

# Hunt, Amusement and Representation: The Viennese Hofburg and Its ‘Satellites’ in the Seventeenth Century

## Markus Jeitler

From the Late Middle Ages, the Vienna Hofburg was undoubtedly the most important, although by no means the only residence of the Habsburg monarchs who were both Austrian sovereigns and Holy Roman Emperors. Lesser branches of the family possessed their own residences in Innsbruck, Graz and other sites throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> These residences maintained their importance throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries until the extinction of the relevant line, from which point they were used occasionally for the *Erbhuldigung* (homage).<sup>2</sup> The residences at Wiener Neustadt and Linz were among the oldest and most prominent of the Habsburg possessions; both had grown under the care of Emperors Friedrich III and Maximilian I and continued to be developed by Ferdinand I early in his reign.<sup>3</sup> Wiener Neustadt may even be considered a rival to Vienna in terms of its importance,<sup>4</sup> although Friedrich III and Maximilian I established gardens at the Hofburg in order to enlarge the complex and make it a more pleasant and modern residence.<sup>5</sup> The reasons for this preference could be found in the siege of the Hofburg in 1462<sup>6</sup> and the wars against the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus who resided there after conquering Vienna in 1485.<sup>7</sup> During the 1530s Wiener Neustadt declined in importance but Leopold I started to draw more attention to the castle again.<sup>8</sup>

After his election to the Bohemian and Hungarian thrones in 1526, Ferdinand I added the royal residences in Prague and Buda to his establishment, although Buda was soon lost to the Ottomans in 1541, and Bratislava became the new seat of the Hungarian government.<sup>9</sup> Ferdinand considered Vienna, Prague and Innsbruck to be his main residences.<sup>10</sup> The castle of Bratislava had to be rebuilt because it was not adequate.<sup>11</sup> Ferdinand began an ambitious renovation and expansion of the Vienna Hofburg including its gardens, but one of the king's top priorities was his hunting grounds at nearby estates such as Ebersdorf (about 10 kilometres from the Hofburg) and Laxenburg (about 18 kilometres from the Hofburg). Under the reign of Ferdinand's son and successor Maximilian II, the Neue Lustgarten in the Hofburg was mainly used to keep horses which reduced the garden areas at once.<sup>12</sup>

1 Viktor Thiel, *Die landesfürstliche Burg in Graz und ihre historische Entwicklung*, Vienna – Graz – Leipzig 1927 (= Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte Steiermarks und Kärntens 3). – Wiltraud Resch et al., *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Graz: Die Profanbauten des I. Bezirkes*, Horn 1997 (= Österreichische Kunsttopographie LIII) – Johanna Felmayr et al., *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Innsbruck, Die Hofbauten*, Vienna 1986 (= Österreichische Kunsttopographie XLVIII).

2 HHStA (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Vienna), Z-Prot. (Zeremonialprotokolle) 2, pag. 895–898.

3 Johann Jobst, *Die Neustädter Burg und die k. u. k. Theresianische Militärakademie*, Vienna – Leipzig 1908, pp. 6–14 – Alexander Wied et alii, *Die profanen Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt Linz 1. Teil*, Vienna 1977 (= Österreichische Kunsttopographie 42), pp. 475–527.

4 Renate Holzschuh-Hofer, Typologie und Traditionspflege an der Hofburg im 16. Jahrhundert, in: Herbert Karner (ed.), *Die Wiener Hofburg 1521–1705. Baugeschichte, Funktion und Etablierung als Kaiserresidenz*, Vienna 2014 (= Veröffentlichungen zur Bau- und Funktionsgeschichte der Wiener Hofburg 2), p. 577.

5 Markus Jeitler – Jochen Martz, *Der Untere und der Obere Lustgarten*, in: Karner (see note 4), pp. 189–190. – Markus Jeitler – Jochen Martz, *Der Rosstummelplatz (Josefsplatz) und seine Vorgänger: Irrgarten und Hinterer Lustgarten*, in: Karner (see note 4), p. 268.

6 Georg Theodor von Karajan, *Die alte Kaiserburg zu Wien vor dem Jahre MD nach den Aufnahmen des k. k. Burghauptmannes Ludwig Montoyer mit geschichtlichen Erläuterungen*, Vienna 1863, pp. 77–93. In 1462 the Viennese rebelled against Friedrich III and besieged the Hofburg.

