

# Architecture and Rhetoric in the Work of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach

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It is now commonplace that both the painting and sculpture of the early modern period are based on the principles of rhetoric. However, there is less information available on the connection between rhetoric and architecture, although the function of the most important buildings was also political or religious *persuasio*. The work of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723) provides an exemplary case for studying that connection. Fischer was trained in Rome under Bernini and Bellori and went on to build notable churches and palaces in Vienna, Salzburg, and Prague. In his function as imperial architect he worked with *concettisti* such as Conrad Adolph von Albrecht and Carl Gustav Heraeus. Fischer was obviously aware of the rhetorical function of his buildings, and his understanding of the relationship between architecture and rhetoric can be analyzed according to three functions: the persuasive function of the architecture itself; the emblematic function of the buildings in the context of *inventio* and *dispositio*; and the question of *decorum* in connection with different styles in rhetoric.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN RHETORIC AND THE VISUAL ARTS, above all in the painting of seventeenth-century Rome and France, has been a frequent subject of academic study over the past few years.<sup>1</sup> However, the relationship between Baroque rhetoric and architecture has so far received little attention.<sup>2</sup> In this study I shall examine this connec-

<sup>1</sup>Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Colour Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>2</sup>Bruno Contardi, *La retorica e l'architettura barocca*, Studi di storia dell'arte 8 (Rome: Bulzoni, 1978); Carsten-Peter Warncke, "Rhetorik der Architektur in der frühen Neuzeit," in *Johann Conrad Schlaun 1695–1773: Architektur des Spätbarock in Europa*, ed. Klaus Bußmann, Florian Matzner, Ulrich Schulze (Münster: Stuttgart Oktagon, 1995), 612–21.

tion in the work of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723), the most important Austrian architect of his age, and in that of his son Joseph Emanuel.<sup>3</sup> This case study is motivated in part by the fact that Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach was not a traditional technician but learned and worked in Italy as sculptor and creator of ephemeral architecture. Religious painting and sculpture as well as absolutist decorations were the main fields of the visual arts in which rhetoric was used. Such a study joins the discussion of the emblematic function of Fischer's imperial architecture (Sedlmayr, Aurenhammer, Möseneder, Matsche, and Lavin); in addition, it promises to bring new insights into the relationship between architecture, sculpture, and literature when viewed in terms of rhetoric.

#### PERSUASIO

The main object of oratory was *persuasio*, i.e., the art of persuasion, directed primarily at the affections, but which had already been applied to the visual arts by Alberti.<sup>4</sup> Born the son of a sculptor in Graz, Fischer spent the years 1671 to 1687 studying and working as a sculptor in Rome and Naples. During this period he would certainly have encountered the theory of *docere*, *delectare*, and *movere*, as exemplified in the altars and celebratory apparatus for the forty-hour prayer constructed by the "theater architects" Cortona and Bernini.<sup>5</sup> Like Bernini's altars, Fischer's high altar for the church of pilgrimage in Mariazell, dating from 1693, was designed in the form of a stage. As in a *theatrum sacrum*, the spectator is exhorted to *compassio* by the angels flanking the crucifix held by God the Father and by the highly

<sup>3</sup>Hans Aurenhammer, *J. B. Fischer von Erlach* (London: Lane, 1973). Hans Sedlmayr, *Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach* (Vienna: Herold, 1976). For the latest state of research, see Friedrich Polleroß, *Fischer von Erlach und die Wiener Barocktradition*, *Frühneuzeit-Studien* 4 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1995).

<sup>4</sup>Joachim Knappe, "Rhetorizität und Semiotik: Kategorientransfer zwischen Rhetorik und Kunsttheorie in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Intertextualität in der Frühen Neuzeit: Studien zu ihren theoretischen und praktischen Perspektiven*, *Frühneuzeit-Studien* 2, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann and Wolfgang Neuber (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1994), 485–532.

<sup>5</sup>Karl Noehles, "Rhetorik, Architektur Allegorie und Baukunst an der Wende vom Manierismus zum Barock in Rom," in *Die Sprache der Zeichen und Bilder: Rhetorik und nonverbale Kommunikation in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Volker Knapp, *Ars Rhetorica* 1 (Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1990), 190–227, here 213–20; Mark Weil, "The Relationship of the Cornaro Chapel to Mystery Plays and Italian Court Theater," in *All the world's a stage...: Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, *Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University* 6/2 (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University, 1990), 458–86.

emotional gestures of the Virgin Mary and John below the cross (see fig. 1).

Like sacral sculptures and temporary architecture, the buildings of the Counter-Reformation and the Age of Absolutism had a persuasive function in general. An obvious example of this is provided by an engraving in the *Perspettiva de' pittori e architetti* by Andrea Pozzo (1693), which shows an equestrian monument of Emperor Leopold I (fig. 2). The architecture behind the statue has the same effect as a church apse, acquiring special dignity through the rows of double columns. The persuasive function of architecture is justified by Karl Eusebius of Liechtenstein on the grounds that the silent rhetoric of beautiful and impressive architecture enables it to draw attention automatically as well as arouse the admiration of both the educated and uneducated classes.<sup>6</sup>

Even one of Fischer's very first architectural manifestations, the utopian vision of the imperial residence in Schönbrunn (fig. 3) fulfills these conditions through its manipulations of perspective based on optical illusions, although it lacks any kind of realizable functionality. The design served either as an example of work submitted by the young artist in order to obtain a position at court or else as a teaching aid for his tutorship of the heir to the throne.<sup>7</sup>

