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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER OF THE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN BRNO

On his journey through Germany, France, and England the Vienna physicist, professor von Ettinghausen, got acquainted with daguerreotypy, and in summer in 1840; during his visit to Brno, he initiated into the art Friedrich Franz, professor of physics at the local university. As we learn from the Brno paper "Moravia", Franz produced several portraits as early as in 1841. The same paper of Nov. 30th, 1843 brought the news that another professor of the Brno philosophical faculty, Philip Gabriel, an Augustinian, succeeded in making several daguerreotypes. At about the same time Dr. Joseph Berres, professor in Vienna, started making daguerreotypes on paper, in which he was assisted by a noted Brno copper engraver, Joseph Axmann. For all these men daguerreotypy was a hobby or aid in scientific work.

It is maybe typical of the provincial character of Brno that not a single one of its painters throughout the forties decided to make photography his profession. The desire of the public for daguerreotyping was satisfied by travelling photographers, whose names we know from the local "Neuigkeiten".

In May, 1851 the photographers Weissbrod from Frankfurt am Main and Blenker from Bruchsal in Baden appeared in Brno, and jointly advertized photographic portraits coloured by colours or China ink¹. In the same year in autumn the portraitist and photographer Giulio Hofholzer opened a studio in Novoveselská Street, No. 145. He used the Talbottypy, and already two years after Talbot and Malone obtained a patent for using porcelain as base for the photograph, he produced coloured portraits for rings and brooches². At this time V. E. Schnepf, the book-seller, offered English photographic paper for negatives and positives for sale at 6 kreutzers a carton³.

During the summer holidays of the year 1852, as in the preceding years, the portraitist Heinrich Förstler came to Brno, advertizing for the first time photographs besides water-colour paintings and miniatures⁴. He was one of the painters who in the late forties and early fifties decided to produce photographs besides paintings, and later devoted themselves exclusively to photography, as can be seen from the next visit he paid Brno at Easter, 1860⁵. On this occasion he presented himself principally as photographer. Although he did not fail to

¹ *Neuigkeiten des Brünner Tagesboten*, Juni 8, 1851.

² *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Oct. 28, 1851.

³ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Oct. 24, 1851.

⁴ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Aug. 20, 1852.

⁵ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. April 1860.

reminded the public that in the preceding years he left in Brno over 300 water-colours and oil portraits, he did this for the sake of publicity rather than to take pains to produce painted portraits, when it took him only a minute — as he himself remarked — to make a photograph.

From March to May, 1854 Jan Bubeník, a daguerreotypist from Bratislava, lodged at the inn of “U tři kohoutů”. He not only made photographs, but also taught practical daguerreotypy, giving sufficient instruction to his trainees in three days’ time⁶. He made his stay in Brno till May 31st, and probably left for some other town, because in 1856 we catch trace of him in Opava⁷.

The interest in photography increased rapidly, so that the Brno book-sellers Baschak and Irrgang offered the readers of “Neuigkeiten” Martin’s well-known Handbook of Photography, which appeared in Vienna in 1854 in its fourth edition⁸.

In the same year the photographer Theodor Dvořák returned from France to Brno, and advertized his photographic portraits at 2 to 5 guldens⁹ apiece, cutting his prices during his next stay in Brno in 1856 down to 1 gulden 30 kreutzers and 2 guldens¹⁰ apiece, which was doubtless due to the increasing number of professional photographers.

The American invention of stereoscopic daguerreotypes spread fast through Europe, and reached Brno by way of Vienna. In May, 1855 the Vienna daguerreotypist, Joseph Schinowski used the “here hitherto unknown invention”, producing stereoscopic pictures in thirty second sittings in any weather, and, moreover, in colours. He made a several days’ stay in Spurný’s Café in Pekařská Street¹¹.

