

Space and Place: Urban Development in the Age of Defortification

Cornelia Jöchner
Gebaute Entfestigung. Architekturen der Öffnung im Turin des frühen 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts.

Studien aus dem Warburg-Haus,
 Bd. 14. Berlin, De Gruyter 2015.
 440 S., 30 Farb-, 273 s/w Abb.
 ISBN 978-3-11-034759-3. € 99,95

Cornelia Jöchner's book based on her 2012 *Habilitation* is an ambitious study of two prominent Turinese churches, the late Baroque Superga and the Neoclassical Gran Madre di Dio, in the context of the "spatial turn," focusing on the monuments' positions and functions in the spatial matrices in and around the city. Both churches are set apart from the historic center of Turin on the opposite side of the Po River, so the volume thus explores the edge of the city in transition from a fortified early modern town to a regional capital open to its territory, constructing new spaces as the old city walls gradually become meaningless and are then levelled. As votive and commemorative structures, respectively, associated with the Savoy dynasty, the buildings are geopolitical landmarks offering rich possibilities for interdisciplinary approaches to their study, and the author makes good use of this potential.

Rather than presenting new documents or examining details of design chronology or construction history, Jöchner's emphasis is on the perception and reception of the buildings and their settings by the viewer. This interpretive approach offers new readings of these monuments based largely on detailed formal analysis with a theoretical accent and on the established secondary literature. Primary sources appear in the form of

architectural theory (such as Alberti) and relevant passages from guidebooks (Keyssler), but only in supporting roles. Ranging across more than a century from c. 1706 to 1831, the book results in a kaleidoscopic investigation of space and place.

SPATIAL CONDITIONS

In her brief but dense introductory chapter, Jöchner presents the theoretical and methodological framework for her study (11–21). She invokes scholarship on the sociology of space (Georg Simmel) and on phenomenology (Bernhard Waldenfels, Martin Heidegger) as well as sometimes-neglected early twentieth-century writers on art and architecture such as Albert Erich Brinckmann, Herman Sörgel, Fritz Schumacher, Adolf von Hildebrand, August Schmarsow and Paul Zucker. Here and throughout the book her intellectual dialogue is chiefly with authors writing in German. A major aim is to reassess the concept of an architectural exterior, which she sees not as a simple negative space surrounding the building, but an active component in shaping these surroundings (18–20).

The next chapter, entitled "Theatrum Sabaudiae" after the great atlas of Turin and Piedmont published by Blaeu in Amsterdam in 1682, is also brief and sets the stage for the central arguments of the book to follow (23–37). The chapter orients the reader within the spatial organization of Turin's topographic situation, territory, and fortifications, establishing Piedmont's role as a buffer zone between France and the Habsburgs, and its command over Alpine transit routes.

The vast majority of the book is devoted to the two final chapters constituting Jöchner's two case studies. First, Filippo Juvarra's church and monastery complex at Superga (1716–31; *fig. 1*), not in Turin itself, but perched on a distant hill overlooking the city (39–193); and second, Ferdinando Bonsignore's Gran Madre di Dio

