

# RISE AND FALL

## Anton Baumgartner, architect and master builder, and his family

All Internet sources A1, etc. are in this online file:

<https://peter.panholzer.org/Baumgartner.pdf>

The family tree can be seen here:

[https://peter.panholzer.org/Baumgartner/Baumgartner\\_Genealogie.gif](https://peter.panholzer.org/Baumgartner/Baumgartner_Genealogie.gif)

As an Excel file with register links:

<https://peter.panholzer.org/Baumgartner/BaumgartnerGenealogie.xlsx>

The focus is on Baumgartner's biography - not on his complete catalog raisonné.

Anton Baumgartner loved to pose as Baron von Baumgarten or Baron von Paumgarten. Notwithstanding archival noble records during his career as an architect and builder, his real name is simply Anton Baumgartner.<sup>1</sup>

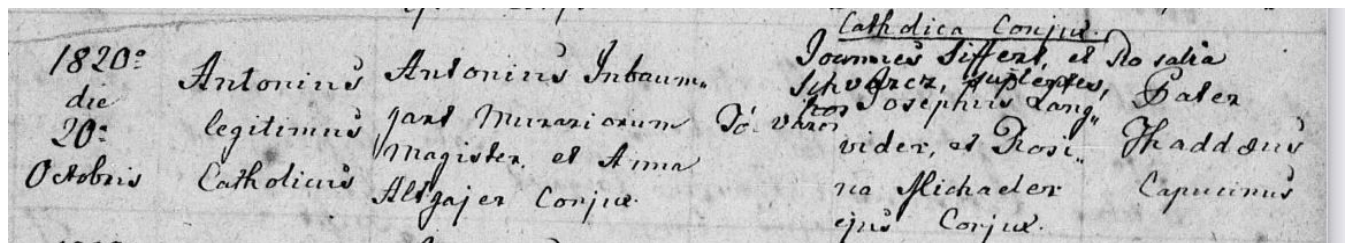


Figure 1 (son of Antonius Baumgartner "murariorum magister")

Anton's parents, Anton Baumgartner and Anna Altgajer, married on May 25, 1818 in Pápa in Veszprém County, Hungary. Her son Joseph was also born in this city on March 2, 1819. Anton, the second son, was born on October 20, 1820 in the Továros (lake side) area of the Esterházy town of Totis (today Tata), situated on an artificial lake, about 90 km north-east of Pápa.<sup>1</sup> Here the father Antonius Inbaumgart appears in the baptismal register as "murariorum magister".<sup>2</sup> Regrettably, he had died at the age of 34 a month before Anton was born.

A year later Anna married the architect and master builder György Hanauer in Totis and bore him nine more children between 1822 and 1839, six boys and three girls. Her husband was the estate architect responsible for the Piarist School, which was built in 1765 under Empress Maria Theresia by the Hungarian Baroque architect Jakab Fellner in Totis. Hanauer was also busy with other projects in Totis and the surrounding area until the late 1840s. He does not appear in any records in Vienna.

Totis, today's Tata northwest of Budapest, was already a noble bathing and health resort as well as a popular summer resort for the Budapest aristocracy - similar to the upper-class spa town of Baden near Vienna, where many Viennese patrician families had a summer villa and where the emperor also sojourned regularly. Family members of Count Esterházy also stayed in Totis at their summer palace, rebuilt by Jakab Fellner, which was equipped with old, well-fortified fortifications for states of siege: Emperor - and King of Hungary - Franz I sought refuge here with his wife Maria Ludovika von Austria-Este,

when he had to flee Vienna from the armies of Napoleon and signed the Peace of Schönbrunn here after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. A century later, the palace hosted Emperor (and King) Franz Joseph at the height of his splendor. Another decade later, the expelled heir to the throne Charles, although he had already lost his power, found an enthusiastic reception here in solidarity when he tried to restore the Hungarian kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

In view of the national pride of the Hungarians, Totis was particularly friendly to the Austrian monarchy. In this town, Anton spent his childhood and school days together with his brother Joseph and his nine step-siblings, most of whom were much younger.

In the summer of the year 1838, Anton Baumgartner and his brother Joseph successfully graduated from the Piarist College in Totis, passing their graduation exam "Matura". In autumn of the same year their stepfather Hanauer – who was the estate architect of this renowned institution – sent both of them to Vienna to study architecture. There they rented a room in the cramped tavern "Zum blauen Mondschein" on Salvatorgasse, Stadt 380<sup>5</sup>. In early November 1838 they both enrolled at the academy's School of Architecture in the sprawling Jesuit *Professhaus* in Annagasse under the guidance of Pietro Nobile (Vienna's most famous architect at the time). After one semester, however, they stayed away from class. In November 1840 they both re-enrolled. It is unclear what they did in the meantime of a year and a half. Perhaps they attended lectures at the Polytechnic Institute in Vienna, which also offered architecture classes. Re-enrolled at the Academy, Joseph stayed away from classes from the very beginning of the first course, but Anton persevered and completed all six courses by the summer of 1843. Among his teachers were Pietro Nobile (design), Carl Roesner (architecture and ornamental drawing), Wilhelm Ostertag and (after 1842) Ludwig Christian Förster (beginnings of higher architecture), and Paul Sprenger and (after 1842) Georg Beskiba (mathematics and perspective).<sup>6</sup>

In the years before 1848, the freelance architect hardly had a chance of getting major commissions. *"Architecture was limited on the one hand to the pure building trade, on the other hand to the bureaucracy of the building officials. The Hofbaurat and the censorship officials, who had the gift of twisting and turning the building laws in all directions, entrenched themselves behind a monopoly position. Architecture as art got nothing. It took a good dose of youthful vigor and poetic faith to devote oneself to architecture at the time, an art that hardly existed as such."*<sup>7</sup>

*"From the time that Peter Nobile, Roesner and later also Van der Nüll and Siccardsburg worked at the school of architecture, artistic feeling was awakened among their pupils, and by the end of 1847 there was a whole young generation of architects who "The year 1848 found a prepared ground among the artists, especially the architects."*<sup>7</sup>

