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## **NOT A QUESTION OF STYLE? CATHOLIC ENLIGHTENMENT AND ITS REFLECTION IN THE VISUAL CULTURE OF BAROQUE CEILING PAINTING IN SOUTHERN GERMANY**

### **Abstract**

The new methodological principles for the research on the Enlightenment and its visual reflection in baroque ceiling painting in southern Germany show a clear correspondence between composition and iconography and the reform concepts of the Catholic Enlightenment.

The methodological approach does no longer focus on stylistic questions which do not lead to conclusive results or on the relationship between neoclassicism and Enlightenment but aspects of religious and ideological changes taking place in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century — devotional rhetoric, instructions regarding the sacrament, or the scholarly approach to history in the sense of the *Congrégation de Saint-Maur*.

The changes occurring during the Enlightenment did not lead to neoclassical forms but visual rhetoric structures in narrative cycles of large ceiling decorations. Earlier ceiling decorations followed the post-Tridentine principle of a correspondence between the calculated effects of the rhetoric of the images and the written words. The viewer should be surprised (*maraviglia*) by deceptions through ingenious perspectives (*inganno degli occhi*) as well as rejoice (*diletto*) in the beauty of the paintings. Later, in the years of the Catholic Enlightenment, we observed a return to the system of horizontal perspective, which focused more exclusively on the iconographic content of the representation. This tendency follows the goals of spiritual literature by authors like Lodovico Antonio Muratori.

**Keywords:** Visual rhetoric structures, Baroque ceiling painting, Catholic Enlightenment, Ludovico Antonio Muratori, Law of Amortisation, Augsburg, Munich.

At first glance, the Baroque ceiling paintings of the Catholic churches in southern Germany seem hardly associated with issues of the Enlightenment.<sup>1</sup> These fresco paintings are considered *the* prime example of

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<sup>1</sup> This essay was written as part of my work at the CbDD (<https://deckenmalerei.badw.de/das-projekt.html>).

post-Tridentine interior decorations, equal to Roman sacred architecture. However, it is precisely in these frescos where a noticeable change is apparent, at least since the 1750s.

Frank Büttner laid the methodological foundations for research on the Enlightenment and its visual reflection in Baroque ceiling painting in southern Germany.<sup>2</sup> It becomes particularly evident in the church decorations, which constitute most painterly commissions. They show a clear correspondence between composition and iconography and the reformatory ideas of the Catholic Enlightenment.<sup>3</sup>

The methodological approach does no longer focus on stylistic questions which failed in this case or on the relationship between neoclassicism and Enlightenment but aspects of religious and ideological changes taking place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century — devotional rhetoric, instructions regarding the sacraments or the scholarly approach to history in the sense of the *Congrégation de Saint-Maur*.

The changes during the Enlightenment did not lead to neoclassical forms but visual rhetoric structures in narrative cycles of large ceiling decorations. Earlier ceiling decorations followed the post-Tridentine principle of a correspondence between the calculated effects of the visual rhetoric and the written word. The viewer should be surprised (*maraviglia*) by deceptions through ingenious perspectives (*inganno degli occhi*) as well as rejoice (*diletto*) in the beauty of the pictures. In the years of the Catholic Enlightenment, we see a return to the system of horizontal perspective, which focused more exclusively on the iconographic content of the representation. This tendency agrees with the goals of spiritual literature by authors like Ludovico Antonio Muratori.<sup>4</sup>

Based on a few typical examples, I would like to illustrate the link between the new enlightened religious practice and the new kind of ceiling painting, demonstrating how practical the “historical turn” approach can be for art history.

<sup>2</sup> Büttner, Frank: “Abschied von Pracht und Rhetorik. Überlegungen zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen des Stilwandels in der Sakraldekoration des ausgehenden 18. Jahrhunderts in Süddeutschland.” *Herbst des Barock. Studien zum Stilwandel*, Die Malerfamilie Keller (1740–1904), ed. by Andreas Tacke. Munich et. al. 1998, pp. 165–173.

