The Čakovec Stone Bust Collection: New Identifications, Possible Dating and the Identity of its Commissioner

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Summary
The Museum of Međimurje in Čakovec, situated within a former Zrinski residence, stores a stone bust collection containing portraits of 17th-century Croatian and Hungarian dignitaries. Most of the identified portraits have been modelled on Elias Widemann’s engravings from the series Icones Illustrium Heroum Hungariae. So far researchers have formed two opposing opinions concerning the collection’s interpretation: while some claim the collection was commissioned by the Zrinski family during the second half of the 17th century, others insist it was commissioned by the Festetics in the 1820s. This article proposes another engraved portrait series as a model for the collection, namely Franz Leopold Schmittner’s engravings published in Corpus Juris Hungarici (1751), which can be used to confirm or newly establish the identity of seven busts. The authors examine in what way this new find affects the interpretation of the collection’s commission and its contextualization within Croatian and Hungarian art.

Keywords: Čakovec Old Castle, bust collection, portrait gallery, László Festetics, Corpus Juris Hungarici, Franz Leopold Schmittner, Croatian and Hungarian kings

The Museum of Međimurje, situated within Čakovec Old Castle Palace, stores a collection of twenty-five stone busts.¹ The collection represents a gallery of illustrious men (Latin: viri illustri, Italian: uomini famosi) that predominately contains portraits of 17th-century Croatian and Hungarian state and church dignitaries. Apart from the identities of the subjects, little is known about the collection itself due to the lack of archival documents and records. Using secondary historical sources and information, researchers have formed several assumptions concerning the collection’s date of origin, commissioner, original placement and possible creator.

The busts have been sculpted in sandstone, and are nearly twice as large as their subjects were in real life. The portrayed are shown en face in strict frontal stature without any torsion of the body, their gaze fixed straight in front of them. Most of the figures are clad in dolmans and pelisses, clothing characteristic of the Croatian and Hungarian nobility during the 17th century. The drapery is modelled flatly, with almost graphically executed folds and clothing details, such as buttons and clasps. All of the busts have been damaged: their noses have been broken off, and some have even been covered with tar. When, why and by whom remains unknown.

Former discussions on the collection
The Identities of the subjects
Most of the busts that have been identified so far had been modelled on engraved portraits executed by Elias Widemann (Wideman, Wiedemann, Widmann; 1619–1652), a well-known 17th-century portraitist. Widemann was born in Augsburg but worked in Vienna and Pressburg (Croatian: Požun, Hungarian: Pozsony; today Bratislava) from the 1630s onwards.² He executed more than 300 engraved portraits that were published in three separate series (1646, 1649, and 1652) under the patronage of Johann Christoph III von Pucheim (first two series) and possibly Ferenc Nádasdy III (the last one).³ His portraits became popular and
widespread very quickly, serving as a visual medium that confirmed the importance and position of the subject in the aristocratic, political, economic and religious hierarchy of the Habsburg monarchy and the Kingdoms of Croatia and Hungary. Widemann’s engravings have served as models for numerous panel paintings, but they have never been used in mural or sculptural work, with the exception of the Čakovec collection, as will be discussed further in the text.

The last of Widemann’s three series, *Icones Illustrium Heroum Hungariae* (Vienna, 1652), has been used as a model in the sculpting of eleven busts from the Čakovec collection. The most notable personages whose portraits are represented in both collections are: the brothers Nikola Zrinski VII (Zrínyi VII. Miklós; 1620–1664) and Petar Zrinski IV (Zrínyi IV. Péter; 1621–1671), during whose lifetime the Zrinski family reached its political, economic, military and cultural pinnacle; György Lippay (1600–1666), primate and Archbishop of Esztergom; and Pál Pálffy (late 1580s or early 1590s–1653), Privy Counsellor and Palatine of Hungary. Only fragments of the busts of Nikola Zrinski VII and Pál Pálffy have been preserved, namely their heads. The remaining busts that have been modelled on Widemann’s engravings are of: Ferenc Forgách (1625–1647), Chamberlain to Emperor Ferdinand III; Miklós Nadányi, captain of Nógrád and Verebély; György Illésházy (?–1684), Chamberlain to Emperor Ferdinand III and royal steward to Leopold I; János Héderváry (1620–1662), Pressburg Cathedral canon; Colonel István Palásthy; András Izdenczy, ambassador of the Crown in Constantinople; and Zsigmond Lónyay (1593–1653), diplomat and representative of the Princes of Transylvania. It is possible that one more bust was modelled on Widemann’s engravings. The sculpture was already heavily damaged in the 1930s (only its face was preserved), and today nothing of it has remained. The bust has previously been identified as a probable portrait of Ferenc Wesselényi (1605–1667), military commander and Palatine of Hungary, due to its similarity to Wesselényi’s portrait in *Icones* (the high and frowning brow, the long moustache turned downwards, the full lower lip, the thick curly beard). However, it is possible that the bust portrayed György Szélechényi (1595–1685) or György Széchényi (?–1695), primates and Archbishops of Esztergom, whose portraits bear a particular facial resemblance to that of Wesselényi. Unfortunately, as the bust has been destroyed, it is impossible to give a definite answer to the question of its identification.

