

THE BAROQUE IN CENTRAL EUROPE

while Guarini's influence continued in and around Turin, the artistic ideals of Baroque Italy were being spread to the north and east through Switzerland, Austria, southern Germany, and Bohemia. There Italian influences merged with local tastes and surviving craft-guild traditions to create a version of the Baroque distinctive to central Europe. As in Italy, the driving force was the Catholic Counter-Reformation, yet the style received support not only from Church officials, but also from princes and monarchs, who hoped to project a progressive image, and from the common people, for whom it reflected deeply held religious beliefs. In many respects Baroque churches in central Europe continued medieval themes, and architecture, sculpture, and painting advanced a single idea: the evocation of a heavenly realm. Number symbolism is prominent, as are the images of saints serving as intercessors between earth and heaven. Twin-towered west fronts are commonly found capped by bulbous domes rather than Gothic spires. The impression of lofty volume that is conveyed in the Gothic by soaring vaults is created in the central European Baroque by much lower plaster vaults on which paint and stucco have been expertly applied to create the illusion of an open sky filled with heavenly hosts. These Baroque churches are bright and airy; the windows are glazed with clear glass, and daylight is directed onto white interior surfaces embellished with gold and pastel hues.

The Baroque monuments of Italy were important sources for central Europe. Il Gesù in Rome was particularly influential because its design led to the development of the *Wandpfeiler* or wall-pillar that characterizes many central European Baroque churches. At Il Gesù the barrel-vaulted lateral chapels are separated from one another by cross walls faced at the nave with pilasters. North of the Alps, these cross walls became wall-pillars, which Baroque architects exploited for both structural stability and the shaping of internal space. Although the churches may retain side aisles, some even with galleries overhead, the wall-pillars were used as space-shaping elements to establish the concept of centrality within what were generally longitudinal plans. Thus, the interaction of axial and centralized plans, already seen in the oval designs of Borromini and Bernini, was continued in the Baroque of central Europe.

The life and work of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723) exemplify one of the ways in which Italian ideas were transferred to central Europe. Fischer, an Italian, came from an Austrian family of masons, and von Erlach came from an Austrian family of masons, and he was sent to Rome for training in the studio of Carlo Fontana. During the sixteen years he spent in Rome he became familiar with both ancient and contemporary works there, and these influences, combined with knowledge from travels across Europe, were later reflected in his own designs and in the illustrated *Entwurf einer kaiserlichen*

Architektur (Historic Architecture), a precocious history of architecture which he published in 1721. Fischer von Erlach's architectural fortunes were tied to those of the Hapsburgs. He joined the imperial court at Vienna as architectural tutor to Joseph I in 1689, was raised to the nobility in 1696, and served as chief inspector of court buildings from 1705 until his death. During his lifetime, Austria experienced a surge of nationalistic pride after decisively repelling the Turkish attack on Vienna in 1683. Seeking to create an impressive international city that would rival Rome or Versailles, Viennese princes built Baroque palaces and raised new churches.

Fischer von Erlach's major contribution to Vienna was the Karlskirche (1716–23), a building that reflects his view that every work should be unique (Fig. 12.26). By borrowing from a wide range of historical sources, he created a highly original design that referred to many major buildings of the past. The church was dedicated to St. Charles Borromeo, the emperor's patron saint, and was built in fulfillment of a vow Charles VI made in 1713 during an outbreak of the plague. Its broad facade is dominated by a dome on a drum rising above a pedimented portico, flanked by columns in a manner recalling the front of S. Agnese in Agone, where the central dome is flanked by twin campaniles. Elements from historical buildings incorporated here include the columned portico from Roman temples such as the Pantheon; Trajan's Column from imperial Rome, repeated on both sides of the rotunda and adorned with scenes from the life of St. Charles Borromeo rather than reliefs of the Dacian War; the drum and dome from papal Rome; and an overall composition suggesting the dome and minarets of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. The interior is impressive for its elongated oval nave (Figs. 12.27a,b), the ceiling of which is embellished with illusionistic frescoes depicting St. Charles Borromeo appealing to the Virgin Mary as intercessor for relief from the plague. Fischer von Erlach had seen the ceiling frescoes being installed at Il Gesù during his residence in Rome, so he used painting, rather than coffering or ribs as Bernini or Borromini would have done, to complete the dome's interior.

