

GRATAE POSTERITATI SIGISMUNDVS LIBER BARO IN HERBERSTAIN Neypberg & Guettenhag, Primarius Ducatus Carinthiae Hæreditariusq; & Camerarius & Dapifer &c. Immunitate meritorum ergo donatus, actiones suas à puero ad annum vsq; ætatis suæ septuagesimum quartum, breui commentariolo notatas reliquit.



*Baron Sigismund von Herberstein*

Gratae Posteritati  
(To My Loving Descendants)

nostros aggressi, postremo etiam caedes ingens est consequuta, impedimenta & tormenta simul omnia amissa, & Ister Christiano sanguine decoloratus.

**G**vilhelmus Rogendorfus fatali magis casu quam culpa sua hic laudem prudenter fideliter & fortiter gestarum rerum. Deinde etiam brevi vitam amisit.



**I**TA Buda in manus Turcae peruenit, in cuius castra ad veterem Budam posita cum Nicolao Comite de Salmis, à Rege nostro missus, Septembri Mense veni. Persuasum ibi barbaro, ne longius hostiliter progredereetur. Pestilentia tum multa loca in Hungaria, Austria, & Sciria per quae mihi redeundum erat, infecerat, saluus tamen vndiq; presidio Dei nostri euasi.

Anno

**A**MBO NOS ORATORES TALI VESTE AD TVRCARVM IMPERATOREM MISSI.



The Ivan Potrč Library in Ptuj (Slovenia) keeps in its collection of precious books the once famous, but today mainly unknown, work of the renowned Baron Sigismund von Herberstein *Gratae posteritati* from 1560.

The copy of *Gratae posteritati*, kept in Ptuj, is one of the few colorized editions preserved in the world. Its value is even higher due to the fact that the book has been an integral part of the abundant Herberstein family book collection in Ptuj.

Herberstein's work *Gratae posteritati*, published in Vienna in 1560, is the second edition (the first was published in 1558) of this work in Latin, which is especially appealing because of the lavish illustrations including six full-body portraits of Sigismund von Herberstein.

For all bibliophiles and experts, as of now the *Gratae posteritati* is also available in facsimile. We are presenting new findings about this rare and valuable work, coincidentally making it widely accessible, as it is ranked among the most important of European literary heritage books.

## Baron Sigismund von Herberstein

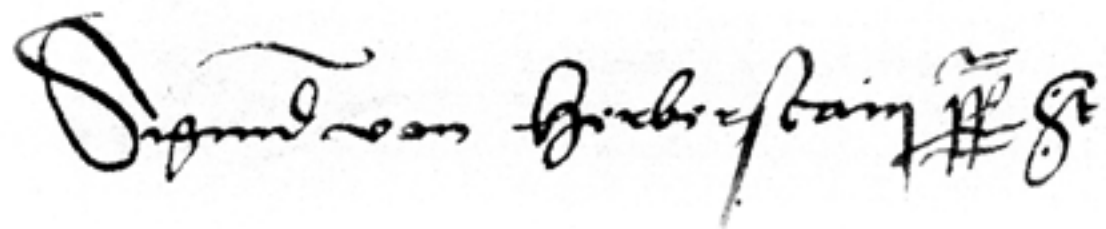
The Herberstein nobility originates from Herberstein castle beside the Bistrica (Feistritz) River near to Gleisdorf in present day Styria, Austria, and has been well documented since the 13th century. The Herberstein's were in the service of the Habsburg dynasty almost from the beginning, which allowed them to spread their property into other Habsburg hereditary lands. They were present in today's Slovenian territory for centuries and have significantly co-shaped Slovenian history.

Baron Sigismund von Herberstein (1486–1566) is the novelty's most prominent member. The humanist, polyglot, cosmopolitan and diplomat, who in the service of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation emperors from the Habsburg dynasty made a brilliant career and greatly contributed to the social advancement of his family.

Sigismund von Herberstein was born on August 23, 1486, in Vipava, to parents Leonhard von Herberstein and Barbara von Lueg. He received primary education in his hometown, where he also grew fluent in the Slovenian language, however in 1499 he enrolled in the University of Vienna. After completing his education, he concentrated on his military career for seven years and proved himself as a brave man and capable strategist. Since 1514 he has served Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor. In the following four decades, he carried out 69 official missions abroad to German states, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, Spain, Russia, Switzerland, Italy, France and a military camp near Budim, where he met with Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the then greatest threat to Christendom.

