

The Cobenzls: Statesmen, Diplomats and Patrons at the Service of the Habsburgs

A Conference and Proceedings on the Most Relevant Noble Family from the County of Gorizia (1508–1823)

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On 4 and 5 December 2020 a family that had played a considerable role in the Central European region for three centuries has recently reoccupied the centre stage thanks to a conference (online) organized in Gorizia under the title *Gorizia at the Heart of Europe. The Cobenzls: Statesmen, Diplomats and Patrons at the Service of the Habsburgs*.

The initial idea of an international research involving scholars of various disciplines (history, art history, *Musiktheorie*, archival, epigraphy, geography) who should study the family native of the County of Gorizia and flourished between 1508 and 1823, came from Alessio Stasi, professor at the Theological Faculty of Triveneto (Padua-Udine). He is the author of monographs, papers, articles and conferences which, despite the multiplicity and depth of his interests, are always focused on the enhancement of the historical, artistic, cultural and religious heritage of the County of Gorizia, a region that for a long time belonged to the Holy Roman Empire in which Romance, Germanic and Slavic languages and cultures met, giving rise to an original and peculiar civilization.¹

The conference will be followed in a short time by the publication of the proceedings, also including contributions from scholars who did not intervene during the works. The volume, full of new and unexpected discoveries, is meant to help fill an important gap in European historical studies and to serve as a basis for further research. The book and the whole activities have been made possible thanks to the contribution of the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, the support of the Archdiocese of Gorizia, Cassa Rurale FVG Bank and the patronage of the Municipalities of Gorizia and Mossa. The project

has been coordinated by the scientific committee composed of Alessio Stasi, Federico Vidic and Lucia Pillon.

The Cobenzls has been conceived as a wide-ranging project, which intends to relaunch the study of history and disciplines related to the modern age in the upper Adriatic region around Gorizia. In fact, it is a question of picking up the thread of a tradition that had had a prominent figure in Luigi Tavano (1923–2018), priest, historian, educator and founder of the Institute of Social and Religious History of Gorizia.² His name was linked to cycles of conferences, publication of books, meetings and research projects that had investigated, among other things, also relevant dimensions of the 16th–18th centuries. Considering only the activities related to this period, Gorizia thus hosted a series of historical conferences with the titles *From Maria Theresa to Joseph II – Gorizia, the Littoral, the Empire* (1981),³ *Carlo Michele d'Attems first Archbishop of Gorizia* (1988–1989),⁴ and *The Eighteenth Century Across the Alps* (1992).⁵ The Cobenzl project is intended as an ideal continuation of this series.

However, research on Gorizia and its surrounding region in the modern age did not stop in 1992.⁶ Since then, numerous steps forward have been made on the occasion of various exhibitions (accompanied by important catalogs, full of unpublished contributions) hosted at the castle of Gorizia (organized by the municipality), at the 18th-century Palazzo Attems-Petzenstein and at the Provincial Museums of Borgo Castello, often in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Gorizia. Just to mention a few, *The Lichtenreiter in the 18th-Century Gorizia* (1996),⁷ *Gorizia barocca. An Italian City in the Habsburg*

Empire (1999),⁸ *The Sign of the Habsburgs* (2001),⁹ *Divus Maximilianus: A County for Gorizia 1500–1619* (2002),¹⁰ *Abitare il Settecento (Living in the 18th Century)* (2007).¹¹ To these must be added *Antonio Paroli 1688–1768* (1996),¹² *Baroque Painting in Gorizia* (2002),¹³ *Barok na Goriškem / Il barocco nel Goriziano* (2006),¹⁴ in collaboration with Narodna Galerija, Ljubljana, and Goriški Muzej, Nova Gorica (1996), as well as the conferences *Katholische Reform und Gegenreformation in Innerösterreich 1564–1628* (Graz–Ljubljana–Gorizia 1994),¹⁵ *Counter-Reformation and Absolute Monarchy in the Austrian Provinces* (Gorizia 1997)¹⁶ and “*Venezia non è da guerra*”. *The Isontino, the Friulian Society and the Serenissima in the War of Gradisca 1615–1617* (Gradisca d’Isonzo 2008).¹⁷ A separate reference must be done for the annual exhibitions organized by the Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Foundation, established from the legacy of the late Count Guglielmo Coronini Cronberg (1905–1990).¹⁸

The Cobenzl Project brought together the collaboration of all these local institutions, together with the State Archives of Gorizia and the Isontina State Library, which provided an active and professional contribution, indispensable for carrying out scientific research during the health emergency (in which most public research institutions have been closed for a long time). In this way, it was possible to support the work of 32 scholars, belonging to 22 universities and different institutes in 8 countries (Italy, Austria, Slovenia, France, Russia, United Kingdom, Germany and Belarus). Jessica Scodro, Ilaria De Paoli and Daniele Tibaldi, staff of the Institute for Central European Cultural Meetings (ICM), in collaboration with the “Sen. Antonio Rizzatti” Centre for Social Studies, managed the complex IT organization of an online conference, divided into four sessions lasting about two hours each, for a total of almost nine hours. The planned concert in the Cobenzl Palace (now Archbishop’s Palace of Gorizia) with the music that the great composers W.A. Mozart, L. Koželuh and A. Eberl wrote for the Cobenzl or dedicated to them, in collaboration with “Thomas Schippers” Musical Association, had to be rescheduled to better times.

