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Vyšehrad in the period of Charles IV and Wenceslas IV. Unknown appearance of the royal castle in the early 17th century iconography

ANNOTATION

The University Library in Bologna possesses a plan dated circa 1626, by the Florentine architect and military engineer Giovanni Pieroni, concerning proposed fortification with a contemporary survey of Vyšehrad castle, drawn in particular detail in the area of the ruined former royal acropolis prior to its Baroque redevelopment to a fort, providing a valuable glimpse of the earlier constructions. Additionally the plan depicts elements not revealed from the archaeological excavations, comprehensively published in 2004–2015. Also prospects by the Dutch draftsmen, Roelandt Savery and Paulus van Vianen, who worked in Prague at the court of Rudolph II, are equally valuable for the topography of Vyšehrad. These documents help to interpret other known iconographic sources, mainly the two Sadeler's prospects from 1606, and depict the royal acropolis in greater detail. They also bring new knowledge of its layout in the period of Charles IV and Wenceslas IV, especially regarding the questions about its gates and palaces.

SUMMARY

Vyšehrad, the iconic site of Bohemian history and the second royal castle in the seat city of the Bohemian dukes and kings, is constantly intensively researched. The archaeologists Bořivoj Nechvátal, Václav Moucha and Ladislav Varadzin with a collective of authors published in 2004–2015 a monumental trilogy of the entire archaeological excavations and building history surveys in the area of this national cultural monument, which included analysis of the archive documentation and iconography. Despite that, new sources for studying the topography, architecture and building history of Vyšehrad occur and no doubt will occur in the future. An outstandingly valuable source is a plan for proposed fortification at Vyšehrad by the Florentine architect and military engineer Giovanni Pieroni, who was entrusted with this task by emperor Ferdinand II, possibly in 1626. The plan is deposited in a file of the three convolutes of Pieroni's correspondence, drawings and treatises in the University library in Bologna. His survey of the castle and the detailed depiction, especially of the area of the ruined former royal acropolis, is of fundamental importance since it captured Vyšehrad with its ruined constructions prior to its Baroque redevelopment from a castle to a fort. Archaeological excavations could not reveal many parts identified on the plan by Pieroni and other iconographic sources, mainly views by the Dutch artists, who worked in Prague at the court of Rudolph II, Roelandt Savery and Paul van Vianen. The drawing by Savery, archived in The Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum in New York, depicted an ancient rotunda of St. Martin, which Savery later often inserted into his paintings and which became a graphic proposal published by Hendrik Hondie the Elder after Pieter Stevens on the Night theme. A very valuable drawing by Vianne, deposited in The Szépművészeti museum in Budapest, depicted the ruins of the third royal palace on the acropolis and of an unknown building with two towers, standing on the north side of the acropolis opposite to the church of St. Petr and Paul. These views helped the interpretation of the known iconographic sources, mainly the two prospects by Sadeler from 1606, and showed the royal acropolis in much more detail. New information of the layout of the acropolis, of the remains of palaces, walls and gates allows a reconstruction of the castle in the period of Charles IV and Wenceslas IV, during an extensive redevelopment. The views of the period give evidence of a gate on the east side of the acropolis at the very edge of the castle close to the outer ramparts, decorated by a strip of the coats of arms of the Bohemian Lands, similar to the one, which Wenceslaus IV got installed at his Točnick castle in the 1390s. The gate remains might have survived in the bank of the Baroque fort. The two towered building on the other hand at the north side of the acropolis could have been constructed also as a gate, a representative entry into St. Peter's basilica replacing an earlier road with a Romanesque bridge, but has never been used as a gate. Possibly originally only a single tower stood here as a refuge. Archaeological excavation on this site of the Baroque armoury was not extensive enough; further information may be expected in the future. Among the four palace buildings on the acropolis the third one is of specific interest, being built in the period of Charles IV around 1350 as a substitution for an earlier Přemyslid dynasty palace, modified during the reign of Wenceslaus IV. On its first floor there used to be a timber chamber, identified by a large arch in the southern wall, depicted on the view from around 1600. The same floor contained a living room with rectangular windows and a room on the east, enlightened by windows with semi-circular arches,

probably a chapel, with an oriel window facing the courtyard.

Drawings deposited in various collections, worldwide and private, show where to look for further valuable evidence of the castle history in the future, with the possibility of finding other documents from the period prior to the castle Baroque modification into a fort, which may provide further, so far only suspected forms of the early Vyšehrad.

Fig. 1. Giovanni Pieroni, about 1626: Vyšehrad. Fortification proposal (elaborated version). Coloured pen-and-ink drawing (deposited in: Bologna, © Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Collection of manuscripts, sign. MS. 935 C, not foliated; photo G. Roncaglia, 2013).

Fig. 2. Giovanni Pieroni, around 1626: Vyšehrad. Fortification proposal (elaborated version). Detail with the acropolis. Legend: **p1–p4** – palace buildings; **o5** – fifth building on the acropolis; **e** – angled wall towards the gate; **f** – northern rampart of the acropolis; **v2** – tower; **b** – eastern gate to the acropolis; **g** – garden (deposited in: Bologna, © Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Collection of manuscripts, sign. MS. 935 C, not foliated; photo G. Roncaglia, 2013, adjusted and depicted by P. Uličný, 2017).