7 Ibidem, pp. 96–98.

8 Jobst (see note 3), p. 15.

9 Jaroslava Hausenblasová – Markus Jeitler, *Die Hofburg und die Familie Habsburg*, in: Karner (see note 4), p. 26.

10 Thomas Fellner – Heinrich Kretschmayer, *Die Österreichische Zentralverwaltung I. Abteilung. Von Maximilian I. bis zur Vereinigung der Österreichischen und der Böhmisches Hofkanzlei (1749)*, 2. Band: Aktenstücke 1491–1681, Wien 1907 (= Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs 6), pp. 262–263. – Hausenblasová – Jeitler, Hofburg (see note 9), pp. 25–26.

11 Hausenblasová – Jeitler (see note 9), p. 26. – Andrej Fiala – Jana Šulcová – Peter Krútky, *Die Bratislavaer Burg*, Bratislava 1995

12 Jeitler – Martz, Rosstummelplatz (see note 5), p. 273.

Maximilian also built the Neugebäude near Ebersdorf<sup>13</sup> and the *Lusthaus* at Prater.<sup>14</sup>

Although both Ebersdorf and Laxenburg had gardens, the primary purpose of these estates was to support the large hunting preserves attached to them. Whereas the Neugebäude had only minimal accommodations for overnight stays, Ebersdorf and Laxenburg were adapted to accommodate large parties for longer periods of time.<sup>15</sup> This procedure had been developed into an established system, which now has to be presented and discussed with the help of respective case studies.

### Laxenburg

The moated castle at Laxenburg [Fig. 1] had been acquired by Duke Rudolf III Habsburg in 1306 and was later rebuilt by Duke Albrecht III in the late fourteenth century, who also raised the neighbouring village of Lachsendorf to a market town. Maximilian added vivaria and a ‘Netherlandish’ flower garden.<sup>16</sup> The castle and its estate were temporarily leased to the current bailiff; in the 1540s and 1550s the Spanish aristocrat Martín de Guzmán ran a powder mill at Laxenburg.<sup>17</sup> Emperors Matthias, Ferdinand II, and Ferdinand III used Laxenburg as a hunting seat.<sup>18</sup> In 1637 Empress Eleonora Gonzaga of Mantua, the second wife of Ferdinand II, got the castle and estate as a part of her thirds, but there are no records of the empress visiting or making any alterations to the castle.<sup>19</sup> After her death on 27 June 1655, Laxenburg came to the empress’s niece Eleonora Magdalena Gonzaga of Mantua-Nevers, the third wife of Emperor Ferdinand III, and again it served her after his death in 1657 as a part of her thirds.<sup>20</sup> The dowager empress reached an agreement with her stepson, Emperor Leopold I, whereby she received the income from the estate while he enjoyed its use. The emperor made long visits to Laxenburg, usually in the spring, and even held official audiences there.<sup>21</sup> The castle itself could not accommodate the full needs of the court, forcing court ceremonies to be adapted to the smaller venue.<sup>22</sup> Today the old castle at Laxenburg preserves its medieval appearance. Johann Sebastian Müller, who accompanied the Duke of Saxony-Weimar on a trip to Laxenburg in 1660, described it as ‘old, with two towers and a moat, an old chapel, very bad and narrow rooms, a balcony on a small tower used as a dining room in summertime, and aeries for herons and falcons’.<sup>23</sup>

### Ebersdorf

Ebersdorf (now known as Kaiserebersdorf) [Fig. 2], which, like Laxenburg, was also originally a moated castle, began as a high-Medieval residence and the seat of the prominent Ebersdorf family.<sup>24</sup> In 1499 the brothers Wolfgang and Veit of Ebersdorf were forced to give the castle to Maximilian I. At this time the complex consisted of an upper and a lower house, a chapel, annexes and fortifications.<sup>25</sup> In 1529 Ottoman troops set fire to the castle, which sustained significant damage.<sup>26</sup> In 1550 Ferdinand I began making extensive renovations to Ebersdorf, similar to those being conducted at the Hofburg in Vienna. This project included the partial demolition of the old castle and new buildings, such as the *Uhrtrakt* (clock wing), annexes, gardens and, later, a menagerie.<sup>27</sup> These works were often hampered by a lack of funds, but under the guidance of the architects Johann Tscherte and

13 Hilda Lietzmann, *Das Neugebäude in Wien. Sultan Süleymans Zelt – Kaiser Maximilians II. Lustschloss*, Munich – Berlin 1987.

