

Quotidian Life of Aristocracy in the First Czechoslovak Republic. The Case of the House of Collalto e San Salvatore

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This text deals with the quotidian life of the Czechoslovakia-based members of the House of Collalto e San Salvatore in 1918–1938. After a general introduction summing up the political and family situation of the House, the attention is paid to the means of transport and travelling, places of residence, children upbringing and languages. Furthermore, the cultural life of the House is addressed: their reading habits, writing activities, their pets and jobs. The social life of the House is brought in focus too, which means the visitors of the aristocratic houses living in the neighbourhood and the relatives are paid attention to. Last but not least, the text deals with the documented diseases that occurred at the House in the followed period and with the approach of the Collaltos to the body functions. [Collalto; Czechoslovakia; Quotidian Life; Aristocracy of the 20th Century]

Introduction

Even though the current historiography does not concentrate only on the political events anymore, a reader of the works dealing with the life of an aristocrat easily falls for a notion, that the life of a nobleman was a life of a permanent politician, construction benefactor, and art patron. From a political point of view, the creation of Czechoslovakia was definitely a stormy time: for aristocracy it meant the abolition of their titles (in December 1918), the land reform aiming to divide the land among the Czech peasantry (it began in April 1919 by adopting the so-called Expropriation Act No. 215), and the abolition of the fideicommissum institution (in July 1924). The rhetoric of punishing former aristocracy for the White Mountain¹ on the one hand, and its merits for the National

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¹ F. PEROUTKA, *Budování státu II.*, Praha 1991, p. 560.

Revival on the other² placed the Moravian aristocrats – who mainly remained Austrians in many ways and considered themselves the Austrian internationals³ – in a difficult position. But the life of nobility did not mean the all-day dwelling in the realm of deeds that are later going to appear in the pages of the history textbooks. If we believed such a view, the Czechoslovak “aristocracy”⁴ would have no everyday procurement and quotidian problems, its members would have to look marbly inanimate.

Luckily, even if we look away from the turbulent politic, the everyday life of aristocracy in the new Czechoslovak Republic does not look inanimate at all. Under a closer inspection, the keen photographers,⁵ sportsmen, tourists, or car drivers⁶ appear. The everyday point of view, such as the one, which chronicles written by common people offer, or which one can find in preserved memoirs of the literarily active aristocrats,⁷ reveal ordinary people.⁸ And exactly these ordinary people are the target of this text: it wants to be a contribution to the research of what the quotidian life of Moravian aristocracy was like in the times of the First Czechoslovakian Republic.

This subject has already drawn some attention of the historians and it had enough time to bear some significant works. The main focus of the historians is the 19th century,⁹ but some attention has already been paid

2 J. PEKAŘ, *Omyly a nebezpečí pozemkové reformy*, Praha 1923.

3 Which is how Alfons Mensdorff-Pouilly saw himself (R. ŠVARŤÁČKOVÁ-SLABÁKOVÁ, Šlechtic – velkostatkář. Příklad Alfonse Vladimíra Mensdorff-Pouilly, in: L. FASORA (ed.), *Člověk na Moravě v první polovině 20. století*, Brno 2006, p. 16.

4 The fact that the Czechoslovak aristocracy did not “de iure” exist must be mentioned, because their titles were abolished.

5 E.g. J. VACA (ed.), *Fotografové šlechtici v zemích Koruny české*, Praha 2017.

6 E.g. F. WITTLICH (ed.), *Volný čas objektivem šlechty*, Praha 2016.

7 E.g. E. SCHÖNBORN, *Das Leben lässt sich nicht planen: ein Schicksal in bewegter Zeit*, Wolfurt 2016.

8 For example, the life of the House of Dubsky in Lysice chateau is a subject of one chapter in the memoirs of B. Sedlák (B. SEDLÁK, *V závětrí Květnice*, Tišnov 2000), similarly, the life of Emanuel Collalto is completely apolitically described in Flesar Chronicle (V. FLESAR, *Kořeny věku. Kronika rodu Flesarů psaná v letech 1423–1923*, Jimramov 2015).

9 For example, Zdeněk Bezcený was dealt with aristocratic marriages (Z. BEZCENÝ, *Sňatky české šlechty ve druhé polovině 19. století*, in: V. PETRBOK, *Sex a tabu v české kultuře 19. století*, Praha 1999, pp. 88–93). For more about the relationship between a noble man and a prostitute see A. WAGNEROVÁ, *Bol láskey prodejně: ze života Johannese Nádherného a jeho milostných družek*, Praha 2013. There is an interesting example of a monography on the aristocratic photographers (P. SCHEUFLER et al., *Fotografové*

to the interwar period of the 20th century too:¹⁰ so far, the relation of the aristocracy to motorsports, farming in Africa, photography, persisting interest in hunting or marriage strategies have been described.¹¹

For studies of the quotidian life aristocracy led in the First Czechoslovak Republic, the House of Collalto e San Salvatore is noteworthy for more than one reason. Firstly, the members of this House never took part in Czechoslovak policy beyond the necessary point, required by the management of their estates. They did not engage in Union of Czechoslovak Landowners (*Svaz československých velkostatkářů*), their signatures can be found under none of the Czechoslovakia-based aristocracy declarations from the beginning of the Second World War,¹² except for the land reform, it can be hardly said they were noticeably touched by the Czechoslovak political events. Secondly, the House of Collalto was of Italian origin, therefore, after 1918, it had to go through a plenty of difficulties to obtain Italian citizenship: while the Italians saw them as Austrians, the Austrians saw them too Italian. Once they acquired Italian citizenship, there was no rational reason to change it for the Czechoslovak one, the members of the House living in Czechoslovakia after 1924, therefore, did not have Czechoslovak citizenship and did not feel Czechoslovak at all.¹³ The last reason, why the House of Collalto is a very good subject for the everyday-life-of-aristocracy studies is the preserved ego-docu-

šlechtici v zemích Koruny české, Praha 2017). For works which do not deal only with the nobility see for example M. LENDEROVÁ – T. JIRÁNEK – M. MACKOVÁ, *Z dějin české každodennosti: život v 19. století*, Praha 2009.

- ¹⁰ Automobility of the Austrian and later Czechoslovak nobility was elaborated very well by Miloš Hořejš (e.g. M. HOŘEJŠ – J. KRŽÍZEK, *Zámek s vůní benzínu. Automobily a šlechta v českých zemích do roku 1945*, Praha 2015). The Kenyan farm of Adolf Schwarzenberg is a topic of Š. Lellková (Š. LELLKOVÁ, *Das verlorene Paradies. Die Farm des Fürsten Adolf Schwarzenberg in Afrika*, in: *Adel und Wirtschaft: Lebensunterhalt der Adelligen in der Moderne*, München 2009, pp. 235–244). For more general work about Czechoslovak aristocracy see J. DOLEŽAL, *Úvahy o české šlechtě v čase První republiky*, in: *Svědectví*, 20, 77, 1986, pp. 39–62.
- ¹¹ For more about them see E. GLASSHEIM, *Noble nationalists. The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy*, Cambridge, 2005 or also R. ŠVAŘÍČKOVÁ-SLABÁKOVÁ, *Rodinné strategie šlechty: Mensdorffové-Pouilly v 19. století*, Praha 2007.
- ¹² See D. JELÍNKOVÁ HOMOLOVÁ – Z. HAZDRA, *Ve znamení tří deklarácí: šlechta v letech nacistického ohrožení československého státu*, Praha 2014.
- ¹³ The family residence Castello San Salvatore near Treviso had to deal with the economic problems after 1918, the castle had to be bought again and the war damages had to be wiped out at last partially. For more about the House's problems with its Italian estates see P. MORO, *Collalto. Storia di un casato millenario*, Roma 2018, pp. 117–130.

ments,¹⁴ numerous letters written by five children of Manfred Collalto to each other or their parents can be found firstly in the found G 169 in Moravian Land Archive in Brno, but the second important source can be memoirs of Giselda Mensdorff-Pouilly, née Collalto. The three-volume unpublished work named *Erinnerungen*¹⁵ presents – mainly in its first and second parts – a detailed (yet given to its nature definitely stylized) view of the everyday life of a Moravian noble family in the times of the First Czechoslovak Republic and the Protectorate.