The Čakovec collection holds a portrait of another Zrinski, the only son of Nikola VII and one of the last family members, Adam Zrinski (Zrínyi Ádám, 1662–1691). The bust is identical to the nobleman’s portrait kept at the Čakovec Franciscan Monastery, which dates from the early 18th century (the original was destroyed by fire in 1699). Several researchers have identified one of the Čakovec sculptures as a portrait of Fran Krsto Frankopan II (Frangepán Ferenc Kristóf; 1643–1671) (Fig. 1), the brother-in-law of Petar Zrinski IV. Not having found the exact engraving or painting that could have served as a model, they have based their claim on physiognomic similarities between Frankopan’s known contemporary portraits (Fig. 2) and the Čakovec bust. The accuracy of this identification is disputed further in the text.
There remain several busts whose identity has only been proposed but not confirmed, and those that have not been identified at all. The collection holds three sculptures that have been identified as possible portraits of Habsburg rulers: that of Ferdinand II (1578–1637) (Fig. 4), Ferdinand IV (1633–1654) (Fig. 6), and Leopold I (1640–1705). The identity of the first two is discussed further in the text. Among the unidentified portraits are: the busts of two bearded men with long hair, one of whom is wearing a richly decorated cloak (Fig. 8), and the other is holding a book with a seal (Fig. 10); a woman’s torso (Fig. 13); a torso of a Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece (Fig. 15); and a bust of a Hungarian nobleman, which has been shattered into several fragments.

Possible date of origin and commissioner

The pivotal point of the issue of the collection’s interpretation, which is also the one researchers most strongly disagree on, is the date of its origin. So far, researchers have formed two opposing opinions: some believe the collection was commissioned by the Zrinski family during the second half of the 17th century, while others claim it was commissioned by the Festetics family in the first half of the 19th century. The fact that many busts in the collection were modelled on the engravings executed by Elias Widemann made the first researchers believe the collection was created around the middle of the 17th century. Using secondary historical sources and information, Marijana Schneider first dated the collection between 1660 and 1670. In determining the terminus post quem, she used the travel writings of a 17th-century Dutch philologist and explorer, Jacob Tollius (1633–1696), who visited Nikola Zrinski VII at his palace in Čakovec in 1660. As Tollius never mentioned the stone busts in his description of the Čakovec palace, Schneider concluded that the sculptures must have been executed after Tollius’s visit. Furthermore, she determined the year when the Zrinski Frankopan conspiracy (in Hungary also known as the Wesselényi conspiracy) was uncovered (1670) as the terminus ante quem since its unveiling stigmatised the name of the Zrinski family and brought about the end of its power and influence. If the collection was created sometime during the seventh decade of the 17th century, it could have been commissioned by either Nikola VII or Petar Zrinski IV, who both resided at the Čakovec Old Castle Palace at that time. As Nikola ardently collected books, coins, medals, engravings and paintings, the commissioning of a bust gallery of illustrious men—who were in great part his contemporaries—would easily fit his art collector’s profile.

The main problem with the thesis that the collection was created sometime in the 17th century is that it lacks support in primary sources and archival documentation. The first documents that record the busts’ existence—or at least the ones that have been found so far—are plans for reconstructing the main and inner-courtyard façades of the Čakovec Old Castle Palace. The plans were commissioned in the early 1820s by László Festetics (Ladislav Feštetić; 1786–1846), the then owner of the Čakovec estate, as a part of his project to renovate the Old Castle complex. Executed by Carl Reiche, the plans show the busts placed on the façades (mainly) within niches between the first- and second-floor windows (Fig. 17 and 18). Géza Galavics first used these plans to argue that the sculptures were created in the first quarter of the 19th century, claiming the commission fitted László Festetics’ role as the reviver and promoter of the Zrinski cult. According to Galavics, Festetics ordered the busts at the initial stage of his plan to renovate and redecorate the Old Castle Palace, which he ultimately had to abandon due to financial problems.
Original placement and possible creator

Another dilemma concerning the collection's interpretation is the question of its original placement. So far researchers have specified two possible options: first, that the busts originally adorned the façade of the Čakovec Old Castle Palace, and second, that they were placed in the Zverinjak Park adjoining the palace. The aforementioned plans of the palace's main and courtyard façades go in favour of the thesis that the sculptures were originally meant to serve as architectural decoration. The fact that the busts' back sides have been left unfinished strengthens this thesis. Additionally, researchers who believe the collection was made during the 17th century use a comparative example of busts adorning the main façade of the Esterházy family residence in Eisenstadt (Croatian: Željezno, Hungarian: Kismarton) to further support their argumentation. Commissioned by Pál Esterházy I (1653–1713) and executed by a local master Hans Matthias Mayr in 1667, the Eisenstadt sculptures represent the Esterházy family's gallery of ancestors, which contains the commissioner's portraits and that of his father alongside pseudo-portraits of Hungarian forefathers. However, in literary descriptions and visual images of the Čakovec Old Castle Palace dating from the 17th to the 19th century, there is no proof the façade was ever decorated with any type of sculpture.