As mentioned, a fundamental component of the research is presence of the Cobenzl family records (most of which are unpublished) in the Coronini

Cromberg archive held by the National Archives of Gorizia. These are a tremendous source of information for understanding local and European history. Equally important are the many works of art and buildings commissioned by them in Gorizia, Mossa, Štanjel (San Daniele del Carso), Postojna (Postumia, Adelsberg), Planina (Haasberg), Ljubljana and Vienna, which bear witness to their important role as patrons of art and architecture. Thus it has been possible to assemble the disseminated traces of the rich cultural legacy of the Cobenzls, from the rise of the Habsburg Monarchy and the settling of the Jesuits, to the development of art, music, thought and literature, thanks to their personal connections with key personalities of European history such as all Habsburg monarchs from Ferdinand I to Francis II/I, St Ignatius of Loyola, Ivan IV the Terrible, Catherine II of Russia, Napoleon, neoclassical painter F. Caucig and philosopher Rousseau.

A brief overview of the issues raised during the conference can give an idea of the findings and highlights offered by the participants. The first session, chaired and introduced by Alessio Stasi, was dedicated to *The Cobenzls in the Late Renaissance*. Stasi offered a comprehensive insight on *The Cobenzls 1508–1823. A Gorizia Dynasty of Politicians and Diplomats in the Habsburg Empire*. Starting from the development of the name and the coat of arms, he underlined that the Cobenzls were arguably the most notable Goritian family in the modern European age; yet their story has remained largely untold. Although many of their family records still survive, they have been little studied. Due to historical interpolation, the Cobenzls’ ancestry has been wrongly traced back to the Cubertels, a family documented in Carinthia in the 12th century. New evidence shows that at the dawn of the Middle Ages the Cobenzls were instead wealthy farmers from the Karst (Carso) plateau who distinguished themselves in the defence of the military outpost of Štanjel (one of the former strongholds of the Counts of Gorizia) during the gradual strengthening of the Habsburg rule in the Goritian region, which subsequently became the site of bloody battles between Venetians and Turks. Much of the family’s fortune and prestige was laid by Giovanni (Hans) Cobenzl (ca. 1530–1594) (Fig. 1). A true *homo novus* of the

late Renaissance, he pursued a political career at the service of the Habsburgs, building a vast network of friendship and ties throughout Europe. Not all Cobenzls followed the same career path, though. Some of them became men of letters. Others became churchmen or churchwomen. One of them was even a bandit. Fresh archival, genealogical, heraldic and epigraphic research reveals a three-century-long fascinating picture of the family's private and public life. One of the most striking discoveries made by Stasi was the Cobenzl coat of arms in Millstätter Lenten cloth from 1593, on the side of the rare representation of Christ in Limbus, stating the donor's hope in redemption after death. The cultural and artistic legacy handed down to Europe by this family is impressive. Acknowledging this legacy, concluded Stasi, is our duty.

Bernhard Huber (Deutschordens-Zentralarchiv, Wien) intervened as the second lecturer on *Hans Kobenzl von Prosegg als Deutschordensritter (um 1530/1566–1594)*. Reconnecting to Stasi's observations, Huber elaborated on the fact that Hans Cobenzl gives an interesting example of a Teutonic Knight in the second half of the 16th century in two respects. On the one hand, the form of his entry into the order through imperial and royal protection of Ferdinand I shows how much the order was after 1525, through the loss of Prussia and the political effects of the Reformation, was dependent on the highest authority of the empire and had to make appropriate concessions. On the other hand, it also becomes clear what significance the Teutonic Order had at that time as a state-appropriate supply authority in the imperial structure. Cobenzl, in the service of Habsburg, whether for Emperors Ferdinand I, Maximilian II or Archduke Karl II of Inner Austria, devoted himself intensively to the concerns of the Teutonic Order after he had made his profession. Whether it concerned the recuperation of confiscated religious goods in Italy, or those entrusted to him. The numerous correspondence also give evidence of the diplomat Cobenzl, who was gladly called to represent the interests of the Reich, the Church and the Order. Huber primarily highlighted Cobenzl's religious career and referred to the relevant sources of the German Order's Central Archive (DOZA) in Vienna for further research.



