

THE 19th CENTURY GUITAR

in the collection
of the National Museum in Prague

Daniela Kotašová



NATIONAL MUSEUM



THE 19th CENTURY GUITAR

Overview of the Prague Collection

- Total number of guitars: 109
- 19th century guitars: 69
- Anonymous makers: 21
- Likely identified makers: 48



Places of production:

Austrian Empire	Prague	16
	Vienna	16
	Bregenz	2
	Paseky	2
	Leitmeritz	2
	Hlinsko	1
	Pilsen	1
	Ústí n. Labem	1
Germany	Dresden	1
	Gotha	1
	Markneukirchen	1
Italy	Naples	3
Russia	Moscow	1



„Johann Georg Staufer / IN WIEN.“
ca 1815–1821, Inv. No. E 792



OLDER CRAFTSMEN OF THE VIENNESE SCHOOL

AMBROSIUS BOGNER

(1752, Haid at Tachau – 1816, Vienna)

- Records of Bogner's stay in Prague from 1792, then his departure to Vienna.
- According to his guitars, he gradually adapted to the Viennese style

- 1) "*Ambrosius Josephus Bogner fecit Vienna Anno 1805.*" [National Museum Prague, E 1236](#)
- 2) "*Ambrosius Josephus Bogner fecit Vienna Anno 1802.*" [Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, M 464](#)
- 3) A guitar by Bogner from 1815, Kresse collection, <https://kresse-gitarren.de/archiv/g/bogner-ambrosius-wien-1815/>

Ambrosius Josephus Bogner
fecit Vienna Anno 1805

Ambrosius Josephus Bogner
fecit Vienna Anno 1802



Prague Collection, 1805

Vienna Collection, 1802



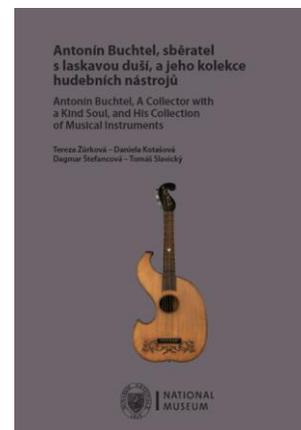
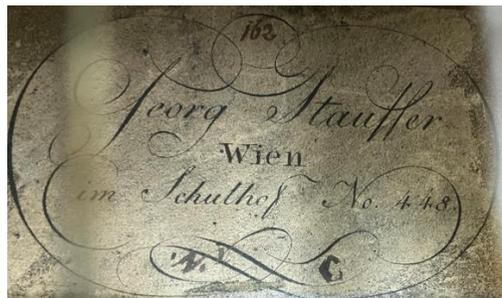
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VIENNA GUITARS IN THE PRAGUE COLLECTION

STAUFFERS

Father **Johann Georg** (1778–1853)
& Son **Johann Anton** (1805–1871)

- "162 | Georg Stauffer | Wien | im Schulhof No. 448." ca. 1801–1806, „Doppel-Gitarre“ one of Stauffer's first inventions; Collection of Antonín Buchtel (1804–1882), [Inv. No. E 444](#)
- "Johann Georg Staufer / in Wien ..." label from 1815–ca. 1821, E 792
- **Incorrect label** "Michael Weber / me fecit Pragae 1841", ca. 1800–1815; Collection of K. B. Dvořák (1856–1909), E 1227
- „ J. A. Stauffer & Company / Anno 1829. in Wien No. 480. ", the most productive period of Georg and Anton, E 723
- **Incorrect label** "Johann Homolka ...", circa 1850, identical to the last model of Georg St.; Collection of K. B. Dvořák, E 1242



Johann Georg Stauffer, Wien,
ca 1801–1806, Inv. No. E 444



STAUFFERS' CONTEMPORARIES VIENNA

- **Johann Ertl (1776–1828)** excellent example of the first Viennese guitar model 1800–1820. Collaborated with J. G. Stauffer (1822, k. k. Privilegium) **Left E 1200**
- **Johann Rudert (1781–1854)**, the same model, less ornate, E 2274
- **Nicolas Georg Ries (1790–?)** example of the later Viennese „Legnani modell“, 595
- **Johann Gottfried Scherzer (1802–1870)**, E 14
- **Johann Bucher (1792–1856)** 1809–1815 he apprenticed with J. G. Stauffer. He probably made exclusively plucked instruments. Label "*Johann Bucher / Guitarmacher / Mariahilf. Hauptstrasse / in Wien*". **Right E 1858**