14 Erich Zinsler, *Das Lusthaus im Wiener Prater. Zur Geschichte eines fast vergessenen Wiener Wahrzeichens*, *Wiener Geschichtsblätter Beiheft* 4, 2000, pp. 3–43.

15 Lietzmann (see note 13), p. 169.

16 Elisabeth Springer, *Laxenburg. Chronik – Bilder – Dokumente*, Laxenburg 1988, pp. 38–39. – Silvia Rankl, *Das Wasserschloss in Laxenburg. Ein Beispiel fürstlicher Herrschaftsrepräsentation im Mittelalter*, Diplomarbeit Universität Wien, 2011, pp. 10–101.

17 Springer (see note 16), 42; FHKA, NÖK (Niederösterreichische Kammer) Prot. (Protokollbuch) 32 (1555), fol. 92r.

18 Springer (see note 16), 44–48; HHStA, Z-Prot. 1, pag. 550–554.

19 Springer (see note 16), 48.

20 Springer (see note 16), 48; FHKA, NÖK Fasz. 413, fol. 142r–143v.

21 HHStA, Z-Prot.1, pag. 550–554; Z-Prot. 2, pag. 891–892, 980–981, 1407, 1529–1533; Z-Prot. 3, fol. 118v, 148r–149r, 196v; Z-Prot. 4, fol. 72v, 107r–107v, 292r, 323v, 569v–570r, 590v, 569r; Z-Prot. 5, fol. 73r–94r, 144v, 186v, 349v–365r, 408r.

22 HHStA, Z-Prot. 1, pag. 552–553; Z-Prot. 2, pag. 980.

23 Katrin Keller – Martin Scheutz – Harald Tersch (eds.), *Einmal Weimar – Wien und retour. Johann Sebastian Müller und sein Wienbericht aus dem Jahr 1660*, Vienna – Munich 2005 (= Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 42), pp. 124–127.

24 Michaela Müller et alii, *Die archäologischen und bauhistorischen Untersuchungen im Schloss Kaiserebersdorf*, Vienna 2008 (= Monografien der Stadtarchäologie Wien 3), pp. 27–39.

25 Ibidem, pp. 37–38.

26 Ibidem, p. 40.

27 Ibidem, pp. 43–46.

Pietro Ferrabosco, work was completed in 1565.<sup>28</sup> It is likely that Maximilian II built the *Zöglingstrakt* (pupil's wing) and the northern wing. At this time a road connected Ebersdorf directly to the Neugebäude, indicating a relationship between these two imperial residences.<sup>29</sup> Ferdinand II preferred to hunt at the castle in autumn, and this tradition was continued by Ferdinand III and Leopold I.<sup>30</sup> In 1660 Johann Sebastian Müller described Ebersdorf as a '*Khayserl. Lust- und Jagdhaus*', full of hunting trophies and containing representative rooms including a '*Ritterstube*', antechamber, audience chamber, and a '*Kayserl. Schlaff-Cammer*' as well as a small garden.<sup>31</sup> In 1683 the castle was once again destroyed by Ottoman troops, to the extent that demolition was considered.<sup>32</sup> However, the complex was rebuilt between 1687 and 1689 under the direction of the architect Christian Alexander Oedtl.<sup>33</sup>