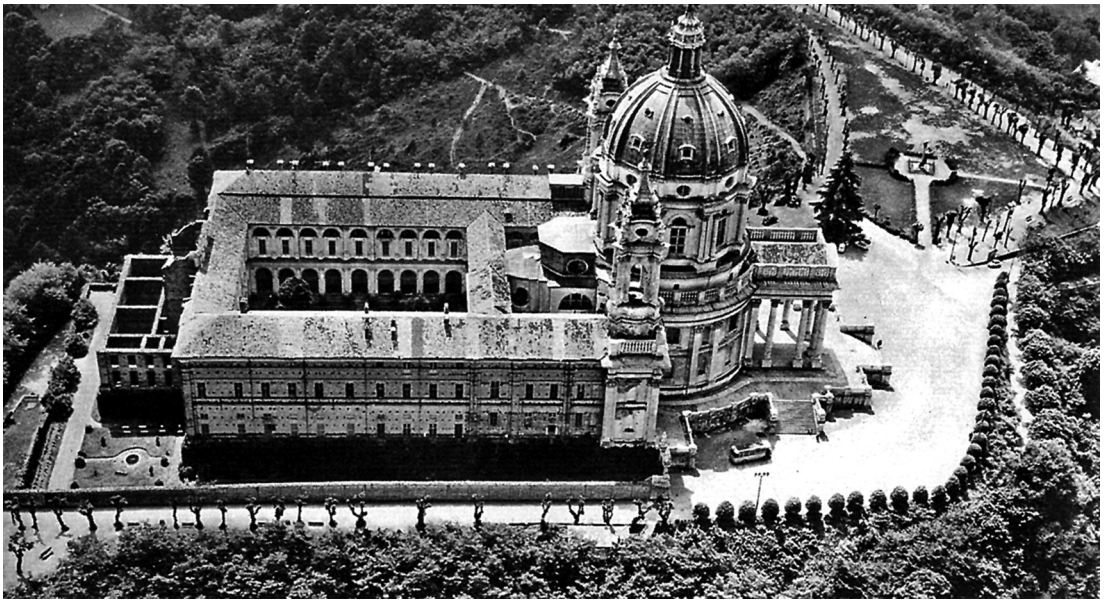


Fig. 1 Filippo Juvarra, Superga, church and monastery complex, Turin, 1716–31 (Jöchner 2015, S. 63, Abb. 32)

(1818–31; *fig. 2*), the latter as part of a larger architectural ensemble including the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele and the bridge across the Po at the site of the former city gate Porta di Po (195–323). Both monuments are centralized structures with a portico, and both furnish a focal point on the opposite side of the Po when viewed from the city or its surroundings. Yet they reflect the differing geopolitical circumstances separating them by a century, and their positioning in relation to the city varies dramatically: Superga is visible but apparently unattainable, while the Gran Madre di Dio directly abuts the edge of the seventeenth-century city in a low piazza just across the river.

SUPERGA

Vittorio Amedeo II commissioned Juvarra (1678–1736) to construct Superga in 1716. The votive church marked the Savoy victory over the French after the siege of 1706, ultimately earning the dynasty the royal crown of Sicily in 1713 (later exchanged for that of Sardinia in 1720). The church was built on a hill overlooking the city where the sovereign had supposedly prayed to the Virgin for victory. Its program combined several typologies in addition to that of a centralized votive church: a monastery, a royal residence, and a dynastic mausoleum.

Jöchner aims to demonstrate how Superga works as a Savoy “Anschauungsraum” (roughly:

“viewing space”) both inside and out. She offers a rigorous analysis of the church’s position in the landscape in combination with an analysis of the building itself. In this zooming telescopic to microscopic view of the building, Jöchner invokes the phenomenology of “horizon” to characterize its relation to the viewer approaching along the axis from the suburban royal palace Rivoli on the opposite side of the city. She argues that Juvarra calibrated the exterior directionality of the building to different viewpoints, with a frontal orientation toward the east side of the city, and a diagonal view angled 30° toward Rivoli, which made the entire church and monastery ensemble visible (55f.). Such calibration occurred inside the church too, where Jöchner shows in detail how centrality and directionality are melded through refined planning and articulation. The octagonal-circular plan of the rotunda creates a centralized space with vertical thrust of exceptional height, while the deep horizontal axis of the choir focuses the viewer’s attention on the high altar. In Jöchner’s interpretation, the resulting tension highlights both the main altarpiece, illustrating the reason for foundation, and the tall dome, representing the votive foundation itself and its donor Vittorio Amedeo II.

Her minute formal analysis draws on diverse sources (for example Hans Sedlmayr, Erich Hubala and a little-known dissertation by Gertraude

