

Johann Blasius Santini-Aichel: a Gothic-Baroque Architect in Bohemia 1677-1723

by

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J. B. Santini-Aichel is a neglected architect. His work was, until recently, almost unknown in Britain and not very familiar in his own country. There are several reasons for this: the Czech lands have never figured prominently on the itineraries of British art or architectural historians; for the past five decades or so, as study travel has become popular, they have been part of the Communist bloc and were therefore regarded by many as a not very desirable venue; in addition, some of Santini's best buildings are set in remote areas such as the Moravian uplands where few people speak any language other than Czech. These problems are compounded by the lack of reliable information: attributions are uncertain, no Dehio or Pevsner recorded buildings in the Czech lands.

Lately the architect's work has begun to attract attention as travel has become easier. The unique mixture of Baroque and Gothic in some, but by no means in all, of his buildings is puzzling and fascinating, raising the question of whether he was a freakish artist and whether the road he took was a cul-de-sac or part of a wider development. The writer is not able to give a conclusive answer to these questions; she can only introduce the reader to a selection of Santini's buildings, mostly ecclesiastical and outside Prague.

Santini's work was influenced to an unusual extent by the political and religious conditions of his time. Bohemia had been a rich and powerful country since the reign of John of Luxembourg in the fourteenth century, but after the rise of the Hussite movement in the early fifteenth century it was riven by religious strife. The Hussites were partly religious reformers who based their teachings on those of Wycliffe, partly politically motivated, expressing the popular anger at the economic power of the church which owned one-third of the land and partly Slav nationalists objecting to the dominance of the Germans. In 1413 their leader, Jan Hus (1369-1415) was invited to attend the ecclesiastical Council of Constance to

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defend his teachings and given a promise of safe conduct but, in spite of this, was burnt at the stake as a heretic in 1415. When the news reached Prague, popular unrest broke out and in July 1419 the Burgomaster and several of the city's dignitaries were thrown out of one of the town hall windows and killed - the first 'defenestration'.

The religious wars continued for many years and spread into the neighbouring countries. The Hussite armies were extremely successful and there was massive destruction of churches and monasteries before they were defeated. But religious strife continued and increased with the rise of Protestantism. In 1609 the Emperor Rudolph II confirmed in law existing religious freedom, but was forced to abdicate in 1611 and died the following year. His brother, the Emperor Matthias, re-instated the Catholic church and was himself succeeded by his cousin Ferdinand II who was even more determined to eradicate Lutheranism. In May 1618 another uprising started in Prague with another defenestration. Three of the Emperor's representatives, among them Jaroslav Martinic to whom we shall return, were thrown from a window of Prague castle, but all the victims survived. The Emperor Ferdinand was deposed and the Protestant Frederick V, the 'Winter King' and son-in-law of James I, was elected King of Bohemia.

This event sparked off the Thirty Years' War which devastated almost the whole of central and northern Europe as the Catholic forces of the Empire fought the various Protestant armies. The conflict was resolved, for Bohemia, when Catholics defeated Protestants in the battle of the White Mountain outside Prague in 1620. The King fled to Holland, the Protestant leaders were executed and their goods confiscated.

Churches and monasteries lay in ruins, having fallen victim to either the Hussites or the warring armies. Bohemia was ruled direct from Vienna and did not regain her independence until after the First World War. Catholicism became the State religion, Protestants were persecuted and all the eloquence of the Baroque style was employed in the cause of the Counter-Reformation to persuade the people to return to the old faith. The Baroque style, however, was seen, even by Bohemian Catholics, as foreign to their culture, an alien style imposed by the conquerors, an attitude which can still be sensed today. The Gothic style was, and to some extent still is, felt to be the only truly native style. After the end of fighting the huge reconstruction programme attracted builders, artists and craftsmen from all over Europe.

Into this historical and cultural background Giovanni Battista Santini (Jan Blažej Santini / Johann Blasius Santini-Aichel) was born on 3rd February 1677 in Prague, son of the sculptor and stone mason Anton Santini-Aichel, who had also been born in Prague and had married Catherine Osten of Plzeň. The family was one of many to immigrate from the Val d'Intelvi near Lugano in Italy, an area from which Carlo Maderno and Borromini had originated. Johann was the eldest of three children and is said to have been born with a spinal defect. He was therefore not suited to becoming a stonemason but was trained as an artist and apprenticed to the court painter, Christian Schröter. Santini senior worked with Jean-Baptiste Mathey who,

together with Lucas von Hildebrandt, had introduced the Baroque style into Bohemia and had built the church of St Francis of the Knights of the Cross near the Charles Bridge in Prague. The German Catholics, victors in the recent religious wars, were the most influential people in late-seventeenth-century Prague. His father had already added the German name Aichel to his own and Santini must have lived in three languages and three cultures. As an ambitious young man, it was among the German-speaking nobility and Catholic clergy that he sought his fortune.