This text, therefore, wants to concentrate on the quotidian life of the Collaltos in Czechoslovakia between 1918 to 1938, that is on the Czechoslovakia-based House, not on the Czech one. After a general introduction, which only cursorily sums up the political and family situation of the House previously elaborated in other works,¹⁶ the text is divided into six parts, each dealing with one aspect of everyday life. Issues such as diet, fashion, faith, forms of humour, or sex and erotica stay aside – the preserved materials do not allow them to be reconstructed – but the same holds good of hunting and marital strategies – where, on the contrary, the material is so extensive it would make a separate study of a similar length. It can be rightly argued that the description of the everyday life of the Collaltos could be significantly more extensive, and each of the abovementioned aspects deserves a study of its own. However, the aim of this work is rather a general view of the quotidian life of an aristocratic family within a relatively short period of time, than an exhaustive description of its one aspect. Its aim is the reconstruction

¹⁴ This means the written material of the personal character expressing the psychology and opinions of a concrete individual, through which the author's real-world can be seen (see. W. SCHULZE (ed.), *Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in die Geschichte*, Berlin 1996, p. 7).

¹⁵ G. MENSENDORFF-POUILLY, *Erinnerungen*, Bd. 1–3, San Salvatore, Private Archive of Countess Isabella Collalto-de Croÿ.

¹⁶ An excellent work of Eagle Glassheim about the national feelings of Czechoslovak aristocracy must be mentioned, but also works dealing with the relations of nobility and Czechoslovak Republic (e.g. Z. HAZDRA, *Šlechta ve službách Masarykovy republiky: mezi demokracií a totalitními režimy*, Praha 2015, furthermore: D. JELÍNKOVÁ HO-MOLOVÁ, *Šlechta v proměnách: osudy aristokracie v Československu v letech 1918–1948*, Praha 2017, and last but not least R. ŠVAŘÍČKOVÁ-SLABÁKOVÁ, *Mýtus šlechty u nás a v nás: paměť a šlechta dvacátého století*, Praha 2012. About Czechoslovak history there is a bit controversial work of Marry Heimann: M. HEIMANN, *Czechoslovakia. The State that Failed*, New Heaven 2011. For the subject of aristocracy modernisation in the 19th and 20th century see e. g. H. REIF, *Adel im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, München 1999.

of everyday activities of one – politically mainly passive, but culturally influential – aristocratic family living in Czechoslovakia in the interwar period, with the help of the abovementioned documents. Last but not least it wants to be a contribution to the internationally led research of the House of Collalto.¹⁷

The House of Collalto and Czechoslovakia

The House of Collalto e San Salvatore belonged to the ancient Lombardian noble Houses, its properties were located near Treviso in the vicinity of Venezia, but the Moravian fideicommissum was founded only by Rambaldo XIII., who – in 1622 – purchased manor Brtnice (*Pirnitz*) from Ferdinand II. and later enlarged it by buying manors Černá (*Tscherna*) and Německý Rudolec (*Deutsch Rudoletz*). The other members of the House extended the fideicommissum by buying manors Uherčice (*Ungarschitz*), Písečné (*Piesling*) and alodial Okříšky (*Okrisko*) a Pokojovice (*Pokojovitz*). In 1822, Francis I. promoted the Moravian property holders (and only them) to the status of Princes with the predicate *Durchlaucht*. The newly established Czechoslovak Republic found Prince Emanuel Josef Anton in the position of the *chef de la famille*. This man – in 1918 just 64 years old – could be safely described as a black sheep of the family.¹⁸ His father Eduard, the third Prince Collalto, died when Emanuel was only 8 years old, Eduard's brother Alfons was appointed a guardian, but it was Emanuel's mother Caroline née Apponyi who had the most important influence on her son's upbringing. Her cultural habits and great generosity were to become her son's important features. However, in 1879, they did

¹⁷ It can be divided into three main lines. The first one deals with the Italian estates of the House. (P. A. PASSOLUNGI, *I Collalto: linee, documenti, genealogie per una storia del casato*, Villorba 1987 and P. MORO, *Collalto. Storia di un casato millenario*, Roma 2018). The second line pursues the House of Collalto's traces in Austria (e. g. G. BUCHINGER – P. MITCHELL – D. SCHÖN, *Das Palais Collalto. Vom Herzogshof und Judenhaus zum Adelspalast*, in: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege*, 56, 4, 2002 pp. 402–419). The third research line deals with the Moravian estates of the Collaltos (Z. KAZLEPKA, *Ostrov italského vkusu. Umělecký mecenát Antonia Rambalda hraběte z Collalto a San Salvatore mezi Itálií, Vídní a Moravou v první polovině 18. století*, Brno, 2011 and J. KOUMAR, *The Last Princes of the House of Collalto e San Salvatore in Moravia*, in: *Historický časopis*, 67, 4, 2019, pp. 633–657). The main unifying point of all three research lines is the Family Archive of the Collaltos deposited in Brno.

¹⁸ For more of his personality and life see J. KOUMAR, *Emanuel Collalto e San Salvatore. Tři pohledy na život „posledního muže starého režimu v Rakousku“*, in: *Moderní dějiny*, 27, 2, 2019, pp. 31–53.

not prevent Emanuel from falling in love with a simple young Viennese girl Irma Büttner, who he had no hope to marry, because she was strictly refused for her lowborn origin by the rest of the family led by his former guardian. Miss Irma was a former model in Hans Makart's atelier and she was all but noble.¹⁹ Since the Moravian-Collalto-fideicommissum Charter eliminated men in unequal marriages from the holder's position and no agreement with the rest of the family was reached, Emanuel and his Irma did not marry and lived in Switzerland or Paris, only in 1890s they were seen together in Vienna or Uherčice. But due to this inappropriate love, all Emanuel's connections with the rest of the family were interrupted and for his successor's children he was only a legendary figure, they only heard of but never met.²⁰

In the newly established republic, Prince Emanuel claimed Czechoslovak citizenship. He had more than one reason for it: he could speak Czech and all his properties except for his Viennese alodial houses were located in Moravia, he also sympathized with the newly established republic which abolished the aristocratic titles. The republican regime announced fideicommissum abolition since its beginning, which did not matter much to the childless Prince, a stranger to his family and the last member of his line. He bequeathed as much of his alodial possession as he could to his wife, nieces, and nephews – children of his sister Juliette – but the fideicommissum properties had to pass to his cousin's lineage, which he did not have a good relationship with. Furthermore, in the case of fideicommissum abolition, he did not have to be afraid of marrying his Irma anymore. The wedding took place in Vienna on 28th May 1919, after 40-year-long relationship, miss Irma then became Princess Collalto. However, the wedding was preceded by an agreement with the future successor, Emanuel's grand-nephew Manfred.

Manfred, the second son of Emanuel's cousin Octavian, was the heir of Italian properties Collalto and San Salvatore. In his younger years, he was farming on a small manor of Teschendorf in Mecklenburg, later, his father handed him over his manor Staatz in Lower Austria – originally

¹⁹ For more about Irma see J. KOUMAR, *Morganatický sňatek aristokrata druhé poloviny 19. století jako sociální deviace: příklad Emanuela Collalto e San Salvatore*, in: *Historická sociologie*, 2, 2022 (in print).