Anton Baumgartner had satisfactorily completed his studies at the Academy's School of Architecture in 1843 and then started to practice with experienced architects and master builders. After a sufficient number of years he could obtain the authority of Architect and Stadtbaumeister (City-Approved Builder). Above all, he probably worked as a consultant in the studio of his later best man, the architect Franz Xaver Ehmman, whose studio near the church Maria am Gestade was only a six-minute walk from his apartment in the Schabenrüsselhaus, entrance Am Bergl.<sup>8</sup> The 19 years older Franz Xaver Ehmman

(1801-1872), from Sirtz (Circ) in Hungary, had also completed all courses at the Academy and had been an architect and officially authorized *Stadtbaumeister* since 1831. His father Johann Ehmann was also a *Stadtbaumeister* and worked for Prince Esterházy in Hungary.<sup>9</sup> One might assume that Baumgartner's designs were influenced by those of Ehmann. However, this only applies to his designs between 1855 and 1859, which arose from the austere style of the bureaucratic Vormärz due to the simple, even austere design of the facades.

In 1848 – apparently in Baden near Vienna – the 27-year-old Anton fell in love with 18-year-old Johanna, daughter of the *Imperial Tax Assessor* Karl von Gager,<sup>10</sup> who had retired in 1842 and was knighted in 1854. In June 1846, the Gager family had rented a villa in Baden's Neugasse, in the vicinity of which Anton's young family would later also spend the summer. The wedding took place on September 17, 1849 in the parish of St. Stephan in Baden. Anton's best man was the architect Franz Xaver Ehmann. As a dowry, Gager gave the bridal couple the extensive Ebnerhof estate with 13 rooms, forest and meadows in Raaba, not far from Graz. The young couple initially lived in Baumgartner's apartment at Stadt 482 "Am Bergl",<sup>A75</sup>, but soon moved to an apartment in the house at Stadt 660 Auwinkel 4<sup>11</sup>, built in 1836 and owned by the wealthy merchant Theodor Dumba<sup>12</sup>. Each of the three inhabited floors had 11 windows(!), so it was spacious enough to accommodate both an apartment and possibly an architect's office.



Figure 2 – City 660 / Dominikanerbastei 15 / Auwinkel 4

With its long, double-folded window front, this wide building contrasted favorably with the grey and crammed houses on the opposite side of the Auwinkel. From the upper floors one had an enchanting view over the promenades and meadows outside the bastions and over the Danube Canal. In 1862 a fourth floor was added by architect Johann Adametz. Two years later, the Baumgartner family moved to Rothenthurmstraße 37, again Am Bergl, where Baumgartner had lived before his marriage. Baumgartner also rented a villa in Baden every summer, so we have to look there for family events that fall in the summer months.<sup>13</sup>

In 1851, the young couple's first daughter, Helene, was born in Baden. In Helene's baptismal entry, Baumgartner's father, Anton InBaumgart senior, is entered as "*High Count Esterházy District-Baurath*".

- More about Helene in the chapter HELENE – EDLE VON WARIMFELD

In 1852 another girl followed, Gisela. Baumgartner is not yet entered in the baptismal entry as master builder or architect, but (as with Helene's baptism) only as "construction consultant", so after completing his architecture studies at the academy he probably worked for Franz Xaver Ehmann and Anton Oelzelt, the largest building contractor in Vienna.

- More about Gisela in the chapter GISELA – BARONESS of KARWINSKY BY KARWIN

Finally, in 1854, a son followed, Karl. In his baptismal entry, the father simply referred to himself as "Anton Baumgartner" and even as an "Architect". He had probably completed the necessary number of years of practice in an architectural firm to enable him to establish his own studio.

- More about Karl in the chapter KARL VON PAUMGARTTEN (alias FRIEDRICH VON THUL)

Until recently, the first independent design by Anton Baumgartner appeared in the Viennese building consensus books of 1855 – a residential building at Währingerstraße 12, in "Neu-Wien", a district that had already been approved for building before the city wall fell. His clients were the court and city architect Anton Oelzelt (1867: Knight of Newin = Neuwien) and his wife Adele. Oelzelt himself directed the execution of this building.<sup>16</sup>

But recently, during my research, a pompous advertisement appeared in the Wiener Fremden-Blatt of January 16, 1853 with a huge Fraktur title. Anton the architect's oat was itching: A79

### *An der Stelle*

*of the old Johannes chapel in the Jägerzeile, the 4-storey high residential building was built in the latest style and now completed, which construction management was carried out by the famous [sic!] architect von Baumgarten, thanks to the very functional and solid inner division with 17 beautiful, bright apartments of the entire residential building, the most incredible has been achieved on this building area.*

The house, built in 1852, still stands at Praterstraße 39 with its original facade and is listed in the Architects' Lexicon as the work of the court master builder Anton Oelzelt. We can assume that in the eight years between 1843 and 1851 Baumgartner completed his practical years first with Franz Xaver Ehmann and then with Anton Oelzelt.

In 1852, shortly after the birth of his daughter Gisela, Baumgartner was working on his own designs. Until then, his monthly salary as an employed architectural consultant had to be sufficient to provide for his family. After he received his first commissions as an official architect, his financial situation quickly improved. In 1856 he received his first public, particularly extensive commission, that of the Israelite Institute for the Deaf and Mute in Haltergasse (Juchgasse) on Landstrasse.<sup>14</sup> The board of directors of the institute included the wholesaler Emanuel Kanitz, also from Hungary, who busied himself as co-founder of several charities in the k. k. Monarchy. With the support of Kanitz,

Baumgartner subsequently received numerous commissions from large industrialists and the moneyed nobility of the up-and-coming Viennese Jewish society.

In 1856 he submitted drafts for the conversion of the Greek Church on Fleischmarkt, the implementation of which was prevented by the architect Franz Poduschka, who was notorious for his intrigues but was insignificant after a personal feud with Baumgartner<sup>A71</sup>. 1859 Baumgartner designed an apartment building in Wien 3, Löwengasse 2B/Obere Weißgerberstraße 14. Here, the style of the facade simple in the classicist tradition of the Vormärz and its simplicity similar to the preceding Institute for the Deaf and Dumb. Renaissance motifs and ostentatious opulence only came to light in Baumgartner's work after the expansion of the Inner City of Vienna. Summing up, Baumgartner only received three commissions in the second half of the 1850s. The big breakthrough was yet to come.