Giovanni Battista travelled to Italy, saw the work of Bernini in Rome and of Guarini in Turin, returned to Prague in 1700 and settled in Malá Strana in 1705. Two years later he married the daughter of his master. Three sons died in infancy but one daughter survived. In 1716 his wife died and Santini married a girl from a noble family. No doubt this provided him with an *entrée* to influential circles. When Santini's father died one of his other sons took over the workshop and the brothers collaborated in some building projects.

As his career gained momentum Santini frequently worked on several buildings at once. He also left them aside for long periods and many were not finished until after his early death. This makes a chronological approach to his work difficult. It is preferable to approach his work through his patrons, the religious orders and the nobility beginning with the commissions carried out for the Benedictines, followed by the Cistercians and lastly the one country house to be discussed here which was built for the Kinsky family.

The Benedictine monastery of Kladruby is an outstanding example of Santini's Baroque interpretation of the Gothic style. It had been built in 1115 in the Romanesque style by King Vladislav I who is buried in the church. Destroyed by the Hussites it was rebuilt by Abbot Fintzguh, 1712-26. Whilst Santini rebuilt the church, the Dientzenhofers were responsible for the conventual parts. The church is a long building of grey stone with many windows, a lacy Gothic façade surmounted by a royal crown. It is surprising to see a Baroque dome

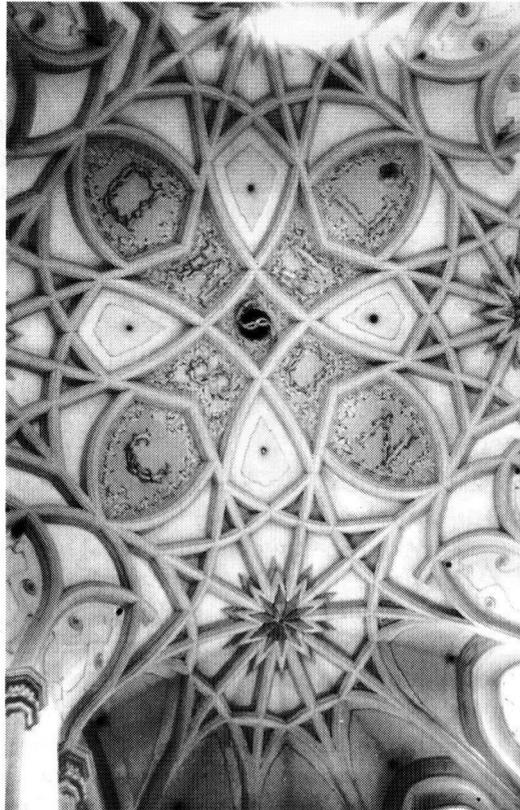


Fig. 1
Kladruby, ceiling



Fig. 2

Kladruby, interior, dome and crossing

surrounded by flying buttresses and tiny pinnacles. Santini kept the ground plan, built a new west front with a hexagonal porch and added an east end shaped like a clover leaf, a reference to the first Romanesque church, but crowned by a stunning ceiling criss-crossed by a delicate network of ribs (Fig.1). Over the crossing is a dome on pendentives and drum (Fig.2). The new parts have ogival arches but round-headed arches were kept in the nave up to the transept. The Romanesque memory is reinforced by massive pillars and compact walls while the ribs are a delicate non-structural network which was one of Santini's hallmarks. On 20th December 1720 Abbot Maurus Fintzguith wrote to Berthold Dietmayr, the abbot of Melk, who was just then supervising the rebuilding of his monastery by Jakob Prandtauer, proudly describing the dome as 'ample, in a splendid Gothic style never seen before'.¹ This letter, which has been preserved in the library of Melk, shows that Santini responded to the patron's wishes when he introduced Gothic elements.

Nothing could demonstrate more clearly the

two abbots' different approaches to the rebuilding of their churches: Berthold Dietmayer going for full-blooded, triumphalist Baroque while Maurus Fintzguith wished to recreate something of the monastery's Gothic past. The finished dome was in fact much higher than shown in the drawing accompanying the letter. Kladruby's Gothic elements give the Baroque drum and dome an additional upward thrust. It is also interesting to note that in the early eighteenth century the princes of the church were already in the habit of taking the waters in the Bohemian spas.

The dome ceiling has illusionist paintings of saints, angels and clouds. There is a remarkable incurving of the walls beneath the galleries. The ribs which support them have been cut off, reminding one of the vaulting in the Vladislav Hall in Prague castle with which Santini must have been familiar. When travelling in Italy Santini may also have seen the intersecting dome vaulting of Guarini's churches in Turin, especially of S. Lorenzo and the capella of SS. Sindone. The façade evokes the Gothic world: triangles, ogival arches, flying buttresses, pinnacles.