<sup>3</sup> Klueting, Harm: “Der Genius der Zeit hat sie unbrauchbar gemacht’. Zum Thema ‘Katholische Aufklärung’ — Oder: Aufklärung und Katholizismus im Deutschland des 18. Jahrhunderts. Eine Einleitung.” *Katholische Aufklärung - Aufklärung im katholischen Deutschland*, edited by Harm Klueting et al., Hamburg 1993 (Studien zum achtzehnten Jahrhundert, vol. 15), pp. 1–35; Schneider, Bernhard: “‘Katholische Aufklärung’: zum Werden und Wert eines Forschungsbegriffs”. *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique*, vol. 93 (1998), 3/4, pp. 354–397.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Muratori, Lodovico Antonio: “Della Regolata Divozione De’ Cristiani”. Venice 1747.

At the same time, I would like to show how drastic the influence of the sovereign and the responsible prince-bishop was on the ceiling painting. For that reason, I will compare church frescos that originated under Joseph von Hessen-Darmstadt, the Prince-Bishop of Augsburg, with those that developed under the supervision of the electoral Religious Council in Munich. For such a comparison, the different ecclesio-political prerequisites provide an ideal base.

In his seminal essay in the catalogue *Herbst des Barock*, Büttner focused on the fresco of the Munich court painter Christian Wink, painted in 1767 in Inning at Lake Ammer. Above the choir, it shows the baptism of Christ in a scene where a quiet crowd of people follows the action in the open countryside. The depiction visualises an important and scripturally recorded moment of the life of Christ, drawing on the “*stilus humilis*”. However, artistically this proves to be not very beneficial on such a large surface as the church vault. Büttner comments rightly: “The style chosen by Wink and his concept of broad narration are not suitable for the layout of the decorations.”<sup>5</sup>

It is a similar case with the frescos by Wink from 1767 for the pilgrimage church Hl. Kreuz in Loh.<sup>6</sup> The choir fresco displays the bronze serpent, a topological reference to the cross of Christ, as *patrocinium* of the church. The fresco thereby emphasises the great significance of this topic in the context of the liturgy of the hours. However, in terms of composition, a crowd of people watches Moses and the bronze serpent, slightly forlorn in the large pictorial space. Again, the subject proves to be not suitable to the available picture plane.

In earlier decorations, the iconography of the bronze serpent as an expansion of the concept relating to content was mainly found in the framing cartouches. For the central frescos, however, the extendable and more eventful narratives such as the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, the uncovering of the precious cross by Saint Helena or the recovery of the True Cross by Emperor Heraclius were preferred. It can be exemplified by the fresco of Johann Baptist Zimmermann in collaboration with Martin Heigl for the interior of the parish church in Berbling from 1756.<sup>7</sup> Here the topological prototypes — the tree of knowledge, Noah’s

<sup>5</sup> See Büttner, op.cit., p.?

<sup>6</sup> Schmidmaier, Edith: “... durch einen künstlichen Mahler herausziehen ...”. Die Wallfahrt ‚Zum Heiligen Kreuz‘ in Loh mit Fresken und Altarbildern von Christian Wink (1767/68). *Kunstsammlungen des Bistums Regensburg*, vol. 7 (1989), pp. 465–480.

<sup>7</sup> Bauer, Anna: “Berbling”. *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland*, edited by Hermann Bauer et al. Vol. 12,1: Freistaat Bayern, Regierungsbezirk Oberbayern, Stadt und Landkreis Rosenheim, part 1: Aising bis Hohenaschau, Munich 2006, pp. 90–101.

ark, Moses striking the rock or the bronze serpent — only assist from the small pictorial area of the cartouches. Their execution as grisaille also indicates their subordinated position. The narrative density of the presented events provided the artist with a broad spectrum for unusual inventions and perspective subtleties, facilitating a compelling composition of the large pictorial space. It also accommodates the wish for an opulent and splendid decoration, as appropriate for the “stilus gravis”, the high rhetoric style.

Regarding form and content, the fresco paintings of Berbling are related to the Jesuits’ Collegiate Church in Landsberg am Lech.<sup>8</sup> The remarkable optical illusion, the so-called “inganno degli occhi”, was created by Christoph Thomas Scheffler in 1753, a member of their religious order.