In 1857 the young Emperor Franz Joseph proclaimed in a hand letter the words "It is my will . . ." his Vienna City Expansion (*Stadt-Erweiterungs*) Plan and appointed Konstantin Graf Wickenburg as chairman of the *Stadt-Erweiterungs* fund, which was responsible for financing the massive urban planning work and the new representative buildings to be constructed by selling the *Ringstrasse* building plots.

At the end of this year, the 37-year-old architect Baumgartner, who had immigrated from Hungary and who was still not considered an assimilated Viennese, was given Viennese Municipal Membership at a meeting of the Municipal Council chaired by the Vice-President (later the Mayor of Vienna) Andreas Zelinka and as a result was granted the right of domicile from 1863 (against a fee payment).<sup>A76</sup>

1860 was to be a decisive year of success for Baumgartner, because in 1855 the Serbian Prince Michael Obrenowitsch had bought a villa with a garden from Prince Nikolaus Esterházy on the country road in the immediate vicinity of Palais Metternich, which was outside the Karolinentor at Waag-Gasse 507 (also Waggasse). In fact, at this time the extensive gardens of the Villa Metternich extended to the gardens of the properties in Waag-Gasse (later Salesianergasse). Obrenovich had this villa luxuriously renovated by the summer of 1856. Subsequently, he regularly used it as a place to stay on his travels. He may have commissioned Baumgartner to renovate this villa, because Anton Baumgartner was not unknown to Prince Esterházy, the seller of this property, who would commission him with the design his palace in Budapest a few years later. This possibility is supported by the fact that in the autumn of 1860 Prince Obrenovich had commenced talks with Baumgartner about his planned palace in Belgrade and had organized a trip for him to Paris so that he could study the latest fashion in terms of artistic interior decoration. Obrenovich was a noble patron of the arts and architecture and used his wealth for the pleasure of indulging his taste and artistic preferences. Immediately after Baumgartner's return and report, Obrenowitsch commissioned him to design the Small Residence (also known as the Summer Palace) behind the existing building built by Michael's father, Milosch. The cost estimate of 300,000 ducats (about five million euros today) was particularly generous and must have earned Baumgartner a fat fee. In May of the following year, Baumgartner traveled to Belgrade to start with the construction of this palace according to plans he had drawn up. Despite his exploratory trip to Paris, he promised - probably for patriotic reasons - to employ mainly local craftsmen for the interior artwork and furnishings.<sup>A81</sup>



In this building, there were round-arched Byzantine windows on the upper floor for the summer residence of the prince and his wife, Countess Júlia Hunyady de Kéthely. The windowless ground floor was designed like a crypt for a museum exhibition of effectively illuminated art objects that the prince had collected during his numerous travels.<sup>A90</sup>

Figure 2a - Prince Michael Obrenowitsch

Obrenowitsch was only allowed to enjoy his new palace for a few years, because in 1868 he was walking in the Topschider Park shot dead by assassins and horribly mutilated with saber blows<sup>A84</sup>.

Emanuel Kanitz, Baumgartner's early patron, commissioned him in 1861 to design a residential building on the newly created Rudolfsplatz (corner of Gonzagagasse), and in the same year another on Franz-Josephs-Kai, on whose adjacent plot Baumgartner designed a residential building for Leopold Abeles, who would later rise to meteoric financial and social fame as a cotton manufacturer.

After the years of the demolition of the wall and the beginning of construction activity on the Vienna's City Expansion area, Baumgartner's great Ringstrasse ("Ring Road") career began. In 1861 he joined the *Stadtbaumeister* guild<sup>17</sup> and subsequently carried out most of his designs as *Stadtbaumeister* ("Master Builder").

The granddaughter of Anton Baumgartner (the daughter of his son Karl), *Helene Frankl* – whom I was able to find by way of a rare coincidence in 1965 in *Mauer* near Vienna – knew some details about her grandfather handed down by her parents. She still remembered the description of his external appearance and his character traits: he was very tall, strong, had reddish-blond hair, blue eyes, and was utterly good-natured to the point where his business ability ended in absurd and unjust outcomes.<sup>H</sup>



Ignaz Wechselmann Emil Unger Josef Favary Bela Ney Heinrich Koch  
Anton Baumgartner Michael Ybl Anton Weber

Figure 3 (Anton Baumgartner surrounded by his Hungarian colleagues, Budapest 1871)



Baumgartner received his commissions almost exclusively from the circle of friends of his respected bridal family *Gager* and via his early acquaintance with *Emanuel Kanitz*. In 1861 he designed three more houses on *Rudolfsplatz*, a square which had been newly created as part of the city's expansion and named in honour of *Crown Prince Rudolf*, and a fourth apartment building on *Gonzagagasse*. Baumgartner's clients, *Emanuel Kanitz*, *Adolph Pollak Ritter von Rudin*, *Leopold Abeles*, *Menachem Russo* and *Isaak Friedländer* all belonged to the class of rich industrialists and bank directors. In 1862 his first building situated directly on the *Ringstraße* was Opernring 23 for the matches manufacturer *Adolf Pollak, Ritter von Rudin*. This was one of the very first private palais on the *Ringstraße*, which began to be planned in a southerly direction from the *Burgtor* (Fig. 10).