1 *Johann Cobenzl von Prosegg. Portrait from Franz Christoph Khevenhüller's Annales Ferdinandeï, Nachdruck 1721 (Wien, ÖNB Bildarchiv; Foto: Bildarchiv).*

In the third speech, Simon Malmenvall (Teološka fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani – Katoliški inštitut, Ljubljana) illustrated the research carried out together with Alexei Martyniuk (National Institute for Higher Education, Minsk) on *Hans Cobenzl's Diplomatic Mission to Moscow (1575) and his Predecessors*. Both scholars have concentrated on to the wider historical and cultural circumstances of Hans Cobenzl's diplomatic mission at the court of Ivan IV the Terrible in 1575–1576, which represents an important event in the history of contacts between the Holy Roman Empire, particularly the Inner Austria, and East Slavic (Rus') principalities during the middle ages and early modern period. Their research followed a two-part structure: the first part covers three minor case studies on the predecessors of

Cobenzl from the Alpine-Adriatic region living in the 13th (Philipp of Salzburg), 14th (Herman von Cilli) and 15th (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini) centuries; the second part covers the historical background of Cobenzl's mission to Muscovy and his literary account. The authors advocate two mutually intertwined theses: all described diplomatic missions to Eastern Europe or aims to establish contacts with rulers of various Rus' principalities were primarily the result of political needs stemming from the unsolved issues within the Holy Roman Empire; all these missions or contacts enabled the incorporation of the territories of the Eastern Europe in the Western "mental map" and contributed to the "discovery of Russia" in the mid-sixteenth century (most notably by Sigismund Herberstein, also originating from Inner Austria). This – as Malmenvall said – provided the overall context of the mission of Hans Cobenzl; he did not choose the road to nowhere: he was following his predecessors.

The following intervention of this session, by Claudia Bortolusso, was devoted also to the primary figure of the family, citing an epigraphic testimony by himself; *"Rhenus, Tiberis, Tanais, Tagus et Danubius"*: *Giovanni [Hans] Cobenzl in the Europe of Late 16th Century*. From his native San Daniele del Carso, Giovanni (Hans) Cobenzl was called to hold various offices both in the administrative and diplomatic field throughout his remarkable career at the Austrian courts. In order to provide a deeper understanding of this faithful servant of the Habsburgs, the focus was primarily on the archival sources, mainly unpublished and preserved in the Coronini Cronberg Historical Archive, now in the State Archive of Gorizia. The lecture was divided into two parts: after a brief introduction clarifying the chosen research path, Bortolusso followed with a selection of archival sources. As said, the starting point was an epitaph found among the documents referred to Cobenzl's stay in Regensburg, where he passed away on 16th August 1594 while taking part in the imperial diet. In particular, Bortolusso referred to the days following Giovanni's death, together with another archival source concerning the wedding *per procuratorem* between archduchess Anna and king Philip II of Spain, which took place in Prague in 1570. This selection of sources, together with those included in the paper, have revealed the potential

of the documentation kept in the State Archive of Gorizia.

Again in this Hans Cobenzl's panoply we must refer to the original insights offered by Robert Devetak (Fakulteta za humanistiko, Univerza v Novi Gorici) on the theme *Hans Cobenzl in the Slovenian Press during the Late 19th Century*. The scholar analyzed Slovenian publications from the last third of the 19th century focused on the Cobenzl family, whose members lived in Slovenia and also used the Slovenian language in their activities. This also allowed Giovanni Cobenzl (Janez Kobencel) to be successful in his aforementioned mission in Russia. In the second half of the 19th century, as Devetak explained, the Slovenian national elite was looking for prominent historical figures who could be included in the national imagination and discourse. These personalities served as examples to stimulate the Slovenian-speaking population to internalize national ideas more quickly and to engage in efforts to achieve national and linguistic rights at a time when there were many conflicts with other ethnic groups of the Habsburg Monarchy, in the case of Slovenia mainly Germans and Italians. The deeds of personalities who could become national heroes were especially important. The authors of the Cobenzl writings combined real and imaginary events and sought to portray some prominent family members in an ideal image, ignoring the facts and further valuing or even inventing their actions which would successfully help mobilize the masses for the idea of the Slavic peoples. This raises questions about the scope of such works and their impact on readers and the general public.

Immediately after the first session, the award for best student work followed. In fact, an award was set up for the best original work on the Cobenzls submitted by a graduate or an undergraduate student. To enter the competition, candidates had to be enrolled in academic year 2019/2020 and be no older than 35 years of age. The aim of the competition was to raise awareness among young students of the unique historical legacy of the Cobenzls. Thus, the winning work by Filippo Soramel (Mansfield College – University of Oxford), *Guidobaldo Cobenzl (1716–1797), an Aristocrat between Paternalism and Patriotism*, was presented at the conference. Soramel illustrated the scope of his research stating that, under the

reigns of Maria Theresa (1740–1780) and Joseph II (1780–1790), Guidobaldo Cobenzl participated, in Gorizia, in three significant socio-cultural experiences of state-building. His involvement in the Company of Charity (1754–1755), in the Society of Agriculture (1764–1797) and in the Academy of the Romano-Gorizian Arcadians (1780–1797) were emblematic of a variable, yet systemic relationship towards socio-economic modernisation between the Gorizian nobility and the Habsburg dynasty. On the one hand, Guidobaldo's endeavours demonstrate how aristocratic-dynastic cooperation peaked in the 1760s, with the blending of traditional lordly paternalism and patriotic ideologies and practices intended to establish new patterns of social control necessary to the rising Habsburg "fiscal-military state". On the other, they testify the opposite trend during the following two decades, thus shedding new light on the transition of the Gorizian nobility from feudalism to the modern state.