Comparable "*Guitarre-Laute*", Catalog by Ludwig Reisinger (1863–1943), Vienna 1912, Pupil of Ignaz Johann Bucher (1828–1881) (*Stauffer & Co. – The Viennese Guitar of the 19th Century*, 2011, p. 109, 226)



J. Ertl, E 1200



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"Guitarre-Laute"



J. Bucher ca. 1809–1856
E 1858



Catalog by Ludwig Reisinger
Vienna 1912

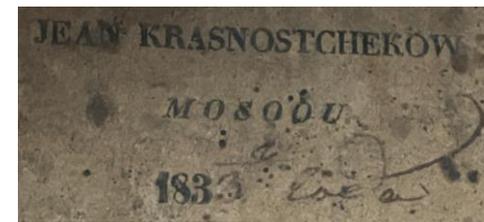
STAUFFERS' CONTEMPORARIES

OUTSIDE VIENNA

- DRESDEN: **Johann Christian Beyer (active 1798–1816)** oriented towards French models from the end of the 18th century. A typical feature of the known B. guitars: arched back and „moustaches“ pointing upwards (French model) **Left E 1198**
- GOTHA: **J. W. Bindernagel (1770–1845)** E 294
- NAPLES: **G. B. Fabricatore (active 1780–1811)**, E 1197 (year 1806), E 1219 (year 1811), E 1235 (year 1819) – K. B. Dvořák's collection of music instruments
- MOSCOW: **Ivan Yakovlevich Krasnoshchekov (1798–1875)**, probably the most famous Russian guitar maker of the 19th century, original type of Russian guitar with 7 strings. Characteristic body shape, lyre-shaped head design, back made of 1 piece of annealed walnut. K. B. Dvořák's collection **Right E 1233**



J. C. Beyer E 1198



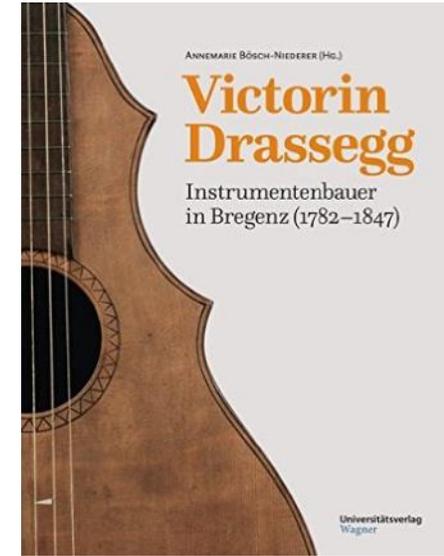
I.Y. Krasnoshchekov, 1833,
E 1233



ANONYMOUS GUITAR MAKERS

VICTORIN DRASSEGG (?)

- Without a label, but has characteristic features for V. Drassegg: body shape, including decoration of the sound hole. Tailpiece decorated with moustaches. Soundboard, back in two parts, sides – red varnished knotty maple. Head in the shape of a lyre.
Photo E 1302
- Victorin Drassegg (1782–1847)**, a native of Velká Polom (Moravian-Silesian Region), settled in Bregenz in 1816. Long-term military service during the Napoleonic Wars, escape, false identity, fight for survival – influence on his personality. Public recognition only in the last years of his life in Vienna.
- PUBLICATION:** *Victorin Drassegg, Instrumentenbauer in Bregenz (1782–1847)*, edited by A. Bösch-Niederer. Universitätsverlag Wagner, Innsbruck 2016
- In the Prague museum collection also a zither (Inv. No. E 579) with the label: "*Victorin Drassegg Instrumentenmacher in Bregenz*"



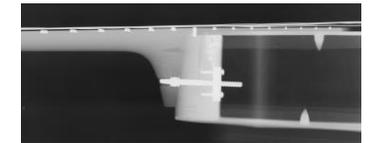
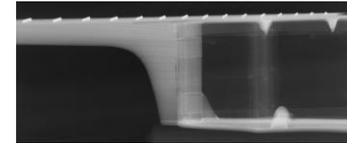
TRANSFER OF LABELS

Label "*BERNARD ENZENSPERGER / ZITHER, Zither, Violinen u. Guittarren ...[?]. in Wien*"