The so-called “Litterae Annuae” passed down the period perception of this church decoration. They are annual reports from Jesuit houses written for the order’s headquarters in Rome and sometimes also gave account of architectural changes. Precisely because whitewashing, eulogies and exaggerations were immanent in this medium, the actual appreciation of the Landsberg Jesuits is exemplary of the time.<sup>9</sup>

Right from the outset, “the elaborate brush of the highly experienced Appeles” (*Appelis peritissimi artificiosissimus sane penicillus*)<sup>10</sup> is praised as well as *select postures* and the enhanced and elaborate shading of the different colours, before mentioning the virtue of swiftness, typical of the time. The commentator conveys how Scheffler managed to move — in the sense of *movere* — the believers with his opulent “ornat”: Scheffler’s art affects the viewers of the time in a way they admire most, displaying such great virtuosity and craftsmanship that they marvel at it.<sup>11</sup>

The following quote shows how, according to the report, all senses of the fictitious viewer were vividly stimulated:

namque ea est pontis nimio fugientium pondere divulsi ruina, is subito delabentium immanis horror, ea torrentis, fluctibus hostes involventis, et gutatas aquas undique dipargentis natura, is accensus acerrime pugnantium ardor, id ex oculis

<sup>8</sup> Dietrich, Dagmar: “Zum Bildprogramm der Landsberger Jesuitenkirche Heilig Kreuz. Ein Beispiel jesuitischer Kreuzes-Ikonographie. *Das Kreuz. Darstellung und Verehrung in der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Carla Heussler et al. Regensburg 2013 (Regensburger Studien zur Kunstgeschichte, vol. 16), pp. 234–261; Hartmann, Simone: *Christoph Thomas Scheffler (1699–1756). Visualisierung barocker Frömmigkeit*. Regensburg 2015 (Studien zur christlichen Kunst, vol. 10), pp. 44–47, 49, 76–78, 112, 143–145, 167, 181–186, 235–238.

<sup>9</sup> Reprinted by Hartmann, p. 235–236.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

emicans fulgur, ea vulneratorum, ac morientium tristissima Species, ea denique diversissimorum mortuum vehementia ut Syderati intuentium oculi nec ab arte, nec ab ingenio quid quam, solae aures armorum Strepitum, et pugnantium clamorem desiderare possint; at vero cum vocem artifex penicillus dare non potuit, certe vocis conatum non sine admiratione dedit.<sup>12</sup>

The correspondence between the Jesuit maxim “Omnia ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam” and the ensuing decorations is evident.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the description follows the “*visual rhetoric ideas of spiritual guidance*”<sup>14</sup> as they can be outright attested for the “*Catholic-Jesuit circles in Bavaria*”<sup>15</sup> in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The artistic intention to open the viewer with all kinds of rhetoric means for the “persuasio”, i.e., the argumentative persuasiveness of the pictures, is more than apparent in this account.

In the following, I show how this spiritual guidance with the help of visual rhetoric changed in the features of the post-Tridentine decorations. The reason for this was, on the one hand, altered ideas of piety within the Catholic Enlightenment; on the other, a “simplified”, carefully chosen and reduced iconography reflecting the Enlightenment’s art theory. How much Wink’s fresco in the church in Loh turned out to be pioneering and modern is demonstrated by the ceiling fresco of Johann Joseph Anton Huber in Schlipsheim near Neusäß a quarter of a century later.<sup>16</sup> Huber had been the director of the Catholic Academy in Augsburg since 1784. In the late 1760s, he was promoted to the favourite painter of the enlightened circles surrounding the prince-bishop of Augsburg.<sup>17</sup>

While looking at the fresco in the palace chapel of Schlipsheim, which belonged to the Augustinian monastery Heilig Kreuz in Augsburg, quite a few stylistic developments in comparison to Wink’s fresco in Loh are apparent. In contrast to Wink, Huber refrains almost altogether from using any optical illusion, the “*inganno degli occhi*” necessary for the vertical perspective. Instead, the fresco, also painted from a single viewpoint, presents itself as “*quadro riportato*”, a panel painting on a ceiling.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Dietrich, p. 238.

<sup>14</sup> Hundemer, Markus: “Rhetorische Analyse und topische Theorie. ‘Die Brücke über die Zeit’. Johann Georg Bergmüllers Chorbogenfresko im Marienmünster zu Dießen am Ammersee”. *Pinxit, sculpsit, fecit. Festschrift für Bruno Bushart*, edited by Bärbel Hamacher et al. Munich 1994, pp. 196–210, 210.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Menath-Brosch, Marika: *Johann Joseph Huber (1737–1815). Das Werk des Augsburger Freskanten und letzten Akademiedirektors*. Munich 2009 (opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de), vol. 1, pp. 253–261. Vol. 2, pp. 187–195.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, vol. 1, p. 44–45.