The second session was devoted to *The Cobenzls in the Baroque Age* and chaired by Federico Vidic (Istituto di Storia Sociale e Religiosa, Gorizia), speaking on *From the Seignory to the Court: The Rise of the Cobenzls in the Service of the Habsburgs*. Over the span of two generations, the Cobenzls were capable of getting a spectacular social and political rise that led them from the peripheral seignory of San Daniele del Carso to hold prestigious positions at the court of Vienna. The authors of this progression were Giovanni Filippo (1635–1712) and Giovanni Gasparo Cobenzl (1664–1742), father and son, in the decades around 1700s. The first, after ruling the County of Gorizia in an era of civil unrest, became captain of Trieste for over twenty years and then of Gorizia itself where he died in 1702. The second entered the court very young and, thanks to the support of the chancellor Bucellenti and archduke Charles, gained more and more offices. Taking over from his father as captain of Gorizia, he also embarked on an administrator career which then led him to Ljubljana. Only in 1722 did Charles VI call him to Vienna as court marshal and grand chamberlain, a position he held until the emperor's death. The career of both Cobenzls reveals how one supported the other through the dynamic centre-periphery typical of the Habsburg Monarchy, which provided



2 Anonymous: Ritratto di Giovanni Gasparo Cobenzl, 1731, Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg, Gorizia (inv. n. 1244).

for a continuous exchange of economic and power resources between the two sides. Giovanni Filippo Cobenzl had the intuition and the ability to keep his son in Vienna in his early years, while Giovanni Gasparo (Fig. 2) managed to remedy his father's failure to obtain Gorizia thanks to his deep understanding of the court mechanisms.

Cobenzl and Architecture: Castles and Manors in the County of Gorizia and in Carniola, the theme chosen by Helena Seražin (Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti, Umetnostnozgodovinski inštitut Franceta Steleta, Ljubljana), dealt with the architectural commissions of the Cobenzls from the second half of the 16th to the end of the 18th century. Again, among the most significant patrons of this family was Hans Cobenzl, who built or rebuilt manors, palaces and castles in all the estates acquired by him: Prosecco (near



3 Charles Cobenzl. Portrait by an anonymous painter (Private Property).

Trieste), Štanjel, Jama (Lueg), Gorizia and Mossa. The next very active member of this family in terms of buildings was Giovanni Filippo Cobenzl, who carried out the largest reconstruction of the manor of San Daniele towards the end of the 17th century and built the Lože Palace near Vipava (Vipacco, Wippach). His son Giovanni Gasparo sold, in his later years, the properties of Gorizia and, acquiring the Carnioline estates from the Eggenberg family, transferred the centre of gravity of the family lordships to Inner Carniola. He completely rebuilt the Haasberg palaces near Planina and Logatec. He also bought the palace in Ljubljana and obtained from his brother Ludovico Gundacaro (1678–1745) the estate of Ribnica, giving both to his son Guidobaldo. He had a new palace built in Ljubljana in Novi trg 4 and towards the end of the 18th century he completely restored the palace of Ribnica (Reifnitz). With him also ended the architectural commissions of the Cobenzl family, as the last representative of this powerful family, Philip (1741–1810), spent most of his time in Vienna.

Following insights came from Tina Košak (Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije

znanosti in umetnosti, Umetnostnozgodovinski inštitut Franceta Steleta, Ljubljana – Univerza v Mariboru, Filozofska fakulteta) concerning *Picture Furnishings and Collections in the Cobenzl Residences in Carniola*. Košak, who studied in particular hereditary ventilations, inventories of castles and purchase contracts, for the first time comparatively analyze furnishings and collections of paintings in the Carnioline residences of the Cobenzls between the mid-18th century and the first decade of the 19th century, in the context of the history of real estate and intra-family relationships, the role of their diplomatic posts, artistic commissions, as well as subsequent transfers and the destination of their artistic heritage. The main starting point are the properties and residences of Carniola passed to the sons of the captain of Gorizia Giovanni Filippo Cobenzl, Ludovico Gundacaro and Giovanni Gasparo, subsequently inherited mostly by the latter's sons, Charles (1712–1770) (Fig. 3) and Guidobaldo, namely the palaces of Ljubljana and Haasberg, the castles of Jama (Lueg), Logatec (Lohitsch), Ribnica (Reifnitz) and the villa of Lože (Leitenburg), as well as, in comparative terms, the castle of Štanjel. In addition, Košak touched the issue of receiving and transferring objects from Lože, also drawing on pre-World War I reports and France Stele's conservation reports.