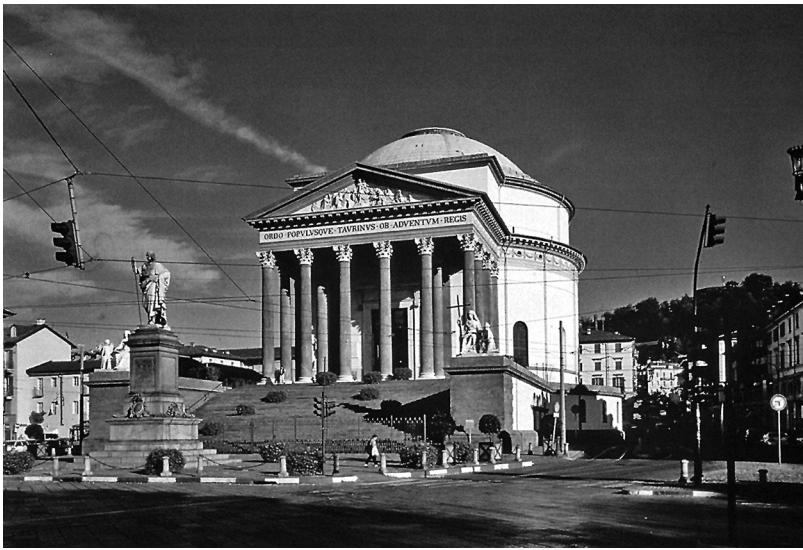


Fig. 2 Ferdinando Bonsignore, Gran Madre di Dio, Turin, 1818–31 [Jöchner 2015, S. 278, Abb. 236]

Huber). Nonetheless, her chief formal comparisons such as St. Peter's and Sant'Agnese in Agone in Rome, the Redentore in Venice, and Weingarten are all standard topoi in the previous literature, for example Rudolf Wittkower's *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750* (Harmondsworth 1958; 3 vols., Yale 1999). Jöchner rightly mentions the Escorial as a precedent for the Superga program, but without fully realizing its significance for the Savoy dynasty (see below). Here she could have made more explicit reference to the Savoy's recently fulfilled royal aspirations and the church's role in consolidating "royalty." (On these aspects, see Elisabeth Wünsche-Werdehausen, *Turin, 1713–1730: Die Kunstpolitik König Vittorio Amedeo II.*, Petersberg 2009.)

GRAN MADRE DI DIO

The church of the Gran Madre di Dio, designed by Bonsignore (1760–1843), celebrated another dynastic milestone, the restoration of the Savoy to the city of Turin after nearly sixteen years of exile during the French occupation of the Napoleonic era (1798–1814). The church is thus a new element in the *longue durée* (199) of plans for the city entrance at the Po, dating from 1673 and newly urgent after the French levelled the fortifications in 1800. Plans for the zone developed by the French were reworked under the dynasty after restoration, making for highly charged political space. The piazza and the church were not planned together, but gradually developed into a single ensemble symbiotically.

While the chapter on Superga barely considers other dynastic churches within Turin's city walls, the chapter on Gran Madre di Dio and Piazza Vittorio devotes much attention to earlier piazzas and urban projects in the city (209–244, 257–264). This survey establishes the key features of the "Turin façade" and urban strategies in interventions from Ascanio Vitozzi's 1606 design for Piazza Castello through the city expansions of 1620, 1673 and 1702/14. Jöchner convincingly demonstrates how these features are recalled at the enormous Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, built by Giuseppe Frizzi (1797–1831) from 1825 (*fig. 3*). The author dissects the diagonal axis along via Po between Piazza Castello and the river as compared to that from Rivoli to Superga: here the spatial sequence may be fully experienced and reveals a chronology of the dynasty, without the visual/haptic disconnection of Superga's remote site.

Whereas at Superga Jöchner's analysis emphasizes the spatial shell of the church's structure as an active membrane between interior and exterior, shaping but not dividing a continuum of interior and exterior space, in the later ensemble she identifies the stereometric properties of the church and piazza design – particularly the central pavilions of the long piazza façades – as the defining characteristics of the architecture. In the church itself, she reads the wall as "mass" rather than a spatial shell, and links the concepts of mass and

volume to late eighteenth-century French theory and practice, the work of Etienne-Louis Boullée (289–291) and Parisian customs *barrières* of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (317). She explores the concept of the Pantheon as a building “typus” during this period as the idea behind the Gran Madre di Dio (277–298), with featured examples from Berlin and Darmstadt. Yet her combination of formal analysis of the building interior with its surrounding space in this chapter is less convincing than at Superga, precisely because of the “Geschlossenheit” (compact unity, 296) created by these volumetric masses.