We could continue the list of travelling photographers with the names of Löwy, Mändel, both from Vienna, and Schwoiser of Munich, and others. However, let us give our attention to the first photographer settled in Brno, Adolf Schwöder. He was born in Brno on June 24th, 1811 in the family of the city coppersmith, Francis Schwöder¹². We do not know what trade he learned, in 1850 he gave commissionaire as his profession¹³. He started photography about 1845¹⁴, and had some undefined relations linking him to Graz (Austria), where he was summoned in May, 1855 to make some photographic portraits¹⁵. It may be that he was in contact with the local photographer and painter, Primus Skoff, who was originally a travelling photographer and who visited Nový Jičín in Moravia¹⁶ in the early forties. This conjecture seems to be corroborated by the striking conformity of the two photographers in the composition of their pictures: Both Schwöder’s and Skoff’s and Skoff’s figures are almost always located between a column and a balustrade, with a vase containing creepers beside the

⁶ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. March 25, 1854, April 12, 1854, May 3, 1854.

⁷ Jaroslav Bouček, *Mährens erste Photographen*. Paper read at the International Symposium on the History and Aesthetics of Photography. Prague, April 21, 1969.

⁸ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. May 20, 1854.

⁹ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. April 9, 1854.

¹⁰ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Dec. 11, 1856.

¹¹ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. May 15, 1855.

¹² Brno City Archives, Census of 1857.

¹³ Brno City Archives, Census of 1850.

¹⁴ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Dec. 9, 1865.

¹⁵ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. May 20, 1855.

¹⁶ Jaroslav Bouček, l. c.

heads. With Skoff the vase is usually set off by a drapery, whereas Schwöder balances his composition by lighting up the background of the head. Also the carpet plays an important role with both of them. Its striking pattern is in contrast with the neutral background of the photograph.

It was evidently quite logical that it soon occurred to Schwöder and the other photographers who started out as painters that the photograph was handicapped by its lack of colour. Man has always seen the world in colours, and suddenly was presented a true copy of reality, but this reality was in fact fictitious, as it lacked a substantial element — colour. The photographers tried to remove this imperfection by colouring the black-and-white pictures. That is probably why Schwöder joined forces with the painter Johann Tripp. Tripp settled in Brno toward the end of the year 1851 or at the beginning of 1852 after a stay in Vienna and at Želetava¹⁷.

From the very beginning of this cooperation the Moravian Gallery owns three coloured photographs signed "Schwöder u. Tripp", and dated 1852. These are three would-be miniatures of a gentleman, a lady, and a young man (file No. SDK 367—369). Schwöder made a photograph of the face and Tripp painted it with distempers and water colours. The most successful parts of the pictures are the faces with fine complexion tints, expressive eyes, and reflexes in the hair. The bodies, on the other hand, are rigid, seeming to float above the chairs in their rigidity. The upper part of the background is painted in light ochres, the lower part is finished in dead gray colour.

Two coloured photographs of a married couple originating from that period are the property of the Museum of the City of Brno (file No. 56.223 and 56.222). Same as with the photographs of the Moravian Gallery, the painting is flat and inexpressive, the forms crude, and the coloration is far from refined: the dark green dress and dark gray wrap are in sharp contrast with the dull ochre background. More refinement can be found in the portraits of the Man with a pince-nez and the Woman wearing a brown dress, owned by the same institution (file No. 56.220 and 56.221). These are again the portraits of a married couple, this time painted with oil and gouache. The pinkish hues of the complexion of the face and hands stand out against a dark brown background. The dark dress demurely merges with the background, the painting is much more plastic than is the case of water-colour photographs, doubtless keeping to the traditions of Vienna portrait painters of the first half of the 19th century. Judging by the studio requisites, the photographs were made in the late fifties of the 19th century. When evaluating the period of cooperation of the photographer Adolf Schwöder and the painter Johann Tripp¹⁸, we can but say that

¹⁷ Johann Tripp was born on Dec. 27, 1816 in Arzl in Tyrol (Brno City Archives, Census of 1857). He is first mentioned as portrait painter in Vienna in 1840 (Wurzbach, *Biograph.-lex. Österr.* 47, 1883, 207). He seems to have been a relative of Vendelin Tripp, born in 1811 likewise in Arzl, pupil of the Academy of Vienna, who was a painter of portraits and historical scenes, and died in Vienna on July 2, 1842 (*Thieme — Becker* XXXIII, 404). Johann Tripp was staying in Vienna as late as 1848, when his daughter Pauline was born there. His son Henry was already born at Želetava on June 9, 1850, and his daughter Laura was born in Brno on March 31, 1852 (Brno City Archives, Census of 1857).