The furnishings include three grand pieces: the retable, the throne and the organ. The retable in dark wood resembles the intricate façade. At the point where the nave joins the apse there are two external cylindrical staircases of glass and iron. The treatment of light which enters indirectly is typical for Santini. Instead

of a triforium there are large paintings above the arches and below the windows of cherubim, seraphim and guardian angels, the Virgin and Christ. The organ on a gallery over the entrance bears the arms of Abbot Fintzguth. The throne (for King Vladislav?) is on a large dais in the form of a crown.

Křtiny, another Benedictine monastery, is set in beautiful countryside, just north of the large industrial city of Brno in Moravia (Fig.3). The church is dedicated to St Mary and was built 1712-35. It is a huge pilgrimage church on a Greek-cross plan, with oval ambulatory cloisters attached to it with great ingenuity. Two wings were planned but only the southern one was completed (Fig.4). This is one of Santini's pure Baroque churches with no Gothic elements. Four giant pilasters decorate the cylindrical core and follow the curvature of the walls. The spacious, light, domed interior was decorated with paintings by various artists after Santini's death, among them one Winterhalter, possibly an ancestor of the famous nineteenth-century artist. Unlike Kladruby this church was a new construction, not a rebuild. Although for



Fig. 3
Křtiny, exterior

the same monastic order, the absence of Gothic elements may suggest that abbots had a large measure of autonomy.

Rajhrad, begun in 1722, was completed posthumously. It has a concave façade behind which is a succession of three drum-less, oval-domed spaces, given symbolic significance by the inscription: 'Faciamus hic tria tabernacula'²² (Fig.5). But, unlike Křtiny, this is again a masterly fusion of Baroque and Gothic. The ceiling is decorated with delicate, non-structural ribs and the richly decorated succession of interior spaces produces a stunning effect (Fig.6). As one walks through the building the view is twice restricted where the nave narrows only to be joyfully extended on entering the next section. The first space is a longitudinal oval, the second and

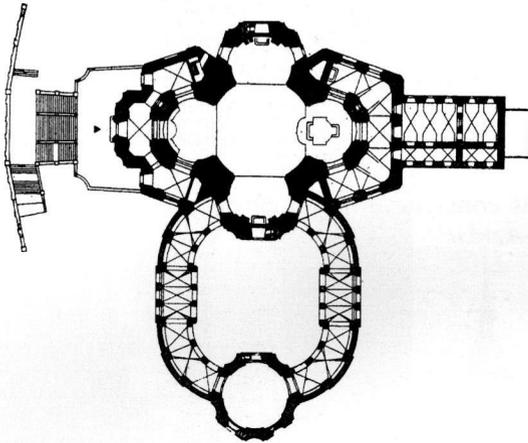


Fig. 4
Křtiny, plan



Fig. 5
Rajhrad, façade

lightest is octagonal and covered by a shallow dome, the last is a similar oval to the first but slightly wider (Fig. 7). When looking towards the west end the organ gallery bulges forward dramatically. The surrounding monastic buildings are currently derelict.

One of Santini's earliest commissions was the monastery of Zbraslav, started in 1700 and finished only in 1727 after his death by his assistant Francis Maximilian Kaňka (Fig.8). This marked the beginning of his connection with the Cistercians who were to become his main patrons. The monastery was founded by King Václav in 1292. Like many others it had been destroyed in the religious wars. This is Santini's best known Baroque building. The courtyard is surrounded by three cloistered wings of two or three stories, the cloisters being unusual in having two alleys. The high, rectangular windows of the Hall are topped by ovals reminiscent of Melk while the keystones over the round-headed ground-floor windows are almost art nouveau in feeling. The composition of the exterior wall is united by giant pilasters.

As in many of Santini's buildings, light enters obliquely and indirectly. This is very cool and restrained Baroque with paper-thin shallow decorations. In 1781 the monastery was dissolved in the course of the religious reforms of the Emperor Joseph II. It is now a museum of modern sculpture.