On the other hand, according to a newspaper article from the 1930s, the Čakovec busts were originally placed in a park called Zverinjak (Croatian: zvijer, 'beast'), which adjoined the palace. Since Zverinjak was primarily used as hunting grounds, it is possible the author of the article confused it with Nikola Zrinski VII's cultivated garden, in literature sometimes referred to by its Italian variant, Giardino. Similar to Zverinjak, Giardino was also located near the Old Castle Palace, and it was supposedly adorned with fountains and sculptures. However, without any concrete proof either in the shape of archival documents, visual material or detailed description, it is difficult to fully accept or discard this thesis.

Although no account recording the name of the busts' sculptor has been found so far, several researchers have made some assumptions concerning his possible origin. Some have attributed the collection to a sculptor from Burgenland (Croatian: Gradišče, Hungarian: Órıvidék or Várvidek) due to its connection with the busts from Eisenstadt, whereas others have attributed it to a sculptor from Styria (Croatian: Štajerska, Hungarian: Sztejerszág) because of the region's historical and artistic connections with continental Croatia.

Tradition: Secular portrait series in the decoration of castles in the Kingdom of Croatia and Hungary (17th and 18th Centuries)

In early modern interior and exterior decoration of castles in the Kingdom of Croatia and Hungary, there were several types of portrait collections representing secular personages. These types often intermixed, and although only a few types were parallel in time, we can hardly find two that are identical. Portraits usually depicted kings of the Kingdom of Croatia and Hungary, Roman and (almost exclusively) Habsburg Holy Roman Emperors, military leaders, Hunnic and Hungarian chieftains (from the 9th and 10th centuries), illustrious men of the world (Europe and the ancient Near East) and Hungarian history, and members of Croatian and Hungarian noble families. Collections that contained Hungarian royal portraits seldom included other types of portraits. In contrast, portraits of Hunnic and Hungarian military leaders, illustrious men and members of noble families often appeared in the same collections.

Series decorating buildings' interiors and exteriors have deliberately not been discussed separately, because they derive from the same conceptual and pictorial tradition. The discussion has been focused on portraits executed in sculpture, wall painting and easel painting. In the last group, the main focus was on portrait galleries that had been displayed at family castles and had consisted of a substantial number of portraits. The paper does not discuss series that were executed in the (Grand) Principality of Transylvania (1571–1867).

Portrait galleries that satisfy the abovementioned criteria can be roughly divided into the following groups:

- Series that represent illustrious personages from ancient and medieval times are successors of Italian uomini famosi series. Two series of this kind were made in the Kingdom of Hungary. One of them is the series of full-body portraits of illustrious men (mostly military leaders) and kings from ancient and medieval history that was executed in the sgraffito technique on the façade of Fričovce Castle (today in Slovakia, Hungarian: Frics). The other decorates the walls of Bytča Castle's arcaded courtyard (today in Slovakia, Hungarian: Nagybícske), and it comprises full-body portraits of leaders and legendary personages from ancient Greece, Rome and Asia, medieval and early modern military commanders and rulers, Hungarian kings, and members of Hungarian noble families.

- By commissioning series of imperial portraits, noble families pledged their loyalty to their elected (from 1687 hereditary) monarchs, members of the House of Habsburg. The bust series at Červený Kameň (today in Slovakia, Hungarian: Vöröskő), the murals at Forchtenstein (today in Austria, Hungarian: Fraknó), as well as the panel paintings at Pottendorf (today in Austria) and Zvolen (today in Slovakia, Hungarian: Zólyom) and Pécel all represented Habsburg monarchs—who were also kings of the Kingdom of Croatia and Hungary—as the successors of Roman and Holy Roman Emperors.

- Collections containing portraits of monarchs of the Kingdom of Hungary (from 1102 also of Croatia) were the reflections of the Hungarian (Latin: hungarus) historical sense: royal portraits reminded the commissioners and spectators about the national constitution(alism), which originated in the Middle Ages, and the Doctrine of the Holy Crown. Such series could be found at the castles Halič (today in Slovakia, Hungarian: Gács), Eisenstadt, Hlohovec (today in Slovakia, Hungarian: Galgóc), Gödöllő, Humenné (today in Slovakia, Hungarian: Homonna), and Šestine.