¹⁸ This cooperation continued till December, 1865, when Johann Tripp died (Brno City Archives, Register of Deaths, Book III, 244).

their art was no more than honest trade followed by two people of average talent who had to stand up to the hard competition of the photographers and painters of Brno.

Some time before the year 1862 Schwöder changed his studio and moved over to 398/399, Sedlářská Street¹⁹, and three years later, on March 14th, 1865 he advertised in the "Neuigkeiten" his new "studio of artistic photography" in the Koblížná Street, No. 545, where the Opera Café is standing today.²⁰

Schwöder's black-and-white photographs are represented in the collection of the Moravian Gallery only by pictures made since the middle of the fifties. Although he must have had practice of over a decade, his pictures are of poor quality, especially as far as composition is concerned. Takes of groups of persons in the studio were much less successful than portraits. He stressed the expression of the face, particularly that of the eyes, as can well be seen in the photograph of the Old gentleman with a moustachio (file No. 2327).

Of the photographs originating in the sixties and in the early seventies only men's portraits are worth mentioning. Their simplicity and sobriety remind us of the early portrait photographs of his make. From the technical point of view, however, they show great progress. His portrait of the Sitting woman (file No. 2323) is also of some interest. In making it he put aside all needless requisites, and probably that the portrait in question was that of a woman, he put in play the ruffles and laces of an attractive young woman.

Adolf Schwöder closed his practice of photographer in the early eighties in a studio in Nová Street, No. 12, whose primitive wooden construction reminding us of a garden house has been preserved to this day²¹.

Schwöder's contemporary and probably competitor was another Brno photographer, Johann Hayder, mentioned for the first time in the Directory in 1856²². At that time he had a studio in the building at the corner of Kapucínské Square and Zelný trh Square. He was born in Budapest in 1818 or a year later²³, and he came to Brno toward the end of 1854 from Vienna²⁴. Out of the season he was apparently also a travelling photographer²⁵. The Moravian Gallery owns only two of his photographs, but the two prove beyond all doubt that he was a gifted portraitist²⁶. His main preoccupation in making the picture was the face. The dress is suppressed, as well as the background (see the photograph of the Man with a beard, file No. 1337). From the picture of the Old gentleman with a walking stick (file No. 4527) you feel the strength of personality. The civil posture, which must have been typical of the gentleman photographed, is unfavourably affected by the painted background. If the backscene was painted by Hayder himself, landscape painting was not his strong point. It affects us as a theatre scene produced by a dabbler. He was probably forced to use the ro-

¹⁹ *Allgemeines Adressenbuch*, M. J. Zeckel. Brno 1862, p. 322.

²⁰ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. March 14, 1865.

²¹ He last appears on the list of photographers in the Directory of 1881. The Directory of 1885 brings no mention of him.

²² *Adressenbuch und Häuserschema*. J. A. Herlth. Brno 1856, p. 349.

²³ Brno City Archives, List of Foreigners in Brno 1751 to 1857.

²⁴ In January, 1855 Hayder's wife Henriette, whose maiden name was Rechenberg, native of Vienna, advertized garment cutting training for Brno ladies.

²⁵ At the time of census in 1857 he was absent from Brno, and had an open passport.

²⁶ At the time of census in 1857 he was registered as portrait painter.

matic background by the prevailing fashion, which, in his case, was strongly out of keeping with the realistic presentation of the personage. Both of the pictures originate from the sixties, when he had his studio in the town court called Stadthof.