The rebuilding of the Cistercian monastery of Sedlec, 1702-6, also was among



Fig. 6
Rajhrad, interior

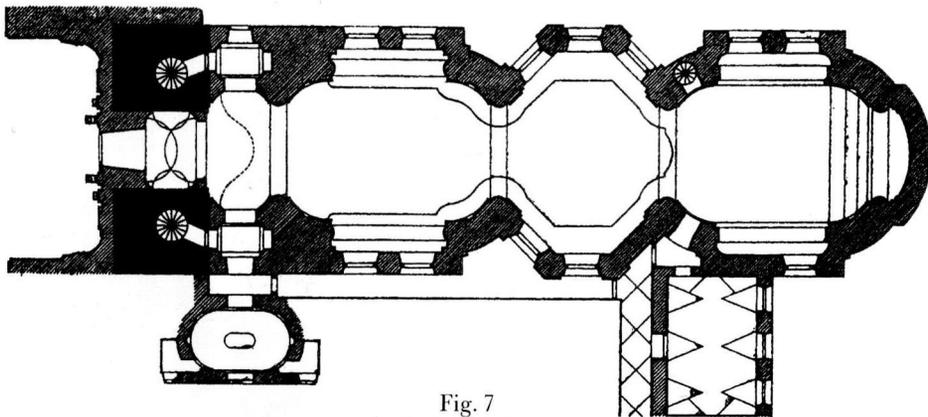


Fig. 7
Rajhrad, plan

Fig. 8
Zbraslav,
exterior

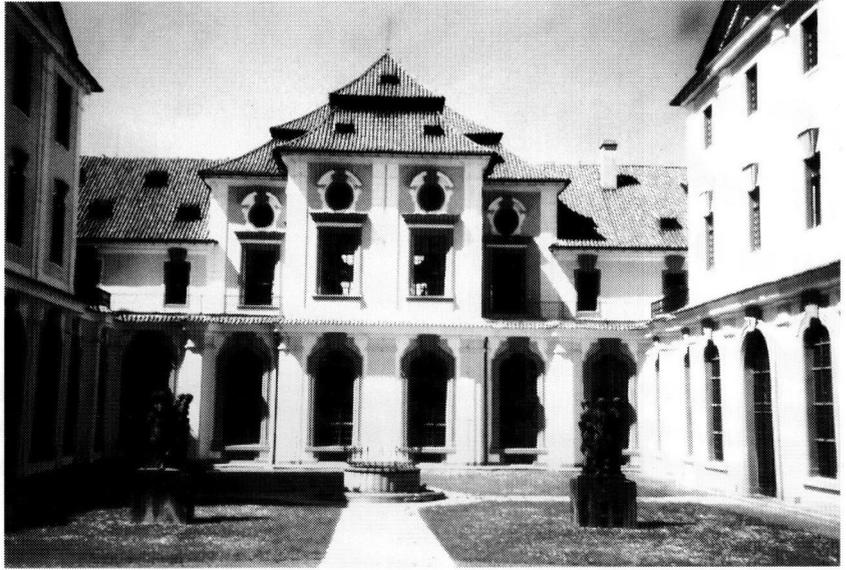
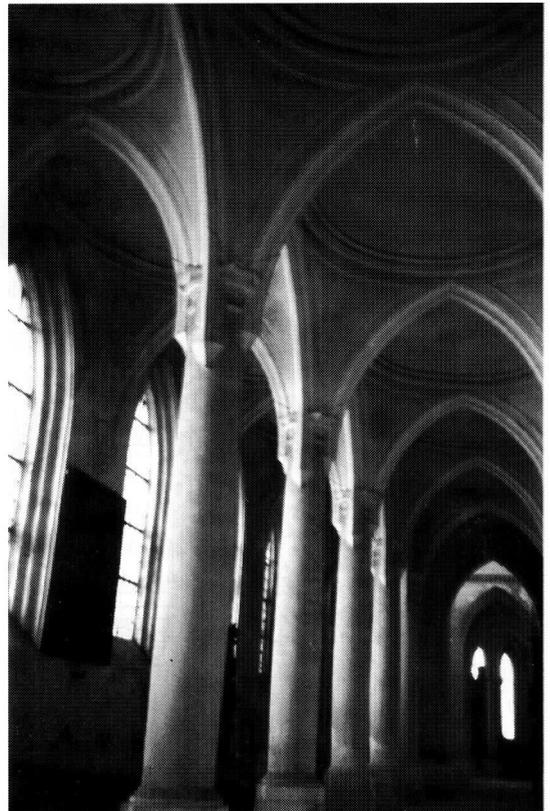


Fig. 9
Sedlec, interior



Santini's earliest projects, contemporary with Zbraslav. It is situated on the outskirts of Kutná Hora, once one of the richest towns in Bohemia where silver-mining had been carried out since the tenth century. In the rebuilding of Sedlec we encounter the earliest fusion of Gothic and Baroque which was to become Santini's hallmark. The monastery had been burnt down by the Hussites in 1421. By the late sixteenth century some monks had returned and about 1700 Abbot Snopek (1634-1709) met Santini. In the correspondence, which is preserved,³ the abbot had explained his wishes: Gothic forms, reflecting the monastery's and the order's past glory in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, the time of Bohemia's proud statehood and independence, had to be evident. They were to distinguish Sedlec from the newly founded houses, all of which were in the new Baroque style. As at Kladruby the wishes of the client determined the style and, again as in Kladruby, the foundations and the buttresses of the original building remained. Santini rebuilt the exterior of the church, dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin and St John the Baptist, largely as it had been but on the west front a huge Gothic window is surmounted by a round one and the composition is topped by finials and a statue of the Virgin on the apex. He created new vaults, added a south aisle and flooded the body of the church with light from large windows which is reflected from the whitewashed walls. He decorated the interior with delicate plasterwork and the thin, non-structural ribs, which had become typical of his work. Different and equally interesting is the vaulting in the double aisles, each bay carrying a small spherical calotte on pendentives, a very Baroque feature (Fig.9). He added sculpture and painting by such Baroque artists as Willmann, Jäckl and Brandl.