#### ARCHITECTURA LOQUENS

It is probably no accident that the direct application of rhetorical terms recurs as an artistic credo in the life of Bernini. As Baldinucci mentions in 1682, the Roman artist recommended his students

prima all'invenzione e poi riflettava all'ordinazione delle parti, finalmente a dar loro perfezione di grazia, e tenerezza. Portava in ciò l'esempio dell'Oratore, il quale prima inventa, poi ordina, veste, e adorna, perchè diceva, che ciascheduna di quelle operzioni ricercava tutto l'uomo, e il darsi a più cose in un tempo stesso non era possibile.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Victor Fleischer, *Fürst Karl Eusebius von Liechtenstein als Bauherr und Kunstsammler (1611-1678)* (Vienna: C. W. Stern, 1910), 91-92.

<sup>7</sup>Sigurd Schmitt, "Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlachs Schloß Schönbrunn in Wien: Studien über Schönbrunn I und das Schönbrunn-II-Realisierungsprojekt von 1696" (Ph.D. diss., University of Munich, 1990), 11-117.

<sup>8</sup>Filippo Baldinucci, *Vita del Cavaliere Gio: Lorenzo Bernino* (Florence: Vincenzo Vangelisti, 1682), 78. All translations are by Peter Ian Waugh unless otherwise noted.

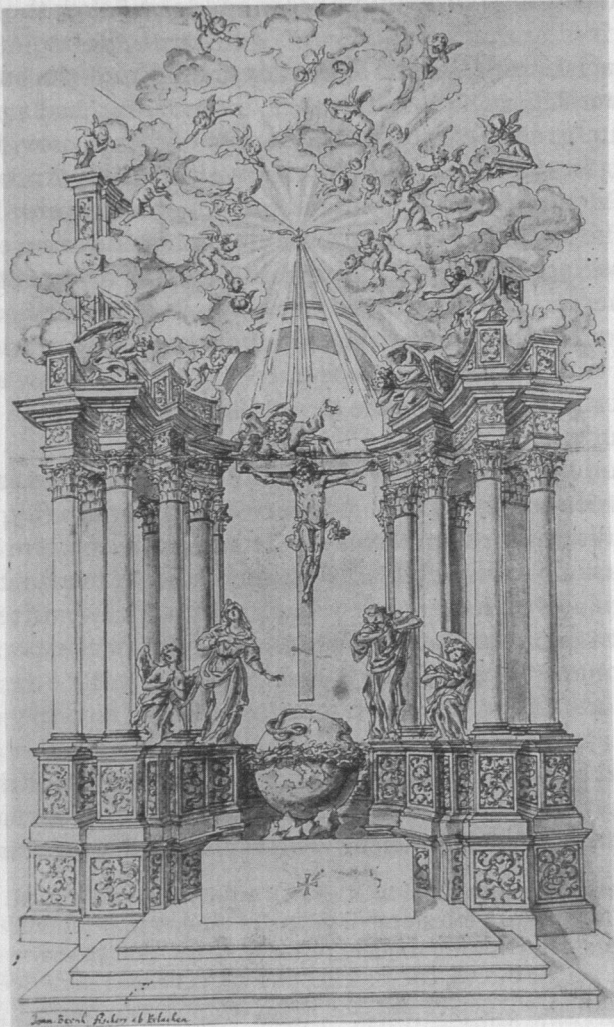


Fig. 1. J. B. Fischer, *Hochaltar in Mariazell*, 1692, drawing, Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz. Photograph: Kunsthistorisches Institut, University of Vienna. Used by permission.