The rather severe and classical approach of Fischer von Erlach contrasts with the work of his contemporary, the Tyrolean architect Jacob Prandtauer (1660–1726), who was trained in Munich as a mason and practiced as an architect-sculptor. The works of Borromini and Guarini are reflected in his designs, but he was also influenced by Fischer von Erlach. A member of a religious brotherhood, Fischer von Erlach was closely involved with his designs while Prandtauer was closely involved with his designs while they were under construction, and he is known primarily for monastic projects, including rebuilding the great Cistercian abbey of Melk (1702–14), set dramatically atop a rocky ridge rising 200 feet above the Danube. The monastery's buildings are arranged in an elongated U shape, with the church placed inside the U, its compressed choir interrupting one long range of rooms. From the river below



12.28 Jakob Prandtauer, Kildes Church interior, Merk, 1700–14.

The undulating walls and pillars create a rhythm as they contrast to the serene, modular interiors of a Renaissance building such as Bramante's St. Louis, Florence (see Fig. 7.45).



12.29 Christoph Dientzenhofer, St. Nicholas on the Lesser Side interior, Prague, 1703–11.

One of our architect brothers, Christoph Dientzenhofer designed this church using wall-pilars. Setting these pillars on the diagonal, he was able to support (graciously) these dimensionally varying horizontal arches that twist tangentially at the centers of the bays, producing that spatial reading.

and the small courtyard that precedes the west front, the twin towers of the main façade dominate, while the drum and dome over the crossing are best seen from the major courtyard at the east end of the church. This is a wall-pillar church with galleries above the oval chapels instead of aisles: a longitudinal emphasis was unavoidable because of site restrictions, and Prandtauer emphasized verticality through fluted pilasters and a dome on pendentives that soars above the clouds and the swirling drapery of the figures in the ceiling frescoes (Fig. 12.28). The undulating cornice of the nave supports recessed arches around clerestory windows, causing the whole ceiling to appear as a floating world. The painted illusion of heavenly figures spilling out from the vaults above provides a dramatic link between earthly matters and the spiritual world.

In Switzerland, Bavaria, and Bohemia (now the Czech Republic), Baroque design was generally the province of families of architects, sculptors, and painters, in which fathers, sons, uncles, and nephews collaborated on building projects. For example, five Dientzenhofer brothers—Georg, Christoph, Leonhard, Johann, and Wolfgang—were active in Bohemia and southern Germany just before and after 1700, where they combined the free-swinging curves found in the works of Borromini and Guarini with Slavic and Gothic motifs. Christoph's son, Kilian Ignaz,

also became an established designer. These families of master builders should not be thought of as rustic; a number of them were trained in major centers such as Turin, Vienna, and Prague, and they knew both the built and the unbuilt designs of leading Italian architects, even though they practiced architecture as guild members. Christoph Dientzenhofer (1655–1722) designed the church of St. Nicholas on the Lesser Side in Prague (1703–11) (Fig. 12.29) to have a longitudinal plan with deep wall-pilars set between chapels below and galleries above. The wall-pilars near the nave are splayed to support doubly curving arches. This configuration creates what has been called *syncopation*: a double reading of the spatial units as either a traditional bay system or a series of overlapping ovals.

DIE WIES, BAVARIA

An alternative strategy of spatial dematerialization was employed by Dominikus Zimmermann (1685–1766) at the church of Die Wies, or The Fields (1746–54) (Fig. 12.30), located in a meadow beneath the Bavarian Alps. Turning located in a meadow beneath the Bavarian Alps. Turning hall church and oval schemes and creating an outer bearing wall layer and an inner trabeated layer of coupled columns, Zimmermann supported a nearly flat wood and



Fig. 12.31 Johann Balthasar Neumann, Würzburg Residence, begun 1720.

Here is the garden-front of the palace or imperial hall reached by one of the great stairs of the period (see page 136).

The collaboration of two other brothers can be seen in the abbey church of Einsiedeln (1719–35), where the design was begun by a lay brother of the monastery, Caspar Moosbrugger (1656–1723), and was finished after his death by his brother Johann Moosbrugger and others. Einsiedeln is still a major center of religious activity in Switzerland, and the monastery has an appropriately grand facade fronting a sloping plaza at the end of the town. In the center of the composition is the church, its great bowed front with twin towers projecting from the straight line of the flanking monastic buildings. This curved element directly reflects the principal feature of the interior, the shrine constructed on the site of the cell of St. Meinrad, who is venerated here. A great octagon completed by a dome surrounds the shrine, which thus occupies the first and largest bay of the nave. Wall-pilars pierced by aisles and galleries help define this space and form the transition to the smaller, circular domed bays of the nave.