Santini was also responsible for two other buildings at Sedlec: the ossuary and the refectory. The former, begun in 1708, in the crypt of the nearby cemetery church, is dedicated to All the Saints. It has a square plan in six sections with ribbed vaulting of fantastic complexity (Fig.10). Everything in it is made of bones – skulls,

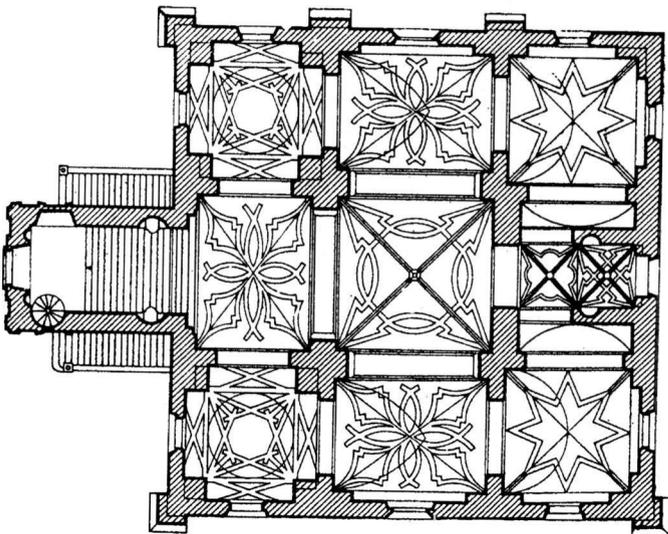


Fig. 10
Sedlec ossuary, plan

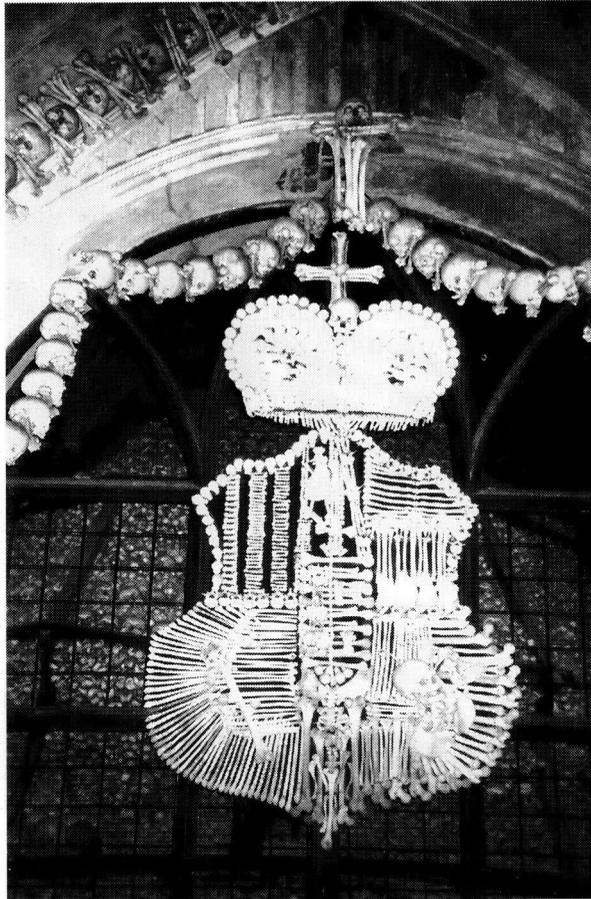


Fig. 11

Sedlec ossuary, coat of arms of the Schwarzenberg family

ribs, tibiae, fibulae – a veritable *danse macabre*. Since the powerful Schwarzenberg family were patrons of the church at the time we see their coat of arms, made entirely of bones, mounted on the wall (Fig.11).

The former huge refectory of the monks, which has doors to their cells leading from the upper gallery, is decorated with wall paintings depicting the history of the order and the figures associated with it. Unlike the church this is in pristine condition. After the monastery's dissolution, again by the Emperor Joseph II, a tobacco factory was established here. After the end of Communism the American tobacco firm Philip Morris obtained a share in this and it is now the biggest joint venture in the Czech economy.

