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Masterarbeit

Architect on the Imperial Throne or Fools' Tower by Joseph II

ausgeführt zum Zwecke der Erlangung des akademischen Grades
einer Diplom-Ingenieurin

unter der Leitung
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Abstract

The Narrenturm, which is located within the medical complex of the University of Vienna, was the first dedicated medical institution for the mentally ill worldwide. In 2012 the Narrentum was integrated into the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (the Museum of Natural History in Vienna) and since then houses the pathological-anatomical collection of the museum.

The cylindrical building was erected in 1784 and was financed privately by Emperor Joseph II. It was ahead of it's time in many ways and indicates the emperor's embracement of the ideas of Enlightenment. The construction of the building raises several unanswered questions and mysteries. Up to this day, it is unknown where the emperor got the idea for the peculiar form of the building and why helping mentally ill patients was so important to him. The circular floor plan suggests a possible connection to Bentham's idea of the Panopticon which deserves further investigation.

This master work embarks on a fascinating journey, investigating the personality of Emperor Joseph II and focusing on his exchanges with other important figures of the Age of Enlightenment throughout Europe around the time the Narrenturm was designed and created. This makes Joseph II an important link for spreading the idea of a circular floor plan using the principle of supervision and control from a central vantage point from the French architectural scene, to the Russian Prince Potemkin and - finally - to the inventor of the Panopticon, Samuel Bentham, allowing us to see the Panopticon in a whole new light.

Kurzfassung

Der Wiener Narrenturm im Gelände des Universitätscampus, des historischen Allgemeinen Krankenhauses der Stadt Wien, war das weltweit erste Spezialgebäude zur Unterbringung und Behandlung von Geisteskranken. Im Jahr 2012 wurde der Narrenturm in das Naturhistorisches Museum Wien eingegliedert und ist Sitz der Pathologisch-anatomischen Sammlung.

Das im Jahre 1784 errichtete, zylindrische Gebäude war ein Privatprojekt von Kaiser Joseph II, welches er aus eigenen Mitteln finanzierte. Dieses Bauwerk war seiner Zeit in vielfacher Hinsicht voraus und deutet auf die aufgeklärte Haltung des Kaisers hin. Die Bausubstanz des Narrenturms birgt zahlreiche ungeklärte Fragen und Geheimnisse in sich. Bis heute ist nicht klar, wie der Kaiser auf die Idee eines kreisförmigen Gebäudes für Geisteskranke gekommen ist, und warum er sich persönlich so sehr um die Versorgung von Geisteskranken angenommen hat. Die Kreisform des Narrenturms verleitet dazu, nach Verbindungen zu Bentham's Idee des Panopticons zu suchen sowie den Kontext der Entstehung der beiden Konzepte genauer zu erforschen.

Diese Masterarbeit begibt sich auf eine spannende Entdeckungsreise in der die Persönlichkeit von Kaiser Joseph II beleuchtet wird und der Fokus auf den durch seine Reisetätigkeiten ermöglichten Austausch mit dem russischen Prinzen Potemkin und anderen wichtigen Geistern der Epoche des aufgeklärten Absolutismus in der Zeit rund um der Errichtung des Narrenturms gerichtet wird. Damit wird Joseph II zum wichtigen Bindeglied für die Übertragung der Idee des kreisförmigen Grundrisses und des Prinzips der zentralen Überwachung von der französischen Architekturszene zum russischen Prinz Potemkin sowie zum Erfinder des Panopticons, Samuel Bentham. Aus diesem Zusammenhang wird ein neuer Blick auf das Panopticon ermöglicht.

Content:

I

Preface

The period of Enlightened absolutism in the late eighteenth century inspired many new and innovative architectural concepts which were applied to public facilities such as hospitals, prisons, mental institutions, and educational facilities.

One of the most important theoretical works of this time was Panopticon, written by the English philosopher and founder of modern utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham. Panopticon, or the inspection-house, published in 1791, is an architectural idea which can be applied to prisons, mental institutions, schools, hospitals, factories, etc., and is based on the principle of supervision and control from a central vantage point. Literally translated from Ancient Greek, "pan" means "all" and "opticon" means "observe". Michel Foucault, whose work Discipline and Punish brought Bentham's Panopticon back into the centre of the discussion at the end of the twentieth century elegantly summed it up with the words – "The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly."[1] He argued that the Panopticon "must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men," and "not … as a dream building." The Panopticon is "a pure architectural and optical system", he said, "the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form … that may and must be detached from any specific use."[2] This "cruel, ingenious cage" – a cylindrical tower with a circular floor plan became a remarkable symbol of a time when absolutist monarchs ruled all over Europe.

Seven years prior to the publication of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, a very special building was constructed in Vienna in 1784, the Narrenturm, or Fools' Tower, which was the city's first mental institution. Stylistically and functionally, it was in many ways unusual and way ahead of its time. The extraordinary, cylindrical shape of the Fools' Tower, the number and arrangement of the cells spread around the periphery of the 5 circular floors, an octagonal structure on the roof, and, last but not least, the uncertainty surrounding the question of who was the actual architect of the building, are only some of the mysteries still surrounding the building.

The construction of the Narrenturm was financed using the personal fortune of the Austrian Emperor Joseph II. The emperor reportedly visited the institution more than once a week, and he immediately made his way up to the roof and entered a small octagonal turret on top of the building. From there, Joseph II could oversee a gigantic medical complex, his creation and a manifest of Enlightenment.[3] The medical complex located between Alserstraße and Währingerstraße with the circular Fools' Tower in the middle was undeniably one of Joseph II's biggest projects and proudest creations for the city of Vienna. The complex was unique in all of Europe and was created in a record time of less than three years from the first construction decision to the opening. In addition to the Narrenturm, the medical complex also consisted of the civil hospital with 2,000 beds, a surgical academy for training new doctors, a military hospital with 1,200 beds and a medicinal herb garden.[4]

There had been a lot of confusion considering the architect of the Narrenturm. Both Isidore Canevale, the famous architect who also worked on the adjacent surgical academy and the military hospital, and Joseph Gerl, who was the executive architect of the Narrenturm, are sometimes considered to be the main architect of the Narrenturm. However, Joseph's personal confidant and surgeon, Johann Alexander von

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[1]Foucault, Michel: *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, NY: Vintage Books 1995, p. 173

[2]Ibid., p. 205

[3]Cf. Swittalek, Markus: *Das Josephinum*, Dissertation, eingereicht an der TU Wien, 2011, p. 176

[4]Cf. Ibid., p.127

Brambilla, put an end to this speculation by stating that the concept and design of the Narrenturm was created by the Emperor Joseph II himself.

It turns out that this unusual monarch, known for his enlightened spirit and large number of reforms, had also shown a great interest in architecture. During his reign, a massive process of change occurred in city planning and the general appearance of Vienna. From the very beginning of his regency, Joseph II's main focus was improving the health care system for his people. Joseph II became famous as a traveling monarch, spending almost a third of his reign traveling throughout Europe. He precisely analysed the visited places, especially in the areas of sanitary, military and economic concerns, and gathered inspirations for his own projects and reforms. One of the most important and inspiring travels for Joseph II was his visit to France in 1777. At that time, a big discussion in the French architectural scene revolved around the design of a new general hospital after the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris was destroyed by a fire in 1772. The design competition continued for several years and many different proposals were created, some of which were based on circular floor plans. Joseph II had a chance to familiarise himself with the new ideas introduced by the French designs, as well as to pay a visit to the French architect, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, one of the most influential representatives of the architecture of that period, known as French revolutionary neo-classicism. Ledoux was at that time working on his famous project of Salines de Chaux, or Royal Saltworks at Arc-et-Senans, which was also based on the principle of central observation. So it is likely that it was during his visit to Paris that Joseph II became inspired and the ground was set for the ideas of his future medical complex, including the Narrenturm, which stylistically is often compared to French revolutionary architecture.

Another interesting connection between Ledoux's project of Salines de Chaux and Bentham's Panopticon was made by Foucault. In Discipline and Punish, he claimed that Ledoux envisioned the idea of "the perfect disciplinary apparatus … when he built Arc-et-Senans." According to Foucault, the same idea of central supervision, "a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned", can later be found in Bentham's Panopticon.[5]

In that sense, both Panopticon and Narrenturm are connected to Ledoux's design, they were both born out of the same architectural ideology inspired by Enlightenment. However, Foucault saw the connection between the Panopticon and Ledoux's project only on the ideological level – in the way they shared the common principles of central control and spatial organisation. In my masterwork, I consider the possibility that the Narrenturm, which was actually built several years before Bentham's design of the Panopticon was published, is the missing link between Ledoux's ideas and the Panopticon. This would make the Narrenturm the original, if slightly underdeveloped, model for the Panopticon.

The Narrenturm shares obvious similarities with Bentham's Panopticon in concept and design. The Narrenturm's cylindrical structure with the centrally located doctors' rooms, surrounded by the patients' cells arranged in a circle, seems to reflect the basic principle of the Panopticon, even though the exact optical system of control according to Bentham's vision could not be achieved here. From the middle tract housing the doctors' apartments, the cells could not easily be monitored, if at all. Still, the circular structure and the central location of the staircase and the staff apartments allowed complete control over the movement of patients and visitors.The building's geometry guaranteed a strong sense of control, even though it was not optical as envisioned by Bentham.

However, the two buildings share so many characteristics that one has to wonder if and how they are connected to each other, especially considering that the Narrenturm was already operational for seven years

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[5]Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*, p. 173

by the time Bentham published his work. Even when considering that Bentham first came up with the idea in the year 1787, the Narrenturm had already been completed for three years by that time. Jeremy Bentham himself, talking about Panopticon, claimed to have come upon an innovative "idea in architecture", inspired by his brother Samuel Bentham. Samuel was a young and talented naval engineer who was at that time working on the estate in Krichev, White Russia, which "belonged to Prince Grigory Potemkin, the most influential of Catherine II's favorites during the 1780s."[6] Krichev estate was turned into the base of the newly built Black See fleet. The shipyard of Krichev, established in 1785, became one of Russia's main shipbuilding facilities. Under Potemkin's direction, several manufacturers for sails, ropes, leather, glass, bricks and copper were established in Krichev. Samuel Bentham was hired to contribute his engineering knowledge and creativity and in return Potemkin provided him with a house, servants, workers, and virtually unlimited funds to improve the estate and dedicate his time to experiments and inventions. His area of responsibility also included the supervision of various technical installations and facilities, and it was in this context that the idea of the Panopticon was conceived. Samuel encountered difficulties in keeping discipline among his workers and developed the idea of the inspection house which applied the principle of control from a central point for overseeing all of his workers.

The potential connection between the two designs seems even more likely when considering that Jeremy Bentham, who himself dated his concept back to the year 1787, had argued from the beginning that the Panopticon should not be used merely as a prison, but also to "guard the insane". Is it possible that the Bentham brothers had heard about the existence of the Narrenturm? Could it be that Joseph II influenced the concept of the Panopticon either directly or indirectly?

Considering Joseph II's many international contacts and travels, it might be possible to trace Bentham's Panopticon back to Joseph's original ideas. Regarding this theory, Joseph's trips to Russia in 1780 and 1787 play an important role, especially due to the fact that Joseph II was accompanied by Prince Potemkin most of the time during those trips.

Joseph II's first visit to Russia in 1780 took place three years after his inspiring visit to France, which gives us reason to suggest that he was already planning his new medical complex for Vienna. However, neither the Narrenturm nor any other building of the medical complex had been built at this point in time. One can only assume that Joseph II shared with Potemkin his impressions and inspirations from France and the ideas he envisioned in his mind. It is a known fact that Samuel Bentham came to Russia and had already been introduced to Potemkin shortly before Joseph's first visit. However, since he was still very young, rather poor, and travelling around Russia, it is quite unlikely that he met Joseph II in 1780 and heard about his visions. It is not even clear whether Joseph II had already envisioned the Narrenturm at that time at all. Samuel Bentham started working for Potemkin in Krichev in 1784 and was very much impressed by the ideas of the Prince.

Joseph II's second visit in 1787 was even more significant because the Narrenturm had already been designed and built by that time. On the Crimean peninsula Joseph II met Empress Catherine II and Potemkin, who organised an Imperial tour for his empress around the Russian Southern provinces in order to impress Catherine and everyone else with his achievements.

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[6]Werrett, Simon: *Potemkin and the Panopticon: Samuel Bentham and the Architecture of Absolutism in Eighteenth Century Russia*, UCL Bentham Project, Journal of Bentham Studies, vol. 2 (1999), http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/648/2/002__1999__S.Werret_1999.pdf, accessed on 06.05.2017, p. 4

It can be assumed that Joseph II and Potemkin, who shared a mutual passion for technical developments, had intensive discussions about their respective innovations and reforms. This assumption is also supported by Potemkin's tendency to idealise the wealth and prosperity of the Russian Southern Provinces, as manifested in his almost theatrical staging of celebrations for his empress. Potemkin's dream was to create an "Enlightenment Eden" in the South, and he was fostering knowledge and economic advancements there in every way possible.[7] The massive scale of Potemkin's plans included dairies, vineyards, cheese factories and botanical gardens and extended to new harbours, cities and "idealised towns", "from Kherson to Sebastopol, from Balaclava, Theodosia, Kerch, Yenikale and back to Kherson again."[8] In this context of Potemkin's creative urge and ambition it seems only natural that Joseph discussed his experiences in building the Narrenturm with him. Such a novel concept as the new general hospital in Vienna, which did not just exist on paper but had actually been built, was an exceptional achievement which could not be found in any other European country at the time. One can imagine a certain sense of pride in Joseph for being the one who designed and financed that project.

It is a known fact that Samuel Bentham, Jeremy's brother, was also invited to the Crimean peninsula in May 1787 to accompany Catherine II and Potemkin, and it was there when he probably met Joseph II in person.

The fact that this visit of the Russian Southern provinces brought all three – Joseph II, Prince Potemkin and Samuel Bentham – together for over a month strengthens the theory that they could have talked about Panopticon and Narrenturm. Potemkin was very proud of his fleet and his achievements in naval engineering and he eagerly displayed his ships to the two emperors. Since Joseph was known to be very interested in innovations and technical achievements, it is very likely that he would have been eager to meet the master ship builder who was responsible for creating this fleet. During those meetings, the two would have probably had in-depth discussions about engineering, architecture and design, and in that context it seems likely that Samuel Bentham might have mentioned his brother Jeremy's work on Panopticon. Hearing about those ideas, Joseph II, who was very proud of his own achievements, surely would have told Samuel about his own "Panopticon" – the Narrenturm in Vienna. It is not hard to imagine that Samuel would have passed those stories on to his brother Jeremy, who at that time was still working on his yet unpublished letters about Panopticon. Jeremy might have been influenced to a certain degree by the fully operational Narrenturm and might have seen it as a physical expression of his own theoretical "diagram of power".

Even if Samuel Bentham had no direct contact with Joseph II after all, it is still reasonable to assume that Potemkin could have passed the idea of Joseph II's cylindrical building, the Narrenturm, on to Samuel Bentham.

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[7]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, pp. 8-9

[8]Sebag Montefiore, Simon: *Prince of Princes – The Life of Potemkin*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2000, pp. 273-4

Below is a chronological list of events that led me to the idea of the possible influence Joseph II had on Bentham's Panopticon:

- 1777 – Joseph II visited France, got acquainted with French revolutionary utopian architecture, met Ledoux, collected inspirations and had first thoughts about a medical complex and a separate institution for the mentally ill.
- 1779 – Ludwig Cobenzl, who joined Joseph II on his trip to France, was named ambassador to the Austrian embassy in St. Petersburg and was involved in planning Joseph's trip to Russia in 1780.[9]
- March 1780 – Samuel Bentham came to Russia and was introduced to Potemkin. Bentham was young and rather poor, so it is quite unlikely that he met Joseph II and heard from him about Narrenturm in that year.
- May to July 1780 – Joseph II visited Russia, was accompanied most of the time by Potemkin, intensive exchange of ideas very likely. It is possible that Joseph II shared his ideas about the design of the Narrenturm with Potemkin.
- 1783 to 1784 – Narrenturm was designed by Joseph II and built in Vienna.
- 1784 to 1787 – Samuel Bentham worked for Potemkin on the Krichev estate, around this time he came up with the idea of the observation principle for controlling the workers. It is possible that Potemkin had an influence on Samuel's concept if he had previously heard from Joseph II about the Narrenturm.
- February 1786 – Jeremy Bentham came to Russia and started working on Panopticon.[10]
- 1786 to 1787 – Jeremy sent letters from Krichev to his father, which were later published as *Panopticon.*
- May to June 1787– Joseph's second visit to Russia, during which he once again met Potemkin. Samuel Bentham, who accompanied Potemkin, was introduced to Joseph II as naval engineer. It is possible that they exchanged ideas about Panopticon and Narrenturm. Samuel might have told his brother Jeremy Bentham about the design of the Narrenturm. It is possible that the idea was adopted, adjusted, and integrated into Jeremy Bentham's work *Panopticon* before it was published.
- November 1787 – Jeremy Bentham left Russia.[11]
- 1791 – *Panopticon* by Jeremy Bentham was published for the first time.

The main historical facts and descriptions about Potemkin were taken from Sebag Montefiore's book Prince of Princes – The Life of Potemkin (2000), as it is the latest and most complete of all the published biographies about Potemkin and it is based on primary sources from Russian national historical archives and museums, including the ones in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

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[9]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 61

[10]Bentham Mary Sophia: *The Life of Brigadier-General Sir Samuel Bentham, K.S.G. Formerly Inspector-General of Naval Works Lately a Commissioner of His Majesty's Navy with the Distinct Duty of Civil Architect and Engineer of the Navy by His Widow M. S. Bentham*; London Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862, p.82

[11]Левенсон П.Я. : *Иеремия Бентам. Его жизнь и общественная деятельность*, Издательство Проспект, 2014, https://books.google.at/books, search for "потемкин и бентам", accessed on 06.05.2017

In the process of writing about Joseph II, I used a lot of material from the Dissertation of Swittalek Das Josephinum (2011), since he did extensive research regarding Joseph II's influence on the architecture in Vienna and, especially, about the medical complex and the surgical academy, the Josephinum. This was relevant for my masterwork since my main focus was on Joseph II's Narrenturm, which was also the part of the medical complex and, like the Josephinum, a private project of the emperor. The idea of a possible connection between the designs of Narrenturm and Panopticon through Joseph II and Potemkin is the result of a joint effort between me and my supervisor, Professor Dörte Kuhlmann, who I want to thank wholeheartedly for leading and encouraging me along the way. I would also like to express gratitude to the architect Thomas Kratschmer, who is in charge of the renovation of the Narrenturm and has provided me with historical plans and a lot of valuable information about the building. I am also grateful to my parents, who made my studies at TU Wien possible and patiently supported me throughout eight-and-a-half years to this day. Last but not least, my special gratitude goes to my best friend Stefan Lindmaier, who helped me immensely with translating and proofreading my texts and who supported me in every way.

II

Panopticon

1. Indefinite Discipline as a New Form of Power

Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon was brought back to the centre of discussion thank to Michel Foucault and his analysis, set forth in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* which was published in 1975.

According to Simon Werrett, Foucault's work occasioned a broad debate in the 1980s and 1990s "on the extent to which Bentham's program for a rational, utilitarian society was motivated by a concern for humanitarian reform or more sinister, disciplinary interests". Werrett wrote, "Janet Semple, for example, has reacted strongly to Foucault's notorious view that the Panopticon constituted a 'diabolical piece of machinery' for social control in the nineteenth century. Semple suggests that Foucault's 'claustrophobic distrust of the world' has led him to depreciate the sincerity of Bentham's intentions. She prefers to see the Panopticon as the product of 'a realistic, kindly man looking for ways to ameliorate the lot of the poor'." Werrett claimed that "almost all commentators agree that the Panopticon constituted or helped to constitute a new form of power in the late eighteenth century, although disagreement again arises in relation to the ethical nature of this power." Werrett then recites the differences in the interpretation of the old and new regimes by different authors. "Ignatieff differentiates between an old paternalist regime, characterized by a weak state and reliance on physical terror to maintain order, and a new regime consisting of a strong state, controlling society through discipline of the mind rather than the body … Likewise, Foucault views the Panopticon as a 'cage, cruelle et savante', an idealized microcosm of nineteenth century society, where discipline has become institutionalized in schools, hospitals, prisons and asylums, operating through the internalized subjection imbued through surveillance. Semple … argues that as a penitentiary, the Panopticon represented the inverse of Bentham's plans for a new and positive 'democratic' system of power, in which government would be made public and accountable to ensure the greatest happiness of the greatest number. By means of the inspection principle, applied through public tribunals, 'panoptic' government offices and freedom of the press, power would at all times remain under the scrutiny of the populace."[12]

Foucault, whose work *Discipline and Punish,* made people aware of the Panopticon again, provides the surest point of departure for our discussion on the origins of this fantastical establishment.

He begins with a scene of the horrifying destruction of Damiens in front of Notre Dame, in 1757, who had made an attempt on the life of the king and was made to suffer his punishment publicly, for, as Middleton claims, "people must partake of the king's justice and thus give to it an ultimate sanction." Continuing the discussion on the history of prison reform, Middleton argues, "But within a few years attitudes, not only in France but throughout Europe, had changed: vengeance was no longer to be wreaked on the body of the miscreant; his mind, rather, was to be transformed … The soul, not the body, was to be the focus of attention. In place of a public assault on the body, justice was to be implacable, to be administered impartially and impersonally, behind closed doors. The miscreant was not to be forced to suffer. Instead, he was to be deprived of his rights so that he might repent and reform. He was to be regenerated to become a useful citizen." From now on, executions became rare, "swift, uniform and withdrawn from the public gaze", whereas imprisonment, "which in the eighteenth century had been relatively uncommon, gradually became the norm."[13]

In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault discusses the concept of imprisonment on a broader and more general scale by introducing readers to the idea of "disciplinary societies*". "*They operate by organising

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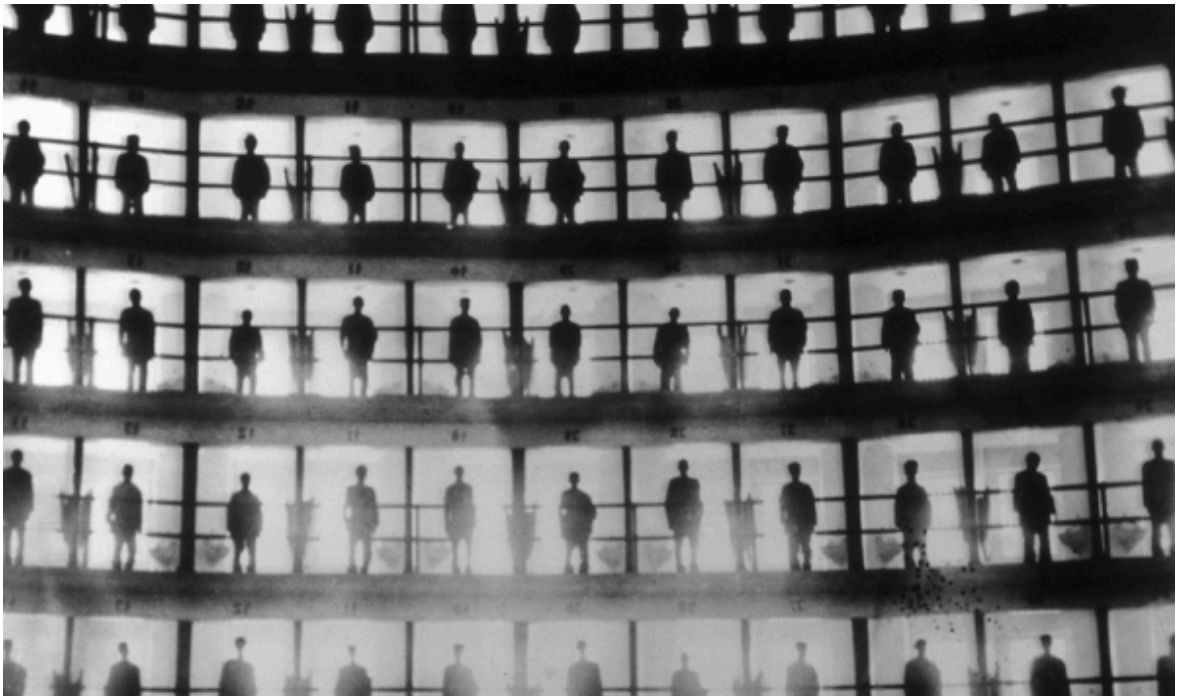
[12]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, pp. 1-2

[13]Cf. Middleton, Robin: *Sickness, Madness and Crime as the Grounds of Form*, AA Files No. 24, Autumn 1992, p.24

major sites of confinement. Individuals are always going from one closed site to another, each with its own laws: first of all the family, then school ('you're not at home, you know'), then barracks ('you're not at school, you know'), then factory, hospital from time to time, maybe prison, the model site of confinement. Prison provides a model for the others."[14]

Foucault associated disciplinary societies with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reaching their apogee at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to him, the disciplines that were known from the classical age in the 17th and 18th centuries were at that time only applied in the relatively closed places like barracks, colleges and manufactories. In the 18th century the network of disciplinary mechanisms started to expand and ultimately penetrated the whole "social body".[15]

Foucault wrote, "The practice of placing individuals under 'observation' is a natural extension of a justice imbued with disciplinary methods and examination procedures." He set forth by questioning, "Is it surprising that the cellular prison, with its regular chronologies, forced labour, its authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts in normality, who continue and multiply the functions of the judge, should have become the modern instrument of penality? Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?"[16]



► ***Figure 1*** *The Presidio Modelo, a panopticon prison, Isla de Pinos, Cuba, 1926-1928.This photograph was taken when it was fully operational.*

[14]Deleuze, Gilles: *Postscript on Control Societies,* L'Autre Journal 1, May 1990, p. 177

[15]Cf. Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*, p. 209

[16]Ibid., pp. 227-8

2. The All-Seeing Eye

Both Middleton and Foucault agreed on the fact that the inspiration for the changes described above came from England. “Indeed, it was the English reform movement that most vitally stirred the French, in particular the notions of the utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham, who was to provide the conceptual model for all innovative architectural arrangements in the years that followed,”[17] wrote Middleton. Foucault agrees that a “network of mechanisms that would be everywhere and always alert, running through society without interruption in space or in time” was Jeremy Bentham’s dream and that his famous work Panopticon provided a way to realise it.[18]

“Bentham’s Panopticon is the architectural figure”[19], wrote Foucault, “It programmes, at the level of an elementary and easily transferable mechanism, the basic functioning of a society penetrated through and through with disciplinary mechanisms.”[20] He continued, “… it is the diagram of a mechanism of one power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use.”[21]

He described its basic design principles, “…at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. In short, it reverses the principle of the dungeon; or rather of its three functions – to enclose, to deprive of light and to hide – it preserves only the first and eliminates the other two. Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap.”[22]

As seen above, Foucault stressed the importance of visual effects which played a major role in the panoptic design, creating a unique relationship between light and shadow, a game of visibility and invisibility. The geometry of the building itself dictated what, who, how and when could be seen or remained hidden from the gaze. Thus, an ideal order would be sustained by the building itself and no more effort was needed. He argued that the optical conception of Panopticon was a guarantee of order.

“Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. He is seen, but he

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[17]Middleton: *Sickness, Madness and Crime*, p.25

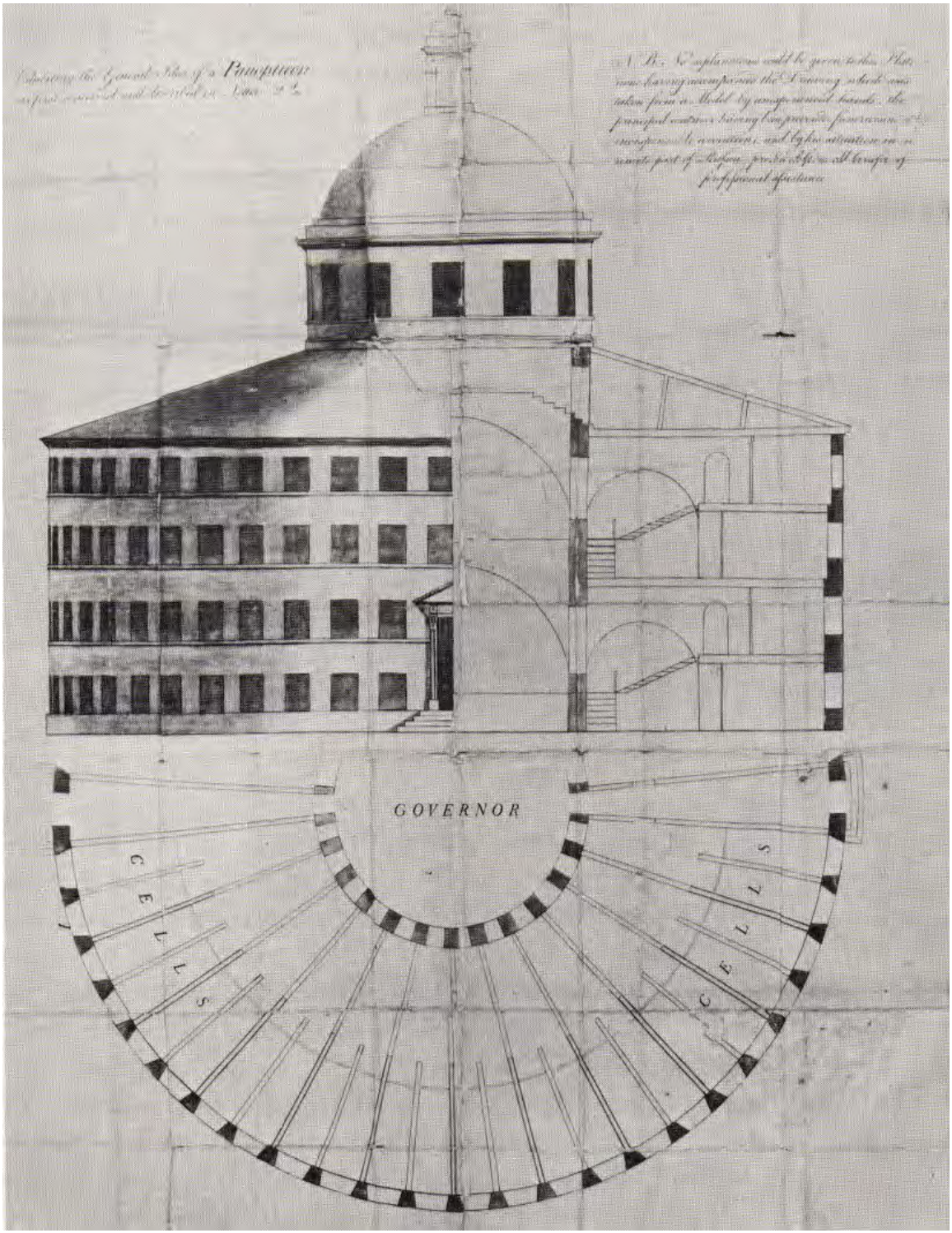
[18]Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*, p. 209

[19]Ibid., p. 200

[20]Ibid., p. 209

[21]Ibid., p. 205

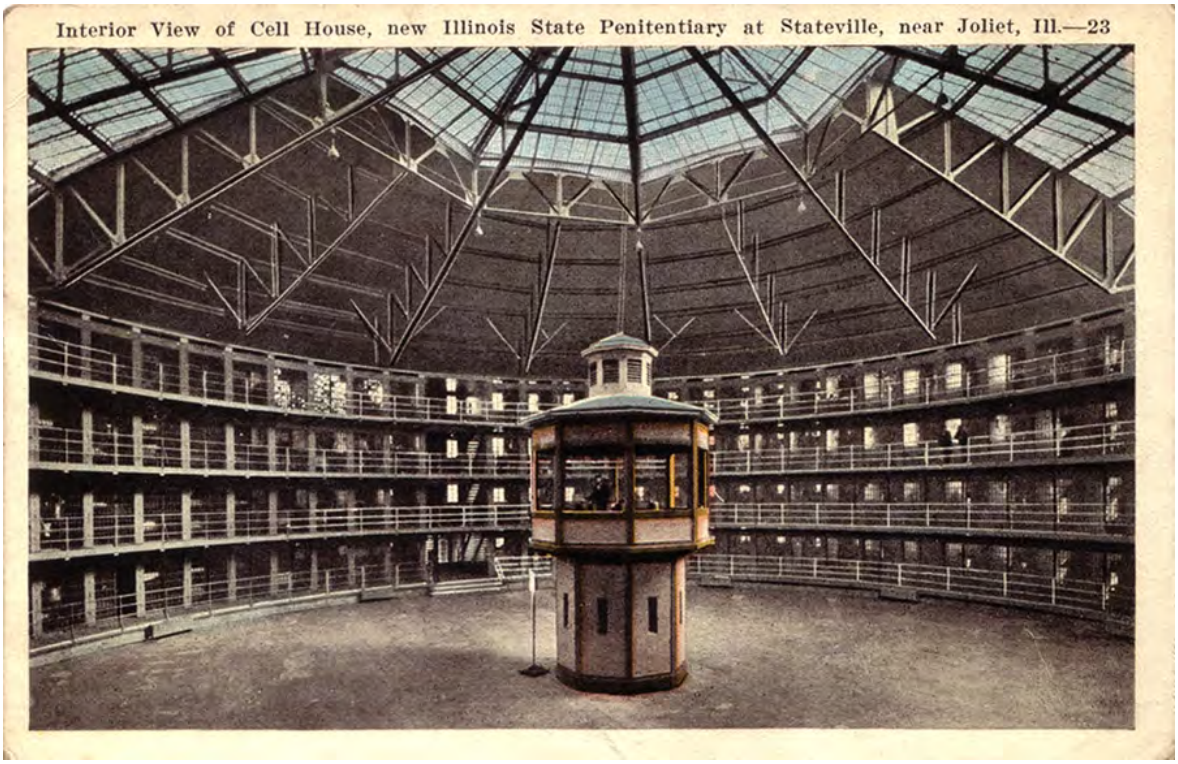
[22]Ibid., p. 200



► ***Figure 2*** *Jeremy and Samuel Bentham, design for Panopticon penitentiary, 1787: half-plan, half-section and half-elevation.*

does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication. The arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, imposes on him an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is a guarantee of order. If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape, the planning of new crimes for the future, bad reciprocal influences; if they are patients, there is no danger of contagion; if they are madmen there is no risk of their committing violence upon one another; if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time; if they are workers, there are no disorders, no theft, no coalitions, none of those distractions that slow down the rate of work, make it less perfect or cause accidents."[23]

Furthermore, Foucault put down how the fear of the constant presence of the observer in the central tower played psychological tricks on the inmates' minds. "Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. To achieve this, it is at once too much and too little that the prisoner should be constantly observed by an inspector: too little, for what matters is that he knows himself to be observed; too



► ***Figure 3*** *Interior view of Illinois State Penitentiary - Panopticon structure. The first round house was completed in 1919, the other three were finished in 1927. F house is the last remaining panopticon cell house.*

[23]Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*, pp. 200-1

much, because he has no need in fact of being so. In view of this, Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so. In order to make the presence or absence of the inspector unverifiable, so that the prisoners, in their cells, cannot even see a shadow, Bentham envisaged not only venetian blinds on the windows of the central observation hall, but, on the inside, partitions that intersected the hall at right angles and, in order to pass from one quarter to the other, not doors but zig-zag openings; for the slightest noise, a gleam of light, a brightness in a half-opened door would betray the presence of the guardian. The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen."[24]

Foucault also pointed out that the Panopticon principle worked independently of the presence of the observers, as well as the number of observers or their qualifications.

"Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants ... Similarly, it does not matter what motive animates him: the curiosity of the indiscreet, the malice of a child, the thirst for knowledge of a philosopher who wishes to visit this museum of human nature, or the perversity of those who take pleasure in spying and punishing. The more numerous those anonymous and temporary observers are, the greater the risk for the inmate of being surprised and the greater his anxious awareness of being observed. The Panopticon is a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power."[25]

Foucault claimed that the genius of the panoptic building was that the confined became trapped in their own illusion of being permanently watched and finally became their own observer and judge.

"A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. So it is not necessary to use force to constrain the convict to good behaviour, the madman to calm, the worker to work, the schoolboy to application, the patient to the observation of the regulations. Bentham was surprised that panoptic institutions could be so light: there were no more bars, no more chains, no more heavy locks; all that was needed was that the separations should be clear and the openings well arranged. The heaviness of the old 'houses of security', with their fortress-like architecture, could be replaced by the simple, economic geometry of a 'house of certainty'. The efficiency of power, its constraining force have, in a sense, passed over to the other side – to the side of its surface of application. He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects: it is a perpetual victory that avoids any physical confrontation and which is always decided in advance."[26]

Foucault asserted that the Panopticon principle provided a whole range of applications apart from the simple observation of the confined. It opened up a large field of possibilities for scientists, doctors, teachers, lawyers or anyone interested.

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[24]Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*, pp. 201-2

[25]Ibid., p. 202

[26]Ibid., pp. 202-3

He wrote, "… the Panopticon was also a laboratory; it could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals. To experiment with medicines and monitor their effects. To try out different punishments on prisoners, according to their crimes and character, and to seek the most effective ones. To teach different techniques simultaneously to the workers, to decide which is the best. To try out pedagogical experiments – and in particular to take up once again the well-debated problem of secluded education, by using orphans … The Panopticon is a privileged place for experiments on men, and for analysing with complete certainty the transformations that may be obtained from them. The Panopticon may even provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms. In this central tower, the director may spy on all the employees that he has under his orders: nurses, doctors, foremen, teachers, warders; he will be able to judge them continuously, alter their behaviour, impose upon them the methods he thinks best; and it will even be possible to observe the director himself … The Panopticon functions as a kind of laboratory of power."[27]

Even though Bentham was very much focused on prisons, he was convinced that the Panopticon principle was universal and could be applied to all kinds of buildings. In the preface of his work *Panopticon,* Jeremy listed the benefits provided by his "inspection house", "Morals reformed – health preserved – industry invigorated – instruction diffused – public burthens lightened – Economy seated, as it were, upon a rock – the gordian knot of the Poor-Laws not cut, but untied – all by a simple idea in architecture!"[28]

Foucault built on Bentham's idea that the Panopticon principle was, "necessary modifications apart", applicable to all kinds of buildings, "although Bentham takes the penitentiary house as his prime example – it is because it has many different functions to fulfil – safe custody, confinement, solitude, forced labour and instruction."

"It is polyvalent in its applications; it serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work. It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used."[29]

"Panopticism is the general principle of a new 'political anatomy' whose object and end are not the relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline. The celebrated, transparent, circular cage, with its high towers powerful and knowing, may have been for Bentham a project of perfect disciplinary institution; but he also set out to show how one may 'unlock' the disciplines and get them to function in a diffused, multiple, polyvalent way throughout the whole social body."[30]

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[27]Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*, pp. 203-4

[28]Bentham, Jeremy: *Panopticon; or the Inspection House: containing the Idea of a new Principle of Construction applicable to any sort of Establishment, in which Persons of any description are to be kept under Inspection; and in particular to Penitentiary-Houses, Poor-Houses, Lazarettos, Manufactories, Hospitals, Mad-Houses, and Schools: with a Plan of Management adapted to the Principle: in a Series of Letters, written in the Year 1787, from Crecheff in White Russia, to a Friend in England by Jeremy Bentham, of Lincoln's Inn, Esquire*, http://www.fcsh.unl.pt/docentes/rmonteiro/pdf/panopticon_%20jeremy%20bentham.pdf, accessed on 07.05.2017, p. 3

[29]Cf. Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*, pp. 205-6

[30]Ibid., p. 208

"The panoptic schema, without disappearing as such or losing any of its properties, was destined to spread throughout the social body; its vocation was to become a generalized function." [31] – this was Foucault's evaluation of Jeremy Bentham's panoptic principle almost two centuries after it was written.

3. From Idea to Architecture

Underlying the debate on the origins of the Panopticon principle, Jeremy Bentham is typically praised for inventing this architectural and optical system for inspection and observation. "However, Jeremy always insisted that the original conception came from his younger brother Samuel", argues Philip Steadman and cites Jeremy's words as proof. "After all, I have been obliged to go a-begging to my brother, and borrow an idea of his."[32]

Werrett also argues that there is a problem with the contemporary views on Bentham's Panopticon, as it is typically considered out of context, "more as a philosophical exercise or idealized invention of Jeremy Bentham than as a practicable project with its own development and history". Werrett suggests that, considering Panopticon "in its first incarnation, as it was designed by Samuel Bentham, Jeremy's brother, on an estate in White Russia" and if "examined in relation to the Russian context in which it was designed" at the end of the eighteenth century, the Panopticon "was intimately connected with the system of absolutism in Russia."[33]

According the correspondence of Jeremy Bentham, the first sources of information mentioning Samuel's invention of the Panopticon principle were the letters written by Jeremy to various correspondents, including their father, while he was at Krichev estate on the river Dnieper in the southern province of Mogilev in White Russia in 1786 to 1787. Krichev was an extensive estate which belonged to Prince Potemkin, who employed Jeremy's brother, Samuel Bentham, for his engineering talents.[34] Jeremy arrived at the estate in February 1786, and started work on his book *The Defense of Usury.* Fascinated by his brother's idea for an Inspection House or Elaboratory, Jeremy incorporated it into his own design he prepared for a design competition of a new prison in Middlesex, which was held by the *St. James Chronicle*.[35]

Steadman recalls a couple of letters, written by Jeremy to different correspondents between December 1786 and April 1787, mentioning his brother's "new idea in Architecture which is the subject of a course of letters I [Jeremy] have just finished for my Father" and "referring to 'a particular kind of building … for the purposes of keeping persons of any description under the eye of an Inspector'."[36]

The letters to his father, to which Jeremy referred, found their way to the press only in 1791 and were published as a series of 21 letters together with "some very substantial postscripts" in The Works of Jeremy Bentham (Vol. IV, 1843) under the title Panopticon; or the Inspection House: containing the Idea of a new Principle of Construction applicable to any sort of Establishment, in which Persons of any description are to

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[31]Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*, p. 207

[32]Cf. Steadman, Philip: *Samuel Bentham's Panopticon*, http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1353164/2/014%20Steadman%202012.pdf, accessed on 07.05.2017, p. 1

[33]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, pp. 2-3

[34]Cf. Steadman: *Samuel Bentham's Panopticon*, p.1

[35]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, p. 4

[36]Cf. Steadman: *Samuel Bentham's Panopticon*, pp. 2-3

be kept under Inspection; and in particular to Penitentiary-Houses, Poor-Houses, Lazarettos, Manufactories, Hospitals, Mad-Houses, and Schools: with a Plan of Management adapted to the Principle: in a Series of Letters, written in the Year 1787, from Crecheff in White Russia, to a Friend in England by Jeremy Bentham, of Lincoln's Inn, Esquire. "This is where the application of the Panopticon concept to prison design was worked out in detail, and where the famous architectural scheme of 1791 was published."[37]

Jeremy's first letter began by mentioning, that it was his brother Samuel, whose idea inspired his writing.

"Letter I.
Idea of the Inspection Principle.
Crecheff in White Russia, 1787.

Dear ****, I observed t'other day in one of your English papers, an advertisement relative to a House of Correction therein spoken of, as intended for *******. It occurred to me, that the plan of a building, lately contrived by my brother, for purposes in some respects similar, and which, under the name of the Inspection House, or the Elaboratory, he is about erecting here, might afford some hints for the above establishment … I have accordingly obtained some drawings relative to it, which I here enclose. Indeed I look upon it as capable of applications of the most extensive nature; and that for reasons which you will soon perceive. To say all in one word, it will be found applicable, I think, without exception, to all establishments whatsoever, in which, within a space not too large to be covered or commanded by buildings, a number of persons are meant to be kept under inspection. No matter how different, or even opposite the purpose: whether it be that of punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick, instructing the willing in any branch of industry, or training the rising race in the path of education: in a word, whether it be applied to the purposes of perpetual prisons in the room of death, or prisons for confinement before trial, or penitentiary-houses, or houses of correction, or work-houses, or manufactories, or mad-houses, or hospitals, or schools."[38]

According to Philip Steadman, "Samuel also wrote down his ideas, but it seems those notes are lost. As he wrote to Jeremy in November 1787 after his brother had returned to Britain: 'Inspection house papers I have mislaid or by mistake sent to you'."[39]

Now, after reading these letters, it seems obvious, that both Bentham brothers agreed on the fact that the idea for the Panopticon came from Samuel and it was Samuel's concept that inspired Jeremy to his theoretical work.

Strengthening this argument, Philip Steadman also mentioned that, "Given the respective characters of the two brothers, it makes sense that Samuel should have been the originator of the 'inspection principle'. Jeremy was the philosopher and theoretician, scholarly and reclusive. Samuel was outgoing, friendly and persuasive, had studied engineering and the sciences, and above all was gifted with a fertile mechanical creativity. The list of his improvements, inventions and patents, most of them relating to the art of

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[37]Cf. Steadman: *Samuel Bentham's Panopticon*, p.3

[38]Bentham: Panopticon; or the Inspection House, pp. 4-5

[39]Cf. Steadman: *Samuel Bentham's Panopticon*, p. 2

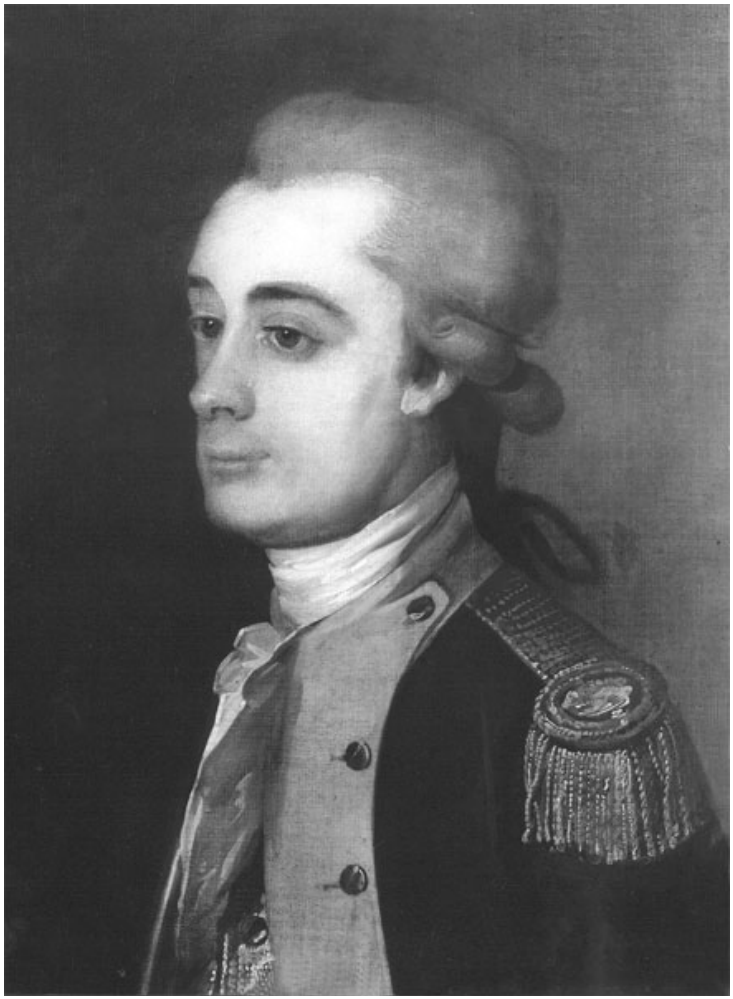
shipbuilding, runs to several pages… One can perhaps see, in these Russian boats of Samuel's, something of the bold eccentricity that also characterised the Panopticon."[40]

Let's take a closer look at this talented young Englishman and his adventures in Russia.

4. Samuel Bentham, Prince Potemkin and Their Panopticon

"To many Englishmen, and to still more young Scots, Russia in the later eighteenth century seemed a land of opportunity, comparable to America in the scope it offered for the acquisition of wealth and the free exercise of talents."[41] Samuel Bentham was one of many who sought their fortunes in Russia at this time.

"Samuel Bentham was the youngest of seven children – Jeremy was the eldest – and they were the only two who survived. Their father Jeremiah was a well-connected lawyer whose patron was the future Whig Prime Minister, the original but devious Earl of Shelburne … They were a touchingly close family, writing to each other constantly, worrying about Samuel's escapades in Russia. The brothers shared a brilliant intelligence, a driving energy and an outstanding inventiveness, but personally they were opposites: Jeremy, now almost forty, was a shy, scholarly judicialist. Samuel was loquacious, sociable, irritable and amorous. Trained as an engineer but uninhibited by the profession, he was an inventive polymath and entrepreneur. In some ways he shared Potemkin's restless



► ***Figure 4*** *Samuel Bentham, 1784*

[40]Cf. Steadman: *Samuel Bentham's Panopticon*, pp. 3-4

[41]Cf. Anderson, Matthew S.: *Samuel Bentham in Russia, 1779-1791*, The American Slavic and East European Review, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Apr., 1956), p. 157

ebullience – he was 'always running from a good scheme to a better … life passes away and nothing is completed'."[42]

"Born in London in January, 1757, Samuel Bentham was educated at Westminster School and in France. He early showed a remarkable interest in mechanical and engineering problems, and in August 1770, was apprenticed to a master shipwright at Woolwich. In 1777 he went with him to the dockyard at Chatham, where he remained until November, 1778. After that date he continued to study various problems connected with shipbuilding and visited all the main British dockyards, but had no income other than an allowance of £ 70 a year from his father, and no great prospect of attaining in Britain the type of position he felt his talents deserved.

His interest in Russia had begun to develop before he was out of his teens. Like so many of his contemporaries in Western Europe, he was impressed by the efforts of Catherine II to civilize and modernize her vast and unwieldy empire …In fact he was already determined to seek abroad scope for the abilities which he believed likely to be stifled by routine at home, and had for some time been thinking seriously of trying his luck in Russia. A country so in need of technicians and scientists of every kind and ruled by a sovereign of such open-mindedness was likely, he thought, to offer a free field for experiment with new ideas and methods … For the same reason Jeremy hoped that Catherine could be persuaded to introduce a new and rational code of legislation to be drawn up himself, and thus apply in practice the principles so excitingly stated in the *Nakaz* of 1767. Samuel was to present the completed code to her, and to supply, if necessary, information on Russian social conditions and judicial methods."[43]

"By March, 1780, after a short visit to Moscow, he was in St. Petersburg, where he made a few important acquaintances. Already in the beginning of April he was offered a position of 'Director-General of all the Shipbuilding and Mechanical works relating to the Marine', but he did not accept the offer, partly because the salary of 1,000 rubles seemed too low, and partly because he was increasingly attracted by the idea of spending some time in study of Russian society and economic life. So he went travelling.

The Russian Government was devoting much attention to the development of the short stretch of Black Sea coast which it had secured from Turkey in 1774, and particularly to the port of Kherson. In the summer of 1780 … he visited the Ukraine and paid a flying visit to the new port. The possibilities he saw there excited his easily-aroused imagination, and he confided to his brother that 'the commerce of the Black Sea, so little attended to by the Russian court in proportion to its advantageousness, has made my fingers itch even more than that of Courland.' At once he began to formulate ambitious schemes for the development of Russian trade in the Black Sea and with Poland, intending to submit them to the all-powerful Potemkin on his return to St. Petersburg."[44] Sebag Montefiore wrote, "He hoped to make his fortune, while Jeremy wanted him to propose his legal ideas to the Empress."[45]

He returned St. Petersburg in mid-September where he called on Potemkin. "Serenissimus monitored young Bentham's progress. The Englishman realized that the Prince was the man who could put his ideas into practice. Potemkin wanted his help with the Dnieper rapids and his estates and made a vague offer to him soon after meeting him. But Samuel wanted to travel so, in 1781, the Prince despatched him on a trip to

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[42]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 295

[43]Anderson: *Samuel Bentham in Russia*, pp. 157-8

[44]Ibid., p. 160

[45]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p.296

Siberia to analyse its industries, providing him with a couple of soldiers and guards. On his return, the prince gave his papers on Mines, Fabrics and Salt-Works to the Empress.

Potemkin was looking for talented engineers, shipbuilders, entrepreneurs and Englishmen: Samuel was all of these things. Writing to his brother Jeremy from Irkutsk in Siberia, Samuel boasted about his new contact – 'the man in power'. It was obvious to the excited traveller that he and his anonymous potentate were made for each other:

'This man's business is to greater amount than any other's I have heard of in the Empire. His position at Court is also the best on which account, as well as that of his riches, Governors of course bow down to him. His chief affairs lie about the Black Sea. He there farms the duties on some articles, builds ships for the Crown, supplies the army and the Crown in general with all necessaries, has fabrics of various kinds and is clearing the waterfalls of the Dnieper at his own private expense. He was very anxious to have assistance in his undertakings before I left St Petersburg.' (SB to JB, 16 June 1782, Irkutsk, British Museum Archive)."[46]

After he returned to St. Petersburg and engaged in an unfortunate affair with Countess Sophia Matushkina, the pretty niece and ward of Field-Marshal Prince Alexander Golitsyn, the Governor of Petersburg, Samuel finally accepted Potemkin's job offer in Kherson.[47] "My love affair is at an end…I must certainly quit Petersburg … So it is lucky that an offer of Prince Potemkin offers me a good opportunity…", Samuel Bentham wrote to his brother Jeremy.[48]

"Potemkin appointed him lieutenant-colonel with a salary of 1,200 roubles a year and 'much more for table money'. The Prince had many plans for young Samuel – he was going to move his dockyards below the bar in the Dnieper and he wanted Samuel to erect his various mechanical inventions 'under his command'. The fortunate Colonel was now almost in love with Potemkin, like so many Westerners before and after him … When the Prince was interested in someone, he treated him with more respect than all the generals of the empires of Europe put together: now Samuel was that person."

Samuel bragged: "I go to him at all times. He speaks to me whenever I come into the room giving me the *bonjour* and makes me sit down when the stars and ribbons may come ten times without his asking them to sit down or even looking at them," adding "Everything I propose to him, he accedes to". "Potemkin's idiosyncratic management style bemused Colonel Bentham: 'as to what employment I am to have at Kherson or elsewhere…' Serenissimus also mentioned 'an Estate on the Borders of Poland … One day he talks of a new port and dockyard below the bar, another he talks about my erecting windmills in the Crimea. A month hence I may have a regiment of Hussars and be sent against … the Chinese and then command a ship of 100 guns.' He was to end up doing almost all of the above. He certainly could not complain that working for Potemkin was going to be boring. However, as to his immediate destiny, he could only inform his brother: 'I can tell you nothing'."[49]

Various entries in Samuel's diary he wrote during his six months of travelling round the empire "always in the same carriage as Potemkin" speak of the close friendship they enjoyed. "The journey I have been

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[46]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 296

[47]Cf. Ibid., pp. 296-8

[48]Cf. Ibid., p. 295

[49]Cf. Ibid., p. 298

making this spring with the Prince, to me who do not think much of fatigue, has been in every respect highly agreeable … I had not for a long time spent my time so merrily."[50]

In July of 1784, Bentham arrived at "his new posting – Krichev. Potemkin's sprawling estate 'on the borders of Poland' was another world, all of its own. Bentham was appointed the sole master of an estate that was 'larger than any county of England' and indeed than many German principalities: Krichev itself was, according to Bentham, over 100 square miles, but it was right next to another Potemkin estate, Dubrovna, which was even larger. At Krichev, there were five townships and 145 hamlets – 14,000 male serfs. Together, the population of these two territories was 'upwards of 40,000 male vassals', as Samuel put it, which meant that the whole number of inhabitants must have been at least double that.

The Krichev-Dubrovna estates were not only big but also strategically vital: when Russia annexed these Polish territories in the first Partition of 1772, Catherine gained control of the upper reaches of two of Europe's greatest trading rivers: the right (north) bank of the Dvina that led to Riga on the Baltic and the left or east bank of the Dnieper, on which Potemkin was to build so many of his cities. When Catherine granted lands to Potemkin in 1776, he may have requested estates that happened to have access to both rivers and therefore were potential trading stations with both the Baltic and the Black Sea: ideal for making small ships, Potemkin's lands flanked the north bank of the Dnieper for an awesome fifty miles."[51]

"Potemkin was already the master of an industrial empire, best known for its factories making Russia's most beautiful mirrors…" In Krichev "Bentham found a brandy distillery, factory, tannery, copperworks, textile mill with 172 looms making sailcloth, a rope walk with twenty wheels, supplying Kherson's shipyards, a complex of greenhouses, a pottery, a shipyard and yet another mirror-factory. Krichev was an extension of Kherson. 'The estate … furnishes all the principal naval stores in the greatest abundance by a navigable river which … renders the transport easy to the Black Sea. The trade went in both directions: there was already a surplus of cordage and sailcloth that was traded on to Constantinople, while there was a booming import-export business to Riga.This was Potemkin's imperial arsenal, his manufacturing and trading headquarters, his inland shipyard and the chief supplier of his new cities and navy on the Black Sea".[52]

Simon Werrett considered the Krichev estate in the context of Potemkin's attempt to embody the Russian paradise myth through his development of the south. In 1784, Potemkin began planning the "new Russian Eden" in preparation for Catherine's tour through the southern provinces and Crimea. Werrett claimed that "Krichev formed part of the Empress' itinerary: Catherine would visit at the end of May 1787," and thus suggested that "from the beginning, Samuel Bentham's activities at Krichev were connected with the Crimean tour."[53]

"I have the direction and putting in order of all the Prince's fabrics here."[54], wrote Samuel Bentham. Besides, "he was also commissioned to construct a royal barge on which Catherine would travel down the Dnieper to the Crimea, and further vessels for her entourage."[55]

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[50]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 299

[51]Cf. Ibid., p. 299

[52]Cf. Ibid., p. 300

[53]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, pp. 9-10

[54]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 300

[55]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, p. 9

Sebag Montefiore makes it clear that "Bentham's main task was to build ships for Potemkin – all sorts, any sort at all. 'I seem to be at liberty to build any kind of ship … whether for War, Trade or Pleasure.' The Prince wanted gun frigates for the navy, a pleasure frigate for the Empress, barges for the Dnieper trade and ultimately luxury barges for the Empress's long-planned visit to the south. It was a tall if not towering order. There was a priceless moment of Potemkinish exasperation when Bentham tried to pin down the Prince about the ship design. Did Serenissimus want one mast, two masts, and how many guns? 'He told me by way of ending the dispute that there might be twenty masts and one gun if I pleased. I am a little confused…'. What inventor could want for a more indulgent, and maddening master?"[56]

Werrett claims that "whilst there is no doubt that Bentham's work was largely directed at improving the fleet … he also took charge of projects unconnected with shipbuilding." For example, "Potemkin requested him to recruit personnel for the Botanical Garden and model dairy under construction for the tour ... In June 1784, Samuel sent Jeremy a request for assistants to improve the brewery and distillery at Krichev and made numerous experiments to this end himself. He did much to develop gardening and agriculture at nearby Zadobrast, introducing an English strain of potatoes to the estate, planning a model hoggery, and experimenting with the cultivation of new grasses. He collected literature including Miller's *Gardeners Dictionary* and Young's *Annals of Agriculture*, and employed John Aiton, nephew of George III's gardener at Kew, to make experiments in cultivation." According to Werrett, "…such activities would make sense if the estate was intended for Catherine's inspection. Bentham's horticultural and manufacturing experiments would contribute to the formation of the 'Enlightenment Garden' which Potemkin was creating for the Empress. With manufactories 'more complete than any in England' and brought 'to a degree of perfection', Bentham would present the Imperial tour with an idealised Russian production estate, part of Potemkin's idealised Russian Eden."[57]

"Krichev was another world from the salons of Petersburg … It teemed with different races and languages. This was all most confusing and alarming to a newly arrived artisan from Newcastle, who had never travelled before. 'The heterogeneous mixture of people here is surprising,' Beaty, a Geordie heckler, confessed. There were Russians, Germans, Don Cossacks, Polish Jews – and the English. At first 'I thought it a collection of the strangest sounds that ever invaded my English ears.'"[58]

While Samuel Bentham had a virtually limitless budget managing Potemkin's estate, and was recruiting "British experts" for different tasks and trading goods between England and Russia, "Jeremy Bentham longed to join Samuel in Belorussia: he saw not only mercantile opportunities but peace in which to work on his treatises, and statesman like Potemkin who could put his utilitarian ideas into practice. (His utilitarian theory measured the success of rulers by their ability to provide the greatest happiness for the greatest number.) Potemkin's estates sounded like a philosopher's dream."[59]

On July 28, 1785, Jeremy Bentham set out from Brighton and travelled to Paris, then via Nice and Florence to Constantinople. He reached Krichev in February 1786. "It was a joyous reunion: the Bentham brothers had not seen each other for five and a half years. Once the party was complete, the Belorussian village seemed to turn into a Tower of Babel of quarrelling, drinking and wife-swapping. The recruits were as

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[56]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 301

[57]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, pp. 9-10

[58]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 300

[59]Cf. Ibid., pp. 302-3

ragged a crew as could be expected, and few were quite what they claimed: Samuel tried to control this 'Newcastle mob – hirelings from that rabble town.'"[60]

"Despite the capers of these expatriates, the Benthams achieved an immense amount, both literary and mercantile: 'The day has an abundance more hours in it at Krichev or rather at our cottage three miles off where I now live,' wrote Jeremy. 'I rise a little before the sun, get breakfast done in less than an hour and do not eat again until eight … at night.' He was working on his *Code* of civil law, a French version of the *Rationale of Reward* and the *Defence of Usury*. But he had also 'been obliged to go a begging to my brother and borrow an idea…' This was the Panopticon – Samuel's solution to supervising this rabble of Russians, Jews and Geordies: a factory constructed so that the manager could see all his workers from one central observation point. Jeremy the legal reformer could immediately see its use in prisons. He worked from dawn till dusk on the *Panopticon."*[61]

It is here that Sebag Montefiore and our story finally arrive at the moment when the Panopticon was created.

Simon Werrett suggested that "both problems of skill and problems of discipline with his workforce" were "the reasons for which the establishment was designed." He wrote that "by the summer of 1786, the English supervisors became increasingly difficult to control."[62] Arguing that Bentham was more concerned with "the lack of discipline among the Englishmen", Werrett claims that the "Panopticon offered no significant development on the usual method of a trainer overseeing his workforce. So Bentham's invention was not so much an attempt to employ 'ignorant Russian peasants effectively', but rather a solution to the immediate and very real problem of 'who will guard the guards?'"[63] Philip Steadman agrees, "In both cases the answer seemed to lie in the architectural design of new factory buildings."[64]

Middleton brings another, often mentioned by historians, source of inspiration for the Panopticon to light, "… but he had been stirred also, as Jeremy made clear, by the system of control and surveillance devised for the students at the Ecole Militaire in Paris by the director, Joseph Paris, better known as Duverney, working with the architect A.-J. Gabriel."[65]

In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault suggested that Jeremy Bentham was inspired by the menagerie. "Bentham does not say whether he was inspired, in his project, by Le Vaux's menagerie at Versailles: the first menagerie in which the different elements are not, as they traditionally were, distributed in a park (Loisel, 104-7). At the centre was an octagonal pavilion which, on the first floor, consisted of only a single room, the king's salon; on every side large windows looked out onto seven cages (the eighth side was reserved for the entrance), containing different species of animals. By Bentham's time, this menagerie had disappeared. But one finds in the programme of the Panopticon a similar concern with individualizing observation, with characterization and classification, with the analytical arrangement of space. The Panopticon is a royal menagerie; the animal is replaced by man, individual distribution by specific grouping and the king by the machinery of a furtive power. With this exception, the Panopticon also does the work of a

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[60]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 308

[61]Ibid., pp. 308-9

[62]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, pp. 5-6

[63]Cf. Ibid., p. 7

[64]Cf. Steadman: *Samuel Bentham's Panopticon*, p. 2

[65]Cf. Middleton: *Sickness, Madness and Crime*, p. 25

naturalist. It makes it possible to draw up differences: among patients, to observe the symptoms of each individual, without the proximity of beds, the circulation of miasmas, the effects of contagion confusing the clinical tables; among school-children, it makes it possible to observe performances (without there being any imitation or copying), to map aptitudes, to assess characters, to draw up rigorous classifications and, in relation to normal development, to distinguish 'laziness and stubbornness' from 'incurable imbecility'; among workers, it makes it possible to note the aptitudes of each worker, compare the time he takes to perform a task, and if they are paid by the day, to calculate their wages (Bentham, 60-64)."[66]

Foucault also mentioned that the principle of central control, later found in the Panopticon, was "the perfect disciplinary apparatus … is what Ledoux had imagined when he built Arc-et-Senans; all the buildings were to be arranged in a circle, opening on the inside, at the centre of which a high construction was to house the administrative functions of management, the policing functions of surveillance, the economic functions of control and checking, the religious functions of encouraging obedience and work; from here all orders would come, all activities would be recorded, all offences perceived and judged; and this would be done immediately with no other aid than an exact geometry. Among all the reasons for the prestige that was accorded in the second half of the eighteenth century, to circular architecture, one must no doubt include the fact that it expressed a certain political utopia."[67]

Figure 5 *Backyard of the royal menagerie of Versailles during the reign of Louis XIV, 1643-1715. Artist: D'Aveline (French artist, late 17th and early 18th century) - Coloured copperplate print (Detail)*

[66]Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*, p. 203

[67]Ibid., pp. 173-4

Werrett also directs the readers' attention toward another relevant "characteristic of eighteenth century Russian culture" – its use of "theatrical display and spectacle." In other words, among the Russian nobility, theater often "invaded life".[68] The author claimed that "theatricality was an attribute of power" and that noblemen "displayed their standing by imitating Europeans while remaining Russians … Consequently, estates were frequently used for extravagant spectacles to impress the sovereign. Many became completely transformed into idealised or imaginary foreign landscapes."[69]

Werrett set forth his discussion, suggesting that both Potemkin's imperial tour and the estate of Krichev "shared in this Russian culture of theatricality." He wrote, "As part of the Crimean tour, Bentham and Potemkin's efforts transformed the estate into a landscape of enlightened prosperity, an idealisation of Russia's potential as a 'garden of the sciences', to be presented to the Empress and her noble entourage. It was amidst this theatre of horticulture, model factories, palaces and gardens that the Panopticon was to be built. Besides offering a solution to Bentham's immediate problems with his undisciplined supervisors, the Panopticon formed part of Potemkin's theatrical display for the Russian court. In fact, Jeremy Bentham explicitly stated that theatricality was a central component of the Panopticon."[70] Since "the Krichev Panopticon was to contain 'a complete and constant habitation for the principal inspector … and his family' … [they] would be provided with a 'great and constant fund of entertainment' as they stared out of the windows … and the scene … 'would be a very various, and therefore, perhaps, not altogether an unamusing one'", wrote Werrett. "At Krichev, such a scene would consist of Bentham's serfs, employed on a series of wood-working machines he planned to install in the establishment." Therefore, Werrett concluded, the "Panopticon subsumed the spatial structure of the Russian estate into a single building: the family house, the noble at the centre, his peasant workforce surrounding him. These peasants would not be employed in their traditional agricultural or craft work, however, but on Bentham's wood-working machines – some of the most advanced machinery in Russia at the time. This was precisely the kind of enlightened panorama which Potemkin sought to demonstrate on the tour. Like Krichev itself, or the grand stage of the southern territories, the Panopticon presented an idealisation of what the Russian estate might become under the watchful eye of the enlightened Empress Catherine and her nobility: a western, enlightened production utopia, constructed amidst the horticultural splendour of a restored Eden."[71]

Jeremy Bentham was immediately inspired. "[Jeremy] Bentham's interest in conditioning human responses to particular ends first became evident in 1778, when he published *A View of the Hard-Labour Bill",* showing himself "convinced of the advantages of imprisonment, with a stress on solitary confinement and labour", "but he offered no architectural solutions". And "only when he visited his younger brother Samuel in Russia, in 1786, did it become evident to him that human responses could be conditioned, indeed controlled, by design. This was the beginning of a life-long obsession."[72]

"Samuel meanwhile was running the factories, trading with Riga and Kherson … and building *baidaks* (riverboats) for the Dnieper. Despite the 'Bedlamite' behaviour of his recruits … in 1786, he produced an impressive twenty *baidaks* … In 1786, Potemkin's orders changed. Since 1783 Catherine and Potemkin had

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[68]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, p. 10

[69]Cf. Ibid., p. 11

[70]Cf. Ibid., p. 12

[71]Cf. Ibid., p. 13

[72]Cf. Middleton: *Sickness, Madness and Crime*, p. 25

been debating when the Empress should inspect her new domains in the south. The trip had always been delayed but now it looked as if it would actually happen. Samuel was already an expert at building barges and *baidaks* for the Dnieper. Now Potemkin ordered him to produce thirteen yachts and twelve luxury barges in which the Empress could cruise down the Dnieper to Kherson … Samuel set to work and managed to fulfil Potemkin's massive order, to which he added an imperial vermicular – a six-section barge, 252 feet long, driven by 120 oars."[73]

"Jeremy Bentham, who wanted to meet the famous Potemkin, was waiting for Serenissimus to visit the estate while Samuel was away, testing his ships … Some biographers have claimed that Potemkin and Jeremy Bentham had long philosophical discussions, but there is no account of such a meeting. If they had met, it is hard to believe that Jeremy would not have written about it."[74]

"The estate flourished: in Krichev, Potemkin had taken advice from his Swiss medical adviser Dr Behr on reducing mortality, possibly by inoculation. The male serf population had risen from 14,000 to 21,000 in just a few years. Its estate and financial accounts show its importance to the Kherson fleet, while Bentham's unpublished letters in Potemkin's archives reveal how the Black Sea cities used Krichev as their supply yard. In the two years and eight months up to August 1785, Bentham's enterprise sent Kherson rigging sailcloth and riverboats worth 120,000 roubles and cable and canvas worth 90,000 roubles. In 1786, Bentham delivered 11,000 roubles' worth of *baidaks*. When Samuel had moved on, its canvas production trebled, its ships' tackle doubled. Many of the factories were highly profitable by 1786: the brandy distillery made 25,000 roubles per annum; the 172 looms made another 25,000 roubles; and the ropewalk produced 1,000 woods or sixteen tons a week, creating maybe 12,000 roubles. However, profit and loss accounts meant little to Potemkin: his sole criterion was what brought glory and power to the Empire – which meant his army, navy and cities. By this criterion, this imperial arsenal and factory was an outstanding success."[75]