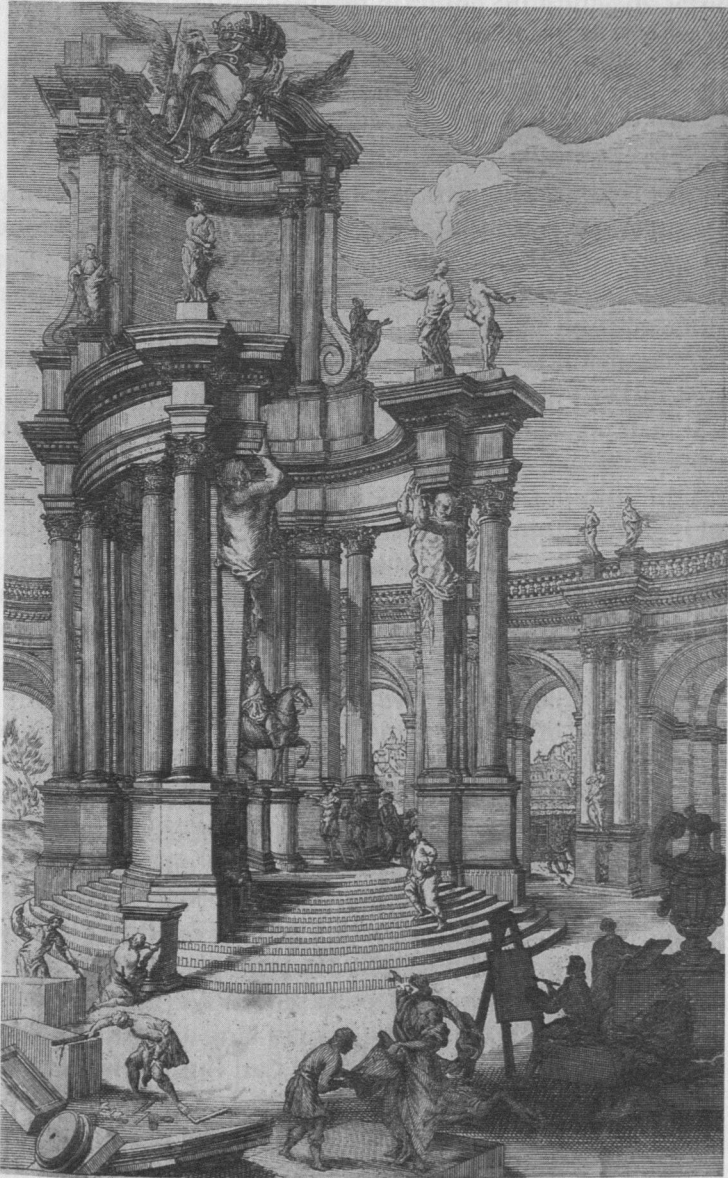


Fig. 2. Andrea Pozzo, dedicatory page for Leopold I, 1693. Photograph: Kunsthistorisches Institut, University of Vienna. Used by permission.

[Firstly to consider the invention and then the arrangement of its parts and lastly to endow the work with its perfecting grace and elegance. In doing so he was following the example of an orator who first invents, then arranges, garnishes and embellishes, because he said that each of these steps demands the application of the whole man and that it is not possible to do everything at once.]

Significantly enough, the first examples of emblematic monuments that are no longer merely of a temporary nature are to be found in seventeenth-century Roman art, such as the design for a church with cupola, displaying the arms of the Chigi, attributed to Cortona, or Bernini's obelisk on an elephant.<sup>9</sup> The application of this practice to a Hapsburgian theme is demonstrated by a design for a stately carriage executed in 1673 by members of the immediate circle around Fischer's Roman teacher Philipp Schor. It shows a figure, personifying Spain and surrounded by allegories of war and peace, who not only displays the arms of Castile three-dimensionally in the form of a castle, but is also enthroned between the Pillars of Hercules, which display the royal motto *Plus Ultra* (fig. 4). It is therefore highly probable that Fischer, too, was familiar with the use of rhetoric and emblems in art, since the circles in which he moved included those of Bernini, Schor, the ecclesiastical art theorist Giovanni Pietro Bellori, and the scholarly Jesuit Athanasius Kircher.<sup>10</sup>

Characteristic of the following works is the fact that they are all examples of public architecture executed in collaboration with court scholars who shared a common humanistic or theological background. However, the personal—and thus methodical—relationship between ecclesiastical works and scholars on the one hand, and secular works and scholars on the other, has so far received little attention. Around 1690 the court architect had, in contrast to his work under Charles VI, primarily ecclesiastical concertists at his side. The first time Fischer worked with a secular scholar was on the triumphal arch built in 1699 in honor of the Roman king and his wife Amalie von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel. In 1712 Carl Gustav Heraeus (1671–1725), who was appointed director of the Imperial Collection of Coins and Antiquities by Joseph I in 1710, wrote the dedication for

<sup>9</sup>Karl Möseneder, "Aedificata Poesis: Devisen in der französischen und österreichischen Barockarchitektur," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 35 (1982): 139–75.

<sup>10</sup>Elisabeth Sladek, "Der Italienaufenthalt Johann Bernhard Fischers zwischen 1670/71 und 1686: Ausbildung, Auftraggeber, erste Tätigkeit," in Polleroß, *Fischer von Erlach* (see n. 3 above), 147–76.

Fischer's first handwritten version of *Historical Architecture*, which was subsequently presented to the new emperor.<sup>11</sup>

The conditions for the development of such syntheses of words and pictures in the "imperial style" were thus already in existence even before the accession of Charles VI. In 1712, on the advice of Heraeus, the second court architect Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt had designed a triumphal entrance to the Imperial Palace, constructed on the occasion of the coronation in Frankfurt. The connection between rhetoric and architecture in this case becomes clear from the following contemporary description:

Die Zieraten dieses Thors (an welchem die Ordnung der *Architectur* dem Herrn Johann Lucas Hildebrand, Kayserlichen Hof-*Ingenieur*, allein obgelegen) hat man nach dem Exempel anderer Pforten nicht wollen ohne Bedeutung seyn lassen, um die Steine, wie bey der alten Römer Zeit, sowohl durch Figuren, als durch Schrifften redend zumaachen.<sup>12</sup>

[In accordance with the example of other arches, one did not want to omit endowing the decoration of this arch with significance, so as to make the stones speak through the figures as well as through the inscriptions, as in the time of the ancient Romans.]

#### INVENTIO

The first *officium oratoris* was traditionally *inventio*, the discovery of arguments to shock the affections, to produce pathos and ethos. As an aid to this, special handbooks were written. One of these works, the *Iconologie ou la science des emblèmes, devises etc., qui apprend à les expliquer, dessiner et inventer*, by Jean Baudoin (Amsterdam, 1698), presented itself as "most useful for orators ... and in general for all those who are curious about the arts and the sciences."<sup>13</sup> As a result of his experiences in the circles of Bernini and the Roman and Neapolitan antiquaries, Fischer obviously saw himself from the very beginning

<sup>11</sup>On the work of the Fischers and their programs for Charles VI, see Franz Matsche, *Die Kunst im Dienst der Staatsidee Kaiser Karls VI.: Ikonographie, Ikonologie und Programmatik des 'Kaiserstils,'* Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte 16 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), 1ff.

