Rococo Architecture
and
Classic Architecture in the time of Rococo

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- ***6th period of art history*** ***(brief presentation)***
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This study focuses on European architecture from the late 17th century to the mid-18th century, which implies that the architects involved were born approximately between 1646 and 1703.
Rococo architecture is often considered to be a particular period of Baroque architecture, unless it is completely confused with the latter *which has already been discussed*. Here, we will show that these are two perfectly distinct styles since rococo is concerned with plastic effects that are very different from those of the Baroque, while what we might call classical architecture is simultaneously changing in the same way.
To introduce the recurring effects of the 15th and 16th centuries *we used a painting from the corresponding period for each one*, and we *did the same for the 17th century*. For the Rococo period, this time we'll use a bas-relief sculpture by Robert Le Lorrain (1666-1747), "The Servants of Apollo giving water to the horses of the solar chariot", also known as "the Horses of the Sun", created in 1737 at the main entrance to the former stables of the Hôtel de Rohan in Paris.

Robert Le Lorrain: The Servants of Apollo giving water to the horses of the solar chariot, also known as "the Horses of the Sun" (1737)
Portal to the former stables of the Hôtel de Rohan in Paris

Image source: https://fr.m.wikipedThe Servants of Apollo giving water to the horses of the solar chariotia.org/wiki/Fichier:Archives_nationales_%28Paris%29_cour_des_chevaux_du_Soleil_%28Minutier_central_des_notaires_de_Paris%29.png

As with the Baroque period, two main effects will be considered. The first, certainly the most characteristic of this period, consists in undoing forms, or, more precisely, in doing and undoing forms. In the Horses of the Sun, it is particularly evident that the forms of the horses and figures are partly made, partly sculpted, but also partly undone under the pretext of being hidden by clouds. Another aspect of this effect is the disorder of the scene and its restlessness in all directions: the central part, where the man presents the animal with a cup, corresponds to a well-made group, while all the other participants in this scene are scattering in all directions so that the cohesion of their group is unravelling.

The second effect we shall consider is related to the first but intervenes in a specific way. It consists in giving the dual impression that all the aspects of the work intervene together in a coordinated fashion, and yet that each intervenes for itself, i.e. very autonomously from the intervention of the others. Here, all the horses and humans participate together in the same agitated watering scene, and at the same time each goes off in a direction of its own, performing an action of its own, without interacting in any way with the others. Even the watering horse seems only minimally attuned to the character handing him the trough, his momentum already seeming to carry him further.

Without considering all the effects used at the time, to fully understand his characteristic works it seems necessary to mention two other recurring effects that have a specific status, since one specifically affects what we experience as an effect of matter, while the other specifically affects the forms that are read by our mind. The one that affects the appearance of matter simultaneously produces closing and opening effects. Thus, the material surface forming the background of the Horses of the Sun sculpture is perfectly opaque, closed since it corresponds to an almost flat material surface occupied by the surface of the clouds and the sun's rays, but this material surface is locally transformed into horse forequarters and figures emerging from the wall, a wall which therefore opens up to let their relief escape in front of it. For its part, the effect that specifically affects the shapes read by the mind implies that these shapes follow each other in certain respects but do not follow each other in other respects. In this case, it's the horses and figures that captivate our mind, and while these various representations do follow one another in the plane of the sculpture, which forms a slight relief against the background of the clouds, they go in very different directions and therefore don't follow one another, since each follows its own path which distances it completely from the path followed by the others.

The architecture of previous centuries showed a recurring difference between Italy and the more nordic countries. In Italy, the effects of matter were most often in direct and absolute visual conflict with those that captivated our mind, whereas in the Nordic countries the effects of matter and the arrangements that captivated our mind were certainly in mutual contrast but nevertheless quite independent of each other.

Although the period we are now considering also gives rise to differences between countries, these need to be considered in a different way. With architecture, we're in the realm of matter, since we're in the realm of constructed matter, which implies that the effect of simultaneously making and unmaking will necessarily have very visible implications when it's borne by the effects of matter. As it happens, in Italy, and even in Austria, the material is especially likely to carry visual effects that make and break, whereas in Northern Europe, and even in Spain, it's more likely to be arrangements that capture the interest of our mind or captivate it that will carry this type of effect. Within the architectures that fall under this latter option, another pair of notions will separate what relates to architecture that we call "rococo" from that which, for lack of more precise vocabulary, we would say remains "classical". This other pair of notions, as we shall see, amounts to separating "analytical" plastic expressions and "synthetic" plastic expressions.

While Rococo is not a continuation of the Italian Baroque, there is a continuity of attitude in both areas of architecture: since architecture is a question of matter the way for the mind to demonstrate its most radical autonomy from matter is to show its ability to break it, and we'll see that this is the expression that prevails in northern Europe, while the way for matter to confront the mind brutally

and directly is to surprise it by appearing to break before it, and this is what we'll see in Italy. It should be noted, however, that there was no more German exclusivity of Rococo than there had been Italian exclusivity of Baroque, each time it was simply a matter of preferences for artistic options linked to local habits.

Jean-Baptiste Tiépolo: fresco of the staircase of the Würzburg residence - 1752-1753
Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Treppenhaus_der_W%C3%BCrzburger_Residenz_mit_Deckenfresko_von_Tiepolo_2017.jpg

The first example is the marriage of a German architecture and a fresco painted in it in 1752 and 1753 by the Italian painter Jean-Baptiste Tiepolo (1696-1770) and his son Jean-Dominico. The architecture is that of the staircase of the residence in Würzburg, Germany, its architect is Johann Balthasar Neumann (1687-1753) and the theme of the fresco is Apollo, as God of the arts, radiating out to the four corners of the earth.
Earlier it was said that, in the architecture of this period, matter was characterized by the simultaneous realization of closing and opening effects, and this is exactly what we see here: the walls of the stairwell form a closed envelope, affirming the enclosure of the place despite the presence of doors and windows, while the space opens up completely on the side of the ceiling, which seems as if transparent and giving a direct view of the sky. As for what especially captivates our mind, of course it's Tiepolo's fresco and the multitude of its details. From place to place, parts of this fresco descend in front of the upper edge of the masonry, thus participating both in the real

space of the stairwell and in the imaginary space painted on its vaulted ceiling, and the same applies to the sculpted figures near the corners which are simultaneously statues belonging to the stairwell and figures participating in the painted scene. Without being fooled by the difference in status between the white walls of the constructed material reality and the highly coloured appearance of the painted imaginary reality, the artificial architecture painted on the ceiling, like the arrangement of its figures and vegetation, is spread out in a space that seems to extend the architecture of the stairwell walls and participate with them in the same perspective effects. In a way, the imaginary space painted on the ceiling vault seems to continue the real material space of the stairwell, but without really continuing it since we understand their difference in reality: here we find the effect that characterizes the arrangements that captivate our mind, as we announced in the preamble.
If we now consider simultaneously the effects proper to the constructed material and those proper to captivating our mind, we see that together they do and undo at the same time: the materiality of the walls that surround us is well done, as is the imaginary space painted on the ceiling, but the impression of complete openness of the room's top does nothing but annihilate the effect of this architecture's material enclosure, radically destroying it.
Finally the second effect, whose essential role in this period has already been announced: the material walls and the painted ceiling together generate a space that is enclosed laterally and open above and, in this effect that they create together, the materiality of the walls and the painting that captivates our mind do things that are very independent of each other since, as we've already considered several times, the walls create the peripheral enclosure while the painted trompe-l'oeil creates the opening to the sky.

Pietro da Cortona: "Triumph of Divine Providence" on the ceiling of the grand salon of the Palazzo Barberini in Rome (1633-1639)

Image source: https://coinsdumonde2.blogspot.com/2016/03/italie-rome-le-palais-barberini.html

It's true that ceiling frescoes which seem to extend the architecture of the space are not an innovation of the 18th century. For example, between 1633 and 1639, Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669) painted false architecture and a false sky covering the entire ceiling of the grand salon in Rome's Palazzo Barberini on the theme of the "Triumph of Divine Providence" *(https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Triomphe_de_la_Divine_Providence)*. However, the relationship between the materiality of the side walls and the imaginary scene painted on the vault here is very different from that in Tiepolo's fresco, as they are categorically separated by a wide, regular cornice, that prevents them from reacting on each other. Going further back than the Baroque age, the second Italian Renaissance also made use of false architecture and skies painted on the surface of the vault, as seen for example *(https://www.quatuor.org/themes/theme002.pdf)* with the Assumption of the Virgin painted between 1526 and 1530 by Correggio on the Dome of Parma Cathedral *(https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Cath%C3%A9drale_de_Parme)* and with the

vaulting of the Salon de l'Olympe in Villa Barbaro in Maser painted from 1560 by Veronese *(https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/39/Salla_dell%60olimpo2C_Paolo_Veronese2C_Villa_Barbaro.jpg)*. In the first case, there's a general golden border around the dome that completely cuts off the fresco from the architecture that supports it, and in the second case the painted architecture cuts the vault into autonomous paintings, which doesn't allow us to feel inside these architectures, and therefore to have the same relationship with the painted scenes as in the staircase of the Würzburg residence. The division of the vault has the same effect on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, painted by Michelangelo between 1508 and 1512 *(https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Plafond_de_la_chapelle_Sixtine)*.

Rinaldo Mantovano (active in Mantua from 1527 to 1539): mural fresco in the Giants' Hall of the Palazzo del Te in Mantua

Image source: https://coupdoeilsite.wordpress.com/2019/07/06/giulio-romano/

From the same period, many rooms in Mantua's Palazzo del Te also feature painted architecture on the ceiling, framing multiple painted scenes, but the frescoes painted vertically between 1532 and 1536 by Rinaldo Mantovano on the walls of the Hall of the Giants, depicting collapsing architecture, should be considered separately. This collapsing effect could be likened to the "do and undo" effect that was so important in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, but here it relates exclusively to the painted frescoes intended to captivate our mind, not the materiality of the architecture within which we move. As it happens, in the 16th century, the main plastic effect was to destabilize us, and in that intend this fresco evoked a building in the process of collapsing, casting doubt on the stability of the site.

Back to the Würzburg residence, this time for the Garden Room, whose proximity to the ceiling provides a clear contrast between the opaque material presence of its column-supported parts and the openness to an imaginary sky of the central part of the room. Its frescoes were painted in 1750 by Johannes Zick (1702-1762) on the theme of the feast of the gods.
Everything said about the staircase in this residence applies equally here, and we can add the contrast between the continuous white material surface of the vaults and the intricate cutting of their edges that captivates our mind. The fresco as a whole forms a single scene but it is organized according to a variety of perspectives, enabling us to read to the best the piece of fresco in front of us as we turn around the room, which is another way of bringing into play the second characteristic effect of this period: the scene corresponds to an overall effect achieved by bringing together autonomous perspectives specific to each of its parts, and therefore mutually incompatible. This was also true of Tiepolo's fresco on the ceiling of the staircase, but the effect was more discreet due to the fresco's very large surface.

Gartensaal at the Würzburg residence, frescoes by Johannes Zick (1750)

Image source: https://www.residenz-wuerzburg.de/englisch/rooms/index.htm

Detail of the Gartensaal at the Würzburg residence with frescoes by Johannes Zick on the theme of the Feast of the Gods

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/diq/W%C3%BCrzburg

The visual proximity of parts that don't correspond to the same perspective means that an overall view of the fresco looks somewhat "messy", since its overall coherence is undone, thus also satisfying the other effect characteristic of this period, that of doing and undoing at the same time. By the same occasion we can say that the different parts of the scene do not follow one another from the same perspective, but that they do follow one another since they form a continuous scene, which this time corresponds to the effect we said specifically characterizes the arrangements that captivate our mind.