### The Favorita

The third residence in the vicinity of Vienna was the Favorita in the suburb of Wieden [Fig. 3], about 2 kilometers from the Hofburg. Favorita began as a late-Medieval manor house which was acquired by Emperor Matthias for his wife Anna.<sup>34</sup> Eleonora Gonzaga favoured this palace, and it was in her possession from 1622/1623 to 1637. She renovated the house and used it as a villa. The model for this project was Villa La Favorita outside her native Mantua, which belonged to her brother Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga.<sup>35</sup> Many ballets, theatrical performances, operas and feasts took place in the villa's extensive gardens.<sup>36</sup> Between 1637 and 1646 the Favorita belonged to Empress Maria Anna, the first wife of Ferdinand III. Documents from 1637 and 1638 indicate that Favorita was able to accommodate the imperial family and their household. The '*Khayserlichen Vauoritenhoff*' included a great hall, '*Khaysserliche Zimmer*', a kitchen and cellars.<sup>37</sup> The estate was large and included meadows, fields and vineyards. The pleasure gardens were designed by Giovanni Battista Carlone; they were composed of a '*Margrantengarten*' (pomegranate garden), flower-beds, a pond and a grotto.<sup>38</sup> After Maria Anna's death the Favorita came into the possession of the imperial widow Eleonora Gonzaga. In 1655/1657 it passed to her niece Eleonora Magdalena Gonzaga as a part of her thirds.<sup>39</sup>

Eleonora Magdalena also made significant changes to the Favorita. In 1658 and 1659 she added a new staircase, a new floor, and two rooms for her court ladies.<sup>40</sup> In 1661 the kitchen was rebuilt,<sup>41</sup> and in 1666 a new '*Galleria*' was added by recycling old timber from the Hofburg.<sup>42</sup> In 1668 two wooden pavilions were built in the garden.<sup>43</sup> In 1660 Johann Sebastian Müller described the '*Khayserin Garten Favorita*' ('The Empress's garden Favorita') as having vineyards; a pleasure garden with statues, railings and espaliers; an artificial embanked lake approximately 107 steps (ca. 79 m) long, 30 steps (ca. 22 m) wide and '*quite deep*', which was surrounded by a balustrade and navigated by a '*Dutch*' gondola; a skittle-alley, galleries with busts displayed in niches; and two grottos. Inside the palace, Müller lists a '*Ritterstube*', an antechamber, and a sleeping room.<sup>44</sup> In 1674 the garden wall was in ruins, so that people were able to enter the garden to steal copper pipes from the fountains.<sup>45</sup> In 1683 the Favorita and the surrounding suburb of Vienna was burned in the Ottoman siege and had to be rebuilt. However, the work which was under the direction of the architect Giovanni Pietro Tencalla did not begin until

28 Ibidem, pp. 43–46.

29 Ibidem, pp. 46–48; Lietzmann (see note 13), pp. 63–64.

30 Müller *et al.* (see note 24), pp. 48–52 – HHStA, Z-Prot. 1. pag. 411–413, 422, 427–428, 437; Z-Prot. 2, pag. 1548; Z-Prot. 3, fol. 68r, 123r, 170v; Z-Prot. 4, fol. 579v, 610r; Z-Prot. 5, fol. 73r–94r, 157r, 241v, 314v, 371v, 585v.

31 Keller – Scheutz – Tersch (see note 23), p. 54.

32 Müller *et alii* (see note 24), pp. 52–53.

33 Müller *et alii* (see note 24), p. 53; Moriz Dreger, *Baugeschichte der k. k. Hofburg in Wien bis zum XIX. Jahrhunderte*, Vienna 1914 (= Österreichische Kunsttopographie XIV), p. 209 – WSStLA (Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv), Alte Ziviljustiz A2, Fasz. 216/Zl. 20.

34 Erich Schlöss, *Baugeschichte des Theresianums*, Vienna – Cologne – Weimar 1998, pp. 17–25.

35 Petr Fidler, Loggia mit Aussicht – Prologemena zu einer Favorita, *The Art Bulletin* 60, 1978, pp. 274–295.

36 Andrea Sommer-Mathis, „La Favorita festeggiante“ – The Imperial Summer Residence of the Habsburgs as Festive Venue, in: Ronnie Mulryne – Krista De Jonge (eds.), *Architectures of Festival: Fashioning and Re-Fashioning Urban and Courtly Space in Early Modern Europe* (in preparation).