In 1850 the artist Joseph Haier, native of Vienna trained in Munich, a painter of portraits and historical scenes, settled among the painters of Brno. He had his residence in the Dominikánské Square No. 188 since 1855²⁸. He apparently practiced photography already at that time, but the first reliable information on the existence of his photographic studio comes only from the year 1862, when he advertized a new garden studio in the Novoveselská Street, No. 145³⁰. The next year he also took over the studio of the invalid photographer J. F. Terček at the Měnská Gate³¹, but already in 1864 he let Terček's widow have the studio. In that year he gave up painting completely, becoming a travelling photographer, and since Jan. 1st, 1865 his studio was used by the firm "Rafael"³³. It appears that at that time photography prevailed over painting, because as early as in the year 1862 an unknown Brno critic was shocked by the absence of Haier, Zelený, and Maysl from the art exhibition then held in Brno. He said: "... does this mean that photography has prevailed over all to the degree that the majority of the artists have given up their artistic careers, devoting themselves to this low trade?"³⁴ Haier himself, perhaps realized the crisis of photography in the seventies and eighties, remarking a revival of painting. It also may be that he grew too old to be comfortable as a travelling photographer. It is certain, however, that towards the end of his life he reverted to painting and to the conservation of paintings.

Another outstanding Brno photographer was likewise a stranger in the city. He came from the Trenčín District, then a part of Hungary, where he was born in 1827³⁵. He was probably a member of the well-known family of artists, the Quittners of Galanta, of which originated the portraitist Miksa Quittner³⁶. Leopold likewise has the title of painter and photographer on the reverse of his photographs. The Brno public first made his acquaintance in February, 1859, when he opened a studio at the Padowetz Hotel³⁷. He advertized at that time that he was master of all sorts of photography on metal, paper, glass, flax, as well as stereoscopy. All this in the most up-to-date Parisian and London methods. We know so far a single photograph made in this studio, the picture of Count Alphonse Dubský in hussar uniform³⁸. The composition is simple but impressive. A canellated part of a column with a richly sculptured postament is

²⁷ He was born on Sept. 9, 1816 in Vienna, where he also died on April 7, 1891 (*Führer d. Gem.-Gal. d. Franzens-Museum. Brünn, 1899*). His widow Elisa was still living in Brno in 1895.

²⁸ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. March 25, 1855, Sept. 25, 1855.

²⁹ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. June 7, 1855.

³⁰ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. May 11, 1862.

³¹ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. July 25, 1863.

³² *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. March 12, 1864.

³³ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Jan. 1, 1865.

³⁴ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. April 27, 1862, in the article entitled *Zur Gemälde-Ausstellung*.

³⁵ Brno City Archives, Census of 1870.

³⁶ *Thieme-Becker* XXVII, 530.

³⁷ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Feb. 20, 1859.

³⁸ State Archives, Brno, G 147/116.

situated in the golden section. The figure of the officer resting his right fore-arm against the postament reaches up to about two thirds of the column, forming a pyramidoidal composition with the column.

In May, 1859 there appeared in the "Neuigkeiten" an article about his photo studio³⁹. There is a mention of this being the second reporter's visit to Mr. Quittner's studio, during which the author of the article found that his stereoscopic pictures were remarkable. He stressed the exceptional technical skill of the artist, and his effort to capture beneath the surface the character and individuality of the person represented. In March, 1861, when the application of another Brno photographer, J. F. Terček, for permission to build a glass photo studio over the former police station next to the Ferdinand Gate (plot No. 541 at the site of the present-day stairs adjoining the Grandhotel), was rejected, he applied for the same place himself, but was equally unsuccessful. The Mayor turned him down on the grounds that the place in question had been recently cultivated to serve the citizens of Brno as promenade, and that the construction of the studio would encroach upon the "freedom of the public"⁴⁰. For this reason he opened a photo studio in the garden of the house No. 121 in the Velká Pekařská Street⁴¹. Here was made, among others, the photograph of the officer Adolphus Illek owned by the Museum of the City of Brno, dated 1862 (file No. A 3330/3992). He stayed at this address until April, 1864, when he advertized his newly built studio in the Malá Pekařská Street No. 42⁴², remnants of which can even today be seen in the court-yard extension of the house. He wrote that the building cost him not only a lot of effort, but also a lot of money, and that in recompense of the encouragement the public had given him for the whole time of his residence, he offered them in Brno a brand new invention: the microphotograph à la Paris. He did not enjoy his new studio for long, however. His building venture probably exhausted his finances to the point that on July 18th, 1864 he abandoned it to the photographeress Julia von Kovács⁴³. Of Mrs. Kovács we only know that she stayed in Brno from April, 1860, and had a studio at the inn "u Černého Orla"⁴⁴. In her advertizement of March 31st, 1861 she offered photographs on paper, glass, etc. She was in close contact with French and English photographic societies, and she produced photographs for 50 kreuzers to 50 guldens apiece⁴⁵. Her only photograph in the collection of the Moravian Gallery, the portrait of a little girl, comes from the period when she was using Quittner's photo studio, i.e. the years 1864 to 1867. In that year the photographeress Julia von Kovács died at the age of 40 as a result of burning. The profession and hobby of this doubtless exceptional woman proved fatal to her. According to the obituary notice published in the "Neuigkeiten" on Nov. 12th, 1867, and signed by Leopold Quittner, the widow Julia von Kovács, née von Borry, was a landowner, and for reasons of which we are ignorant, also photographer. Leopold Quittner resumed the ownership of the deserted studio in Malá