- Series consisting of pseudo-portraits of Hunnic and Hungarian military leaders and chieftains were often
used by members of particular noble families as proof of their family's ancient origin, functioning almost as their ancestral galleries. Tracing back their family's privileges deep into the past and linking them with rulers who lived in the Middle Ages, noblemen often “found” their ancestors among the—legendary or real—Hungarian tribal chieftains. For example, the aforementioned collection of sixteen stone busts placed on the façade of Eisenstadt Castle was meant to show that the members of the Esterházy family could trace their roots to the Hunnic leader Örs. Apart from the Hunnic and Hungarian leaders, the panel painting collection at Güssing Castle (today in Austria, Hungarian: Németújvár) included portraits of János Hunyadi (Hungarian: Hunyadi Mátyás; 1443–1490) as well as Pál Kinizsi (c. 1431–1494), a general in King Matthias’s army, with which its commissioner—most probably Kristóf Batthyány (1637–1685)—wanted to evoke the glorious time of the Hunyadi family. There are two collections that are unique in comparison to other series found in the territory of the Kingdom of Croatia and Hungary. The first one is the generals’ portrait gallery that used to decorate the hall of Sárvár Castle. Commissioned by Ferenc Nádasdy III (1623–1671) in the middle of the 17th century, the collection consisted of twenty canvases portraying (mostly) contemporary generals and two cardinals. The second one is the palatines’ gallery at Felsőhídvég (today: Kölesd, Hungary). Ignác Hiemer, deputy-lieutenant of Fejér County, decorated the dining room of his castle with portraits of palatines of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1780s. The palatines are portrayed in medallions that run in four rows across the walls, but very few of them are still visible due to the bad state of the building.

Engraved portrait series as models for the decoration of castles in the Kingdom of Hungary: Mausoleum and Corpus Juris Hungarici – new identification of the Čakovec busts

Mausoleum

Between 1615 and 1632 Lőrinc Ferenczffy (1577–1640), secretary of the Hungarian Court Chancellery, commissioned an engraved portrait series of Hunnic and Hungarian military leaders and kings, which was executed by Aegidius Sadeler (c. 1407–1456) and Matthias Corvinus (Croatian: Matija Korvin; Hungarian: Hunyadi Mátyás; 1443–1490) as well as Pál Kinizsi (c. 1431–1494), a general in King Matthias’s army, with which its commissioner—most probably Kristóf Batthyány (1637–1685)—wanted to evoke the glorious time of the Hunyadi family.

Corpus Juris Hungarici

Almost a century after the publication of Mausoleum, another printed series portraying the kings of the Kingdom of Hungary was published in Trnava (today in Slovakia; Hungarian: Nagyszombat) in 1751. The engravings were used as accompanying illustrations in the Corpus Juris Hungarici, a two-volume book of Hungarian laws consisting of the Tripartitum—a summary of the common law of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary completed by István Werbőczy (Stjepan Verboczy; c. 1458–1541)—and decrees issued by various kings. In the volumes, half-length portraits of Werbőczy and twenty-three law-making monarchs are shown within cartouches, which are flanked by scenes from their reign. The first royal portrait in the books is that of Stephen I (Croatian: Stjepan I; Hungarian: I. István; c. 975–1038) (Fig. 9) and the last one is a portrait of Maria Theresa (1717–1780). The engravings were executed by a Viennese artist, Franz Leopold Schmittner (Schmitner; 1703–1761), who relied heavily on Mausoleum in modelling the faces and hairstyles of his monarchs. The only exception is the portrait of Louis I (Croatian: Ludovik I. Veliki; Hungarian: I. Nagy Lajos; 1326–1382) (Fig. 3), which is rather different to the one in Mausoleum.

The engravings from Corpus Juris were often used as models for various collections containing portraits of Hungarian monarchs. From the aforementioned series, three of them belong to this group: the surviving portraits from the royal pavilion at Gödöllő Castle, the grisaille busts in the king’s hall at Humenné Castle, and the Kulmer family easel paintings from Šestine Castle. As will be discussed further in the text, it seems that to these examples we can also add the Čakovec bust collection.

Corpus Juris portraits can be used to confirm and newly establish the identity of seven busts from the Čakovec museum. Two of them have already been mentioned as possible imperial Habsburg portraits. One is the bust of Emperor Ferdinand II (Fig. 4), which shares great similarities with the Emperor’s portrait in Corpus Juris (Fig. 5) in both physiognomy (elongated face, high forehead, receding hairline) and garment (drapery strewn over the shoulders, starched ruff). The other is the bust that had been previously identified as a possible portrait of Emperor Ferdinand IV (Fig. 6). This sculpture most probably represents King Matthias Corvinus as it shares a lot of similarities with the King’s portrait from Corpus Juris (Fig. 7) (protruding chin, high cheekbones, curly locks of hair, high collar worn below the armour). Even the decorative pattern on the bust’s breastplate corresponds to the one on Matthias’s portrait. The only difference lies in the pose (in the engraving Matthias is shown in half-profile with his body twisted in the other direction, whereas the bust is sculpted in a strict frontal posture) and the motif of the