Victorin Drassegg (?) Inv. No. E 1239



- Details of construction (neck/head joint, inner surfaces showing heavy toothing plane traces, rectangular profile and treatment of the linings inside, shaping of braces etc.) and materials (woods untypical for the Viennese production - e.g. walnut) differ from Enzensperger's work
- Very strongly suggest the maker is in fact V. Drassegg
- Enzensperger's label was probably added.
- Enzensperger designed his "Akustik-Guitarre" model, the shape which somewhat resembles Drassegg's characteristic model of the body from Vienna in 1831
- First known Drassegg's dated guitar in this shape is from 1832 (Berlin Collection, SIMPK Kat. Nr. 5874)
- Both Enzensperger and Drassegg participated in the Industrial Exhibition, Vienna, 1845
- Already around 1820 a similar model was introduced by makers here in Innsbruck (eg. Johann Fritz)



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Label Enzensperger E 1239

Drassegg? E 1302

TRANSFER OF LABELS

Viennese school



- Guitar with three added bass strings and a printed label “*Johann Homolka / Instrumentenmacher in Prag*” **E 1242**
- The guitar by “*Homolka*” was exhibited, among others, at the Czechoslavic Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague in 1895 (according to written sources)
- A **comparable** model by J. G. Stauffer is in the private collection of Stefan Hackl, Gregg Miner.
- **Conclusion:** probably the last model by **Georg Stauffer** and his workshop, **Vienna ca. 1850** (cf. ribbing inside the body, varnish on the soundboard, mechanics, standard Viennese inlay etc.)



TRANSFER OF LABELS

Viennese school

Label as the least reliable clue to the manufacturer

- Guitar with the label “*Michael Weber*” – **Stauffer’s workshop, Vienna ca 1800–1815, Inv. No. E 1227**
- According to the results of the study, the instrument was probably created in the workshops of the now highly regarded J. G. Stauffer or his colleagues of the top Viennese guitar school of the 19th century
- Hypothesis for the confusion of labels: Both instruments bearing the labels “**Michael Weber**” (E 1227) and “**Johann Homolka**” (E 1242) were presented as work of Czech and Prague instrument manufacturers in the end of the 19th century. These guitars were probably intended to represent the high level of Czech instrument production at national exhibitions.
- Details: article by Daniela Kotašová: *Guitars in Karel Boromejský Dvořák’s Collection*. *Musicalia*. Journal of the Czech Museum of Music. Praha, Národní muzeum, 2024, 16 (1-2), 167–199.



CZECH GUITAR PRODUCTION

Stauffer's direct students, trained in Vienna

- Stauffer's influence on guitar construction spread throughout much of Europe, Russia, and the USA, long after his death
- In Prague, **Johann Georg Stauffer** had storage space for his instruments at the bookshop of Hasse. Due to high demand, there was a large selection of Stauffer's standard large and small treble guitars (advertisement from 1818).
- **Anton Mitteis (1791–1870)** – Litoměřice. Guitars: E 106 and **left E 1237**
- **Dominik Franz Prokop (1803–1862)** – Hlinsko, a distinctive guitar model. Some of Prokop's innovations (the arching of the soundboard, etc.) suggest that he had much in common with Georg Stauffer's creative approach. Guitars: E 636, **right E 1218**
- Source: Ladislav Prokop: *Zápisky [Notes]*. Hradec Králové 1981



A. Mitteis, E 1237



D. F. Prokop, E 1218



CZECH GUITAR PRODUCTION

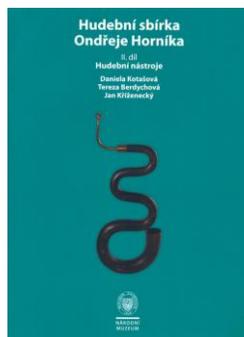
inspired mainly by designs from Vienna



Věnceslav Metelka (1807–1867) – Paseky nad Jizerou (Northern Bohemia)

- Followed the typical Viennese Legnani model
- Large extant correspondence and notes shows his interest in improving his own work (Memorial of National Literature)
- Guitar - label: “*Zhotovená od Věnceslava Metelky V PASEKÁCH nad Jizerou*” [Made by Věnceslav Metelka IN PASEKY nad Jizerou] from 1864 (inside inscription). Comes from the collection of Ondřej Horník (1864–1917). **Left E 293**