"Suddenly, in 1787, the Prince sold the entire complex, for 900,000 roubles, in order to purchase even bigger estates in Poland. He had received the estate for nothing and, though he had invested a lot, it is unlikely that hiring English artisans cost anything close to that … He moved some of the factories to his estates in Kremenchuk, leaving others to continue under new management. When the estate was sold, Krichev's Jews tried to raise a purse to buy the estate themselves 'to enable Sam[uel Bentham] to buy up this town'. But nothing came of it."[76]

This was the end of Jeremy Bentham's adventurous and productive time in Russia. Finally, after almost two years in Potemkin's world, Jeremy Bentham departed in November of 1787.[77] The letters on *Panopticon,* that he sent to his father were waiting for him unpublished in England, and in 1790 "Willey Revely, an architect, was employed to give form to his concepts". Later, "Samuel, having returned from Russia, was consulted as engineer. Only in 1791 *Panopticon; or the Inspection-House* was published in three volumes, one consisting of the original letters, with two devoted to an extremely lengthy postscript, together with the designs drawn up by Revely."[78]

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[73]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 309

[74]Ibid., pp. 309-10

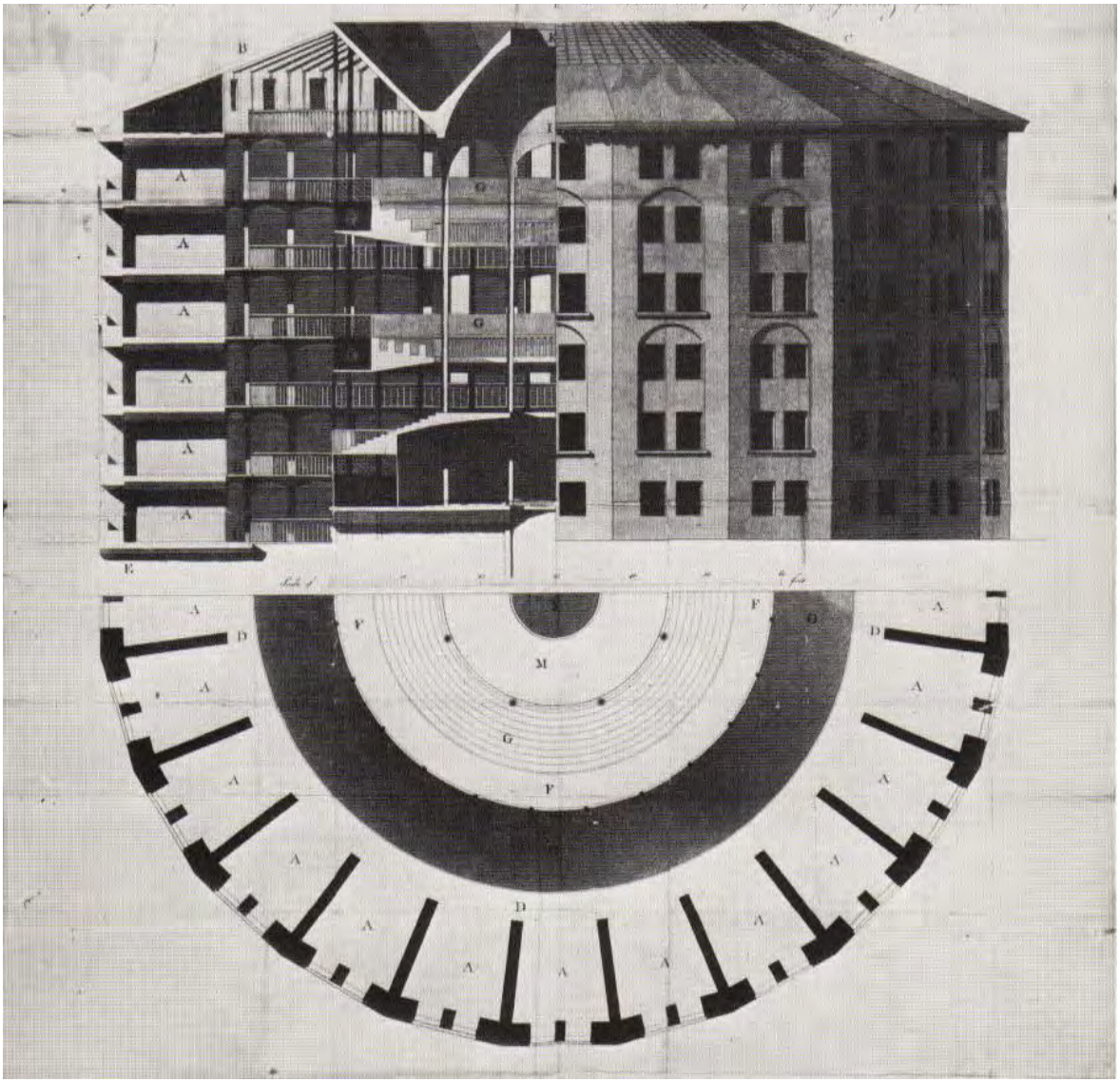
[75]Ibid., p. 310

[76]Ibid., p. 311

[77]Cf. Левенсон: *Иеремия Бентам*

[78]Cf. Middleton: *Sickness, Madness and Crime*, p. 26

As for Samuel Bentham, the "Prince had so far used Sam Bentham as a Siberian mining consultant, factory-manager, shipbuilder, colonel of Musketeers, agronomist and inventor. Now he was to bring his barges up the river on a special mission and then become a quartermaster, artillery expert, fighting naval officer, Siberian instructor and Chinese-Alaskan trader, in that order."[79]



► ***Figure 6*** *Jeremy and Samuel Bentham with Willey Reveley, design for Panopticon penitentiary, 1791: half-plan, half-section and half-elevation.*

[79]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 311

5. One Idea – Different Designs

In his article, Philip Steadman directed the readers attention to another important detail about different Panopticon designs or, at least, their different descriptions. Most of the sources described the Panopticon to be of a perfectly circular rotunda form. However, Samuel's widow Mary Sophia wrote in 1856 that "The [planned] building consisted of a centre from which diverged several long rays, all of them, on all the stories, capable of inspection from the central part". Steadman speculated that she might have been confused and had mixed up Samuel's workshop in Krichev with one of his other buildings – the School of Arts on the river Okhta in St Petersburg which was built in 1807 under Samuel's supervision.[80]

Steadman gave the following description of the School of Arts. "It consists of a twelve-sided drum at the centre, roughly 28 m … in diameter, with five radiating rings, each of them 21 m … long and 6.5 m … wide … The wings are on three storeys … The drum is made up in plan of three concentric rings. The central ring is … on six storeys … contains an office for clerks. Above this is the 'principal inspection room' … The topmost floors serve as an infirmary … Around all these rooms is an annular space, 2 m … wide, which rises as a void through the five main storeys. It is surrounded by galleries, and crossed by stairs to the observation platforms. The third and outermost ring, 9 m … wide, is divided into twelve wedge-shaped spaces, five of which form parts of the radiating wings."[81]

"The key purpose of the geometry of the whole structure at Okhta is of course supervision of all the cadets, apprentices and their teachers working in the different spaces. The audiences … are overseen by their instructors and from the centre. The students occupied in the radial workshops can all be observed from the 'principal inspection room' and from the platform on the floor above … Mary Sophia – who accompanied Samuel on this Russian trip – describes how she was allowed to enter the building when it was nearly finished: 'From the central chamber a perfect view was obtained of all that passed within the walls on each of two floors, the rays inclusively' … At the very centre we find the building's most extraordinary feature. Here is a narrow cylindrical space, about 1 metre in diameter, extending the full height of the building up to the level of the infirmary. Inside the cylinder is a chair for the Inspector of the School, '… By pulling on the ropes, the Inspector can propel himself vertically, to arrive unexpectedly at the different levels including the focus of all the classrooms on the top floor, and check that everybody is hard at work."[82]

The School caught fire in 1818 and was almost forgotten, however Steadman argues that "it anticipated in its geometry the many 'radial prisons' built across the world in the later Nineteenth Century."[83] Steadman also pointed out some of the disadvantages of the circular panoptic plan and claimed that they led to the failure of the Panopticon penitentiary. He argued that the radial plan allowed to avoid some of the contradictions of the circular design and strengthened his argument by citing examples of successful radial prison designs.[84]

Coming back to the question of the geometry of the first Panopticon, the worksop in Krichev, Steadman recalled the two other sources whose author presumably also was Mary Sophia, in which the

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[80]Cf. Steadman: *Samuel Bentham's Panopticon*, p. 5

[81]Cf. Ibid., pp. 8-9

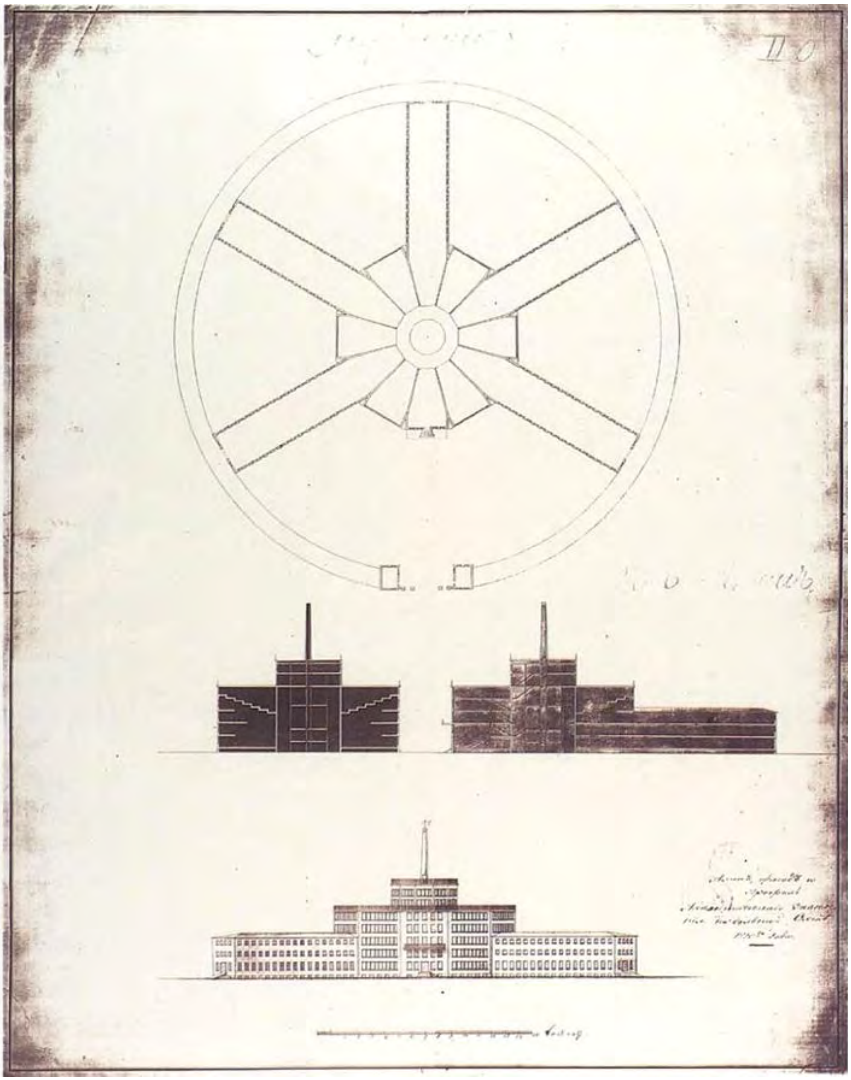
[82]Cf. Ibid., pp. 11-2

[83]Cf. Ibid., p. 1

[84]Cf. Ibid., pp. 11-2

Krichev Panopticon was described as a radial building having rays. Relying on the “detailed and circumstantial character of these accounts”, Steadman suggested, “that Mary Sophia was *not* mistaken about the geometry of the projected Krichev building, and that its plan was indeed radial.”

Steadman also argued that the twenty-first Panopticon letter was “even more revealing” because it described the advantages of “the mode of inspection from the centre”, in the “state of rest”, over the “state of incessant walking”, or inspection “along straight halls”, which Samuel experienced in the Royal Military School at Paris, where his new idea “struck him”.



▸ ***Figure 7*** *Samuel Bentham’s School of Arts in Saint Petersburg, 1807: plan, elevation and two sections (Russian State Naval Archive).*

Steadman concluded, " What is clear … is that in the 1790s while Jeremy, helped by Samuel, was persevering with his cylindrical plans, Samuel was also continuing to develop and press for radial designs like those of Okhta and – as readers may now be convinced – Krichev."[85]

It is important to point out that Steadman is talking about two completely different architectural designs, while both had the same purpose of inspection and observation. So what if his suggestion is right and the Bentham brothers each had developed their own Panopticon? Unfortunately, Samuel's own contemporary Panopticon notes seem to have been lost. As we have seen, we are only left with the published letters of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. But a few little pieces of information, found in documented letters and articles by Samuel Bentham's wife, shown above, give us reason to suggest that Jeremy's design of a perfectly circular floor plan for the Panopticon is not a direct copy of his brother's idea. I suggest that the circular Panopticon by Jeremy Bentham had been inspired by another building, discussed in the next chapter.

[85]Cf. Steadman: *Samuel Bentham's Panopticon*, pp. 27-9

III

The Emperor and His Tower

1. Joseph II – Enlightened Monarch

Joseph II was a very unusual monarch. He became famous as the "Reformkaiser" (reform emperor), for his "utilitarian bent, humanitarian instincts, and ambitious programs of reform in every area of public concern have prompted historians to term him an 'enlightened despot', 'revolutionary Emperor', 'philosopher on a throne', and a ruler ahead of his time, … essentially unrealistic, almost utopian, in establishing his goals, and dogmatic and overly precipitous in trying to achieve them."[86]

The Age of Enlightenment in Austria is intrinsically tied to emperor Joseph II.[87] His policies as co-regent and later sole regent were so enduring that many of their long-lasting effects can still be felt today. His policies were mostly formed by his thorough education and intense preparation for being a regent, as well as the impressions and experiences he made during his travels. His policies were supported by his inner circle of enlightened advisers who had a strong influence on forming the emperors' ideas.[88]

▸ ***Figure 8*** *Posthumous portrait of Emperor Joseph II of Austria by Carl von Sales, 1823*

"In him the best qualities of an enlightened ruler seemed to find expression. Idealistic, utilitarian, and rationalistic in his concepts; conscientious, courageous, and decisive in performance of his responsibilities; plain and penurious, sober and temperate in his personal habits; Joseph was forthright and unaffected in manner, broadminded – tolerant for a ruler of his age and susceptible to new ideas – and readily accessible to his subjects whether of great or humble estate."[89]

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[86]Davis, Walter W.: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer for the Austrian Netherlands*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1974, p. XI

[87]Cf. Reinalter, Helmut: *Joseph II. Reformer auf dem Kaiserthron*, Verlag C.H.Beck oHG, München, 2011, pp. 7-8

[88]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 17

[89]Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p. 59

The historical evaluation of his persona and his achievements differ widely because of his unconventional ways and because of various intrigues which still overshadow him to this day.[90] Most of the historians describe him as a "complex and controversial personality". For example, Sebag Montefiore wrote that, "No one so represented the incongruities of the Enlightened despot: Joseph was an uncomfortable cross between an expansionist and militaristic autocrat and a philosopher who wished to liberate his people from the superstitions of the past."[91]

In order to analyse and explain the actions and extravagant ideas of this enlightened emperor, a number of historians was involved in investigating "Josephinism", "dealing in great detail with the motivations, substance, and influence of his motivations. The roots of Josephinism run deep, but can be observed emerging here and there from the intellectual and political soil that nourished them … one can not understand Joseph's programs apart from the man … the tools of psychoanalysis could uncover much concerning Joseph's childhood and adolescence – his grooming for the throne as a not unloved but, in many respects, neglected member of the royal family in the hothouse atmosphere of the court – which would go far toward explaining his emotional makeup and the personality quirks that colored his reforms and, to a significant degree, explain his failures."[92]

Careful evaluation of historical records reveal a fascinating picture of a person with many different talents.[93]

2. Personality and Education

Joseph was born on March 13, 1741 as heir to the throne. He was the grandson of Emperor Karl VI (October 1, 1685, Vienna – October 20, 1740, Vienna) and son of Emperor Franz I (December 8, 1709, Nancy – August 18, 1765, Innsbruck) and his wife Maria Theresa (May 13, 1717, Vienna – November 29, 1780, Vienna). He was the eldest son of their sixteen children and grew up with nine of his siblings while six of them died as infants. The siblings had very close relationships to each other and also to their parents. Those relationships were mostly kept intact throughout their lives over long distances by writing letters as well as personal visits.[94]

The empress regretfully noticed early in Joseph's childhood that he had very little patience, displayed arrogance and sarcasm and often treated others with rude manners. She wrote many letters to her son to express her concerns:

"Oh [how] I fear that you will never find friends whereupon you place much value, and to whom should Joseph be attached? For these sarcastic, scornful, spiteful impulses come neither … from the Emperor nor from the Co-Regent but from the heart of Joseph; that is what causes me grief: … this could be the misfortune of your life, all of ours, and the misfortune of the Empire."[95]

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[90]Cf. Reinalter: *Joseph II*, p. 8

[91]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes,* p. 224

[92]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p. XII

[93]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 17

[94]Cf. Ibid., pp. 17-9, author's translation

[95]Cf. Maria Theresa to Joseph II, 14 Sep. 1766, as found in Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p. 63

Maria Theresa was so concerned with Joseph's ways that she devised a program of discipline and education designed to eradicate his undesirable traits. Joseph had been removed from the tender care of his mother at the age of seven and was placed under the governance and tutelage of the old Field Marshall Count Karl Batthayany, to whom she wrote instructional letters:

" The *Ajo* [governor or guardian] should be diligent to remove from his [Joseph's] person all those who flatter him too much, who would give to him, because of his high birth, more conceit than necessary, who want to serve him through laughter, though gestures, through gossip and reports concerning other people, or evil rumors, through sundry jests and remarks so that he may learn to value, without needless curiosity, the genuine, solid worth in everyone, and not to amuse his mind to the detriment of his intimates, a fault which is especially to be censured in great men for whom it is easy to grieve or embarrass such persons who are not permitted to employ similar measures against them. His *point d'honneur* should consist in deserving the grace and love of his parents by his industry and good manners, and in attracting other people to him by friendliness and kindly answers on all conceivable occasions, to excuse the faults of others, to intercede, if it is permitted to him, impelled … by true kindness of heart, of which he has so many examples among his ancestors, and through which he is obliged to serve others as an example.

The day is to be begun with prayer, and the primary and most essential thing for my son is to be convinced, in a humble heart, of the omnipotence of God, to love and fear Him, and to create, out of the true Christian practice and duty, all other virtues."[96]

A strict schedule was introduced: get up at 6:45 to pray, study latin from 8:00 to 9:00, history lessons from 9:45 to 10:30, followed by German lessons. After lunch the schedule continued with geography lessons and religious studies, interspersed with two half-hour prayers. The day was rounded off by attending church service.[97]

Considering his upbringing, it is little wonder that as a grown-up, Joseph II had "no idea of good cheer or amusements, neither did he read anything except official papers", as Ligne recalled, "He regarded himself as a model of rational decency and all others with sarcastic disdain."[98]

Maria Theresa made sure that Joseph got the proper education in all the ares which were important for a royal heir. Joseph was educated in all aspects of the territories ruled by the Habsburg monarchy, including their society, constitution, religion, economy and their jurisprudence. He was particularly interested in the sciences of craft, mechanics, and surgery.[99]

His religious education consisting of daily attendance of multiple services and twice-daily prayer sessions, as well as Latin and philosophy lessons were led by three Jesuit priests, carefully chosen by his mother. Another Augustinian priest tutored him in history, reading, languages, logic, and penmanship. Other areas of Joseph's well-rounded education were mathematics, literature, geography, and languages – especially German and Latin as well as French, Italian and Slavic languages.

One of Joseph's early and abiding interests was natural history. During his travels he went to see local collections of stuffed birds and animals, cabinets of preserved insects, botanical gardens and menageries

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[96]Full text can be found in Friedrich Walter (ed.) *Maria Theresia, Briefe und Aktenstücke in Auswahl*, pp. 98-101; for English translation cf.: G. Pusch (ed.), *Letters of an Empress. A Collection of Intimate Letters from Maria Theresa to her Children and Friends*, pp. 26-37, as found in Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p. 64

[97]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 19

[98]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 225

[99]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp. 19-20

and he would even sometimes arrange to converse with knowledgeable naturalists such as Count Georges Louis Leclerc de Buffon, whom he visited in Paris. The technological aspects of physical science also caught his attention, but only the practical parts, which could be utilized for some immediate and practical purpose. From his later travels we know that he greatly enjoyed the experiments the physicist Nicolas Philippe Ledu demonstrated during Joseph's stopover in Paris in 1777. We can later observe the same utilitarian standard applied by Joseph in deciding upon policies of state. "Always the acid test was: what course of action will best suit the general welfare and the primary interests of the Habsburg dominions?"[100]

Figure 9 *Maria Theresa and family by Martin van Meytens,1756, Joseph II on the left of Maria Theresa*

[100]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, pp. 64-7

3. Personal Life

During the Seven Years' War between Austria and Prussia, the heir to the throne married princess Isabelle of Parma, the granddaughter of the French King Ludwig XV on October 6, 1760. This alliance, together with the one between Louis and Maria Antonia (Marie Antoinette), was intended to tie the French and Austrian empires closer together. Joseph's expectations were vastly exceeded and it is reported that he was overjoyed when me met his future wife.

Joseph had two significant attachment figures – his mother and Isabella. He loved his wife, for she was not only very beautiful but also very well educated – especially in the field of natural sciences. She was full of ideas and very shrewd. She was not only affectionately treated by her husband, but also by her in-laws and soon became everybody's darling. Isabella played the violin, drew and painted, and also showed an interest in abstract sciences and dedicated herself to music and writing.

However, as Sebag Montefiore states, "His emotional life was tragic: his talented first wife, Isabella of Parma, preferred her sister-in-law to her husband in what seemed to be a lesbian affair, but he loved her."[101] It got worse.

Figure 10 *Entry of the Bride (Marriage of Joseph II to Isabella of Parma) by Martin van Meytens, 1760, Painting 1 from a series of 5*

[101]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 225

On March 20, 1762 she gave birth to their first child, the little Maria Theresa. After suffering two miscarriages, she was seven months pregnant when she got ill with smallpox in November 1763 and gave premature birth to a baby girl on November 22. The baby was named Christine but died on the same day. Five days later, Isabella herself died from smallpox in her husband's arms. Joseph was distraught. He wrote in a letter to his brother Leopold, "I have lost everything, my beloved goddess, the love of my life is gone". The heir apparent was so devastated by the loss of his wife that he resolved to never get married again.[102]

Since an heir to the throne is not supposed to be a widower, Maria Theresa started to search for a suitable bride for Joseph II and chose Maria Josepha of Bayern, daughter and heir of Emperor Karl VII. Joseph tried to prevent the marriage but eventually gave in to Maria Theresa's demands. And so, on January 23, 1765, he was finally married to his second cousin, who was not an attractive woman.

The crown prince viewed this marriage as a sacrifice and made no secret of his animosity towards his wife. His dislike of her was so strong that he avoided sleeping in their common bedroom.[103]

Two years after their wedding, his wife Josepha fell ill and died. Joseph II was now left with just his beloved daughter when she suddenly died of pneumonia in January 1770. With his daughter the last connection to his first wife Isabella was now gone.[104]

Figure 11 *Princess Isabella of Parma by Jean-Marc Nattier*

Figure 12 *Holy Roman Empress Maria Josepha of Bavaria by Martin van Meytens*

[102]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp.20-21, author's translation

[103]Cf. Ibid., p. 22

[104]Cf. Ibid., p. 23

4. Co-Regent

On March 27, 1764 Joseph was proclaimed King of Germany in Frankfurt. A few days later, the coronation ceremony was held and Joseph became Joseph II.[105]

Figure 13 *The Coronation Procession of Joseph II by Martin van Meytens*

Figure 14 *The Coronation Banquet of Joseph II by Martin van Meytens*

In August of 1765, Joseph II travelled to Innsbruck with his father to attend the wedding of Leopold. During the celebrations Emperor Franz I suddenly suffered a stroke and died in front of the assembled crowd. Through the death of his father Joseph II became Holy Roman Emperor.

This sudden and tragic event profoundly changed the lives of Maria Theresa and Joseph II. Maria Theresa briefly considered to step down and retire in a monastery in favour of her son but state chancellor Count Kaunitz convinced her to stay on and so it came to be that Joseph II was declared co-regent in September of 1765. While Emperor Franz I never meddled much in his wife's dealings of ruling the empire, Joseph II was very actively involved as co-regent.[106]

As Holy Roman Emperor, Joseph II was formally ranked higher than his mother, but the co-regency turned out to be difficult. The differences between mother and son were fairly obvious, their world view and generational conflicts was the cause of many arguments between the two and ultimately lead to their estrangement. Already at the young age of 20, Joseph II drafted a memorandum in the early 1760s in which he outlined many of his political views, such as responsibilities of the ruler, concentration of power in the state, removal of special privileges, and his view of the ruler as first servant of the state. One can look at this memorandum as the Manifesto of Enlightened Absolutism.

The young emperor was primarily active in foreign affairs, focusing on the areas that were his own responsibility as German Emperor. State chancellor Kaunitz was said to be of similar ilk and their relationship was beneficial for the political agenda of the emperor. Both of them put Austrian interests first, but Joseph II was also striving to keep the unity of the empire intact and hoped for strengthening of the emperor's powers.

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[105]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 21

[106]Cf. Ibid., p. 22

Joseph II did not only inherit the title of Holy Roman Emperor, but also a vast fortune from his father. He used the money to drive down the debt of the empire in order to ease the burden of interest payments. He introduced an austerity program and analysed all state expenditure in search of potential cost-cutting measures. Unnecessary expenses, especially in the areas of entertainment and hospitality, were cut. The changes were also visible in his clothing – Joseph II started wearing military uniforms in 1768, a trend which was first made popular in progressive Prussia.[107]

Ideologically, two professors were most influential for Joseph II and his political agenda: Anton of Martini, a professor of jurisprudence, and Joseph of Sonnenfels (1732/33, Nikolsburg, Mähren – April 25, 1817, Vienna), a professor of political science and political economy. Both were proponents of physiocracy – the "government of nature". This theory originated in France during that time and was one of the earliest theories of economics. All of this happened during a time of decline for agriculture in Europe facilitated by mercantilism and economic turbulence. The physiocrats believed that agriculture was the sole source of wealth, economic value can therefore only be created through agriculture and land development. Both of those professors contributed ideas and supported Joseph II in formulating and executing his reforms.[108]

The ideas of Enlightenment were already prevalent and were tangible in the Austrian capital without any need to travel abroad. French etiquette and customs pervaded neighbouring German territories, French literature was read and discussed among the intelligentsia in Vienna, and sometimes French travellers like Montesquieu, Voltaire and Beaumarchais visited the city.[109]

"Freemasonry provided still another channel for the rationalistic, humanitarian, and eudaemonistic currents of the enlightenment,"[110] wrote Davis, "Freemasons held prominent positions of authority or influence at the Imperial court." According to Davis, "Joseph's attitude toward the Freemasons was somewhat ambivalent. He was in accord with many of their aims and appreciated their charitable donations, but he was suspicious of secret societies and felt that all benevolences should be handled through official channels. He steadfastly refused to join the order, knowing full well that to do so could restrict his freedom of action."[111]

5. The Traveling Monarch

The emperor travelled extensively to get to know the various lands of the empire and also other European empires. Inspired by what he saw, he started to implement many changes in his own empire.[112]

He wanted to get a better idea about the world, of the people inside and outside of his empire, he wanted to see the conditions in which people lived, to get familiar with their needs. He also wanted to see and study new achievements, buildings and scientific accomplishments.

In the beginning, as a co-regent, he had to coordinate his travels with his mother and get her approval.

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[107]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 23

[108]Cf. Ibid., p. 24

[109]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p. 99

[110]Cf. Ibid., p. 100

[111]Cf. Ibid., p. 102

[112]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 25

Joseph traveled a lot, in fact there was no other European monarch who traveled more than he did. At the end, he had spent almost one third of his time as monarch traveling. His trips included all parts of his own lands, as well the provinces of patrimonial Habsburg lands and further territories of the Habsburg monarchy including Austrian Netherlands, the duchy of Milan, the military border zone, Galicia, Londomeria and Bukowina, but also France, Russia, The Kingdom of Sicily and the Vatican.

Figure 15 *"M(onsieu)r le comte de Falckenstein" (Emperor Joseph II., incognito as Count von Falkenstein), 1777*

Figure 16 *Johann Alexander von Brambilla*

He planned his travels swiftly, unexpectedly and very precisely – just like he preferred to rule his country. He usually traveled incognito using the name Count von Falkenstein or *Graf von Falkenstein.* This name wasn't chosen by accident, it became, as some historians state, his second personality.[113]

Joseph inherited the county Falkenstein from his father. It was nothing unusual to travel incognito at that time, it was actually a very convenient way to travel since it was faster and cheaper. It was the only way for a monarch do travel without large a escort and it allowed him to avoid time-consuming receptions at every stop along the way.[114] This was very much aligned with Jospeh's principles of providence, efficiency and

[113]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 43

[114]Cf. Donnert, Erich und Reinalter, Helmut: *Journal der Rußlandreise Josephs II. im Jahre 1780,* Kulturverlag, Tour bei Innsbruck, 1996, p. 63; Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp. 43-4

closeness to people. Though he usually traveled with a very small escort, there was always one man, his personal surgeon Johann Alexander von Brambilla, who accompanied Joseph on all of his voyages. He was not only responsible to watch over the monarch's health during the travels, but also to get an impression of medical institutions around Europe. Brambilla and Joseph became friends with the best surgeons in Europe and soon developed their own plans and thoughts about the healthcare system and about how to improve the living conditions of their own people. Brambilla increasingly became the monarch's personal confidant.[115]

Joseph's travels played a major role in the formation of his views and ideas of politics, health care, education, religion, and economy, and they formed the basis for his future reforms. During his travels the "Emperor prided himself on perpetually inspecting everything from dawn till dusk."[116]

Especially his visits to Italy in 1769, France in 1777, and also to Russia in 1780 and 1787 give valuable clues for understanding the sources of inspirations for some of his greatest projects: the general hospital in Vienna and the Narrenturm.

In 1769 Joseph's arguments with Maria Theresa regarding their co-regency began to pile up, resulting into his wish to be further from Vienna and his mother. Well-prepared for the journey and bringing with him a long list of modern and historical buildings, paintings, sculptures, gardens, battle fields, public establishments and charitable institutions that he intended to visit, Joseph left Vienna in the direction of Rome on March 3, 1769. He planned to stay away for at least five months. Joseph's visit to Italy is interesting due to the fact that he was the first Holy Roman Emperor who visited Rome since Charles V(1500-1558), and his visit was to become a milestone in his political career. His impressions of the city and his visits of ecclesiastical centres of power had a great influence on his political decisions in this later life, especially about the relationship between state and church.

On the way to Rome, Joseph and Brambilla made a stop in Bologna where they visited an important medical school and where Brambilla was a member of the Science Academy. In Rome Joseph visited, among other places, St. Peter's Basilica including the papal conclave, various hospitals and educational centres, handcraft workshops and factories. In Florence, Joseph and his surgeon visited another Science Academy. In the Lombard province they inspected garrisons, fortresses, barracks and troops. They made a stop in Padua, which was Brambilla's hometown and where he went to university. Brambilla drew the emperor's attention to the lack of space and study materials in the University of Padua, especially in the medical faculty. The surgeon's plan was successful – one year later, in 1770, the emperor granted Padua University's extension with a remarkable anatomy lecture hall, designed by the court architect Giuseppe Piermarino. They continued their trip towards Milan, the centre of the Italian Enlightenment, where Joseph's attention was drawn to a lively political discourse – the minds of the city were preoccupied with an open debate about abolition of torture and the penalty and the appearance of the famous book by Cesare Beccaria *Dei delitte e delle pene.* Finally, the emperor and his escort made a short stop in Mantua, where Brambilla also was a member of the Science Academy, and then travelled via Verona to Venice and finally back to Vienna.

As a result of Joseph's visit to Italy, he worked out a plan for political reforms of Lombardian and Milanese bureaucracy, which later became an example for the other Habsburg provinces.[117]

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[115]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 44

[116]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 224

[117]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp. 44-8

Figure 17 *Padua University, Teatro Anatomico by architect Piermarino*

In 1771, Joseph and his surgeon were on their way to Bohemia, where the population was starving from hunger and diseases, because of the inefficient government and bad conditions for the farmers. What he saw there shocked him deeply so he set up an asylum for the hungry and let Brambilla take care of the people there. Joseph proved to be a humane and fearless leader as he insisted on visiting the asylum personally and inspected the rooms inhabited by the sick and dying.[118]

Figure 18 *Emperor Joseph II saves Bohemian farmers from hunger, Wood engraving of the drawing of H. Merté, ca 1860.*

[118]Cf. Brambilla, Johann Alexander von: *Rede auf den Tod des Kaisers Joseph II*, Rudolph Graeffer und Kompagnie bey Ignaz Alberti, Wien, 1790, pp. 30-1. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp. 48-50

Joseph's most important trip was his visit to France in 1777. He had been planning to visit his sister Marie-Antoinette for a while and he also wanted to see Paris to get to know the city, its military and medical institutions, along with schools and manufactories, and he also planned to meet many important and famous people which he was there.[119]

On the way to Paris, Graf von Falkenstein and his escort made a stopover in Stuttgart to visit a ducal military academy – the so-called Carlsschule. The journey continued to Strasbourg and Nancy and finally to Paris. At the first day the emperor paid a visit to the royal family at Versailles – Joseph's sister and Queen of France – Marie-Antoinette and her husband, King Louis XVI. However, Joseph's interests extended beyond visiting his family and so on the next day the emperor and his surgeon started their exploration of the city and it's surrounding area. The first place to visit was Hôtel des Invalides. This huge building complex was founded by Louis XIV (1643-1715), known as Louis the Great or the Sun King, and served as accommodation for veterans and handicapped soldiers. Joseph and Brambilla were satisfied when they found the building to be in good condition, with big and well-lit wards and each of the soldiers having their own bed. The emperor was very impressed by the magnificent building which had been financed by the king's donations for the veterans. Afterwards he even studied a model of the building. The day after, Joseph and Brambilla paid an unexpected visit to the biggest and most famous hospital of France – Hôtel-Dieu in Paris. It was the oldest civil hospital in Paris, partly burnt down five years before, and because of that it was in disastrous condition. As usual, Brambilla couldn't persuade his emperor to stay away from the ill and contagious people. They were horrified by the low and stifling wards and the fact that three to four patients often had to share one bed. Hygienic conditions were very poor and there were neither doctors nor surgeons around to help the patients. Finally, they managed to find some member of the staff and were shown a list with the names of all patients – there were 3.549 patients in total, accommodated in wards of 20 to 40 people each, divided by gender. The mortality rate was 25 percent – an unusually high number even for that time. Hôtel-Dieu left a very disappointing impression on the emperor and his surgeon, but the emperor left a generous donation for the hospital.[120]

Figure 19 *The north facade of the Hôtel des Invalides, seen at twilight*

[119]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp. 50-1

[120]Cf. Ibid., pp. 51-4

Joseph visited Académie des Sciences multiple times. He attended different lectures and natural science experiments in the field of magnetism, electricity and oxidation. Here, Joseph initiated a discussion about the conditions in Hôtel-Dieu and even his brother-in-law, King Louis XVI, understood that there was an urgent need for action. Later on, open discussions about the possible solutions often took place at Académie des Sciences and in the following years many organisational concepts and building designs were created. The main exponent was the surgeon Jaque Tenon who was in contact with Brambilla's colleague, the Austrian surgeon Huncovsky. Tenon later traveled to England to lay the groundwork for his design of the new Hôtel-Dieu. This discussion came to a conclusion in 1788 with the design of a Pavillion system. The initiator for this French discussion were the Austrian emperor and his surgeon. Joseph II was later formally accepted as a member of the Académie Francaise.[121]

"Joseph gave careful attention to French public relief institutions, hospitals, asylums, orphanages, poor houses, schools, factories, transportation and communication systems, and harbour facilities during his visit in the spring of 1777, and he appears to have derived some inspiration from his observations for certain subsequent undertakings. He was so impressed, for example, with the methods employed by the Abbé l'Épée for educating deaf-mutes that he sent Johann Storck to study them and subsequently, in 1779, to assist in establishing the Vienna Deaf and Dumb Institute (*Wiener Taubstummeninstitut).* Similarly the emperor founded a military academy of medicine and surgery in 1784 patterned in part after the colleges of surgery which he had inspected in Paris and Montpellier, a veterinarian school and animal hospital, suggested perhaps by his visit to the French veterinary school in Charenton, and the Vienna General Hospital modelled after the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris. Innovations introduced in the institute for educating the daughters of Imperial officers, founded just two years prior to the emperor's journey to France, may also have been prompted by his examination of the famous school at St. Cyr for daughters of impoverished noblemen."[122]

Joseph has also visited more peaceful places such as botanical gardens and a natural-history collection. He also went to the park of Ermenonville, located close to Paris which inspired him to hire the court architect Isidore Canevale a few years later for the extension of the Laxenburg park close to Vienna.

