

1. Purpose of the visit

My dissertation project aims to provide an account of the building history, architectural design as well as the actual use and function of Schloss Eggenberg, and to discuss its significance in comparison to other prestigious residences of the time in Europe.

Schloss Eggenberg was built at the start of the 17th century as an ancestral home for an influential European statesman and diplomat. In the course of his exceptional career he advanced from a modest patrician background to the upper echelons of a leading family in the Austrian hereditary lands. Conceived as the residence of the Emperor's governor in Inner Austria, Prince Hans Ulrich of Eggenberg (1568-1634), the palace to the west of Graz was not only intended to express the rank and influence of the principal. It also represented the highly personal creation and legitimation of an educated statesman and social climber. Hans Ulrich held the highest offices at court and was one of the most influential diplomats during the reign of Emperor Ferdinand II. His travels and diplomatic missions led him far beyond the hereditary lands to Spain, Italy and the Spanish Netherlands. The rise of the Eggenbergs to becoming one of the pre-eminent families in the Empire and the first prince's office of governor, which was the virtual preserve of the Habsburg dynasty, were compelling reasons behind the decision to build a new residence befitting elevated social status. Although the spot which Hans Ulrich selected for this was to the west of Graz, at the same location where his great-great grandfather Balthasar Eggenberger had already had a prestigious manor built in the late Middle Ages, the requirements for the new residence were now inspired by major European models. The prototypes for the architecture of Schloss Eggenberg are to be found in the immediate vicinity of the Habsburg courts in Madrid, Vienna and Brussels.

For this reason my research can only be carried out in an exclusively European context. It is not only the lack of direct sources with regard to the palace's construction history but above all the biography of the principals which necessitates an intensive exploration of the origins of residence architecture in Europe. The PALATIUM project represents a virtually "tailor-made" research platform for me to pursue my investigations into the architecture of Schloss Eggenberg. My previous attendance at three PALATIUM conferences in Madrid, Paris and Vienna has enabled me to gain an enhanced knowledge of and deeper insight into my research field. My participation in the PALATIUM Summer School in Utrecht offered me the opportunity to gain a sound understanding of methodologies and the current state of research into European residence architecture, into its origins, significance and functions.

My presentation for the conference in Venice brought together these aspects and introduced, for the first time, results of my latest research on former function(s) of Eggenberg Palace, to the science community, focusing on the imperial wedding of 1673 in Graz, when Schloss Eggenberg would be in full operation for the first time.

2. Work carried out during the visit

SCHLOSS EGGENBERG IN GRAZ AND THE IMPERIAL WEDDING OF 1673

“palazzo eguale alle Reggie più superbe”

[...] restavano all' arrivo di S. M.; la qual gionse ancor quella sera, salutata dall' Artigleria del Castello di Graz, ad Eggenberg palazzo mezz' hora distante del Princip: Giov: Sigifredo di questo nome, che la vastita, l' ordine, e gl' ornamenti dell' Atchitettura lo costituiscono eguale alle Reggie più superbe, e gl' addobbi de i quali l' havea interiormente tutto ricoperto, con aggionger in quest' occasione, senza risparmio di spesa, alle sue ricche suppellettili quanto di più vago, e prezioso si può tesser in auree tele, o effigiar al vivo con le sete, e con gl' ori, lo rendevano per così gran Principessa un alloggio ben degno, nel quale per quei due giorni trattò il Principe tutta la Corte con indicibile, ma sua hereditaria splendidezza. [...]

Only once during the 17th century did Schloss Eggenberg become centre-stage for an outstanding event of truly international dimensions. Only seven months after the death of his first wife, Margarita Teresa of Spain, in March 1673, Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705) married for a second time. His wedding to Claudia Felicitas of Austria-Tyrol (1653-1676) was held in Graz in October of the same year. Schloss Eggenberg was chosen as a residence for the imperial bride and her mother, Archduchess Anna, née de' Medici. In search of an appropriate wedding location and a suitable residence for the imperial bride, Graz and the nearby Eggenberg Palace seemed to comply almost perfectly with every single requirement. Moreover, this event provided Prince Johann Seyfried of Eggenberg (1644-1713) with a unique opportunity to present himself as a bountiful host on a par with the first families of the realm and to parade his splendid new palace.

Johann Seyfried's grandfather, Prince Hans Ulrich, diplomat and chief minister to Emperor Ferdinand II, commissioned his new family seat to be built to the west of Graz in 1625. The residence of the imperial governor Hans Ulrich von Eggenberg served both as an example of political architecture and as a sophisticated form of legitimising his family's rule. Architecturally, it drew its inspiration from comparable residences within the Habsburg dominions in Spain and the Spanish Netherlands.

In 1665, one year before his wedding to Eleonora Princess of Liechtenstein, Johann Seyfried came into his inheritance and began to continue building work on Schloss Eggenberg, which was still unfinished at the time. In accordance with his status, the entire second floor was magnificently furnished to serve him and his wife as a prestigious suite of rooms.