<sup>12</sup>Carl Gustav Heraeus, *Inscriptiones et symbola varii argumenti* (Nuremberg: P. C. Monath, 1721), 175–76.

<sup>13</sup>"très utile aux orateurs ... et généralement à toutes sortes de curieux des beaux-arts et des sciences."

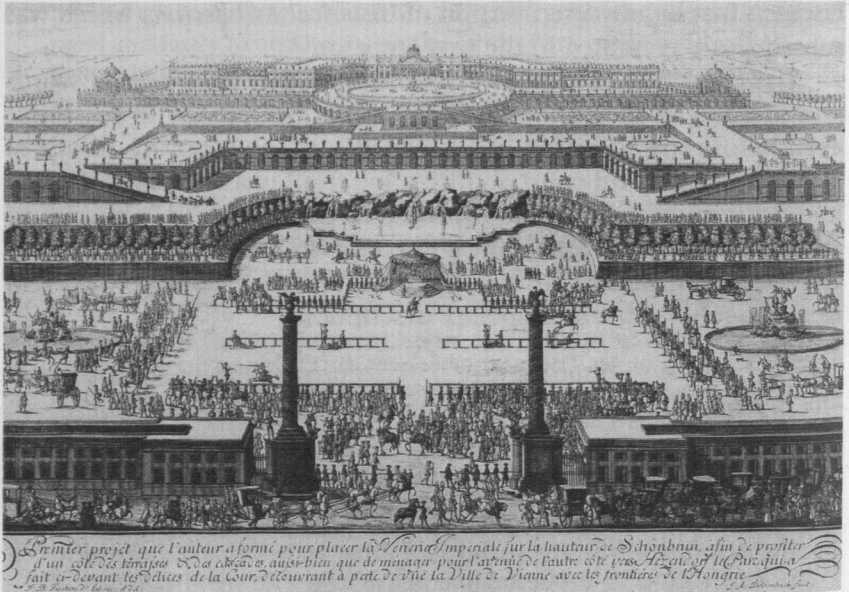


Fig. 3. J. B. Fischer, first design plan for Schönbrunn, ca. 1688; engraving by J. A. Delsenbach. Photo: Author's archive.

more as one of these “connoisseurs of the arts and sciences” than as a simple practitioner of architecture.

Fischer’s own view of himself and his achievements as an ingenious designer and scholar is documented above all in connection with his first large-scale work in Vienna, the highly praised Trinity Column in 1679, which Leopold I dedicated to the memory of the plague epidemic. We learn from contemporary sources that it was *Ingenieur* Fischer who gave the impulse to invent something different and unusual. While the new invention of the cloud pyramids must be ascribed to the imperial *Ingenieur* Lodovico Burnacini, Fischer’s contribution clearly displays the conscious and fitting artistic realization of a prescribed *concetto*. Namely, he demanded a change in the already existent basis so that the triangular figure on both pedestals could be more clearly seen, and he furthermore insisted upon a triangular balustraded platform instead of a circular one, so that it would match



Fig 4. Giovanni Paolo Schor, design for the Spanish ambassador's stately carriage, 1673, art market. Photograph: Author's archive.

the pedestals (fig. 5). The elaboration and development of the concepts for the reliefs that Fischer added to the architectural basis were made in close collaboration with the Jesuit Franz Menegatti. The result is a suitably convincing work of art, the *conchetto* of which, both in its form and content, was the symbolism of the Trinity.

This use of a convincing visual symbolism also typifies Fischer's ideal design for Schönbrunn, with its numerous terraces (fig. 3). As later with the Court Library, the identification of the Hapsburgs here with Apollo and Hercules illustrates above all the ideal ruler's mastery of *arma et litterae*. Thus the medallion for the completion of the palace according to the second plan in 1700 expressly depicts the residence of Joseph I as the Palace of the Sun (fig. 6). Parallel to this, a Jesuit panegyric portrays the Roman king in front of his residence as Hercules (fig. 7).

However, in my opinion, more important than the traditional identifications of the ruler with the God of the Muses and the Virtuous Hero is the unique spatial extension and the hierarchical gradations of height found in Fischer's project. The optical impression corresponds to the iconographical hierarchy extending from the column portal, with its apotropaic representations of the demigod, to the quadriga of the Sun God above the central gable of the palace. Whereas the struggle of Good against Evil is illustrated by the victory of the virtuous heroes over Hydra and Cerberus, of Apollo over the python on the fountain, or indirectly, even of the battling knights, Phoebus-Apollo actually rises above the residence and thus into the realm of apotheosis inaccessible to terrestrial man.

Interestingly enough, the two pillars of Hercules and the steep ascent of the numerous terraces, as well as the depiction of the triumph of the Virtuous Hero over the Vices in the form of well-ordered architecture above artificial rocks, recur in Giovanni Francesco Guernerio's design for Wilhelmshöhe in Kassel, dating from 1701.<sup>14</sup> The two architects, both of whom were trained in Rome, obviously delivered variations of concepts that Bernini considered for the projects for Louis XIV. In 1665 the Roman architect had the idea of erecting two columns like those of Trajan and Antonine, flanking a pedestal which would support a statue of the Sun King on horseback and the motto

<sup>14</sup>Giovanni Francesco Guernerio, *Delineatio Montis a Metropoli Hasso-Cassellana Uno Circiter Milliarum Distantis* (Rome: H. Harmes, 1726).