Figure 20 *Park Ermenonville*

Figure 21 *Schlosspark Laxenburg*

[121]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 55

[122]Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p. 97

Neo-classical architecture must have impressed Joseph II very much, because he made notes about his architectural impressions all the time. Above all, medical institutions, but also public buildings, factories, channels and streets fascinated Joseph II, and he bought a lot of maps as well as documents about manufactures, trade and the military. The French architecture of neo-classicism was characterised by strict geometrical forms and structures, rich use of columns and pilasters, strongly reduced floral-ornamental decoration and ochre coloured, natural-stone facades. In particular the building of Académie Royale de Chirurgie, established for educating military surgeons, impressed the emperor with its beautiful Theatrum Anatomicum and library. Here, Joseph II and Brambilla saw the connection between theoretical science and practical applications.[123]

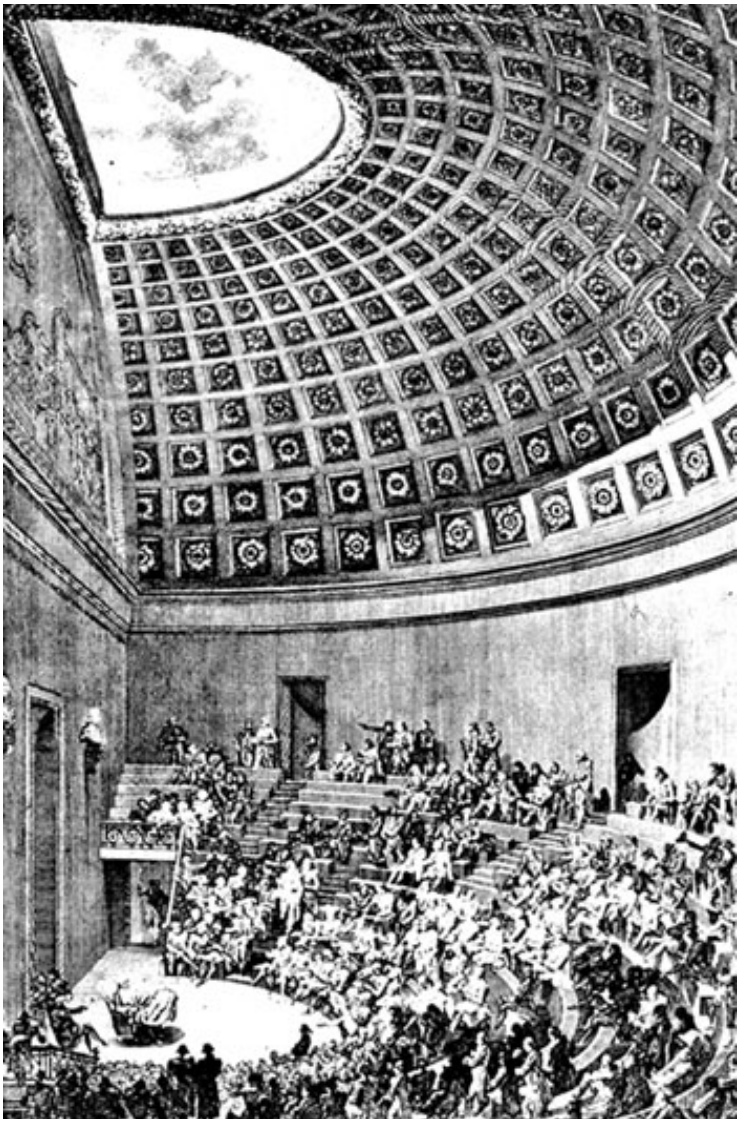


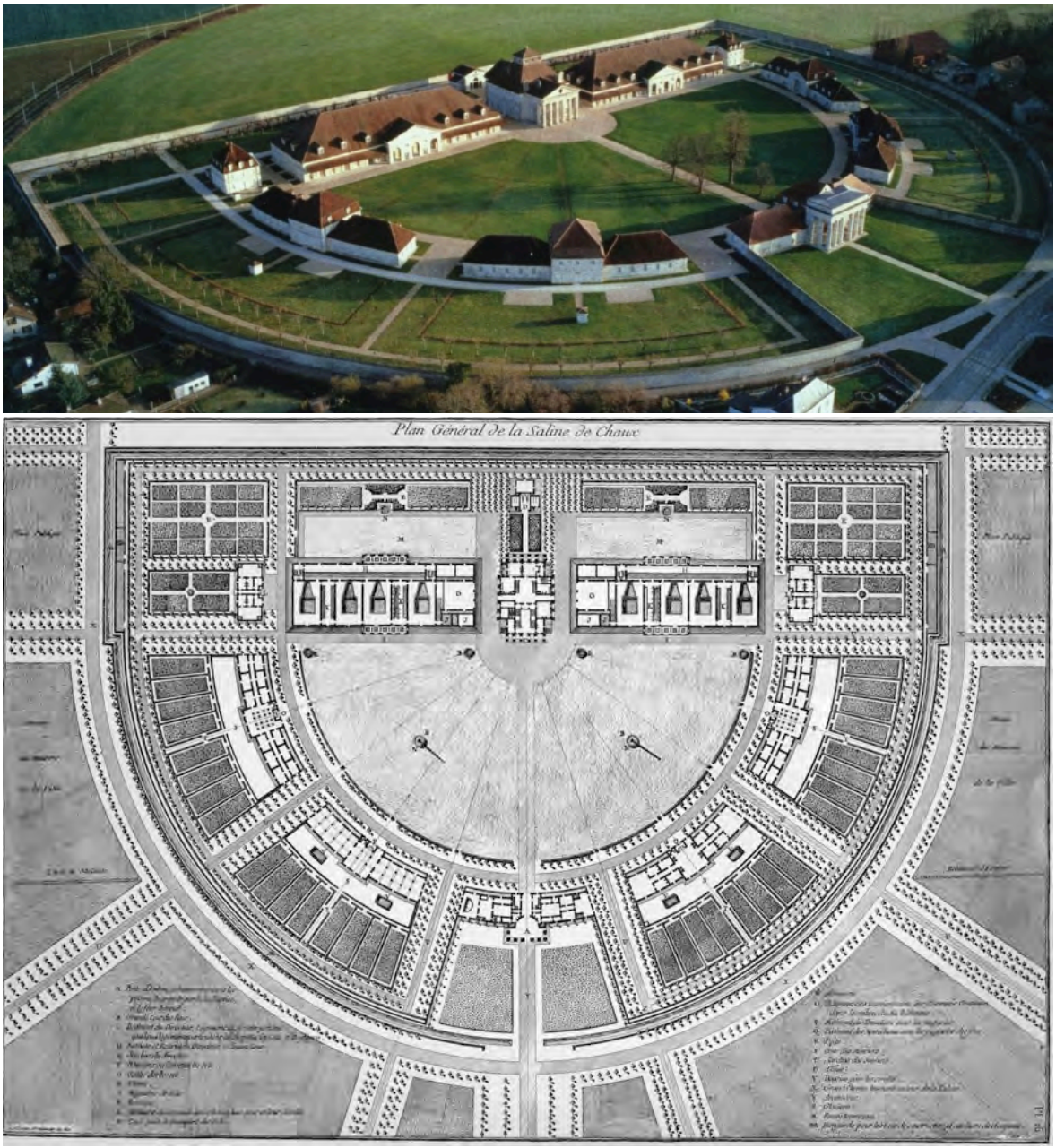
Figure 22 *Le Grand Amphitheatre des Ecoles de Chirugie Paris. Copperplate engraving from Claude-René-Gabriel Poulleau, 1780*

His interest for architecture made him visit one of the pioneers of the revolutionary neo-classicism, the visionary architect of the Enlightenment – Claude Nicolas Ledoux. The emperor had seen Ledoux's drawings and had "subscribed in advance to the publication which Ledoux was then preparing, and which was to keep him engaged almost to the end of his life."[124] A very interesting fact, from my point of view, is that exactly at the time when Joseph visited Ledoux, the French architect was working on

[123]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp. 56-8

[124]Kaufmann, Emil.: *Three revolutionary architects, Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu,* in Transactions of the American philosophical society held at Philadelphia for promoting useful knowledge, New Series – Vol. 42, Part 3, 1952, https://modernistarchitecture.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/emil-kaufmann-three-revolutionary-architects-boullc3a9e-ledoux-and-lequeu.pdf, accessed on 15.05.2017

the construction of one of his most famous projects, the Saline Royale d'Arc-et-Senans or Royal Saltworks at Arc-et-Senans (1775-1779), which was a complex of eleven buildings, five workshops and workers' homes, arranged in a huge semicircle, centred around the House of the Director. [125] I will come back to this design later in this work.



▸ ***Figure 23-24*** *Ledoux, Saline Royale d'Arc-et-Senans, 1775-9, aerial view and general plan*

[125]Cf. http://www.architectuul.com/architecture/saline-royale-d-arc-et-senans, accessed on 15.05.2017

Joseph met many scientists, politicians and other personalities, whose points of view had an influence on his policies later in his life. "Moreover Joseph held two conversations with the noted physiocrat Anne-Robert-Jaques Turgot, who had been ousted only the previous year for the office of Controller-General. The discourse must have been lively; for Joseph was familiar with the ex-minister's proposals for economic and social reforms, having had copies of them prepared for his perusal, and favorably disposed toward Turgot's endeavours to do away with sinecures and monopolies, abolish the guilds, terminate the onerous labor services of the peasants, set aside the exemptions and special prerogatives of the privileged classes, and eliminate duties on the internal traffic in cereals and other foodstuffs, which were viewed as unjust impediments to economic efficiency and national prosperity. Even many of the plans which Turgot had failed to realize – those for a state-administered educational system, religious toleration, and a general land tax – struck a responsive chord in the Emperor's heart; for his intentions lay in the same direction…

Recognising his sovereign's penchant for acquiring practical information concerning state administration, Ambassador Mercy-Argenteau arranged for financier and former court banker Joseph de Laborde to explain public revenues and expenditures, the organisation and operation of the royal treasury, and the problems of fiscal management, and for Bertier de Sauvigny, Intendant for the *Ice de France,* to describe how the intendancies were governed. Not one to be satisfied solely with official explanations, Joseph toured the coastal provinces taking special notice of highways, bridges, canals, and seaports. Before leaving Paris, he had been briefed by Trudaine the Younger, director of the national corps of engineers, on construction plans and had been shown mechanical devices and models of equipment that would be installed…'[126]

Another famous and influential person who lived in Paris during this time was the American polymath and inventor Benjamin Franklin, who served as ambassador of the United States in France. His achievements and discoveries in the field of electricity were widely known in France and his reputation meant that he was introduced to many important scientists and politicians, including the king. It is very possible that Joseph II met him too during his visit to France.[127]

"In any case it is doubtful that he was stimulated to undertake projects solely on the basis of what he observed in France. Not only were his basic attitudes well established by this time, but also he was quite frequently critical of abuses and sceptical of the rehabilitative value of institutions such as hospitals, foundling homes, or workhouses which were overcrowded, unsanitary, poorly ventilated, or staffed by personnel indifferent to the needs of those dependent upon their care. In one instance, he complained of a detention facility where the aged, criminals, the insane, inmates suffering from general diseases, and young people guilty of trifling misdemeanours were confined together in narrow and squalid quarters without even being put to work. Still, the things which he saw and heard in France left profound impressions – some loathsome, others of a salutary nature – which, considered together with the manifold experiences and ideological influences to which he was exposed, help to clarify, if not fully explain, the motivations for his programs."[128]

Joseph's two trips to Russia in 1780 and 1787 played a significant role in shaping his foreign policy and brought him in contact with many more significant historical people as well as philosophers and

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[126]Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, pp. 97-8

[127]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 58

[128]Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p. 99

architects. The two Russian adventures of Comte von Falkenstein will be discussed extensively in part IV of this masterwork.

6. The Reformer

The fact that Maria Theresa and her son hardly agreed on anything saddened her, but at the same time she never wanted him to raise above the rank of her junior partner and so she denied him many of his reforms.

The co-regency lasted for fifteen years. Maria Theresa's health deteriorated increasingly in November 1780 when she fell seriously ill. On November 29, 1780 she succumbed to her illness and Joseph II became the sole regent. The French secretary of state said after the death of Maria Theresa that "a revolution started at the Viennese court, and the revolutionary is Joseph II".[129]

After the death of Maria Theresa, Joseph II was free to implement his ideas. He continued to work on the reforms which he started as co-regent but now he was able to implement his ideals and ideas up to the smallest of details. Davis wrote on the regards of the motivated monarch, "…the energetic and strong-willed heir had been restive during the period of his co-regency, impatient with the cautious and tactful methods of his mother so foreign to his impetuous nature … Now, like an adolescent suddenly released from parental control, he wished to prove himself, to exercise his new-found freedom to the very limit, and to bring instantaneous remedies for all the ills of society whether society was or was not prepared to accept them."[130] Many of his reforms met resistance in various groups of society.[131]

The prerequisite for the far-reaching changes was the abolition of censure beginning in 1781. A completely new censure committee, which supported the emperor's Enlightenment spirit, was created and the censure of the church was eliminated. Scientific publications were uncensored from that time on.

Joseph II developed a completely new style of governance. Very few of his co-workers had his trust and could act freely. Johann Alexander von Brambilla was one of them and they developed a vision for a new medical care system together.[132]

"Joseph, though doubtless affected by the philosophic milieu of his day, was guided primarily by interests of state … This guiding principle of serving the general welfare by implementing measures based on common sense characterises all of Joseph's enactments and resolves the apparent philosophical inconsistencies in his programs. The fact is that he was not bound to any ideological formula or system but acted solely on the basis of what he deemed to be most advantageous for the monarchy and its people. When the thoughts of the 'enlighteners' corresponded with his own, he might invoke them to bolster or justify his programs, but he was in no way inalterably attached to them."[133]

"It is fairly evident, therefore, that the Habsburg Emperor, who so eagerly grasped the reins of government late in 1780, was motivated more by practical considerations than by any altruistic philosophic principles – though there is no reason to doubt his humanitarian instincts and sincere concern for the general

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[129]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 25, author's translation

[130]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, pp. 59-60

[131]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 26

[132]Cf. Ibid., p. 63

[133]Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p.107

welfare … he addressed himself with a single-minded dedication to public affairs, declared it his sacred truth to care for the well-being of his subjects, to assure the 'greatest happiness to the largest number', and to provide honest and efficient government to all within the Habsburg dominions …Regardless of the sincerity or insincerity of his intentions or whether his reforms arose in any degree from the ideologies of the Enlightenment (which they almost certainly did), the course taken by the Emperor was that which he deemed best for the monarchy and the well-being of the state…If his repeated pronouncements on the subject provided support for his utilitarian purposes, they were also compatible with his character and, therefore, all the more suitable for affectation of measures considered necessary for the advancement of dynastic and Imperial interests."[134]

"Joseph II possessed a passionate desire to refashion almost overnight his ramshackle dominions into the unified and economically-sound corporative reality of his dreams. In order to accomplish this, he recognised the necessity of breaking down the remaining feudal barriers and diminishing or restricting ecclesiastical influence, because he considered all special privileges as retrogressive, 'antediluvian' remnants of an era out of tune with his progressive ideas. Furthermore, he wished to install a monarchical patriotism, to augment the public sources of revenue and to emancipate the spirits of his subjects in order to recruit the best minds and talents for the service of the state. To him the popular welfare was an indispensable prerequisite to progress and the essential foundation for durable reforms; consequently, the emperor himself as 'first servant of the state' must nourish, care for, and safeguard the well-being of all his subjects, be they nobles, burghers, or peasants. But for all his egalitarian professions and manifestations, and despite his realistic recognition that a man's worth was not determined by the circumstances of his birth, Joseph was nonetheless a paternalistic absolutist believing it his providentially-ordained responsibility to direct his people to their highest good, to lead them to accept what was best for them or, failing this, to impose the blessings of the enlightenment even against the will of the recipients.

Writing to the estates of Brabant in 1789 he insisted, 'I do not need your consent to do good and I regard [it] as my chief duty to save you, even in spite of yourselves, from the danger to which you would perhaps be exposed should I await your consent.'"[135]

According to Davis, Joseph believed in "the government of a single individual", so the sovereignty was to reside in his hands alone; he was above the law and it was his Royal Prerogative to define the policies and introduce legislation. The opinions of state counsellors were accepted or rejected as the emperor saw fit. "Once a course of action had been determined, it was to be implemented by government organs and administrative personnel without question and without hesitation", wrote Davis, "The emperor's intolerance of delay – his conviction that 'great things must be executed at a single stroke' – led him to impose his grand

Figure 25 *Emperor Joseph II steers the plough, postcard after a painting by Richard Assmann*

[134]Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, pp. 111-2

[135]Ibid., p. 112

conceptions without adequate preparation and without consideration for the feelings of those whom he would benefit, not alone for those groups or individuals whom he would divest of special positions, honours, or prerogatives. Little wonder that his program of sweeping and instantaneous remedies for all social and administrative ills was generally received with little enthusiasm by those unable to comprehend his purposes and was obstructed and impeded by factions whose interests it would demolish!"[136]

Sebag Montefiore wrote, "his reforms rained his peoples like baton blows. He could not understand their obstinate ingratitude. When he banned coffins to save wood and time, he was baffled by the outrage that forced him to reverse his decision. 'God, he even wants to put their souls in uniform,' claimed Mirabeau. 'That's the summit of despotism.'"[137]

To get a general idea of Joseph II's reforms, I will briefly touch upon some of them and then have a closer look at the reform of the health care system which was of great importance for the emperor himself and for the framework of my masterwork.

Economic reforms

"From the very first, he levied protective tariffs against commodities found in sufficient supply in his dominions, duties which he hoped would contribute to industrial development by reserving internal markets for domestic manufacturers. More jobs would be created this way, he believed, to the benefit of the labourers whom he termed the 'useful classes.' Noteworthy here is the fact that while the workers and peasants had not yet emerged as a political estate, Joseph fully recognised their worth and acted accordingly. He regarded the land as the fundamental natural resource:

▸ ***Figure 26*** *"Kaiser Josef II, als Ackersmann bei Slawikowitz am 19. August 1769" (Emperor Joseph II as farmer), original lithography ca.31x43cm*

> Land and soil given by nature to men to sustain them are the only sources from which everything comes forth, to which everything again returns and which eternally exist. From this [premise] follows the undeniable truth that the soil and only the soil has the capacity to satisfy national necessities…
> This being so, the serfs should be freed from bondage … As free farmers they would … contribute more toward the material welfare of the monarchy." Joseph also

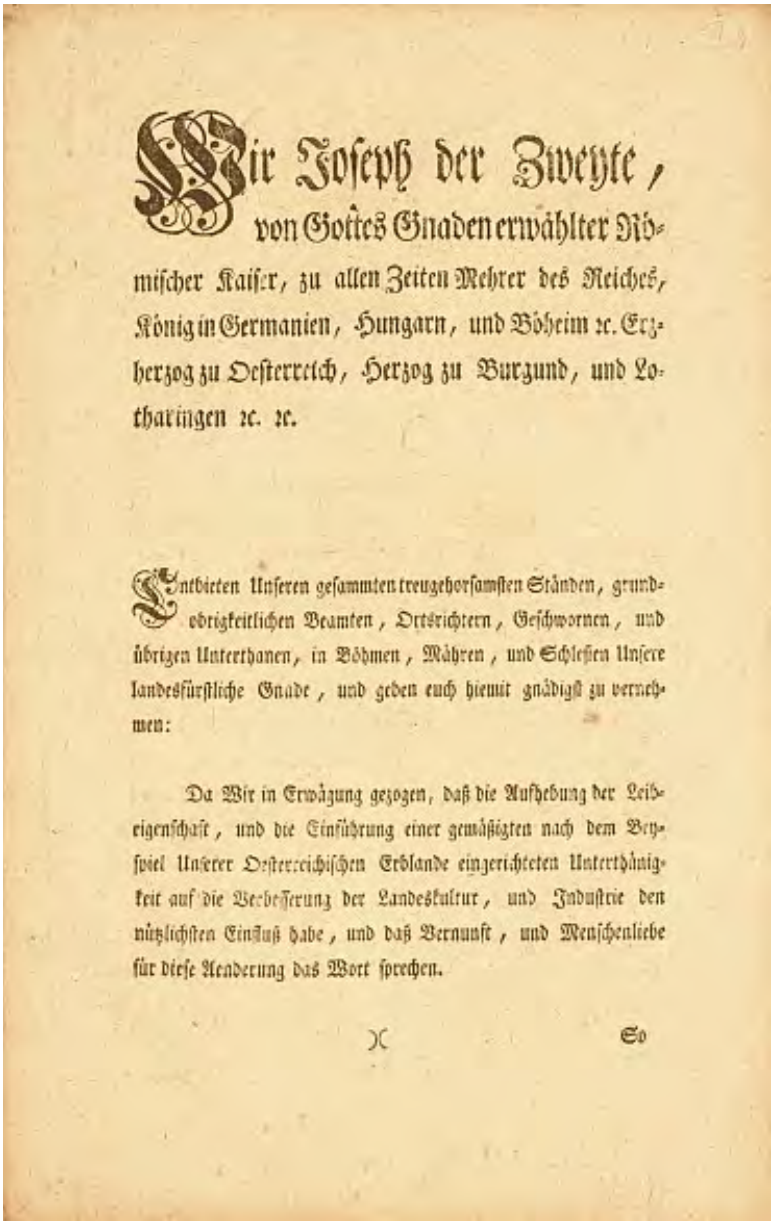
[136]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, pp. 112-3

[137]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 224-5

counted on gaining the support for the state from the emancipated serfs.[138]

"The idea of personal bondage, of course, contradicted the Enlightenment view of humanity, and also influenced the mobility of people, thus affecting the demand for workers which came with onset of industrialization. With the *Patent for the Abolition of Serfdom* in 1781 a landlord could no longer make arbitrary use of peasants. Peasants were entitled to leave a domain, to start families and to look for additional sources of income. With his new system of taxation, Joseph II sought to reduce the peasants' financial burden. For the first time there was to be a fixed, unified rate of taxation, whereby the landlords were now only entitled to some seventeen per cent of the harvest, and had no possibility of obtaining any additional revenue. However, he was soon forced to withdraw this latter reform because of vigorous opposition from the landlords.

All that remained was the regulation on the abolition of serfdom. It was only in the aftermath of the revolution of 1848 that the remnants of feudal overlordship (tithes and obligatory labour) were finally abolished."[139]



Wir Joseph der Zweyte,
von Gottes Gnaden erwählter Römischer Kaiser, zu allen Zeiten Mehrer des Reiches, König in Germanien, Hungarn, und Böheim ꝛc. Erzherzog zu Oesterreich, Herzog zu Burgund, und Lotharingen ꝛc. ꝛc.

Entbieten Unseren gesammten treugehorsamsten Ständen, grundobrigkeitlichen Beamten, Ortsrichtern, Geschwornen, und übrigen Unterthanen, in Böhmen, Mähren, und Schlesien Unsere landesfürstliche Gnade, und geben euch hiemit gnädigst zu vernehmen:

Da Wir in Erwägung gezogen, daß die Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft, und die Einführung einer gemäßigten nach dem Beyspiel Unserer Oesterreichischen Erblande eingerichteten Unterthänigkeit auf die Verbesserung der Landeskultur, und Industrie den nützlichsten Einfluß habe, und daß Vernunft, und Menschenliebe für diese Aenderung das Wort sprechen.

So

▸ ***Figure 27*** *Patent for the Abolition of Serfdom, 1781, Courtesy of Schloss Schönbrunn Kultur- und Betriebsges.m.b.H.*

[138]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, pp. 104-5

[139]http://www.habsburger.net/en/chapter/peasant-provider-people, accessed on 15.05.2017

Religious reforms

In the religious sphere, he completely rejected the atheistic and deistic views of the Enlightenment, but strove to subordinate the church's role in civil society to that of the state which was duty-bound to serve the public welfare in accordance with rational precepts. This didn't mean that the church was to be prohibited from exercising its rightful authority in matters of faith and morality. In contrary, the temporal and spiritual authorities must cooperate for the welfare and happiness of the people. "However, in the present world, the state's responsibility for the well-being of those residing within its territories must be considered preeminent … consequently he [the emperor] must be responsible for seeing that the church properly discharged its obligation to care for souls." During his reign, Joseph established general seminaries for educating enlightened, high-minded, self-sacrificing priests who would wholeheartedly dedicate themselves to serving the spiritual needs of their parishioners.[140]

On November 29, 1781, with the approval of the Pope Pius VI, Joseph II proclaimed the closure of all church orders that weren't dedicated to health care or education. As a result, an immense amount of financial, material and human resources were set free which made it possible to finance his charity and healthcare projects.[141]

Figure 28 *Emperor Joseph II meets Pope Pius VI*

[140]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, pp. 107-8

[141]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 81

Educational reforms

Making the prosperity of the empire the highest priority, Joseph decided that all able-bodied citizens should be put to work and children should be trained in specially organised schools to be diligent and adept at performing skilled tasks. Joseph went so far that no one could be admitted to apprenticeship for a craft unless he possessed a school certificate. Industrial and agricultural schools of secondary education were founded, as well as schools for girls that trained them in the practical arts of cooking, sewing, and knitting in addition to "the three Rs".[142]

Back in 1774, Maria Theresa made attendance of elementary schools for children between ages six and twelve mandatory. Joseph now brought the schools under closer governmental control. Students in both the elementary and secondary schools were educated for citizenship. Both non-catholics and jews were allowed to attend secondary schools where they learned about geography, natural science, and world history in addition to taking the standard courses in grammar, rhetoric, and composition. At the same time, the privileged schools and the Rittersakademie (knight's academy) in Vienna were disbanded because, according to Joseph, "forty years of experience have taught that, despite the great expense, only few really useful and able servants of the state are trained here".[143]

Another area of great concern for Joseph was the training of state administrators and functionaries. To lessen procrastination and incompetence, he imposed stringent regulations upon government personnel and, after 1786, Count Anton Pergens secret police was instructed to keep them under strict surveillance so that any instances of dishonesty, misuse, or disobedience would be quickly uncovered.[144]

Judicial reforms

In the judicial sphere, Joseph regulated civil procedures in 1781 and proclaimed a new penal code in 1787, which altered the measures taken earlier by Maria Theresa. Furthermore, Joseph endeavoured to eliminate class privileges in juridical procedures, abolish feudal and church courts, guarantee equality before the law for everyone and to accelerate trial proceedings. The emperor required every lawyer to possess a doctoral degree and an examination certification, and before becoming a judge a service of apprenticeship of several years was required.

A distinction was made between criminal and civil offences, and a degree of system and order was brought into civil procedures. Justice was to be rendered swiftly, inexpensively, and impartially without regard for social status of the accused. The same was true regarding criminal cases. Nobles convicted of petty crimes were chained to fellow offenders and sent out, in prison dress and with shaved heads, to sweep the streets. Joseph was determined to abolish torture and restrict capital punishment. The death penalty was not completely abolished during Joseph's ten-year rule, but death sentences imposed on those convicted of capital crimes were replaced, in all but one case, with consignment to the galleys or to chain gangs drawing heavily-laden barges up the Danube. These changes were not imposed because of the humanitarianism of the emperor, but due to economic considerations coupled with the belief that the threat of lifelong suffering could be a greater tool for crime prevention than the fear of death.On the same premises, workhouses were founded where incarcerated criminals would be constrained to perform hard labor. Also, fines were no longer

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[142]"The three Rs (as in the letter R) refers to the foundations of a basic skills-oriented education program in schools: reading, writing and arithmetic.", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_three_Rs, accessed on 15.04.2017

[143]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p. 109

[144]Cf. Ibid., pp. 108-10

used as punishment because they meant very little to the rich classes, but often brought starvation upon the poor.[145]

Health care system reforms

Joseph II viewed the life and health of all citizens as an integral factor of the power of a state. No matter if a person is a civilian or a soldier, all should have access to adequate resources and should be able to contribute to the well-being of the state. However, it was often impossible for Joseph II to enact his reforms against the will of the church and the nobility. He was the head of the army and under his leadership the military was at the forefront of reforms in many parts of the empire.

His profound education in the field of natural sciences and his vivid interest in medicine explained his particular focus on medical reforms. This was also fuelled by his philanthropy, leading to the founding of many hospitals, poorhouses and orphanages.[146]

Since the tragic death of his beloved wife Isabella and his daughter, Joseph II became very sceptical about doctors and Viennese internal medicine in general.[147] The only person the emperor trusted in this field was his personal surgeon and confidant, Johann Alexander von Brambilla, who served as counsellor of the young emperor and joined him on his travels. Later, as first director of the Josephinum, Brambilla played an important role in the field of military and civil medical reforms triggered by Joseph II.[148]

Educated in Padua as a medical doctor and surgeon, Johann Alexander von Brambilla was very much appreciated by the soldiers and had the emperor's trust. Similar to Joseph II, Brambilla was authoritarian, pedantic and paid attention to many details. Both of them were passionate about making lists and wrote all kinds of documentary reports. They were thinking in very clear and centralistic terms and were constantly defining instructions. Their curiosity and hunger for knowledge have taken them on exhausting and sometimes dangerous journeys, so that the emperor and his personal advisor and doctor could learn much about people in their own empire and abroad. They wanted to introduce big changes for the well-being of the people and often overcharged their subjects because they wanted to achieve too much in a very short amount of time. Both of them experienced strong opposition from the church and nobility because they were convinced of the righteousness of their goal – Enlightenment.[149]

The journey to France, Italy and Russia were formative for Joseph II and Brambilla's relationship and crucial for future developments. They studied and analysed profoundly what they had seen and collected the impressions and knowledge about the medical institutions, which they planned to implement in the Habsburg empire.

Due to the virtually infinite trust the emperor had in Brambilla, he was made head surgeon in 1778 and one year later he was in charge of the whole military medical service.[150]

Joseph II developed a new approach to treat poor and sick people. He didn't see them as troublesome burden, as outcasts that must be lumped together. He understood that each group of people,

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[145]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, pp. 110-1

[146]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 25

[147]Cf. Ibid., p. 75

[148]Cf. Ibid., p. 28

[149]Cf. Ibid., p. 75

[150]Cf. Ibid., p. 76

be they poor, sick, mad, blind, disabled, or orphans, had different needs and must be treated in a different way and also required separated accommodations. A high number of well educated medical doctors, surgeons and maternity nurses were necessary for his planned reform.[151]

The abolition of serfdom turned many people into free citizens, which made the state and no longer the landlord responsible for their health and well-being.[152] The states responsibilities in medical services did not only apply to taking care of the general public in cases of illness, injury, epidemics and plague but also – most importantly – taking care of the soldiers in the battle field and veterans. Nothing was more crucial for the power of the empire than its army, which relied on experienced soldiers. Therefore, the development of a medical care system in order to improve health and save as many experienced soldiers as possible was of strategical importance for the empire's future.[153]

Figure 29 *Das Invalidenhaus Wien-Landstraße, (Vienna House for Invalids) an institution for military invalids in Vienna, opened in 1787 under Kaiser Joseph II, demolished in 1909.*

[151]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 69

[152]Cf. Ibid., p. 75

[153]Cf. Ibid., p. 69

Especially the war of the Bavarian Succession, which ended when the treaty of Teschen was signed on May 13, 1779, played an important role in the reform of the military medical service. During this war, the faults of the Austrian system became very obvious and Brambilla was very straightforward about them with Joseph II. The emperor was aware of the need of action and was now ready to introduce the medical service reform. Even though the reform didn't apply only to the army, it served as a motor of innovation.[154]

Brambilla was sent to different military hospitals in the empire to inspect and evaluate their work and also the qualification of the medical personnel. After his inspections, Brambilla reported to the emperor and together they analysed the results and defined the possible improvements.[155] At this point in time, Joseph II and Brambilla had already visited various large-scale hospitals in different countries during their travels. There was an ongoing discussion in Europe about the concept of such large-scale hospitals and there were many arguments in favour – one of them cost efficiency. The pavilion system was widely discussed because it provided better hygiene and ventilation, which was a huge improvement because it helped preventing contagious diseases from spreading freely throughout the hospitals.[156] These discussions were not only held verbally; floors plans and elevations of existing and currently planned military and civil hospitals were shown around and sold throughout Europe. Therefore, Joseph II also had access to those documents.[157]

Reforms were introduced through the emperor's "Direktiv-Regeln" (directives) just a few months after Joseph II became sole regent. Joseph II ordained on April 16, 1781 die "Neuordnung der Spitäler in Wien" (the reorganisation of hospitals in Vienna), and one year later the reorganisation of the field medical services.[158] In those directives, the framework for large-scale hospitals defined exact rules for financing, maintenance, management and even outlined the required qualifications for the medical staff. One year later, on September 5, 1782, exact instruction about the number of patients and their accommodations followed.