Still in Germany, the interior of Ottobeuren Abbey in Bavaria, built between 1748 and 1760 by the architect Johann Michael Fischer (1692-1766) from foundations already laid by his predecessors from 1711 onwards, is another example of the ceiling opening up the materiality of a construction to undo its enclosing effect and captivate our mind with imaginary scenes and skies.
In principle, this succession of domes can be analyzed in the same way as the ceilings of the Würzburg residence already mentioned, but these ceilings give the impression that the enclosure is completely undone on top, whereas in Ottobeuren Abbey the repetition of the arcades separating the

domes and falling solidly onto the architraves of the walls also provides an opportunity to bring to the ceiling the contrast between the materiality of the enclosing construction and the disappearance of this enclosure in the area of the frescoes which captivate our mind with their variety, detail and color.

Johann Michael Fischer: Ottobeuren Abbey in Bavaria, Germany (1711-1760)

Image source: https://fr.aleteia.org/2019/04/22/ottobeuren-une-imposante-abbaye-baroque-au-coeur-de-la-baviere/

Not everything has been said about the interior architecture of German buildings of this period since, as the views of the Gartensaal at the Würzburg residence and the Ottobeuren abbey show, a multitude of so-called "rocaille" motifs develop here, to which we'll return later. But first, we need to compare the rococo style in vogue in Germany with the classical style more widely represented in France. For this, we'll consider the interior of the chapel at the Château de Versailles, built between 1698 and 1710 and probably designed towards the end of his life by Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646-1708) with the help of Robert de Cotte (1656-1735).
The vault was painted as in German Rococo buildings, the main part around 1715-1716 by Antoine Coypel (1661-1722) on the theme of the "Eternal Father in his glory bringing the promise of redemption to the world". Here, there is no plastic reaction between the architecture of the building and the scene painted on its vault since a firm cornice and a curtain of windows cut these two parts off from each other. This complete break between the organization of the architectural material and

the decorations that especially captivate our mind is at the root of the difference between the "rococo" style and the "non-rococo" style which, for simplicity's sake, we'll call the "classical" style, most common in France but also found in abundance in Germany as we'll see later. To characterize this difference we'll say that the rococo style corresponds to a synthetic expression, i.e. we can't separate the perception of the materiality from the perception of the arrangements that captivate our mind, whereas in the classical style of the same period it's an analytical expression in which we can analyze separately the organization of the material and the organization of the arrangements that specifically seek to captivate our mind.

Painting by Antoine Coypel on the vault of the Château de Versailles chapel, on the theme of the Eternal Father in his glory bringing the promise of redemption to the world.

Imagesource: https://fr.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Plafond_chapelle_Royale_Versailles.jpg

Let's start with the painting of the vault where we find all the effects envisaged in the German examples. The effect that undoes as well as makes obviously corresponds to the central hole that breaks the continuity of the organization of the painted decorations on the vault, thus forming a kind of tear in the vault through which we see the sky as if by transparency. This tear appears to open the vault locally, but this one remains opaque over the rest of its surface, corresponding to the effect of simultaneous opening and closing that characterizes the appearance of the building's materiality. Coypel's painting forms a continuous series of sequences that alternate between the rather architectural decorations separating the windows and the depictions of figures on the ceiling of the lunettes surmounting these windows, and each of these sequences is quite distinct from the others, both by its own organization and by its isolated location inside each of the lunettes or on the ribs separating them. While creating an overall rhythm, each part of the painted fresco asserts its autonomy from the others, which corresponds to the second effect that has been described as characteristic of this period of art. Finally, and as a consequence of the effect we've just analyzed, all the painted parts follow each other continuously, leaving no undecorated rest on the vault, but they do not follow each other if we take into account the fact that all these parts ignore each other and do not together form a single scene.

Now let's take a look at the chapel's interior architecture. It is characterized by a two-storey layout, the ground floor formed by heavy arches affirming the building's material solidity and suggesting a continuous material envelopment around our own material body, and the upper floor punctuated by the vertical path of columns that our mind can only follow with the eyes, just as it can only follow with the eyes the horizontal path of the entablature they bear and which encircles the building, and

similarly follow the perpendicular beams that join the outermost columns, leaving painted caissons between them.

Interior of the chapel at the Château de Versailles (1698-1710), probably by Jules Hardouin-Mansart and Robert de Cotte

Image source: https://www.narthex.fr/oeuvres-et-lieux/sites-et-architecture/a-loccasion-du-tricentenaire-de-la-mort-de-louis-xiv-redecouvrez-la-chapelle-royale-du-chateau-de-versailles depuis WIKIMEDIAS COMMONS

The massive heaviness and continuity of the thick masonry on the ground floor suggest the continuity of the building's enclosure, while on the upper floor, in contrast, the well-separated columns suggest its openness. Here we find the simultaneous effect of enclosure and openness characteristic of the effects provided by the material layouts of the period, but the massive arcades on the ground floor alone can also be said to provide both an effect of massive continuity surrounding the site and an effect of openness in each of their arcades. Moreover, while the layout of the masonry on the ground floor asserts a horizontal effect, the presence of the columns, in contrast, asserts a vertical effect, and the cornice running above these columns reintroduces a horizontal effect: horizontality and verticality are thus constantly being made and unmade. Of all the elements of this architecture we can say that together they form a continuous regular sequence encircling the building, and at the same time that each is completely autonomous, either because they are heavy pillars set apart from one another, or because they are arcades quite distinct from one another, or because they are columns set apart from one another, or because some are vertical while others are horizontal, or even because they cross one another. In short, we find the other characteristic effect of this period: the assembly of architectural arrangements forms a very apparent overall effect even though each one individually forms an effect that is very independent of that of the others. And if, finally, we limit ourselves to the columns, beams and cornices on the upper floor which require the attention of our mind to follow them with our eyes, all these parts are necessarily joined since some carry the others and therefore we can say that they follow each other continuously, but we can also say that they don't follow each other since they don't go in the same direction.

Having shown what unites the Rococo style and the Classical style of the same period in Northern Europe, it remains to show how these two styles differ from Italian architecture, and even, as we shall see, from certain characteristic examples of Austrian architecture.
An Italian example is the interior of the multi-storey dome of the small Sanctuary of the Visitation at Valinotto, built in 1738 near Carignano in Piedmont. It was designed by the architect Bernardo Vittone (1704-1770).

Bernardo Vittone: interior of the Sanctuary of the Visitation at Valinotto, near Carignano, Italy (1738)

Image source: http://www.agostinomagnaghi.it/portfolio/santuario-della-visitazione-di-maria-a-santa-elisabetta-detto-del-valinotto-carignano-to-progetto-di-restauro/

What is the material effect here? It's the pillars that support the arches of the vault, it's the vault itself of the dome, it's the walls of the alcoves that surround the dome from a distance while allowing light to pass between them and the dome. But even if we can say that this is the effect of matter, it's impossible to pinpoint the precise and complete form of this matter for it is constantly pierced by holes without any recognizable continuity, as if spongy and traversed everywhere by light: the light that comes from the crown of skylights around the dome and even crosses the wall above the arcades that support it, the light that penetrates directly through the central circle that marks its center, and the light that emanates from the orange frescoes that pierce its surface many times over with hexagons and half-rounds. In fact, if matter has a mass effect, it is not through its own shape that we perceive it but through the light that pierces it and crosses it from one side to the other. As for our mind, it has no difficulty in reading the path of the arches that support the vault at its lowest level, resting on the pillars, and in reading the star pattern of the arches that rest on the top of these arches to give the dome its shape.

That the material that closes the place from above is penetrated on all sides by light, and therefore completely open, comes as no surprise to us given what we've said about the simultaneous effect of closure and openness concerning material in this era of architecture. Nor does it surprise us, given the importance of the "undoing" effect in this period of architecture, that the reading of the material's form should be undone in this way. However, unlike in Rococo architecture where it was the paintings that captivated our mind that provoked this effect, here it is the material of the construction that generates it. In Ottobeuren Abbey, for example, it's the continuous material bridges between each side of the nave that ensure the continuity of the enclosure effect, while the painted domes repeatedly break it up, and the multiple rocaille decorations scattered over these material bridges also tend to break their continuity. In the staircase of the Würzburg residence it is the side walls that provide the solid enclosure effect while the ceiling painting completely undoes it, and the same applies to the garden room of the same residence where the walls and solid parts of the vaults provide the enclosure that is undone by the ceiling paintings. In the Valinotto Sanctuary, conversely, it's the material that creates the "undone" by its layout, while it's the arches and arcades that our mind reads with the tips of our eyes that maintain the effect of coherence and stable solidity of the place.

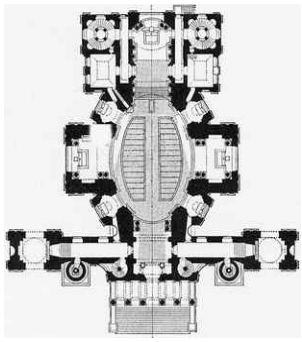
Generally speaking, it is this principle that differentiates Italian architecture from the architecture of Northern Europe: in Italy the material often gives the impression of unravelling while it is the

layouts read by our mind that give the opposite impression, in contrast to rococo Germany and classical France where it is the layouts that captivate our mind that give the impression of unravelling the coherence of the place, while, conversely, it is the material that reassures us on its solidity.

It has been said that what applies to Italy also applies to Austria, although this does not imply that all buildings in these two countries function in the same way, nor that all German buildings are rococo.
To justify the equivalence with Italian architecture, we consider the Church of St. Charles Borromeo (German: Karlskirche), built in Vienna by the architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656-1723). We'll be looking at the exterior of this highly dislocated building. It was built between 1715 and 1737 and completed after the architect's death by his son, Joseph Emanuel Fischer von Erlach (1693-1742).

Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach: St. Charles Borromeo Church in Vienna (German: Karlskirche)

Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Karlskirche,_Vienna?uselang=de#/media/File:Austria_august2010_0062.jpg



Plan of Saint-Charles-Borromeo church in Vienna

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/%C3%89glise_Saint-Charles-Borrom%C3%A9e_(Vienne)

Its plan shows that it is articulating various bodies of buildings that are quite distinct and autonomous from one another, both in terms of the lack of continuity from one to the other and the absence of unity in their forms which are very foreign to one another. Of course, this satisfies the effect that combines overall organization with the strongest possible autonomy of all the parts that participate in this overall effect. It also satisfies the effect that gives the impression that the building is completely undone even though it is perfectly made in front of us, this undone aspect corresponding here to the lack of overall compactness of the building which seems to be made out of odds and ends, not least because of the monumental columns that stand vertically and in isolation without any plastic relationship to each other or to the forms of the rest of the building. If the building's materiality is immediately defeated by its lack of compactness, it's our mind that, despite its disjointed appearance, understand that the whole forms a single building, which is therefore well and truly made in front of us. The building's lack of overall compactness also implies the effect of openness expected from the materiality of this almost completely opaque building, an effect that is locally reinforced by the open air of the entrance portico and the wide openings that can be seen on the ground floor of the two side massifs. As for the layouts that are especially suited to the mind, they run in all directions, vertically and spirally in the case of the monumental columns, horizontally and discontinuously in the case of the mid-height cornices, arched in the case of the

pediments of the side massifs in contrast to the triangular pediment at the entrance, and so on. All these lines and figures follow one another on the surface of the same building but they don't follow the same directions or the same type of layout, as was appropriate at the time for forms that especially require our mind to read them "with our eyes".