²⁰ Giselda Mensdorff-Pouilly wrote about him: "We children heard of him as of a legendary figure and we had no idea of his love affair [...]. I saw uncle Emanuel only once through the glass windows on his coffin." MENS DORFF-POUILLY, pp. 95–96.

a fief of Ida Colloredo-Mannsfeld. When his older brother died, Manfred took charge of all Italian properties, and after Emanuel's death on 11th December 1924 the Moravian properties as well. At that moment, the land reform was in course there, the northernmost part of the former fideicommissum with chateaus in Černá and Neměcký Rudolec was expropriated and changed into the residual estates, the former manor Písečné at the Austrian border was to meet the same fate. Out of the total Moravian-estate volume 10,756.92 ha the land reform bit off 3,743 ha, that is a little over one-third.²¹

Unlike Emanuel, Manfred Collalto never became a Czechoslovak citizen. He settled in Uherčice and he counted on his children to take over all the properties. He had two sons, older Octavian (Tadi) was supposed to take over the Moravian estates, younger Rambaldo (Rami) the Italian ones. Manfred married off his three daughters quite well. The youngest Polyxena (Pati) married Alfred Josef Lichtenstein²² (Alfi) and after their wedding they lived mainly in Hungarian Hőgyesz. The middle one Anna (Anni) married Marquis Ferdinand Piatti (Ferd) and lived with him mainly in Lower-Austrian Loosdorf. The oldest daughter Giselda (Didi) married Eduard (Dodo) Count Mensdorff-Pouilly. Compared to the other sisters, her marriage was the least favourable, Eduard, the fourth son (sixth child) of Count Alfons Vladimír Mensdorff-Pouilly was practically destitute, the couple, therefore, did not have their own residence at the beginning. Manfred's children did not apply for Czechoslovak citizenship either, which backfired on them after the Second World War and even worse in the much later restitutions.²³ Octavian set about administering his estates limited by the land reform vigorously. After his father's sudden death on a heart attack on 22nd July 1940, he succeeded him as the holder of all Moravian estates as was planned. But it was a wartime already, for which he could not even bury his father's body in San Salvatore, but temporarily in Vratěnin cemetery (his body was transported to Italy only in the 1950s).²⁴

²¹ J. VOŽENÍLEK, *Předběžné výsledky československé pozemkové reformy*, Praha 1930, pp. 648, 760, 767, 783, 806.

²² Moravský zemský archiv, Brno (further only MZA), G 169 Collalto Family Archive, cart. 394, inv. n. 259, fol. 60–63.

²³ Detailly and more elaborated see MORO, pp. 128–142.

²⁴ MENSENDORFF-POUILLY, p. 59.

Quotidian Life of the House-of-Collalto members in Czechoslovakia (1918–1938)

Out of the abovementioned members of the House of Collalto, only Prince Emanuel with his Irma and later his successor Manfred with his wife Thekla née Ysenburg-Büdingen stayed in the Czechoslovak territory. Out of Manfred's children, Octavian with his wife Maria Windisch-Graetz resided in Brtnice castle and gradually took over the administration of the estates and Manfred's oldest daughter Giselda Mensdorff-Pouilly stayed in Kněžice, from where she moved to Jihlava at the beginning of the war. Anna, Polyxena, and Rambald with his wife Ida Zeno visited their siblings quite often but never stayed in Czechoslovakia for a longer time. The subsequent text is, therefore, going to concentrate on their everyday life only.

Travelling and Tourism

In the everyday habits of the House of Collalto, the means of transport played an important part. The rhythm of aristocratic life before the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian empire was prominent for its schematic nature: summers were spent in the country residences and winters in Vienna.²⁵ The Moravian aristocracy was also significantly oriented towards Vienna,²⁶ travelling was therefore frequent. However, for the Collaltos between 1924 and 1938 more important than the visits in Vienna were the mutual visits of sisters in Loosdorf, Högyesz, stays in Staatz, and journeys to Italian San Salvatore. Only Prince Emanuel rotated his stays in Vienna with *séjours* in his Moravian estates, his lifestyle stayed faithful to the old monarchic times.

Distance from Vienna to Brtnice was covered mainly by cars. Emanuel Collalto owned *Gräf & Stift, type 40/45 HP*, which he never drove himself, his chauffeur Josef Fritz later went to Manfred's services and retired in the late 1930s with a pension of 1,500 Czechoslovak crowns. Manfred himself was a lover of fast cars. He drove his car *Alfa Romeo 6C 2300B type Corto u. Lungo*²⁷ himself, even though he was not able to repair it when it broke down on the way and was dependent on the help of those around him. He learned to drive fast so he could cover the 700-kilometer journey from Staatz to San Salvatore in one day, if he drove alone.²⁸

²⁵ For closer elaboration see J. ŽUPANIČ, Úvod, in: V. VAVŘINOVÁ – J. ŽUPANIČ – K. BÁNYÁSZOVÁ, *Volný čas objektivem šlechty*, Praha 2016, pp. 7–19.

²⁶ L. HÖBELT, Die mährische Aristokratie in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts, in: T. KNOZ – J. DVOŘÁK (eds.), *Šlechta v proměnách věků*, Brno 2011, pp. 245–252.

²⁷ MZA, G. 169, cart. 394, inv. n. 259, fol. 81.

However, when he travelled with his family, they usually went by train, but in post-war Italy the train journeys turned out to be very lengthy and the change in Venice sometimes took half a day. In the second half of the 1920s, the train journeys are therefore rarer, and the family goes to Italy mainly by cars, usually with oversleeping in Villach. Such a demanding journey was not for Manfred himself, therefore a chauffeur, an Italian from Udine – Ugo Franceschini²⁹ – was employed, but for 5–6 people, the rear part of the car was very cramped and uncomfortable. Thanks to the personal testimony of a second driver Mr. Zvěřina, we also know of the second Manfred's car, *Lancia*,³⁰ but we also know of his habit to run over all the poultry he met on his fast drives around Uherčice.³¹

Cheaper to buy than a car was a motorcycle, which allowed Manfred's children to travel independently without borrowing one of their father's cars and drivers. After 1927, when they settled in Kněžice, Giselda and Eduard Mensdorff-Pouilly bought an Italian motorcycle *Moto Guzzi* with a sidecar. Travelling in it was not comfortable, though it was quick, thanks to the motorcycle the visits at the Strachwitz in Zdounky chateau became quite frequent. Hugo Strachwitz, the former Eduard's schoolmate from Kalksburg, and his family, made trips with Giselda and Eduard to Velehrad, Milotice, and other places.³² The motorcycle also helped with shopping, done mainly in Jihlava, where also Octavian and his wife often came to buy things. But unlike his sister, Octavian usually went by car. In 1932 Giselda and her husband bought a car *Tatra 57*,³³ which they then used till the end of the war. That car was hardly reliable, but in an hour, they could reach Manfred in Uherčice, in ten minutes they were at Octavian's in Brtnice and despite the frequent necessary repairs, the car proved good even for longer trips to Boskovice, Nečtiny, Loosdorf and even to Hungarian Hőgyesz. Eduard (Dodo) quickly learned to drive it, but the family still employed a chauffeur.

²⁸ MENSNDORFF-POUILLY, p. 30. In the Collalto archive there are car his maps of Italy preserved.

²⁹ We can find his wife as a chambermaid in the payroll lists (MZA, F 19 Central Administration of the Collalto Estates, cart. 391, inv. n. 200, fol. 112).

³⁰ L. BLÁHOVÁ, *Motorismus v rodových albech jihomoravských zámeků*, in: J. HOŘEJŠ – J. KŘÍŽEK et al., *Automobilismus a šlechta v českých zemích 1894–1945*, Praha 2012, pp. 186–196.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

³² MENSNDORFF-POUILLY, pp. 108–109.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

Octavian himself owned a motorcycle too, it was *Jawa*, but the preserved documents do not let us reconstruct how much he used it. Based on the preserved accounts, the American car *Buick*, bought in 1934, must have been used more frequently.³⁴ The *Asap Plzeň* truck was in Octavian's possession too, but it was used for the needs of Brtnice estate. Octavian was a driver like his father, he drove fast though not always safe. On May 7, 1937, while driving his car to Prague, in Jihlava's Schiller Street,³⁵ he collided with another car driven by the son of a local merchant Ervin Goldreich, who later sued him for 60,350 crowns for the car damages and his son's injuries – a surgery and hospitalization was necessary.³⁶ However, cars were used mainly for the distant targets, while around Brtnice Octavian used a six-seat carriage as same as his father, who loved horses and considered a horse-driven carriage a more suitable means of transport. Yet, both men had their pictures taken on the horseback and supported horse breeding. Of course, travelling by car was not always pleasant. The ways near Hungarian Högyesz were dry, covered by dust and animal excrements, therefore in dry summer, clouds of dust would come out the bottom of the car and made not only the journey but also breathing for the passengers very uncomfortable, the refreshing break-outs were therefore necessary.³⁷

Trains were used for journeys to Germany. The first-class tickets were bought, if the first-class carriages were full, then the second class came in handy, nevertheless, for the longer distance, it was considered extremely uncomfortable. When, for instance, Octavian and his sister made a journey to their mother's relatives in Büdingen in 1936, they went by car to Prague, and only from Prague's Wilson Railway Station, they continued by train.³⁸ On the way back, all first and second-class seats were occupied, only the third-class tickets were still left, which Octavian considered so humiliating, that he preferred spending the substantial part of the journey in a restaurant carriage, where he and his sister played cards and ordered one bottle of mineral water by one, so as not to have to return back to their seats.

