

Ondrej Slanina

Charles University in Prague

Czech Suns: Baroque Monstrances in Loreto Prague

My dissertation *Czech Suns: Baroque Monstrances in Loreto Prague* connects my favourite periods of arts&crafts - Arts at the court of Emperor Rudolf II. and Baroque. I am writing about types and iconography of seven extraordinary monstrances in Loreto in Prague and social history, where I'm trying to describe motivation of donation from Czech nobility, but also from ordinary people.

Many pieces on monstrances were crafted in the period of reign Emperor Rudolf II. These pieces of jewellery have a votive character, which means, that were freely donated to treasury by ordinary people and nobility. Monstrances in Loreto Prague are designed in Baroque, but there are many older rings, chains, cameos, emails and jewels from the time of reign of Emperor Rudolf II. used on them. Nobody was trying to analyze them in the past, it was always written, there are some older jewels.

My approach to topic of my dissertation is analyzing style of Prague monstrances in Loreto, materials and iconography and comparing with monstrances in Central Europe. I'm using modern method of analyzing according to last trends by experts. I also take advantage from my own long research of materials, because I used to work in many antique shops, auction houses and small goldsmith's manufacture. I also wrote a book about exotic materials in history of arts&crafts.

During my research I cooperate with actual goldsmithes, restorers, museum researchers and archaeologists, because many of comparing jewellery were lost during time or spread around the world, but recently there were discovered undescribed jewells in tombs of Czech nobility (tombs of important and rich families Lobkowitz in South Moravia, Zejdlíc from Schönfeld in Czech-Moravian Highland) and also in Renaissance house during construction working from period of time around 1600 in South Bohemia, which are completely unknown to international researchers, but also to many art historians in Czech republic.

My dissertation is about interesting phenomenons - donation and votive functions of Prague Loreto and history of collecting in this famous treasury, which is along to Treasury in St. Veits Dome the second most important treasury in the whole Czech republic. There is a big problem in scientific literature in my country like in the whole Eastern Europe. Older generation of art historians had to write texts according to communist ideology, where are three main nonsenses, which are still repeated in my country, sometimes also in newer texts.

1) People had to give their property to Loreto, because they had to satisfied greedy Church. 2) Most of diamonds and precious jewells were given to Loreto by religious fanatics women from Czech nobility. About religiously fanatics women was very strong stream also in Czechoslovak communist cinematography. 3) After 1948, when Czechoslovakia was driven by communist party and orders from Moscow, tradition of arts & crafts manufactures was violenty stopped. Masters of arts & crafts were enterpreuners, which was prohibited by law.

In my possible presentation I will present my approach to the topic, how I analyze older jewels at monstrances, which are part of the artefact, the shape of types of jewellery in Central Europe around 1600. I will also speak about problems with museums in the Czech republic according to communist regime, about fake artefacts in collections, about activities in the fields of arts done by secret police and also about communication with museums and archives in Czech republic.