In 1863, Baumgartner received two more *Ringstraße* commissions: Kärntnerring 10 – again for *Adolf Pollak* – and Kärntnerring 14, for the brothers *Moriz and Eduard, Ritter von Todesco*. The latter building was Baumgartner's crowning creation, in which his magnificent design talent found its highest expression.<sup>18</sup>

Figure 4, Stiegenhaus des Palais Todesco, Kärntnerring 14

In addition to the two buildings on the *Kärntnerring*, Baumgartner designed another apartment building at *Gonzagagasse 12* in the same year and undertook the construction work for the house at *Gonzagagasse 3*, which had been designed by *Ferdinand Fellner*. However, due to the vast number of projects, both his architect's office and his construction company had difficulty meeting their deadlines<sup>19</sup>. In order to cope with this problem, Baumgartner employed a few young draughtsmen and trainee architects such as *Franz Olbricht*, among others, and thereby helped them with their practical training. Olbricht's residential buildings were noticeably influenced by Baumgartner's Renaissance-related facades, but later also by *Otto Wagner's* designs.

The year 1864 was no less fruitful: designs for the *Hotel Österreichischer Hof* by the Hess family of hoteliers on the newly built corner of *Rotenturmstrasse* and *Fleischmarkt* and a fourth house on *Rudolfsplatz*. In the same year, sixty Viennese architects, including

Baumgartner, joined the enlarged Austrian Society of Engineers and Architects (*Österreichischer Ingenieur- und Architektenverein*)<sup>20</sup>, but Baumgartner was never present at the meetings. He now earned enough to rent both the apartment at *Rothenthurmstrasse 37 (Am Bergl)* and a second apartment at *Auwinkel 5*. The latter was opposite his previous apartment at *Stadt Nr. 660/Auwinkel 4*.

In 1865 designs followed for a palais for *Count Wickenburg* on *Salzgries*, an apartment building at *Salztorgasse 2* and the last of Baumgartner's four Ringstraße buildings, opposite *Garben's Kursalon*, *Johannesgasse 20*. In addition, Baumgartner was responsible for the construction work of the neighboring building at *Johannesgasse 22* designed by *Johannes Garben* in the same year. The owner of the last two buildings

designed by Baumgartner was again the matches manufacturer *Adolf Pollak*, who had previously set up his own posh private salon in Baumgartner's apartment building on *Salztorgasse 2*.



Graf Wickenburg, Präsident der Wiener Stadterweiterungskommission vor seinem von Architekt Anton Baumgartner entworfenen Palais im unregulierten Kai-Viertel

Baumgartner's design for the Palais Wickenburg was initially much laughed at because the main entrance to the building had to be literally climbed via an improvised ramp due to the unfinished planification of the streets around the *Salzgries*.

In 1866, the architect, who had been so successful up to that point, faced a severe family loss which subsequently destroyed his happiness in life, gradually destroyed his creative power and finally led to his total ruin.



On August 28 of this year, his young wife Johanna, who was only 36 years old, died of a sudden pulmonary hemorrhage. The altarpiece of St. Johanna in the Johanna chapel erected in her memory on the Helenenfriedhof near Baden bears her potrait (today this painting is no longer there). The design of this crypt chapel was to be Baumgartner's only work that year. His children were between twelve and fifteen years old.



Johanna was not only a beauty admired by many, but also extremely talented as an artist. The couple *Baron Baumgartner von Baumgarten* were often guests at the soirees of the salonnière *Sophie von Todesco* (the wife of *Eduard von Todesco*, and née *Gomperz*), in the *Todesco-Palais* at Kärntnerring 14. There Johanna recited tender poems and also performed popular songs. She impressed the Burgtheater director *Heinrich Laube* – who was also among the guests – so much that he offered her further training as an actress and singer.<sup>H</sup>

Baumgartner found it difficult to recover from the painful loss of his wife. It was only after two years of complete seclusion that he began to work again, but it was only with difficulty that he regained his former enthusiasm. Of course, the war years 1866/67 had also contributed to a general stagnation in the construction industry. Within the next two years (1867-1868) his work was limited to a single design and execution: Babenbergerstraße 9, and as construction contractor of twelve other apartment buildings, six of them in the *Gonzagaviertel* (the building lots surrounding *Gonzagagasse*).

Perhaps, after the death of his beloved wife, he had withdrawn too much from the social circles of yore to rediscover his old patrons; perhaps the competition had become too strong, especially from the architectural partnership of *Romano and Schwendenwein*, as well as from *Karl Tietz*, who during this period had literally worked himself to death with an average of ten apartment building projects per year. He died young in a mental hospital in Döbling (see table below).

Architekt	Wohnbauten auf den Stadterweiterungsgründen	
	1859 -1865	1868 - 1873
Romano und Schwendenwein	24	29
Anton Baumgartner	11	6
Emil Förster	9	2
Ferdinand Fellner	5	3
Carl Tietz	5	28 (!)
Theodor Hansen	3	6
Heinrich Ferstel	3	3



Figure 7 – Palais Esterházy, Budapest 1871

In the three years 1871-1873 Baumgartner commuted between Vienna and Budapest. There, *Prince Esterhazy* commissioned him to design his representative private palace, on which Baumgartner worked together with the Hungarian contractor *Ignaz Wechselmann* (see Figures 3 and 7).

At the same time he took part in the architectural competition in Vienna for the new building of the Vienna Stock Exchange situated on the northern section of the Ringstraße. In 1872, Baumgartner resigned from the *Baumeisterinnung* (Master Builders' Guild). Anticipating the looming financial crisis of 1873, he had wisely entered into an exclusive four-year contract (1872-1875) with the *Allgemeine Österreichische Baugesellschaft* shortly before the stock market crash of 1873, which brought him the construction of seventeen (!) large apartment buildings in the 1st district and, in 1875, the large-scale demolition order and the conversion of the extensive *Wiener Bürgerspital*,<sup>A8</sup> all of which, however, restricted his work as a designing architect. After this exclusive contract expired, he designed and built apartment buildings for the first time in the areas outside the former city walls, primarily in the second district (*Leopoldstadt*). In the same year, plans were drawn up for his last representative large-scale apartment building in the inner city: the double block of houses between Maysedergasse, Albrechtsplatz and Augustinerstraße<sup>21</sup> behind the State Opera, known today for the *Café Mozart*, and part of the *Hotel Sacher*.

Anton Baumgartner's impressive scope of work encompassed a total of 132 projects: 43 buildings designed by him (and mostly also executed by him), 33 buildings erected by him as contractor and 56 adaptations designed and executed by him.