Unlike the Salms from Rajec, whose journey to Egypt Giselda mentions

³⁴ Its registration-plate number was PB-55724 (MZA, F 19, cart. 408, fol. 613).

³⁵ Today Benešova Street.

³⁶ MZA, G 169, cart. 318, inv. n. 398, fol. 285.

³⁷ MENSENDORFF-POUILLY, p. 124.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

in her memoirs,³⁹ the Collaltos travelled only for a family or social reasons and only around Europe. The visits of their Italian estates or Büdingen – the castle which all sisters loved for its ancient and picturesque look – are understandably frequent, the visits of Dresden and Berlin as same as of Hungarian cities are documented. What we would call tourism now – that is travelling for travelling – is not frequent but not rare. For example, at the visit of Mantua, the Collalto siblings silently looked at each other when a guide spoke about a count Collalto who caused terrible damages to the city in 17th century.⁴⁰ The only journey overseen was Prince Emanuel's hunting expedition to Abyssinia, but it still happened under the times of old monarchy, in 1908, he travelled by a liner of Austrian Lloyd company.⁴¹

Places of Residence

As mentioned, the aristocratic way of life with summers spent in Moravia and winters in Vienna was the way of Prince Emanuel's life. After the disintegration of the empire, Vienna kept being his main seat, he owned there a magnificent villa in Heiligenstadt. In his Brtnice castle, the Kielmanseggs – a family his niece married into – lived permanently till 1924, count Max administered the local properties, the countesses together with daughters of the princely inspector Nagl took care of the soldiers during the First World War when the convalescent centre was set up in the castle by Emanuel's decision.⁴² However, for his summer stays, mainly Uherčice were used: he occupied rooms in the north wing of the castle, with the great view of the Blatnice valley, Irma had a right to use them even after his death. Their chateau suite consisted of four rooms, three guestrooms, a corridor, the dining room, the smoking room, the billiard room, and the

³⁹ Ibid., p. 93.

⁴⁰ It was Rambaldo XIII. (1579–1630), historically the most prominent figure of the House of Collalto. Mantua was conquered and plundered by his army in such extent that it caused the displeasure of Ferdinand II, who otherwise kept sympathies for Rambaldo (T. ČERNUŠÁK, *Collaltové na prahu novověku*, in: P. ELBEL – O. SCHMIDT (eds.), *Z Trevisa do Brtnice*, Brno 2019, pp. 57–61).

⁴¹ For more about the company as same as about the overseen travels during the Austro-Hungary monarchy see M. BOČEK, *S nadějí za oceán*, Plzeň 2019, chapters 4–5.

⁴² Státní okresní archiv Jihlava (further on just SOKA), Okresní úřad Brtnice, inv. n. 18, (Chronicle of Brtnice, p. 273). The convalescent centre was originally set up only for commissioned officers, but later it was opened for all soldiers. The costs were on Prince Emanuel's account.

chambermaids' rooms.⁴³ Although after his death, his family complained about his exquisitely bad taste – all furniture was grey or black, mainly carved and as the example of a complete tastelessness a barometer held in the pawns of a six-foot-tall carved bear was used – the complaints probably account for the generation difference. Prince Emanuel was a man of the last century, his grand-niece called him the last man of the ancient regime in Austria,⁴⁴ therefore his style was a style of Hans Makart's atelier, while his grand-nephew and his children's style was completely different.

After Emanuel's death, Uherčice became Manfred's seat. He had the chateau restored, as many as 17 layers of plaster and wall paintings were removed in representation halls,⁴⁵ the long-neglected roof and rafters were repaired⁴⁶ and the chateau was newly equipped with the artefacts from Brtnice and other chateaus. Till 1931, when Emanuel's widow Irma died, the new owners of Uherčice used to meet her there during her summer stays. Their relationship was not cordial, Manfred's sister Marie Therese sighed at her lack of noble behaviour and education,⁴⁷ but Giselda considered her a good-hearted woman, who could have used her husband's family situation to her favours so many times, but never did that.⁴⁸ A photography of Irma dedicated to Thekla Collalto survived in the family archive,⁴⁹ it can be at least said that there were some closer relationships between these two women.

Manfred did not spend his Viennese stays in a family palace at Am Hof square, but more often in *Hotel Ambassador (Krantz)*, where most preserved letters were addressed.⁵⁰ This habit of his could be traced to the times of old monarchy,⁵¹ but there was a trace of personal continuity in it too. Family palais at Am Hof had never been the place where he spent time even before he inherited Collalto estates, hotels were his preferred places even then.

⁴³ MZA, F 19, cart. 398, fol. 64–68.

⁴⁴ M. T. COLLALTO, *Erlebtes und Geschautes*, MZA, G 169, cart. 308, inv. n. 233, p. 348.

⁴⁵ MENSENDORFF-POUILLY, p. 99.

⁴⁶ D. HODEČEK, *Dějiny zámku v Uherčicích ve 20. století*, in: *Muzejní a vlastivědná práce*, 41, 4, 2003, pp. 193–201. Hodeček situates the repair to the late 1920s, but it can be said for sure they did not start before the change of the family line and the arrival of Manfred in spring 1925.

⁴⁷ COLLALTO, p. 362.

⁴⁸ MENSENDORFF-POUILLY, p. 95.

⁴⁹ MZA, G 169, cart. 467, fol. 362.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, G 169, cart. 396, inv. n. 260.

⁵¹ Z. BEZECNÝ, *Česká šlechta v éře první republiky*, in: T. KNOZ – J. DVOŘÁK (eds.), *Šlechta v proměnách věků*, Brno 2011, pp. 225–230.

Octavian and his wife Marie (Meiny) née Windisch-Graetz moved to castle Brtnice in December 1928. He had the former rooms of the Kielmanseggs adapted for his needs, but the adaptations were necessary even in the representative halls and entrance tower. The renaissance arcades in the palace on the third square were opened again and the annex corridor at the palace entrance was removed. The reason he stated in his application for residence for his stay in Brtnice, was gaining experience in administration of the estates, Manfred paid him the appanage of 20,000 crowns.⁵² The largely permanent stay of the owner's son in Brtnice was welcomed by the locals, Octavian supported the local Scouting Association (*Sdružení svazu junáků skautů a skautek*) which his oldest daughter Alexandra participated in.⁵³ Even after his father died in 1940, Octavian never moved to Uherčice, which his predecessors preferred due to its proximity to Vienna. His wife was soon seen with the governess and Italian teacher of children Elena Sabbatini⁵⁴ on their walks through Brtnice.

As the Guest Book of Brtnice chateau kept between 1928 to 1939 proves, besides the siblings and relatives from the Houses of Mensdorff, Piatti, Windisch-Graetz, and Lichtenstein, the visits of counts Ernesto and Karl Widmann-Sedlnitzky from nearby Luka nad Jihlavou were frequent as same as visits of other Houses: the House of Waldstein, Fürstenberg, Belcredi, Trauttmansdorff, in 1930 Poldi Sternberk appeared, a year later Zdenko Radslav Kinski took part in the autumn hunts, Anna Strachwitz Czernin stopped for a few days, the list could go on and on.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the visits of the Walderdorffs, children of Emanuel's sister were less frequent: the change of the family line in Brtnice brought a cool-down (although not the end) in the relationship with their Klastenbrunn line.⁵⁶ The majority of the visitors appeared between late October and late November when the hunts took place, but many visitors also came in summer. However, the most frequent visitors: the Sternbachs from Třešť, Podstatsky from Telč and Blankensteins from Batelov cannot be localized

⁵² For the application for residence and the appanage lists, see MZA, G 169, cart. 320, inv. n. 433, fol. 42 nn.

