Between Palaces and Castles: The Viennese Aristocracy at Home during the First Half of the 18th Century

Abstract:

This contribution shows how the study of urban and seigniorial houses of the Viennese Aristocracy could throw light on the residential options of this social group between the end of the 17th Century and the middle of the 18th Century. As a matter of fact, these elites often owned two residences at least, which correspond to their dual functions: lord and courtier. Thus, their residential customs are part of this permanent tension between the proximity of the prince and the exercise of their seigniorial domination. To analyse architectural forms, iconographical cycles, furniture inventories, but also financial investments is a way to assess the importance, or even the priority, attached to one of these residences. Moreover, these residences contribute to elaborate a proper identity which aims to produce a social distinction among the Court and the Nobility. This paper is be based in particular on two well-documented cases among others: the counts of Harrach and Questenberg who owned each a Viennese palace and a seigniorial castle, one in Lower Austria, the other in Moravia.

Keywords: *: Urban and seigniorial houses, Counts of Harrach and Questenberg, Vienna.*