Concluding this session, Michela Messina, curator at Civici Musei di Storia ed Arte, Trieste, elaborated the topic *Testimonies of the Cobenzls in the Trieste Civic Collections: Tombstones, Portraits, Globes and Ancient Volumes*. Although the Cobenzl's contacts with Trieste were apparently sporadic, the museum and book collections of the Municipality of Trieste host various testimonies relating to the family, useful for their cultural and social history. Two 17th-century relief carved stone plaques with the family coat of arms in the Castle of San Giusto testify to the activity of Giovanni Filippo Cobenzl as Captain of the city, while the pictorial collections of the Museo Sartorio reveal an unpublished portrait of his son, Giovanni Gasparo, wearing the Golden Fleece. The intellectual activity of the latter is documented by two globes by Vincenzo Coronelli that belonged to him and by a series of precious 16th- and 17th-century books from his library, preserved in the "Attilio Hortis" Library, in which there is also a pleasant portrait of his son, Guidobaldo, founder of the Arcadian colony of

Gorizia. The series of portraits ends with three other family members, including two women, contained in the so-called *Auersperg Albums* of the Museo Teatrale, whose drawn effigies are a living testimony of the network of contacts in which the Cobenzl family was inserted at the end of the 18th century.

The third session of the conference held the title *The Cobenzls in the Age of Enlightenment*. In his introductory speech, the chair Antonio Trampus (Dean, Dipartimento di studi linguistici e culturali comparati, Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia) offered a brilliant lecture on *Giovanni Filippo Cobenzl and Josephinist Reforms*. This Cobenzl, generally known as Philipp (1741–1810) (Fig. 4), is generally remembered for his long political career which, after studying at the Savoysche Ritterakademie in Vienna and at the University of Salzburg, led him to join his uncle Charles in Brussels. There he was trained in State affairs until in 1767 when, on Kaunitz's recommendation, he returned to Vienna to work in the Hofkammer and became a close friend of Joseph II, so much to participate in his 1777 *incognito* journey to France. In 1779 Philipp attended the Teschen conference instead of his cousin Louis (1753–1809) and then became deputy chancellor in charge of foreign affairs. The extensive literature on his figure, starting from the second half of the 19th century, presents him as one of the staunchest supporters of Josephan politics. However, in the last thirty years, historiography has looked in a new way to the radical path of Joseph II's reforms. No longer is this path considered as the moment in which the contradictions between the innovative force and absolutist praxis became more evident, but as a necessary overcoming of the gradualness and sectoriality of the previous decades reforming policy. The talk intends to offer useful elements and insights to understand Philipp Cobenzl's position in this dynamic, starting from a survey of the documentation left by Cobenzl, and in particular from the possibility of distinguishing public and private sources, and then compare the *egodocuments* with other evidence of the time, including those of Karl von Zinzendorf. Transnational and trans-continental dimension of the Cobenzls were spotlighted by David Do Paço (Département d'Histoire, Sciences Po, Paris) under the title *The Cobenzl Family and the East in the 18th Century*. Do Paço's contribution explored the



4 Johann Daniel Donat: Ritratto di Giovanni Filippo Cobenzl, 1775, Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg, Gorizia (inv. n. 1309).

economic, social, political and cultural connections of the Cobenzl family with the Ottoman Empire. The scholar highlighted the diplomatic revolution led by Philipp Cobenzl from 1779 onwards. This relied on the family's private networks and the influence of Peter Herbert von Rathkeal in Istanbul and within the Ottoman Empire. The rich and dense correspondence between Philipp Cobenzl and Peter Herbert von Rathkeal between Vienna and Istanbul from 1779 to 1792 is, in this sense, a major contribution to the new diplomatic history and to the history of the Eastern question and the history of the Habsburg monarchy. As Do Paço concluded, the networks of the Cobenzl family offer an original perspective to the economic development of the port of Trieste and in particular to the development of its global dimension and the first exchanges between Trieste, the Indian Ocean and China. After economy and diplomacy, literature came into affair thanks to Gabriele Zanello's (Dipartimento di

Lingue e letterature, comunicazione, formazione e società, Università degli Studi di Udine) talking about *La "Raccolta di composizioni e di poesie" in onore di Giovanni Filippo Cobenzl*. As Zanello explained, in the encomiastic production in Friuli flourishing both on the Venetian and on the Archducal side of the region during the 18th century, there are also two poetic collections belonging to Gorizia which include compositions in several languages. The first printed in Udine in 1744, celebrates the taking of possession of the captaincy of Gradisca by Baron Antonio De Fin; the second, on the other hand, enjoys a much broader scope in various respects, since it celebrates with a wider range of languages the important role played by Giovanni Filippo Cobenzl in the stipulation of the Teschen treaty between Austria and Prussia (1779). The speech focused on the second collection: it briefly recalled its critical fortune and reviewed the promoters, authors and languages involved; it grasped the links with that dense network of relationships that would soon be consolidated in the Arcadia Romano-Sonziaca; it also presented the principal themes, the intertextual connections, and the metric and stylistic solutions, isolating the elements of continuity and those of discontinuity with respect to the Arcadian tradition; finally, it showed how the compositions of this collection also conveyed an ideological message that was not limited to mere and predictable encomiastic content.