*Non Plus Ultra*, in allusion to Hercules. In the planning for the Louvre, Bernini combined the allegory of Hercules not only with the sun symbolism, but also with the visualization "of a moral and architectural progression."<sup>15</sup> Whereas, in Paris, Bernini's idea of Hercules, which he described as "contained in the mountain of labor, which is the rock," could only be illustrated metaphorically in the form of a rustic socle, Fischer and Guernerio employed the landscape in such a way that the difficult path of virtue to the Temple of Glory was represented in tangible form.

Furthermore, the main axis contains geographical allegory, since the sun quadriga symbolizes the East, whereas the Pillars of Hercules mark the western end of the world. Indeed, Fischer's illustration of the status of the Ruling Monarch of the Earth in both a historical and a geographical dimension is based on a tradition of pictorial and literary panegyric that goes back to the 1660s. It refers, on the one hand, to the *translatio imperii* of the ancient kingdoms of the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, up to the Hapsburgs, and on the other, to the claim, involving the question of Spanish succession, to a dominion *Plus Ultra* in all four continents.<sup>16</sup>

Under Charles VI, the two monumental pillars of Hercules acquired additional and more concrete meanings in relation to the sovereign. Since the motto *Plus Ultra* was the symbol of the Spanish monarchy and its dominions overseas, this motif was interpreted by the pretender to the Spanish throne as a symbol of the double sovereignty that had existed under his Hapsburg predecessor Charles V (fig. 8). A new layer of meaning was added with the imperial motto *Constantia et Fortitudine*, chosen by Charles VI, since these two virtues were also symbolized emblematically in the pillars.

This aspect also characterizes the program for the monumental columns of the Karlskirche in Vienna (fig. 9), constructed after 1715: according to Heraeus, they serve as "silent speakers" and allegorically refer to the founder's motto: *columnae muta et secundaria tantum significatione symbolum fundatoris loquantur* (in the hidden secondary

<sup>15</sup>Irving Lavin, "Bernini's Image of the Sun King," in *Past and Present: Essays on Historicism in Art from Donatello to Picasso* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 138–200, 288–302.

<sup>16</sup>Friedrich Polleroß, "Sol Austriacus und Roi soleil: Amerika in den Auseinandersetzungen der europäischen Mächte," in *Federschmuck und Kaiserkrone: Das barocke Amerikabild in den habsburgischen Ländern*, Ausstellungskatalog Schloßhof (Vienna: Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1992), 54–84, here 63–80.



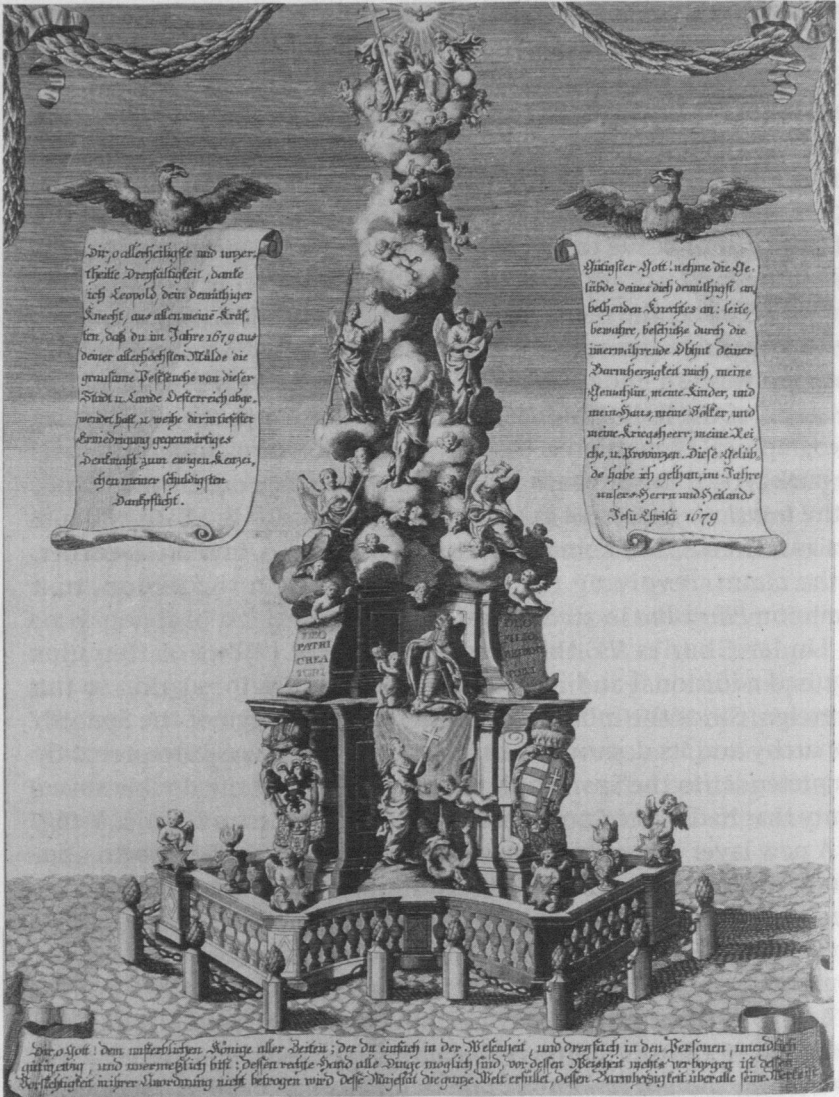


Fig. 5. Schönbrunn as residence of Plague Column, Vienna, ca. 1690 (copper engraving, eighteenth century). Photograph: Author's archive.