Fig. 3. Philipp van den Bossche / Johannes Wechter / Aegidius Sadeler, 1606: PRAGA. So called Sadeler's Large Prospect of Prague – section: Vyšehrad. Copper engraving, etching, part 9. Legend: 117–121 – from the original 1606. **117** – chapter church of St. Peter and Paula; **118** – church of the Beheading of the John the Baptist (originally of St. Cross); **119** – rotunda of St. Martin; **120** – Apex gate; **121** – acropolis; **a** – tower; **d** – tower by the gate to Podskálí; **v1, v3** – towers; **w** – position site for the drawing by Paul van Vianen (fig. 8); **c** – track to Podskálí; **e** – angled wall to the gate; **f** – northern rampart of the acropolis; **o5** – tower like structure, northern gate?; **b** – eastern gate to the acropolis; **g** – enclosed garden; **p2, p3** – ruins of the palaces; **n** – north eastern corner of the third palace; **i** – house by the rotunda of St. Martin; **j** – outer wall (scanned from the reproduction BOSSCHE/WECHTER/SADELER 1973; editing by author, graphic depiction S. Babušková, 2017).

Fig. 4. Aegidius Sadeler, 1606: Ruderi del Castello Vissehrad. Part (nr. 50) of the album *Vestigi delle antichità di Roma, Tivoli, Pozzovolo et altri Ivochi*. Legend: **p1–p4** – palaces; **v1, v3** – towers; **b** – eastern gate; **f** – north wall of the acropolis; **pp** – church of St. Peter and Paul; **j** – outer rampart of the castle (copied from SADELER 1606; editing by author, graphic depiction S. Babušková, 2017).

Fig. 5. Jan Kozel (Joannes Caper) / Michael Peterle from Annaberg, 1562: PRAGA BOHEMIAE METROPOLIS ACCVRATISSIME EXPRESSA 1.5.6.2. Vyšehrad, section from a prospect of Prague. Wood block (scanned from a black and white reprint from 1904, archived in: National Heritage Institute, general directory, collection of plans, nr. PPOP 994-5-4558).

Fig. 6. Adalbert Hilscher, 1772: Vyšehrad, plan with a proposal of the armoury fencing (Military central archive Prague, fond Collection of fortification plans Prague (1680–1954), sign. I 5/8; reprophoto P. Uličný, 2015).

Fig. 7. Folpert van Ouden-Allen, 1679: Prague. Detail of Vyšehrad from the Prague panorama. Pen-and-ink drawing, right third of the complex (Wien © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Kartensammlung und Globenmuseum, sign. ALB Vues 11383; KAR0514411).

Fig. 8. Paulus van Vianen, about 1604–1605 (1610): View of the Vyšehrad acropolis from the north west (Town rampart with people). Pen-and-ink drawing, 128 × 238 mm (Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum Budapest, Collection of prints and drawings, inv. nr. 1406).

Fig. 9. Paulus van Vianen, about 1604–1605 (1610): View of the Vyšehrad acropolis from the north west. **A** – detail of a tower like building in the north part of the acropolis; **B** – detail of the third royal palace (Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum Budapest, Collection of prints and drawings, inv. nr. 1406).

Fig. 10. Prague, Vyšehrad, royal acropolis. Reconstruction of the Vyšehrad appearance before 1420. **Ochre** additions and corrections after the plan by Pieroni from about 1626 and after iconography from about 1600. Legend: **v1, v2, v3** – towers; **pp** – chapter church of St. Peter and Paul; **v** – basilica of St. Lawrence; **p1–p4** – palaces; **o5** – tower like structure, northern gate?; **b** – eastern gate; **f** – north wall of the acropolis; **g** – separated areas, later garden with houses; **j** – outer rampart of the castle. (Into the original copied from MOUCHA/NECHVÁTAL/VARADZIN ET AL. 2015, plan nr. 3 supplements, additions drawn and edited by P. Uličný, 2017.)

Fig. 11. Brno-city, No 278, Zelný trh 7. Detail of a niche of a thermally insulated room on the ground floor on the outer side of the façade of a Gothic burgher house, probably built in the 2nd half of the 14th century, from bricks and blocks (photo H. Winklerová, 2017).

Fig. 12. Prague-Old Town, No. 541, Karolinum. A niche of a thermally insulated room on the ground floor of a house incorporated today into the wing of Karolinum (photo A. Holasová, 2017).

Fig. 13. Prague, Vyšehrad, royal acropolis. Reconstructive sketch of the first floor of the second and third palace according to the iconography. Legend: **p1** – first palace; **p2** – second palace; **p3** – third palace; **v2** – tower (drawn by P. Uličný, 2017).

Fig. 14. Anonymous, the first half of the 17th century (about 1648): Prospect map of Vyšehrad. Detail: Vyšehrad, royal acropolis and chapter church. Coloured pen-and-ink drawing (Prague City Archives, inv. nr. P-3276).

Fig. 15. Roelandt Savery, about 1610: View of St. Martin's rotunda at Vyšehrad from the north. Pen-and-ink drawing, 184 × 311 mm (New York, © Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum, Collection of drawings and prints, inv. nr. s D. 17.8; original name A village farmstead with a circular tower by a road leading into the village).

Fig. 16. Bedřich Havránek, before 1841: Rotunda of St. Martin with the blocked Leopold's gate. Pen drawing (The City of Prague Museum, inv. nr. 24788; copied from KAŠIČKA/NECHVÁTAL 1985, fig. 96).

Fig. 17. Roelandt Savery, about 1606: Temptation of Christ on the slope of a hill with a view of Prague. 490 × 700 mm; unknown location (copied from DEBRABANDERE 1976, fig. 5).

Fig. 18. Hendrik Hondius the Elder after Pieter Stevens, 1605: Night (Nox; from the cycle Vier Tageszeiten). Copper engraving, 230 × 330 mm (Wien, Albertina, inv. nr. HB 57(3), fol. 131; scan of a photograph from 1997 from the collections of the Institute of art history AV ČR).

Translated by Linda and Patrick Foster