Unrealized projects by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach show other ways of giving the impression that the building's material compactness has been defeated, or even that the building has been destroyed, while our mind is able to deny this effect in order to identify how the building remains compact, or to appreciate how well-made it is in spite of everything.

Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach: Triumphal Arch project for Vienna and garden building project (1721 engravings from "Entwurff einer historischen Architectur" published by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach)

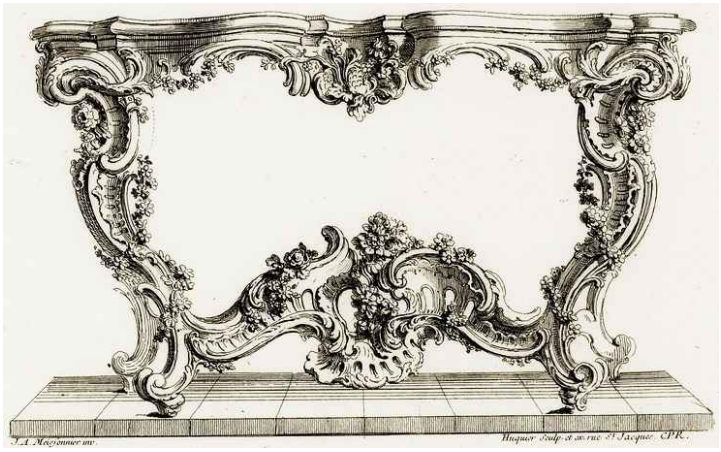
Image source: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105017683/f210.item et https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105017683/f283.item

Among the personal projects he had engraved in 1721 for a work he dedicated to the history of architecture, we might mention a Triumphal Arch for Vienna in which the materiality of the upper floor almost completely disappears, thanks to the lightness of its architecture reduced to simple columns, the effect of the disappearance of matter being reinforced here by the presence of smoke behind which the base of these columns is concealed, thus appearing to float above the arch of the lower level whose material wall is continuous.
Even more radical is the building project in a garden that appears to be cut squarely in two, hollowed out in its entire central section, the material of which seems to have completely disappeared. However, our mind can reconstruct the coherence of this building by understanding that these are the two ends of an underlying ovoid shape, somewhat similar to what Bernini did with the colonnades of St. Peter's Square in Rome.

The Italian and Austrian architectural styles, in which it is the material of the building that seems to be unravelling, are therefore quite distinct from the German and French styles in which it is the arrangements that captivate our mind, or that are specially read by our mind, that give the impression of unravelling the material. As in these countries, however, we are dealing with both analytical and synthetic plastic expressions. Thus, in Fischer von Erlach's Triumphal Arch project, we can consider separately, and thus analytically, the lower floor with its continuous materiality and the upper floor with its tenuous, evaporating materiality, while in his garden building we cannot imagine the complementarity of its two halves without confronting their division on either side of the gap that separates them. The same applies to the church of Saint-Charles-Borromeo, whose overall coherence our mind cannot appreciate without confronting the very disjointed aspect of its material, and to the interior of the Sanctuary of the Visitation where our mind cannot appreciate the

coherence of the figures formed by the arches and arcades without confronting the difficulty of feeling the very fragmented presence of the built masses pierced many times to let the light through.

After a general overview of architecture in the late 17th and first half of the 18th centuries, it's time to look at the theme of "rocailles", the origin of the term "rococo" in association with "baroque".



Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier (or Meissonier): Drawing for a table, circa 1730

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Juste-Aur%C3%A8le_Meissonnier

Above, New Tettnang Castle, stucco by Joseph Anton Feuchtmayer (1696-1770)
Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/4c/Tettnang_Neues_Schloss_Treppenhaus_Stuck_3.jpg/1280px-Tettnang_Neues_Schloss_Treppenhaus_Stuck_3.jpg

Right, detail of a wooden stall back from the abbey church in Zwiefalten (circa 1750)

Image source: Baroque (Italy and Central Europe) in the "Architecture Universelle" collection of the Office du Livre, Fribourg

Examples of the use of rocaille motifs include a table design from 1730 by Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier (1695-1750) who was of Italian origin but spent his entire career in France, a stucco by Joseph Anton Feuchtmayer (1696-1770) created around 1728 in the new castle of Tettnang in southern Germany, and a wooden stall back carved in 1750 in the abbey church of Zwiefalten, also in Germany. All these motifs are organized in the same way: tightly closed arcs, most of them centered inwards, other arcs, often more modest in size and directed outwards, and radial shapes, energetically centrifugal, linked in one way or another to these rounded shells, most often seeming to emanate from them.
All these forms obviously captivate our mind, while the material corresponds to the surfaces that connect them, that hold them together, or even, as in the example of the stucco in the new Tettnang castle, to the surface on which they are affixed. The dynamic between the material surfaces that hold them and the energy with which these forms seem to escape from them implies that our

perception must hold together the effects of the immobile material surface and the effects produced by the forms that captivate our mind, that we are therefore in the case of a synthetic type of reading, and therefore right in the case of a rococo type of expression. The four effects that have been said to characterize this period of art history are easily identifiable: centrifugal shapes and centripetal shapes, or shapes with a dynamic that closes in on itself, create effects that are completely independent of one another, even though they are part of a very coherent overall effect; the material to which these motifs cling forms continuities that are closed but perforated within the portions of the circle drawn by the rocailles, or pierced by the path of the centrifugal impulses and tongues of material; finally, all these reliefs whose drawing captivates our mind follow each other in continuity on the same motif, but they don't follow each other since they go in completely different directions from one another.

Above, detail of the King's bedroom in the Palais Rohan in Strasbourg, France (circa 1742)

Image source: https://www.rivagedeboheme.fr/pages/arts/peinture-18e-siecle/le-rococo.html

On the right, the ceiling of the Basilica of Vierzehnheiligen near Bad Staffelstein, Germany. The fresco was painted by Giuseppe Appiani between 1764 and 1769

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Basilique_de_Vierzehnheiligen

In France, the now well-established academicism virtually prohibited the use of this type of expression in the exterior architecture of buildings and confined it to the interior decoration of residences, furniture and even ironwork, as in the case of *the gates of Nancy's Place Stanislas*, forged in 1752 by Jean Lamour (1698-1771). An example is the decoration of the king's bedroom in the Palais Rohan in Strasbourg, built from 1732 to 1742 by the architect Robert de Cotte (1656-1735), but it could just as easily have been the decoration of *the apartments in the Hôtel de Soubise* in Paris, fitted out from 1736 by the architect Germain Boffrand (1667-1754). An example of rocaille furniture designed by Meissonnier has been given, and it may be added that, generally speaking, this type of furniture corresponds to the so-called *Louis XV style*. In Germany, the interiors of religious buildings make abundant use of this type of motif. One example is the ceiling of the Vierzehnheiligen basilica, which features a continuous gilded rocaille motif that encircles the entire fresco. The basilica was built between 1743 and 1763 by the architect Johann Balthasar Neumann (1687-1753).

General view of the interior of the Vierzehnheiligen basilica near Bad Staffelstein, Germany

Image source :
https://www.wikiwand.com/de/Basilika_Vierzehnheiligen

Detail of the galleries of St. Nicholas Church in Malá Strana (also known as the Kleinseite), Prague (architect Christophe Dientzenhofer)
Image source: https://inges-reiseblog.de/in-der-st-nikolaus-kirche-auf-der-prager-kleinseite/

In addition to the large motif encircling the ceiling fresco, rocaille motifs surround all the smaller ceiling paintings, and motifs of the same type are scattered across all surfaces, interrupting decorative bands, enlivening capitals and their abacuses, cutting cornices, and affixed like coats of arms to the overhangs of the galleries, just as in the Church of St. Nicholas in Malá Strana (also known as the Kleinseite) in Prague, built from 1702 to 1771 by architect Christophe Dientzenhofer (1655-1722), but this time not in Germany but in the Czech Republic.

This way of multiplying rocaille motifs and spreading them throughout the building is in keeping with the four characteristic effects of rococo: as the decoration is scattered in this way, without any continuity between its various parts, it acquires an "undone" appearance; each part of the decoration has an autonomous effect, since it is isolated, well separated from the others, but despite this autonomy they all together create the same effect, that of rocaille decoration; although the walls of the building together form an opaque material continuity, these walls seem to open up to let these motifs escape everywhere as they seem to emerge from their surface; finally, if all these motifs, whose animation, color and complexity captivate our mind, follow one another on the same surface, they don't follow one another because they are separated from one another, and when they touch, as is the case with the motifs surrounding the great central fresco on the ceilingof the Vierzehnheiligen basilica, they seem to move away from one another.

Facade of Santiago de Compostela Cathedral (Spain), built between 1738 and 1750 by architect Fernando de Casas y Novoa, incorporating the two medieval towers. It is preceded by a monumental staircase dating from 1606

Image source : https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Cath%C3%A9drale_de_Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle

This principle of a profusion of decorative details scattered here and there on fairly neutral surfaces serving as a background is also the one that prevails, this time in Spain, and this time outdoors, on the façade overlooking the Obradoiro square of Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. These motifs are not strictly identical to those defined as rocaille, but they also create a scattered effect of complex details of the same type scattered and colonizing all surfaces. Incorporating two towers dating from the Middle Ages, this arrangement of columns, pilasters, abacuses, arcades and pediments, accompanied by this swarming surface decoration, was created between 1738 and 1750 by the architect Fernando de Casas y Novoa (circa 1680-1749).

This facade is often incorrectly referred to as "*Churrigueresque*" architecture, as it leaves significant surfaces devoid of decorations to contrast them. Churrigueresque art is also wrongly referred to as Churrigueresque "baroque", since it is more a Spanish equivalent to German rococo. It owes its name to the Churriguera family, sculptors in Salamanca, who created altarpieces with dense decoration and almost no free surface for ornamentation, as in the case of the altarpiece in the church of San Estaban in Salamanca, sculpted from 1693 by José Benito Churriguera (1665-1725).
A real example of Churrigueresque architecture is the sacristy of the Carthusian monastery in Granada, Spain, built between 1727 and 1746 to plans by architect Francisco Hurtado Izquierdo (1669-1725). Admittedly, a few bare surfaces allow the eye to breathe a little, but for the most part the decorations are dense and packed together. This principle is not dissimilar to the organization of the façade of the Landsberg am Lech town hall, which takes us back to Germany, more precisely to Bavaria. The façade was designed in 1719 by the architect Dominikus Zimmermann (1685-1766) and gives the same "horror of emptiness" impression as the sacristy of the Carthusian monastery in Granada.
To limit ourselves to the two main effects of the Rococo period, this principle of saturating surfaces with decoration brings the following properties: the simplicity, rigor and nudity of material surfaces are well done since they appear in places, but they are at the same time completely undone by the omnipresence of the decorations that clutter them up; this decoration brings together motifs that are different from one another, and therefore autonomous from one another, moreover sometimes

alternating by making mutual contrasts, but the fact remains that together they make a collective effect of "overloaded decoration".