1875 was a decisive year in Baumgartner's career: from then on his work went steadily downhill. Even smaller orders and adaptations only came in sporadically. About this time he thought he had found a new glimmer of hope, but it was to prove deceptive. He had fallen head over heels in love with *Katharina Schwarz*, whom he married in the spring of 1879 – or rather, she married him and his fortune.<sup>22</sup>

*Katharina Schwarz* came from *Groß-Kikinda* in the southern Hungarian Vojvodina (today in Serbia) and performed in Vienna in a nightclub as dancer and chanteuse.

Baumgartner became completely obedient to her and followed all her wishes.<sup>H</sup>

Katharina persuaded him to sell the Styrian estate *Ebnerhof* through intermediaries<sup>A9</sup> or to transfer it to another name<sup>23</sup> before his creditors (*the Kann brothers et al.*) drove him into bankruptcy on the basis of unsecured bills of exchange she had issued. Shortly before the end of 1876, the *Kann brothers* seized carriages and furniture at the *Ebnerhof* estate with an estimated value of only 1,993 guilders<sup>A11, A14</sup>, indicating that the *Ebnerhof* itself was no longer in Baumgartner's name, but in Katharina's or that of a straw man.<sup>H</sup>

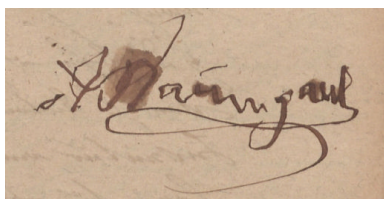
Baumgartner had given her complete financial freedom. She managed to make his cash disappear entirely in her luxurious fashion wardrobe and disastrous stock market speculations<sup>H</sup>. Before their wedding in the spring of 1879, she even persuaded Baumgartner to sign a marriage contract in which he de facto gave her the rest of his belongings.<sup>22</sup> In January 1879 – just before his marriage to Katharina – Baumgartner had re-registered with the *Baumeisterinnung* (Master Builders' Guild). It is not known why he left for seven years, after all he executed some interesting buildings during this period: an apartment and commercial building on Petersplatz (corner of Graben),<sup>A10</sup> another on Maysedergasse and an apartment building in Budapest. In July 1877, Baumgartner's

furniture at *Rothenthurmstraße 37*, estimated at 972 guilders (today around €16,000), was put up for auction by the Vienna Regional Court. The sale was not achieved until October. The impoverished Baumgartner lived and worked for a short time in an apartment at 1. Werdertorgasse 12,<sup>H</sup> made available by his generous client and benefactor *Leopold Abeles*<sup>24</sup>. Even though Baumgartner's Styrian estate *Ebnerhof* had already been sold before the end of 1876 without his daughters having the slightest idea of it, the commercial court in Vienna forced his company "*Anton Baumgartner*"<sup>A12</sup> (registered in 1865) into public bankruptcy on February 5, 1878.<sup>A13</sup> Baumgartner successfully appealed. The bankruptcy was lifted two months later, because Anton Baumgartner had been able to have all creditors paid out in full from Katharina's proceeds from the *Ebnerhof* estate.<sup>H</sup>



In the course of the following years Katharina had completely wiped him out financially by issuing numerous unsecured bills of exchange. Being thus impoverished, he now had to think about continuing to earn money somehow. In 1882, the design for an apartment building in Vienna VIII, *Laudongasse 37* was created, but Baumgartner's authorship as architect in this object is certainly in question. His then 28-year-old son Karl had studied architecture in Vienna and Munich, but later switched course and became a composer under the alias *Friedrich von Thul*. It is very likely that the father Anton, who was now almost unable to work, put his name under a design by his son Karl. In any case, the facade design of the house does not fit in Baumgartner's oeuvre.

Katharina Schwarz not only caused Baumgartner's financial ruin, but also destroyed his health. As already mentioned, he was so good-natured that he remained unconditionally in bondage to Katharina. After the two of them could no longer afford their large apartment in the *Ankerhof* on *Hoher Markt*, they moved to *Himmelpfortgasse 3*, where Katharina ended up dying of abdominal cancer in 1885. She had appointed her niece *Maria (Mary) Rosenzweig* as the sole heir to her share holdings and the furniture which was by now all hers. Maria was the daughter of Katharina's sister *Leopoldine Schwarz*, who was also born in *Groß-Kikinda*. Katharina left nothing but debts to her unsuspecting husband. Baumgartner was now totally impoverished and completely broken. Partially paralyzed by the shock, he had to use a wheelchair for a long period of time. His signature on Katharina's probate document hints at his tragic physical decline (Figure 9).



In the midst of tiresome inheritance lawsuits, in which even former maids who had been fired a long time ago wanted to collect outstanding debts. Anton Baumgartner died of a stroke. He passed away completely penniless on April 5, 1887, in a room of the *Hotel*

*Garni* in Pestalozzigasse at the back of the Ringstraße, and in the presence of his son Karl<sup>22</sup>. The ambulance took him to the General Hospital (*Allgemeine Krankenhaus*), but there was no more help either. Nobody, neither the local press nor the Austrian Association of Engineers and Architects took any notice of the death of the socially forgotten, once so successful Ringstraße architect.



Figure 10 - Opernring 23 für *Aron Pollak, Ritter von Rudin*, Wien 1862

Baumgartner had helped shape the early Ringstraße style, just as significantly as his same generation colleagues Romano and Schwandernwein. However, while their own, local historicist style increased to ostentatious representation, Baumgartner had taken a more ascetic path. He wasn't interested in baroque emulation. His quiet facades radiate a measured calm, which was achieved through the restraint of curved forms and through geometrical and harmonious proportions, as visible in his first Ringstraße building, Opernring 23 for *Adolf Pollak, Ritter von Rudin*.

The construction of *Otto Wagner's* design in 1869 for *Mathias Prohaska* at 1. Bellariastraße 4 was in Baumgartner's hands, and both signatures adorn the construction drawings. This meeting represents a certain curiosity, since it would be interesting to know how the two architects met and whether there was a synergy between Anton Baumgartner and the ascetic formal rhetoric of the 28-year-old, who was 21 years his junior. Otto Wagner was still at the beginning of his steep career (Figure 11).