The book and its engravings had great success in the early modern period. The portraits of kings and military leaders from Mausoleum were one of the most important models for various portrait series decorating the walls of noblemen’s castles, such as the ones at Bytča and Eisenstadt (wall paintings) or at Hlohovec and Güssing (panel paintings).
4. Bust of King Ferdinand II, 1820s (?), sandstone, Čakovec, Museum of Međimurje
Poprsje kralja Ferdinanda II., 1820-e (?), pješčenjak, Čakovec, Muzej Međimurja

5. Franz Leopold Schmittner, Portrait of King Ferdinand II, “Corpus Juris Hungarici”, Trnava, 1751

6. Bust of King Matthias Corvinus (formerly identified as Ferdinand IV), 1820s (?), sandstone, Čakovec, Museum of Međimurje
Poprsje kralja Matije Korvina (prethodno identificirano kao portret Ferdinanda IV.), 1820-e (?), pješčenjak, Čakovec, Muzej Međimurja

7. Franz Leopold Schmittner, Portrait of King Matthias Corvinus, “Corpus Juris Hungarici”, Trnava, 1751
There is another bust whose formerly proposed identity can be disputed on the basis of a comparison with the engravings from Corpus Juris. The bust in question is the one that has so far been identified as the portrait of Fran Krsto Frankopan (Fig. 1). It is highly likely that the sculpture actually represents King Louis I since it is very similar to Louis’s portrait in Corpus Juris (Fig. 3), not only in physiognomy—as is the case with Fran Krsto Frankopan (Fig. 2)—but also in garment. In both the engraving and the sculpture, the subject is clad in armour with a fur cloak draped around his shoulders held together with a clasp. It is quite interesting that the subject is represented in armour as this practice was most often used by members of ruling families, who wanted to evoke Roman imperial portraits in this fashion. Consequently, it seems more likely that a king, such as Louis I, would be portrayed in armour rather than a member of nobility, i.e. Fran Krsto Frankopan, who was actually less influential than other distinguished men represented in the collection, such as Nikola and Petar Zrinski, György Lippay or Pál Pálffy, who are all portrayed wearing dolmans and pelisses.

There remain four busts in the collection that have not been identified so far. The bust of a bearded man with long hair draped in a richly ornamented cloak (Fig. 8) is actually a portrait of King Stephen I, which is identical to the saint’s portrait in Corpus Juris (Fig. 9). The sculptor followed the engraving to such an extent that he even copied the same
pattern on the cloak and the arrangement of decorative gems on its straps. The bust of a man holding a book with a seal (Fig. 10) represents a portrait of King Andrew II (Croatian: Andrija II.; Hungarian: II. András; c. 1177–1235). Its appearance corresponds to the engraved portrait in Corpus Juris (Fig. 11): both men are depicted with long hair, a moustache and a beard; they have a protruding chin; they are dressed in a buttoned-up dolman; and they wear a chain necklace with a pendant around their necks. However, there are a few differences, namely their pose and the motifs of a book and a crown. In the engraving, the king is shown in profile, whereas the bust is in full en face position. The sculpture is missing a crown, but it has an addition of a book with a seal. It is possible that the book represents the Golden Bull (1222) Andrew II was forced to issue, which became one of the fundamental Hungarian laws. The book motif does appear in another portrait of King Andrew II (Fig. 12). The portrait in question is a drawing from the Festetics family collection that used to be stored at their library in Keszthely. But even in this portrait Andrew II is depicted with a crown, which poses the question of why none of the kings in the Čakovec collection (Andrew II, Louis I and Matthias Corvinus) have been sculpted wearing a crown, even though the crowns are present in the engravings the busts have been modelled upon. If we accept the presumption that the busts were meant to be installed on the Čakovec Palace façade walls, it is possible the sculptures were made without the crowns so that all of the busts would be equal in size and thus more easily fitted into the niches.

11. Franz Leopold Schmittner, Portrait of King Andrew II, "Corpus Juris Hungarici", Trnava, 1751
Franz Leopold Schmittner, Portret kralja Andrije II., "Corpus Juris Hungarici", Trnava, 1751.

12. Portrait of King Andrew II, 1810s, pencil and ink, Budapest, National Széchényi Library
Portret kralja Andrije II., 1810-e, olovka i pero, Budimpešta, Nacionalna knjižnica Széchényi

13. Torso of Queen Maria, 1820s (?), sandstone, Čakovec, Museum of Međimurje
Torzo kraljice Marije, 1820-e (?), pješčenjak, Čakovec, Muzej Međimurje
It is possible it represented King Ferdinand I (1503–1564) as the type of armour and Order’s chain correspond to the ones on Ferdinand’s portrait in *Corpus Juris* (Fig. 16).

