

The first half of the eighteenth century found the Czech architecture at one of its heights. It is therefore surprising that there are many buildings of unquestionable qualities which authorship was never definitely established. One particular group of these was at the centre of this thesis' attention. The architects mentioned in connection with them included over the times the likes of Oktavian Broggio, Jan Blažej Santini-Aichel, Kylián Ignác Dientzenhofer and other less significant authors. The records of the Prague based guild of architects mention a well established architect named Ferdinand Špaček and list a number of buildings. However the records are erratic and do not provide a reliable source of information so the role of this supposedly prominent artist remained unclear for a long time.

Now a definitive list of eighty buildings resulted from a long and extensive research. These show Václav Špaček (in the records mistakenly named 'Ferdinand') to be an important and influential artist of his time.

Václav Špaček, son of an established builder, was born in Prague in the year 1689. His education remains unclear but he was probably an apprentice to, at that time the most successful, architect František Maxmilián Kaňka. Most likely it was here where he met the most original of the architects working in central Europe at that time - Jan Blažej Santini-Aichel. Špaček was involved in the execution of one of Santini's projects – the Berkovský palace in Prague's Lesser Town, so even though they did not work together as such, Špaček was in many ways disciple of Santini's as much as Kaňka's.

The turning point of Špaček's career was his introduction to Anna Maria Františka the Grand Duchess of Tuscany. She was the wife of the last heir to the Florentine house of Medici. However, the marriage was an unhappy one and they soon separated. While the Grand Duke returned to Italy, Anna Maria Františka stayed at her estates in northern Bohemia. ...