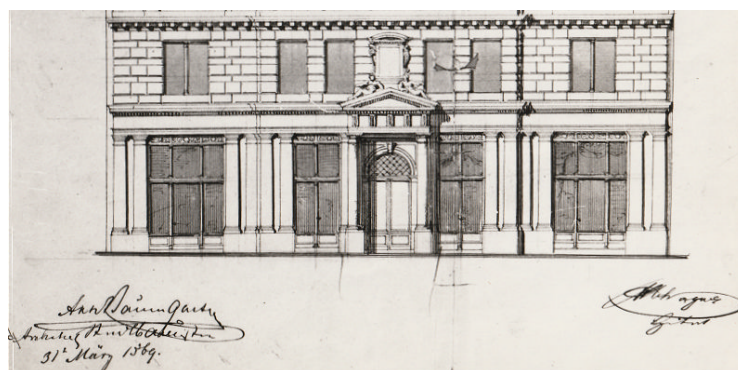


Figure 11 – Miethaus Wien 1. Bellariastraße 4 – Architekt *Otto Wagner* – Wien 1869



Baumgartner's buildings are now largely classified as protected heritage monuments.



#### VIGNETTES OF THE MISERY OF THE BAUMGARTNER CHILDREN

All three of Baumgartner's children relied firmly on the wealth of their father, who - as they thought - had amassed a considerable income from his Ringstraße projects, and above all also owned the *Ebnerhof* – dowry of the Gager grandparents – a stately country estate near Graz in the province of Styria. This deception was to become their dilemma.



#### HELENE EDLE OF WARIMFELD

In 1874, the 23-year-old Helene Baumgartner married the 27-year-old ministerial employee Emmerich Grill Edler von Warimfeld. Emmerich (also Emerich) was the son of Ignaz Grill Edler von Warimfeld, who had died ten years earlier and who had been the influential *Kanzleidirektor des k. k. Oberstallmeisteramtes* (Director of the Head Office of the k. k. Imperial Stables) from 1820 to 1850.<sup>25</sup> The best man was *Franz Graf Mercandin*, Privy Councilor and President of the Supreme Audit Office.<sup>A22</sup> At her wedding at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, Helene was already more than six months pregnant with her son Friedrich.

After Emmerich's several years as a *concept adjunct* at the governor's office of Lower Austria, the Minister of Agriculture, *Johann Freiherr von Chlumecký*, appointed him as *Ministerialkonzipist* in the Ministry of Agriculture in 1872, whose offices were located at Rudolfsplatz 13.<sup>A 23</sup> In the same office, Emmerich met his future brother-in-law, *Ludwig Déschán von Hannsen*. But he was no longer there five years later.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, *Ludwig Déschán von Hannsen* later married both of Emmerich's sisters: the elder, Wilhelmine, in 1880 and the younger, Maria, in 1912. However, the family ties did not end there, because in 1889 Ludwig was not only active as police commissioner in the passport office of the Vienna police headquarters<sup>A50</sup>, but also a notable poet who, under the stage name *Ludwig Sendach*, wrote – *inter alia* – the libretto for Karl's extremely successful operetta "Die Bonifaziusnacht".<sup>A24,A51</sup>

Initially, Helene and Emmerich lived in Anton Baumgartner's apartment at Rotenturmstrasse 37<sup>11</sup> for a few years, but moved out of this apartment in 1877 after the foreclosure sale of the furniture there. Thereafter, they lived at a different address almost every year. Emmerich kept his official position as a *Ministerialkonzipist* in the Ministry of Agriculture for decades. He retired early and lived a quiet life with his wife. Around 1894 they moved their place of residence to Klosterneuburg – probably as a cost-cutting measure.

Between 1882 and 1887, Emmerich was a board member and at times a deputy chairman of the tongue-twisting *Leopoldstädter Spar- und Vorschuß-Consortium des Ersten allgemeinen Beamten-Vereines der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie*.<sup>A25</sup> *Ludwig Déschán von Hannsen* was also represented there. While living in Klosterneuburg, Emmerich was appointed Town Secretary of nearby Korneuburg at the beginning of 1898.<sup>A26</sup> In the Korneuburg *Männergesangsverein* (men's choral club), there was not only

merry singing going on, but also merry drinking: Emmerich participated eagerly and was elected to the advisory board in 1899 together with some other members.<sup>A27</sup> On November 28, 1899, Emmerich and Helene celebrated their silver wedding anniversary "*within close family circles*".<sup>A28</sup> Perhaps their son Friedrich was there, or even Helene's brother Karl. Gisela was on her death bed in a hospital in Baden.

When his position as Town Secretary of Korneuburg was terminated in March 1900, Emmerich received a severance payment of 200 guilders, which he urgently needed: he earned so little that in the summer of 1898 he had given the family jewels as collateral to a criminal usurer who was subsequently sent to prison.<sup>A30</sup> Emmerich died of pneumonia in Klosterneuburg in 1905. His widow Helene survived him by ten years. Both are buried in the family crypt chapel of the Helenenfriedhof near Baden.