On another form of art was centered in the speech of Roberta Vidic (Fachgruppe Musiktheorie, Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg) on *Vienna and Beyond: Cobenzl's Engagement with Music and the Stylistic Change around 1781*. A European network of nobility – noted Vidic – played a central role in the patronage and development of the Classical style in music. In this sense the Cobenzl family offers a good example of the local and international dimension of the 'Viennese' Classicism. The Cobenzl's engagement with music was related to the patronage of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and discussed in a broader context of the stylistic change around 1781. Mozart's first encounter with the Cobenzl family took place in the 1760s in Salzburg and then in Brussels, where Charles Cobenzl served as the Habsburg minister plenipotentiary in the Austrian Netherlands. Brussels was the last stay

of Leopold Mozart before the famous trip to Paris, when he was on a concert tour with his two children Maria Anna and Wolfgang Amadeus. Paris was one of the great cultural centers of Europe, and the European nobility was also greatly influenced by French culture. At the same time, the development of the Viennese style was strictly connected with local taste and social conventions. In Vienna W. A. Mozart was furtherly acquainted with Philipp Cobenzl as a patron of the arts, while Charlotte Cobenzl de Rumbeke (1755–1812) was Mozart's first piano pupil after his arrival in 1781. Departing from historical documents and musical repertory, these different roles are specified in terms of the historical distinction between *dilettanti* and *professori* and compared with Mozart's contemporary collaboration with the pianist Josepha Barbara Auernhammer (1758–1820), Vidic concluded.

Diplomacy came back on the stage through the intervention by Lothar Höbelt (Institut für Geschichte, Universität Wien) entitled *Count Ludwig Cobenzl, the Third Partition of Poland – or the Fourth Silesian War?* If Philip Cobenzl was the more original mind – Höbelt argued – his younger cousin Louis Cobenzl was the "Mozart" of the foreign service, a gifted youngster with plenty of *joie de vivre*. He spent more than half his career as a congenial representative at the court of Catherine the Great as the quintessential diplomat who went native. Louis was an enemy of the French Revolution, of course, but above all he was a man of the ancien regime. He experienced the revolution as a nuisance but not as a real threat. His job had always been to keep Russia on the Austrian rather than the Prussian side – and he stuck to that guiding line even if his superiors in Vienna – including his cousin – indulged in wild flights of fancy. Höbelt focused his attention on the fact that Louis Cobenzl's attitude towards the partitioning of Poland was shaped by the very same considerations. He did not think that it was a good idea; yet, in certain circumstances it might serve its purpose. In 1793, he bowed to the inevitable when his cousin Philipp left him with no option but to accept the Second Partition. In 1795, he gleefully negotiated the Third Partition that enabled him to turn the tables on the Prussians. Yet at the same time he cautioned Vienna against provoking a war against the Berlin upstarts. In 1796, he finally managed to

persuade the Czarina to send an army to support the Austrians against the French – but two months later Catherine suffered a stroke and all his efforts were to no avail.

The fourth and final part of the conference, *The Cobenzls, Art and Memory*, was chaired by Cristina Bragaglia (Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg, Gorizia), who introduced this session *Tracing Cobenzl Assets in the Coronini Collections*. The documents of the Coronini Cronberg family, and in particular those belonging to the last descendant, Count Guglielmo, contain numerous references to prominent figures of the Cobenzl family and the works of art coming from their heritage. Through these evidences, Bragaglia tried to establish what has actually been preserved from the inheritance received in 1810 by Michele Coronini, and what has instead been purchased since the 1950s. Count Guglielmo, in fact, always paid great attention to the family “which had played an important role in the history of Gorizia, Carniola and the Empire”, investing energy and economic resources to increase the Cobenzl works in his possession. In addition to the purchase of some paintings, such as three pastels depicting Giovanni Gasparo, his wife and his daughter, the portraits of Guidobaldo Cobenzl and his wife Maria Benigna di Montrichier, coming from the Lože castle, and that of Carlo Cobenzl by Franz Lippold, Count Coronini tried to get hold of the marble bust of Carlo Cobenzl by the sculptor Augustin Ollivier, located in the Predjama castle. The research carried out by Count Coronini on the occasion of the exhibitions of 1956 and 1981 offered an important opportunity to begin further studies on his Cobenzl portraits. More interesting information on other portraits of the Coronini collections emerged also from the correspondence between Guglielmo Coronini and the Belgian scholar Georges Englebert. He also pointed out to him some Cobenzl works available on the antiques market, as recently demonstrated too.

British scholar Catherine Phillips (Vladimir Levinson-Lessing Professor of the History of Collecting, European University in St. Petersburg) illustrated her beloved *Count Charles Cobenzl: Art and Politics in the Austrian Netherlands*. Charles Cobenzl served Vienna throughout his career as a diplomat,

negotiator and administrator, but it is in Belgium and in Russia that his legacy is felt. If the collection that he formed in Brussels was to be sold in 1768 to Catherine the Great of Russia, to lay the foundations of what is now one of the world's great collections of drawings, in Belgium itself he is to this day credited with the establishment of key cultural institutions. Standing on the cusp of different cultural histories, Cobenzl has often been studied from a national (or nationalistic) point of view, but after his appointment as Minister in the Southern Netherlands in 1753, he himself balanced continued loyalty to his rulers in Vienna with an enthusiasm for and promotion of the interests of his new home. He argued that the arts were central to the prosperity of the Southern Netherlands, that however much Vienna needed money, it made bad economic sense simply to extract it from the region, rather than investing now to increase income in the future.