<sup>18</sup> Accolti, Pietro: *Lo inganno de gl’occhi, prospettiva pratica*, 1625. Pietro Accolti wrote under the title ‘Optical Illusion’ a compendium on perspective in which he deals

The reduced number of depicted people monumentalise the larger than life-sized figures in the rather low-ceilinged interior. By foregoing the figure and the vertical perspective, Huber ignores the rule of the “versimile”. Instead, he obtains with his lucid composition a quick and concentrated way to appreciate the message relating to content: the adoration of the bronze serpent. The simplified meaning of this issue, according to the biblical “Book of Numbers” (21:1–9), is entirely consistent with its meaning in the “Liturgy of the Hours” for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, which falls on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September.<sup>19</sup> The unity between the church decoration and the liturgical service as a result of this undergoes a crucial consolidation. At the same time, the focus lies more on the biblical passages. The connection between the raising of the cross and the erection of the bronze serpent is now addressed not only in the liturgy of the hours but also in the church decoration.

The unusual choice of topic and the stylistic devices of Wink in Loh and Johann Joseph Anton Huber in Schlipsheim quite resemble each other. However, the ecclesio-political conditions for these two church decorations were utterly different.

Within the diocese of Augsburg, one could detect steady steering towards the reformatory ideas of the Catholic Enlightenment since the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This tendency centred around the Prince-Bishop Joseph von Hessen-Darmstadt in Augsburg. His two closest advisors, Giovanni Battista de Bassi and Eusebius Amort, verifiably kept a lively and friendly correspondence with Lodovico Antonio Muratori, whose writings greatly influenced the religious goals of the Catholic Enlightenment in south Germany.<sup>20</sup> Regarding an intended reform Muratori published his book *De i pregi dell' eloquenza popolare* in 1750. This work was already translated into Latin, the language understood by all priests, by

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with the question how to widen space upwards without losing plausibility. Fastenrath, Wiebke: ‘*Quadro riportato*’. *Eine Studie zur Begriffsgeschichte mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Deckenmalerei*, (Schriften aus dem Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität München 51) 1990, pp. 60–61. In addition: Büttner, Frank: “Die ästhetische Illusion und ihre Ziele. Überlegungen zur historischen Rezeption barocker Deckenmalerei in Deutschland”. *Das Münster*, 54/2 (2001), pp. 108–127, 110–111.

<sup>19</sup> Re. the correlation between the text of the reading and the iconography of Wink’s rendering, see Schmidmaier, p. 473–474; re. the text of the liturgy of the hours, see Schenk, Johann: *Deutsches Brevier. Vollständige Übersetzung des Stundengebetes der römischen Kirche*. Regensburg 1936/37, vol. 1, pp. 776–783.

<sup>20</sup> Dreyer, Angelika: *Die Fresken von Joseph Mages (1728–1769). Zwischen barocker Frömmigkeit und katholischer Aufklärung*. Regensburg 2017 (Studien zur christlichen Kunst, vol. 12), pp. 54–81, 184–193; Müller, Markus Christopher: “‘Aufgeklärtes Agiornamento’ in Augsburg? Die Korrespondenz (1743–1768) Giovanni Battista Bassi mit Eusebius Amort.” *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Augsburger Bistumsgeschichte e.V.*, vol. 51 (2017), pp. 467–534.



Trautwein and published in Augsburg in 1757.<sup>21</sup> Muratori demanded in his book that the priest's style "must be distinctly simple and comprehensible"<sup>22</sup> while at the same time condemning, regarding architecture, opulent ornaments in speech as licentious.<sup>23</sup> Earlier, in 1718, Fénélon proposed the same perspective: he postulated that sermons should be composed in the style of the Bible, in the style of the discourses of Christ, the prophets and the apostles.<sup>24</sup> Exactly this demand for more Christ-centred piety and the reduction of the rhetoric repertory of images was one of the defining elements in the domain of the Augsburg diocese from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

The Catholic Enlightenment in the Electorate of Bavaria stood with Max II Joseph under completely different auspices. Numerous statutory regulations aimed to gain state access to church assets and dissolve administrative structures within the church.<sup>25</sup>

Politically quite skilfully, the many announcements in Bavaria drew society's attention to the monasteries as sole culprits of the precarious economic situation in the Catholic electorate, which was mainly shaped by agriculture. It had fallen considerably behind in comparison to the economically rather virile Protestant north, primarily dominated by trade.