Only seven years later historical sources document the stay of the imperial bride in Schloss Eggenberg in late 1673. They provide the first account of the only just finished furnishings, use and function of the building which would be in full operation for the first time in the two days before the wedding. We don't know when precisely Graz and Schloss Eggenberg were selected as venues for the wedding, but it was not before August 1673 that a final decision

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for Claudia as the new empress was taken. Vienna was ruled out as a site for the celebrations because the imperial court was officially still in mourning following the death of Margarita Teresa in March. Leopold, too, expressly wanted his second wedding to be a restrained affair – *“sin mucho ruydo”* – (without much ado). According to his wishes the celebrations in Graz would be staged along far more modest lines than the marriage to the Spanish Infanta.

So Prince Eggenberg only had about two or three months to get everything ready and turn his palace into an imperial residence. It was a race against time. The 24 rooms on the second floor which had been lavishly furnished for himself and his wife were turned into two magnificent guest apartments to host the bride and her mother during the last days before the wedding. The painters and carpenters were required to work extra and night shifts, for which extra candle rations were also issued. By 30 September the painters were still busy trying to complete the ceiling paintings even though Claudia had long left her residence in Innsbruck and set off on the arduous 22-day journey to Graz. On 13 October the huge travelling party with more than 350 participants entered Schloss Eggenberg through the rear gate, *“preceded by the sight of several thousand flickering torches in the evening”*. The empress to be was welcomed *“bei der senfften”* (in her sedan chair) in front of the palace by the complete Eggenberg family. To greet his guests, Prince Eggenberg had had an inscription in the form of a chronogram mounted above the portal. After the obligatory kiss on the hand the guests were led to their rooms.

On the second floor Claudia had an enfiladed suite of twelve rooms in the North Wing placed at her disposal. The walls were decorated with precious textiles embroidered in gold and silver, alongside Flemish tapestries with mythological scenes. In one room the walls were decorated with two mirrors and 48 paintings in gold and silver frames instead of the usual *“splendid tapestries”* (*Prunkthuecher*). The spectacular ceilings with their huge cycle of over 500 individual scenes of history and landscape paintings, emblems, mythological and allegorical depictions, in lavish stucco frames are praised by all commentators. A further room contained Claudia’s magnificent four-poster bed. Both the bed curtains and the overlay were golden in colour and embroidered with silver flowers. Her mother’s suite was located directly opposite in the South Wing. And according to the descriptions, it was no less magnificently furnished. The one difference was the textile decoration in blue and *“duncklen wittiblichen farben”* (dark colours appropriate to a widow). Both apartments included the great hall (*grosser Saal*) where the life guards stayed. This central and largest room in Eggenberg only came to be decorated some years later. As the *“planetary room”* (*Planetensaal*), it became the highpoint of the *bel étage*. In 1673 the ceiling and walls had been stuccoed but were still without paintings. Even so, this state of incompleteness evidently did not prevent Johann Seyfried from considering the Schloss worthy to accommodate high-ranking guests.

The decision to choose Schloss Eggenberg was not only taken because of its splendour and precious furnishings. In 1673 no other residence in the hereditary lands could compete with it. The size and arrangement of the rooms also met the requirements which court ceremony stipulated for a future empress. The structural layout in Schloss Eggenberg probably dates back to the original design of 1625 which had been created for the first prince as the imperial governor. Its use as the first stage for the new empress indicates just how much the building met imperial standards in terms of its dimensions and distribution of space. The second floor could easily accommodate two enfiladed guest apartments consisting of a joint guard room, three antechambers and an audience chamber. The audience chamber was connected to a further succession of eight rooms intended for more private use.

However grand, Eggenberg was not designed for an event of this scale. It is not clear where the two Eggenberg brothers and their households as well as the bride's entourage were accommodated at the same time. Claudia and her mother alone were about to arrive with a retinue of more than 350 people. Johann Seyfried left his new apartments on the second floor to his illustrious guests and had to move, most probably into the first floor. That would already have taken up two-thirds of all the available space in the palace and indeed exhausted the entire supply of prestigious rooms. But where could room be found for his brother who had to be put up in accordance with his status? Naturally there was always recourse to the townhouse in the city. We do not know for certain whether one of the two brothers stood down and agreed to stay there. What we do know is that space was at a premium for two days in Eggenberg.

The example of Schloss Eggenberg clearly shows how rapidly space could be freed up for extraordinary occasions and how impressed contemporaries were by the results. However, all descriptions unanimously praise the splendour of the bride's residence. Claudia did not leave the palace during her two-day stay at Eggenberg. Already on the morning after her arrival, at 9 o'clock, the representatives of the Styrian estates reached Eggenberg with over 30 carriages in tow. The audience with the imperial bride took place in the "*Verhörsaal*" (audience chamber), the walls of which were decorated with purple velvet. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon a column of 50 carriages finally drove up in front of the house: The Emperor had arrived. To welcome her bridegroom Claudia descended to the foot of the staircase. After the visit she accompanied him "*as far as the first room*". The final day before the wedding ended with the visit of the Papal Nuncio.