Over the next years, a sprawling network of hospitals was developed throughout the whole empire. In Prague, Brünn, Ollmütz, Budapest and Wiener Neustadt, existing Jesuit colleges were transformed into military hospitals. In Hermannstadt, Königsgrätz, Lemberg, Milan, Mantua and Theresienstadt, completely new military hospitals were built. In garrison towns like Karlsburg, Padua, Peterwardein, Ragusa, Schärding, Temeswar and Verona, as well as in Graz and Linz, garrison hospitals were established.[159]

7. City Planning and Architecture During the Reign of Joseph II

Joseph II facilitated not just a political but also an architectural change, the building activities which he so strongly supported followed a strict pragmatism. Joseph II had an architectural vision which bordered on utopianism. They followed an architectural movement which originated in France and is today called "revolutionary architecture" or "revolutionary classicism".

The term "revolutionary architecture" was shaped in the 1920s and describes a tendency in French architecture at the end of the 18th century. It's most important representatives are Ledoux, whom Joseph II

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[154]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 74

[155]Cf. Ibid., p. 81

[156]Cf. Ibid., pp. 79-80

[157]Cf. Ibid., p. 81

[158]Cf. Ibid., p. 75

[159]Cf. Ibid., pp. 81-2

met in Paris, Boullée and Lequeu. Their most important designs were left on paper, sometimes on purpose and sometimes not, but in the case of Boullée always on purpose, because his designs were pure vision, an artistic ideal. In the final years before the French revolution it was not feasible to realise grand projects due to financial constraints, and the revolutionary movement had other priorities anyway. All the more surprising that one of the main buildings of that movement has been built in Vienna – the Narrenturm.

The term "revolutionary classicism" can be understood as a "modern" take on classicism. It was an international movement which resonated in London, Berlin, St. Petersburg and Vienna and was echoed by the emergence of modern architecture in the 20th century.

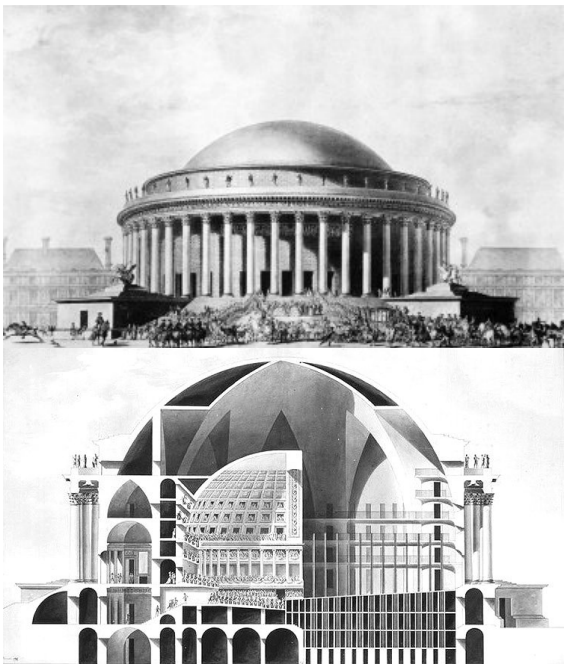

Figure 30 *Boullée Étienne-Louis – Project for the Opera au Car, Paris, Ile-de-France, 1781, perspective view and cross-section of stage and auditorium*

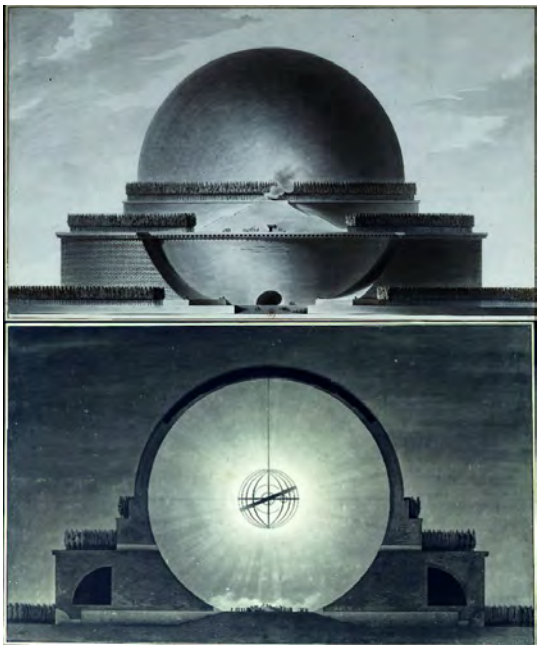

Figure 31 *Boullée Étienne-Louis – Cénotaphe a Newton,* (*Cenotaph to Newton*), day&night, 1784

According to Swittalek, Joseph II was enthusiastic about this modern architectural language and it inspired him to adopt policies which set Vienna on a path to become a glamorous, open and truly European capital – a city designed for the benefit of the people.[160] Emperor Joseph II attended lessons in architecture, had a collection of architectural designs and had a great passion for architecture and urban planning. The notes he took during his travels clearly show his interest for architecture, particularly during his trips to France. He visited all kinds of buildings, but also roads and bridges, took many notes and created various drawings. He met the classicist architect Ledoux and collected many of his published architectural designs.[161]

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[160]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 94

[161]Cf. Ibid., p.95

Up until the 1780s, Vienna was characterised by Austrian baroque, the architectural language of Lukas von Hildebrand and Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach. The curved forms were later elevated by rococo, until neo-classicism became fashionable.The building facades in Austrian baroque were accentuated by columns and pilasters, but also by figural elements such as atlases and caryatids. They where almost exclusively built using plaster, because natural stone was only scarcely available. Only heavily exposed or particularly detailed elements such as windows or column capitals were built with sandstone. The facades were typically multi-coloured, without paying special consideration to the different materials the individual parts of the facade were built with. In a similar way, the extension of Schloss Schönbrunn (Schönbrunn palace) was undertaken.[162]

During the reign of Joseph II, the image of Vienna began to change. Count Johann Fekete de Galántha described the achievements of Josephinian architecture in Vienna in the year 1787, "Vienna's location is well documented by many maps of varying quality and it is well known how much the great Joseph contributed to the improvement of the houses of those that misunderstand and mock him even more than the rest of his subjects. The great hospital, the barracks, many improved streets, the avenues on the Glacis, the Prater and the Augarten … exemplify not only his vision but also his excellent taste."[163]

The main goals of Emperor Joseph II were to improve the quality of life in the city, including access to clean water and clean air to lower the risk of diseases, open up and expand the city, as well as to increase the number of green and open spaces. Those goals were defined by himself and he actively pursued them. Swittalek claimed that city planning during that time was influenced by Eudiometrics – the teaching of clean air and the effects of air pollution.The awareness of air pollution and hygiene were major influences in the decision to dismantle inner-city cemeteries and to move them to the outskirts of the cities. The streets were systematically cleaned – using prisoners as work force – and during summer the streets were hosed down twice daily to minimise dust, which was the responsibility of the landlords. The cleaning needed to be done using fresh water – it was forbidden to use wastewater for that purpose. This made it a necessity to ensure access to clean water for the whole city. Joseph II achieved this by finding new natural springs and connecting them to the water supply system. In addition to providing clean water and improving the sewage system, apartment buildings were to be modernised and built more openly, and several parks were to be established in the city.[164]

Priority was given to removing the particularly dirty areas such as the Glacis, which was a several hundred meter wide open area separating the city walls from the suburbs.[165] Following Joseph's order in 1700, the Glacis was demolished and replaced by a street encircling the city as well as multiple lateral streets toward the outskirts of the city. In doing so, 3,000 trees were planted, green areas were created and in 1776 lanterns were erected – soon after its completion, the Glacis was embraced as a recreational area by the citizens of Vienna.[166]

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[162]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p.86

[163]Fekete de Galantha, Johann Graf: *Wien im Jahre 1787: Skizze eines lebendes Bildes in Wien, entworfen von einem Weltbürger* übersetzt von Viktor Klarwill, Nikola Verlag, Wien, 1921, p. 18, author's translation

[164]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p.89, 96

[165]Cf. Stohl, Alfred: *Der Narrenturm oder die dunkle Seite der Wissenschaft,* Wien, Böhlau, 2000, p. 39

[166]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p.89

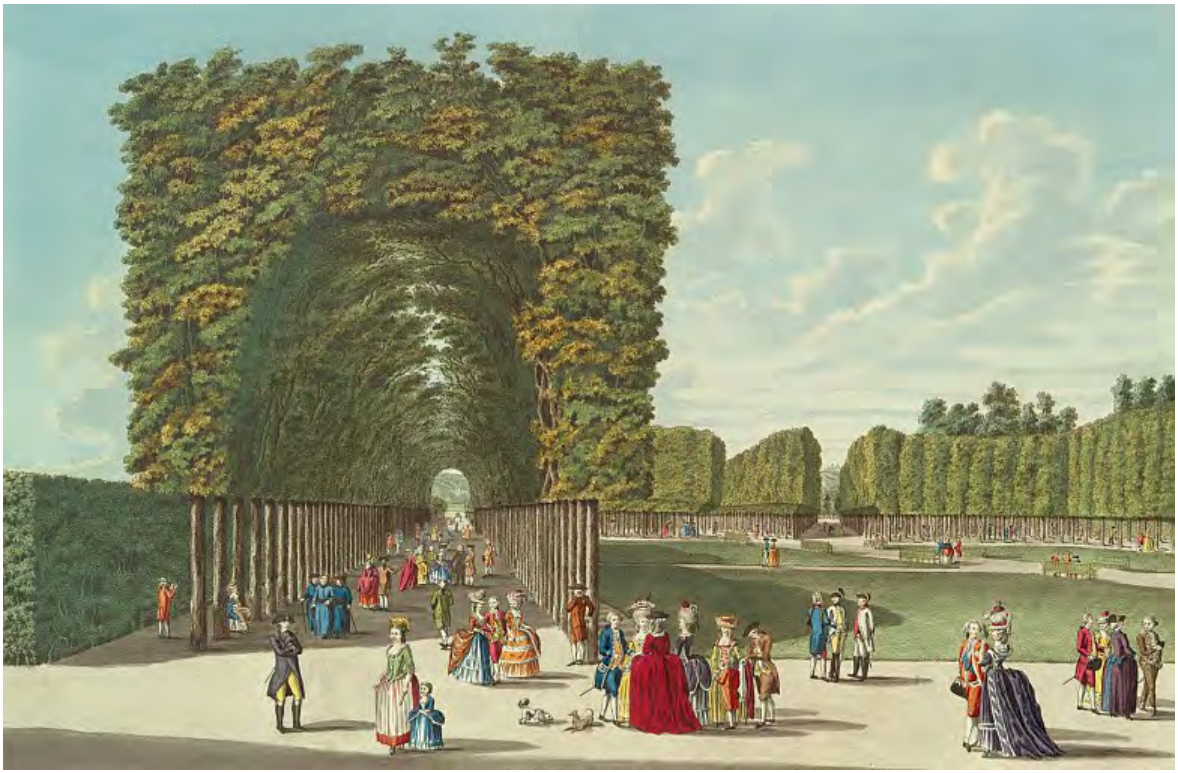

Figure 32 *Ein Theil des Augartens (Part of Augarten) by Johann Ziegler, coloured Copperplate, 1783*

Johann Pezzl wrote in 1809, "Emperor Joseph II cleaned up the Glacis, replacing it with streets, walkways and green avenues; he beautified the Prater and the Augarten, opening both to the public; he built the medical-surgical academy, the general hospital, the house for the invalids and enforced the regular cleaning of the streets as well as improved its pavement."[167]

Several parts of the city were made accessible to the general public for the first time – the Glacis, the bastions of the city wall, the Prater, and the Augarten. Joseph II decided to move the emperor's residence from Schönbrunn to the Augarten.[168] "The emperor owns a small, simple yet beautiful cottage adjacent to the park, in which he sometimes lives like a simple private citizen, to enjoy the beauty of the park. His small garden is directly connected to the Augarten, protecting him from the curious eyes of the public. Whenever he wants to participate in the simple joys of life, all he needs to do is join the crowd which has been accustomed to the presence of the emperor." – wrote Count Fekete.[169]

This simple cottage, which contained an octagon on the inside, was designed and built in 1781 by the imperial court architect Isidore Canevale, following precise instructions given by the emperor. According to

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[167]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp. 89-90, author's translation

[168]Cf. Ibid., p. 93

[169]Fekete de Galantha: *Wien im Jahre 1787*, pp. 84-5, author's translation

Figure 33 *Der Feuerwerksplatz im Prater (Firework place in Prater) by Johann Ziegler, coloured copperplate, 1783*

Swittalek, the form of the octagon, which could not easily be seen from the outside, was not chosen by accident, it was to become an icon of Joseph II's buildings.[170]

Opening the Prater to the general public triggered a thorough redesign of the water regulation north of the Donaukanal (Danube channel), as described in Fred Hennings' book *Das josephinische Wien*. In this area, which used to be troubled by flooding, Emperor Joseph II was able to perform truly pioneering work. The Jägerzeile, the former name of today's Praterstraße, which had only a few buildings back then, was transformed into a main axis of the city and was lined with trees. The little stream Fugbach was first bridged, then embanked, and finally dried up. The stream was smelly and must have had a negative effect on the resident's health, the emperor declared. Along the former banks of the stream today's Franzensbrückenstraße was built and was also lined with trees. At its end, a bridge was built across the Donaukanal which connected it to Weißgerberlände on the other side of the Danube channel. Among the streets created during that time were Ausstellungsstraße, Reichsbrückenstraße and Prater Hauptalle, which was crowned by the octagonal Lusthaus, designed by Isidore Canevale and built between 1781 and 1783. Swittalek was convinced that all of these developments followed a grand plan – the creation of the Praterstern, a radial junction formed by several main streets.[171]

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[170]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 93

[171]Cf. Ibid., pp. 93-4

During the first years of Joseph II's reign, the face of the city changed significantly and the population grew at a high rate. While the population of Vienna was around 200,000 people in 1780, only 20 years later it had grown to 271,800 people.[172] A change of the laws allowed people to change their homes and move into the cities. This led to rapid growth of the cities and especially the suburbs which were now better connected to the city centre and enjoyed significant improvements.[173]

The transformation of the suburbs was significant, villages turned into little towns. New public buildings, including barracks, were built there. Social and medical buildings were a high priority, since social policies were central to Josephinian reform politics.[174] Along the main axis, churches, parishes and schools were built using identical designs and layouts. Next to those, a grid of new multi-storey houses was built, providing ample living space for the new citizens. This can still be seen very clearly in districts like Neulerchenfeld, Schottenfeld and in parts of Josephstadt. Residential buildings were the main focus of building activities during these years. This coincided with the sociological restructuring and rapid growth of the population facilitated by the beginning of industrialisation.[175]

The buildings built during those years can easily be identified by looking at their facades. The civil city buildings are characterised by the so-called "Plattenstil", which got its name from the characteristic way plates were applied on even surfaces. Gaps were grooved into the otherwise clean facades, design elements like columns or avant-corps were left out, the wall structure was articulated by the surface layers and applied plates, staying almost flat and usually without any horizontal divisions. Windows were framed in a simple manner and repeated along building axis. Floral ornaments were used only sparsely, breaking up the geometrical form order. Very common were the festoons – a representation in stone of the garlands of natural flowers, leaves or fruit bound together and suspended by ribbons. Applied to the facade surfaces and over windows and entrances, these elements were kept quite similar and are known as "Josephinian festoons".[176]

Count Fekete wrote, "The taste for beautifying residential buildings, the art of making housing as comfortable as it is in France, is already so deeply rooted in Vienna that it has become unnecessary to speak about it. The Palais of Count von Fries adorning Josefsplatz, this landmark of honesty and success may serve as a bright example for those who were not fortunate enough to experience true beauty on their travels."[177] Here one can notice once again strong French influence on Joseph II's architectural taste, which is not surprising considering that Paris was state-of-the-art in the fields of architecture and city planning during that age. Swittalek wrote, "The face of Vienna changed, a new architectural style developed which could be rightfully called 'Josephinian style'."[178]

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[172]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 93

[173]Cf. Ibid., p. 90

[174]Cf. Ibid., p. 92

[175]Cf. Ibid., p. 91

[176]Cf. Ibid., p. 91

[177]Fekete de Galantha: *Wien im Jahre 1787*, p. 30, author's translation

[178]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 92, author's translation

8. Josephinian Stars and Octagons

Switalek shared some interesting theories considering Joseph II's approach to city planning. Due to their relevance to the subject of my work, I will discuss the most important theories in this chapter.

"Octagons and octagrams[179] have long been considered very special symbols…" claimed Switalek. "Gaius Octavius was given the title 'Augustus' by the Roman Senate and became the First Roman Emperor. The title of First Emperor of the Roman Empire became synonymous with Roman Emperors for many centuries. The latin word 'octo' means eight, August is the eighth month of the year. If Augustus is a synonym for Emperor, the title 'Emperor' consequently would have to be translated to 'eight' if it was to be converted into a number. The Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Empire has eight segments. Charlemagne or Charles the Great, the first emperor of the Middle Ages, ordered the Palatine Chapel in Aachen to be constructed in the form of an octagon … Emperor Joseph II had a special ardour for numbers and his favourite number was eight. In 1768 he founded the Order of Knights of St Joseph. Their insignia was a golden cross with a white border and the cross had eight edges."[180]

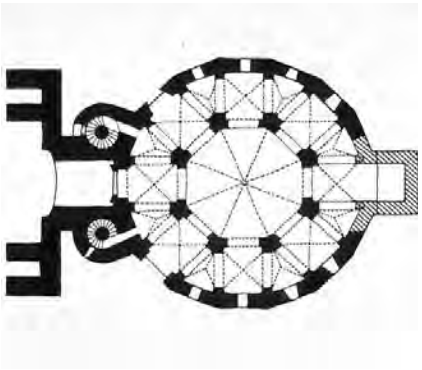

Figure 34 *Restored plan of the Palatine Chapel of Charlemagne, Aachen, Germany, 792-805*

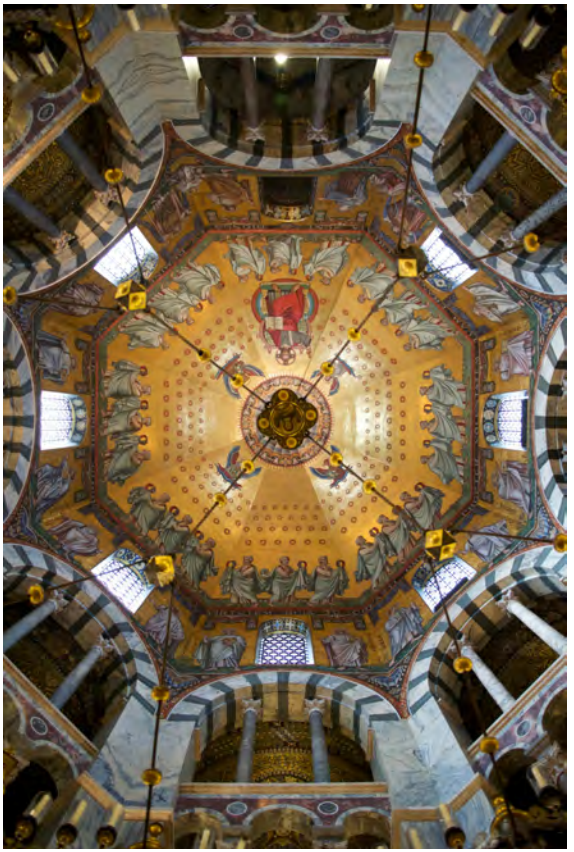

Figure 35 *The Dome of the Palatine Chapel of Charlemagne, Aachen, Germany, 792-805*

According to Switalek, Joseph II gave great importance to the creation of high quality maps of his lands, allowing him to better organise his empire. "During the Seven Years' War it became apparent how important reliable maps were for a successful military operation. Field marshal Lacy, a father-figure for Joseph II, suggested to create detailed maps of the land. Between 1763 and 1787, selected officers

[179]Octagon – is an eight-sided polygon; Octagram – is an eight-angled star polygon

[180]Switalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp. 94-5, author's translation

and engineers created carefully detailed maps of the lands of the Habsburg Monarchy. Joseph II himself was actively involved in the creation of these "Josephinian maps" from 1765 onwards. As a result, thousands of hand drawn maps were created, allowing Joseph II to organise his empire. The maps were declared state secrets. Joseph II applied his enthusiasm for architecture and city planning to reform the layout of Vienna and build landmarks throughout the city. The structure and order he gave to Vienna starting from 1765, but particularly from 1780 onwards, was so profound that it still resonates today. The emperor did not only create streets and avenues, but also eight-pointed star-like street junctures and octagonal buildings which were erected at the intersections of those radial street axis. For those buildings, which were of key importance to the emperor, he personally created drafts, floor plans and sections."[181]

Figure 36 *Grundriss der k.k. Residenzstadt Wien mit allen Vorstädten und der Umliegenden Gegend (Plan of the city of Vienna including all its districts and surrounding areas) by Maximilian (von) Grimm, copperplate, 1783*

[181]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, pp. 95-6, author's translation

Swittalek suggested that the interdependency of city planning and architecture on the one side, and medicine and public health on the other side, also had a foundation in science – "iatromathematics". Iatrophysicians were doctors who tried to solve all the problems of life and cure all diseases by applying the laws of mechanics and mathematics to the human body. The greek word "Iater" means doctor and this science was popular in the European Renaissance and was applied until the 18th century. Iatrophysicians tried to find exact reasoning for medical issues in the realm of natural sciences. Mathematical calculations were of great importance, the science explored the influence of macrocosm on the life of microcosm (humans); it was believed that diseases and their treatment were influenced by the stars and their constellations. The effectiveness of medications depended on the exact time when they were created and also on the time they were applied to the patient. Profound knowledge of astrology was therefore an essential requirement for doctors. Swittalek claimed that Joseph II saw a connection between the outer and inner order of things – in politics, in city planning and architecture as well as medicine. It can therefore be assumed that an iatromathematical way of thinking played a part in creation of a new order within an existing city layout.[182]

Arancha Traub-Swittalek investigated the "stars" and octagonal buildings which were erected under Joseph II, connected them with axis and compared them to historical maps of the city. Those historical maps show significant differences to modern maps, the course of some inner city streets changed over the last two centuries. However, the changes also affected some key elements of the city layout, such as the Praterstern which was built under Joseph II. Today it exists as a seven-pointed star, but one would expect it to be an octagram knowing about Joseph's preferences. Clues about this oddity can be found by studying the city layout created by Mansfeld in 1789, which clearly shows that one corner of the Praterstern is missing – apparently because the building which stands on the eighth corner had not been demolished. The eighth street – the continuation of today's Ausstellungsstraße – would originate exactly at that point. The Praterstern needed to incorporate pre-existing buildings and roads – therefore it was built using four different angles. The eight-star junction at Lusthaus on Prater Hauptallee had no such restrictions and was therefore built using just two different angles, 40 degrees and 50 degrees, respectively.

"But why was such a pivotal element of the new Vienna city layout built in exactly this area?", questioned Swittalek. "The answer can be found a few hundred meters away", he continued, "Joseph II showed great personal interest in Vienna's second district, the Leopoldstadt. He turned his attention away from Schönbrunn Palace and its palace gardens, and focused on the Augarten. He once said, 'Everything I do, I want to feel the effects immediately! When I had the Augarten and the Prater built, I didn't use saplings but grown trees, which would provide shade for me and my fellow citizens.'"[183]

The emperor redesigned the Augarten and created an axial network of paths, the parterres were designed as simple patches of grass and the pruning of trees was reduced. Isidore Canevale was in charge of the most important gardening projects of the emperor. He was not just responsible for planning the buildings (starting with the Augarten portal and culminating with the Lusthaus in the Prater) but he was also in charge of landscaping. He was later tasked with redesigning the Imperial Garden in Laxenburg.

Joseph II acquired the former garden grounds of the Croatian seminary which was adjacent to the Augarten and ordered the Josephstöckl to be erected there. This simple building in direct proximity to the Augarten was built in 1780. In the 18th century it was fashionable to build a small hermitage within gardens,

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[182]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 96

[183]Cf. Ibid., p. 99, author's translation

Figure 37 *Leopoldstadt by Carl Graf Vasquez, 1830*

other examples are Marie Antoinette in Versailles or Catherine the Great in St. Petersburg. According to Swittalek, the Josephstöckl must be seen in this context.[184]

Joseph II resided frequently in this garden hermitage and received the Russian heir Grand Duke Paul there in 1781. Today, the building is quite inconspicuous and after various alterations it is now used by the Wiener Sängerknaben (Vienna Boys' Choir).

Swittalek pointed out that the Josephstöckl bears a resemblance to the Monticello, the home of the Third President of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson (13.04.1743, Shadwell, Virginia – 04.07.1826, Monticello, Virginia), who designed the building for himself around 1769. The templates for the Monticello were Andrea Palladios' Villa La Rotonda and the Pantheon in Rome. Inspired by those buildings, there was an elevated octagonal room in the centre of the house which was lighted by two high circular windows.[185]

From the location of the Josephstöckl the Kaiser Josephstraße (today Heinestraße) lead directly to Praterstern and thus constituted its first axis. Continuing on the other side of the Praterstern, the Prater

[184]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 99

[185]Cf. Ibid., p. 100

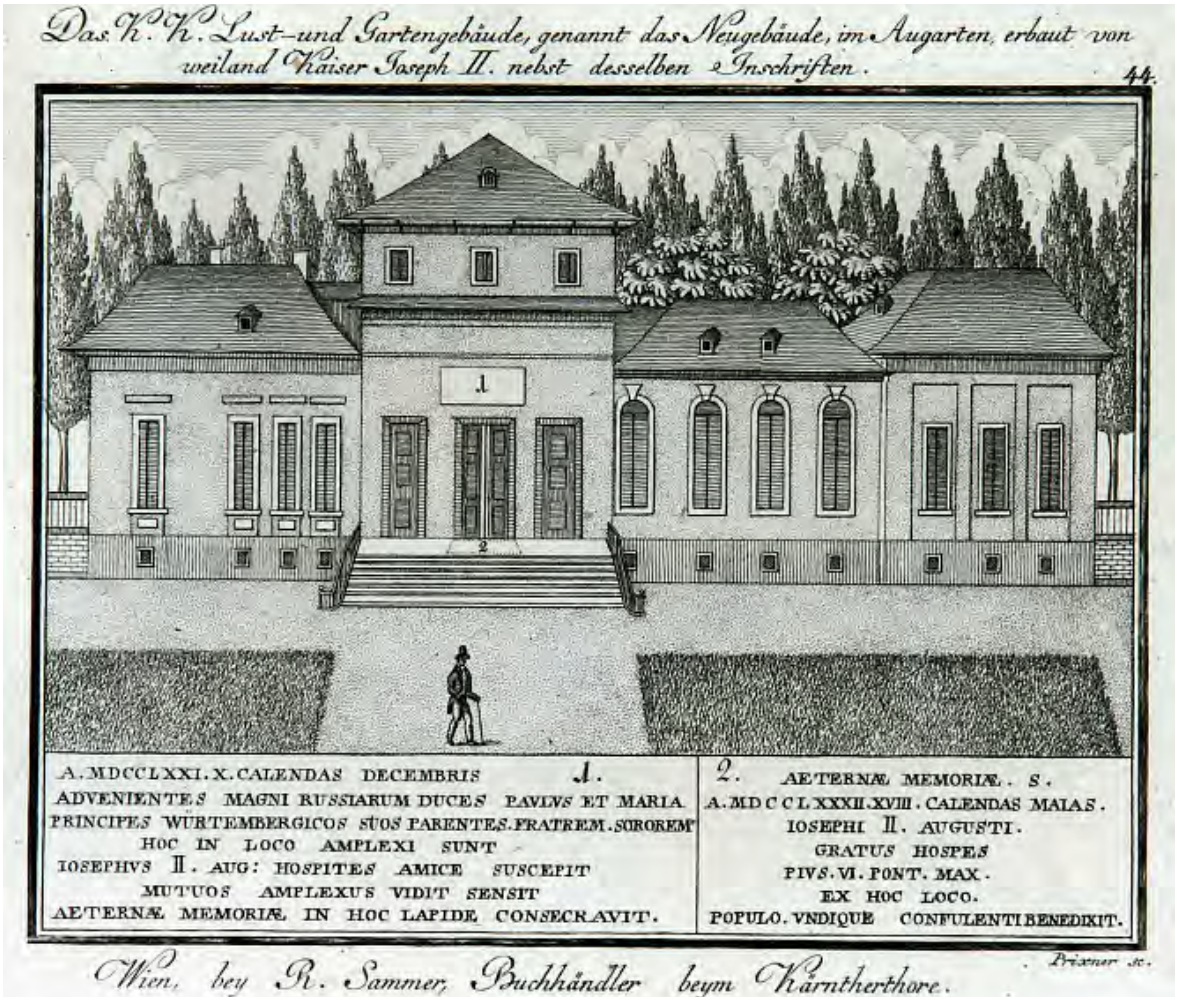

Figure 38 *Josephstöckl or a new residence in Augarten, copperplate, 1832*

Figure 39 *Monticello, Thomas Jefferson, 1769*

Figure 40 *The Lusthaus in the Prater by Johann Ziegler, copperplate engraving, 1783*

Hauptallee lead straight to the Lusthaus and the Lusthausstern (Lusthaus star).

The Prater Hauptallee, which was built under Joseph II, connected both stars across the Prater and was the central axis of Josephinian city planning. The Prater, the green lung of the city, was opened to the general public as a recreational area under Joseph II, and became a key contributor to healthier living conditions in the city.[186]

The centres of these stars were occupied by octagons, with the exception of the Praterstern which remained empty. According to Swittalek, Emperor Joseph II used this to mark places of great importance for him, ones he enjoyed to spend time at. While the city itself was composed of a dense network of streets and buildings, it received a new layer over the existing one – a new structure of star axis and octagons. Not all of those octagons are still preserved in their original form, some have disappeared and their original location can only be guessed at.

The most famous one is the Lusthaus in the Prater, which was designed by Canevale and built between 1781 and 1783. The two-storied building was enclosed by a circle of columns and completed by a lantern-like octagon turret. The coffee shop within the building still exists today, and was a frequent destination for the emperor when taking a trip with his carriage.

If one extends the Aspernallee beyond the Lusthaus one ends up at another octagon – the Josephsruhe at Laaerberg. It was built as a twin building to the Lusthaus at Prater and looked almost

[186]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 101

Figure 41 *The Josephsruhe with the view on Schwechat and Laaerwald by Joseph Schaffer, 1787*

identical. The purpose of these buildings was to enjoy nature, because of their exposed location one could not only enjoy a good view of Vienna, but could see all the way to the Imperial Residence at Laxenburg – where another octagon was built.[187]

It was also possible to see all the way to the palace gardens of Schönbrunn Palace which was home to the Kleine Gloriette (small Gloriette) – yet another octagon. Visitors at Josephsruhe could rent telescopes which allowed them to see those other, far-away octogons. Over the centuries, the Josephsruhe vanished without a trace, no remains of it can be seen today.

Following the Ausstellungsstraße beyond Praterstern one ends up at the Narrenturm – right in the middle of the medical district. This building did not only serve as a modern accommodation for people with mental illnesses, but also stands out as a truly unique building. By virtue of the octagonal wooden top unit it becomes part of the family of Josephinian octagons. The Narrenturm poses questions which lead to many speculations which will be expanded on later.

As discussed above, several smaller octagons were developed by Canevale in Imperial Gardens at the extension of the various axes. One of those axis started at Augarten and continued through Neue Gasse (today's Untere Augartenstrasse).[188]

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[187]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 102

[188]Cf. Ibid., p. 103

The extension of this street was a bridge across Donaukanal (Danube channel) and further ahead it crossed the Glacis and terminated at the Kleine Gloriette (small Gloriette) within the Schönbrunn Palace Gardens. It was the first known octagon in the city and was most likely built some time between 1775 and 1780 by Isidore Canevale. It is located in close proximity to the Große Gloriette (big Gloriette), which was built by his colleague Ferdinand Hetzendorf von Hohenberg. The slender, tower-like, octagonal building is approximately 14 meters tall and is slightly hidden in the shadows of the Große Gloriette. Today it is surrounded by a forest, therefore it's only possible to get a good view from its windows during the winter months.

The Kleine Gloriette lies on the intersection point with the axis of Praterstrasse and is in that way connected to the Praterstern. An additional axis runs along the former Gatterhölzlallee, the exact location of which has changed over the years and follows roughly today's Hohenbergstraße. Continuing on this axis one ends up back at the Josephsruhe at Laaerberg.

One of the rays of the Kleine Gloriette meets the Hercules monument in the Schönbrunn Palace Gardens. If one follows the garden axis from the Hercules monument beyond the Kleine Gloriette, one ends up at the octagon at the garden of Laxenburg, which could be seen only with the help of a telescope from the very top of the Kleine Gloriette – which might explain the height of the octagon.

The Lusthaus in Laxenburg was built between 1783 and 1786 as Chinese Lusthaus. It was an open wooden construction and, according to Wagner-Rieger, has a similarly sober and stereo-metric style as other works by Canevales.[189] Another octagonal building at Laxenburg was the so-called Laxenburger Carusell.

Figure 42 *The Kleine Gloriette in Schönbrunn Palace Garden, probably by Isidore Canevale, 1775*

[189]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 104

If one follows Lasallestraße beyond Praterstern and Praterstraße, one ends up the the Imperial Library at Josephplatz. The central room of that library has the form of an octagon.

Also originating at Praterstern is Franzensbrückenstraße. If one follows this street and intersects it with Belvedereallee (which originates at Lusthaus), one ends up at the Waisenhauspark in today's third district. Back then it was the location of the St. Marx Citizens Hospital, today it is known as Rennweg barracks, located between Rennweg and Landstraße. At Rennweg, a little bit closer to the city centre, the Spital der Barmherzigen Brüder (or Brothers of Mercy Hospital) is located, which supposedly had an octagonal building in its courtyard. That building had been destroyed a long time ago and nothing is known about its construction. However, it can be seen on an English map of Vienna which was drawn in the early 19th century. The head of the Spital der Barmherzigen Brüder at the beginning of Joseph II's reign was his personal doctor, Joseph von Quarin, who later became the first director of the Allgemeines Krankenhaus (general hospital).

Extending the axis from Kleine Gloriette beyond the Narrenturm, one ends up at the former Spanish hospital, which today houses a priests seminary at Boltzmanngasse.

According to Swittalek, there are various documents which state that Joseph II personally created the design sketches for some of the octagons which were built during his reign. It can therefore be concluded that the architect Canevale created the constructions plans for those octagons following the exact instructions of the emperor. Canevale is generally considered to be the designer of the floor plans, but

Figure 43 *Chinese Pavillon in Laxenburg by Laurenz Janscha, around 1800*

apparently it was the emperor who was the real mind behind them and Canevale was merely the executive architect. “Time and again, Joseph II visited the octagons to be in the centre of the radial axes which resembled the rays of the sun”, wrote Swittalek.[190]

Similar examples of important buildings placed precisely at the extension and intersection of city axes have existed in Rome for many centuries. If one traces two lines between four major churches in Rome, one between San Pietro in Vaticano (319) and San Giovanni in Laterano (313), and another between Santa Maria Maggiore (432-440) and San Paolo fuori le mura (385 AD) – these axes form a perfect cross. Exactly at the intersection of these axes one finds an ancient Coliseum.