The state's seizure of church property was made possible through the so-called law of amortisation. The term "amortisation" derives from "manus mortua", i.e., dead hand. It relates to church property and the perpetuity of this church property by canonical law. A consequence thereof was the withdrawal of all contributions towards the church from the economic cycle.

The edict from the 3rd of July 1756 can be seen as a legal turning point. It allowed, among other things, the seizure of the monasteries' mobile properties.<sup>26</sup> On the day of declaration, all those properties were

<sup>21</sup> Muratori, Lodovico Antonio: *Contra sublime loquentes in cathedra seu Dignitas Eloquentiae Popolaris*, translated by Gregor Trautwein, Augsburg 1757.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 17: "clarum, facilem, planum esse oportet stylum."

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., chapter 2: "De duplici genere dicendi, quo efferri potest Verbum Dei, sive de Eloquentia Sublimi & Popolari", p. 18: "Cæterum sæculò proximè elapso verè immoderatio sacrorum quorundam Oratorum obtinuit, quam in architectura prudentes damnant cum risu, ornamentorum luxuries."

<sup>24</sup> Fénélon de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénélon, Francois: *Dialogues sur l'éloquence en general et sur celle de la chair et particulier*, Paris 1740, pp. 190–195. Büttner, p. 168, 172: footnotes 23–25.

<sup>25</sup> Heß, Helmut: *Das kurfürstlich bayerische Generalmandat vom 4. Oktober 1770. 'Edle Simplizität' wird behördlich verordnet*, Munich 1989 (Schriften aus dem Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität München, vol. 47); Dreyer: pp. 235, 247–251.

<sup>26</sup> Edict from 3 July 1756: *Sammlung der Kurpfalz-Baierischen allgemeinen und besonderen Landes-Verordnungen*, edited by Georg Karl von Mayr, vol. 2, Munich 1784, p. 771–772.

taxed with the so-called “*quarta pauperum*”, i.e., a deduction of 25 per cent for the care of the poor. Further signs of a tightening of the monasteries’ situation are often seen in the decimation, at first limited to five years (1759 to 1763) which then was slowly established. The numerous regulations found their final shape in the pragmatic amortisation of the 13th of October 1764.<sup>27</sup> The constantly tighter and finally life-threatening noose around the neck of the monasteries on the electorate’s territory now became manifest and turned into a politically irrevocable fact once and for all.

Paragraph 15 of the law of amortisation from the 13th of October 1764 also speaks against the display of splendour in the decoration of convents and abbeys. It says that the splendour in buildings must be avoided as much as in sumptuous food and drink and should be punished.<sup>28</sup> The reduction of splendour, stipulated and legally binding for the high clergy, was soon also applicable for the parishes. The relevant passage can be found in the startling Bavarian Electoral General Mandate from the 4th of October 1770.<sup>29</sup> Remarkably it says that these must be fashioned in a uniform structure without unnecessary stucco and other interior decorations. The decoration of the altar, pulpit or pictures should exhibit the simplicity appropriate for a sanctuary.

The actual realisation of this mandate for newly decorated churches resided with the state supervisor of the electoral Religious Council, one of Bavaria’s specific authorities, initiated in 1556.<sup>30</sup> At the time of Joseph III, it was an important instrument to intervene in church politics actively. It was now mandatory, for example, that any kind of commissioning of a fresco or stucco had first to be ratified by said Religious Council. Effectively this led to local administrators on the electorate’s territory almost exclusively communicating with the sovereign authorities if new church decorations were necessary. In such a situation, the opinion of

<sup>27</sup> Heß, pp. 49–57; Dreyer, pp. 247–251.

<sup>28</sup> Law of amortisation from 13 October 1764, paragraph 15 (starting at the end of paragraph 14), quoted from: Moritz, Heinrich Andreas: *Novellen zum bayerischen Landrecht. Codex Maximilianeus bavaricus civilis*, Memmingen 1820, p. 151–152: “Unsere Klöster und Stiftungen haben nicht so viel auf neue Acquisitiones lucrativas, als darauf zu denken, daß dasjenige, was sie schon haben, der Gebühr nach administriert, und sowohl der Ueberfluß in Speiß und Trank, als unnöthiger Pracht in den Gebäuden vermieden, der fundamentsmäßige Numerus nicht überschritten und [...] nicht all zu sehr mißbraucht, und exzediert werde.”