Son **Josef Metelka (1841–1880)**, Paseky, 1879. **Right E 793**



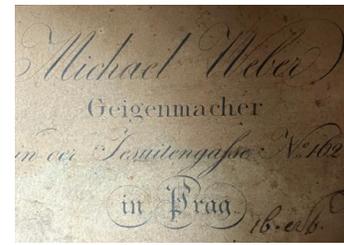
Josef Metelka, E 793



CZECH GUITAR PRODUCTION

Prague

- **Michael Weber (1787–1844)** Journeyman by Caspar Strnad, [E 2803](#)
- **Johann Baptista Bubenik (1804?–1836)** Journeyman by Caspar Strnad. He worked independently for only ca 12 years, and therefore did not build many instruments, [E 1226](#)
- **Johann Kulik (1800–1872)** apprenticed with K. V. Schembera in Prague, as a journeyman with M. Stoss in Vienna. In 1824 he became independent in Prague. He built violins, violas, violas d'amoure, cellos and double basses, guitars, harps. Three guitars in the Prague collection: E 811, E 7, [E 630](#) (year 1842)



M. Weber, E 2803



J. B. Bubenik, E 1226



J. Kulik (1842), E 630

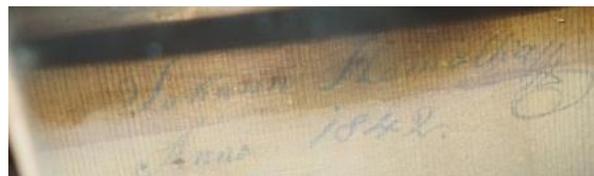


CZECH GUITAR PRODUCTION

Homolkas'

Guitar labels with the Homolka brothers' inscription need to be examined (transfer of labels?)

- **Johann (1800–1883)** from 1862 worked in Kutná Hora. E 637, E 1234
The guitar with the label "Eduard Johann Bauer..." is probably the work of Johann Homolka, cf. the inscription on the back of the soundboard: "**Johann Homolka / Anno 1842.**"
E. J. Bauer from Prague was probably the seller here. [Inv. No. E 749](#)
- **Ferdinand Josef (1810–1862)** guitar E 787
- **Eduard Emanuel Karel (1860–1934)** Member of the National Theatre Orchestra in Prague, expert in historical instruments
 - In 1896, he published *Biographical Reports on Violin Makers in Prague and the Surroundings*. One of the sources for the extensive dictionary of violin makers by Wilibald Leo Freiherr von Lütgendorff (*Die Geigen- und Lautenmacher von Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*)
 - In 2026 - at the Prague National Museum, the project: *Eduard Emanuel Homolka's Music Collection*, publication date December 2026



Inside of soundboard, E 749



Label „E. J. Bauer“ – J. Homolka, E 749



FAKING AND FORGERY

- Guitar with label “*Thomas Hulinzky fecit Pragae, Anno 1754*” Attempt to give the impression of a baroque guitar, but the number of strings, scale, shape, workmanship and dimensions of the neck and head do not correspond to the style; parchment rosette made in an amateur manner, etc. **Anonymous, Central Europe, ca 1825 (?)**
Left E 1199 (next to E 176, E 1438)
- “*Georg Anton Stauffer/ Geigen- und Gitarrenmacher/ in/ Wien.*” (father Johann Georg, son Johann Anton), probably from the workshop of **August Glaesel (1809–1864)** from Markneukirchen **Far right E 1230**
- Article on Stauffer fakes E. P. Hofmann and S. Hackl: “*On Georg Anton*”



Stauffer & Co.
Veřejná skupina · 1,6 tis. členů



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Label, E 1230



Inside of soundboard, E 1230



Left “*Hulinzky ... anno 1754*”



“*Georg Anton Stauffer ...*”

CONCLUSION

- Presentation of a previously unknown collection of instruments in the Prague collection
- Czech guitar production of the 19th century (A. Mitteis, D. F. Prokop, V. Metelka, M. Weber, J. B. Bubenik) although common, but good instruments. They show that high-quality Czech guitar production followed the models from Vienna and not the geographically closer centers from Saxony and Thuringia.
- Topic for future research: verification of authorship for a number of instruments, not based on data from the label, an attempt to identify anonymous guitars (similar to Victorin Drassegg)
- Project objective: printed catalog with expert evaluation of the collection



"Nach dem Modell / des Luigi Legnani 1676 / J. A. Stauffer & Comp. / Anno 1829 in Wien No 480."