#### GISELA EDLE KARWINSKY VON KARWIN

Gisela Baumgartner had married Eugen Karwinsky Ritter von Karwin in *Ober St. Veit* near Vienna at the end of November 1880. Eugen's father Arthur was Protestant, his mother *Wilhelmine Metaxa* Greek-Orthodox. The financial situation of Eugen and Gisela was much worse than the one of Emmerich and Helene. In 1888, a year after Baumgartner's death, both stood trial for "*negligent Crida*"<sup>A31</sup>. Eugene was described as "*a man of forty of elegant, aristocratic appearance*" and "*the appearance of his wife, a thirty-four-year-old red-blond lady, was no less distinguished*".<sup>26</sup>

*"Baron Karwinsky stated that he pinned his hopes on his wealthy father-in-law, who has since died and on whom his wife had claims. Baroness Karwinsky states that she had a maternal inheritance of 10,000 fl. She then placed this sum in the hands of a relative, but lost most of the capital through him. That is why she still had hopes in her father, who was partly responsible for this departure, and after his death in her stepmother who was still alive. [however, she died in 1885; Note d. Author] Incidentally, an official document shows that the accused's father, architect Baumgartner, died penniless. The Court of Justice. . . condemned . . . Baron Karwinsky to one month, his wife to three days of simple arrest."*<sup>45</sup>

But four years later much worse was to come: in March 1892 "*engineer*" Eugen Karwinsky was arrested in his apartment in Penzing, Hauptstraße 70.<sup>A32</sup>

*"Noblesse oblige"*

*"On the 19th of began before the Vienna Assize Courts. . . a two-day trial A33 to A40 against the two brothers Eugen and Arthur Karwinsky von Karmin, who, according to the old but still excellent method, pretending to be a baron, landowner of the like, harmed a number of people sensitively. . . Eugen von Karwinsky injured a total of eighteen people by 7334 fl 92 kr [today 120,000 €]. As for the second defendant, Arthur Karwinsky, A34, he lives in the same miserable circumstances as his brother. Having been in debt since 1882, sued and threatened with execution, his subsequent behavior closely resembled that of his brother. . . He is independently charged with five acts of fraud with a total loss of 1087 fl. . . The verdict [of the jury] was published at 3 a.m. (!): Eugen v.*

*Karwinsky became six and Arthur v. Karwinsky sentenced to three years in prison and both sentenced to loss of nobility”.*

Only five days after the verdict, it was discovered that one of the twelve jurors had included a Karwinsky creditor.<sup>A42</sup> Normally, as a result, the court should have declared this a mistrial. For journalists, this judicial drama was a source of cynical satire.<sup>A43, A44, A45</sup> We do not know what became of the two Karwinsky brothers. Eugen seems to have already died during his severe imprisonment, because in December 1899 his wife Gisela was entered in the death register as a widow. She had died of pulmonary tuberculosis at the early age of 47. The urn bearing her Karwinsky noble title was buried in the family crypt chapel of the Helenenfriedhof near Baden. Her blamed husband was denied the family crypt (in contrast to Helene's husband, the good Emmerich)<sup>27</sup>.



KARL BARON OF PAUMGARTEN  
(recte Karl Baumgartner, alias FRIEDRICH VON THUL)

After the two daughters Helene (1851) and Gisela (1852), the third and last child, Karl, was finally born on May 5, 1854, this time in Vienna and not in Baden as before. Shortly thereafter, Anton Baumgartner set up his own business in the house at *Biberbastei 660 (Auwinkel 4)* and received his first commission: as already mentioned, an apartment building for Anton Ölzelt at Währingerstrasse 12 in *Neu-Wien*. In Karl's baptismal entry in the *Dominikanerkirche* (parish of Vienna 1st, Maria Rotunda), his father was not entered as a baron, but with his original name: *Anton Baumgartner, architect, son of Anton Baumgartner, master builder, and Anna nee Algeyer*. Godfather was again Karl von Gager, k. k. Senior Tax Collection Director, retired, living at *Nr. 635, Vienna Leopoldstadt*.

Karl Baumgartner was to follow in his father's footsteps and become an architect. Initially he received private lessons at home, then completed his *Matura* at the Theresianum and subsequently studied architecture in Vienna and Munich.<sup>A67</sup> At the end of 1878, at the age of 24, he married the 19-year-old daughter of an army major, Rosa Kreipner, in Vienna, parish Mariahilf. At that time, Karl's father had already been in a relationship with his mistress Katharina Schwarz for a number of years. According to a newspaper report from 1878<sup>A47</sup>, Karl Baumgartner was “*tall, pale in the face, thin, had a hooked nose, black hair and a mustache of similar colour*”. Rosa Kreipner” was “*remarkably thin, tall, also pale in the face and had blond hair*.”

It is quite certain that Karl, who had studied architecture in Vienna and Munich - albeit without a final degree - designed the above-mentioned apartment building in Vienna's 8th district, Laudongasse 37 in 1881 at the age of 27. The hapless father only put his signature on the blueprints (see Figure 9 above). Karl von Paumgarten turned to music at an early age and in the years that followed became a successful composer under the pseudonym<sup>A48</sup> *Friedrich von Thul*, often collaborating with his brother-in-law, the poet *Ludwig Sendach (recte Ludwig Déschán von Hannsen)*. Karl's notable artistic achievements soared like a phoenix from the glimmering ashes of his father's collapsed career.



Karl's first operetta "*Der von Humpenburg*" was premiered with great success on May 13, 1884 in Vienna's *Ronacher Theater*<sup>A68</sup>. Performances in Prague, Baden and Klagenfurt followed with equal acclaim over the next two years. The premiere of Karl's next and by far best-known operetta "*Die Bonifaciusnacht*" took place in December 1888 at the *Deutsche Theater in Prague*. The futurer heir to the throne, *Archduke Franz Ferdinand*, also attended "to the end".<sup>A49</sup> It was a huge success, as the *Wiener Tagblatt* reported the next day.<sup>A50, A51</sup> "*Die Bonifaciusnacht*" was then also performed in Brno, Graz, Teplitz and Hamburg<sup>A52</sup> and brought its creators considerable success. In 1892, after a financial slump, Karl received support from the *Society for the Promotion of German Science, Art and Literature* in Bohemia for his planned work on a new operetta *Hermione*, which was never completed.<sup>A54</sup> In 1894 he began to work for the k. k. State Railways, first as a diurnist<sup>A69</sup> and soon afterwards as an assistant to the Central Train Director's Office.<sup>A70</sup> The following year he found a position as military bandmaster of the Infantry Regiment Nr. 60 in Erlau, Hungary (today Eger).<sup>28 A67</sup>

Around the turn of the century, Karl was already known in many German-speaking theaters under the alias *Friedrich von Thul*. He almost created an operetta in collaboration with Franz Lehar and Alexander Girardi. However, he got into a legal dispute with Franz Lehar, which ended peacefully in the end. What was amusing was the typical diction of Alexander Girardi's testimony, which follows:<sup>A59 to A61</sup>