37 HHStA, OMeA (Obersthofmeisteramt) SR (Sonderreihe) K 76, 1637–1638.

38 Schlöss (see note 34), pp. 26–33.

39 FHKA, NÖK Fasz. 413, fol. 142r–143v.

40 FHKA NÖK Fasz. 337, 15. Mai 1658; NÖK Fasz. 346, 12. Mai 1660.

41 FHKA, NÖK Fasz. 413, fol. 142r–143v.

42 FHKA, NÖK Fasz. 375; 1666 Jänner 20.

43 FHKA, NÖK Prot. E (Expedit) 356 (1665), fol. 312r.

44 Keller – Scheutz – Tersch (see note 23), pp. 66–67.

45 FHKA, NÖK Fasz. 413, fol. 129r–135v, fol. 146r–155v.

after the death of Eleonora Magdalena Gonzaga in 1686. The new renovations added several features, including the orangery, shooting-stand and an outdoor theatre.<sup>46</sup>

What do these imperial residences in the vicinity of Vienna have in common and what was their relationship to the Hofburg? Laxenburg, Ebersdorf, and Favorita are all situated close enough to Vienna [Fig. 4] that they could conveniently be visited, and they all were able to accommodate the imperial family and their household. Further, these residences could be used at short notice, as for example in 1654, when Ferdinand IV suffered from smallpox, and the court moved to Ebersdorf.<sup>47</sup> On 23 February 1668, Leopold I and Margarita Teresa fled to Ebersdorf and Eleonora Magdalena to Favorita when the *Leopoldinische Trakt* (Leopold wing) in the Hofburg burnt down.<sup>48</sup> Documents show that during the 1620s the court enjoyed long stays at Laxenburg in the spring to shoot herons and at Ebersdorf in late summer and early autumn. This tradition was continued by Ferdinand III and Leopold I;<sup>49</sup> in 1668 Leopold went ‘as usual in May’ to Laxenburg.<sup>50</sup>

The presence of the imperial court and household in these residences meant that important ceremonial events were adapted to these sites; prominent audiences, such as that of the apostolic nuncio Mariano Albrizi in May 1671<sup>51</sup> and the reception of the Muscovite delegation in 1687 both occurred at Laxenburg.<sup>52</sup> After renovating Favorita in around 1690, Leopold I held a number of important audiences and receptions there, including the visit of Tsar Peter the Great of Russia in June 1698,<sup>53</sup> the reception for Amalia Wilhelmine of Brunswick-Lüneburg, the wife of Joseph I in 1699,<sup>54</sup> and the proclamation of Archduke Charles as King of Spain together with the ‘*pactum mutuae successionis*’ in 1703.<sup>55</sup>

A ‘regular’ seasonal rotation of the court’s presence in the Hofburg and the three nearby castles can be found out for the year 1692; toward the end of April or early May the court moved to Laxenburg, on 2 June to Favorita and on 4 September ‘for a few weeks’ to Ebersdorf, before returning to the Hofburg.<sup>56</sup> This general model of sojourns and travels was observed for several decades until the death of Emperor Charles VI in 1740.<sup>57</sup> Wiener Neustadt was not used with similar regularity.<sup>58</sup>

In the seventeenth century, and especially during the reign of Ferdinand II, the imperial residences at Ebersdorf and Laxenburg were regularly used according to the season, the available accommodations, and the emperor’s interest in hunting. Therefore these castles must have met the needs of the royal court and household in ways that the Neugebäude or Favorita could not.<sup>59</sup> Ebersdorf and Laxenburg took on the character of satellite residences, most notably during the reign of Leopold I. As these castles could be reached within a day’s journey of the Hofburg, significant facilities for court and governmental administration were unnecessary. These castles served three main functions: they provided facilities and accommodation for the imperial hunting parties, space for leisure and amusement, and a suitable setting for formal diplomatic and ceremonial events. Although their relationship to the Hofburg has been obscured with the passage of time, the Vienna palace always remained the main residence of the Habsburg family. [Fig. 5]

46 Schlöss (see note 34), pp. 34-40.

47 HHStA, Z-Prot. 1, pag. 411-412.

48 Markus Jeitler, *Brände in der Hofburg*, in: Karner (see note 4), pp. 35–36.

49 Springer (see note 16), pp. 44-56; HHStA, Z-Prot. 3, fol. 57r; Z-Prot. 4, fol. 45v.

50 HHStA, Z-Prot. 2, pag. 1407.

51 HHStA, Z-Prot. 2, pag. 1529–1535.

52 HHStA, Z-Prot. 4, fol. 208v.

53 HHStA, Z-Prot. 5, fol. 411r–423r; Erich Schlöss, Zar Peter der Große in Wien. Übertragung der Blätter 411 bis 452 der Ceremonialprotokolle 1698 (ZA Prot. 5) in die Schrift unserer Zeit wort- und zeilengetreu, *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 51, 2004, pp. 375–546.

