

THE BAROQUE SCHWARZENBERGS AND THEIR LANGUAGE CULTURE IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY

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The constitutive element of the identity of the Schwarzenbergs during the 17th and 18th century was not their regional or national provenance but rather a kind of cosmopolitanism and their membership in the European aristocratic society. This was clearly reflected in their relationship to languages. This article analyses the linguistic background of the baroque Schwarzenbergs, examining which languages they spoke and how prestigious they considered them to be, as well as which languages they taught their children. Besides German as their first (native) language, the Schwarzenbergs were proficient in French, Italian, and Latin; in the 17th century, they also spoke Spanish. While they did not neglect the vernacular languages – in this case, Czech – their capabilities in these popular languages were significantly exceeded by their command of the Romance languages and Latin. The practical, social function of Czech was what mattered; it was entirely sufficient for the Schwarzenbergs to know it well enough to communicate with their subjects in the Kingdom of Bohemia.