For Claudia the actual day of the wedding on 15 October began with her receiving the Venetian ambassador. This was followed by the arrival of her new ladies-in-waiting, who had arrived from Vienna. Leopold also paid her another courtesy visit before the wedding. This time, however, Claudia and her mother waited for him "*at the last door of the hall leading to the corridor*" – in other words, no longer downstairs but on the second floor. The three of them then spent an hour together in the *retirata*, until Leopold set off back to the city.

This was probably the starting signal for the wedding celebrations. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the court's period of mourning was finally lifted and all the guests changed from black mourning dress into lavish wedding attire. Slowly the participants of the wedding procession began to assemble in front of the house. Meanwhile Claudia had slipped into her bridal gown. In the absence of a male member of the dynasty who could fetch the bride on behalf of the Emperor, Leopold entrusted his *Oberststallmeister* (grand equerry), Count Dietrichstein, with this duty. The *Unterhofmarschall* (deputy steward of the household), Count Oetting, was given the less enviable task of arranging the entrance into the city; over 90 coaches, each drawn by six horses, had to be marshalled for this purpose.

Consequently the surroundings of the Schloss must also have been up to these exceptional requirements. The idea of leading the carriages in a column over one mile in length along the principal axis of the formal garden to the walled forecourt and then channelling it back towards the city in the correct order as required by protocol would not have worked. As Claudia's arrival had already shown, it must also have been usual to enter the grounds from the rear. Probably the only way to regulate this high volume of traffic would have been to set up a one-way system which would guide the procession from the rear park gate across the forecourt back towards the city.

At 5 o'clock the huge procession set off. The coaches were preceded by small military companies and accompanied by mounted escorts, the *arcieri* guards (ceremonial units), the city councillors, servants, drummers, trumpeters and countless other people. An avenue of chestnut trees which had been hastily planted to mark this special occasion lined the approximately 4 km long route from Schloss Eggenberg to the edge of the city. Dusk had already fallen when the procession approached the city. The festive illumination of the walls, the firing of cannons from the bastions and the pealing of all the church bells must have created a setting as loud as it was impressive. On her arrival at the city boundary, the imperial bride was welcomed by the city council, which continued to accompany her through lanes and squares lined with a rejoicing population to the Court Church (Hofkirche), where the wedding was held.

Thus ended Eggenberg's short moment in the limelight. Prince Eggenberg could look back with satisfaction on his role as host. After all, the whole of Europe's attention had been fixed on Eggenberg for a few days. Furthermore, several printed descriptions of the imperial wedding in German, Italian and French made him and his resplendent new residence famous far beyond the borders of the hereditary lands, even though it took him years of struggle to cope with the financial aftermath of his invitation.

3. Description of the main results obtained

In comparison with other imperial or princely wedding festivities – many of them were presented at the Venice conference – the 20-day festivities in Graz was indeed a restrained affair. There were no fireworks, triumphal arches erected for the entry or public performances on the streets. This was most likely due the Emperor's express request for the wedding concerning the death of his first wife only a few months ago. Schloss Eggenberg was not used as a venue for performances or feasts, but the palace offered the necessary ceremonial space for other important events: the bride's audiences and receptions.

One subject of discussion on my paper was the extraordinary huge suite of rooms prepared for Claudia and her mother, Archduchess Anna. 12 rooms for the bride and a hierarchically equal suite of rooms for her mother are two very well-spaced apartments, even for imperial standards. Especially the dimension and location of Anna's apartment caused some confusion.

In 1673 Schloss Eggenberg was one of the most modern, comfortable and spacious residences within the Habsburg hereditary lands. No imperial residence and no imperial apartment could compete with it. The *piano nobile* in Eggenberg, consisting of two imperial 12-room-apartments, was designed for such extraordinary occasions. In other words, if Claudia moved into one apartment, it seems quite obvious, that her mother took the other suite of rooms. There was simply no other person, according to Claudia's new rank as empress to be, which could accompany her and stay together with her. After the wedding, things have changed and the new Empress moved into the Graz Burg, at her husband's side.

Veronika Sandbichler's paper on the "Comedy-houses" in Innsbruck reminded me on possible functions of the great longitudinal hall in the western wing of Eggenberg Palace. In the 1750s this room was converted into the palace church. But the originally intended function must have been comparable with the former "Ballspielhaus" at Ambras Castle: A multifunctional room for ball games (like Jeu de Paume) and ballets or performances as well. In October 1673 performances and minor music events had been staged in and around Graz for the coming 18 days after the wedding day. None of them took place in Eggenberg, but why? No source provides information on that question. Probably, the theatre hall was not yet completed in 1673.

For my studies on the architecture of Schloss Eggenberg, theses about the Dutch and Spanish influences were sustained. The importance of the ducal palace at Lerma, as one of the most important model for Schloss Eggenberg, was confirmed as well. Further research has to be done on the significance of four winged palaces with four towers in Spain and the Spanish Netherlands (royal and princely residences) in relation to the architectural layout of Schloss Eggenberg.