Fig. 6. Schönbrunn as the seat of the Sun God, 1700; engraving of the medal celebrating the laying of the foundation stone. Photograph: Author's archive.



Fig. 7. Joseph I as Hercules Austriacus; copper engraving by A. Trost, 1701.  
Photograph: Author's archive.

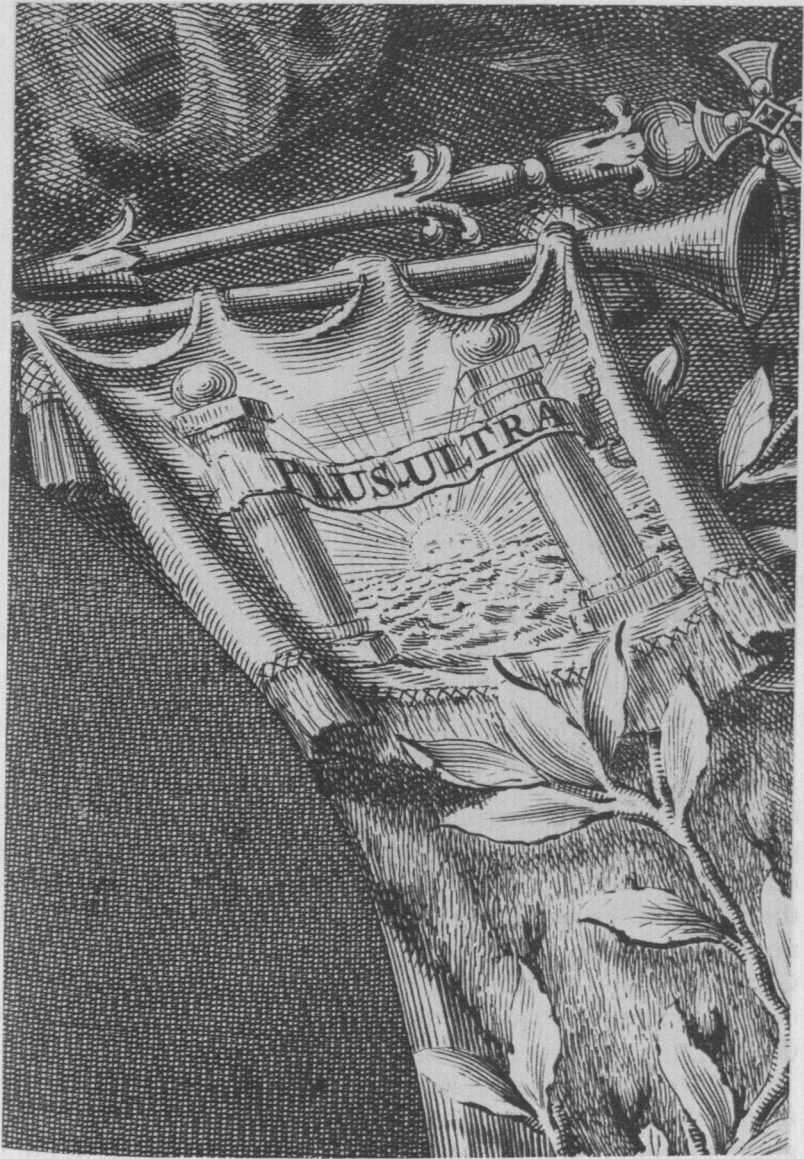


Fig. 8. Heraldic device of Charles as King of Spain; engraving by J. Blommendaal and Ph. Bouttats, ca. 1703/05. Photograph: Author's archive.



Fig. 9. Karlskirche, Vienna, engraving by Salomon Kleiner, ca. 1725. Photograph: Kunsthistorisches Institut, University of Vienna.

meaning the columns bespeak the founder's symbol). The two triumphal pillars are thus rightly associated with the columns of Jachin and Boaz, which were erected in front of the Temple of Jerusalem and, like the emperor's device, also symbolize the motto *Ne ruat* (that he might not fall). Especially interesting for us is an emblem of the Jesuits in Graz, dating from around 1600. It shows the Temple of Jerusalem as a central building with cupola, as well as two pillars and two obelisks (fig. 10).

The iconography of the Karlskirche should thus also be regarded from a typological point of view. The statues of *ecclesia* and the synagogue in front of the church explicitly indicate this. However, the typology of the imperial church, which was consciously constructed from the unwilling contributions of the estates and is thus a symbol of the Hapsburg Empire as a whole, presents Vienna above all as a New Jerusalem, Rome, and Constantinople in one, and Charles VI as





Fig. 10. The Temple of Jerusalem with its two columns; emblem of the Jesuits in Graz, ca. 1603. Photograph: Author's archive.

the new Solomon, Augustus, and Constantine.<sup>17</sup> The typology of sovereigns, which is set out in numerous texts by Heraeus, also informed the preface to Fischer's *Historical Architecture*, although, in my opinion, the real statement of this is to be found first and foremost in Fischer's artistic implementation. It is well known that the principal architectural characteristic of the Karlskirche is its conscious combination of classicistic elements and Baroque solutions, for most of which the original inspiration was provided by Bernini's designs for the facades of St. Peter's and Borromini's S. Agnese in Piazza Navona.