Cistercians continued to play a vital part in Santini's career. Plasy, another monastery belonging to the order near the present western border with Germany, was founded in 1144 by the heir apparent, later Vladislav II Přemysl. It, too, was

destroyed by Hussites in 1421-5, and during the following centuries most of the land had to be given to the Griesbeck family, the powerful local landowners. The monastery had become almost completely deserted by the beginning of the Thirty Years' War. The monks sheltered the Viceroy Jaroslav Martinic on his flight from Prague after the second defenestration of 1618 which marked the outbreak of the war. He had been the representative of the Emperor and this stood the monks in good stead after the victory of the Catholic forces. Nearly all their possessions were returned.

Around 1660 Mathey had built a church, Prelate's house and a magnificent two-storey granary which surmounts a Royal Chapel and is crowned by a steeply pitched Baroque roof and a spire. Abbot Eugene Tyttl(1699-1738) commissioned Santini in 1711 to reconstruct the buildings and build a new Abbey church. Tyttl, unlike Snopek at Sedlec, did not ask for Gothic elements to be incorporated into the new building. We therefore see a splendid Baroque structure which has, nevertheless, some of Santini's typical elegant conceits.

Only the convent, Chapter House, St Bernard Chapel, a small hospital and the lodge of the Prelate's house were completed. Santini commemorates Abbot Tyttl, his patron, by decorating the top of the chapter house, not by the usual crucifix but by a Greek Tau, a letter T on which a serpent is entwined. The convent is a massive building of three storeys on a square ground plan of 84m sides surrounding a large courtyard. The domed Chapter House projects from the western cloisters. Two grand cantilevered staircases, well lit by immense windows rise through two floors (Fig.12). On the upper level are the cells for the monks and the Priors's apartment which can also be reached by a discreet oval winding staircase. At Plassy, Santini created a building in which practical and ceremonial considerations mingle successfully. When it was dissolved in 1785 by Joseph II it was one of the richest monasteries in the land. In 1826 the entire property was sold to Prince



Fig. 12
Plassy, staircase



Fig. 13
Mladotice, exterior

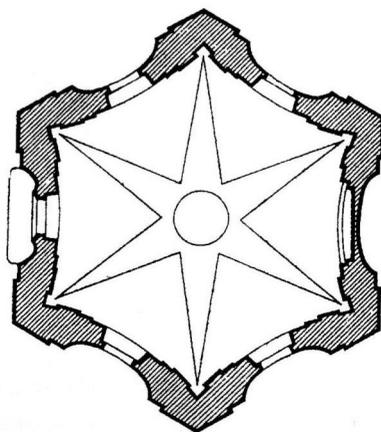


Fig. 14
Mladotice, plan

Metternich. In 1945 the Czechoslovak State took over the property from the family.

Santini's smallest building is the chapel of Mladotice, 1708-10, dedicated to the Holy Name of the Virgin (Fig.13). It is a hexagonal single-cell building. The walls between the buttresses are slightly concave, the large, plain windows have prominent keystones (Fig.14). The bell under its hood attached to the side is a particularly happy touch.

Nearby and visible from Mladotice is the Cistercian convent of Mariánské Týnice where Santini started work in 1711, another commission of Abbot Týttl for whom Santini was working at Plasy at the same time (Fig.15). The Greek-cross church consists of a cylindrical core surrounded by four elliptical spaces carrying pyramidal roofs. It has a strong cornice surmounted by a reinforced balustrade and is decorated with giant pilasters with flat capitals both inside and out. Originally the central part carried a dome and lantern but this collapsed after a heavy snowfall when the balustrade held back the snow. The remains of the lantern are preserved in the grounds. Also on the original plan the church was to have two three-wing



Fig. 15
Mariánské Týnice, exterior

cloisters but the eastern ones were never built and the conventual buildings were unfinished.

Santini's most important work was the group of buildings which he erected at Ždár nad Sázavou, a small industrial town in the Moravian uplands. The Cistercian abbey was destroyed by the Hussites and in 1706 Abbot Vejmluva commissioned Santini to repair the derelict fourteenth-century abbey church. The major addition to this building was a new organ gallery which floats above the nave. Within the walled monastic complex Santini added a new prelate's residence with a splendid polygonal refectory lit by tall windows surmounted by oculi (Fig.16). Behind the church and over the sacred well (*Fons Beatae Mariae Virginis*) he erected a well house. The small, single-story former abbot's summer house is now the home of the Kinsky family, members of the Czech nobility. Further along the valley he built a walled cemetery to receive the victims of a predicted plague epidemic which fortunately never came.