By contrast, Jöchner’s identification here of a specifically early nineteenth-century type of the liminal “Eingangsplatz” (entry piazza) opening the

city is a valuable insight achieved by her subtle analysis of urban typologies. The Piazza Vittorio Emanuele with its “Wegraum” (space as path) thus joins other contemporary examples with customs facilities and churches such as Valadier’s Piazza del Popolo in Rome, the Parisian Place de la Concorde, and Piazza del Plebiscito in Naples. Ultimately, Jöchner’s unusual juxtaposition of Superga and the Gran Madre di Dio piazza ensemble as the Savoy dynasty’s symbolically unattainable “Anschauungsraum” vs. its temporally organized experiential “Aktionsraum” (action space) rewards the reader with a new understanding of the spatial techniques available to reframe a city that has outgrown its early modern corset on the cusp of the modern era.



Piazza Vittorio Emanuele
in costruzione a porta di Po 1827.

Place Victor Emanuel
en construction a la porte du Po 1827.

Torino, presso Gio. Batt. Maggi Negri di Stamp. in Via di Po.

Fig. 3 Giuseppe Frizzi, Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, Turin, 1825–30. After the engraving by Stanislaw Stucchi, 1827 (Jöchner 2015, S. 206, Abb. 165)

EL ESCORIAL AS REFERENCE

The dizzying variety of at times somewhat labored terminology employed by Jöchner (“Wirkungsbezugsraum,” “Zeigfeld,” “Verbindungstypen”), and terms perhaps too often presented within self-conscious quotation marks (e.g. five times within the first six lines of 113) sometimes make for difficult reading. In contrast to this dense deployment of concepts developed within the last century, the author makes little attempt to reconstruct notions of interior and exterior space as they were current in eighteenth-century Piedmont.

Jöchner neglects to fully exploit Superga’s parallels with the Escorial, its centralized church and mausoleum. The Escorial held profound significance for the Savoy dynasty, since they were able to make Turin their capital after the Spanish victory over the French at Saint-Quentin on 10 August 1557, St. Lawrence’s feast day, under the leadership of Philip II with the Savoy Duke Emanuele Filiberto. To mark this victory, both men vowed to build churches dedicated to St. Lawrence, with Philip’s vow soon resulting in the Escorial and Emanuele Filiberto’s in Guarino Guarini’s San Lorenzo over a century later. The Escorial program remained a touchstone for the Turinese San Lorenzo throughout its long genesis. (On this and the dynasty’s other ties and references to the Escorial, see: Susan Klaiber, *The First Ducal Chapel of San Lorenzo: Turin and the Escorial*, in: Mariarosa Masoero/Sergio Mamino/Claudio Rosso [eds.], *Politica e cultura nell’età di Carlo Emanuele I: Torino, Parigi, Madrid*, Florence 1999, 329–343, and Giuseppe Dardanello, *Memoria professionale nei disegni dagli Album Valperga: allestimenti decorativi e collezionismo di mestiere*, in: Giovanni Romano [ed.], *Le collezioni di Carlo Emanuele I di Savoia*. Arte in Piemonte 9, Turin 1995, 63–134, here 108.) And although a dynastic crypt as at the Spanish monument was never planned for San Lorenzo in Turin, such a function may well have been part of the early programs for the Chapel of the Holy Shroud, since both Emanuele Filiberto and Carlo Emanuele II entertained plans to be buried there (with the former’s remains transferred to the chapel in 1843; see John Beldon Scott,

Architecture for the Shroud. Relic and Ritual in Turin, Chicago 2003, 276–278, a study not referenced by Jöchner). In this context, Superga is just one more in a series of Savoy variations on the theme of votive, funerary, palatine churches informed by the Escorial.