⁵³ The number of her legitimation was 30, the surviving documents of paying the membership in the organisation are from 1937 on (*ibid.*, F 19, cart. 398). For Octavian's financial support of Scouting organisation, see fol. 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, F 19, cart. 391, inv. n. 200, fol. 102.

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, G 169, book 324, inv. n. 30.

⁵⁶ More about this family line: R. WALDERDORFF, *Klafterbrunn: Geschichte der Familie Walderdorff*, Klafterbrunn 1987.

to one season of the year: they developed mutual friendship with the Collaltos, given also by the proximity of their estates.⁵⁷

By far the worst was the residence situation of Manfred's oldest daughter. After her wedding with Eduard Mensdorff-Pouilly, the couple lived at Manfred's chateau in Staatz, frequent but short are their stays in Boskovice, Nečtiny, and Vienna, where they stayed in the Mensdorff house at Mayerhofgasse. However, the couple had two children soon, the third was expected, and they needed their own place of residence. At first, they moved to Uherčice, where they inhabited the rooms on the ground floor at the grand ball-hall.⁵⁸ Manfred planned chateau Písečné to become a place of his daughter's residence: its location was perfect for journeys to Vienna, and it was situated just a few kilometres from Uherčice. But the land reform expropriated Písečné, and so he came with an idea of accommodating his oldest daughter in Okříšky. In the archival fund Estate Brtnice, a design of a new villa for Okříšky is preserved. It was supposed to stand on the slope next to the old castle, but its construction never even started,⁵⁹ probably due to the financial situation after the land reform. That was why as the last solution, Giselda was offered Kněžice chateau in the proximity of Brtnice after the birth of the third daughter Anna-Polyxena – named after Giselda's two sisters. The chateau consisted of 23 rooms and the Mensdorff family lived there together with 8 servants: František Včelař and his wife from Boskovice, three governesses, two kitchen maids and cleaners and finally with their chauffeur František Staněk, who also took care of the horses Manfred gave his daughter. The living costs were paid from the appanage Manfred paid to Giselda: in 1927 on it was 5,000 crowns, later 7 and 9,000,⁶⁰ but electricity, maintenance (the chateau remained a part of the Collalto estates), milk and meat were also at her father's expenses. Without this financial support, the operation costs of the chateau would be unthinkable, at least in the 1920s

⁵⁷ MZA, G 169, book 324, inv. n. 30.

⁵⁸ MENSODORFF-POUILLY, p. 100.

⁵⁹ MZA Brno, F 16 Brtnice Estate, maps 1111 a 1112. Vila with the side entrance and a sectioned park facade should have its own tennis court and a large garden in the slope above the pond.

⁶⁰ The sum of 5,000 crowns is mentioned by contemporaries in J. VEČEŘA – A. ONDRÁČEK – O. PEJCHAL, *Kněžice*, Kněžice 1994, p. 108. The letters following Manfred's death and execution of his Last Will from 1941 the sum of appanage is 7,000 and 9,000 (see MZA, G 169, inv. n. 439, cart. 32, fol. II.) Similar, but lower sums were paid to other Manfred's daughters (ibid., G 169, inv. n. 260, cart. 369, fol. 23).

and 1930s, it can be therefore said that from the material point of view Count Eduard married into the Collaltos instead of Giselda marrying into the Mensdorffs.

In the late 1930s when the home education was no longer enough for the children and the transport to schools would be difficult, it was easier to move from Kněžice to the rented villa Budischowski in Jihlava,⁶¹ where the family spent the whole war. Besides the kitchen and the dining room, the magnificent villa in a prominent position above the river valley of the former village Holzmühl could offer 8 big and 2 smaller rooms, in the ground floor a flat of a driver was adapted and Giselda's mother Thekla stayed in the villa with the Mensdorffs almost permanently too. The same reason made Octavian look for some accommodation for his children in Jihlava after 1936 too, but he did not choose anywhere close to his sister. His children, who attend German Volksschule in Jihlava,⁶² were rented a villa at Roseggergasse,⁶³ the street was at the suburb on the way to Brtnice, and Octavian spent some time with children in Jihlava too.

Children Upbringing and Languages

What probably the most reflects the old monarchy habits and their influence on the aristocracy, is children's upbringing in the House of Collalto. If in the 19th century a woman was supposed to have at least four children,⁶⁴ the second fourth of the 20th century made no difference. In aristocracy, even the two and half year pauses between children were not necessary, the noblewomen usually breastfed only a few first weeks: this was the case of Giselda. When her first daughter Leopoldine (Leo) was only a year old, her mother left for a 7-week trip to Rome and Firenze with her husband and his sister Sophie, the daughter stayed with her nanny,⁶⁵ The first son Alexander (Sander) also had his breastfeeding nanny. However, the main person who took care of the Collalto children

⁶¹ Vila was built in 1909 for Wilhelm Budischowsky, the owner of the adjacent leather-work company at Ahorn-gasse 1 (today Dělnická Street) in Kalvarienberg. Budischowski belonged to the family of entrepreneurs from Třebíč, he set up his own factory in Jihlava. His grave is in today's Kalvárie cemetery a few steps from his villa. The company was hit hard by the economic crisis of the 1930s and in 1934 it bankrupted; all its possession was then owned by a bank.

⁶² The school certificates of the older daughter Alexandra are preserved: MZA, G 169, cart. 469, fol. 61.

⁶³ Today Svatopluka Čecha 13. See *ibid.*, F 19, cart. 391, inv. n. 200, fol. 846.

⁶⁴ M. WINKELHOFER, *Šlechtictví zavazuje: osudy žen v c.k. monarchii*, Praha 2012, p. 82.

⁶⁵ MENS-DORFF-POUILLY, p. 93.

was Anna Kotnik. The woman was in family from 1924 and stayed there to bring up all Giselda's and Octavian's children⁶⁶ born and educated in Czechoslovakia. She was respected enough to be taken to Austria after the war, she was to live there in castle Greillenstein with Giselda. Children also had a French governess, madame Rosner.

First two children of Marie Collalto, Octavian's wife, came one by one in a short time (Alexandra was born in 1930, Manfred in 1932), but because her both deliveries were difficult and had to be carried out in a Viennese clinic, the couple waited with the third baby till 1941 (when the second daughter Cecilia was born). Their children also had their own governesses in Brtnice castle: a French one, and Italian one and the Austrian teacher Emma Holzhammer.⁶⁷ Since the children needed a contact with their peers, who could not be chosen from the town children, the visits at the abovementioned Sternbachs at Trest were frequent: they had children of the same age. For the same reason, Octavian and Giselda often visited the Blankensteins in Batelov (Batelau). Both siblings were quite close to them, which can be documented by the fact that the numerous wedding guests who could not be accommodated in Batelov at Konstanz Blankenstein and Gustav Kalnoky wedding in November 1929, slept in Brtnice and Kněžice.⁶⁸

The most important change can be observed in the approach to education. Giselda and her siblings never visited any school – they had a home teacher, a former Kalksburg substitute, but their formal education was not famous at all. That is why in his army questionnaire, Alexander Mensdorff-Pouilly had to fill in “a primary school” with a question mark to the box asking about his mother's education:⁶⁹ he was all but sure about her schools. Education of Manfred's children stood on languages. Giselda, the smartest of all sisters, read and wrote in German, French, and English, all other children could speak these three languages too, they even had English, French and Italian governesses. Mastering Italian was obvious for the Italian noble House, even though Manfred himself spoke it only imperfectly,⁷⁰ because he spent his youth in German Teschendorf and later

⁶⁶ MZA, F 19, cart. 391, inv. n. 200, fol. 20.

⁶⁷ Ibid., F 19, cart. 391, inv. n. 200, fol. 132.