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from: Heß, appendix Q1, 9, paragraph 5.: “daß mit Beybehaltung einer reinen und regelmäßigen Architektur alle überflüssige Stukkador- und andere öfters ungereimte und lächerliche Zierrathen abgeschnitten, an denen Altären, Kanzeln und Bildnissen eine der Verehrung des Heiligthums angemessene edle Simplicität angebracht werde.”

<sup>30</sup> Heß: pp. 51–55.



the priest managing a given parish and church, or a monk taking care of the monastery, was not taken into account at that time.

The art policy of the Religious Council in Munich with this shows a distinct difference to the bishopric in Augsburg. Since the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the reformative efforts in Swabia were focused solely on the depiction of Christocentric topics in new church decorations. For example, the Pilgrimage Church of Wies passed muster with the prince-bishop's court theologian Eusebius Amort when he inspected the decorations with their focus on Christ-centred piety.<sup>31</sup> In his opinion, this church ultimately realised the reformative goals of the Catholic Enlightenment. However, the Wieskirche nowadays is seen as a prototype of a particularly opulent Bavarian rococo church with its artistic vividness.

On the other hand, Munich explicitly banked on the reduction of the glorifying, post-Tridentine splendour. The Religious Council expresses this in its letter of permission for the fresco and stucco decorations of the pilgrimage church in Bettbrunn from 1783. The letter states that it concluded that "a certain extravagance of church adornments which would emphasise the splendour rather than true worship is not to be granted".<sup>32</sup>

The commissions for new fresco decorations within the Bavarian territory went mainly to the court painter of Munich, Christian Wink. He was mainly in charge and then assigned his friend and colleague, the stuccoer Franz Xaver Feichtmayr as a contractor for the stuccos, which were significantly reduced compared to stucco decorations from the middle of the century. Wink expresses this in a letter from 1783, which he wrote to the parish priest of Schwindkirchen to explain the modalities of the fresco paintings. He explicitly opposes the now old-fashioned heavy stuccos, which — according to him — interfere with the paintings.<sup>33</sup>

This remark shows a clear shift from the formerly preferred stucco, which was more cost-intensive and therefore considered more valuable, to the frescos with their instructive iconography. After finishing his fres-

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<sup>31</sup> Wies bei Steingaden, *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland*, edited by Hermann Bauer et al. Vol. 1: Freistaat Bayern, Regierungsbezirk Oberbayern, Landkreise Landsberg am Lech, Starnberg, Weilheim-Schongau, Munich 1976, pp. 602–623; Dreyer, pp. 66–74; Wetzler, Dörte: *Die Wieskirche als inszenierte Rahmung des Gegeißelten Heilands*, Paderborn 2019 (Studien zur internationalen Architektur- und Kunstgeschichte 165).

<sup>32</sup> Heß, p. 24: "einigen Aufwand zu Kirchenzierden, welche mehr auf Pracht als auf den wahren Gottesdienst abzielen, nicht zu gestatten."

<sup>33</sup> Heß, p. 34: "Denn es ist keine Sorge zu haben, daß heute zu Tage, wo ganz ein anderer Gustho herrschet, eine schwehre Stuckador Arbeit die Malerey einschränken werde, denn diese Arth ist Gott sey Dank verbannet worden, und ich bin versichert, daß das eine weniger Stukador Arbeit, ein größeres zur Zirde beytragen werde."

cos in Bettbrunn, Wink writes in another letter that they would make “*the mysteries of religion more understandable*”.<sup>34</sup>

The apparent favouritism of Wink regarding commissions was mainly due to his good connections at court. Wink’s almost patrimonial relationship with the Privy Councillor Johann Caspar von Lippert was crucial.<sup>35</sup> Lippert was promoted in 1768 to director of the historic class at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and was also the driving force for disseminating the ideas of Enlightenment within the electoral administration. It was mainly due to von Lippert that Wink was well-known and respected in German-speaking enlightened circles.

With the help of Lippert, the highly esteemed engraver Johann Georg Wille in Paris, who had many friends amongst the leading Enlightenment figures, also got to know of Wink. In a letter to Lippert in August 1774, Wille praised the court painter as a “splendid artist”<sup>36</sup> and considered him one of the few “who deserved to be known to the world”<sup>37</sup>. Two years later, Wille even ordered a picture from Wink via Lippert.

