obelisk and façade. Not only would this have sanctioned a viewpoint (on axis just inside the unbuilt terzo braccio) from which the eccentric position of the obelisk is most obvious, but it also means that if the lateral axis of the piazza is perpendicular to the longitudinal one, as he suggests, it is not parallel to the façade of the church. The author is therefore placed in the awkward position of having to argue that Bernini was concerned with establishing geometrically simple and precise relationships with the Palazzo Nuovo, but not with the church.

This, of course, is not impossible. On the vast scale of the piazza, where, moreover, the curving lines offer few fixed points of sight, slight deviations from the norm are rarely perceptible, as Bellori already recognized (Le vite, ed. E. Borea, Turin, 1976, p. 164). Indeed, it is the lesson to be learned from the anomalies in the layout of the piazza revealed by Birindelli and others. But arguments based on the existence of exact geometrical relationships must finally stand or fall on whether or not these actually exist. We can only hope, therefore, that the next geometrical analysis of Bernini’s famous work will be a professional survey, which will determine once and for all what is really there.

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A large, complete monograph embracing the entire work of Balthasar Neumann has not yet been written. That may seem remarkable at first glance, but it becomes understandable when one considers that even today this architect is discussed in very controversial ways. An example of this is the colloquium organized by E. Hubala in the fall of 1978 at the University of Würzburg (W. J. Hoffmann, “Das Balthasar Neumann-Kolloquium vom 2-4.11.1978 in Würzburg,” Kunstchronik, 23, 1979, pp. 322–328.) There Neumann’s Jesuit Church in Mainz was debated with particular vehemence: M. Holst stressed geometrical and technical influences on Neumann’s planning, while B. Schütz represented the point of view of the Sedlmayer School based on Gestalt theory. Also noteworthy in this connection is the lecture by G. W. Rizzi on Hildebrandt’s part in the Schönborn Chapel in Würzburg Cathedral, which the participants in the colloquium soon designated as the “anti-Neumann Lecture.” All of this shows that, given the present state of scholarship, we are still far removed from the final and unified picture of Neumann that may have been assumed at first by some participants in the Colloquium. In the meantime, M. Holst has effectively strengthened their point of view in her review of Otto’s book (Kritische Berichte, 8, 1980, pp. 54–60). Also B. Schütz has published his research on the planning of the Jesuit churches in Mainz and Würzburg. (See “Balthasar Neumann’s Jesuitenkirche in Mainz and the Plan for the Jesuitenkirche in Würzburg,” Mainzer Zeitschrift [Mitteldeutsches Jahrbuch für Archäologie, Kunst und Geschicht], Jahrgang 73/74, 1978/79, pp. 49–60.) Consequently Otto’s exposition of these churches has been rendered partly out of date.

Otto is concerned almost exclusively with Neumann’s churches. The title Space into Light must not, of course, be misinterpreted as a principle from which all of the church projects were derived. It is, rather, a kind of leitmotif that occurs repeatedly in the discussions of individual buildings. On the one hand the book offers less, on the other hand considerably more than its title would lead one to expect. Thus, for example, the reader learns something about the books that Neumann owned, he becomes acquainted with vaulting techniques once practiced in southern Germany, and he is referred to the different nomenclature used in identifying the three-dimensional transverse arches that Neumann used so frequently. The notes make accessible to the reader the literature on Otto’s theme, which is almost entirely in German, going back to the early German architectural theorists of the 17th century. All of this and much more is presented in such a handy form that it can easily be carried in the luggage of a visitor making the pilgrimage from church to church. Because there is virtually no earlier literature on Neumann in English, the book has a kind of missionary task to perform. This makes it understandable that the author has sought to convey his enthusiasm to the reader, and that he does not wish to endanger his purpose of making converts by frightening his readers with dogmatic subtleties.

Of the many important problems which Otto treats, I would like to single out one, namely the question of whether and to what extent Neumann’s church projects are part of a consistent series of developments. A series of developments can be understood as something of which Neumann’s work represents only a part. But a development can also be understood as something which was itself completed in Neumann’s life work. The question posed in either way would be answered by German scholarship in general agreement that Neumann served within his epoch, to a certain extent, as the goal of history. As an outstanding example, I cite H. M. von Freeden, who wrote about Neresheim: “Here, if anywhere, a proud, perhaps too proud, quotation of Schiller is appropriate for Neumann and his last, greatest work: ‘Every people has its day in history, but the day of the Germans is the harvest of all time.’” (Balthasar Neumann: Leben und Werk, Munich and Berlin, 1953, p. 43.) Otto cannot rise to such rapturous enthusiasm, even with regard to Neresheim, and many readers will thank him. But precisely the assumption of a logical development in Neumann’s projects for churches is challenged by Otto. According to Otto such a development simply does not correspond with the facts and must not otherwise be founded in theory, as for example by trying to use the concept of the “insularity” of the church.

Now discussion of the development which is disputed by Otto must not be restricted to an abstract scheme or to an attempt to establish a chronological order. One could do this for the purpose of using the example of Neumann to investigate the relationship between causality and chance in history. Otto believes that to do justice to Neumann’s churches one must regard them as individual works having a right to exist because of themselves and not because of their participation in an order imposed upon the individual works. Therefore when he compares Neumann’s churches with their predecessors in Bohemia he emphasizes what separates them rather than what unites them. Also, according to Otto, Neumann shunned the influence of Austrian architecture in general and Hildebrandt in particular. But there is another way to look at things, whereby the history of architectural ideas stands in the foreground. Indeed, precisely Neumann’s series of plans show how he probed for ever newer possibilities in the solution to each commission, possibilities which absolutely must be understood as components of a comprehensive ordering scheme. Whether such possibilities could be realized cannot be deduced from aesthetic principles, but rather are dependent upon the chains of causality operating in the real world. I readily believe Otto when he writes that Neumann, as a real, existing person, inwardly rejected what came from Hildebrand. Nevertheless, as E. Hubala has shown, Neumann developed further an architectural theme which is found, if only in the form of relief-like signs in the presbytery of Hildebrandt’s church in Nemecké Jablonné (Deutsch Gabel) (Barock und Rokoko, Stuttgart, 1971, pp. 67, 70, 71). In order to understand that one must, of course, share Hubala’s view that the semantic interpretation of architectural forms depends upon the choice of the artistic theme.

Those readers who are interested in the theme of “Space into Light” should realize that there is a substantial literature on the subject of light in German Baroque architecture. Otto’s book represents an interesting attempt to examine Neumann’s churches from the standpoint of their uniqueness as works of art, without preconceptions insofar as possible. This tendency explains the fact that Otto did not include the results of the research of many other authors and did not judge Neumann’s churches with the help of criteria worked out by those other authors. Thus there will be different opinions as to whether Otto has succeeded. Readers who share Otto’s point of view will judge differently than those who are more interested in art-historical contexts and lines of development.

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(Translated from the German by the book review editor)