54 HHStA, Z-Prot. 5, fol. 527v.

55 HHStA, Z-Prot. 6, fol. 278r.

56 HHStA, Z-Prot. 5, fol. 14v–35v.

57 Friedrich Polleroß, Tradition und Recreation. Die Residenzen der österreichischen Habsburger in der frühen Neuzeit, *Majestas* 6, 1998, pp. 91–148 (130).

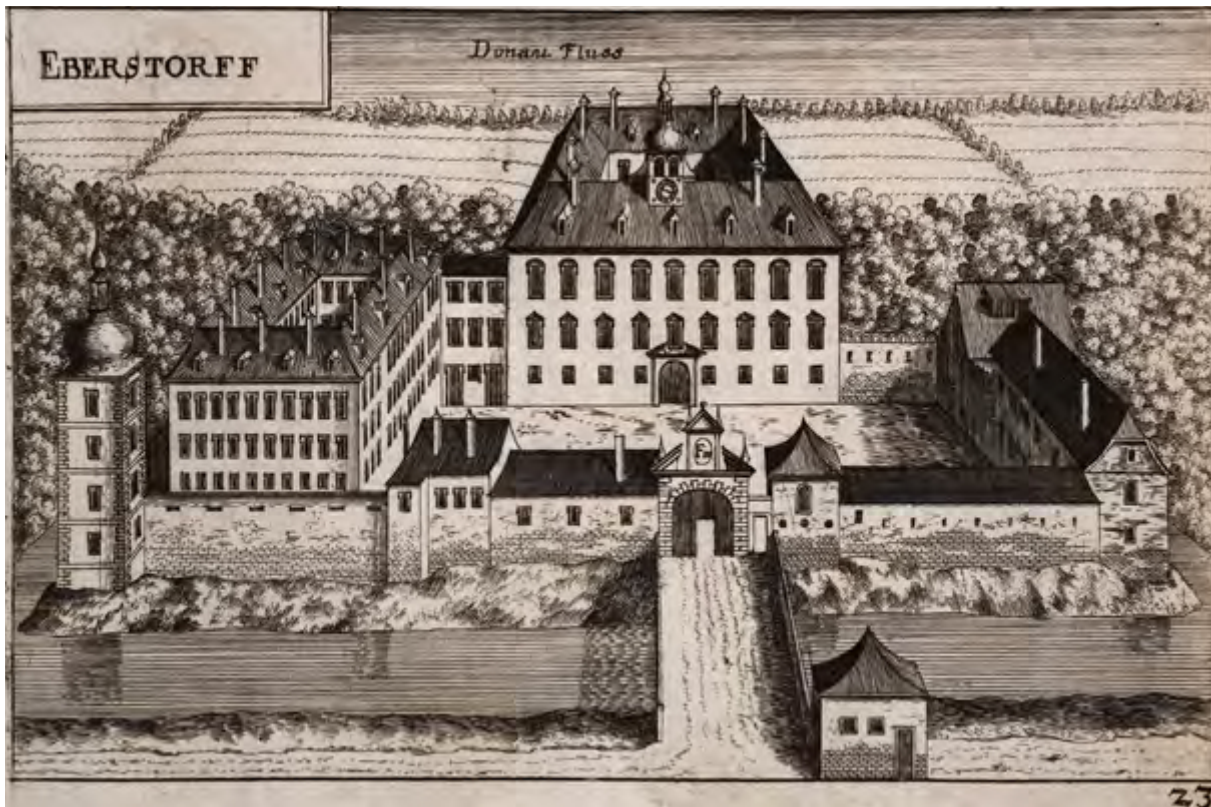
58 Jobst (see note 3), p. 15.