In terms of his artistic talent, Wink gained the most significant attention from the Kaiserliche Franziscische Kunstakademie (Imperial Franciscan Academy of Art) in Augsburg, again facilitated by Lippert. The academy was founded in 1755 by the publisher Johann Daniel Herz who vehemently opposed the “Augsburger Frutzen-Mahler”<sup>38</sup> and tried to initiate an appropriate apparatus of a new artistic repertoire. Due to its rivalry with the city’s art academy, it lacked the backing of the local elite, but on an international level, it achieved remarkable successes. Thus, numerous prominent Enlightenment figures such as Leibniz, Hagedorn or Winckelmann ensured Herz their full support.<sup>39</sup>

Crucial for the great response amongst contemporaries were the various art magazines released by the academy’s directorate, who originally came from publishing. At irregular intervals, the following journals were produced, always explicitly following the maxims of the Enlightenment.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Heß, p. 34: “*die Geheimnisse der Religion verständlicher*.”

<sup>35</sup> Hutter, Christine: *Zwischen Rokoko und Klassizismus. Die Tafelbilder des kurfürstlichen Hofmalers Christian Wink (1738–1797)*, Munich 2012 (opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de), pp. 25–29.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 27: “*daß er ein vortreflicher Maler sey*.”

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 27: “*die doch verdienten Welt bekannt zu seyn*.”

<sup>38</sup> Quote by Johann Joachim Winckelmann from a letter of 26 April 1758, reprinted in Rehm, Walter: *Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Briefe*, vol. 1 (1742–1759), Berlin 1952, p. 353.

<sup>39</sup> Bushart, Bruno: “Augsburg und die Wende der Deutschen Kunst um 1750”. *Amici Amico. Festschrift für Werner Gross [...]*, edited by Kurt Badt. Munich 1968, pp. 261–304.

<sup>40</sup> For example: *Die reisende und correspondirende Pallas oder Kunst-Zeitung* (The Travelling and Correspondent Pallas or Art Journal); *Das Augsburgerische Monatliche*

These magazines included reports on the newest art productions to inform artists about modern movements. Especially the founding of the Munich Academy of Art by Wink as a painter, Feichtmayr as stuccoer and Johann Anton Boos as sculptor resonated powerfully in 1770 with the writers of the March edition of the *Kunstzeitung der Kayserlichen Akademie zu Augsburg* (The Travelling and Correspondent Pallas or Art Journal).<sup>41</sup> They were particularly enthusiastic about the not only hands-on focus of the academy but also about its concentration on art theory which the journal praised as epochal. Here Wink was also presented as a highly enlightened artist on an intellectual level.

In the same edition of the art journal, there were also high praises of his recent frescos in the parish churches of Egling and Eching.<sup>42</sup>

Especially the frescos in the church of Eching show pretty clearly the change in the guidance of the viewer through visual rhetoric.<sup>43</sup> It becomes particularly manifest when comparing the decoration with a fresco by Johann Anwander in the nearby parish church of Pittriching, painted about twenty years before and with the same subject in mind.<sup>44</sup>

The fresco of Pittriching from 1753 presents on its terrestrial ground strip the martyrdom of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in excellent narrative detail. Even wondrous elements from legendary tradition are shown here, such as the severed head of Saint Paul that supposedly had left three wells of milk behind when hitting the ground three times. The fresco above the choir displays an allegoric scene within an elaborate illusionistic architecture of the Fides-Ecclesia around the four continents. Heretics who topple over the picture frame complete the highly adept optical illusion. Intellectually sophisticated emblems and personifications like piety enhance the lavish decor of the visual rhetoric.

Wink in Eching, on the other hand, approached the topic entirely differently. He focussed solely on the recorded moments of martyrdom

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*Kunstblatt* (The Augsburg Monthly Art Journal); *Die Kunstzeitung der Kayserl. Akademie zu Augsburg* (The Art Journal of the Imperial Academy of Augsburg). Compare also Mahler, Hildegard: "Das Geistesleben Augsburgs im 18. Jahrhundert im Spiegel der Augsburger Zeitschriften". *Zeitung und Leben*, vol. 11 (1934), pp. 23–30.

<sup>41</sup> *Kunstzeitung der Kayserlichen Akademie zu Augsburg*, 13<sup>th</sup> item. Monday 26 March 1770, pp. 99–101.