As was discussed above, Schmittner’s engravings from *Corpus Juris* were used as a model for almost one fourth of the Čakovec bust collection (at least seven out of possible twenty-five sculptures).71 This fact obliges us to consider a new *terminus post quem* of its commission, and that is the year when *Corpus Juris* with Schmittner’s engravings was first published—1751. However, the style of the sculptures does not quite coincide with the vivacity and impetuosity of the late Baroque and Rococo art of that period. The busts’ quiescent yet very detailed form is more characteristic of works created at the beginning of the 19th century. This timeframe coincides with the already mentioned plans of the Festetics family to renovate the Old Castle Palace, to which we will direct our attention next.

**The Festetics family in Čakovec**

In 1791, György Festetics (Juraj Feštetić; 1755–1819) purchased the Čakovec estate from the Althanns, who held it in their possession for more than 70 years (1720–1791).72 Not long after the acquisition, Festetics hired one of his architects, József Lippay, to survey the Old Castle Palace in 1796/97. Lippay made several plans (today stored at the...
Alteration plans for the palace façades (1822)

After György’s death, his son László (Ladislav Feštetić; 1785–1846) inherited all the family estates, including Čakovec Old Castle. At the beginning of the 1820s, he planned to transform the palace façades. In the Festetics family archives, nine survey drawings have been preserved that testify to his endeavour. Four plans were signed by János Szajdensvartz and five by Carl Reiche.74 Reiche made an additional eleven plans for the neo-gothic and neo-classical transformation of the main and inner-courtyard façades.75 It is ascertainable from the plans that the architect (and the commissioner) did not plan to transform the building’s structure, but to simply give it a new look using squaring as well as sculptural and stucco decoration. Reiche’s neo-gothic and neo-classical plans differ due to the distinct intended styles, but they do have one thing in common: in every drawing, there is a niche between the first- and second-floor windows with a bust inside (Fig. 17). The busts are also shown in one of Reiche’s survey drawings of the courtyard façade with a slight difference: the busts are placed on consoles between the first-floor windows (Fig. 18).76 Reiche’s plans show how many sculptures were needed for the intended renovation: fifteen for the main façade and
twenty-two for the courtyard facades (ten for the southern and northern walls, and twelve for the eastern and western walls). This means that thirty-seven busts should have been commissioned altogether. However, there is a possibility that there were plans to adorn the remaining outer façades with busts as well, which would bring one to a grand total of sixty-nine sculptures (the remaining outer façades have nine, thirteen and ten window axes). Marijana Schneider published a record of a meeting held at the Society for Yugoslavian History and Antiquities (“Društvo za jugoslavensku povjestnicu i starine”) in 1852, according to which there were eighty-five stone busts stored away at Čakovec Old Castle. Without any concrete evidence, it is difficult to prove that there were originally so many sculptures. However, if this is true, one cannot but wonder what happened to the remaining busts.

Maintaining the memory of national history in the art patronage of László Festetics

László Festetics was the only son of György Festetics, one of the most prominent figures of the Hungarian Enlightenment and the founder of Georgicon (1797), the oldest regular institution of agricultural higher education in Europe. László was educated by the writers and scholars József Péteri Takáts (1767–1821) and István Kultsár (1760–1828). His father and preceptors believed it was important for him to know the Hungarian language perfectly as well as the history and contemporary situation in the country. From 1799 to 1803, László studied law and philosophy at the University of Pest (today Budapest). In 1811 he married Princess Josephine von Hohenzollern-Hechingen (1791–1856), with whom he lived in Vienna. Maintaining an aristocratic lifestyle in the imperial city cost huge amounts of money—even greater than one of the wealthiest families in Hungary, the Festetics, could afford.79 After the death of his father, László spent even more money. He had ambitious plans for renovating family residences. As he was not able to estimate the financial consequences of his unlimited spending (the same was true of his art patronage), by the 1820s he had already gotten into debt, and his properties were sequestrated in 1828.79

László Festetics played an important role in the revival of the cult of the Zrinski family, particularly one of its members, Nikola Zrinski IV (Zrínyi IV. Miklós; 1508–1566), the “hero of Szigetvár.” As a child, during one of his trips with his tutor Takáts (1797), László saw the fresco painted across the dome of the parish church in Szigetvár, which shows the last heroic charge of Szigetvár’s defenders from the fort and the death of Nikola Zrinski.80 Later, as the owner of former Zrinski estates, László felt responsible for revitalising the cult of his great “predecessor”, and he wanted to achieve this by commissioning works of art that depicted Nikola’s life. He commissioned the Viennese painter Johann Peter Krafft (1780–1856) to paint a portrait of the hero of Szigetvár (1820), after which Carl Heinrich Rahl (1779–1843) made an engraving.81 László also wanted to build a memorial fountain in Zrinski’s honour, which would be erected in the English landscape garden of the Keszthely castle. The Austrian sculptor Josef Klieber (1773–1850) sent plans for the fountain to László in 1820 and 1821,82 but the plan was abandoned.