The Asam brothers, painter Cosmas Damian (1686–1739) and sculptor Egid Quirin (1692–1750), were responsible for the wonderfully coordinated fresco and stucco work that graces the interior of the abbey church of Einsiedeln (1719–35). The narrower choir, built to the designs of Egid Quirin, is completed by an enormous altar and embellished with floating stucco figures that complement the ceiling frescoes above. The Asams tended to create

pictorial rather than architectural space. With paint and stucco they transformed what appear to be rather commonplace plans and sections into an extraordinary confection of light, color, and illusionistic space. The nave ceilings combine paint and plaster to create a joyous expression of the Nativity, with angels perched on high corners and putti floating down to earth bearing the good news.

Not all central European Baroque buildings were churches. As in Italy and France, the nobility wanted to display their importance by building great palaces, and the theatricality of the Baroque was well suited to providing them with an appropriate setting. Of these princely abodes, the grandest was the Würzburg Residence (fig. 12.31), begun in 1720 for the prince-bishops of the Schönborn family. Its architect was Johann Balthasar Neumann (1687–1753), generally regarded as the greatest master of the German Baroque. Neumann was trained in mathematics, engineering, and architecture. He served the Schönborns as an artilleryman, civil engineer, and military engineer, before being encouraged to devote his designing talents and engineering dexterity to the creation of architectural spaces. The enormous Residence was symmetrically



12.32 Johann Balthasar Neumann, Plan of Würzburg Residence, near Bamberg, begun 1744

This drawing shows the vaults above referred onto the floor plan. Together, they illustrate how, within the quadrilateral plan, Neumann interlocked highly ornamental oval and circular bays by inserting spherical triangles at their intersections.

12.33 Johann Balthasar Neumann, Vault detail Würzburg Residence, near Bamberg, begun 1744

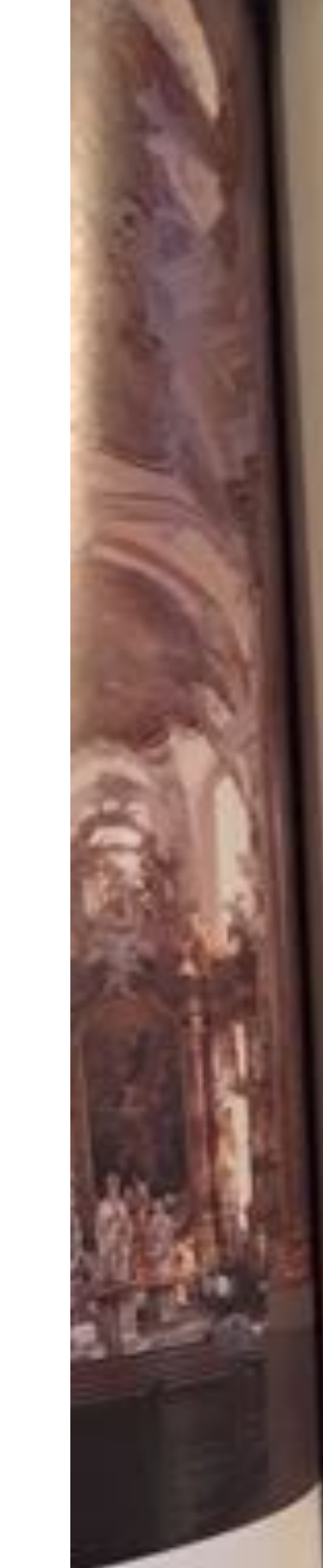
A spherical triangle is created by tracing a triangle onto a spherical surface. Here, vaults form overhead three curving surfaces, with organic plaster ornamentation.



disposed around a deep entrance court, with four interior courts providing light and air to the side wings. Neumann's plans for the palace were scrutinized by leading architects in Paris and Vienna before construction began and as the work proceeded; such oversight and changes in the prince-bishops resulted in a twenty-three-year construction period, with an additional five years required to complete the interior decorations. Neumann's masterpiece within this complex was the sequence of major reception rooms, beginning with the low vestibule, made large enough for a coach to turn around in the column-free space, and extending through the majestic Stair Hall to the White and Imperial Halls on the second floor.

It is the lofty Stair Hall that most clearly exhibits the architect's technical skill (page 338). At nearly 100 by 60 feet, the hall is the largest single room in the palace, and it is roofed by a clear-span stone vault. The centrally placed

stair rises in a single flight to a landing, where it reverses direction and divides before extending to the upper floor—a so-called **imperial stair**. A balcony placed around the staircase allows onlookers a view of the processional space. The ceiling is enriched by the world's largest fresco, executed by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo and celebrating the sun god Apollo and the prince-bishops as patrons of the arts. Representations of the seasons, the zodiac, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America are assembled at the perimeter, the figures gazing into the clouds opening up in the heavens or staring down at those ascending the stair. Among the individuals depicted on the parapet are Tiepolo, the stucco artist Antonio Bossi, and Neumann himself, seated with his dog among items of artillery and taking a well-earned rest. Statues on the balustrades and stucco *cartouches*, swags, and putti above the door and window surrounds harmonize with the allegorical fest overhead.



further delights of stucco and fresco await in the subtle shades of the White Hall, which serves as a foil for the Imperial Hall, the most important room in the palace. Its elongated-octagon plan rises to a high oval, vaulted ceiling filled with Tiepolo's allegorical frescoes, alluding to historical scenes of the Holy Roman Empire and peopled with contemporary members of the Würzburg court.