Above, sacristy of the Carthusian monastery in Granada (Spain), built from 1727 to 1746 to plans by architect Francisco Hurtado Izquierdo
Image source: https://www.espritsud.es/guides-voyage/c/0/i/68919625/grenade-c-est-bien-plus-que-l-alhambra-le-monastere-de-la-chartreuse

Left, altarpiece from the San Estaban church in Salamanca (Spain) - 1693 -
Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Jos%C3%A9_Benito_Churriguera

Dominikus Zimmermann: facade of the Landsberg am Lech town hall (Bavaria, Germany), 1719

Image source : https://structurae.net/fr/ouvrages/hotel-de-ville-historique-de-landsberg

We've just explored the way in which rococo or rococo-style decorations undo the continuity or simplicity of the building's materiality by forcing us to consider simultaneously, and therefore through a perception that can be said synthetic, the appearance of matter and the plastic effects produced by the forms that captivate our mind and tend to undo it. We shall now see how the same effects, this time considered within the framework of an analytical expression, i.e. by placing in separate places or requiring separate readings what makes an effect of matter and what captivates our mind, lead to architectures of completely different appearance.
We begin in France, with a very simple layout, for an equally simple-looking building, replicas of which can be seen in Germany and Spain. The reference example is the park-side facade of the Château de Champs-sur-Marne, a building begun by Pierre Bullet but, in its present appearance, designed primarily by his son Jean-Baptiste Bullet de Chamblain (1665-1726).

Jean-Baptiste Bullet de Chamblain: park facade of the Château de Champs-sur-Marne, France (1699-1707)

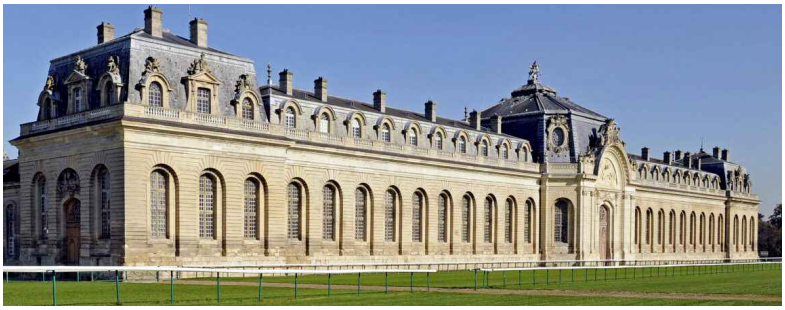
Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Champs-sur-Marne

If it weren't for the very small reliefs at either end of the building, which are very muted reminders of the effects typical of 16th century architecture, we'd say that this building has the shape of a large, regular parallelepiped with a bulge in its center, polygonal on its stone floors and rounded at the level of its slate-covered roof. This central protrusion is obviously what attracts our attention, as it disturbs the perception of the main parallelepiped which, as much for the simplicity of its surfaces without pediment or sculpture as for the clearly legible volume it proposes, is here valued primarily for its character as a built material volume. As this outgrowth defeats the reading of the simple parallelepipedic material volume that would appear in its absence, like in rococo architecture it's here what attracts our attention that defeats the expression of matter, but unlike rococo architecture we don't have to perceive this outgrowth as conflicting with the rest of the building's materiality, since we can very well consider in turn that it's a building that's only a little swollen in its center, and then separately consider the details that especially attract our mind's attention in this central part and that aren't found on the rest of the facades: the first-floor pediment with its carvings, the very pronounced joints between the stones surrounding the French windows, the first-floor balcony and its brackets, the rounding of the ground-floor bays, the canted sections that articulate its different facets, the slightly higher height of its first floor which exceeds the cornice and gutter of the rest of the facades, and finally the rounding of its oculus roof which contrasts with the Mansard roof with dormers of the rest of the roofs. In other words, the ambivalence of the presence of the central excrescence means that, if viewed in two different phases, it can either be read as counteracting the perception of the rest of the building, or as a part of the building that is only slightly different due to its particular complexity. And who says perception in two different times says perception of analytical type, we are therefore in the scenario initially announced: as in rococo architecture it's the layout that especially captivates the mind that undoes the perception of the material configuration,

but unlike rococo architecture it implies an analytical rather than synthetic reading.
Then, the part of the building that attracts the attention of our mind tends to undo the way we perceive the rest of its materiality, a part whose verticality also undoes its overall horizontal appearance: here we find the first characteristic effect of the period. The rectilinear, horizontal-looking wings, and the central, vertical-looking bulge, make very autonomous things, while together they form a parallelepipedal building with a central bulge: this time, it corresponds to the second characteristic effect of the period. Overall, the materiality of this building has a compact, closed appearance, but locally it opens up to let out its central protrusion: very normally this corresponds to the effect that specifically concerns materiality in this period. Finally, the architecture of the central protrusion follows that of the side wings, since it uses the same materials and is integrated into the horizontal strip layout, but it does not follow it since it forms a more vertical entity and differs from it in the particulars described above. This corresponds to the effect normally expected for the layouts that most captivate our mind.

Main building of Prémontré Abbey, near Laon, Aisne, France (1718) - unknown architect

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Abbaye_de_Pr%C3%A9montr%C3%A9



Jean Aubert (known as Aubert aîné): Grandes Écuries building at château de Chantilly, France (1719-1735)

Image source: https://chateaudechantilly.fr/grandes-ecuries/

Two other French examples are based on the same principle of a central protuberance specially highlighted. The first is the main building at Prémontré Abbey, near Laon, built in 1718 but whose architect is unknown. Not even small reliefs here to mark the ends, the large, unified roof emphasizes the overall shape of the building's materiality, while the central projection is completely rounded and features a large pediment that sets it apart from the rest of the building. Secondly, the Grandes Ecuries building at Château de Chantilly, built between 1719 and 1735 by the architect Jean Aubert, known as Aubert l'aîné (circa 1680-1741). Here, the central protrusion forms a polygonal volume that stands out in height and is distinguished by a large, rounded pediment. This outgrowth forms a central punctuation, all the more so as the building's side wings are very elongated, forming a very long horizontal line, barely disturbed by the reliefs at its ends.

After France, some similarly designed buildings, first in Austria and Germany, then in Spain.
The Schwarzenberg Palace in Vienna, Austria, and especially its garden facade, corresponds exactly to the principle defined above: a large, simple, highly horizontal parallelepiped shape for the main building, with a highly vertical, rounded protuberance at its center. Construction of this building took place between 1697 and 1728 and was begun by the architect Lukas von Hildebrandt (1668-1723), completed by the aforementioned Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach.

Lukas von Hildebrandt: park facade of Schwarzenberg Palace in Vienna, Austria (1697-1728) - completed by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach

Image source: https://geppbloggt.com/2014/04/29/der-ubersehene-palast/

Johann Balthasar Neumann: South facade of the residence in Würzburg, Germany (1720-1739)

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/R%C3%A9sidence_de_Wurtzbourg

The south facade of the residence in Würzburg, Germany, designed by the architect Johann Balthasar Neumann and whose staircase we have already mentioned, follows the same layout principle, albeit with a different treatment of the upper sections. This residence was built between 1720 and 1739 and its longer garden facade has a higher central projection with a polygonal rather than rounded layout.

Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff: Sanssouci or Sans-Souci Palace, Potsdam, Germany (1645-1647)

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Palais_de_Sanssouci

A long horizontal building, this time very flat, and a central circular bulge covered by a spherical cap - this is the layout of the facade on the terraced vineyard side of the Sanssouci Palace, built from 1645 to 1647 by architect Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff (1699-1753) in Potsdam, Germany.

A more discreet solution to the contrast between a building with a simply parallelepipedic materiality and the enhancement of the center of its facade to captivate our mind is to apply over it a particularly rich modenature that contrasts with the monotony of its lateral parts. This is how the architect François de Cuvilliés dit l'ancien (1695-1768) treated several facades of Augustusburg Castle in Brühl, Germany. Built in 1725 and 1726 to the plans of architect Johann Conrad Schlaun (1695-1773), François de Cuvilliés redesigned the interior and facades. To distinguish the central part and especially captivate our mind, monumental pilasters were introduced, changing color from

the current plaster of the walls, various sculptures were added, as well as a balcony supported by brackets, while a very elaborate pediment was added in the central bays which are themselves in slight relief from the rest of the pilastered part.

François de Cuvilliés l'Ancien: facade of Augustusburg Castle in Brühl, Germany (1726)

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Ch%C3%A2teaux_d'Augustusburg_et_de_Falkenlust

In stark contrast to this complex but very flat treatment of the central section, the main façade of the Palacio de San Telmo in Seville, Spain, built between 1682 and 1704 by the architect Leonardo de Figueroa (1650-1730). At the center of *its long, repetitive reddish-brick façade* is a very wide, very high portico, sculpted in a style that can be described this time as churrigueresque, and whose whiteness also contrasts with the rest of the facades. This elaborate portico was built by the architect's son and grandson.

Leonardo de Figueroa: detail of the main façade of the San Telmo Palace in Seville, Spain (1682-1734)

Image source: https://fr.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Palacio_San_Telmo_facade_Seville_Spain.jpg

To return to France and complete this theme of a highly uniform horizontal facade contrasting with a raised center, the garden facade of the Château de Versailles as transformed and lengthened by architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646-1708). *As we've seen*, in the previous epoch a central terrace was surrounded by two buildings competing for our attention and satisfying one of the essential effects of the Baroque period. In addition to making a few changes to the modenature of this façade, Jules Hardouin-Mansart eliminated this central terrace to accommodate the Hall of Mirrors, and subsequently fitted the central building with two long symmetrical wings that gave the garden façade its definitive appearance.

Jules Hardouin-Mansart: modifications to the garden facade and side extensions of the Château de Versailles (1678-1689)

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Versailles

This final arrangement can be considered in the same way as the long monotonous facades where the perception of the large horizontal band they form is countered by a central part that projects forward, the only difference being that, this time, it's the main building itself that twists to bring its central part forward, without however modifying its modenature in any particular way, except by creating a shorter distance between the various porticoes in relief on the current part of the facades. However, the near-monotony of the facades throughout their development imply an "unravelling" effect that was not so apparent in the previous examples, in that any complexity in the treatment of the facades is defeated here since they are always similar or almost similar.

Jules Hardouin Mansart: St Louis des Invalides church in Paris, France (1677-1690)

Image source: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hôtel_des_Invalides

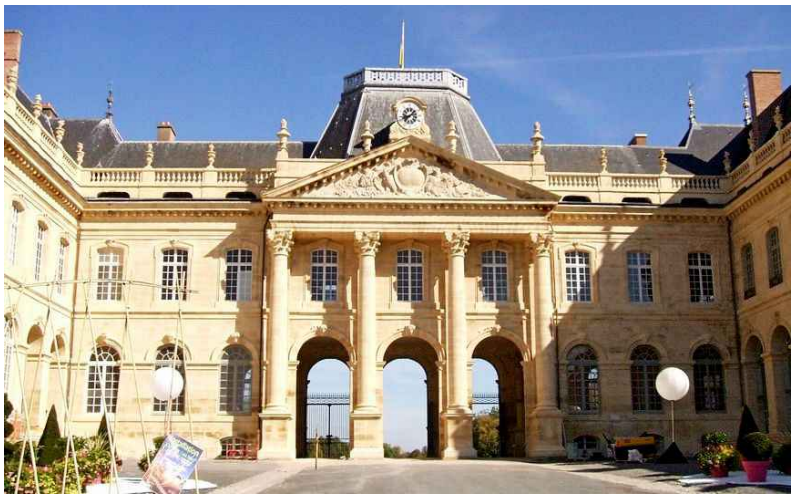
A fairly simple appearance of materiality undone by the complexity introduced by a part of the building that attracts our mind's attention, this can be done in a way other than by a central excrescence that stands out, for example by means of a set of colonnades that our mind reads established frankly in the foreground of a building with a very simple, even smooth materiality, the mass of the building then asserting itself through its material surface while the colonnades attract our mind's attention through their plastic complexity. Actually, our mind can only read the colonnades by following them with the tips of our eyes, whereas it's by feeling the material presence of our own bodies that we grasp by analogy the presence of the building's material mass. What's more, these colonnades, placed in front of the material wall that encloses the building, have the effect of "scratching" it, i.e. undoing its appearance, even though we perceive it well done through them. This brings us back to the first effect that we said characterized the period, and the second immediately follows: the appearance of the building and the colonnades in front of it produce effects that are completely independent of each other, the flat opacity of one and the vertical stripes of the others, but it's precisely thanks to their autonomy of appearance that together they produce the effect of a flat surface striped by colonnades. We've just said that, in this arrangement, the material creates opacity and therefore closure, but it also creates openness since it

allows colonnades to emerge from its surface, whereas the colonnades that our mind reads with the tips of our eyes are formed of columns that follow one another horizontally but which don't follow one another since they are parallel and thus run side by side in the same direction.
This is precisely the set of effects just described that applies to the entrance façade of the Saint-Louis des Invalides church, built in Paris by Jules Hardouin Mansart between 1677 and 1690. The pyramidal shape of its two-storey colonnade adds to its good visual separation from the almost blind surface of the masonry, and the almost complete bareness of the ends of the masonry cube in the background reinforces its reading as a simple material surface.