Considering the book’s subtitle, *Architekturen der Öffnung*, it is disappointing that Jöchner does not engage more closely with Richard Pommer’s *Eighteenth-Century Architecture in Piedmont: The Open Structures of Juvarra, Alfieri & Vittone* (1968). The connection between the two books is more than a superficial common use of the words “Öffnung”/“Open.” Particularly in the chapter on Superga, Jöchner zooms in on a feature like the coretti perforating the rotunda piers. She identifies these window-like openings as a “Kontaktzone” (contact zone) in the spatial shell between interior and exterior, essential to the experience of vision within the church (126–130). This powerful argument is central to her book, indeed a photograph of this pier detail furnishes the cover illustration. Yet precisely these issues of open interior vistas and skeletal structures are Pommer’s main themes. Jöchner’s failure to situate her expanded notions of “Öffnung” in relation to Pommer’s “Open Architecture” is a puzzling omission.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dealing with such wide-ranging material, Jöchner occasionally loses track of the details. One cannot assume, for instance, that Piazza Castello in 1620 appeared as in the idealized Antonio Tempesta painting of a dynastic wedding festival that year (230f.), with the ostentation pavilion for the Shroud forming a forecourt to the ducal palace. In fact, the quarters for the Swiss guards (209) and a foundry blocking access to the palace from Piazza Castello were not demolished until 1659, with the pavilion constructed only in 1662 (Scott 2003, 231–233). Smaller missteps relate to the duchess Cristina di Francia, who was a sister of the French King Louis XIII, not Louis XIV (236), and the repeated reference to the architect Michelangelo Garove (1648–1713) as “Michele Garove” (56, 259).

The book is admirably produced, in generous yet manageable format, and a clear layout on high quality paper. The numerous color as well as black and white photographs specially commissioned for the volume represent a particular highlight. The remaining comparative illustrations are generally taken from secondary sources, and the selection and captioning of these images are occasionally problematic. For example, the early plan of Einsiedeln reproduced (69) does not illustrate the later convex facade referred to in the text (71). Endnotes are generally short and sparingly employed, and a brief index of names (no places) limited to the most important subjects concludes the volume.

In the final analysis, *Gebaute Entfestigung* is a stimulating but uneven achievement. While it

challenges the reader to view familiar monuments in new contexts, it cannot stand alone as a study of Superga, Gran Madre di Dio, or Turinese urbanism. The book will be most useful for those seeking a thought-provoking model of how the “spatial turn” can inform the history of architecture and urbanism at the transition between the early modern and modern eras, and for those interested in understanding defortification as a process of opening a city going far beyond tearing down walls.

DR. SUSAN KLAIBER

Zwischen Theorie, Praxis und Didaktik: Lehrbücher für das Bauwesen

Uta Hassler (Hg.)
**Der Lehrbuchdiskurs über das
Bauen.** Zürich, vdf Hochschulverlag
der ETH 2015. 371 S., zahlr. Ill.
ISBN 978-3-7281-3686-2. € 65,00

Lehrbücher für das Bauwesen lassen sich unter recht verschiedenen Gesichtspunkten betrachten; das Augenmerk kann sich richten auf das Verhältnis zwischen dem mündlichen und dem schriftlichen Unterricht, den Anteil von Text und Bild, die Unterschiede zwischen Lehrbüchern für praxisnahe und praxisferne Bau- und Architekturschulen, für den Selbstunterricht oder die Bauherrschaft, die Besonderheiten der Sprachnationen oder, diachronisch, den Anteil der Lehrbücher an der im

18./19. Jahrhundert einsetzenden Verschulung. Ein von 23 Spezialisten verfasster Sammelband verspricht keine systematische Übersicht, sondern bewährt sich in der Vielfalt der Perspektiven auf das Thema. Das vorliegende Werk verdankt sich dem Interesse der Herausgeberin Uta Hassler an der Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Bauforschung und insbesondere an enzyklopädischen Kunst- und Architekturhandbüchern. Das öffnet den Blick über das Lehrbuch hinaus auf benachbarte Gattungen und entsprechende Leserkreise: die Studie, die Abhandlung, die Enzyklopädie, die Einführung. Eher am Rande bleibt indessen die spezifisch französische Gattung der gedruckten Vorlesung.

WISSENSVERMITTLUNG SEIT DER ANTIKE

Der bunte Reigen der Beiträge ist in sieben Teile gegliedert. Der erste, „Das Wissen im Lehrbuch“, behandelt die Frage, ob Lehrbücher so kompilato-