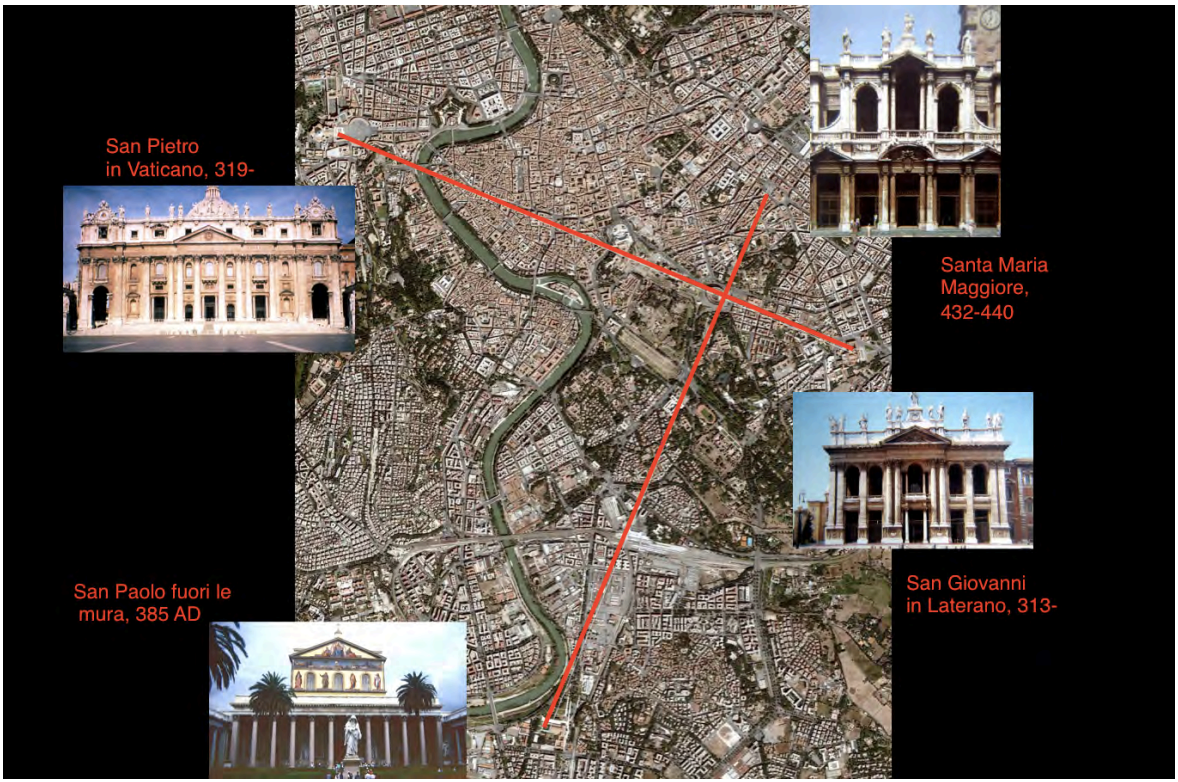

Figure 44 *Map of Rome showing the Coliseum at the intersection of two axes between major churches: San Pietro in Vaticano – San Giovanni in Laterano and Santa Maria Maggiore – San Paolo fuori le mura*

[190]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 105

9. The Medical District

One of the main areas of urban development was between Waringergasse (today's Währingerstraße) and Alserstraße. In the span of three years, a huge medical complex was built there – from the Josephinum to the Allgemeines Krankenhaus (general hospital) the medical campus included all the main medical buildings in close proximity to each other. A civil hospital with 2,000 beds, a clinic for training new doctors, a special ward for 250 mentally ill patients, a military hospital with 1.200 beds, a boarding school and a medicinal herb garden; this complex was unique in all of Europe.[191] Starting at Schottentor, several streets were built to directly connect the new medical district to the rest of the city.[192]

After the second Turkish siege, in the year 1693, Emperor Leopold I founded the Home for the Poor and Invalid in the triangle between Alserstraße, Spitalgasse and Garnisongasse, which are today part of the ninth district. In 1695, the Home for the Poor and Invalid was partly opened; in 1696 it accommodated more

Figure 45 *View from Schottentor to the Wäringergasse, Wiesen and Rossau by Johann Ziegler, 1779*

[191]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 126

[192]Cf. Ibid., p. 93

than 1,000 people.[193] It was a two-storey building with four wings, each about 200 meters long, arranged around a central inner courtyard – today's "Hof 1" (or first courtyard) of the Altes Allgemeines Krankenhaus (former general hospital). The architect of the Home for the Poor and Invalid is unknown.[194]

The first and second courtyards of the former general hospital were completed in 1697 and 1726, respectively. The second courtyard, once called Ehehof (marriage courtyard) or Witwenhof (widows' courtyard), is today known as Thavonahof after its sponsor Freiherr von Thavonat. The hospital was extended again between 1730 and 1752.[195] Between 1752 and 1774, the third courtyard called Studentenhof (student's courtyard) and the sixth courtyard called Hausverwalterhof (caretaker courtyard) were built.

On this closed site, a so-called "town inside the town" was formed, where sometimes up to 6,000 people lived permanently, wearing their own uniform and using their own copper coins. This currency could be used at the bakery, butchery and other services within the complex.[196]

On January 28, 1783, Joseph II, accompanied by Brambilla, visited the Home for the Poor and Invalid. Joseph was under the impression that this huge complex served more as an accommodation for the privileged few, than for people who were actually in need of help.When he didn't receive all documents he asked for about the operations of the facility, the unsatisfied emperor made a drastic decision – to close the whole complex.

During their travels, the emperor and his surgeon had visited a great number of hospitals and medical institutions, such as Hôtel-Dieu in Paris, the wonderful complex for veterans – Hôtel des Invalides, Ospedale Maggiore in Milan, and the Great Military Hospital in Moscow. Having learned from these examples, he decided it was now time for Vienna to get a modern hospital complex and, after closing the Home for the Poor and Invalid, a big building area in the city had become available. Building the hospital complex outside the city was also considered, but the emperor decided to use and expand the former site of the Home for the Poor and Invalid. By closing some nearby monasteries, additional buildings were made available for taking care of the old, poor, disabled and orphaned. The emperor ordered that these people should be taken care of in decentralised, dedicated institutions rather than in hospitals.[197]

Joseph II wanted to make use of all the best ideas and resources for the new general hospital, so he decided to hold a design competition. The focus of that competition was not on the architectural design but on the operational concept of the new hospital. Ten of Vienna's leading doctors participated in the competition. It was common during that time that doctors developed concepts for hospitals and architects were only involved in the later phases of a project. This might seem surprising at first glance, but makes sense when the complexity of the task is regarded. Economical efficiency, medical requirements, safety and hygiene were the most important criteria. The form was not an end in itself.

In the 18th century, building a hospital was an extraordinarily complex task, which required in-depth knowledge about treating and taking care of ill and injured people. Efficient functionality was always the top priority, which was also true for architecture of the Josephinian neo-classicism. This explains why the first

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[193]Cf. http://www.akhwien.at/default.aspx?pid=88, accessed on 18.05.2017

[194]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 106

[195]Cf. http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/hp/1/forensic-medicine/general-information/history-of-the-department-of-forensic-medicine-in-vienna/home-for-the-poor-an-invalid/, accessed on 18.05.2017

[196]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 107

[197]Cf. Ibid., p. 107

steps in creating the concept for this healthcare and educational building were made by the doctors and not the architects. Building on this foundation, in the second stage the doctors and architects worked together on the preliminary design. In the third stage, the final architectural concept with design details was created. This can be well-recognised when looking at the former general hospital.[198]

Soon after the design contest ended, the competition winner was announced: Joseph von Quarin, the medical principle of the Brothers of Mercy Hospital in today's third district of Vienna and a personal doctor of the emperor. However, it was not his position but his approach that was crucial for the decision. His concept corresponded with the emperor's idea of centralism.

According to Joseph II, the structure of the state, government and its institutions, but also city planning, should be organised from one centre. Swittalek suggested that this explains also the formation of Praterstern and Lusthausstern as the starting points for city planning in Vienna.The same approach involved medical institutions and therefore also the new general hospital.[199]

It was planned to keep using the basic structure of the existing building of the Home for the Poor and Invalid. The economic viability of the general hospital was of particular importance to Joseph II because it was a civilian, public hospital which also had to fulfil various social functions. Therefore it made sense to reuse the existing structure.

Quarin took over the development of a plan on how to adapt the existing building, in which he defined a one-sided corridor system. For this architectural task, Quarin must have been helped by the court architect Isidore Canevale. The actual construction work was done by the executive architect Joseph Gerl, while Canevale was only involved when necessary. The whole construction was planned to be completed within seventeen months.[200]

To emphasise the middle axis of the first courtyard, an octagonal chapel was build in front of the entrance and this axis was extended through the other courtyards. The simple and unsophisticated architectural form of the complex was very unusual for the late Baroque.

On August 16, 1784 the new Allgemeines Krankenhaus was finally opened, shorty followed by new buildings for the military hospital and the surgical academy. [201]

During their trip to France, the emperor and his surgeon visited the Académie Royale de Chirurgie and were very impressed by this medical-surgical institution. Another medical-surgical school was erected in St. Petersburg in 1783. Building a similar institution in Austria was very important for the Josephinian reformational policy.

The aim was to have the hospital and the new surgical academy – theory and practice – connected to each other. To that end, Joseph II, advised by Brambilla, decided to create a new building near the Alserkaserne, with became part of the medical complex on the site of the former Home for the Poor and Invalid. On this site, the civil and military hospitals were combined with the university. [202]

Brambilla was granted the privilege to directly influence the massive project, whose first director he later became. The surgeon has been concerned with hospital design for many years – he described, for

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[198]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 108

[199]Cf. Ibid., p. 109

[200]Cf. Ibid., p. 110

[201]Cf. Ibid., p. 111

[202]Cf. Ibid., p. 113

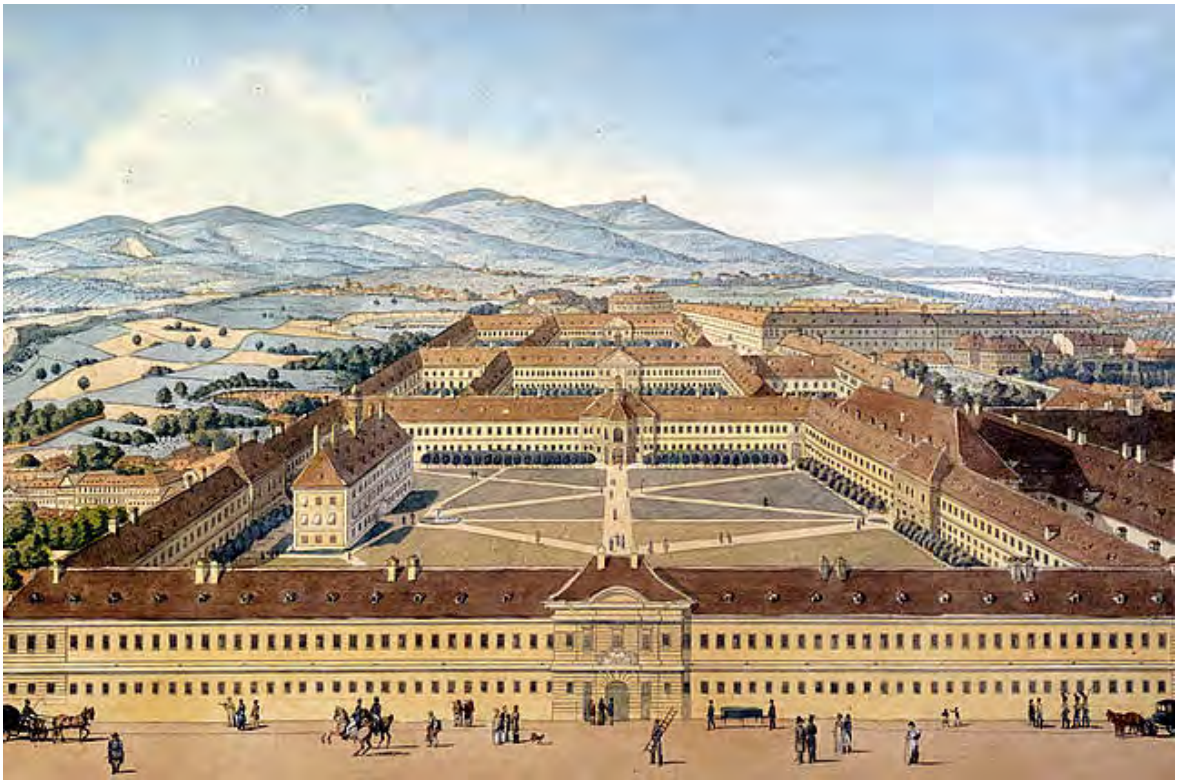


Figure 46 *Altes Allgemeines Krankenhaus (Altes AKH) or former general hospital, 1793*

example, in his work *Abhandlungen über die Phlegmone* (1775) his experiences during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) in Saxony and why he had ordered to build wooden barracks for the ill and injured. These war-time barracks were designed in a way to allow the separation of the ill and injured as required, and guaranteed good ventilation of the wards – these qualities were of utmost importance for him. As a result, the hospital barracks were standardised and erected at all battle fields using a modular design principle. It is noticeable that there was a strict functional division – in the centre the operating barrack was located, surrounded by the pharmacy, kitchen, storage space and common rooms for the personnel. Around this inner space, barracks for the ill and injured were orthogonally arranged. They included about 150 to 200 beds each and were arranged in one or two rows. In the outer corners, four housing barracks for the staff were placed. All the barracks were one-storey buildings, bed barracks had a remarkable height of at least 4 meters to provide a good flow of air. This modular design principle served as a model for all the field hospitals in future wars, and even the bigger field hospitals for 600 up to 1,000 patients were built following the same design.

Brambilla attached the plans for these field hospitals together with the plans of the surgical academy, the military hospital and the Narrenturm or Fools' Tower to his last work – *Appendice all Storia della chirurgia Austriaca Militare* (Appendix for the Austrian military surgery).

Brambilla translated his educational model, which unified theoretical lectures in the lecture hall (Teatro Anatomico) with the practical work on patients, into architecture which resulted in his master plan for the

Figure 47 *Presentation of the design for Josephinum, after 1783*

medical complex. This master plan for the three-part medical complex, which consisted of the Josephinum (surgical academy), the Garnisonspital (military hospital), and the Narrenturm (Fools' Tower) was then used by Isidore Canevale to create the architectural design.[203] This area for the medical complex was smaller than the area with the general hospital, but consisted of completely new buildings.[204]

From the perspective of city planning, the Josephinum, Garnisonspital and Narrenturm belong together. While the strict orthogonality envisioned in the original plans couldn't be fully achieved because of the local conditions, the axiality was preserved. Just the northern wings of the hospital and the academy are clearly shifted from the axis and slightly rotated.[205]

The "face" of the medical complex is represented by the Josephinum – a three-wing academy building with the Ehrenhof (or court of honour) in the front which opened to Währingerstraße.[206] The Josephinum can rightfully be considered an architectural work of art. Architecture, interiors, collections and

[203]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 115

[204]Cf. Ibid., p. 116

[205]Cf. Ibid., p. 118

[206]Cf. Ibid., p. 116

educational model are interconnected and interdependent on each other. Also considering social and medical fields, the idea of Enlightenment was pursued here. All in all, the institution was ahead of its time.[207]

Isidore Canevale is known as the architect of the Josephinum. The planning and construction was executed according to the vision of the architect, Canevale, and the clients, in this case – the emperor and his surgeon Brambilla.[208] The Josephinum was constructed between 1783 and 1785 and it turned out to be Canevales' magnum opus.[209] On November 7, 1785 Brambilla's great day had finally arrived and he opened his life's work as "director perpetuus" (director for live) – the Academia medico/chirurgica Josephina.[210]

The Josephinum is designed as a strictly symmetrical three-storied, three-winged building in the form of the capital letter "E" with a French courtyard in the middle, which was very uncharacteristic for Vienna. Originally, the courtyard was empty, laid out with gravel and hidden behind a metal fence with stone pillars which were decorated with stone vases.[211] Along the middle axis of the courtyard, one could reach the central avant-corps which housed the main entrance with the central double staircase. Through there, one could reach the large ceremonial hall which was used primarily as lecture hall and was facing outwards to the garden. Adjacent to the ceremonial hall were the collections, starting on the left side with the library, followed by exhibits of the natural science, various instruments and compounds. On the right side there was

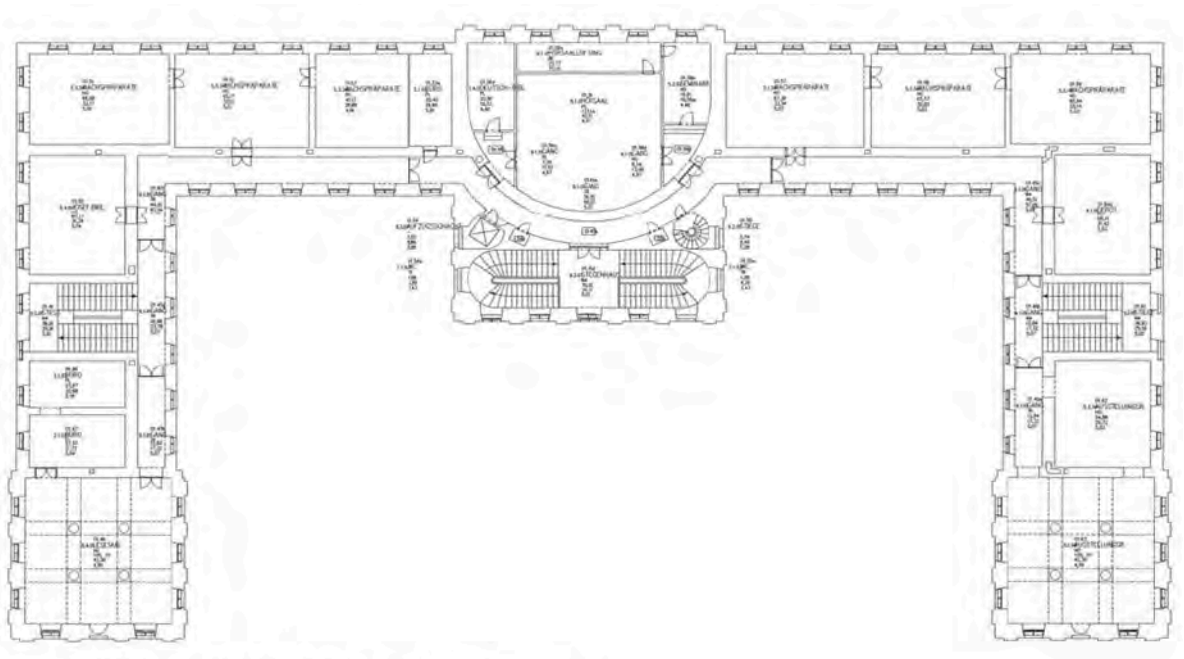


Figure 48 *Josephinum or surgical academy, inventory plan of the first floor*

[207]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 133

[208]Cf. Ibid., p. 133

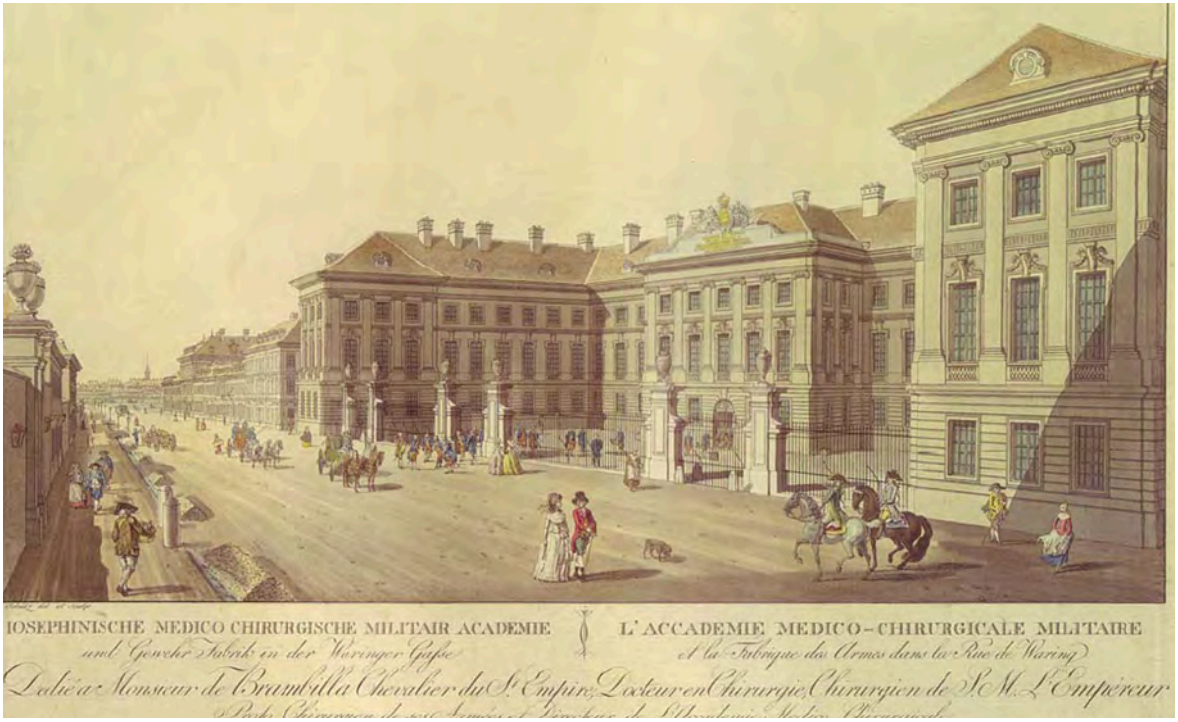
[209]Cf. Ibid., p. 135

[210]Cf. Ibid., p. 176

[211]Cf. Ibid., p. 141

an exhibition of anatomical models.[212] The two wings terminated in wider square rooms which stood out from the rest of the facade. In the left room there is the Josephinian reading hall with four columns in the middle and a bust of Emperor Joseph II on display in one of the window alcoves. The anatomical lecture hall and the reading hall were considered to be the most important rooms.[213]

Joseph II paid the construction of Josephinum from his own pocket, no public money was used.[214] He said that spending money never felt as satisfying as doing so on those institutions.[215] With the Academia medico/chirurgica, an institution was created where medicine and surgery were taught together in theory and practice.[216] Educational institutions also served as representation during that time. Emperor Joseph II proudly showed the foreign state visitors, such as the Russian heir to the throne Grand Duke Paul I, the medical institutions and surgical faculties. The collection of instruments, compounds, surgical tools and waxworks were unique in Europe. Representation was achieved through scientific exhibits presented in an artistic way.



▸ ***Figure 49*** *Josephinum as seen from Währingerstraße, by Carl Schütz, 1787*

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[212]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 137

[213]Cf. Ibid., p. 138

[214]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 135; Cf.Brambilla, Johann Alexander von, *Appendice alla Storia della chirurgia Austriaca Militare in cui trattasi dell' erezione degli Spedali della Fabbrica dell'Academia Gioseffina, e de 'Gabinetti in essa contenuti, con i Ioro Piani, e con quelli degli Spedali di Campagna dell' ultima Guerra conto il Turco,* Pavia, 1800, translated to German by Barbara Peintinger, p. 79

[215]Cf. Brambilla: *Appendice*, p. 76

[216]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 179

The Josephinum can therefore be seen as an architectural work of art and as a manifest of Enlightenment in Austria.[217]

Separated from the Josephinum by an approximately 5 meter gap, the Garnisonspital (or military hospital) is located right behind it. Construction of the military hospital began in 1783, after the existing building had been demolished. It was the biggest military hospital in the whole Habsburg empire. The completion of the building was urgently awaited because of the large number of people who fell ill during the construction of fortresses in Bohemia. Construction was completed in December 1784, after less than two years. Gerhard von Vering was chosen for the position of director of the hospital.[218] The Garnisonspital had six wings and two large inner courtyards, the first courtyard is closed by the backside of the academy building. A freshwater well was located along the axis of the central anatomy lecture room, forming the middle point of the first courtyard. It served as water supply for the hospital as well as the water reservoir in case of a fire. The extension of the northern wing of the first courtyard is simultaneously the backside of the second courtyard, known as Garnisonhof (or garrison courtyard). This courtyard was bigger, completely closed and extended further to the north. In the middle of the second courtyard, another octagon was built – the so-called Rochuskapelle (or Rochus chapel).

The chapel was demolished in 1970. Demolition of the whole north-easter corner of the Garnisonhof was approved around the same time, but the actual demolition wasn't done until 2008 when a new dental clinic was constructed at the site.

The main entrance of the military hospital is located in the wing facing the city; it housed the hospital's guardroom, as well as the new patient's registration and the hospital offices.[219] The building itself is two-storied, with six meter tall rooms in both stories.[220] Some of the details are remarkable. The windows are more than three meters tall and the window recesses are rounded at the top, greatly improving the flow of light and air through the rooms and eliminating dead corners.[221]

Joseph II often used his soldiers for non-military purposes, such as planting trees on the avenues. Back then, the Vienna city garrison consisted of roughly 10,000 – 12,000 men and it was a valuable work force for the emperor. Soldiers were also often used to build fortresses.

Up to 1,000 people eventually worked at the construction site for the Garnisonsspital. It can be assumed that only a small part of that work force consisted of skilled workers – who themselves might have been soldiers – while a huge number of ordinary soldiers were used as unskilled labourers. That was the only way to complete such a huge undertaking as the Garnisonsspital in such a short time.[222]

It is remarkable that none of the rooms faced north, all of them had access to direct sunlight. The individual wards each contained fifty beds. Because of the width of the corridors they were able to hold additional beds if required, but during normal operations only half of the hospitals capacity was used, individual wards were regularly closed for up to one year so they could be thoroughly cleaned, repainted and thoroughly aired.

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[217]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 135

[218]Cf. Ibid., p. 116

[219]Cf. Ibid., p. 118

[220]Cf. Ibid., p. 119

[221]Cf. Ibid., p. 120

[222]Cf. Ibid., p. 121

- ***Figure 50*** *Garnisonsspital or military hospital, ca. 1800*

The patients were separated by gender and type of illness. The surgical patients were assigned to rooms which were located next to the operating rooms and two wards served as maternity wards.

Between any two wards there was usually a small kitchen and a room for staff. The toilets were located in the inner corners of the great garrison courtyard, as well as at the end of the wings in the smaller inner courtyards. For hygienic reasons, the sewers were lowered and were constantly flushed with water which was probably pumped from the nearby Alserbach. In the outer corners of the buildings the surgeons had their offices. The exceptionally tall rooms were equipped with an air intake system near the floor and an air exhaust system near the ceiling which were connected by air ducts providing a constant supply of fresh air. Brambilla used his past experiences when designing this system, he often wrote about the importance of good air supply and good natural lighting in hospital wards. Occasionally the rooms were incensed with aromatic herbs.[223] The two courtyards also played an important role, they were greened and designed with walkways so the patients could take a stroll and relax. Precisely along the axis, in the centre of the great garrison courtyard, the octagonal Rochuskapelle (Rochus chapel) was used for praying.[224] The entrance of the Rochuskapelle in the Garnisonhof faced the Josephinum. The entrance of the chapel and its altar formed an axis which lead directly to the Narrenturm. Figuratively speaking, the Narrenturm was hiding "behind" the altar.[225]

In record time of less than three years, a huge medical complex was built in Vienna between Alserstraße and Währingerstraße. A civil hospital with 2,000 beds, a clinic for training of new doctors, a special ward for 250 mentally ill patients, a military hospital with 1,200 beds, a boarding school and a medicinal herb garden; this complex was unique in all of Europe and still exists almost unchanged today.[226]

Here is a short summary of the opening dates of institutions of the medical complex in Vienna:

- April 1784 – opening of the first institution to house mentally ill patients – the Narrenturm.
- August 1784 – opening of the civilian hospital, or Allgemeines Krankenhaus, including a birthing house and an orphanage.
- December 1784 – the new military hospital, or Garnisionspital, was completed.
- November 1785 – opening of the Academia medico/chirurgica Josephina, or Josephinum.

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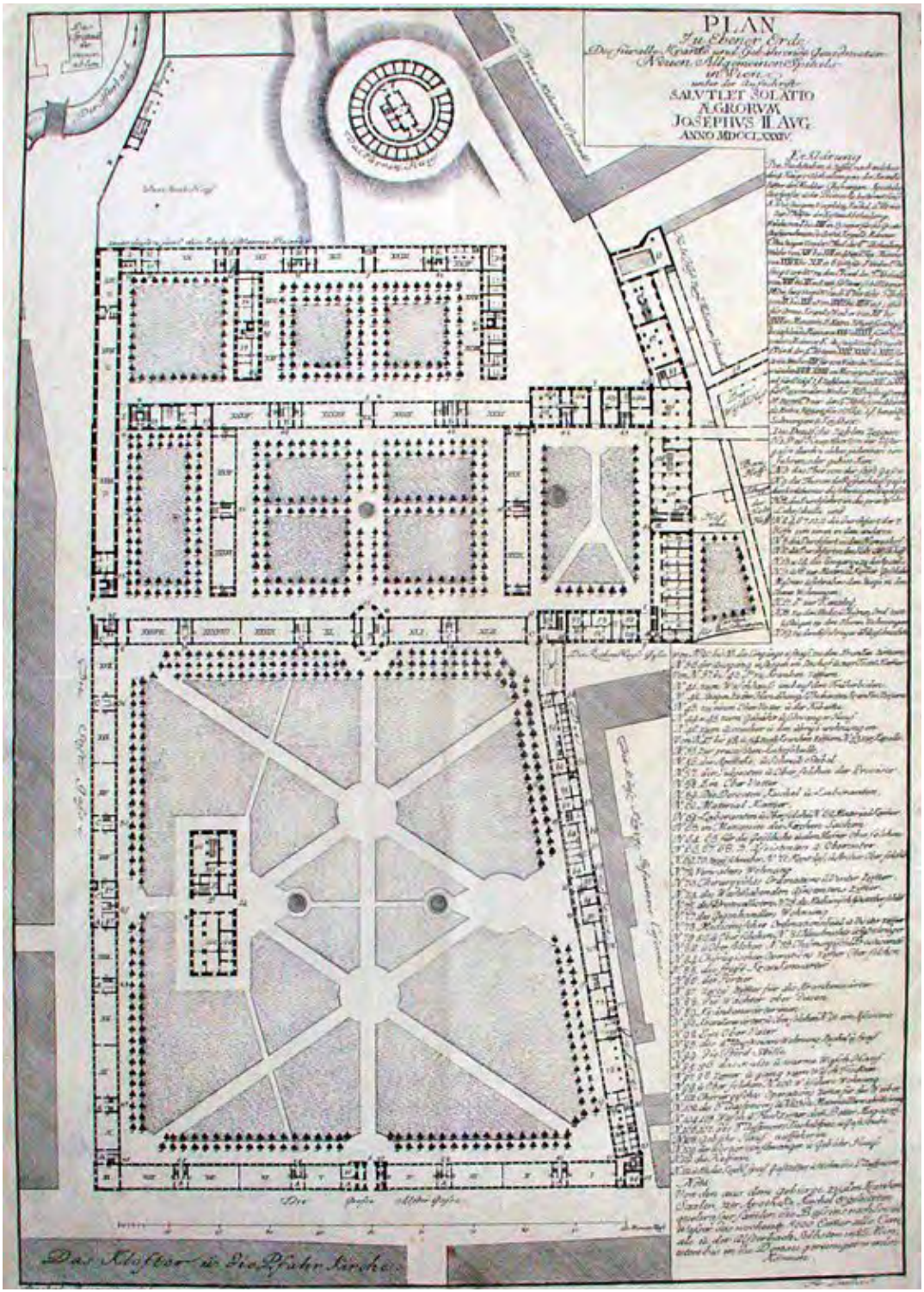
[223]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 122

[224]Cf. Ibid., p. 123

[225]Cf. Ibid., p. 124

[226]Cf. Ibid., p. 127



▸ ***Figure 51*** *Allgemeines Krankenhaus or general hospital, master plan*

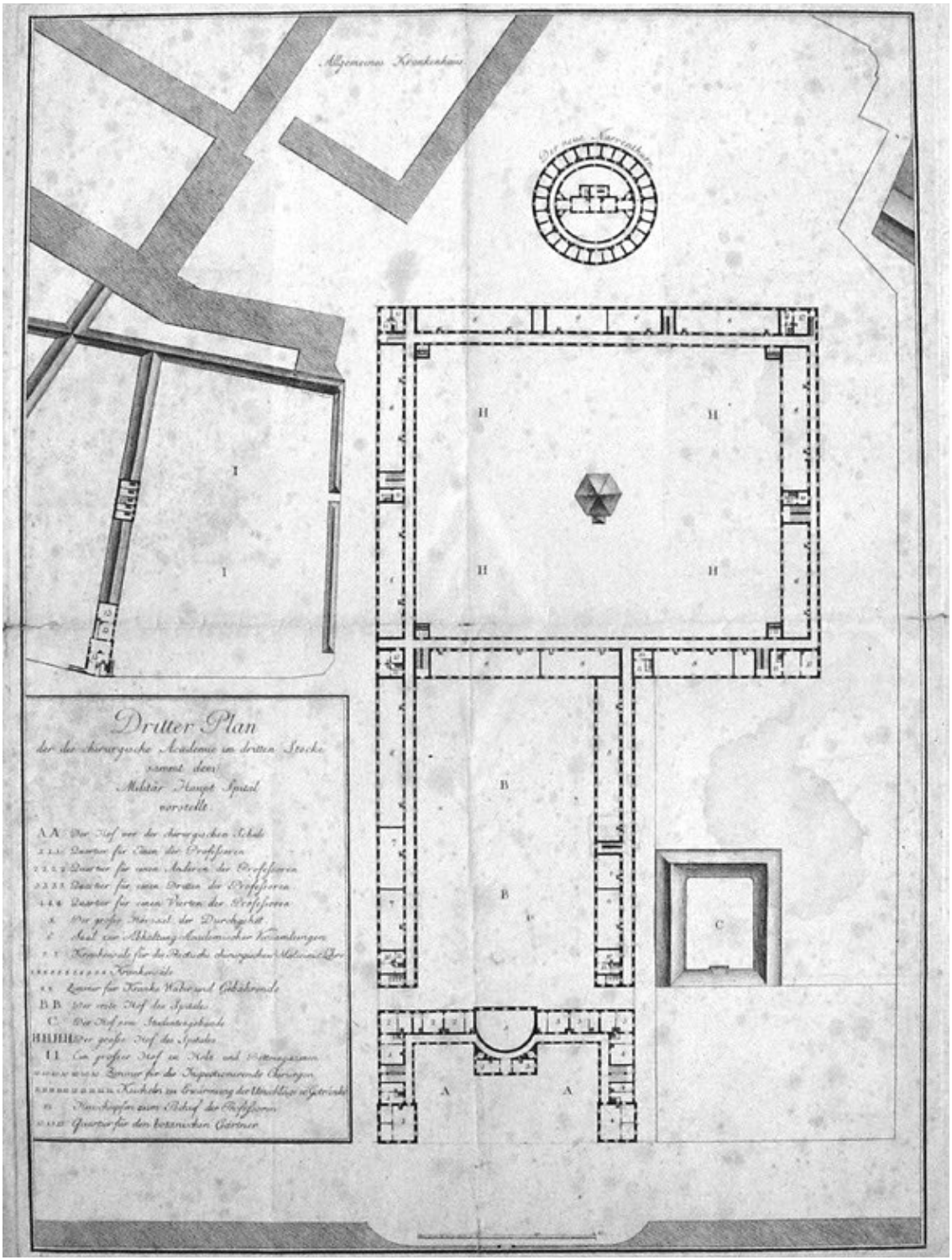


Figure 52 *Allgemeines Krankenhaus: Josephinum, Garnisonspital, and Narrenturm*

10. Narrenturm or Fools' Tower

An important addition to the general hospital was the austere building that is the Narrenturm, or Fools' Tower, which was financed by Emperor Joseph II using his own money. It was opened on April 19, 1784 at a time when other buildings of the medical complex were still under construction. The cylindrical tower was the first asylum in Vienna where the so-called insane were housed and treated, rather than being mistreated by relatives or put on display like animals. It housed civilian as well as military patients. The tower fascinated its visitors because of its extraordinary shape and was soon nicknamed "Guglhupf" after a famous Austrian ring shaped cake. With an octagonal structure on its roof, which no longer exists today, the Narrenturm was part of a collection of Josephinian octagons.[227] Today it is home to the "Pathologisches-Anatomisches Bundesmuseum", the pathological-anatomical museum of Vienna.