Pierre-Alexis Delamair: Hôtel de Soubise in Paris, France (1705-1709)

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/H%C3%B4tel_de_Soubise

The material surface of the Hôtel de Soubise in Paris has the same simplicity and the colonnades in the foreground have the same pyramidal effect, with the difference that the lateral colonnades create a more pronounced "it follows each other/without following each other" effect, as they are continued on the upper floor by pedestal-mounted statues that abruptly interrupt the vertical path initiated by the columns. The building was constructed between 1705 and 1709 by architect Pierre-Alexis Delamair (1675-1745), although the interior was designed in the Rocaille style by architect Germain Boffrand.
The main building of the Château de Lunéville, built for the Duke of Lorraine between 1709 and 1723, is by the same Germain Boffrand (1667-1754). Here, the pedimented colonnade spans the two storeys in a single sweep, and stands out even more prominently in front of the simple, flat masonry enclosing the building.



Germain Boffrand: Château de Lunéville in Lorraine, France (1709-1723)

Image source: https://www.tourisme-lunevillois.com/SITLOR/742002860.htm

For an example this time from England, in a relatively similar style, the Clarendon Building at Oxford University, built from 1711 to 1715 by architect Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736).

Nicholas Hawksmoor: Clarendon Building, Oxford University, England (1711-1715)

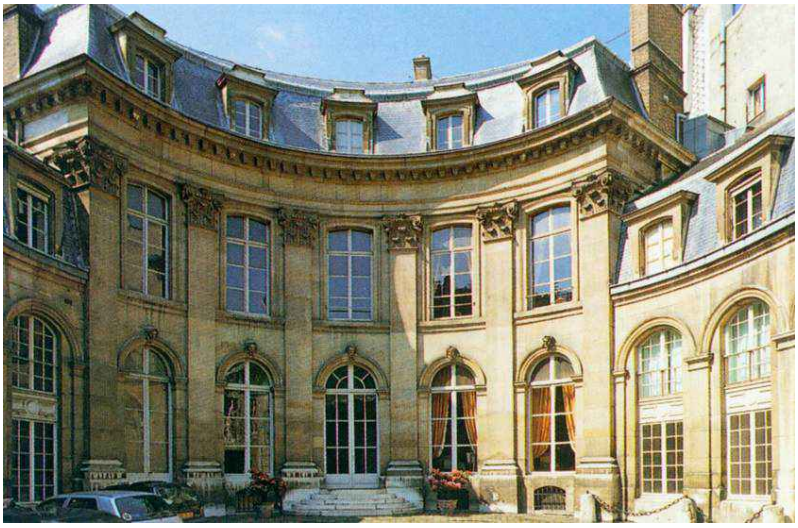
Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Clarendon_Building

As we've said, all the previous examples are analytical in nature, since it's not useful to read simultaneously, and therefore synthetically, the surfaces or the volume corresponding to the mass of the building and the linear lines of the columns in front of it. In the following examples we'll gradually move from this analytical reading to a necessarily synthetic one, which will take us back to the German rococo.

In the interior of the chapel at the Château de Versailles, as we have seen, Jules Hardouin-Mansart created a highly analytical contrast between the continuous masonry of the ground floor, opened by a series of arcades, and the completely empty upper floor, punctuated by the regular return of vertical columns supporting a long horizontal architrave. He used a similar layout for the facades of two royal squares in Paris: the Place Vendôme, for which he drew up a plan in 1699 that obliged developers to respect the layout he had designed, and the Place des Victoires, inaugurated in 1686, which used the same facade principle. On the upper storeys however, the colonnades are replaced by pilasters embracing two storeys at once, and the void between columns is replaced by a continuous flat wall intersected at mid-height by a thick entablature supported by brackets. While reading the horizontal band of the ground floor and the vertical grid of pilasters on the upper storeys in two necessarily separate phases is indeed analytical, reading the architecture of the upper storey façades is not, since the perception of the essentially flat horizontal band of their wall is constantly thwarted by the presence of the pilasters integrated into it: since we can't visually separate the plane that asserts the materiality of these facades from the vertical paths of the pilasters, which our mind can only follow with our eyes, we're dealing here with a synthetic expression. Note that the cut corners of the Place Vendôme and their pediment are distinguished from the long side façades in the same way and for the same reasons as the various central complexifications discussed above.

Jules Hardouin Mansart: a corner of the Place Vendôme in Paris, France (1699 urban plan)
Image source: https://paris1900.lartnouveau.com/paris01/places/vendome/actuel/pcvend6.htm

Jules Hardouin Mansart: a section of the facades of the Place des Victoires in Paris (inaugurated in 1686)
Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Place_des_Victoires



Germain Boffrand: detail of the courtyard of the Hôtel Amelot de Gournay in Paris (1712)

Image source:
https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/b/boffrand/amelot1.html

On the curved courtyard facades of the Hôtel Amelot de Gournay, also in Paris, built in 1712 by the architect Germain Boffrand, we find the same basic layout as for the facades of Place de la Victoire, but here the base is completely removed and the expression is therefore completely synthetic.
We can, however, mention or recall the four effects involved: the materiality of the curved wall, which we feel thanks to the horizontal enveloping effect it produces on our material body, is defeated by our mind's reading of the vertical pilasters which completely scratch this surface, even energetically crossing the line of the horizontal cornice that emphasizes the curve of our envelopment at mid-height; this envelopment by a continuous curved wall and the design of the vertical grid of pilasters correspond to two plastic expressions that are very independent of each other, but which nevertheless together make the same wall; the material wall is completely closed in an oval (see its plan shown below), but this oval courtyard opens completely onto the sky; finally, all the shapes that our mind reads by following them with our eyes (the vertical pilasters, the curved horizontal cornice at the top of the façade, the curved horizontal entablature at mid-height) necessarily follow each other on the same surface, but they don't follow each other visually since they go in intersecting or parallel directions.

For a fully synthetic example we return to German Rococo with the façade of the Basilica of Vierzehnheiligen near Bad Staffelstein, built from 1743 to 1772 by architect Johann Balthasar Neumann and whose interior we have already considered. The material wall of this facade is clearly divided into five vertical bands: two side towers with flat surfaces, a clearly domed central section, two intermediate bands with concave recessed surfaces due to the presence of a cutaway on the side of the towers, and no material effect to disrupt or undo this succession of vertical effects. What fights against this effect of alternating vertical bands, accompanies it in the lower part and then defeats it more and more strongly in the upper part, are the modenatures designed to captivate our mind. In the basement, these are merely vertical reliefs, but on the first level these vertical reliefs are transformed into pilasters with horizontal joints, forming vertical flats that underline the surface effect produced by the building's background. These pilasters start with protruding bases whose relief generates a horizontal band that runs across the entire width of the facade, countering for the first time, albeit only slightly, the vertical effect generated by the bands of material. At the top of these pilasters, a protruding horizontal cornice visibly counteracts this time the vertical effects produced by the surface of the material. Above this cornice the pilasters start up again, then stop fairly quickly as they come up against repeated reliefs, which together generate a horizontal series

of visual accidents that counteract the flatness of the surfaces on which they stand out. These reliefs serve as bases from which new pilasters rise, replaced however by clear columns on either side of the central convex band. On this second level, these pilasters and columns end in highly protruding capitals, which together create a new horizontal band of visual accidents that counter the flatness and verticality of the surfaces as well as the verticality of the pilasters and columns. After a gap above these capitals, a new, highly-projecting cornice, creates a new horizontal line that once again counteracts the vertical effects, and this cornice becomes more complex in the central part, giving rise to a pediment fractured at the ends by high-relief parts above the columns. On each of the two towers, resting on high, projecting bases, the pilasters are now systematically replaced by columns that are almost completely free of the tower's volume. Above these columns, arched pediments are also fractured at their ends, topped by new pediments with circular oculi whose greenish copper cover rebounds to give rise to a bulb with a clearly visible convex volume, tapering towards its summit to abut a small open square turret, itself covered by a similar but smaller bulb.

Johann Balthasar Neumann: facade of the Basilica of Vierzehnheiligen near Bad Staffelstein, Germany (1743-1772)

Image source: https://marienwallfahrtsorte.erzbistum-bamberg.de/oberes-maintal/grundfeld-wallfahrtsbasilika-vierzehnheiligen/index.html

To sum up, the arrangements that reflect the material (the surfaces enveloping the building) take the form of a series of broad vertical bands, some of which end in the bulbous roof, while the arrangements that particularly captivate our mind are initially formed of broad vertical pilasters set against the material gradually transforming into columns, this time well out of the material, of horizontal bands and cornices that continuously counter the effects of verticality, of capitals aligned in horizontal bands that counter the verticality in a more punctual manner, and of highly irregular pediments in the upper sections, some of which clash with the simplicity of the material bulbs. It's fair to say that these layouts are particularly captivating to the mind, not only because the analysis of their complexity delights it, but also because they correspond for the most part to linear effects that the mind can only follow with the eyes, without involving the reading of surfaces or volumes which, for their part, are better suited to rendering the material aspect of the building. From bottom to top, especially in the towers, the verticality of the pilasters at first blends smoothly with that of the material surfaces on which they are stuck, then the protrusions of their bases and capitals

aligned in horizontal bands begin to contradict the verticality effect of the wall surfaces, then the transformation into protruding columns further undermines the surface effect created by the presence of the walls, and finally the visually challenging complexity of the pediments at the top completely undermines the simplicity introduced by the roof bulbs against which they abut. Complementing this progressive affirmation, from bottom to top, visual paths emerge ever more firmly from the volume of the material to negate, and thus undo, the effect of flatness through which this material first appears to us: continuous, very prominent cornices and bands of pedestals and capitals assert horizontals that counter and undo the effects of verticals generated by the alternating bands, flat, hollowed or domed, through which the materiality of the building's surfaces appears to us.
Whether by progressively undoing their surface effects, or by undoing their vertical effects in various ways, the arrangements that captivate our mind are thus systematically engaged in effects that aim to undo what the material of the façade does, while their close combination on the same surfaces, as well as their numerous overlaps, preclude the possibility of considering separately what the material does and what the forms that captivate our mind do: this is a necessarily synthetic expression, in which it's the latter forms that visually "undo" the former, and we're once again right in the definition of the Rococo style that flourished in Germany as we envisaged it from the outset.