*March 22, 1904 – Neues Wiener Tagblatt (daily edition)*

*"An Indictment Against the Composer Lehar"*

*"As we reported yesterday, the writers Rudolf Quittner and Friedrich Freiherr v. Paumgarten [sic!] filed a civil suit against the composer Franz Lehar for breach of contract. . ."*

*". . . Alexander Girardi was the first witness to be heard. He explained that he had been in Ischl when the text was read, but could no longer remember the details. President: How did you like the play? Girardi: To be honest, I was only interested in the role I didn't care who I should have played there, and as far as I can remember I said that she was too young for me and that changes had to be made. President: And otherwise? Girardi: Really, me I don't remember anything else, and then, my judgment is not authoritative. I have often referred to a book as a 'Schmarrn, and it was very good, and vice versa! (Laughter.) President: Didn't you say that you might play the role in the unaltered form?"*



*Girardi: I don't think so. It was about a young lover and I wanted to play more of a character role and a more settled gentleman. As a rule, the librettists are grateful if I give them a few hints about the treatment of my role. . . "*

Finally, a settlement was reached in which Lehar undertook to pay each of the two plaintiffs 500 K. [today about 4000 € each], whereas the claim "*compensatis expensis*" was withdrawn.

In addition to his main work *Die Bonifaziussnacht*, Karl had created five other operettas: *Der von Humpenburg* (his first major success: 1884 premiere at the *Ronacher Theater* in Vienna)<sup>A68</sup>, *Der Sergeant* (1897 premiere at the *Theater in der Josefstadt*)<sup>A56</sup>, *Ninnetten's Wedding* (1898 premiere in the *Berlin Thaliatheater*)<sup>A57,A58</sup>, *The Guardian of Virtue* (*Le gardien e la vertu*, 1908), *The Mummies*<sup>A62</sup> and *The Beggar Violinists*.<sup>A63</sup> His estate included *The Merry Knight*, *The Flying Dutchman* and *The Genius*.<sup>A66</sup> He had also composed popular songs and male choirs.

"*Karl Freiherr von Paumgarten*" (recte Karl Baumgartner, commonly known as *Friedrich von Thul*) died of heart failure at the age of 57 on November 29, 1911 in Vienna, 18th Herbeckstrasse 46.<sup>A64, A65</sup>

His wife Rosa (nee Kreipner) survived him 37 years<sup>A67</sup>. She survived two world wars and died in Vienna in 1949 at the age of 90 as *Rosa Baumgartner*.



#### HELENE FRANKL

(born *Helene von Paumgarten* February 10, 1889, Sarka/Prague, daughter of Karl and Rosa)  
from MUSIC – to GRAPHIC ART – to LUXURY LEATHER – to GOLD

I will never forget a visit in 1965 to Karl and Rosa's daughter, Helene Frankl, Anton Baumgartner's granddaughter, in their apartment in Vienna-Mauer, which I found by inscrutable coincidence. On that occasion she had told me a great deal about her grandfather and herself at length.<sup>H</sup> She had lived a truly tumultuous life:<sup>A72</sup>

At the age of 22, at the end of 1911, more than two and a half months before the death of her father (the composer) in his apartment (?), Helene had given birth to her first child *Wilhelm*, fathered by the 26-year-old artist Karl Friedrich Richter, whom she married seven months later. The baptism of the illegitimate child in the *Evangelical Pauluskirche* in Vienna's 3rd district was delayed for two and a half months, because Helene had converted to the Evangelical Church (AB) for the sake of her protestant future husband - who confirmed himself at the baptism as the child's unmarried father. Helene had promised her terminally ill father that she would marry Richter within a short time, which happened five months later. And then the young family continued to live in their deceased father's apartment at Herbeckstraße 46, until their widowed mother-in-law Rosa finally threw them out. They moved to the *Josefstadt* district.<sup>H</sup> Five years later, in 1917, Helene gave birth to a second child, their daughter *Helene Marga Richter* (married Gottschall in 1939, whose descendants are still living today). *Karl Friedrich Richter* separated from Helene two years after the birth of his daughter. His subsequent disappearance in Vienna shortly before the end of the Second World War is still unclear today.<sup>A73</sup>

After her separation from the “k. k. *Drawing Master*” *Karl Friedrich Richter*, the now 30-year-old Helene married the young, 26-year-old leather specialist *Anton Moritz*. Anton came from three generations of leather and tanning masters in *Unter-St. Veit* and *Pöchlarn*, where Anton was born in 1893. Young Anton had received a luxury leather goods shop from his family of leather manufacturers in Vienna's 7th district, *Stiftgasse 29*, and moved into Helene's apartment in Vienna's 8th district, *Bennogasse 12/1/6*. From this marriage came a son *Hans*, born in 1922, who would later take over his father Anton's leather goods shop. *Anton Moritz* and Helene's marriage broke up after ten years. Helene's children from her first marriage were seventeen and twelve at the time, and Hans, her son with Anton Moritz, was seven years old.

In 1929, the now 40-year-old Helene married the 43-year-old “gold worker” *Norbert Frankl* from Vienna, who was of Jewish descent<sup>A74</sup>. In the hope of escaping Jews - but without success - the growing hatred of he had registered with the authorities as “non-confessional”. Before this marriage, Helene had left the evangelical church and also reported as “non-confessional”. After the annexation of Austria to the German Reich, Norbert Frankl fled from the Nazis to Shanghai in 1940 and died there under unknown circumstances. After his death, which Helene only found out about two years after the end of the war, she – finally widowed – rejoined the Catholic Church after an imposed waiting period.

When I visited the 76-year-old *Helene Frankl* in 1965, she had already survived the gray days of the World War and the post-war period quietly and resignedly for 25 years. My visit was a joyful and welcome change for her. The rest of the afternoon was filled with the long narrations of her memories.

She died of old age in March 1971 at the age of 82.

This is the end of the Baumgartner Story - - - sic transit gloria mundi.

Dipl. Ing. Peter Panholzer  
May 2023