The most important building of this commission is undoubtedly the pilgrimage chapel on Zelena Hora, the 'Green Hill', to house the relic, the undecayed tongue,



Fig. 16 (*above*)
Ždár nad Sázavou, prelatore



Fig. 17
Ždár nad Sázavou, pilgrimage church

of St John Nepomuk, who was said to have been martyred in the fourteenth century for refusing to betray the Queen's confessional secrets by having his tongue cut out before being drowned in the Vltava river in Prague. This building is considered to be the most successful fusion of Gothic and Baroque of Santini's career; it was dedicated in 1722. The building has a pentagonal plan at the centre of a ten-sided enclosure wall. Five pairs of columns support a circular drum which supports a five-vaulted dome (Fig.17). Ten small circles surround the circumference forming five tongue-shaped votive altars. There is an outer ring of five oval vestibules each of which lines up with the altar opposite. Four altars are dedicated to the four Evangelists, the fifth to St John Nepomuk. The ground plan resembles J. B. Fischer von Erlach's burial chapel at Vranov, also the Dientzenhofers' chapel at Kappel, both nearby and both having circular cores surrounded by a ring of oval chapels, while the Prelature recalls Vranov castle itself.

So far we have dealt only with ecclesiastical buildings. Chlumec nad Cidlinou is a grand Baroque chateau by Kaňka after designs by Santini, 1721-23 (Fig. 18). Damaged by fire in 1947 and rebuilt, it is also known as 'Charles Crown' in honour of the visit by Emperor Charles VI. Set high on a hill it fits well into the landscape. The ground



Fig. 18
Chlumec, exterior

plan is dynamic: three cubes radiate and penetrate a double height, galleried cylindrical core of great dignity and serenity. A staircase leads up from a terrace surrounding the entrance block (Fig.19). The plan for the building may derive from Fischer von Erlach's sketches for a garden palace he had built for the Althan family in Vienna,⁴ the same family who had commissioned Fischer to build Vranov in Moravia. Chlumec originally was built for the Kinsky family to whom it has been returned. Parts of it will be run as an hotel.

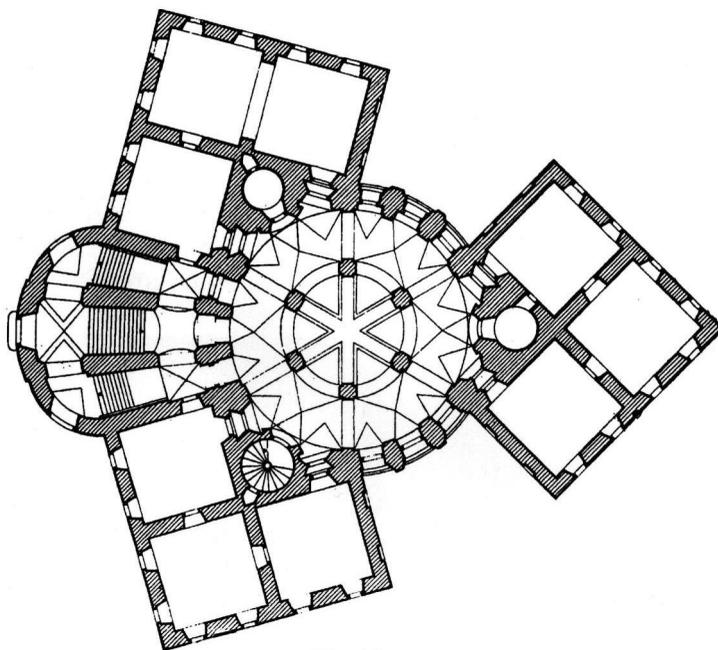


Fig. 19
Chlumec, plan

We have now looked at all the most important of Santini's buildings except for the palaces he built for the nobility in Prague which lie outside the scope of this essay. None of these shows any Gothic elements. The mainly Austrian nobility wanted fashionable Baroque palaces and did not share the clergy's aversion which, as we have seen, was partly nationalist.

It seems that when free to design as he wished Santini preferred classical forms. When the brief specified the use of Gothic elements, as it did in Kladruby and Sedlec, he combined the two styles in a masterly, idiosyncratic and unique way. Of Santini's Baroque buildings – Zbraslav, Plasy, Mladotice, Mariánské Týnice and Křtiny – two, Mladotice and Křtiny, were new. In Plasy and in Mariánské Týnice he worked for Abbot Tyttl, who seems to have put no restrictions on him. We have seen that both at Sedlec and Kladruby the brief specified Gothic forms, which leaves only Zbraslav, his first, and Rajhrad, which, together with the pilgrimage church of St John Nepomuk on the 'Green Hill' at Ždár, were his last commissions. Architectural drawings relating to Ždár have been found in the archives of the monastery of Rajhrad which might suggest that the two abbots were in touch concerning their new buildings. Possibly by that time Santini was enjoying the skill of combining the two styles he had acquired.

Pevsner has compared Santini to Hawksmoor ⁵ and also suggests as sources, among others, Borromini's Collegio di Propaganda Fide in Rome as well as the hall of Prague castle. Yet Santini's work shows greater similarity with that of Guarini who, in 1679, designed a church dedicated to Santa Maria di Ettinga (or the Blessed

Virgin of Ötting) for the Theatine order in Prague which was not built until some years later with a façade by Santini.⁶ This also showed gothicising elements and was another example of the new trend in the Czech lands.