Johann Michael Fischer: Church facade in Zwiefalten, Germany (1741 to 1753)
Image source: Michael Norz sur Google Map

Christoph Dientzenhofer: Smirice Castle Chapel, Czech Republic (c. 1700-1713)
Image source: https://www.turistika.cz/vylety/smirice-zamecka-kaple-zjeveni-pane--1/foto

Now that we're back to rococo, we'll look at a few other buildings in this category, highlighting only their particularly obvious effects.
We start with the façade of the church in Zwiefalten, Germany, built between 1741 and 1753 by the architect Johann Michael Fischer, whose work on the interior of Ottobeuren Abbey has already been mentioned. The materiality of this façade is essentially made up of a smooth, slightly undulating background. In the center and foreground, the pedimented colonnade breaks away from its

continuity, both in terms of the colonnade and the triangular shape of its pediment. In the background, at the top, the smooth materiality of the pediment of the entire facade is torn apart by a highly discontinuous cutting of its outline, captivating our mind with alternating volutes, concave or convex shapes, gently curved or brutally hollowed, continuous or interrupted and continuing on staggered planes in the vicinity of its apex. In short, all the arrangements that especially captivate our mind strive to undo the effect of continuity and surface regularity created by the material of the façade. Note in particular how the broken triangular pediment and the colonnade that supports it form a continuous figure, since it continues on either side of the central fault, but this figure does not continue, precisely because of the fault that cuts it in two. We'll also notice how the cut-out of the façade's general pediment forms a continuous sequence of varied curves, but that these curves don't follow each other since they sometimes diverge from each other or change direction abruptly, which implies that the shapes that especially captivate our mind follow each other but simultaneously don't follow each other. If we now return to the effect produced by the materiality of this façade, but this time taking into account the massiveness of the massive colonnades complemented by its solid base, its entablature and its lateral transition thanks to pilasters that gradually become walls, then we see that this materiality opens up completely in its central part where it tears open, while remaining perfectly closed thanks to the opaque murality that is revealed behind its tear.
(Note: this façade is analysed at greater length and from different angles at https://www.quatuor.org/essai_sur_l_art/12-Tome1-07.html)

Around 1700-1713, architect Christoph Dientzenhofer designed the small chapel at Smirice Castle in the Czech Republic, which offers an interesting contrast between the way its side is treated and the way its rear end is treated.
Since this end is similar to the lower part of the Zwiefalten church facade just considered, we move straight on to the layout used for the chapel flank, where the wall, pediment and architrave are simultaneously hollowed out in their center. The material of the wall and the lines read by our mind are thus deformed at the same time, which implies that they unravel at the same time, whereas we can see that they remain well made since they are always continuous in one case and always legible in the other. The corrugation of the wall opens up its center by creating a concave hollow, but the wall remains continuous in its massiveness, and therefore closed. As for the lines of the entablature and pediment, they are necessarily made up of parts that follow each other since they are continuous figures, but at the same time they don't follow each other since they don't go in the same direction, some parts curving convexly while others curl concavely.
In passing we might mention the succession of the two bulbs at the end of the bell tower, similar to those in the Basilica of Vierzehnheiligen, to underline how these two bulbs of very different sizes together create the same bulbous effect, yet do so in very independent ways, precisely because of their difference in size.

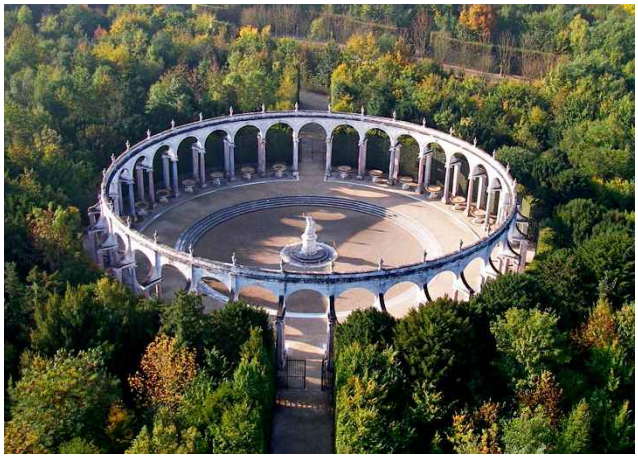
We've already mentioned in passing the interior of the Church of St. Nicholas in Malá Strana, Prague, built by architect Christoph Dientzenhofer from 1702. Its entrance facade repeats many of the principles analyzed in the previous examples, notably the vertical undulations of its wall, whose surfaces are broken by the horizontal lines of the cornices and pediments. Of particular note are the pediments on the two storeys of the central section, which break at the bottom like the pediments on the rear section of the Smirice chapel, and undulate at the top with the wall supporting them as on the side façade of the same chapel. Also noteworthy are the completely broken pediments above the two side portals, broken to such an extent that what appears to be a right-hand end is on the left, and vice versa for what appears to be a left-hand end. The effect of "undoing" is thus especially present in this arrangement, which also corresponds to an effect of autonomy for each of these two ends which together create the same effect of inversion. And since we can't help thinking that their upper parts would form lines following each other if their normal places were restored, we can also feel

here that they follow each other (in our mind, i.e. in an imaginary way), but without actually following each other since they are on the contrary far apart and heading in completely opposite directions.

Christoph Dientzenhofer: St. Nicholas Church in Malá Strana (also known as the Kleinseite), Prague, Czech Republic (1702-1771)
Above, one of the façade's side doors
Image source: Google Street

On the left, the entire entrance facade
Image source: https://www.avantgarde-prague.fr/que-voir-leglise-saint-nicolas-de-mala-strana

The effect of "undoing" has often been evoked without insisting on the simultaneous presence of the "doer". To counterbalance this, we now envisage places perfectly made by means of very simple geometry, perfectly round or perfectly regular.

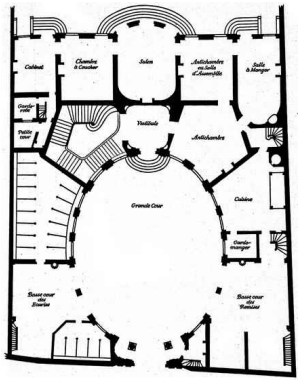


Jules Hardouin Mansart: the colonnade in the gardens of the Château de Versailles, aerial view (1685)
Image source: https://andrelenotre.com/2012/05/24/bosquet-de-la-colonnade-jardins-de-versailles-vue-du-ciel/jardins-de-versailles50-3/

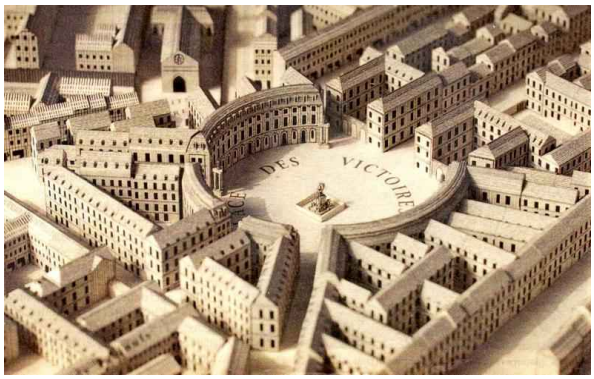
Close-up view
Image source: https://www.laparisiennedunord.com/2017/06/les-grandes-eaux-musicales-du-chateau-de-versailles.html

In the grounds of the Château de Versailles, the colonnade built by Jules Hardouin Mansart in 1685 "makes" a perfect circle of material to enclose a salon of greenery and, as befits the effect produced by the material at the time, this enclosed place is simultaneously opened by wide arcades repeated

one beside the other. These arcades and the alternating-colored marble Ionic columns that support them are what especially catch our attention, as are the pilasters bearing an architrave and a counter-curved rib that counters them at the back, the water-jet basins that separate them and, more discreetly, the fire pots that dot the aplomb of each column. All these elements that draw our attention accompany the simplicity of the continuous horizontal circle of material that surrounds the space above the arcades, but simultaneously they undo its perception since they force us, in contrast, to perceive their discontinuities, their verticality, their radial direction in the case of the architraves and the ribs they bear, the rounded spread of each of the basins, not forgetting the visual complexity of the mutual relationship between all these elements. And as befits the period for arrangements that captivate our mind, the columns, the arcades, the rear pilasters, the architraves and their counter-curving ribs, the basins, their supports and their water jets, the fire pots at the very top, all follow one another side by side, and together they follow the circle of their general arrangement, but at the same time they don't follow each other because they don't go in the same direction: in bouncing curves for the arcades, in spaced and parallel verticals for the columns, pilasters, water jets and fire pots, in radial directions for the architraves and the ribs they support and in a horizontal plane for the basins. The final effect that both the material and the shapes that captivate our mind must perform this time: together they make a large circular arrangement, but each does so very independently of the others.



Plan of the Hôtel Amelot de Gournay in Paris, architect Germain Boffrand (1712)
Image source: https://dengarden.com/interior-design/Rococo-vs-Baroque-in-Architecture-and-Design

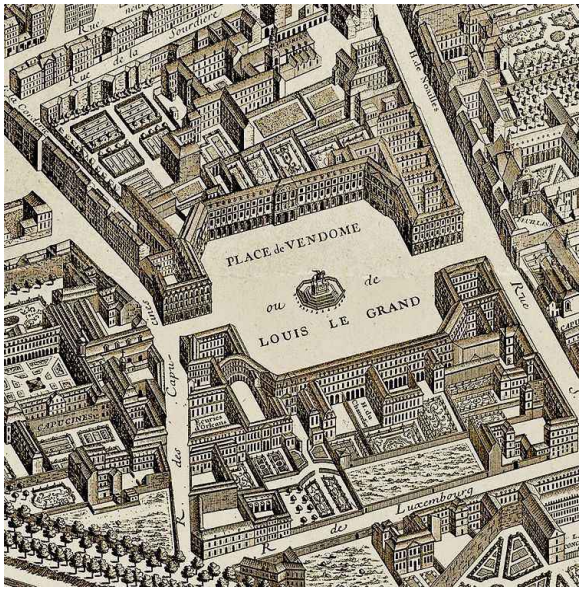


Jules Hardouin Mansart: model of the Place des Victoires in Paris (inaugurated in 1686)

Image source: unknown

Quickly, a few other architectures whose built material globally "makes" a regular geometric shape whose simplicity of reading is defeated by their details that captivate our mind.
The courtyard of the Hôtel Amelot de Gournay is not circular in shape but rather a continuous oval as its plan shows. We've already seen the way in which the spaced vertical pilasters break up the horizontal continuity of this oval, as do the discontinuities in the roof that catch our eye.
We have also already examined the architecture of the Place des Victoires, designed by Jules Hardouin Mansart to house a royal statue. Once again the shape is perfectly circular, and once again the vertical pilasters that punctuate its façades break its horizontal continuity. But it is above all the complete interruptions of its circle, mandatory to make way for the streets converging on it, that draw our attention and break the circular continuity of its structure.
Another geometrically regular royal square designed by Jules Hardouin Mansart is today's Place Vendôme, whose facades we have also examined in detail. Of course, the two streets leading to it break the continuity of the building's structure, but the pediments that bisect each of its halves and each of the canted sections of its corners also present our mind with vertical architectures that are

set apart from one another, breaking the continuity of the building's facades. We've already give a wiew of such cutaway.