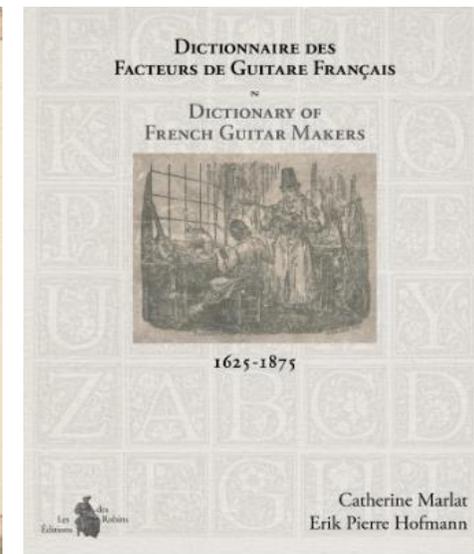
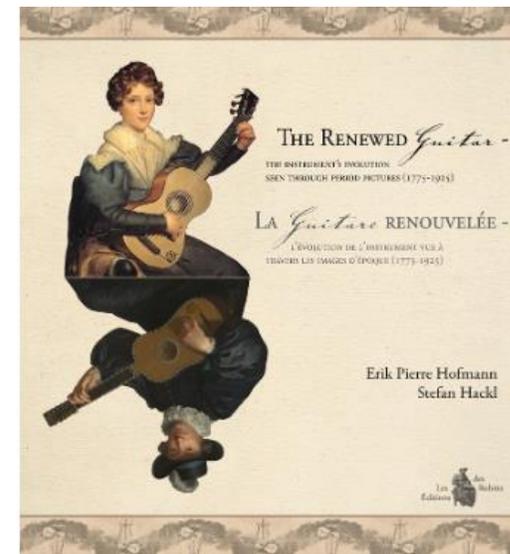
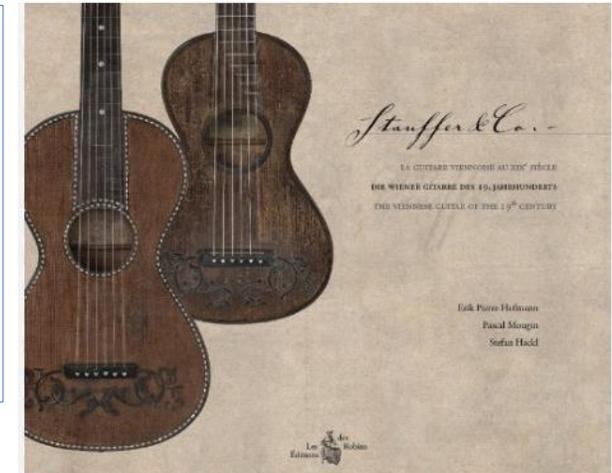


Johann Anton Stauffer & Co.,
Vienna, 1829, E 723



LITERATURE, ONLINE RESOURCES

- *Faszination GITARRE*, herausgegeben Conny RESTLE Christopher Li. Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung. Berlin, 2010
- Erik P. HOFMANN – Pascal MOUGIN – Stefan HACKL: *Stauffer & Co. – The Viennese Guitar of the 19th Century*, Les Éditions des Robins, Germolles-sur-Grosne 2011
- Andreas MICHEL, Philipp NEUMANN: *Gitarren 17. bis 19. Jahrhundert. Katalog*, Museum für Musikinstrumenten der Universität Leipzig, 2016
- Erik Pierre HOFMANN & Stefan HACKL: *The Renewed Guitar - The Instrument's Evolution Seen Through Period Pictures (1775-1925)*, Les Éditions des Robins, 2021
- Catherine MARLAT & Erik P. HOFMANN: *Dictionnaire des Facteurs de Guitare Français 1625-1875*. Les Éditions des Robins, 2025
- Guitars in the Leipzig collection <http://www.studia-instrumentorum.de/> and <https://gitarre-archiv.at/osterreichische-gitarren-in-museen-und-privatsammlungen/>
- <https://www.earlyromanticguitar.com/erg/gallery.htm>



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Gitarre-Archiv Österreich

Thank you for your attention

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