³⁹ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. May 8, 1859.

⁴⁰ Brno City Archives, *Oeconomica*, volume 109/105. (I am indebted to Dr. Vodička, the custodian, for his kind information.)

⁴¹ *Allgemeines Adressenbuch*, M. J. Zeckel. Brno 1862, p. 296.

⁴² *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. April 3, 1864.

⁴³ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. July 19, 1864.

⁴⁴ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. April 8, 1860.

⁴⁵ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. March 31, 1861.

Pekařská Street, then called Kopečná Street. In the following period were produced other photographs of the collection of the Moravian Gallery: the photographs of the Young woman with a lace wrap (file No. 1810) and of the Woman wearing a dark dress (file No. 1808), of which the literal composition and identical requisites point to Quittner's apprenticeship with Emil Rabending, the court photographer of Vienna. We do not know exactly how long Quittner stayed in Brno, but in 1870 he still lived in Kopečná Street, No. 39, the apartment serving, according to his own statement, him and his servant to lodge in and pursue photography⁴⁶.

In the early sixties there appeared in Brno a number of new photographers. They were originally instructed in other trades, and it was perhaps the notion that photography was a lucrative business that brought them here. As we can infer from the frequent association of partners, however, they probably soon found out that the equipment of a studio was rather expensive (the average price mentioned was 4500 guldens), and that the hopes of growing rich fast were exaggerated. This was the case of the firm Klatowsky & Hiss. Ignatius Klatowsky (1833—1866) passed the apprenticeship with a sign-painter and varnisher⁴⁷, learning a trade of artistic craftsmanship. Beginning in 1859, he had his sign-painter's shop in Koblížná Street, No. 32⁴⁸, but in 1861 he moved into a photographic studio and was, as we read in an advertizement of the same year, in close contact with the assistant of Angerer of Vienna, who was a photographer of some renown⁵⁰. He mostly occupied himself with portrait photography, but it was the "artistic photograph" that he had in mind rather than the portrait itself, infesting the studio with props representing all sorts of balustrades, pedestals supporting vases and flowers, and with painted landscapes (see for ex. pictures in the collection of the Moravian Gallery). He was tributary to the aesthetic notions of the time in which was always present the element of fear that photography is incommeasurable with other arts, and that it can become art only when it does more than purely copy nature. The conception of the photographs did not change at all even when Klatowsky joined forces with Edward Hiss, former dealer in trimmings, buttons, and pipes, in 1862. The only increment was the romantic landscape as background. It gave the photographs a sort of unreal character, which is emphasized by their brownish hue giving the impression of a light haze (for ex. the portrait of a young man, file No. 1418, and the portrait of a girl, file No. 4885 of the collection of the Moravian Gallery). The two continued working together until the beginning of the year 1866, when Klatowsky evidently gave up photography, and resumed his old trade in a newly opened sign-painter's shop⁵³, but not for long. At the beginning of September in the same year he died of cholera⁵⁴. Hiss stayed on in their

⁴⁶ Brno City Archives, Census of 1870.