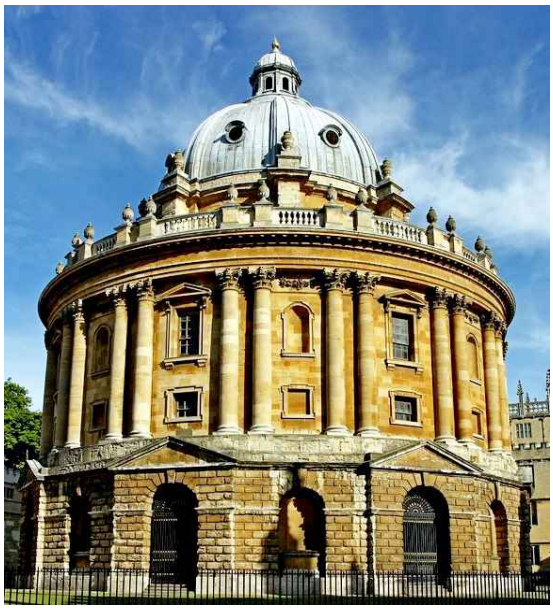
Above, Nicolai Eigtved: Amalienborg place, Copenhagen, Denmark
Image source: https://pl.pinterest.com/pin/525373112777360613/

Left: Jules Hardouin-Mansart, Place Vendôme (detail of Turgo's plan)
Image source: https://www.pinterest.fr/pin/142004194472933913/

From the same family of geometrical forms based on cutaways, but this time more regular since it's a square whose corners are intersected by buildings, the Amalienborg place in Copenhagen, Denmark, designed in 1750 by Danish architect Nicolai (or Niels) Eigtved (1701-1754). Although the buildings in this place form a continuous, regular shape, their continuity is defeated in our mind by the streets that cross it, and above all by its organization into four similar, independent palaces whose architecture negates the effect of horizontal continuity proposed by the walls. Each of these palaces has a colonnade on the floor of its central projection, topped by a large, highly sculpted pediment, and each floor also has a series of vertical pilasters at each end. Nor can we fail to notice the staggered heights of the buildings on either side of the palaces, as well as the layout of the roofs, which are not continuous but rather in the form of canted sections at each end.

So far, circular forms have been considered in hollow, but they can also be conceived in solid form as shown by the example of the Radcliffe Camera at Oxford University in England. The first circular design for this building was by the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736), but on his death the project was taken over by James Gibbs (1682-1754) who retained the principle of the form but slightly modified the architecture. The building was erected between 1737 and 1749. The two storeys have a frame whose circular continuity is underlined by that of the architrave that surmounts them. The top level, set back by a terrace, is also circular, as is the spherical dome that covers it. Almost circular too is the base level, broken down only into a series of canted sections that almost suggest a rounded continuity, but their breakdown into vertical porticos with pediments set apart from one another defeats for our mind the continuity produced by their construction. On the storeys, it's the verticals of the column pairs that break the circular continuity of the masonry which they relegate to their background, while on the terrace it's the counter-curved ribs countering the thrust of the dome that break the circular continuity of the last level, accompanied by the vertical effect of the very large fire pots and the rather protruding radiating ribs that distort the sphericity of the dome.
All the examples we have considered belong to what has come to be known as classical architecture, because in each case it was possible to break down analytically what made the

geometric form simple and continuous and what broke down its simplicity and continuity. Similar effects can be found in rococo architecture, but there we also find the synthetic character that comes from struggling to separate these two aspects, and even from the fact that one only emerges in contrast to the other, in visual struggle with the other.



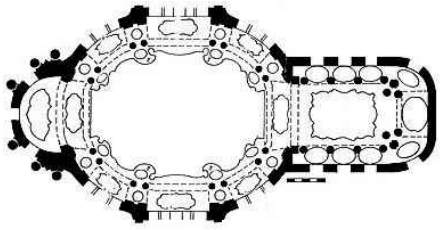
Above, James Gibbs: the Radcliffe Camera at Oxford University, England (1737-1749)
Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Radcliffe_Camera

Right: above the central altar, the top of the Vierzehnheiligen basilica near Bad Staffelstein, Germany, designed by architect Johann Balthasar Neumann
Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Basilique_de_Vierzehnheiligen

To illustrate this, we return once again to the interior of the Vierzehnheiligen basilica designed by architect Johann Balthasar Neumann. In this view of the upper part of the basilica we can clearly feel the circular ring effect of the building above its main altar, especially emphasized by the colonnades and the architraves they bear, and the struggle we have to make visually to pull this shape out of the vertical effects produced by the ribs supporting the ceiling and the jumble of decorations scattered in all directions. In this church the same effect is repeated in each of the more secondary locations, as can be experienced through the panoramic views offered by *http://poppart.com/folder/vierzehnheiligen/index.html?viewmode=blank*. It should be noted that, in the case of this building, the architect had to take over a building that had been started according to different principles, and that the visual creation of these centring effects counterbalancing the dispersal of effects produced elsewhere is a consequence of this circumstance. This time, the lines whose design captivates our mind play an important part in the effect that makes the place central: the continuity of the cornices and their extension in the orange stripes painted on the ceiling, as well as the crown of columns supporting these cornices. Here, the effect of undoing is mainly conveyed by the imaginary openness of the ceiling, thanks to the fresco painted on it, while the "tightening" of centrality bolster the presence of the material walls surrounding the main altar to countering the dispersion of visual effects that tends to undo this effect of centrality.

Another scenario for the two Rococo buildings we will now consider. Here, the architect did not have to fight against the pre-existing primacy of the site but was able to install the effect of

centrality both by arranging the building's exterior material envelope and by arranging one crown of paired columns within its interior.

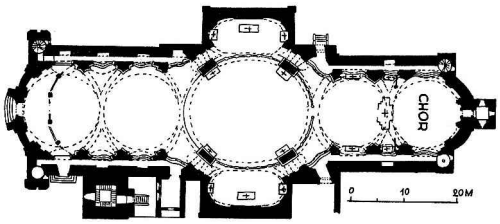


Dominikus Zimmermann: Pilgrimage church in Wies (Wieskirche), Bavaria, Germany (1743-1749) Plan and interior view towards the entrance and organ

Images sources:
https://www.pinterest.fr/pin/550072541974402372/
and https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/%C3%89glise_de_Wies

First, the pilgrimage church in Wies (Wieskirche), Bavaria, built between 1743 and 1749 by the architect Dominikus Zimmermann whose we have already considered the façade of the Landsberg am Lech town hall.
Its plan clearly shows the general shape of the building's material which forms an oval shell, and the doubling of this shape by means of pairs of columns located at some distance from this shell to support the vault on which is painted an imaginary sky populated by numerous figures with, at each of its ends, a false construction seeming to extend the real church building. The edge of the vault is cut into an intricate festoon that extends the rocaille motifs of the abacuses surmounting the pairs of columns, but the irregularity of this cutting does not prevent us from perceiving the overall centrality produced by this belt of colonnades and the start of the vault they carry. As in the Vierzehnheiligen basilica, it is the illusion of an open sky above this vaulted ceiling that breaks down the impression of enclosure produced by the vault's surroundings, but what is important to note here is the effect produced by the double oval shell that gives shape to the building's interior: the outer part of this shell is made of continuous walls that are sparsely open, giving the impression of enclosure, while the belt of double columns remains perfectly open to view, allowing the outer shell of the walls to be clearly perceived. Insofar as these pairs of columns are essential to support the upper part of the building they create a material effect, all the more so as they are held together by a very high plinth and held together at the top by a massive entablature also offering a large material surface. Like the outer walls, this crown of double columns is thus perceived as an essential element of the church's material, so that, taken as a whole, the material appears both closed and open, an effect that has repeatedly been said to be characteristic of the impression produced by material in architecture of this period. It has also been said that, in this period, both the material and the shapes that captivate our mind produce an overall effect while at the same time producing mutually very autonomous effects, and this is indeed what we find here since both the material of the peripheral walls and the scalloped shapes overloaded with rocaille motifs that form the crown supporting the painted dome together produce the same oval enveloping effect, while at the same

time doing so in a way that is very different from the other, and therefore very autonomous from the other.



Balthasar Neumann: Neresheim Abbey, Baden-Württemberg, Germany (1747-1792)
Plan and interior view of the upper part of the nave

Images sources:
https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Grundriss_Neresheim_Benediktinerklosterkirche_Hl._Kreuz.jpg
and https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kloster_Neresheim_12.jpg

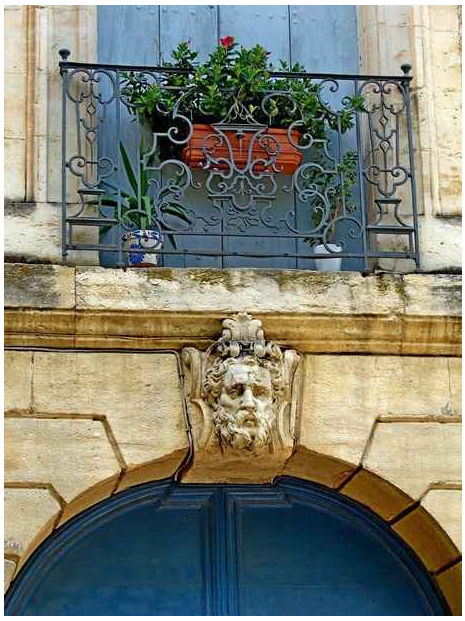
Another example of a German Rococo interior is Neresheim Abbey in Baden-Württemberg, built by architect Balthasar Neumann from 1747. Unlike his basilica in Vierzehnheiligen, here he is not constrained by the presence of earlier works and is able to create a simple, clearly legible correspondence between the centrality shaped by the side walls and the centrality redoubled by four pairs of pillars set at some distance from these walls and supporting a slightly oval cupola. As in the Wies church there is a simultaneous effect of transparency (openness) and enclosure (closure). Smaller domes create a series of well-defined spaces organized to form a Latin cross, and the tribunes on the upper floor allow the simultaneous effect of transparency and enclosure to be generalized along the all length of the nave as can be seen on the plan.

Detail of the galleries of St. Nicholas Church in Malá Strana (also known as the Kleinseite), Prague (architect Christophe Dientzenhofer)
Image source: https://inges-reiseblog.de/in-der-st-nikolaus-kirche-auf-der-prager-kleinseite/

We return to the tribunes of St. Nicholas Church in Malá Strana, Prague, for a final comparison between the Rococo and Classical styles of the same period, this time concerning an element that can be said to be of detail: the way in which the coats of arms or sculptures that captivate our mind are affixed at strategic points for the organization of the material. As is so often the case in rococo church interiors, the material of these tribunes swells in its central part between each pillar, expressively advancing towards the nave, and it is precisely at these points, singularized by the

apparent movement of the material, that a highly visible gilded rocaille motif bursts its shape and thus impairs the proper perception of the swollen volume of the material.

The Hôtel de Matignon in Paris, designed by architect Jean Courtone (1671-1739), was built between 1722 and 1724. Its garden-side facade, with its specially emphasized central projection contrasting with a longer, simpler building, is an example that could have been given in place of the facade of the Château de Champs-sur-Marne. Here, we'll consider the sculpted heads or coats-of-arms that clutter the keystones of the masonry arches above the openings. Another example of this type of sculpture can be found on the keystone of a keyed arch above a bay in the Hôtel de Murles in Montpellier, built in 1707 by architect Jean Giral and whose facades were rebuilt in 1723 and 1730. This way of crowding the key to a bay is not confined to 18th-century classical architecture, since it can be found in rococo architecture of the same period and in classical architecture since the Renaissance, as is the case, for example, with the ground-floor bays on the façade of the Louvre designed by Pierre Lescot. But while the arrangement is not new, it has become especially abundant in classical architecture of the Rococo period where it manifests a strong desire to break away from the simple reading of stereotomy highlighting the material arrangement that serves to support the wall, this by means of a sculpture that especially captivates our mind by its singularity and the unexpected presence of a head in this location.