Herberstein visited Russia and the Duchy of Moscow twice (1517, 1526), explored it and then for the first time meticulously described it in the renowned work, *Notes on Muscovite Affairs* (1549). The book became a bestseller of its time, often translated and republished afterwards.

Baron Sigismund von Herberstein lived to a great age. He died on March 28, 1566, in Vienna, aged 80, and is buried in the local St. Michael's Church.



Baron Sigismund von Herberstein's signature on a document from 1514.



Baron Sigismund von Herberstein's portrait in ceremonial garments, which he received as a gift from Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent at the negotiations in 1541 (Gratae posteritati, 1560).

## Gratae Posteritati: Content and Significance

Baron Sigismund von Herberstein wrote several autobiographical works during the last decade of his life, nevertheless he holds a permanent place in history as the author of the Notes on Muscovite Affairs. Although his other works remained relatively unknown, they are of remarkable documentary value and an important source for the history of the 16th century. One such is also his work written in Latin, Gratae posteritati.



The cover of Gratae posteritati, beautifully decorated with the hand-colored Herberstein family crest.

The copy of Gratae posteritati from 1560 is the second edition of this work and one of seven Herberstein's autobiographic works. The title might be translated as To My Loving Descendants or To My Dear Descendants, unambiguously implying that the work is devoted to his descendants and those, who will bear the name Herberstein after him, that is his nephews and great-nephews, as he had no offspring.

The content of the work is divided into three parts. The introductory address is followed by the chronological and analytically conceptualized overview of Herberstein's life and work. Using lapidary sentences, the author describes his life and introduces his main tasks in various military and official positions, but also as a high official at court and during official visits to a variety of European leaders, above all twice to the Duchy of Moscow and to the Turkish Court. Furthermore, Herberstein did not only include portraits of the notabilities of his time beside the texts, but also his own portraits – the majority of these were created by two extraordinary printmakers, Augustin Hirschvogel and Donat Hübschmann, who closely followed Herberstein's instructions.



Augustin Hirschvogel, Portrait of Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor, colorized etching, 1548.

The comprehensive poetic part comprises a major part of the book, which is distinctly literary, as it consists of dedicatory poems and letters, in honour of the prominent diplomat, by contemporary poets, especially from the Vienna circle, who were under Herberstein's patronage. The most famous poets of that time can be found among the authors, including such individuals, who were, according to humanistic customs, following an ancient Roman tradition, distinguished by the emperor for their poetry with the honorary title 'poet crowned with laurel' – poet laureatus.

It is not a coincidence that Herberstein decided to publish his autobiography in Latin. If he wanted to appeal to a wider range of readers, this would prove crucial. As intellectuals were his target audience, the language used is carefully selected, whereas the text imbued with several reminiscences of antiquity and the Middle Ages, which endeavour to create an added impression of a well-read author, who emerges with a profound humanistic tradition. Moreover, Gratae posteritati is unquestionably Herberstein's most self-promoting work, which possesses an important documentary value and sheds light on several aspects of the author's life as well as historical events of that time.

## Facsimile and the Study Edition of Gratae Posteritati

Due to the extraordinary public interest generated by the work Gratae posteritati and the need to safeguard the original, the Ivan Potrč Library in Ptuj in cooperation with the Primož Premzl Art Cabinet decided to publish the work in facsimile with a comprehensive study edition in 2014. This is a scientific monograph, which includes the translation of the work into the Slovenian language (in fact, the first translation of the work ever) with commentary and four accompanying studies, shedding light on various aspects of the content and importance of the work, furthermore providing new information about the author, the origin of the work and its content.

Dr. Matej Hriberšek is the author of the translation with commentary, and besides him Dr. Dejan Zadravec, Dr. Polona Vidmar and Dr. Jedert Vodopivec Tomažič contributed the accompanying studies.