59 *Dehio-Handbuch. Wien II. bis IX. und XX. Bezirk*, Vienna 1993, pp. 17–20.



1. Georg Matthäus Vischer, Laxenburg, in: *Topographia Archiducatus Austriae Inferioris Modernae*, about 1672.

Photo: Public domain



2. M. Merian d. Ä., Ebersdorf, in: *Topographia Provinciarum Austriacarum*, Frankfurt 1679

From: S. Haag (ed.), *Echt tierisch! Die Menagerie des Fürsten*, exh. cat., Vienna 2015



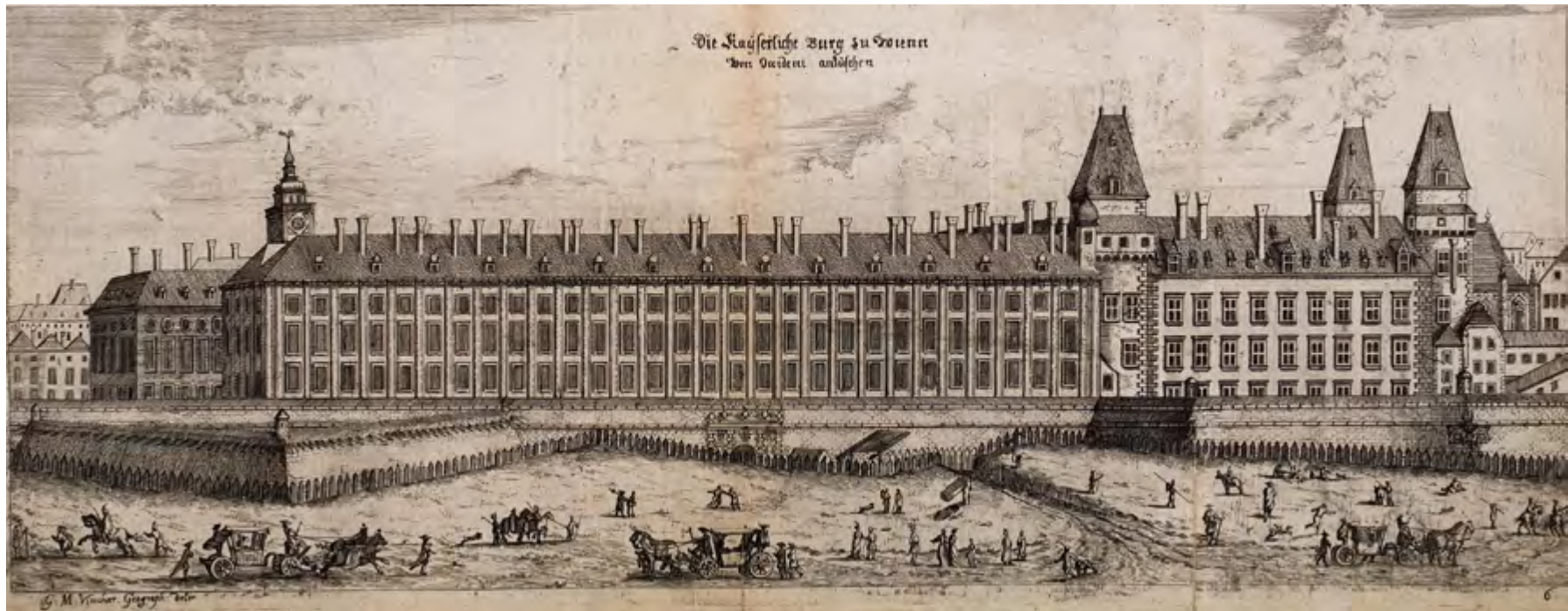
3. Georg Matthäus Vischer, Favorita, about 1672

Photo: Public domain



4. Map of Vienna and its environs (detail), 1692.

Photo: Vienna, WstLA, Kartographische Sammlung /Altbestand, Nr. 1158



5. Georg Matthäus Vischer, The Vienna Hofburg, about 1672.

From: H. Karner (ed.), Die Wiener Hofburg 1521–1705. Baugeschichte, Funktion und Etablierung als Kaiserresidenz, Vienna 2014