⁶⁸ Giselda mentions five guests, whose name we unfortunately do not know. MENS-DORFF-POUILLY, p. 129.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 31.

⁷⁰ Giselda says that the Italian heritage “[...] *was an immense change for our father, he never dealt with the local economy and did not speak the language well, even though he could speak it naturally [...]*” Ibid., p. 22.

in Austrian Staatz and before his takeover of the local estates, his visits in Italy were only occasional. Giselda started giving her children the same education she received in her childhood: she taught them herself. Her daughter had to undergo an official examination in Stonařov (Stanner) every half a year, but soon she needed help. First, a governess was hired to help her: a young miss Ottawa from Brno.⁷¹ But in the late 1930s, when the Mensdorff family moved to Jihlava, the home education was already considered insufficient. The owners of the Moravian Collato estates now wanted to educate their children better, but no Viennese schools or (for girls) more traditional Sacré Coeur institution were considered. Giseldas's twelve-year-old son Alexander, therefore, went to Děčín in 1936 to start the local college together with Eugen Czernin, and children of befriended Podstatskys and Blackensteins, while the oldest Leopoldine started attending the fourth grade of Oberschule at Jihlava's Joseph's Square, in 1936 in her age of 13.⁷² The other children attended the third, fourth and fifth grade at the opposite Volksschule. Even the five-year-old Johana started attending a Czech kindergarten, her parents aimed to teach her Czech, which they could not speak themselves, but little Johana did not like the kindergarten at all and attended it only for two months.

The approach of the members of the Italian family – who never considered themselves Czechoslovaks – to the Czech language is significant. While Prince Emanuel spoke it as same as his father, Manfred's line, which was not intended to own Moravian estates, never learned it. When it was clear that Prince Emanuel is going to stay childless, Octavian and Giselda started learning Czech, but all they mastered was the beginner's stage.⁷³ Octavian later spoke it, some Czech-written letters from his administrators and employees in quite a familiar tone are preserved from post-war times,⁷⁴ but he probably mastered only simple phrases for communication with his environment, German and Italian remained the main languages of his family.⁷⁵ But even Prince Emanuel, who spoke Czech fluently, did not leave a single letter written in it: all his papers were written in

⁷¹ After the Mensdorffs moved to Jihlava, miss Ottawa started working in Třeřt at the Sternbachs.

⁷² Today Náměstí svobody.

⁷³ MENSdorFF-POUILLY, p. 78.

⁷⁴ E.g. MZA, G 169, cart. 318, inv. n. 398, fol. 95–96.

⁷⁵ See her letters in *ibid.*, G 169, cart. 318, inv. n. 398, and also cart. 396, inv. n. 260 and others.

German.⁷⁶ Czech might have been the language he spoke to his servants and employees and it remained like that with his successors, they would never think of writing letters in it. Manfred used to tell his children: “*You are what your people are*” and Giselda’s father-in-law reportedly considered himself a Czech in a frame of the Austrian monarchy, the post-1918 events deeply disappointment him.⁷⁷ It can therefore be hardly surprising, that in the 1930 census, Octavian and his family claimed Italian nationality, while Giselda and Eduard claimed the German one.

Hobbies and Culture

The time of big public celebrations for aristocracy such as carousels,⁷⁸ open-space public performances, carnivals, and live pictures which we can read of in Manfred’s sister’s memoirs,⁷⁹ was over. Celebrations, carnivals, and other feasts were now only of a private nature, fantasy was needed for them more than money.⁸⁰ No art patronage of any Czechoslovak Collalto can be mentioned, there are photographs of the home carnivals, which children did in *commedia dell’arte* style for their grandfather Manfred, however, those were celebrations of a strictly private nature.

Of course, what does not disappear, is the private cultural life such as relation to the books and literature. But even here the shift is visible. While in the library of Prince Emanuel’s grandmother the books by Zola, Hugo, Dumas’s father, and son or by Féval can be found next to a few volumes of Extraordinary Voyages by Jules Verne,⁸¹ in Giselda’s library the adventurous literature prevails. All her family fell for the charm of Karel May’s books, the whole family also wiped at Winnetou’s death.⁸² Giselda herself read mainly historic books by Charlotte Mary Yonge. Her mother, Thekla, was also interested in the historical books, her correspondence reveals her long-term interest in buying Memoires (*Souvenirs*) by a French female painter Louise Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun. When a Viennese book-

⁷⁶ Ibid., G 169, cart. 391-394, inv. n. 240–254.

⁷⁷ MENS DORFF-POUILLY, p. 82.

⁷⁸ See M. MŽYKOVÁ, *Karusely*, Liberec 2006.

⁷⁹ M. T. COLLALTO, *Aus vergangenen Zeiten*, 1937, Private archive of countess Isabella Collalto-de Croÿ, pp. 6–19.

⁸⁰ P. MEDŘÍKOVÁ, *Šlechta se baví*, in: F. WITTLICH (ed.), *Volný čas objektivem šlechty*, Praha 2016, pp. 63–78.

⁸¹ MZA, G 169, c. 380, i. n. 209, fol. 532–541. Emanuel’s grand-mother Therese Apponyi as same as his mother were from a family with the long literary tradition.

⁸² MENS DORFF-POUILLY, p. 167.

shop-keeper Wilhelm Frick finally found this book for her, Thekla rejoiced over the author's description of her visits to Naples and Rome.⁸³ Octavian bought mainly books about forestry and economy, but his wife read some entertaining literature in German and French, there were books of old legends from Moravian castles in her possession, beside the guidebook of Czernin Palace in Prague or a big reference encyclopaedia.⁸⁴ Unlike the previous-generation library, the missing titles are romances for women, although the 1920s are the golden days of romance novels in Czechoslovakia, the titles of a so called "Red Library" were the bestsellers.⁸⁵

Giselda Mensdorff-Pouilly herself was a literal talent. As a proof, her memoirs can be named, but also the fact that after her move from Kněžice to Jihlava in 1937 she started writing another book of memoirs, which did not survive till now. As a gift for her father's 70th birthday, she found, organised, translated, and re-typed the letters of her ancestor Antonio Rambaldo Collalto⁸⁶ and after her dramatic flee from Nečtiny to Bavaria in 1945 she wrote a short history of the House of Collalto. But even before the end of the war, when she stayed in Nečtiny for longer time, she started an inquiry into a personality of Marie Mensdorff-Pouilly née Lamberg, she retyped her most interesting letters and made them into a small brochure.⁸⁷ Her amateur care of the family archive can be ranked into her past-time activities too. The archive was deposited in Moravian Land archive in Brno by a decision of Prince Emanuel even before the First World War,⁸⁸ but in 1930 it is back in Brtnice castle again, where Octavian's chamberlain Franz Michl arranges it. Giselda's translations of

⁸³ MZA, G 169, cart. 398, inv. n. 270, fol. 9.

⁸⁴ Ibid., F 19, cart. 409, II/5.

⁸⁵ Cf. to D. MOCNÁ, *Červená knihovna. Studie kulturně a literárně historická. Pohled do dějin pokleslého žánru*, Praha, Litomyšl 1996. In Therese Apponyi's library, *Bibliothèque pour les Dames* occupied almost one third of its whole extent.

⁸⁶ The typescript survived in MZA, G 169, cart. 320, inv. n. 442. Antonio Rambaldo (1681–1740) was one of the greatest figures of the House of Collalto. For more about his artistic and political activities see Z. KAZLEPKA, *Ostrov italského vkusu*, Brno 2011.

⁸⁷ The first book of memoirs and the brochure of Marie Mensdorff-Pouilly's letter are mentioned in Giselda's preserved memoirs (MENSNDORFF-POUILLY, p. 1). She mentions her book of House of Collalto history there too (p. 272). Unfortunately, none of these works of hers survived.

⁸⁸ B. SMUTNÝ, *Depozita v Moravském zemském archívu v Brně do r. 1918*, in: K. SMUTNÁ – I. ŠTARHA, *155 let archivnictví v českých zemích: sborník příspěvků z konference uspořádané u příležitosti 155. výročí založení Moravského zemského archívu v Brně ve dnech 31. května – 1. června 1994*, Brno 1995, pp. 51–70.