Santini died on 7th December 1723 aged forty-six. In twenty years he had erected more than 100 buildings, an achievement which was made possible by dividing the labour between the architect and the clerk of works, frequently his brother Francis. It is thought that Santini was the first in Bohemia to work in this way. He was fortunate in having the co-operation of his brother and of Francis Maximilian Kaňka (1674-1766), who finished many of the buildings after Santini's death. When he died he was owed large sums for work in progress.

Santini obviously was good at obtaining the confidence of important patrons, more than forty of whom were high-ranking.⁷ Members of the highest nobility, the Kolovrats, the Morzins, the Schwarzenbergs and the Schaffgotschs were present at his weddings and were godparents to his children. It is remarkable that, only half a century after the bitter wars, he was able to work both for the victorious Austrians and the defeated Czechs. He was on good terms with the prelates of the great monastic orders, especially the Cistercians, who referred to him as 'our Santini'. For them he built at Sedlec, Zbraslav, Plasy and, above all, at Ždár nad Sázavou. For the Benedictines he built Kladruby, Rajhrad and Křtiny and for the Premonstratensians, Jesenice and Želiv.

The absence of the Jesuits is striking. In spite of their efforts to re-establish themselves in Bohemia in order to carry out the Catholic re-conquest there seems to have been hostility towards them from the traditional 'native' orders. It was the Jesuits who achieved the canonization of St John Nepomuk in 1729 in Rome, the saint who became the symbol of the triumphant Counter-Reformation in Bohemia and their patron saint. But the Cistercians claimed him as their own. Santini, the grandson of an Italian immigrant, was considered a native architect and guardian of the Gothic traditions of the Cistercians and Benedictines who had no need of the Counter-Reformation to ensure the Catholic presence in Bohemia. For their buildings in the latest fashion of Central Europe they preferred originality, a 'Gothic style as never seen before' created for them by 'their' Santini.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Cyril Eland who drew my attention to Santini's work but who died, sadly, in 1995 before he could see most of the buildings which are described in it.

I would like to thank Ian Curry for allowing me to use some of his slides and Peter Gotlop for his help in translating Abbot Fintzguith's letter. Figures 1,2 and 6 are by Ian Curry; the other photographs are by the author.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Kunstgeschichtliches Jahrbuch der K & k Centralcommission*, (Vienna, 1901), 169.
 Reverend(issi)me, Perill. ac Ampl(issi)me D. D(omi)ne. Domine mihi honorand(issi)me. Tardiorum meae praestitae fidel in scribendo, et transmittenda Ecclesiae ex parte aedificatae, et ex parte aedificandae delineatione varia intercurrentia causarunt impedimenta, signant mei Palirii [?] qui distractus pluribus aedificijs, et his in diversis locis de die in diem differebat. Melius in re, quam in figura apparet specialiter amplissima more Gottico nondum visa cupula, quae plurimum ab adjecta delineatione immutata alterior, et in pyramidibus multo abundantior erit, quam hic delineata videatur, Si Sua R(eve)rend(issi)ma amplitudo dignabitur viam per Cladrubium ad Thermas sumere, gratia mihi fiet, et tunc ocularis inspectio mani festiora reddet omnia. Me aestimat(issi)mis gratijs commendans,

maneo
 Suae Reverend(issi)mae,
 ac Ampl(issi)mae D. D.
 Obsequiosissimus,
 Fr. Maurus Abbas.

Cladrubiensi, die 20. xbris 1720

[Most Reverend, most Brilliant and most Splendid Master who honours me greatly. I am late but sincere in my reply and am sending you a drawing of the church which is partly completed and still being built, various impediments having caused delays. My workmen [?] tell me that these differ in various places and change from day to day. Better, in fact, than the drawing, the edifice as built has an ample cupola in a splendid Gothic style never seen before which is shown on the enclosed drawing unaltered. It will be adorned with many pyramids which can be noted. If your Most Reverend Greatness would grace the road through Kladruby to the baths it would be a pleasure to me, you will see the work with your eyes when your passing the night here will bring more rejoicing to all.

Most Reverend and Splendid Master, I commend myself to you with all due obsequiousness,
 Fra. Maurus, Abbot.

Kladruby, 20th December, 1720.]

2. 'Let us make these three shrines'.
3. Altová, B., *Sedlec, Cistercian Monastery*, Galerie na Valech, (Kutná Hora, 1994).
4. Blunt, A., *Baroque and Rococo Architecture and Decoration*, (London, 1978), 336.
5. Pevsner, N., 'Bohemian Hawksmoor', *Architectural Review*, 121 (1957).
6. Blunt, *op. cit.*, 255.
7. Sedlák, J., *Jan Blažej Santini, Setkání baroka s gotikou*, (Vyšehrad, 1987), 251.

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