The Narrenturm is maybe the most unusual, complex and mysterious building in Vienna – it was ahead of its time in many different ways. It is reported that Joseph II liked to visit the building at least once a week and especially liked the little octagonal structure on the top. Some say that Joseph II liked to dream of grand plans while looking down at his beloved Vienna from such height, while others suggest that the emperor went up there to watch the stars.[228] Joseph II's real motives for his frequent visits, as well as for financing the mental hospital with his own money are unclear.

Figure 53 *Narrenturm*

[227]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 124

[228]Cf. Stohl: *Der Narrenturm*, pp. 35-8

In any case, there must have been a very good reason for Joseph to go there, since the Fools' Tower was probably the last place where one expects an emperor to spend his time at. Stohl wrote about the tower, "The screams of the patients could be clearly heard in the surrounding areas. The whole building was filled with a foul stench because there was no running water anywhere, even though the neighbouring 'Allgemeines Krankenhaus' had a fully functioning sewage system, allowing the waste water to be pumped into the nearby Alserbach. The cells featured waterless toilets, simple holes in the floor, which were connected to a pipe system. The windows had no glass, the casements where set on the hinges at nightfall."[229]

The story of its creation

Joseph II visited various mental institutions together with Brambilla and sent representatives to the ones he could not visit in person, such as the ones in England. Brambilla reported that not only during his travels to France, but also two years later in Budapest, Joseph II was shocked by the fact that thirty to forty patients had to share one room without regard to their symptoms; the furious lumped together with the melancholic, the insane with the introverts, instead of isolating the patients from each other which would have contributed to their well-being.[230]

Brambilla described the case of a young surgeon from a good family who descended into a state of melancholy over an ill-fated love affair.[231] Brambilla asked the emperor to provide this young man with a separate room for himself. The emperor agreed and five weeks later the man was cured. Brambilla described many mental illnesses and methods to alleviate or even cure them. He also dedicated his studies to this area in his work *Discourse about phlegmons*. He differentiated between the mental illnesses and the effects of the mental state on the healing process of regular illnesses or injuries.

Brambilla wrote that the episode with the melancholy surgeon in Budapest motivated the emperor to establish an institute to treat the mentally ill. After being treated of his illness, the surgeon went ahead and graduated to head surgeon. When Brambilla presented this young man to the emperor he convinced him of the possibility of successfully healing mentally ill patients.[232]

Brambilla recommended the treatment of those patients should take place within the medical complex. Soon, a suitable building site was found at a triangle-shaped space in between the civilian and military hospitals.The surgeon stated that the building site as well as the intended use meant that a rounded tower would make an ideal form for the new building. The experiences he made in Budapest proved to him that mentally ill patients should not be kept in big wards but rather in single rooms to keep them separated from each other.[233]

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[229]Cf. Stohl, Alfred: *Warum der Narrenturm zu Wien keinen Garten hatte,* found in *Der andere Garten: Erinnern und Erfinden in Gärten von Institutionen*, edited by Natascha N. Hoefer, Anna Ananieva, Göttingen, Germany, 2005, p. 322

[230]Cf. Brambilla: *Rede auf den Tod des Kaisers Joseph II*, p. 22

[231]Cf. Ibid., pp. 23-4

[232]Cf. Ibid., pp. 21-2

[233]Cf. Brambilla: *Appendice*, p. 24

Architect

There are many misunderstandings in regard to the actual architect of this famous building. Some authors mistakenly suggest that the Narrenturm was designed by architect Isidore Canevale, the designer of the Josephinum. As Alfred Stohl rightfully argues, this opinion was shaped due to the fact that the Narrenturm was included in the drawings made by Canevale, who developed the master plan for the whole medical complex. Canevale was working on various other medical buildings at the same time – the Josephinum, the surgical academy, and the neighbouring military hospital. Since the Narrenturm was already finished at that point in time, Canevale simply included the floor plan in his drawing. It is most likely that because of those construction plans he was often thought to be the architect of the Narrenturm as well.

The second and, once again, mistaken version is that Joseph Gerl, the executing architect of both the general hospital and the Narrenturm, designed the Narrenturm himself. This is most unlikely because Gerl was only responsible for leading the construction process.

The most unexpected, yet probably true version of events is the one told by Brambilla in *Rede auf den Tod des Kaisers Joseph II*, in 1790, in which he claimed that Joseph II ordered the circular tower to be built according to the the emperor's own design and that the building's draft was made by Joseph II himself.[234] Considering how well Brambilla knew Joseph II personally, and how much Joseph II trusted his surgeon on the subject of health care reform and the design of the new medical complex, the words of Brambilla can be considered a trustworthy source of information. Thus, Joseph II himself most likely played a key part in the design of his *Narrenturm* and Joseph Gerl was the executing architect supervising the construction. The architectural language of the tower gives us another clue and strengthens the thesis that Narrenturm was designed by Joseph II – the building looks more like a physical expression of an ideological concept, than a work of architecture designed by a qualified, professional architect.

Architecture

Stylistically and functionally, the Narrenturm is in many ways unusual. The overall concept was supposedly a joint effort by Joseph II, the director of the general hospital Joseph Quarin (1733-1814) and Isidore Canevale. In any case, the Narrenturm seems to follow a very specific and unique idea, whoever was the driving creative force behind it.

The Narrenturm is located exactly at the intersection of the two hospitals – the Allgemeines Krankenhaus (general hospital) and the Garnisonspital (military hospital) – and serves as a connecting link between those two hospitals. It was built on a triangle-shaped site where once was a small hill. One can still see that the building is slightly raised from the surrounding area. The triangle is defined by the angle between Alserstraße and Währingerstraße.[235]

The tower had five circular floors with twenty eight rooms on each floor, except for the ground floor, where one of the rooms was missing to provide the space for the entrance. The 139 individual cells were built along the outer wall, each about 13 square meters. The cells were accessed via a circular corridor. Doctors and nurses were housed in the rather dark middle tract, which divided the yard into two halves and ran almost precisely along a north-southern axis. On top of the middle part, which contained the staff rooms,

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[234]Cf. Brambilla: *Rede auf den Tod des Kaisers Joseph II*, p. 24

[235]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 124

there was an octagonal wooden turret from which the whole medical complex could be overseen. The ceilings between the individual floors were massive and arched. The plaster façade is structured in square panels, the slitted windows emphasise the vertical dimensions of the building. The octagonal turret on the roof was sometimes used by the emperor to gaze at the night sky.

One may also notice a strong resemblance of Narrenturm's shape and concept to the Panopticon, which naturally leads to the question of a possible connection between the two buildings.The Narrenturm's cylindrical structure with the inward facing middle tract seems to reflect the basic principle of the Panopticon, even though critics argue that the idea of direct observation, which Foucault described in his book *Discipline and Punish*, can not be applied to the Narrenturm. The Narrenturm is definitely no example of an optimally designed Panopticon according to Bentham's vision as the doctors could not really see inside the cells, as it was in case with the Panopticon. However, architectural design provided a well-defined structure for the patients and also facilitated a controlling mechanism to a certain degree. The staff tract was placed in the middle of the ringed shape building, almost like a "tendon". The staircase was also located in the middle part, making sure that the movement of patients and visitors was fully controlled by the doctors and staff – no-one could come in or out of the cells or escape the building without passing by the doctors' rooms and thus being seen by them. In that sense there was still a strong sense of control due to the building's geometry, even though in the Narrenturm it was not optical, as envisioned by Bentham. Alfred Stohl remained sceptical and said, "The Narrenturm can only have felt like a Panopticon to the emperor alone, and only when he climbed up to the highest turret to watch the dusty cityscape of Vienna."[236]

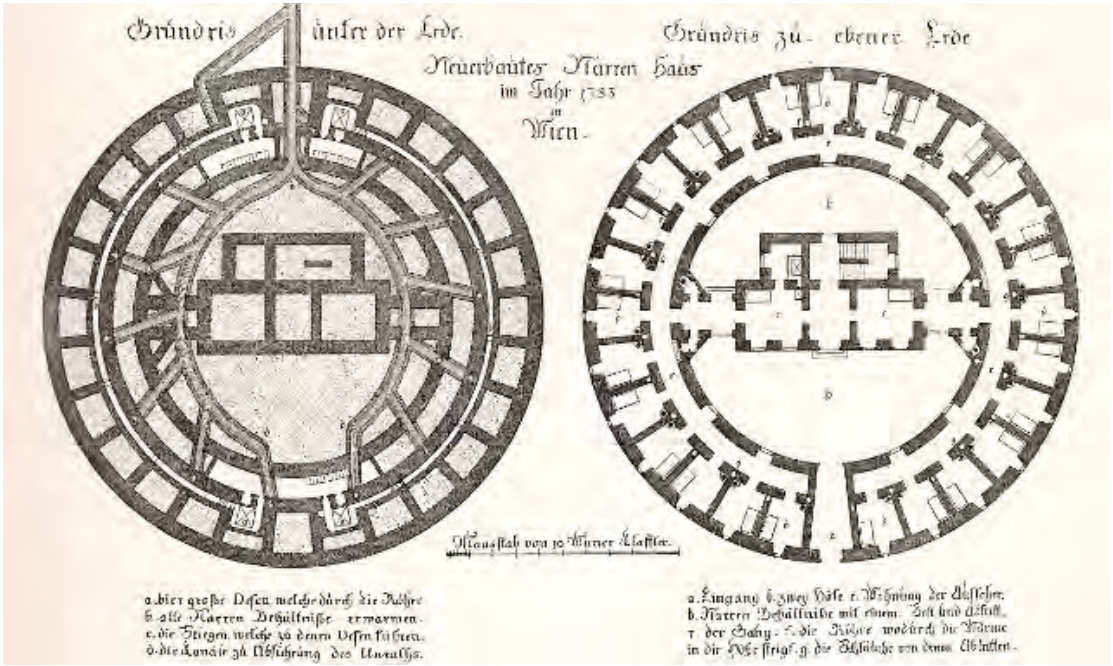


Figure 54 *Narrenturm basement and ground floor plans during construction*

[236]Cf. Stohl: *Warum der Narrenturm zu Wien keinen Garten hatte*, p. 322

However, the similarities between the two buildings are so obvious that one has to wonder if and how they are connected. This question becomes even more pertinent when considering that Jeremy Bentham, who himself dated his concept back to the year 1787, had argued from the beginning that the Panopticon should not be used merely as a prison, but also to "guard the insane". On the other hand, Stohl compared the Narrenturm to a prison when he wrote, "The building was used as mental institute up until the 1860s and was used to lock away mentally ill patients in conditions that can only be described as inhumane by today's standards and similar to imprisonment. Some of the 'patients' were even chained to the walls."[237]

Inspiration

Considering the unusual cylindrical shape of the tower, a few possible sources of inspiration can be mentioned.

To a certain degree, the Menagerie of Versailles, built between 1662 and 1663, can be seen as a precursor to both the Narrenturm and the Panopticon. A copy of the Menagerie, the Imperial Pavillons, can be found in Schönbrunner Zoo in Vienna. However, the buildings have a fundamentally different design: The Menagerie is a building from which one can see radially arranged gardens and enclosures stretching outwards. The Narrenturm and the Panopticon both follow an internal logic; the circular structure with cells arranged in a circle along the outer wall followed such a rigid order that they can be linked to very few predecessors, such as Castle del Monte which was built in the 13th century.

One of the most plausible theories is that the design of the Narrenturm was inspired by the French revolutionary architecture. As mentioned earlier, the architectural ideas which prevailed during the French revolution had been "in the air" for some time already. Joseph II, who traveled to France in 1777, took a particular interest in studying the architectural design proposals for the new Hôtel-Dieu de Paris, which was thought to be the most modern hospital of its time. One of the proposals, created around 1774 by the renowned physician Antione Petit, might have had an influence on the design of the Narrenturm. It also used a circular design with radially arranged wards, and the circular central part. The outer ring with corridors, staircases and additional patients rooms enclosed the whole structure, turning it into a tower. The idea was probably not visual surveillance in the sense of Bentham, but probably more designed to provide good ventilation, as contaminated air was one of the most frequent causes of disease. Additional, this design allowed to divide the patients into many different, separated groups. Even though the French Revolution prevented the realisation of the Hôtel-Dieu de Paris, it is still regarded today as the first prototype of this "radial design".[238]

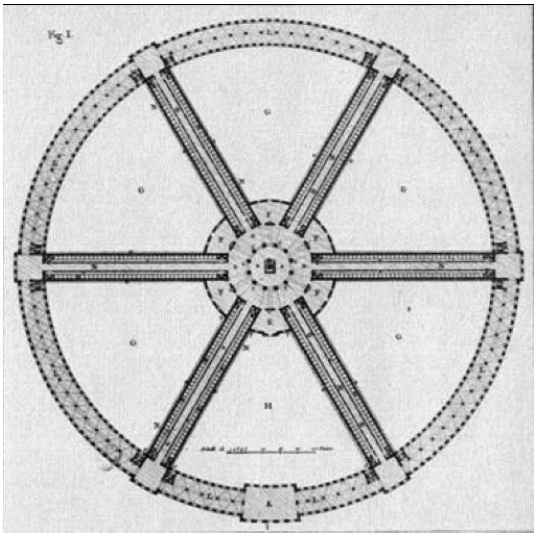
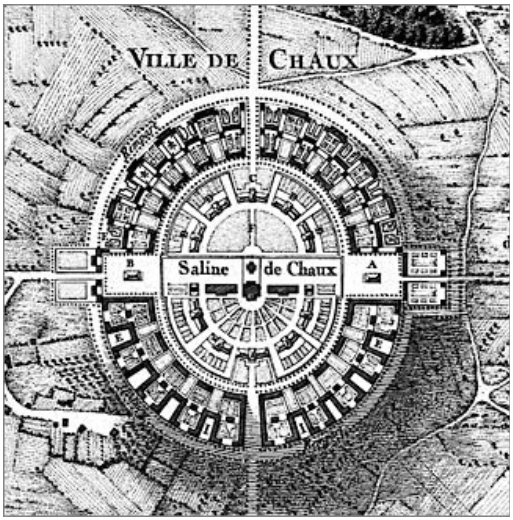


Figure 55 *Project for Hôtel-Dieu by Antoine Petit, 1774, floor plan*

[237]Cf. Stohl: *Der Narrenturm*, p. 7, author's translation

[238]Cf. Kuhlmann, Dörte: *Joseph II und sein Turm*, unpublished material, author's translation



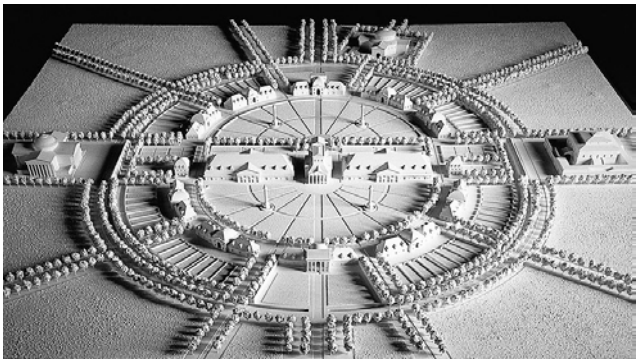


Figure 56-57 *Ville de Chaux by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, master plan and architectural model*

Another influential person in the architectural scene of the revolutionary classicism, Claude Nicolas Ledoux, might have contributed to Joseph's design ideas. At the time Joseph II visited Ledoux in France, this famous French architect was working on his important project "Salines de Chaux" or the Royal Saltworks at Arc-et-Senans (1775–1779). His project included eleven buildings, five workshops and housing workers' homes, arranged in a huge semicircle, centred around the house of the director. It was a stunning example of Enlightenment architecture applied to a monument of industrial use. The buildings arranged in a semicircle were at the heart of Ledoux's idea to create a perfect structure for a new industrial and social era.[239] The position of the house of the director and the workshops in the middle of the complex offered a view over all the worker's housings at the same time, allowing for total, centralised control.

One may observe a certain similarity of the Narrenturm's floor plan with the Salines de Chaux. Especially the organisation of the workers' homes in a semicircle around the middle building of the director is mirrored in the Narrenturm. Instead of a semicircle, the patients' cells are arranged in a full circle. The concept of the Panopticon also focused on this idea of central control. Much later, when Ledoux was imprisoned during the revolution, he dreamt about expanding the Saline into the "cité idéale de Chaux"[240], adding a second semicircle with more workers' homes, but this idea was never realised.

Not only the circular floor plan of the building, but also the rustication of the facade of the Narrenturm is stylistically similar to Ledoux's architecture. The rustic stonework application was very characteristic of the French design of the revolutionary neo-classicism and can be observed especially in Ledoux's Barrières de Paris (1784-1787). The initial facade of the Narrenturm also had applied rustic stone plates, which was a very unusual style compared with other buildings of the medical complex in Vienna. Taking into consideration that Joseph II visited Ledoux in France and had subscribed to his publication, it is reasonable to suggest that he might have been inspired by the sketches of the French architect.

Swittalek points out more similarities of various French architectural designs that appeared around the same time as the Narrenturm was designed. For example, in the same year when the Narrenturm was built,

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[239]Cf. http://www.architectuul.com/architecture/saline-royale-d-arc-et-senans, accessed on 15.05.2017

[240]Cf. Ibid.

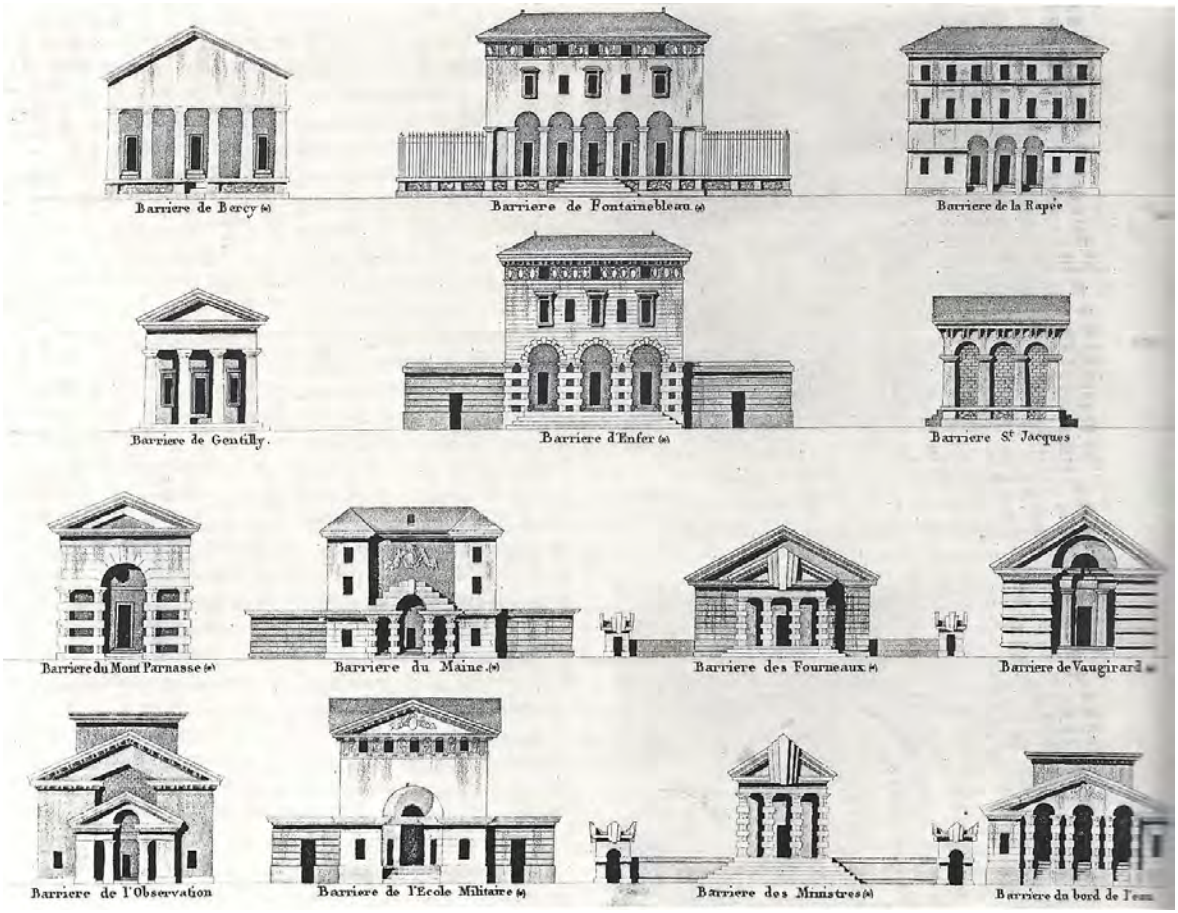

Figure 58 *Barrières de Paris by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, 1784-87*

Figure 59 *Narrenturm elevation, 1783*

Figure 60 *Barriere de la Villette by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux 1784-87*

Ledoux published his design for the ring shaped recreation home Guinguette Faubourg in Saint-Marceau. The French architects Coqueau and Poyet presented their designs for their giant, rounded Hôtel-Dieu, the "Coliseum", in 1785.[241] Since these designs appeared after the Narrenturm had been completed, they could not have had an influence on Joseph II's design. However, the opposite is possible. Maybe the French architects had seen Joseph II's design of the Narrenturm and were influenced by it? Be that as it may, the similarities between these designs suggest a close ideological connection between the European architectural scenes of that time.

In this context, "the Narrenturm was created as one of the most remarkable examples of the otherwise mostly theoretical French revolutionary style – and this happened outside of France and before the French revolution", claims Swittalek.[242]

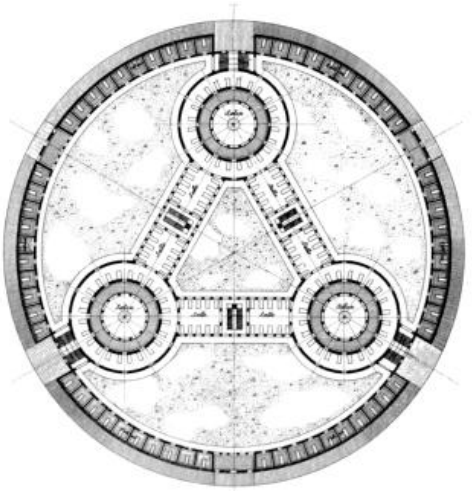

Figure 61 *Guinguette Faubourg in Saint-Marceau by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, 1784*

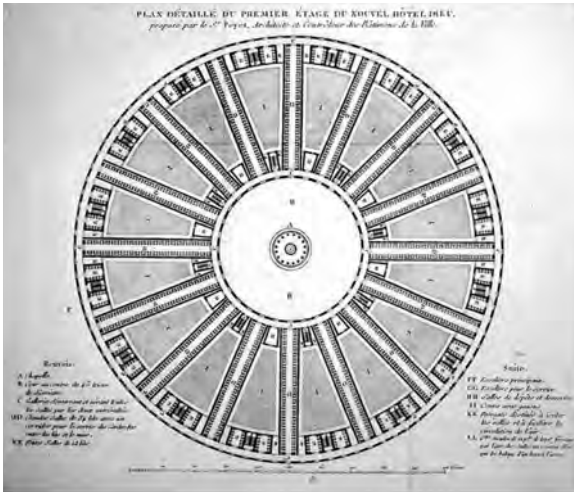

Figure 62 *Design for Hôtel-Dieu by Bernard Poyet and C.-P. Coquéau, 1785*

Treatment of patients

The construction of the Narrenturm is regarded as evidence of a new attitude towards mentally ill patients. The inner structure with different areas for civilian and military patients, rich and poor, men and women, aggressive and less aggressive patients, exemplify the deliberate differences in handling patients from various social groups. Most of the patients were kept in single rooms and were healed, unlike in Budapest where their health deteriorated. When the Narrenturm first started operations, the cells had no doors. One contemporary wrote in his travel journals, "Everything has been furnished with utmost care and precision, and everything is kept clean and in good working condition. The tower is ventilated sufficiently

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[241]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 125

[242]Cf. Ibid., p. 125, author's translation

from all sides and is flooded with daylight". However, shortly after the start of operations, doors were installed for all cells. A traveller visited the Narrenturm in 1789, a few years after the opening and said, "A sizeable number of those unfortunate people who are imprisoned here are soldiers. Many of them are not confined to their cells but roam around the corridors. Yet others are chained to the walls in their cells".[243]

Some of the structural oddities of the Narrenturm can only be explained in light of the contemporary knowledge about the treatment of mentally ill patients. For example, the building was not connected to the sewer system, unlike the neighbouring Allgemeines Krankenhaus and there was no clean running water. Stohl suggests, that it was thought that water had a negative effect on the mentally ill, who were believed to be under the influence of the moon. The theory was that the moon had an effect on the water balance within the patients' bodies, just like it did have an effect on the tides. Therefore everything was done to minimise the patients' exposure to water. Thomas Kratschmer, who is the architect in charge of renovating of the tower, has a different opinion. He is convinced that this was done due to the high costs of installing running water, since the tower was built on a slightly higher place than the surrounding buildings, and it was complicated and expensive to pump the groundwater up into the building. In any case, shortly after the start of operations the tower was connected to the sewage system and changes were made to the toilets – the inmates started using chamber pots, probably because the stench started to become unbearable.

Figure 63 *Narrenturm interior view of the circular corridor with cell doors*

[243]Cf. Kuhlmann: *Joseph II und sein Turm*, unpublished material, author's translation

Another system that proved to be non-functional, was the building's heating system. Instead of providing the cells with warm air, heated by the furnaces in the basement of the tower, the openings in the walls allowed the poisonous exhaust fumes from the heater back into the building. Very soon the central heater was turned off and mobile heating units were installed on each floor instead.[244]

Lightning Rod

The Narrenturm is a thoroughly mystical building, and not just in an architectural sense. Not only the form and the little turret on top are remarkable innovations, another interesting characteristic is that its roof features one of the oldest lightning rods (or lightning attractors) in the world, which mountings still exist in the inner yard today. That lightning rod can already be seen on the very first model of the building.

There are two theories about the early history of treating patients using electricity, which both deserve to be investigated. One of them leads via France to the United States to Benjamin Franklin, the other leads directly to Joseph II, and both of them could have had an influence on the Narrenturm.

Benjamin Franklin supposedly suffered two injuries during his experiments with electricity in which an electric charged surged through his brain. He was in close correspondence with Jan Ingenhousz, who was known for playing a significant part in the discovery of photosynthesis. Ingenhousz also had an accident during which he suffered an electric shock to the brain and he wrote in his letters to Franklin that he felt particularly lively on the day after the accident. During the 1780s, Franklin and Ingenhousz encouraged leading British and French doctors to treat their patients with electric shocks. Even though they did not directly respond to those encouragements, the leading doctors Birch, Aldini and Gale soon used exactly those methods on their patients and reported their successes. It is quite possible that Joseph II was aware about those reports. When Joseph II was in Paris in 1777, Benjamin Franklin was the American ambassador to France. Taking to the account Joseph II's interest in the subject of electricity, supported by the fact that he attended lectures on electricity at the universities in France and in Russia, as reported in the travelogues, it is reasonable to suggest that Joseph II paid a visit to this famous scientist in Paris as well. We have, however, no evidence on this account.

The second theory about the lightning rods leads in a completely different direction. Joseph II was aware of the experiments by Prokop Diviš, a Czech theologian and natural scientist, who believed in the healing powers of electricity and also was studying "meteorological machines" to keep away lightning storms. Some of his experiments investigated the effect of electricity on plants and he also tried to treat health problems with electricity. Even though he lived on a remote parish, Diviš tried to keep up with the latest scientific discoveries in Europe. It was a special privilege for him to be invited to the Imperial Court in Vienna in 1750 to demonstrate various experiments to Franz I. When Georg Wilhelm Reichmann, a professor in St. Petersburg, was killed by lightning while conducting one of his electrical experiments on July 26, 1753, Prokop Diviš became interested in atmospheric electricity and sent his theories about the reasons behind this accident to the Academy of Science in St. Petersburg. He also contacted the Academy of Science in Vienna and proposed to protect the Wiener Hofburg from lightning storms by using the "weather machine" he designed.

From 1750 onwards, Diviš worked closely with Joseph Franz, an Austrian Jesuit and natural scientist, who was closely connected to Emperor Joseph II. Back in 1734, Joseph Franz became professor for

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[244]Cf. Kuhlmann: *Joseph II und sein Turm*, unpublished material, author's translation

mathematics, experimental physics and astronomy at the University of Vienna and built an observatory together with his students. In parallel to these scientific studies, Franz served as teacher for Joseph II at the Imperial Court in Vienna. Among many other areas, Franz was particularly interested in studying lunar eclipses, the orbits of Moon and Mercury, as well as the field of electricity. All of these topics fascinated Joseph II and seemed to have influenced the design of the Narrenturm to various degrees. Whether the oldest still existing lightning rod in the world was built to "catch lightning" in order to treat patients, or rather to protect the building from lightning, or maybe both, remains a mystery.[245]

Mysticism

According to Stohl, there is a whole range of numerological mysteries hidden in the design of the Narrenturm. "After analysing all the available facts I came to the conclusion that … Joseph II himself pursued a different kind of goal. While the Narrenturm was ostensibly used as a … mental institute, the real objective was to serve as a platform for practicing 'alchemy'! I found strong evidence suggesting that the Narrenturm was built according to an occult, supernatural, mystical numeral system. This can be seen in the tower's architecture, the number of cells and their dimensions, the way the cells are arranged in a semicircle, the number of floors as well as in the cylindrical shape of the building itself. That numeral system has been designed according to magical-alchemistical principles as well as astronomical-chronological principles."[246]

Stohl is convinced that precise numerology is the foundation of the architectural design of the building, and denies that the design was a result of the influence of the architecture of the French revolution.

"It was the number 7 which gave me the idea that the tower could be based on a numbers game which used the number 7 as its foundation; this could not have been a coincidence. The 28 segments immediately caught my attention because I knew that mental illnesses were often associated with the phases of the moon. In England, mentally ill people are sometimes called lunatics – moonstruck. The total number of circular segments in the building is 140 (5 times 28) – no further comment necessary. In the archives of the pathological-anatomical museum I found copies of old floor plans which consistently showed that the building had a diameter of 21 'Klafter' [about 38 meter]. Multiples of the number 7 kept popping up everywhere which encouraged me to conduct further investigations.

The reason for the exceptional importance of the number 7 becomes apparent when one reads the definition of the great physician of ancient Greece, Hippocrates, who wrote, 'The number 7, due to its mystical powers, tends to bring all things into being; it gives live and is the source of all change, for the moon itself changes its phase every 7 days. Therefore, the number influences all sublunary matters.'"[247]

Stohl also argues that within the floor plan of the Narrenturm – a ring shape and the "tendon" with the roof structure in the middle – the letters G, O and D can be inscribed. For freemasons in the 18th century, these three letters supposedly had great significance, they are said to stand for the words "God, Order and Deus".

Even though Stohl raises some interesting questions and offers some inspired theories, none of his statements can be proven. It seems especially hard to believe that such a pragmatical rationalist like Joseph II would let himself be influenced by mysticism to such a degree.

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[245]Cf. Kuhlmann: *Joseph II und sein Turm*, unpublished material, author's translation

[246]Cf. Stohl: *Der Narrenturm*, p. 9, author's translation

[247]Cf. Ibid., p. 20, author's translation

Figure 64 *Narrenturm, bird's-eye view*

Even though some aspects still need to be investigated further: the Narrenturm remains a silent witness for Joseph II's passionate spirit of innovation and his far-reaching visionary ideas.