A. R. Collalto letters can prove her interest in the archive arrangement, but the work of both siblings was dilettante at the best.⁸⁹

The cinema was quite a new kind of cultural activities. Octavian and Giselda visited it together with their children in Jihlava shortly before the Second World War started, *Kino Edison* was a few steps from Giselda's Jihlava house, the family usually both a loge there. In Brtnice, Uherčice and Kněžice, radios were operated too. The family meetings, hunts and children's growth were documented by the amateur photography more and more, even though its purpose and execution were not artist: the pictures were supposed to be of a documentary not artistic nature. Most pictures preserved in the Collalto family archive were made by Giselda (they are marked by her handwriting) or her children, only a small fraction of them are from older times.⁹⁰ There are animals in the pictures too. Octavian was a dog breeder, not only hunting dogs were his favourites, but he became a lover of Pekingese Dogs. The bills of the Brtnice vet MVDr. Adolf Stoniš survived and show that Octavian did not regret paying big sums for their treatment.⁹¹ However, their breeding was not always easy: in December 1928 right after his move to Brtnice, one of his dogs was shot by a gamekeeper František Čada.⁹² But dogs were favourite animals in his family for long time. Manfred himself had dachshunds and in Uherčice, he had two poodles. In San Salvatore castle, there was even a dog cemetery with gravestones and names on them.⁹³

The short-term jobs which the members of the House of Collalto engaged in, can be also taken more as a past-time activity. In 1936, Giselda started collecting money from her acquaintances in Jihlava: A Christian organisation *Frohe Kindheit*. When her family got into money troubles, in the late 1930s, Giselda's husband accepted a permanent job too: after a recommendation of his father-in law and brother-in-law he became a director of a brickyard in the Collalto brickworks in Okříšky. Brick-master Prášil was producing there the bricks of his own patent – hollow bricks

⁸⁹ For more about archive and their work there: M. ZAORALOVÁ, Dějiny brtnického collaltovského archivu, in: *Sborník archivních prací ministerstva vnitra*, 2, 1969, pp. 241–257.

⁹⁰ To learn more about the noble photographers before the First World War see P. SCHEUFLER et al., *Fotografové šlechtici v zemích Koruny České*, Praha 2017.

⁹¹ E.g. MZA, G 169, cart. 393, inv. n. 273.

⁹² SOKA Jihlava, OÚ Brtnice, inv. n. 18, (Brtnice Chronicle, p. 199).

⁹³ M. T. COLLALTO, *Von unserer vierfüßigen Freunden*, the private archive of Isabella Collalto-deCroÿ, pp. 6–7.

Jestav, which found so many purchasers in the wide neighbourhood that they managed to draw the languishing brickworks out of the economic crisis. Eduard Mensdorff-Pouilly took over the directing of the brickworks with all energy, he grew fond of the craft,⁹⁴ which was why he stopped working there only when its production was forced to stop by a governmental order in 1942. That time he wrote a letter to Octavian, in which he announced his resignation to the position and apologized for being a stubborn employee at times.⁹⁵

Social Life

The frequent visits of the Collaltos at the aristocratic families in the neighbourhood were already mentioned above. But the social life did not consist only of them, even at the journeys – if possible – the members of the House of Collalto preferred staying with the related or befriended aristocrats. That is why in Venice they overslept in the Morosini palace many times,⁹⁶ Countess Morosini – in her youth a renowned beauty who Emperor Wilhelm courted – gave big cocktail parties which the Collaltos liked participating in. After the younger Manfred's son Rambald married Cecilia Zeno, the family stay in the Venetian Zeno palace, in the proximity of *Basilica dei Frari*. Venice was attractive for its culture, beaches – the afternoons could be spent in Lido. While in Vienna Manfred like staying in hotels, on his family journeys it was considered only the last and mainly emergency option. Therefore at Giselda's trip to visit the Khevenhüllers in Dresden in 1937,⁹⁷ she preferred staying at Countess Schall's to staying in a hotel.

Autumn hunts were the rituals, which were not meant only for men, women participated in their evening social part too. Octavian was often invited to hunt in Bechyně at the chateau of the Paars, his hunting tickets

⁹⁴ Here, I have to disagree with Lothar Höbelt, who claims the Collaltos recalled their Italians roots in the war time and came to Brtnice just to hunt, while their brickwork was directed by a Mensdorff. L. HÖBELT, *Die märische Aristokratie in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, in: T. KNOZ – J. DVORÁK (eds.), *Šlechta v proměnách věků*, Brno 2011, pp. 245–252. Before and during the Second World War Octavian resided in Brtnice almost permanently and the reason why Eduard Mensdorff directed his brickwork comes into account of his fondness of the craft and bad family financial situation in the late 1930s.

⁹⁵ MZA, G 169, cart. 318, inv. n. 398, fol. 1.

⁹⁶ MENSNDORFF-POUILLY, pp. 85–86.

⁹⁷ MZA, G 169, cart. 396, inv. n. 260, fol. 189.

survived in the archive.⁹⁸ In the hunting time, in Brtnice, his wife was often visited by her brother Karl and her mother Alexandra, married again to Ervin Hohenlohe.⁹⁹ The Hunting Passes prove the regular Octavian's presence at the Sternbachs autumn hunts together with young baron Wiedersperg from Plandry (*Preitenhof*) or with the Count Blankenstein from Batelov, the hunts were a social occasion. At the hunt in Panenská Rosička on the November 18, 1936, he for example hunted with baron Nádherný, Prince Rohan, baron Geymüller a professor Zbořil.¹⁰⁰

Hunting was not the only occasion to meet. The visits at the Salms in Rájec, at the Herbersteins in Velké Opatovice, or at the Kalnokys in Letovice are frequent. After the move to Uherčice, the family often visited the old baron Wražda in the neighbouring Police, the Berchtolds – the former Uherčice owners – were visited by Manfred in Budkov and the most frequent visits of the whole family were in Jemnice at the Pallavicinis, where Manfred's daughters grew fond of Irma Pallavicini née Szechényi. She and her husband were humorous people, and even if Irma was feared by some, the Collaltos liked her very much.¹⁰¹ Till the old Count Waldstein in Třebíč died, he was often visited by Giselda and Octavian too, the 91-year-old man was admired for his mental freshness and a permanently good mood.¹⁰²

In Brtnice, Octavian and his wife were often invited to theatre performances, however, there is no evidence of their presence in them. Thanks to the fact the Central Directory of the Collalto Estates had its main office in the castle, its director had a prominent role in the town. The transfer of the friction between the citizens and the family living in the castle to the director can nicely be observed. While he was accused of all the problems that occurred, Octavian – despite the abolition of the aristocratic titles – was addressed only as a Prince and his relations to the town's people were perfect. When the director Josef Schoch retired in 1929, they cheered up a lot: under his management of the estates, a lot of cost cuts happen and all town applications for financial support were strictly refused. Even though it was Manfred who stood behind these decisions, the town officials dealt mainly with the director of his office, Manfred with Octavian therefore could keep distance from all the unpopular savings.

⁹⁸ Ibid., cart. 318. inv. n. 398, fol. 348.

⁹⁹ Ibid., F 19, cart. 391, inv. n. 200, fol. 149.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., G 169, cart. 398, inv. n. 275, fol. 13–18.

¹⁰¹ MENSENDORFF-POUILLY, p. 100.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 117.

However, the overall social life of the Collaltos during the First Republic stagnated. There were no major celebrations, Brtnice did not see any Venetian nights in the park pond anymore: they still took place under the reign of Prince Emanuel under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but never again in the First Czechoslovak Republic. The social life happened only in mutual visits between the noble families, and it shifted to their private sphere.