Neumann was also a designer of churches, the most celebrated of which was the pilgrimage church of Vierzehnheiligen (begun 1744), outside Bamberg. Vierzehnheiligen commemorates the hilltop on which a shepherd boy in 1445 had an apparition of the Fourteen Nothelfer (a sort of heavenly witness, or guardian angel) for whom the church was named. A previous chapel on the site had become inadequate, and jurisdictional conflicts between the prince-bishop of Bamberg and the Cistercian abbot whose monastery was financing the work led to confusion over Neumann's appointment as architect. Construction was finally begun in 1744, but the foundations were laid too far to the east by the supervising architect, who also made design changes of which Neumann did not approve. Neumann redesigned the church, producing a scheme that is remarkable for the way its basically basilican ground plan is transformed into a composition of Baroque circles and ovals (Fig. 12.32). The freestanding altar of the fourteen saints occupies a central position in the nave, while the transepts become circles and the apse is defined as an oval. Neumann manipulated the interior space by arranging the aisle piers freely, both to support the oval vaults overhead and to form screens obscuring direct vision of windows in the side wall, thus combining the drama of light from unseen sources with swirling, curving forms (Fig. 12.33). He used delicate pastel colors, accented with gold, on marble piers and ceiling frescoes to emphasize the airy volumes of the interior. The warm sandstone exterior is grand but restrained, and the twin towers of the entrance front respond to the axis established by the Baroque abbey of Banz on a hill across the valley.

This discussion of major Baroque monuments should not obscure the fact that the Baroque became an almost universal style for churches in the countryside of southwestern Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Poland, much as medieval styles characterize the French and English landscape. Existing churches were remodeled and new ones were built in the Baroque style. Their distinctive reverse-curve domed towers still dot the rural districts. The Baroque even had an impact in Russia, where St. Petersburg was laid out early in the eighteenth century by French and Italian architects.

THE BAROQUE IN FRANCE

Renaissance-inspired conservatism was supplanted in France to make the new dominant Roman Baroque. French official patronage was more than ever centered on the royal propaganda of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, an important issue. The official court was the monarch, and the primary function of the artistic establishment was to provide splendid furnishings, and objects for the display of royal power. In pursuit of this objective, French architects lavishly elaborate works on a scale seldom seen in other manners, costumes, and style of the French Baroque. The model for other European capitals.

THE LOUVRE, PARIS

Several building projects exemplify this process. The rebuilding of the Louvre, begun over a century ago, with the interior court wing by Le Corbusier, was complete. First Lemercier and then Louis Le Vau worked on the interior elevations of the Louvre. During the 1660s a number of architects, including Bernini, the leading European architect, were invited to submit designs for the Louvre. Bernini, proposing a central oval pavilion terminated by colonnades better suited to the bright sun of France than the overcast skies of northern Europe. After he submitted objections to the scheme, Bernini sent a second design, this time with a concave plan, but Louis XIV and his advisers were still not satisfied. At the insistence of Bernini, he came to Paris for six months in 1665, working directly on the Louvre design. In spite of opposition from French architects who hoped to receive the commission themselves. While in Paris, Bernini prepared a proposal, not just for the east wing but for the entire Louvre. In this plan, the original square court was shielded by open loggias with blocky staircases at the corners. The exterior façades were not articulated by giant engaged columns on the ground floor, but articulated by giant engaged columns on the first floor and pilasters on the second floor. The floor was treated as a national base for the Louvre.

Perhaps because Bernini failed to reflect French tastes, Louis decided not to adopt any of his designs. Instead he gave the commission to a French architect, Louis Le Vau, the patron Claude Perrault (1619-90), and a doctor of medicine, Claude Perrault (1613-88). While the main contributions of each were different, these three men were responsible for the Louvre's east façade (1667-77), composed of a colonnade of paired Corinthian columns with central and side pilasters, all set atop a rusticated ground story (Fig. 12.34). This use of paired columns links the work to the precedent, although the design is far more restrained than the Baroque architecture in Italy. In contrast to