Confronted with this duality of the Karlskirche, I would interpret the portico, with its two driveways and columns, as forming the ancient Roman basis, upon which were placed the Roman Catholic cupola and the two bell towers. Such an interpretation corresponds with the fact that these consciously classicistic elements are dedicated to a modern and Christian hero, namely, Carl Borromaeus, who was the patron saint both of plague victims and of the emperor. In fact, this idea of the *aemulatio*, i.e., the supersession of Judaism and heathen antiquity by Christianity, had already been very clearly expressed by Heraeus in a poem dating from 1712. The emperor, who is there referred to as His Apostolic and Catholic Majesty and as King of Jerusalem, is apostrophized as the direct and legitimate successor of the biblical kings. However, owing to the sinfulness of the kings of Israel, God has entrusted the sovereignty to Charles VI, who will surpass even David and Solomon.<sup>18</sup> There can therefore hardly be any doubt that the Karlskirche was intended as the ideal theological and artistic realization of a house of the Almighty, which was only vaguely prefigured in the Temple of Solomon.

Proceeding from the allegorical interpretation of the Karlskirche, Fischer's Court Library has also been analyzed from this aspect, once again taking the columns as a starting point (fig. 11). However, the pillars as an "architectural motto" makes reference not only to its founder, Charles VI, but also to the traditional emblem *Ex Utroque*

<sup>17</sup>On the iconography of the columns of the Karlskirche, see Paul Naredi-Rainer, "Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach und Johann Joseph Fux: Beziehungen zwischen Architektur und Musik im österreichischen Barock," in *Barock: Regional-International: Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch 25* (1993), ed. Götz Pochat and Brigitte Wagner, 275-90, here 276-79; Matsche, *Die Kunst* (see n. 11 above), 201-5; Irving Lavin, "Fischer von Erlach, Tiepolo und die Einheit der bildenden Künste," in Naredi-Rainer, 251-74.

<sup>18</sup>Quoted in Matsche, *Die Kunst* (see n. 11 above), 283-89.



Fig. 11. Interior of the former Court Library, ca. 1730. Photograph: Verlag Pietsch, Vienna.

Caesar.<sup>19</sup> An illustration of this theme is to be found on the title page of a work by Athanasius Kircher. Here Minerva is seen presenting the pillars of Wisdom and Martial Combat as the foundations of a Christian prince's rule (fig.12).

#### ELOCUTIO

At least as important as good ideas to a speech was the linguistic expression of those thoughts, once they had been discovered by *inventio* and ordered by *dispositio*, through skilled mastery of the forms of embellishment and effect, known as *elocutio*. Of the *virtutes elocutionis*, that of decorum became a central category in the art theory of the Renaissance and the Baroque.<sup>20</sup> Ever since Vitruvius, the correspondence of form and content had been exemplified in the different styles of scenery employed in the theater for tragedy and comedy. The Renaissance architect Sebastiano Serlio reproduces a modernized version of Vitruvius in his book.<sup>21</sup> Fischer's scenic reliefs on the Plague Column evidently constitute a direct implementaton of this doctrine.<sup>22</sup> For here, too, the events are presented in a theatrical manner, the architectural backdrops being clearly accentuated both spatially and stylistically. It can hardly be accidental that the Last Supper is associated with classical column architecture, and the Old Testament prefiguration of the Eucharist with contemporary interior design and the use of conventional stuccowork.

As in the case of Baroque stage scenery, Baroque architecture had to correspond to the customary *decorum*. A particularly impressive example of this is provided by the *Wienerische Tugendspiegel* (Viennese

<sup>19</sup>Möseneder, *Aedificata Poesis* (see n. 9 above), 166ff.; Franz Matsche, "Die Hofbibliothek in Wien als Denkmal kaiserlicher Kulturpolitik," in *Ikongraphie der Bibliotheken*, Wolfenbüttler Schriften zur Geschichte des Buchwesens 17, ed. Carsten-Peter Warncke (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 199–233, here 224–25.

<sup>20</sup>Ulrike Mildner, "Decorum, Malerei, Architektur," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 2, ed. Gert Ueding (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994), 434–51.

<sup>21</sup>Serlio distinguishes between the old-fashioned comic scene, where "the houses must be right for citizens," and the elegant "Houses for Tragedies," which "must be made for great personages, for that actions of love, strange adventures, and cruel murders (as you reade in ancient and modern Tragedies) happen always in the houses of great Lords, Dukes, Princes, and Kings." Sebastiano Serlio, *The Five Books of Architecture: An Unabridged Reprint of the English Edition of 1611* (New York: Dover, 1982), 3: fol. 25.

<sup>22</sup>On the "classical and academic tendencies" of this relief, as well as its Roman influences (Raphael, Poussin, and Sacchi), see Christian Theuerkauff, "Johann Ignaz Bendl: Sculptor and Medallist," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26 (1991): 227–75, here 245–47.





Fig. 12. Allegory of the princely art of war and peace; frontispiece engraving for *Principes Christiani Archetypon* by Athanasius Kircher, Amsterdam, 1672.



Fig. 13. Allegory of Decentia, engraving in the *Wienerische Tugendspiegel* by J. Chr. Weigl, 1687. Photograph: Author's archive.