Carlo's wife offered the occasion to Raffaella Sgubin (Musei Provinciali di Gorizia, ERPAC) to analyse *Teresa Cobenzl-Pálffy's Wardrobe*. Sgubin's research dealt with Maria Teresa Pálffy (1719–1771), who married Count Charles Cobenzl at the age of 15. After having spent 18 years looking after their children and home in Vienna, while her husband was engaged in multiple missions abroad, she finally joined him in Brussels in 1753 where the count had been appointed minister plenipotentiary of the Austrian Netherlands. Here the two Cobenzls began to have a high-level social life, however entering into conflict with the high nobility of the court, who did not accept to recognize the count and his wife as equals despite the important role they held. The inventory of the countess's possessions, drawn up on her death and kept in the State Archives of Gorizia, contains interesting information on the means used by the noblewoman to affirm her rank. Thus we learn of the existence of a wardrobe that was nothing short of grandiose made up of dresses in fine fabrics and the most fashionable colours, accompanied by countless accessories in the most popular lace. There were numerous gold and enamel objects, sometimes embellished with diamonds and small miniatures: many snuff boxes, bonboniers, watches, rings and bracelets. There was a large number of fans, as many as 66, of different materials. The Cobenzls arrived at receptions on a coupé

carriage with family insignia, and received guests using silver and porcelain services, in which they served new luxury goods brought by international trade: coffee, chocolate, tea and sugar. Sgubin found that their cellar was equipped with the most prestigious wines and the most luxurious tobaccos.

Luxury and misery curiously belonged also to Paola Predolin's *Michele Coronini Cronberg Heir of the Cobenzls*. In fact, still a minor at the age of 17 Michele Coronini Cronberg received the inheritance that Filippo Cobenzl, his tutor and grandson of great-grandmother Cassandra Cobenzl, had assigned him as his universal heir. A lucky combination added this fortune to the Coronini and Rabatta bequests, which the young count had previously acquired after his father's death in 1803. Michele completed his education in Vienna by taking courses in economics, finance, mathematics, administration, civil law, canon law and maritime law. In 1812 he married Sophie de Fagan (1792–1857) who was also a descendant of Cobenzl since her grandmother was Eleonora Cobenzl, cousin of Philip Cobenzl. Michele Coronini began his diplomatic career first in Naples, then in Paris. With great expectations he returned to Vienna and was entrusted with the task of organizing the Congress of Ljubljana in 1821 where the Austrian intervention in Naples was decided. From 1831 to 1847 he was a member of the Diet of the Duchy of Carniola, in the years 1848–1849 he was a member of the Frankfurt Parliament and in 1862 he was appointed life member of the Chamber of Lords of Vienna. Back home after his experience in France, he tried to tidy up the serious financial situation that he had inherited, in which the long and disastrous trial on the Rabatta inheritance was relevant. Debts escalated rapidly and uncontrollably. To worsen the situation was Count Michele's expensive lifestyle, while his wife Sophie raised her four children alone and managed the properties in the best possible way, earning the esteem and trust of creditors. For Coronini, who died in Paris in 1876, the legacies and especially the heritage of Cobenzl were a calamity rather than a fortune, the expression of a feudal age in decline.

In the last lecture of the session and the conference, Lucia Pillon, Honorary Archival Inspector of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Archival Superintendency, illustrated her fundamental work on *The Cobenzl Papers in the Coronini Archive: The Valorisation of a*

Documentary Collection. As seen, the archive of the Cobenzl family was inherited by Michele Coronini Cronberg together with the rest of the family's heritage. He kept the Cobenzl papers together with the Coronini's in Cronberg (Moncorona) castle (now Kromberk, Slovenia). The archive, as Pillon pointed out, suffered severe damages from the fires that hit the building in 1915 and 1943, during the two world wars. Following the definition of the border between Italy and Yugoslavia, in 1947, it was transferred to Gorizia, in the family palace which had been acquired in 1820 by Michele Coronini Cronberg himself. Today, the foundation established by last Count Guglielmo Coronini is based there. The archival documents, including those that belonged to the Cobenzls, are now the property of the Foundation, which on the basis of an agreement signed in 1992 has deposited them in the State Archives of Gorizia, where they can be freely consulted. The internal searches of the Coronini Cronberg archive, which in 1991 was found in conditions of great disorder and of which only some parts are reordered to date, take place with the aid of a list that considers the Coronini archive in all its consistency – about a thousand files – and was compiled between 1993 and 1995. It is sufficiently detailed but, like any similar instrument, fails to offer an overall view of the archive and its structure. As for the Cobenzl archive, reordering and inventorying – from which any correct valorization must start – are still to be completed, but in the last months an extensive work has been done. The consistency of the archive is now known, calculated in 77 archival units, between files and volumes, and the chronological extremes, from 1393 to 1822.