<sup>42</sup> *Kunstzeitung der Kayserlichen Akademie zu Augsburg*, 29<sup>th</sup> item. Monday the 16 July 1770, p. 230.

<sup>43</sup> Eching. *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland*, edited by Hermann Bauer et al., vol. 1: Freistaat Bayern, Regierungsbezirk Oberbayern, Landkreise Landsberg am Lech, Starnberg, Weilheim-Schongau, Munich 1976, pp. 48–53.

<sup>44</sup> Pittriching. *Corpus der barocken Deckenmalerei in Deutschland*, edited by Hermann Bauer et al., vol. 1: Freistaat Bayern, Regierungsbezirk Oberbayern, Landkreise Landsberg am Lech, Starnberg, Weilheim-Schongau, Munich 1976, pp. 191–198.

and connected these with the personification of the Fides-Ecclesia, who is placed above in celestial regions, easily identifiable. In this way, the significance of Saint Peter as a church founder is introduced and immediately grasped by the viewer. The condensation of the image of the conversion of St Paul and the martyrdom of St Peter and St Paul gives the nave a key role in imitating the experience (*imitatio*) so essential for the stability of the faith of believers. Moreover, the conduct of Saint Peter and Saint Paul is solely contextualised in their succession of Christ. They are not the ones who should be worshipped but SOLO DEO GRATIA — such as the urging of the cartouche in the quire arch. Their martyrdom can purely be seen as a sign of their unwavering faith, of their exemplary virtuousness. Therefore, miracles from legendary tradition like the visualisation of the milk wells do not play any role in Eching.

Along with the contextual change, one can also detect a clear stylistic shift, even though this should not be labelled neoclassicism as such. Thus, in Eching, the costly stucco ornament — completely indispensable twenty years before — gave way to the *stucco finto*, the painted stucco. In addition, it lends the nave's ceiling painting a distinct, confining frame and classifies it as a visual medium. In Eching, there is a very restrained 'inganno degli occhi' — the staging of the ceiling fresco as hypethral opening in the sky — and the figures only show a distinctly modest vertical perspective without it being already a return to the *quadro riportato*, to a panel painting located on the ceiling.<sup>45</sup> The martyrdom of Saint Peter and the triumphant Ecclesia with her attributes of the cross and the cup as references to salvation in faith through the sacrifice of Christ, found in the nave, is contrasted in the choir with the delivery of the keys to Saint Peter as a moment of the Christian church's foundation. The correspondent quotation from the bible borders the choir fresco in cartouches: "TU ES PETRUS ET SUPER HANC PETRAM AEDIFICABO ECCLESIA MEAM [...] ET TIBI DABO CLAVES REGNI CAELORUM." (Matthew 16 / 18–19) Only the four evangelists as bible authors are added to the programme in the nave's cartouches. Further and more extensive visual decorations — like emblems or specific personifications which enrich the iconographic concept in Pittriching — are completely missing here.

How much this reduction of the pictorial repertoire and the focusing on a simple and generally intelligible iconography was also seen by contemporaries as a modern approach in the sense of the Enlightenment, can be seen by the eulogy for Wink's painting for the high altar in Eching in the art journal mentioned above. The review praises the statically quiet and coherent composition with the heartfelt farewell of the Princes of

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<sup>45</sup> See footnote 17.

the Apostles: “Both embrace each other in a tender and highly suitable manner ... Mr. Wink is a painter who does Bavaria great honour.”<sup>46</sup>

In summary, I would like to raise awareness that enlightened thinking in the medium of post-Tridentine ceiling painting should not be solely connected with neoclassical criteria. Instead, the large-scale medium of fresco painting, excellent for grand narratives, was more than suitable to visualise contextual reformatory efforts. The stylistic execution of the decorations, seen as highly modern by renowned figures of the Enlightenment, still often complied with the laws of baroque visual habits. However, it seems a worthwhile and fruitful task for the studies on baroque ceiling painting to draw our attention to these content shifts.

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<sup>46</sup> Augsburgische Kunstzeitung. The second issue's 52<sup>nd</sup> item, Monday 30<sup>th</sup> December 1771, p. 410: “Beyde umarmen sich auf eine zärtliche und dieser Handlung sehr angemessene Weise, [...] Herr Wink ist ein Maler, der Bayern viele Ehre macht.”

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