In his (historical) art patronage, László did not only order works connected with the Zrinski family. He also commissioned full-body statues of two medieval Hungarian kings, King Stephen I (Fig. 19) and Ladislaus I (Croatian: Ladislav I.; Hungarian: I. László), which stand in front of the Saint Mary Magdalene Church in Simaság. The sculptures were executed in 1829 by a Viennese sculptor, Anton Dietrich (1799–1872), a pupil of Josef Klieber.83 The style of the sculptures is very similar to that of the Čakovec busts: their form is rather closed, the kings stand in strict frontal stature, the drapery is modelled flatly, and clothing and attributes are executed with extreme detail. Even the locks of hair and eyes are carved in a similar fashion. The similarity in form between Dietrich’s sculptures and the Čakovec busts does not mean that one should immediately identify Dietrich as a possible creator of the Čakovec collection, but it certainly reinforces the notion that both groups were made around the same time.

Apart from the planned Čakovec Old Castle restoration, the revival of the Zrinski cult and the Simaság sculptures, there is one more link connecting the Festetics family with the Čakovec collection, and that is the aforementioned portraits drawn in pencil and ink. The drawings were originally kept at the Festetics family library in Keszthely (today Helikon Könyvtár), but they were moved to the National Széchényi Library in Budapest (Országos Széchényi Könyvtár) after the Second

19. Anton Dietrich, King Stephen I, 1829, Simaság, Saint Mary Magdalene Church
Anton Dietrich, Kralj Stjepan I., 1829., Simaság, crkva svete Marije Magdalene
The portraits of István Werbóczy and twenty-two monarchs (from Stephen I to Charles III) were modelled on Schmittner’s engravings from Corpus Juris Hungarici. As Schmittner’s engravings were first published in 1751, the theory that the busts were commissioned in the 1820s by László Festetics as a part of his project to renovate Čakovec Old Castle seems more probable. In his art patronage, Festetics wanted to maintain the memory of national history, and a collection containing portraits of historical figures such as the one in Čakovec would easily fit his art collector’s profile. Festetics was known for his attempt at reviving the history of the Zrinski family, and what better way to do it than by ordering portraits of some of its last members and their contemporaries, who belonged to the Croatian and Hungarian elite of the 17th century, and use them to decorate the façade of one of the former Zrinski family residences? At the same time, by incorporating the portraits of Croatian and Hungarian kings into the collection, he could reinforce the notion of national identity and legitimacy of the depicted monarchs’ rule. Such an interpretation would place the Čakovec stone bust collection at the end of the pictorial tradition (and at the beginning of the early nationalist tradition) of using secular portrait series in the residential decoration of the nobility, presented earlier in the paper.

World War. The series contains ninety-three half-length portraits of kings of the Kingdom of Hungary and early modern dignitaries. The portraits of István Werbóczy and twenty-two monarchs (from Stephen I to Charles III) were modelled on Schmittner’s engravings from Corpus Juris (Fig. 13), whereas the portraits of sixty-eight dignitaries were modelled on Widemann’s work. It is not known when the drawings were executed, but an estimate can be made. The last royal portrait is that of Francis I, who is shown without a peruke. This type of portrait spread in the 1810s, which places the drawings around that period. Taking this into consideration, the series was most probably commissioned by either György or László Festetics.

To recapitulate, apart from the portraits of seventeenth-century collections (Fig. 10 and 12), whereas the book is not present the fact that King Andrew II is portrayed with a book in both the Festetics drawings and the Čakovec busts is reinforced by Widemann and Schmittner’s work. It is not known when the drawings were executed, but an estimate can be made. The last royal portrait is that of Francis I, who is shown without a peruke. This type of portrait spread in the 1810s, which places the drawings around that period. Taking this into consideration, the series was most probably commissioned by either György or László Festetics.

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Lónyay, sandstone, 80 × 88 × 28 cm, MMČ 6009. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 32–33.

The 1930s photographs documenting the bust’s appearance are kept at the Museum of Međimurje’s archive and Schneider’s Photo Archive of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Zagreb, Fototeka Strossmayerove galerije starih majstora Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, no. 2054).

MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 38.

Sandstone, 80 × 74 × 28 cm, MMČ 6014. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 43–45.

Sandstone, 75 × 78 × 33 cm, MMČ 6013. – LIDIJA PLAVEC BUTKOVIĆ (note 6), 7; MARIJANA SCHNEIDER (note 6), 256; MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 40–42.

Bust of Ferdinand II, sandstone, 72 × 80 × 30 cm, MMČ 6003. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 46–47, 50; Bust of King Matthias Corvinus (formerly identified as Ferdinand IV), sandstone, 78 × 80 × 35 cm, MMČ 6004. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 49–50; Bust of Leopold I, sandstone, 81 × 79 × 34 cm, MMČ 6018. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 48, 50–51.

