

THE CAPITAL CITY OF MORAVIA AROUND 1800 AND THE BRNO CHAPTER OF THE *AUGUSTINER-EREMITEN*

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For quite a long time, the two towns of Brno (elevated to municipal status in 1243 by King Václav I) and Olomouc, vied for the first place among the towns of Moravia, with Brno becoming the capital only during the Thirty Years' War. In the second half of the seventeenth and during the entire eighteenth century Brno enjoyed a prospering economy, which, to a lesser degree, continued into the nineteenth century. Above all, it was the textile and later the machine building industry that boomed. Mostly due to its fine cloth products, Brno became known as the „Austrian Manchester“, and went on to become one of the most important industrial regions of the Habsburg monarchy in the nineteenth century. This extraordinary economic boom was accompanied by a considerable development in the intellectual sphere also. From the era of enlightenment onwards, Brno had witnessed activities of learned societies, Masonic lodges and scientific associations, with the so-called *Ackerbaugesellschaft* (agricultural society) becoming the most widely-known. The chapter of the monachic order of the *Augustiner-Eremiten* in the old part of Brno became an important centre of intellectual life

in Brno. Many prominent scholars worked there, one of them being Johann Gregor Mendel. The author of this contribution focuses on the parallelity of important scientific accomplishments by members of the order on one hand and the attempts by the ecclesiastical hierarchy at checking independent thinking and the quest for freedom on the other.