### The content of the study edition is:

*Dr. Matej Hriberšek*

- The translation of the work To My Loving Descendants (Gratae posteritati)
- Commentary to Herberstein's work To My Loving Descendants (Gratae posteritati)
- A Small yet Important Witness of its Time: The Herberstein's Gratae Posteritati

*Dr. Dejan Zadravec*

- The Herberstein Nobility and its Most Prominent Member Sigismund von Herberstein

*Dr. Polona Vidmar*

- The Diplomat and His Valuable Robes. Illustration's in Herberstein's Gratae Posteritati

*Dr. Jedert Vodopivec Tomažič*

- The Gratae Posteritati Edition Stored in Ptuj, 1560: Structure, Materials, Damage, Conservation and Restoration Work

All texts in the study edition of the book are written in the Slovenian language, whereas the accompanying studies also include an abstract in English.



Listina o lastništvo

GRATAE POST

*multis annis, postquam eorum ex his ingens est confusio, immo  
omnes de incerta summa annis, & Ille Christiano longius de  
evolutione.*  
**G**ustavus Rex, etiam suis magis casu quam casu sua be-  
dixi quodque fidei et suorum gestorum etiam. Deinde cum his  
in eam ante.



**I**ta fide in manu Turce pervenit, in cuius castra ad venientem Tur-  
das postea cum Nicolo Curate de Salina, & Rex nostro multo, Ne-  
pensi Alenti veni. Perfidiam ibi barbaro, ne longius hostilitate pro-  
gredere. Perfidiam cum multa lex in Hispania, Austria, et sic  
no per que vobis referendum erat, infestat, locum autem vobis per  
Elio Dio vobis erat.

Anno

**A**MO NOS ORATORES TALI VESTE AD  
TYR CARVM IMPERATOREM MISSI



The bibliophilic limited edition in facsimile was published in 100 hand-numbered copies in a set with the study edition. The set is inserted into an elegant, hand-made case covered with blue linen.

## Excerpts from the book:

»Nevertheless, Slovenian historiography has until today failed to honour its Vipava born and Slovenian speaking compatriot in a way and at a level adequate to his achievements.«

Dr. Dejan Zdravec

»The majority perception of Baron Sigismund von Herberstein as an author is biased, but the Notes on Muscovite Affairs has always come to the fore. Hence, until recently, his other works have not received proper attention, among them unjustifiably the Gratae posteritati, as their documentary value for an understanding of historical events during the first half of the 16th century is exceptional.«

Dr. Matej Hriberšek

»The copy of Gratae posteritati, kept in the Ivan Potrč Library in Ptuj, came into the possession of the Herberstein family during the 19th century at the latest. It is of significance that the Herbersteins kept the second edition of the autobiography in Latin from 1560 and not the first edition from 1558 also printed by Rafael Hoffhalter in Vienna. The first edition in Latin is not as lavishly illustrated as the second edition, and above all, it does not hold the six full-body portraits of Sigismund von Herberstein. Furthermore, both editions are of importance for the history of illustrated books and the history of graphic design.«

Dr. Polona Vidmar

»Besides the colorized graphics and immense historical value of the 1560 Gratae posteritati edition, stored by the Ivan Potrč Library in Ptuj, it is precisely the decay of paper under and around the colorized graphic depictions that dictates special storage measures and high restrictions on usage. Therefore, despite the conservation work in 1987 and 2013, severe restrictions on usage are not sufficient in order to protect the book from further damage, thus the decision to publish an edition in facsimile is even more important.«

Dr. Jedert Vodopivec Tomažič

## Short description:

- The copy of Gratae posteritati, kept in Ptuj, is one of the few colorized editions preserved in the world, and its value is even higher due to the fact that the book has been part of the Herberstein family book collection.
- The work is an important contribution to the diplomatic and political history of the 16th century.
- The book is especially appealing because of the hand-colored graphics of nine leaders of that time, two depictions of the Herberstein family crest and six full-body portraits of Sigismund von Herberstein.
- The first translation of the work into the Slovenian language is also the first ever translation of the book.
- The comprehensive study edition provides new information about the origin of the work and its content.
- The carefully crafted edition in facsimile preserves all the characteristics of the original.

## The set includes:

- Gratae posteritati in facsimile; 120 pages; 18,7 x 29 cm; hand-numbered copies
- Study edition of Gratae posteritati: 292 pages; 18,7 x 29 cm
- Ownership certification
- Hand-made case covered with blue linen

Bibliophilic edition of 100 copies

ISBN 978-961-93727-0-8 (set)

Price: 1.205,48 € + VAT

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