The conference made it possible to experiment with all the possibilities that new technologies can offer, even in an emergency situation, for the celebration of events of scientific relevance. To make the lectures accessible to the public, the Youtube chat was used for the translation of the speeches and abstracts both in English and Italian. These are *best practices* that may also be useful in view of the next important event that will see Nova Gorica and Gorizia as European Capital of Culture in 2025.

Annotations

- 1 See: Sergio Tavano, *Gorizia: Friuli e non Friuli. Appunti di storia culturale*. In: Ferruccio Tassin (Ed.): *Cultura friulana nel Goriziano*. 2. ed., Gorizia-Udine: ISSR-Forum 2003, pp. 45–80.
- 2 Sergio Tavano: *L'Istituto di Storia Sociale e Religiosa: le premesse e gli orientamenti*. In: Silvano Cavazza, Mauro Gaddi (Eds.): *Figure e problemi dell'Ottocento goriziano*, Gorizia: ISSR 1998, pp. 243–264.
- 3 Da Maria Teresa a Giuseppe II. *Gorizia – il Litorale – l'Impero*, Gorizia: ICM 1981.
- 4 Carlo M. d'Attems primo arcivescovo di Gorizia 1752–1774. Vol. I. *Studi preparatori*, Gorizia: ISSR-ICM 1988; Vol. II. *Atti del convegno*, Gorizia: ISSR-ICM 1990.
- 5 Ferruccio Tassin (Ed.): *Il Settecento a cavallo delle Alpi: cultura e società*, Gorizia: ISSR-ICM 1993.
- 6 However the goal of “preparing young scholars capable of tackling local history issues with the appropriate tools” has not been fully achieved, given the marginalization and lack of inclusion of too many young graduates, interested in local history, updated to the historiographical debate ongoing and prepared for the critical use of sources and the necessary scientific scrutiny. See: Silvano Cavazza: *L'Istituto di Storia Sociale e Religiosa e la ricerca storica a Gorizia*. In: Cavazza, Gaddi (Eds.): *Figure e problemi cit.*, pp. 265–270.
- 7 Andrea Antonello, Walter Klainscek (Eds.): *I Lichtenreiter nella Gorizia del Settecento*, Mariano del Friuli: Edizioni della Laguna 1996.
- 8 Silvano Cavazza (Ed.): *Gorizia barocca. Una città italiana nell'impero degli Asburgo*, Mariano del Friuli: Edizioni della Laguna 1999.
- 9 Raffaella Sgubin (Ed.): *Il segno degli Asburgo: oggetti e simboli dalla regalità al quotidiano*, Gorizia: Musei Provinciali 2001.
- 10 Silvano Cavazza (Ed.): *Divus Maximilianus: una contea per i goriziani 1500–1619*, Mariano del Friuli: Edizioni della Laguna 2002.
- 11 Raffaella Sgubin (Ed.): *Abitare il Settecento*, Gorizia: Musei Provinciali 2007.
- 12 Ferdinand Šerbelj (Ed.): *Antonio Paroli 1688–1768*, Ljubljana-Gorizia-Nova Gorica: Narodna Galerija-Musei Provinciali-Goriški Muzej 1996.
- 13 Ferdinand Šerbelj (Ed.): *La pittura barocca nel Goriziano*, Ljubljana: Narodna Galerija 2002 (both Slovenian and Italian editions).
- 14 Ferdinand Šerbelj (Ed.): *Barok na Goriškem / Il barocco nel Goriziano*, Ljubljana: Narodna Galerija 2006.
- 15 France M. Dolinar, Maximilian Liebmann, Helmut Rumpler, Luigi Tavano (Eds.): *Katholische Reform und Gegenreformation in Innerösterreich 1564–1628*, Klagenfurt-Ljubljana-Wien, Graz-Wien-Köln: Hermagoras/Mohorjeva-Styria 1994.
- 16 Silvano Cavazza (Ed.): *Controriforma e monarchia assoluta nelle province austriache*, Gorizia: ISSR 1997.
- 17 Andrea Zannini, Mauro Gaddi (Eds.): *Venezia non è da guerra. L'Isontino, la società friulana e la Serenissima nella guerra di Gradisca*, Udine: Forum 2008.
- 18 *Dalla penna d'oca alla macchina da scrivere. Guglielmo Coronini e la bella scrittura (2015); A tavola con i conti Coronini (2016); Donne allo specchio. Personaggi femminili nei ritratti della famiglia Coronini (2017); L'eredità russa dei Conti Coronini. Opere d'arte e oggetti preziosi dall'impero degli zar (2018); L'indispensabile superfluo. Accessori della moda nelle collezioni della famiglia Coronini (2019); Verde sublime. Il Parco Coronini Cronberg e la rappresentazione della natura tra Neoclassicismo e Romanticismo (2020)*, all with catalogues edited by Cristina Bragaglia Venuti.

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