Above, head carved on the key of a bay arch in the Hôtel de Murles in Montpellier, France (early 18th century)
Image source: photograph by the author

Left: central section of the garden facade of the Hôtel de Matignon in Paris (1722-1724)
Image source: https://www.rtl.fr/actu/debats-societe/l-hotel-de-matignon-lieu-de-pouvoir-lieu-de-la-republique-7789509265

It's not surprising, of course, that an arrangement of this kind should disrupt our understanding of the organization of matter at a point of particular importance to its perception, but a comparison with the rococo style's rocaille-shaped coats-of-arms is once again instructive. In the tribunes of St. Nicholas's in Malá Strana these rocaille sculptures are also applied in places that are especially important for reading the swelling of the material, but while these swellings cannot be perceived without being disturbed by the reading of the rocaille sculptures which break these swellings at their most powerful point, in classical architecture, while these sculptures do encumber the keystones of

the arches, they do not defeat the reading of these arches which remain quite comprehensible despite this presence. In this case, there's a time for reading the way the masonry is broken down into successive keystones, and there's another time for focusing on the presence and detail of the sculpture that clutters the key. Between rococo and classical architecture of the same period, on this arrangement of detail we find again what distinguishes the two styles: a synthetic reading in the first case since the two effects cannot be visually separated, and an analytical reading in the second since this reading can easily be broken down into two successive phases.

The analysis began by showing that Italian and Austrian architecture often followed a different principle from Rococo and Classical architecture of the same period. Although Italian architecture has not been given much consideration, perhaps because it was less fertile in the 18th century than in previous periods, it does deserve to be presented more fully, bearing in mind that it is distinguished by the fact that it is mainly the layout of its materials that tends to unravel the perception of elements of particular interest to our mind.

Filippo Juvarra: Basilica of Superga, Turin, Italy (1717-1731)

Image source: https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Basilique_de_Superga

The Basilica di Superga in Turin was built between 1717 and 1732 by the architect Filippo Juvarra (1678-1736). Its central core of cylinders with a cupola at the top are not fundamentally different from, for example, the circular Radcliffe Camera building at Oxford University. On the other hand, the presence of an enormous transparent canopy supported by colonnades completely contradicts the material massiveness of the rest of the building, confounding the constructive logic that our mind thought it had understood from observing the columns and pilasters in simple relief on the continuous walls erected to enclose the building's circular central core and its orthogonally treated side wings. Our intelligence reads the same principle throughout the building, that of columns and pilasters with capitals supporting a high, continuous architrave, but the materiality of the building shows itself to be highly contradictory from one place to another since it is full in one part and empty in another, thus undoing the principle of unitary treatment that our mind thought it had understood. Naturally, the effect on the material in this period is particularly visible: depending on the location it is either closed, opaque or, conversely, completely transparent, open. In contrast to the Wies church and Neresheim Abbey where the transparency of the column belts allowed them to open onto closed walls, corresponding to a single reading and thus a synthetic effect, here the open and closed material are in separate locations, corresponding to a reading in two different times, and thus to an analytical effect.

We had already considered the interior of the Sanctuary of the Visitation in Valinotto by architect Bernardo Vittone, the way in which the masses there were fractured in all directions while our mind's reading of the arches and arcades recreated in this complexity a regular, centered organization. This time, by Bernardo Vittone we're talking about the exterior architecture of a church, Santa Maria Assunta in Grignasco, built from 1751 onwards. Its material mass is broken down into several interlocking volumes: a low volume with an overall cubic appearance, higher volumes each with a concave curved facade that overlap this cubic volume in the center of each of its faces, and finally a polygonal volume that is interlocked at the top of this construction. As inside the Sanctuaire de la Visitation, these complex interpenetrations of volumes, added to their sometimes horizontal, sometimes fragmented vertical and sometimes compact vertical layouts, make it virtually impossible to read the entire mass of the building as a whole. While this overall reading is therefore not easily accessible, our mind can easily spot geometric regularities in the way the various parts are assembled, and the drawing of lines that our mind deciphers completes the identification of these regularities: columns and pilasters to underline the symmetry of the curved entrance wall, prominent cornices to emphasize either the orthogonality or the concavity of the facades, pilasters and architraves projecting slightly to frame the different volumes, and windows with very distinct shapes and symmetrically positioned to help us spot the distinct existence of the cubic volume overlapped by the concave facade volumes.

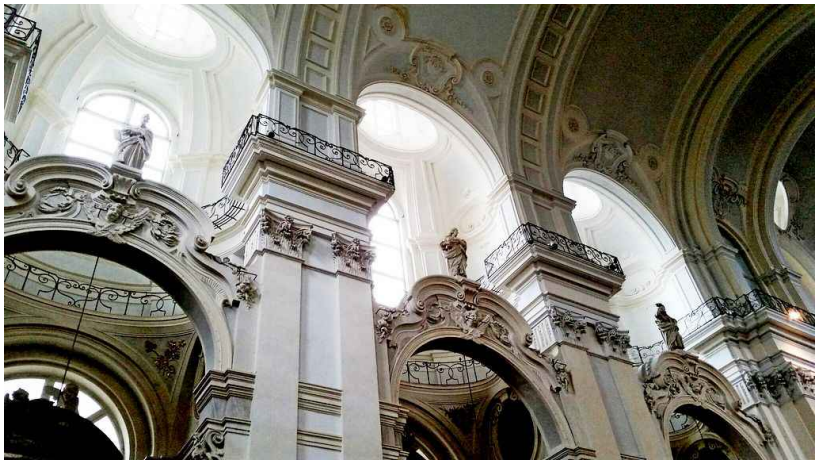
Bernardo Vittone: Church of Santa Maria Assunta in Grignasco, Italy (1751)

Imager source: https://www.cittaecattedrali.it/it/bces/498-chiesa-di-santa-maria-assunta

In short, as in the Sanctuary of the Visitation it is the forms and regularities that our mind reads or locates that give us a clear overall idea of the building, while the complexity of the volumes generated by the material masses tends to defeat the overall vision of these masses. Unlike the Basilica of Superga, the reading of forms here is necessarily synthetic.
The second characteristic effect of this period is easy to spot: the material masses and the architectural design read by our mind together form a compact building, yet each volume involved develops very independently of the others, and each of the various modenatures covering them also asserts its autonomy.

Anew with architect Filippo Juvarra, this time with one of the aisles of the Chiesa della Madonna del Carmino (Church of Our Lady of Carmel) in Turin, built between 1732 and 1735. As in Bernardo Vittone's Sanctuary of the Visitation it is the abundant light from the sky that hollows out the building's material. Here, however, this does not lead to a complicated decomposition of the

material but rather to its very significant hollowing out, to the point where it seems as if all the material between each of the pillars supporting the vault has been excavated. And if the building's material seems completely hollowed out in this way, therefore defeated in this aspect, it's the sculpted arches whose design captivates our mind that give continuity and consistency to the building by blocking the entrance to each of the light shafts that hollow out the material.

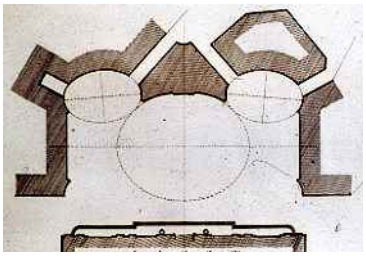


Filippo Juvarra: Church of Our Lady of Carmel (Chiesa della Madonna del Carmino), Turin, Italy (1732-1735)

Image source: https://www.piemonteis.org/?p=3080

The last Italian example is the Piazza Sant'Ignazio in Rome, designed by the architect Filippo Raguzzini (1690-1771) who built it around 1727-1728 and drew up the plan shown here.
Often mistakenly referred to as Baroque, this piazza is more aptly described as "Italian Rococo". Overall, it is rectangular in shape, with the façade of Sant'Ignazio church occupying one of its long sides, but its other long side is dislocated by oval slices carved into its mass, making it difficult to read this shape, especially as the rather horizontal organization of the surfaces corresponding to its short sides is at odds with the very vertical arrangements concerning its rounded surfaces. In contrast to the lack of overall coherence of the surfaces through which the building material is presented, the wide or narrow vertical white stripes (in the gable, at the corners of the surfaces) and the wide or narrow horizontal stripes (in the plinth, at mid-height, at the cornice or at the intermediate floors) form a repeating pattern that gives the piazza its unity. It's our mind that reads these vertical and horizontal stripes with the tips of our eyes, and it's also our mind that spots the

regularity of the truncated oval shape that repeats itself both on one large side of the piazza and at the ends of its smaller sides. On a large scale then, as in the other Italian examples, it's the material that defeats the perception of the place's unity while it's the lines that our mind reads as we follow them with our eyes that, in contrast, affirm this unity. Conversely however, on a smaller scale the lines and window frames that capture our mind's attention disturb our perception of the continuity of material surfaces and then undo our perception of these surfaces.



Filippo Raguzzini: Piazza Sant'Ignazio in Rome, Italy (c. 1727-1728)

Image source: https://getbacklauretta.com/2020/07/19/chiesa-san-ignatius-rome/, https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Piazza_Sant%27Ignazio and https://www2.gwu.edu/~art/Temporary_SL/131/Images/113L22_2.html

Finally, we review the three other effects that characterize this period of architectural history. The special effect produced by the material is clearly visible: it forms a closed volume, but the gaps between the various buildings add to the gap corresponding to the street that runs in front of the Sant'Ignazio church to make it a volume that is also open on many sides. That produced especially by the arrangements that captivate our mind or that our mind conveniently reads is carried by forms that follow one another all around the square, since the principle of white bands or white lines is repeated all around it, but the vertical bands and vertical lines do not follow one another since they are parallel, horizontal stripes and lines do not follow each other either since they are drawn on buildings separated from each other by a gap, while vertical stripes and lines do not follow horizontal stripes and lines since, of course, they intersect. Finally, both the concave material surfaces that we read through the envelopment they suggest in our own bodies, and the lines and stripes that our mind follows with our eyes, make simultaneous effects of autonomy and the oval surface portions they produce together. This effect is repeated all around the place, mainly on its long side but also at its extremities in front of the Sant'Ignazio church, and if this oval surface portion effect is an effect that all parts of the square produce together, depending on their situation each surface does so in a very autonomous way: very isolated for the extremities in front of the church, continuing from building to building for the parts surrounding the central building which belong to the same oval extending over three separate buildings, and in surfaces offset from each other in depth as far as the central building is concerned.

This analysis of the architecture that developed in Europe from the late 17th to the mid-18th century brings to a close a cycle of evolution that stretches from the Renaissance of the 15th century to the dawn of the revolutionary period at the end of the 18th century.
For each of the four major stages that marked this evolution we have sought to isolate their characteristic plastic effects, each time highlighting the relationship that was established between the effects specifically produced by the materiality of these architectures, read by our whole body, and the effects that concerned the dispositions specially adapted to reading by our mind, whether these were lines that we could only read by following them with our eyes with all the attention required by our mind, or whether they were historical references addressed for this reason to our memory.
In this text devoted to the Rococo period we have seen the importance of the effect by which forms undo the effect produced by other forms. It is the very radicality of this effect that signals the end of a cycle, a cycle which consists of contrasting to separate as strongly as possible what is material from what concerns the mind. The architecture of the late 18th century marks the beginning of another cycle, one in which the material and what concerns the mind continue to contrast but also become increasingly independent of each other, a cycle that will also give rise to four distinct stages leading up to the architecture of the so-called modern period.

Last english version of this text: February 25, 2024