Mirror of Virtue) by Erhard Weigl, published in 1687 (fig. 13). It describes the virtue of *decentia* (appropriateness) as a representation that corresponds to a certain social status and presents it in personified form with a scales, standing in front of the various pillars. As a result of their order, these vary in height and display the insignia of the different social classes, ranging from the lowest to the highest pillar, according to rank.

The importance of this question can be demonstrated by referring to one of Fischer's buildings that has not yet been considered from this point of view, namely, the Palais Trautson. In the first plan, the palace facade was designed with a simple Ionic order. However,

during the construction work, Trautson, as Lord High Steward, was made a prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1711; this fact then had to be incorporated in the *decorum* of his residence as well, so that the Ionic arrangement of the central projection was replaced by a composite order of columns. Yet their narrower proportions required the height of the gable to be raised, so that an inelegant overlapping of the beams resulted (fig. 14). This has been wrongly understood by architectural historians as "intended severity" and as the dynamic penetration of two building blocks.<sup>23</sup>

Against the background of the question of rhetorical style should also be seen the express decision of the emperor or his artistic advisors in favor of the two Fischers and against the second court architect, Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt. In fact, Hildebrandt's decorative, more two-dimensional style had an influence on bourgeois architecture and is opposed to the "high" Roman and Palladian style of the Fischers, as may be seen from the plans for the facade of the Imperial Palace in Michaelerplatz.<sup>24</sup> For the main facade of the imperial residence Hildebrandt planned an almost barracklike office building consisting of three-and-a-half storeys, decorated only in the middle by an entrance cylinder covered by a cupola, a pilaster arrangement, and a balustrade with statues. In his first alternative designs, Joseph Emanuel adopted the basic structure but replaced the rather modest portal with a monumental triumphal arch and embellished the plain barracklike facade with a projection that included a colossal arrangement of pillars. In actual fact, it was precisely these forms of architecture that expressed that *magnificentia*, which in its turn represented, in the *genus grande* of rhetoric, the goal to be achieved through a wealth of verbal embellishment (*ornatus*), conscious enlargement (*amplificatio*), fullness (*copia*), and variety (*varietas*).

#### CONCLUSIO

Obviously the court scholars who designed the iconography of these buildings, Carl Gustav Heraeus and Conrad Adolph von Albrecht,

<sup>23</sup>Peter Prange, "Das Palais Trautson: 'eine ungemaine Architecture,'" *Pantheon* 52 (1994): 101–19, here 103, fig. 4; Michael Krapf, *Palais Trautson* (Vienna: Bundesministerium für Justiz, 1990), 25–26.

<sup>24</sup>Richard Bösel and Christian Benedik, *Der Michaelerplatz in Wien: Seine Städtebauliche und architektonische Entwicklung*, exhibition catalogue (Vienna: Kulturkreis Losshaus, 1992), 66ff., cat. nos. 30–33.



Fig. 14. Palais Trautson, Vienna, ca. 1711, detail of the facade.  
Photograph: Author's archive.



Fig. 15. The Colossus of Memnon, emblem of the triumphal arch of the city of Vienna; engraving by J. B. Fischer, 1690. Photograph: Author's archive.

were quite as skilled at rhetoric as the Jesuits at the court.<sup>25</sup> However, the question of whether Fischer himself was actually familiar with the basic principles of oratory still remains to be answered. It is true that the architect was confronted with Jesuit emblems as early as 1688 in Graz and 1689 on the Viennese Plague Column. It is recorded that Fischer designed emblems for the triumphal arch of 1690 (fig.15). He was evidently familiar both with the theory of emblems and with poetics; and the fact that he combined the use of word and picture, of the senses and reason, in a way similar to that of rhetoric is not only due to his training in Rome. For in his *Historical Architecture* Fischer

<sup>25</sup>Edwin P. Garretson, "Conrad Adolph von Albrecht: Programmer at the Court of Charles VI," *Mitteilungen der österreichischen Galerie* 24/25 (1980/81): 19-92.





Fig. 16. Benedikt Richter, reverse of the portrait medallion of J. B. Fischer, 1719. Photograph: Kunsthistorisches Institut, University of Vienna. Used by permission.

mentions that the engravings are provided with explanatory texts, since “illustrations, as silent speakers, demand a speaking picture. Because one of these without the other does not make its presence clearly enough felt.”<sup>26</sup> With these words, the architect follows the traditional definition of emblems, which states that universal pictures should be determined by their inscriptions.

The final proof of the theory that the architecture of the imperial style is rhetorical, and that Fischer consciously combined the arts of oratory and architecture, is provided by the architect’s portrait medallion, executed by the court medallist Benedikt Richter and dating from 1719. This personal emblem displays architecture of a deliberately eclectic and historicized nature, as well as the motto *Docent et Delectant* (fig. 16). The function of *docere* and *delectare*, which may be shown to have formed the theoretical basis of the architecture of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, was therefore exactly the same as that of the *officia oratoris*, first formulated by Cicero and Horace and a familiar part of modern art theory ever since Leon Battista Alberti.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>“Abbildungen / als stumme Redner / eine redende Mählerey erfordern. Weil eine von diesen ohne die andere sich nicht deutliche genug zu erkennen giebet.” *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur*, 5th ed., ed. with afterword by Harald Keller (Dortmund: Harenberg, 1988), fol. 12.

<sup>27</sup>An extended version of the present essay, together with further information on this subject, is found in German as “Docent et delectanti: Architektur und Rhetorik am Beispiel von Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach,” *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* (1996): 155–206, illus. nos. 335–50.