⁴⁷ Brno City Archives, Census of 1857.

⁴⁸ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. May 29, 1859.

⁴⁹ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. May 24, 1861.

⁵⁰ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Nov. 27, 1861.

⁵¹ See the date on the reverse of the photograph (file No. 4832) from the Moravian Gallery.

⁵² He was born in Brno on Feb. 11, 1825 (Brno City Archives, Census of 1890), and had a fancy goods shop in Koblížná Street, No. 65.

⁵³ *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Jan. 4, 1866.

⁵⁴ Brno City Archives, Brno Register of Deaths, Book III, *Neuigkeiten*, l. c. Sept. 26, 1866.

former studio. It seems that he improved the technical equipment, replaced the old props with new ones, and continued in the business till 1890⁵⁵, with only occasional intermissions when he stayed in lowland Austria⁵⁶.

Translated by A. Nováková

ÚVOD K HISTORII BRNĚNSKÉ FOTOGRAFIE

Autorka zjistila při studiu dobových dokumentů, že o prvních fotografech z povolání se dá v Brně hovořit teprve na přelomu 40. a 50. let 19. století. A nebyli to ani fotografové domácí, kteří seznámili zvědavé publikum s daguerrotypií, nýbrž cizinci přišli z Vídně, Mnichova a odjinud.

Prvním usedlým brněnským fotografem byl zdejší rodák *Adolf Schwöder* (1811— po 1892). Fotografovat začal kolem roku 1845, avšak první zaručenou písemnou zprávu o něm jako fotografovi z povolání máme až z roku 1853. Už z předchozího roku 1852 vlastní Městské muzeum v Brně a Moravská galerie několik jeho kolorovaných fotografií, které zhotovoval ve spolupráci s brněnským malířem *Johannem Trippem* (1816—1865). Některé detaily v kompozičním uspořádání snímků ukazují, že se Schwöder poučil u Prima Skoffa, fotografa ve Stýrském Hradci.

Jen o tři roky později než Adolf Schwöder, tedy roku 1856, je v Brně zachycen další fotograf z povolání *Johann Hayder*, rodem z Pešti (1818 nebo 1819 — před 1890).

V druhé polovině 50. let začal v Brně s fotografováním i Vídeňák *Josef Haier*, malíř historických výjevů (1816—1891). Fotografoval zde však jen do roku 1864, pak se dal na dráhu cestujícího fotografa. Po letech prožitých s „kamerou na cestách“ za publikem se v 70. letech vrátil opět k malování obrazů.

Jiným fotografem cizincem usedlým v Brně byl *Leopold Quittner* (* 1827). Do Brna přišel začátkem roku 1859 a hned zpočátku uchvátil obecnost i kritiku. Když v únoru 1859 inzeroval svůj ateliér v hotelu Padovec, upozorňoval měšťany, že se v Brně zdrží jen několik dnů. Ze zamýšlených několika dnů se stalo celých deset let. Jeho obchodní partnerkou byla Maďarka *Julie von Kovács* (1827?—1867), která v Brně fotografovala od roku 1860 do roku 1867, kdy zemřela na následky popálenin.

Rozvoj podnikání v 60. letech 19. století vyvolal k životu i v Brně celou řadu nových fotografických firem. Jednou z nich byl ateliér *Ignáce Klatowského* (1833—1866), vyučeného malíře písmá a lakýrníka. Otevřel si ho roku 1861 na Kobližné ulici. Jak vyplynulo z jeho brzkého sdružení s obchodníkem *Eduardem Hissem* (1825 — mezi 1890 a 1892), bylo i k provozování tohoto řemesla zapotřebí jistého kapitálu. Vzniká také otázka, proč se rok před smrtí vrátil k malířství písmá, když Hiss se naopak vzdal svého původního obchodu s galanteriím zbožím, aby se výhradně věnoval povolání fotografa, které provozoval až do roku 1890.

⁵⁵ In 1890 he is mentioned in the Brno Directory for the last time; in 1892 it is only his wife Emily that is mentioned there, her address being 3, Soukenická Street.

⁵⁶ Brno City Archives, Census of 1890.