Bust of King Stephen I (formerly unidentified), sandstone, 82 × 66 × 30 cm, MMČ 6008. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 52–53; Bust of King Andrew II (formerly unidentified), sandstone, 78 × 77 × 33 cm, MMČ 6010. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 54–55; Torso of Queen Maria (formerly unidentified), sandstone, 49 × 67 × 37 cm, MMČ 6016. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 56; Torso of King Ferdinand I (?), sandstone, 25 × 52 × 15 cm, MMČ 5998. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 56. Only the front part of the torso has been preserved, which shows parts of armour and the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece; Bust of unidentified Hungarian nobleman, sandstone, first fragment: 15 × 70 × 40 cm, MMČ 6017; second fragment: 30 × 29 × 26 cm, MMČ 6019. – MAJA ŽVORC (note 5), 56.


JOSO (?), Hoće li grad Zrinskih u Čakovcu biti sravnjen sa zemljom, in: Novosti, 18 November 1932, 7; ANĐELA HORVAT (note 17), 39–41.


MARIJANA SCHNEIDER (note 6), 257.

41 The doctrine was first articulated by István Werbőczy and was later elaborated by Péter Révay, a Crown Guard, in his works Commentarius De Sacra Regni Hungariae Corona (Augsburg, 1613) and De monarchia et Sacra Corona Regni Hungariae (Frankfurt, 1659). At the core of this doctrine was the notion that the crown itself had personhood, and that as a legal entity it was equal to the state of Hungary. It was superior to the ruling monarch, who ruled “in the name of the crown.”

42 The fresco portraits of Hungarian kings at Halíč Castle have been heavily damaged, and today only a few of them can be identified with the help of accompanying inscriptions. It is believed the frescoes were made in the first half of the 17th century when the castle was in the possession of Zsigmond Forgách, the palatine of the Kingdom of Hungary, and his son Ádám. – GÉZA GALAVISCS, Hagymány és aktualitás a magyarországi barokk művészetben – XVII. század, (A barokk képzőművészeti tematika helyi elemei), in: Magyarországi reneszánsz és barokk. Művészettörténeti tanulmányok, (ed.) Géza Galavis, Budapest, 1975, 231–277, 239–240; GYÖRGY RÓZSA (note 35, 1973), Appendix 3, footnote 25 (156).

43 Between 1670 and 1690, Pál Esterházy hired the Northern Italian painter Carpoforo Tencalla and his workshop to paint the walls of his Eisenstadt Castle great hall with forty grisaille portraits of Hunnic and Hungarian military leaders and kings. The portraits were executed after the engravings of the Mausoleum (with some alterations). – GÉZA GALAVISCS, Hol keressük a Hesperidák kertjének földi mását? Esterházy Pál és a festő Carpoforo Tencalla „vítája” és a folytatás a kismartonihazi Esterházy-rezidencia disztermének menyezetképének (1674), in: Művészet és mesterség, Tiszteleg kötet R. Várkonyi Agnes emlékére, (eds.) Ildikó Horn et al., Budapest, 2016, 279–362, 349–354.

44 The walls of the Hlohovec Castle guest hall were adorned with a series of panel paintings that depicted Hunnic and Hungarian military leaders, chieftains and kings of the Kingdom of Hungary. The commissioner could have been either György Erdödy or his son János. – ORSOLYÁ BUBRYÁK, Családtörténet és reprezentáció. A galóci Erdödy-várkastély gyöjtéményei, Budapest, 2013, 242–244, pictures 126a–126b and plate XVIII.

45 Situated in the garden of Gödöllő Castle, the interior of the so-called royal pavilion was once decorated with fifty-four oil portraits of kings of the Kingdom of Hungary. The paintings were commissioned by Antal Grassalkovich in the 1760s, and only three pieces of the original Baroque collection have been preserved. – ÁRPÁD MIKÓ and KATALIN SINKÓ (note 35), 394, V1–28.

46 Commissioned by István Csáky sometime between 1770 and 1790, grisaille portraits of Hungarian monarchs decorated the walls of the so-called King’s Hall. The painter was presumably Sebastian Hirschlinger. – ANNA PETROVÁ-PLESKOTOVÁ, Malírskvo 18. storočia na Slovensku, Bratislava, 1983, 85; ŠILVENZET TÉRDIK, Görögkatolikus püspöki központok Magyarországon a 18. században. Művész és reprezentáció, Nyíregyháza, 2014, 106, 126.

47 The collection of forty-six easel portraits was created during the 1780s, most probably in Hungary, and was later acquired by the Kuliner family through their marriage with the Zichy or the

Based on the earliest records of the Magyars (Hungarians) from Byzantium, medieval and early modern scholars considered Magyars to be the descendants of ancient Scythians and Huns. This historiographical tradition disappeared from mainstream history after the similarities between the Hungarian and Uralic languages were noted in the late 18th century.


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