Health and Intimacy

The less we can follow great public events, the more we can concentrate on the intimate life. Diseases made a necessary part of it, they did not avoid the Collaltos and their children in Czechoslovakia, on the contrary, they witnessed them since their childhood at their governesses. In 1918, their English governess miss Nay was diagnosed the myoma, which she was supposed to get operated in Vienna, but her fear of surgery and doctors made it impossible. Before the operation she had a strong anxiety attack and had to be transferred back to Staatz without any surgery. The Italian governess died with tuberculosis right after the end of the First World War.¹⁰³ Manfred's wife, Princess Thekla suffered from tuberculosis too, before the First World War she had it treated in the Alpine Sanatory in Caux (she stayed in the monumental Caux-Palace). But besides this one curative stay, she never seemed to have any lung problems again. In November 1928 here daughter Anna Piatti was diagnosed the eye tuberculosis, she had to undergo an eye surgery made by a famous Viennese eye doctor Josef Meller.¹⁰⁴ Her surgery went well but caused Anna's miscarriage, however, the fact that her tuberculosis did not get to her brain outweighed the sorrow.

Frequent childbirths in the second quarter of the 1920s were not easy. Marie Collalto, Octavian's wife had such a hard first delivery, that for a few days, the doctors in Třebíč were afraid of her and her baby's life, she eventually had to be transferred to Vienna for Caesarean section.¹⁰⁵ In general, the deliveries are more often undergone in the sanatory, and the home environment is considered insufficient. Giselda's third delivery therefore happened in one sanatory in Brno, it was complicated and took her a long time to recover.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁴ For more about his fame see F. A. J., Professor Dr. JOSEF MELLER (Vienna), in: *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, 33, 1949, pp. 653–654.

¹⁰⁵ MENSENDORFF-POUILLY, p. 131.

By far the most hit by diseases was Princess Thekla. Since 1911, she suffered from bad migraines, which largely prevented her from her social life and travelling. She took her stays in Kněžice as a treatment, the good air and calm atmosphere of a small village helped her recover. However, in 1928 she was hit there by a stroke which resulted in a right-side paralysis and speech impediments. In 1930, another stroke worsened her speaking even further. Yet despite her two strokes, she lived for twenty more years.

The body was given a rest and a proper treatment in spas: spa *séjours* were the necessary part of Prince Emanuel's life. He repeatedly visited Karlovy Vary, where he cured his indigestion: he died of the burst duodenal ulcer in 1924. Manfred visited Mariánské lázně, where he took the treatment quite seriously, in two weeks he spent there, he was able to lose 14 kilos since he drank only local mineral water and took baths.¹⁰⁶

Parents understandably wanted to protect their offspring from the childhood illnesses, but they were not successful in it. In 1928 Giselda's children suffered from measles, in 1930 Octavian's children were down with scarlet fever. Appendectomy seems to be the operation of the period. Two of Giselda's children underwent it, even though they had no troubles, their father, Eduard Mensdorff-Pouilly had the same surgery made in Jihlava only in a local anaesthesia. In all cases the reason for the surgery was only a recommendation to get rid of the potentially dangerous blind gut.¹⁰⁷

All the body's weaknesses were considered humiliating and ridiculing, therefore the prevention of the diseases was preferred to falling ill. That is why a toilet – essentially a place of physical needs – was not allowed to be mentioned openly, let alone the activity people did there, defecation was seen as a humiliating body weakness. This demonisation of basic body functions made the children subconsciously connect the sixth commandment – that is the sin of the body – with the toilet. When eight-year-old Anna Collalto confined the priest that she had sinned against it by going to the “cabinet”, her younger sister Polyxena had to make it clear that what Anna considered the sin was simple defecation.¹⁰⁸ Actually, in Giselda's memoirs, the toilet is called “a certain place” or “a cabinet”,¹⁰⁹ such euphemisms were clearly intended to prevent ridiculing those who

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 126.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 166.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 68.

use it. When the young Eduard Mensdorff-Pouilly went to the toilet in Staatz one morning, he got arrested there for long because his future father-in-law was telephoning in the hall and would see him coming out of the room.¹¹⁰ Using the toilet was a thing too humiliating to admit, therefore Eduard preferred staying there until Manfred finished his long-distance call.

Conclusion

When comparing the family life of the Collaltos with the analysis Radmila Švaříčková-Slabáková made about the family of Alfons Mensdorff-Pouilly,¹¹¹ we must understandably find many similarities and differences. The similarities include the sympathies to the habits of old monarchy and transnationalism. But the personality of Prince Emanuel offers us more than clinging to old times: one can find there personally motivated sympathies towards the new Czechoslovak Republic. All his life, Emanuel wrote in *Kurrent*, strictly required formal approach and contacts, however, his marriage wasmorganatic, and he showed little respect for family traditions and strategies. The situation of the Collaltos in the First Czechoslovak Republic was thus primarily marked by the change of the family line. It can be seen in Emanuel's successors, where also generation gap plays a part. Unlike the Mensdorffs, the letters of the Collalto siblings to their parents are never formal, their writing style is freed from *Kurrent* and high German, they are personal. Despite the fact that Giselda married into the House of Mensdorff-Pouilly, and she had deep respect for Alfons Vladimír¹¹² she never adopted his new-family habits fully. No Manfred's child, however, repeated Emanuel's inequal marriage lapse, the marriages were to be strictly equal (the first one of Leopoldine Mensdorff-Pouilly with Josef Wiedersperg took place only in the wartime, the other ones even in the post-war period, which is why this text does not deal with them).

The quotidian life of aristocracy in Czechoslovakia therefore changes. While Prince Emanuel kept his old pre-Czechoslovak habits: he spent

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ R. ŠVAŘÍČKOVÁ-SLABÁKOVÁ, *Šlechtic – velkostatkář. Příklad Alfonse Vladimíra Mensdorff-Pouilly*, in: L. FASORA (ed.), *Člověk na Moravě v první polovině 20. století*, Brno 2006.

¹¹² She mentions the usage of German in Boskovice, as same as the fact that he would be surprised if anybody wanted him to write a letter in Czech. MENSZDORFF-POUILLY, pp. 157–160.

winters in Vienna and summers in Uherčice, his successor moved to Uherčice as to more or less permanent residence, his son started living in Brtnice, and the oldest daughter in Kněžice. Visits of Vienna are documented but they are rare, the visits of the siblings and other Czechoslovakia-based aristocratic families are more frequent. For any travelling, cars were used, in the late 1920s the withdrawal from the train journeys can be followed, for the short-distance journeys around Bohemia and Moravia, the motorcycles were used. If the train was used as a means of transport, only first-class seats were bought, the lower-class seats were considered degrading for the family status. In the late 1930s Giselda and partly also Octavian move to Jihlava to facilitate children's school attendance, the journeys to the other aristocratic families do not stop, but the visits in Vienna are not documented for this period at all. Change of the place of residence relates to the change of the children's education. Because Giselda and her siblings never visit any school and were home educated, at first, she carried out the education of her children in a similar way – herself, and later with the help of the governess – but in the late 1930s this style of education is not considered sufficient anymore, the same approach can be found at Octavian's children (who were younger than Giselda's).

As far as the language is concerned, Prince Emanuel could speak Czech, while Manfred's family never learned it. Octavian's Czech was later good enough to read and slowly speak with people around him, but for the rest of the family, the main language of communication was German and Italian. The social life of the Collaltos during the first republic stagnated. There were no major celebrations, all social life took place only in mutual visits between the noble families, it was therefore moved into their private sphere. The generation-change can be observed in reading habits: the adventure novels are getting popular, while interest in romance for ladies declined. But the leisure time was no more served by books only: the radio and in late 1930s also cinema took a great part of it, together with pets and Giselda's literal endeavours. A distance from the body functions is maintained, the body is treated in spas and its diseases are not rare at all, yet the anxious distance is kept from defecation and even from the word "toilet", which links to it.

Greater changes were, of course, to happen during the war, wartime brought new problems together with the transformation of everyday life. Even greater changes were brought about by the post-war period. Giselda and her daughter's husband J. Wiedersperg crossed the border

from Nečtiny to Bavaria on foot and then on the roof of a train carriage, Octavian's Moravian properties were confiscated, Octavian himself left Czechoslovakia disappointed and broken to spend the rest of his life and his brother's estates in Italy, where he died in 1976. That, however, is already another chapter.