History of the building (Construction and modifications)[248]

- before 1782 – On the future building side are 37 cells for mentally ill patients within the Allgemeines Krankenhaus (general hospital)
- 1782 – Joseph II selects the building site for a mental institute and finances the construction using his own money
- around 1782-1783 – Development of the floor plan presumably by Joseph II, Josef Gerl builder and architect), Dr. Quarin (first director of Allgemeines Krankenhaus from 1784 to 1791) and other advisors
- 1783 – Construction commences
- 1784 – Opening on April 19, 1784 (ahead of Allgemeines Krankenhaus)
- 1795-1804 – Modifications under the supervision of J.P. Frank (second director of Allgemeines Krankenhaus): garden, bathrooms, window sashes, heating
- 1822 – New construction discussed, but plans were discarded
- 1827 – Hot-air central heating system added according to plans bei Paul Meissner; still no running water or bathrooms installed; still scarcely any light in the cells
- around 1845-1854 – Modifications: bathrooms, additional windows, modifications of the middle tract
- from 1869 – Modifications: added workshops on the ground floor, additional doors between the cells, additional entrance doors
- from 1890 – Outer windows are enlarged; various modifications in numerous cells
- 1943 – Modifications made necessary due to World War II
- 1970 – Renovation of the roof; removal of the octagonal turret on the roof (?)
- from 1975 – Renovations and modifications of the cells
- from 1998 – Added several outer windows
- from 2012 – Overall refurbishment

History of usage[249]

- 1784 (during the reign of Joseph II) – Start of operations, transfer of the patients according to a detailed festive ceremony planned meticulously by Joseph II. Patients were categorised in groups: calm, restless, clean, unclean, military veterans, poor
- 1790 (during the reign of Leopold II) – Admitted 135 mental patients, released 90 as “healed”
- 1800 (during the reign of Franz I/II) – Admitted 238 mental patients, released 93 as “healed”
- 1820 (after Congress of Vienna in 1814/1815) – Narrenturm was run by the state, organisationally separated from the Allgemeines Krankenhaus; land was acquired for a planned new construction
- 1822 (during the reign of Ferdinand I) – New construction project
- 1848 (after the Revolution of 1848) – Founding of the state mental institute
- 1852 (during the reign of Franz Josef I) – New construction at Brünndlfeld (under director Wagner Jauregg), all patients are moved to the new facility
- 1854 – Narrenturm is being used as a nursing home
- 1857 – Discussions about starting a rebuilding project (director Riedel)

[248]Kratschmer, Thomas: personal archive, author’s translation

[249]Ibid., author’s translation

- 1869 – Narrenturm is closed for mentally ill patients
- from 1870 (during World Fair in Vienna and the crash of the Vienna stock exchange in 1873) – The first two floors are used as workshops, the upper floors are used as storage. Some cells are used for patients that are unfit to be moved to other facilities. Other cells are used as home for students and nurses.
- from 1880 (also during World War I between 1914 and 1918) – Nurses residence for the Allgemeines Krankenhaus; full occupancy in 1905, official opening in 1920
- 1970 to 1975 – Relocation of nurses residence. New home of the pathologic-anatomical museum
- 1988 – Allgemeines Krankenhaus, Narrenturm and Garnisionsspital are gifted to the University of Vienna
- 2012 – Integration of the pathologic-anatomical museum into Vienna's Museum of Natural History

- ***Figure 65*** *Narrenturm, Garnisonsspital and back side of Allgemeines Krankenhaus, as seen from Spitalgasse / Lazarettgasse*

IV

Two Genius Minds

1. The Legendary Prince Potemkin

Figure 66 *Field Marshal Potemkin*

"Prince of Princes", as Jeremy Bentham called Potemkin, intrigued the minds of all European Courts. His mysterious coming to power and his almost miraculous achievements on the political front were the reason for many detractors to produce a whole series of lies and false accounts about his life. Some legends appeared during his lifetime, and many more after his death. "When absent, he alone was the subject of conversation; when present he engaged every eye … the semi-Emperor", said Charles Masson about Potemkin.[250]

"The most extraordinary man I ever met. Constantly reclining yet never sleeping, trembling for others, brave for himself, bored in the midst of pleasure, unhappy for being too lucky, a profound philosopher, able minister, sublime politician or like a ten-year-old child, embracing the feet of the Virgin, or the alabaster neck of his mistress. What is the secret of his magic? Genius, genius and more genius!", said Prince de Ligne about Potemkin.[251]

Grigory Alexandrovich Potemkin was born in the small village of Chizhovo near Smolensk into a family of middle-income noble landowners. The date of birth engraved on his tombstone is 30 September[252], 1739. "The date of his birth is, like everything else about him, mysterious because there is much confusion about the age that he went to live in Moscow and that he was put down for the Guards. There is an argument for saying he was born in 1742, the date given by his nephew Samoilov. The dates and military records

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[250]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, back cover

[251]Ibid., back cover

[252]All dates in this chapter are stated according to the old style or Julian calendar which was used in Russia throughout that period. 30 September translates to 11 October in the new style or Gregorian calendar, which we use today.

contradict each other … This date is the most likely."[253] The family was of Polish ancestry[254]; his father Alexander Potemkin, who was a war veteran, married Daria, who was already a widow at age twenty. She was "good-looking, capable and intelligent" and had many admirers, which made her older husband "maniacally jealous" and their marriage "profoundly unhappy". Grigory Potemkin was the third child in the family and the only son among the six children. He was named after his father's cousin, Grigory Matveevich Kizlovsky, a senior civil servant from Moscow, who was later to become his godfather and whom Potemkin loved like his own father after Alexander Potemkin passed away.[255]

Grigory Potemkin spent the first six years of his life in Chizhovo, his father's village.[256] Born into the noble, military household of an officer, he was "brought up to understand that his duty and his path to success could only be found in serving the Empire." The young Potemkin said that he would either become a statesman or an archbishop when he grew up. Indeed, he showed interest in priesthood and was sent to the ecclesiastical school in Smolensk. He had also spent much of his time in Chizhovo's little Orthodox church where the local priest supposedly taught him the alphabet and prayers, which sparked his lifelong fascination with religion.[257]

After the death of her husband in 1746, Potemkin's mother Daria took her family to Moscow to further her son's career. Potemkin's godfather Kizlowsky took the family under his protection and Grigory "… was enrolled in the gymnasium school attached to the university". "Potemkin's intelligence was recognised early; he had a brilliant ear for languages, so he soon excelled at Greek, Latin, Russian, German and French as well as passing Polish, and it was said later that he could understand Italian and English. His first fascination was Orthodoxy…". He possessed a remarkable memory, which enabled him to learn long tracts of Greek liturgy by heart. It has been said that learning was almost too easy for him, "… he bored quickly and feared no one…"[258]

In 1750, at the age of eleven, Grigory Potemkin enlisted for military service in Smolensk, which was not uncommon for noble children during the time. In 1755, after his second inspection, he was put down for the elite Horse Guards regiment.

He enrolled in Moscow University and became one of their best students in Greek and ecclesiastical history. Potemkin was addicted to reading and he was able to read at an unbelievably fast rate, remembering every detail of the reading material.[259] In 1757, Grigory won the university's Gold Medal and was presented to the empress of Russia in St. Petersburg as one of the twelve best students in the empire.[260] Impressed by his knowledge of Greek and theology, the empress promoted Potemkin to the rank of Guards corporal as a reward, even though he had never served as a solider at this point in his life. After coming back from St. Petersburg, Potemkin's attitude to studies radically changed and in 1760 he was expelled for "laziness and

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[253]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 13, footnote

[254]Cf. Ibid., p. 13

[255]Cf. Ibid., p. 16

[256]Cf. Ibid., p. 17

[257]Cf. Ibid., pp. 19-20

[258]Cf. Ibid., pp. 22-3

[259]Cf. Ibid., p. 24

[260]Cf. Ibid., p. 25

non-attendance of lessons".[261] He rejoined the Guards in St. Petersburg and soon became very popular for his looks and talents. "At twenty-two, he was tall – well over six foot [~1,83 m] – broad and highly attractive to women … Potemkin immediately attracted attention as a wit – he was an outstanding mimic, a gift that was to carry him far beyond the realm of comedians. It was soon to win the admiration of the most glamorous ruffians in the Guards – the Orlovs – and they in turn would draw him into the intrigues of the imperial family."[262] His time was taken up with "drinking, gambling, and promiscuous lovemaking", and he fell deep in debt.[263]

Around the time Potemkin arrived in St. Petersburg, Empress Elisabeth was suspended between life and death and Grand Duchess Catherine began to cultivate the Guards, who admired her and hated her husband Grand Duke Peter, the Heir. The Guards protected the imperial palaces, which gave them political significance, and their proximity to the royal court allowed the officers opportunities to stand out and make themselves known to the rulers. Potemkin '"found himself perfectly placed to join the conspiracy that would place her on the throne – and bring them together."[264]

Grigory Orlov, one of Catherine's lovers, led a palace coup in June, 1762 which ousted the Emperor Peter III and enthroned Catherine II. "The Orlov's plan of a Palace revolution appealed to Potemkin's vivid imagination and he eagerly joined their conspiracy. On the night preceding the actual *coup d'etat* he took an active part in agitating on Catherine's behalf among the regiments of the Horse Guards. What he did on the fatal day itself is not quite clear. Catherine herself, in a famous letter to Stanislas Poniatowsky, her former lover whom she later made King of Poland, has described the revolution of 28th June, 1762, which elevated her to her unique position: 'In the Horse Guards,' she writes, 'an officer named Chitroff aged 22, and a subaltern of 17 called Potemkin, directed everything with discernment, courage, and activity' … The generally accepted story, which in later years Potemkin used to tell himself, is that during the review of the troops at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, after Catherine's proclamation and prior to her historic march to Peterhof, he perceived that there was no proper sword-knot on her sword …and promptly riding up to the Empress, offered her his own. Only with difficulty, apparently, could he force his horse to leave the Empress's side and resume his old place. This little episode would naturally attract Catherine's attention, and thus bring Potemkin to her notice for the first time."[265] Catherine made sure Potemkin was promoted to second lieutenant as a reward for his role in the coup. Soon, Potemkin was formally presented to the empress by Orlov as a talented mimic. The empress found his imitation of her very funny and admired his beautiful head of silky brown hair.[266]

"In the eleven-and-a-half years between the coup and the beginning of their love affair, the Empress was watching Potemkin and preparing him for something … the more she saw him, the more fascinating she found his infinite originality. They were somehow converging on each other, running on apparently parallel lines that became closer and closer. At twenty-three, Potemkin flaunted his mimicry and intelligence to the Empress. She soon realised that there was much more to him than a gorgeous *chevelure:* he was a Greek

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[261]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 28-9

[262]Cf. Ibid., p. 30

[263]Cf. Soloveytchik, George: Potemkin. A picture of Catherine's Russia, Thornton Butterworth Ltd., London 1939, p. 44

[264]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 30-1

[265]Soloveytchik: *Potemkin*, p. 45

[266]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 53-4

scholar and an expert in theology and the cultures of Russia's native peoples. But he appears scantily in the history of those years and always swathed in legend: while we sketch the daily life of Empress and Court, we catch glimpses of Potemkin, stepping out of the crowd of courtiers to engage in repartee with Catherine – and then disappearing again. He made sure these fleeting appearances were memorable."[267] "Lieutenant Potemkin has fallen in love with the Empress and did not seem to mind who knew it. He was unafraid of the Orlovs or anyone else in the bear pit of Catherine's unstable Court."[268]

"As a gentleman of the bedchamber, Potemkin now spent much of his time around the imperial palaces performing his duties, which included standing behind her chair at meals to serve her and her guests. This meant that he saw the Empress frequently in public, getting to know the routine of her life. She took an interest in him – and he began to take a reckless interest in her that was not necessary fitting for such a junior courtier."[269]

"When the Empress and the Second Lieutenant of the Horse-Guards encountered each other in the hundreds of corridors of the Winter Palace, Potemkin would fall to his knees, take her hand and declare he was passionately in love with her … He could not have behaved like this before the Orlovs without some encouragement from the Empress. She could easily have stopped him if she had wished. But she did not. This was unfair of her for there could be no prospect of Catherine accepting Potemkin as a lover in 1763/4. She owed her throne to the Orlovs. Potemkin was still too young. So Catherine could not have taken him seriously."[270] But she remained interested in her "original young friend" and helped her "young protégé" with his government career and soon appointed him assistant to the Procurator of the Holy Synod.

▸ ***Figure 67*** *Catherine II*

His special position and friendship

[267]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 54

[268]Ibid., p. 54

[269]Ibid., p. 62

[270]Ibid., pp. 65-6

with the empress started attracting trouble from the Orlovs (Catherine's lover Grigory and his four brothers) who dominated the court. “He was ambitious and was devoted to Catherine – the Empress and the woman.”[271] According to legend he lost his left eye in a fight with the Orlov brothers. Whatever really happened, Potemkin completely disappeared from the court for one and a half years. “He saw no one, studied religion, grew a long beard and considered taking the tonsure of a monk.”[272]

After eighteen months, Catherine ordered Potemkin to return to the court and assume his old position at the synod. He followed her orders, but with his “looks ruined and his confidence broken” he was not the same person as before.[273] “In 1767, he received a job that again showed how Catherine was specially creating tasks that suited his interests. After a short tenure at the synod, she had given him duties as an army paymaster and responsibilities for the manufacturing of daytime army uniforms.”[274] Shortly after, he became a Guardian of Exotic Peoples at the new All-Russian Legislative Commission, a significant political post. In 1768, Potemkin was promoted from “Kammerjunker” (valet de chambre) to “Kammerherr” (chamberlain) of the court, while still remaining in the service of the military where he was promoted to Captain of the Horse Guards. Two months later, he was removed from the army and started working at the court full time on Catherine’s specific orders. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia in September 1768 and Potemkin was eager to turn himself into a war hero.[275]

Potemkin served as Major General of the cavalry. He distinguished himself in his first engagement, particularly excelling at the Battle of Prashkovsky, after which his commander Aleksandr Mikhailovich Golitsyn recommended him to Catherine.[276] For his display of courage and skill during the capture of Jurja, he received the Order of St. Anna. At the Battle of Larga he won the Order of St. George, third class, and fought well during the rout of the main Turkish forces. While on leave to St. Petersburg, the empress invited him to dine with her more than ten times.[277]

Back at the front, Potemkin won more military acclaims and during a ceasefire in 1772 he most likely returned to St. Petersburg to serve as one of Catherine's closest advisers.[278] Potemkin returned to the war in 1773 as Lieutenant General to fight in Silistria. It appears that Catherine missed him and Potemkin interpreted a letter she sent to him in December as a call for him to come back to her, which he did. Potemkin returned to St. Petersburg as a war hero.[279]

Soon after his return to St. Petersburg, Potemkin and Catherine finally got together. “Everything about the love of Catherine and Potemkin is exceptional. Both were extraordinary individuals in the most unique circumstances… Their passion was so exhausting and tumultuous that it is easy to forget that they loved one another while ruling a vast empire – at war abroad, in civil war at home. She was an empress and he a

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[271]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 71

[272]Cf. Ibid., p. 71

[273]Cf. Ibid., p. 72

[274]Ibid., p. 73

[275]Cf. Ibid., p. 75

[276]Cf. Ibid., pp. 77-80

[277]Cf. Ibid., pp. 81-4

[278]Cf. Ibid., pp. 86-8

[279]Cf. Ibid., pp. 91-3

subject — living in a highly competitive Court where everything was seen and every glance had political consequences … Catherine was always the Sovereign, and Potemkin, from the first day, was more than a mere favourite, a politician of the first rank."[280]

"She is crazy about him. They may well be in love because they are exactly the same", were the words of Senator Ivan Yelagin to Durand de Distroff. Indeed, "Their similarity of ambitions and talents was both the foundation of their love and its flaw. The great love affair of the Empress heralded a new political era because everyone immediately appreciated that … Potemkin was capable of exerting his power and would strive to do so at once."[281]

"Potemkin now demanded a place in government. The most important positions were war and foreign affairs. Since he had come back as a war hero form the Danube, it was natural for him to choose the War College as his target."[282] In March 1774, he became Lieutenant Colonel in the Preobrazhensky Guards, a post previously held by Alexei Orlov. He also became captain of the Chevaliers Gardes in 1784.[283] In quick succession he was appointed as Governor General of Novorossiya, as a member of the State Council, as General-in-Chief, as Vice-President of the College of War and as Commander-in-Chief of the Cossacks. These posts made him rich, and he lived his life lavishly. To improve his social standing, he was awarded the prestigious Order of St. Alexander Nevsky and Order of St. Andrew, along with the Polish Order

Figure 68 *Potemkin aged around 35 at the height of his passionate love affair with Catherine*

[280]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 102

[281]Cf. Ibid., p. 122

[282]Ibid., p. 123

[283]Cf. Ibid., p. 124

of the White Eagle, the Prussian Order of the Black Eagle, the Danish Order of the Elephant and the Swedish Royal Order of the Seraphim.[284]

There is a legend according to which Catherine and Potemkin secretly married in June 1774, however there exists no proof of it.[285] The strongest evidence of their marriage can be found in Catherine's letters and the way she treated Potemkin. In at least twenty-two letters she called him "her dear husband" , in hundreds of others – her "lord" or "master" and signed as "devoted wife".[286]

"The best piece of evidence is that, whether or not one accepts there was a ceremony, Catherine treated Potemkin for the rest of their lives as if there had been. Whatever he did, he never fell from power; he was treated like a member of the imperial family and had absolute access to the Treasury as well as the ability to make independent decisions. He behaved with extraordinary confidence, indeed insouciance, and deliberately presented himself in the tsarist tradition."[287]

In the fall of 1775, Catherine began to notice that her relationship with Potemkin "was so all-consuming that it was beginning to burn them both. ' We would be happier', said Catherine, 'if we loved each other less.' … there was evidence too that the tensions of his role as official favourite were taking a toll on their affair. The teacher-pupil relationship that Catherine so enjoyed was becoming irksome if not intolerable to a man as masterful, confident and able as Potemkin. Even the marriage could not change the realities of court politics and his complete dependence on her whim. Yet she loved his wildness – the very thing that made him want to escape … She tried desperately to restore their happiness."[288] But no matter what she tried, Potemkin started to withdraw himself from her. The main reason for that was most likely the constant tension of Potemkin's political and social position – he "wanted to govern and build, but loving Catherine was a full-time job", since she required a constant attention, love and praise. In 1775 the stress was rising, but they continued to love each other and and work together. Catherine "found a partner in Potemkin – a very rare diamond", but their relationship "was not settled enough to serve either of them well". So they struggled.[289] Soon, Catherine took another favourite. Everyone was expecting Potemkin's fall,[290] but it didn't happen. Though the love affair appeared to have come to an end, Catherine and Potemkin maintained a particularly close friendship which continued to dominate their lives. They rearranged "their unique marriage in their own manner" – Catherine had her favourites, while Potemkin was passionately falling in love with his nieces. But they continued to love each other and Potemkin never left the Winter Palace and kept his position of power. "Potemkin now made a difficult transformation from an influential lover to 'minister-favourite' who ruled with the Empress. They had managed to gull everyone."[291]

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[284]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 126-7

[285]Cf. Ibid., pp. 136-7

[286]Cf. Ibid., p. 138

[287]Ibid., p. 139

[288]Ibid., p. 147

[289]Cf. Ibid., p. 149

[290]Cf. Ibid., p. 154

[291]Cf. Ibid., pp. 160-1

In February 1776, Count Gregory Potemkin was awarded the title of Prince of the Holy Roman Empire. The empress took it on herself to ask his majesty the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II for this favour. From now on, Potemkin was known as "Most Serene Highness" , "The Prince", or just "Serenissimus".[292]

While Catherine cultivated her relationships with her other favourites, Potemkin was finally able to turn his attention to other matters. "When she was in a stable relationship, it gave him time to win his place in history. During her happy years with Lanskoy [1780-1784], Potemkin became a statesman – he changed the direction of Russian foreign policy, annexed the Crimea, founded towns, colonised deserts, built the Black Sea Fleet and reformed the Russian army."[293]

2. The Greek Project and the Alliance with Austria

"Europe faced three sources of conflict in 1778. France, eager to avenge the Seven Years War, was about to support the American rebels and go to war against England. (The war started in June 1778 and Spain joined the French side next year.) However, Russia was much more concerned with the other two flash points. The Ottoman Sultan had never been reconciled to the terms of the 1774 Treaty of Kuchuk- Kainardzhi, especially the independence of the Crimea and the opening of the Black and Mediterranean Seas to Russian merchant ships. In November 1776, Catherine and Potemkin had to send an army to the Crimea to impose a khan of their choice, Shagin Giray, in the face of disturbances inspired by Constantinople. Now the Khanate was rebelling against Russia's protégé, and the Ottoman and Russian Empires moved closer to war.

The third axis of conflict was the rivalry for the mastery of Germany between Prussia and Austria. Russia always had a choice between alliance with Austria or Prussia: each had its own advantages. Russia had been allied with Austria from 1726, and it was only thanks to Peter III that it had switched to the Prussian option in 1762. Austria had not forgiven Russia for this betrayal, so Catherine and Frederick were stuck with each other. Foreign Minister Nikita Panin had staked his career on maintaining this alliance, but the Northern System – his network of northern powers including Britain – had never materialised beyond its Prussian fulcrum. Furthermore, it had given Frederick an influence over Russian policy in Poland and the Ottoman Empire that almost amounted to a veto."[294]

"However, Potemkin always believed that Russia's interests – and his own – lay southwards, not northwards. He cared about the Austrian-Prussian and Anglo-French conflicts only in so far as they affected Russia's relations with the Ottoman Empire around the Black sea. The victories in the Russo- Turkish War had exposed the irrelevance of the Prussian alliance…" [295]

Serenissimus began to take an interest in foreign affairs and studied diplomacy. "Initially, Potemkin 'thought only of establishing his favour well and did not occupy himself with foreign affairs in the direction of which Panin showed a predilection for the King of the Prussia', noted the Polish King Stanislas-Augustus. Now he began to flex his muscles. Early in his friendship with Catherine, it is likely that Potemkin persuaded her that Russia's interests were to maintain Peter the Great's conquests on the Baltic and keep control of

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[292]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 154-5

[293]Ibid., p. 175

[294]Ibid., pp. 202-3

[295]Ibid., p. 203

Figure 69 "*Three great monarchs of the 18th century", Joseph II of Austria (left), Catherine II of Russia (middle), Frederick the Great of Prussia (right)*

Poland, but then use an Austrian alliance to make the Black Sea a Russian lake. Catherine had never liked Frederick the Great nor trusted Panin, but Potemkin was suggesting a reversal of Russian policy in turning to Austria. This had to be done slowly – but tensions with Panin began to grow … Panin was not going to give up without a fight, and Catherine had to move cautiously because Potemkin was as yet unproven on the international stage. Panin grew nervous as it became clear that Potemkin was there to stay."[296]

"Catherine was deliberately pushing Potemkin forward on foreign policy: she asked him to discuss affairs with the visiting Prince Henry of Prussia…Potemkin's challenge was to destroy Panin's power, overturn the Northern System and arrange an alliance that would let him pursue his dreams in the south."[297]

The favourite secretary of Prince Potemkin and the empress, Bezborodko, revealed (being bribed by Sir James Harris, the English diplomat in St. Petersburg), that "the monarchs of Europe, from Frederick to

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[296]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 203

[297]Ibid., p. 204

Joseph, were bombarding Potemkin with offers of thrones and money. No offer swayed him… The 'spy' added that Potemkin lived by the 'impulse of the moment' and was quite capable of 'adopting the political principles of every country' but was keenest at that moment on Austria. There, at last, was the truth."

The diplomats noticed that "Potemkin's 'mind is continually occupied with the idea of raising an Empire in the East' and it was he 'alone who heated and animated the Empress for this project'. Catherine was indeed infected with Potemkin's exciting visions. When she talked to Harris, she 'discoursed a long while … on the ancient Greeks, of their alacrity and superiority … and the same character being extant in the modern ones'. Corberon, who had heard it too, did not exaggerate when he wrote that 'romantic ideas here are adopted with a fury'. But the diplomats did not understand the significance of Potemkin's 'romantic ideas' – his 'Greek Project' – that so excited Catherine. Serenissimus' mind was not on London, Paris, Berlin or Philadelphia. It was on Tsargrad, the city of emperors – Constantinople. The dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire was to be the dominating theme of the rest of his life and the foundation of his greatness."[298]

Potemkin, a true admirer and expert on Greek language, literature and culture, started developing a special vision which dazzled due to its profound cultural background and promised big glory to Catherine. It became evident that it was part of a bigger plan, when in April 1779 Catherine and Potemkin named the new-born son of Grand Duchess Maria Fyodorovna Constantine, and designated him "to become emperor of Constantinople after the destruction of the Sublime Porte." "The Grand Duchess had already produced an heir to the Russian Empire two years earlier – Catherine's first grandson, Grand Duke Alexander. Now she produced the Heir to the Byzantine Empire of the Greeks."[299]

"Using classical history, Eastern Orthodoxy and his own romantic imagination, Potemkin now created a cultural programme, a geopolitical system and a propaganda campaign all in one: the 'Greek Project' to conquer Constantinople and place Grand Duke Constantine on its throne. Catherine hired Constantine a Greek nurse named Helen and insisted that he should be taught Greek. Potemkin personally contributed to the Greek education of the Grand Dukes right through the 1780s, 'I should like to remind you', he wrote to the Empress about changing Alexander and Constantine's lessons, 'that in learning languages, the Greek one should be most capital as it is the basis of the others … Where you mentioned reading the Gospel in Latin, the Greek language would be more appropriate as it was the language of the original.' Catherine wrote at the bottom: 'Change according to this.'

We do not know exactly when the partners began to discuss Classical greatness and Byzantine restoration, but it was obviously at the very beginning of their relationship (when Catherine teased him as her 'giaour' – the Turkish name for an infidel). Catherine must have been impressed with the Project's odd mixture of imagination, history and practicality. Serenissimus was made for his Greek Project just as it was made for him. He was knowledgeable about the history and theology of Byzantine Orthodoxy. Catherine and Potemkin, like most educated people of their time, were brought up on the Classics, from Tacitus to Plutarch – hence Potemkin's nickname Alcibiades – though he read Greek and she did not. He often had his readers recite the Classical historians, and his libraries contained most of them. The Classical enthusiasts of the eighteenth century did not just read about ancient times: they wished to emulate them. they built like the Greeks and the Romans. Now Potemkin was also making himself an expert on the Ottoman Empire."[300]

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[298]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 212

[299]Cf. Ibid., pp. 218-9

[300]Ibid., p. 219

"The idea itself was not new: Muscovite propaganda had promoted Russia as the 'Third Rome' ever since the Fall of Constantinople, which Russians still called Tsargrad, city of Caesars. In 1472, the Grand Duke of Muscovy, Ivan III, married the last Emperor's niece, Zoe Palaelogina. His Metropolitan hailed him as the 'new Emperor of the new Constantinople – Moscow' and he used the title Tsar (Caesar), which Ivan the Terrible adopted. In the next century, Filofey, a monk, pointed out that 'two Romes have fallen, but the third stands and there will be no fourth'. But the neo-Classical splendour, the daring symmetry of religion, culture and politics, the practicality of the Austrian alliance, and the specific plan of a partition, belong to Potemkin. His talent was not merely the impulsive conception of ideas but also the patience and instinct to make them real: he had been following this Byzantine rainbow ever since coming to power and it had taken him six years to circumvent the pro-Prussian Panin.

As early as 1775, when Catherine and Potemkin celebrated the Turkish peace in Moscow, the Prince had befriended the Greek monk Eugenios Voulgaris, who would supply the Orthodox theology for the Greek Project. On 9 September 1775, Catherine appointed Voulgaris, on Potemkin's suggestion, as the first archbishop of Kherson and Slaviansk. These cities did not yet exist. Kherson, named after the ancient Greek city of Khersonesos and the birthplace of Russian Orthodoxy, was merely a Greek name in the fevered imagination of Potemkin."[301]

The first step towards the Greek Project was to form an alliance with Austria. The correspondence between the two monarchs reveals Joseph II's interest in rapprochement with Russia and a possible alliance already after the first Polish partitioning in 1772. Then, after 1774, the correspondence stopped both ways until it was renewed in 1780.[302] "He realised he needed Potemkin and Catherine to win Bavaria, which would make his Habsburg lands more compact and coherent. To this end, Joseph had to coax Russia away from Panin's cherished alliance with Prussia."[303] He nevertheless hoped to strengthen Austria's position and saw mutual interest with Russia in their shared opposition to the Ottoman Empire on the Balkans.[304] "All roads led to Petersburg."[305]

"Joseph and his mother Maria Theresa had for years regarded Catherine as a nymphomaniacal regicide whom they called 'The Catherinized Princess of Zerbst'. Now Joseph weighed up a Russian alliance over his mother's opposition. His instincts were backed by his chancellor, Prince Wenzel von Kaunitz-Rietberg, who had engineered the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756 to ally Austria with its old enemy France … Kaunitz made sure that Austria's envoy in Petersburg, Cobenzl, took care 'to place relations with Monsieur de Potemkin on the footing of good friendship…'."[306]

On January 22, 1780 Joseph II summoned the Russian ambassador in Vienna, Prince Dmitri Golitsyn, to meet him for a private audience. He wanted to explore the possibility of a meeting with Empress Catherine II. He explained to the ambassador that his interest was strictly private, he wanted to meet the famous

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[301]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 219-20

[302]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 63

[303]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 221

[304]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 61; Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 221

[305]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 221

[306]Ibid., pp. 221-2

empress in person. Soon after, Catherine II sent Joseph II a positive answer, "informing only Potemkin, Bezborodko and a discontented Nikita Panin". The meeting was set for 27 May in Mogilev in Belorussia.[307]

Ludwig Cobenzl, who had joined Joseph II on his trip to France, was named ambassador to the Austrian embassy in St. Petersburg the year before and was now involved in planning the trip.[308]

"Empress and Prince keenly anticipated this meeting. Between February and April, they discussed it back and forth. The tension told on both of them. They calmed each other like a married couple and then exulted in their schemes like a pair of conspirators. Some time in April, Catherine's lover Lanskoy told her that the sensitive Potemkin's 'soul is full of anxieties'. Probably he was worrying about the array of intrigues against his southern plans…

At the end of April, Serenissimus rode off to prepare the reception for the Tsarina and the Holy Roman Emperor – in Mogilev. It was his policy, and Catherine gave him the responsibility to set the scene. As soon as he departed, Catherine missed her consort. 'I'm without my friend, my Prince,' she wrote to him. Excited letters flew between them. On 9 May 1780, Catherine left Tsarskoe Selo with a suite that included the nieces Alexandra and Ekaterina Engelhardt, and Bezborodko. Nikita Panin was left behind. As the Emperor Joseph arrived in Mogilev to be greeted by Potemkin, Catherine was approaching on the road from Petersburg. She and her consort were still discussing the last-minute details of the meeting and missing each other. 'If you find a better way, please let me know,' she wrote about her schedule – then she signed off: 'Goodbye my friend, we are sick at heart without you. I'm dying to see you as soon as possible.'"[309]

3. Joseph II's Trip to Russia in 1780 and Potemkin's Triumph

The Holy Roman Emperor and co-regent, Joseph II, left Vienna on April 15, 1780.[310] As usual, Joseph II prepared meticulously for the trip, read news bulletins about Russia, studied maps, travel times and distances. As he had done previously, he insisted to travel incognito as Count von Falkenstein.[311] "You know that … in all my travels I rigidly observe and jealously guard my rights and the advantages that the character of Comte de Falkenstein gives me," Joseph instructed Cobenzl, "so I will, as a result, be in uniform but without orders … You will take care to arrange very small and ordinary quarters at Mogilev."

As mentioned above, "this self-declared 'first clerk of the state' wore a plain grey uniform, travelled with only one or two companions, wished to eat only simple inn food and liked to sleep on a military mattress in a roadside tavern rather than a palace. This was to create a challenge for the impresario of the visit, Potemkin, but he rose to it. Russia had few of the flea-bittern taverns the Emperor expected, so Potemkin dressed up manor houses to look like inns."[312]

On May 14, 1780 Joseph II arrived in Kiev where he spent three days. He met the Russian general Count Pyotr Alexandrovich Rumyantsev-Zadunaisky and the two men visited the garden of the Imperial

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[307]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 222; Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 61; Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 63

[308]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 61

[309]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 222

[310]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 63

[311]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 61

[312]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 224

Figure 70 *Emperor Joseph II with the Empress Catherine II*

Palace in Kiev. On May 16, 1780 the emperor visited a monastery and the Kiev academy where he had conversations in Latin with rector Cassiano and various students about different scientific topics and their method of education.The next day he visited Saint Sophia's Cathedral in Kiev where he attended mass, visited the city walls of the old town and had an audience with priests.[313]

He left Kiev on May 18 and made his way to Tshernigov via Koselets, where he stayed for a short while and visited the city barracks. On May 20 he started travelling to Mogilev and half way there was met by Prince Potemkin, who was to play an important role during the rest of the trip and also during the second Russian trip. They arrived in Mogilev on May 22 to finally meet Empress Catherine II.[314]

This was the first time that the two genius minds of Europe, two co-rulers in the greatest European monarchies of their time, met each other. Sebag Montefiore wrote, "It is hard to imagine two more different and ill-suited men. The uptight, self-regarding Austrian martinet wished to discuss politics immediately, while the Prince insisted on taking him off to the Orthodox Church. 'Just up to now, common places have been all the conversation with Potemkin and he hasn't uttered a word of politics,' the Emperor, thirty-nine, balding, oval-faced and quite handsome for a Habsburg, grumbled to his disapproving mother, the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa. Joseph's impatience did not matter because Catherine was only a day away. The Emperor

[313]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, pp. 7-8

[314]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 223

continued to chomp at the bit – but Potemkin displayed only an enigmatic affability: this was a deliberate political manoeuvre to let Joseph come to him. No one knew what Potemkin and Catherine were planning, but Frederick the Great and the Ottoman Sultan observed the meeting with foreboding, since it was aimed primarily at them.The Prince handed the Emperor a letter from Catherine which plainly revealed her hopes: 'I swear at this moment there is nothing more difficult than to hide my sentiments of joy. The very name Monsieur le Comte de Falkenstein inspires such confidence.'"[315]

Potemkin wrote about his impressions of Joseph to Catherine and "passed on Joseph's extravagant compliments about the Empress". Catherine, when she was just a day away, answered in a letter to Potemkin, "Tomorrow I hope to be with you, everyone is missing you … We'll try to figure out Falk[enstein] together."[316]

However, as Sebag Montefiore continues, "this was easier said than done: the Emperor's awkward character baffled contemporaries – and historians."[317] Catherine II herself later said about him that "the greatest enemy of this prince was himself". "This was the Kaiser whom Potemkin needed to pull off the greatest achievements of his career."[318]

On May 24, 1780 at noon, the empress of Russia entered Mogilev through the triumphal arch. Kaiser Joseph II watched her arrival among the folk[319] and was quite impressed by what he saw: "It was beautiful", he reported, "all the Polish nobility on horseback, hussars, cuirassiers, lots of generals … finally she herself in a carriage of two seats with Maid-of-Honour Miss Engelhardt…". As soon as the show was over, the empress, accompanied by Potemkin and Field-Marshal Rumiantsev-Zadunaisky, attended mass in a church and then drove to the Governor's residence. Afterwards, Graf von Falkenstein put on his uniform and Potemkin took him to the court.[320] "It was the beginning of four days of theatre, song and of course fireworks. No expense was spared to transform this drab provincial capital, gained from Poland only in 1772 and teeming with Poles and Jews, into a town fit for Caesars. The Italian architect Brigonzi had built a special theatre where his compatriot Bonafina sang for the guests."[321]

As reported by different historians, it was immediately apparent that the two emperors shared a mutual sympathy for each other[322]. "Serenissimus introduced the two Caesars, who liked each other at once, both dreaming no doubt of Hagia Sofia. They talked politics after dinner, alone except for Potemkin and his niece-mistress Alexandra Engelhardt. Catherine called Joseph 'very intelligent, he loves to talk and he talks very well'. Catherine talked too. She did not formally propose the Greek Project or partition of the Ottoman Empire, but both knew why they were there. She hinted at her Byzantine dreams, for Joseph told his mother that her 'project of establishing an empire in the east rolls around in her head and broods in her soul'. The next day, they got on so well at an *opera comique* that Joseph had confided plans that 'I don't dare to publish' – as

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[315]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 223

[316]Cf. Ibid., p. 223

[317]Ibid., p. 224

[318]Cf. Ibid., p. 225

[319]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, pp. 8-9

[320]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 9; Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 225

[321]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 225

[322]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 62; Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 225

Catherine boasted to Grimm. They meant to impress each other. They had to like each other. They made very sure they did."[323]

The two monarchs conversed for four days, sometimes with Cobenzl and Prince Grigory Aleksandrovich Potemkin, visited different places, and ate together almost every day.[324] As stated in Potemkin's biography by Sebag Montefiore, "Joseph, the obsessional inspector, rose early and inspected whatever he could find. Like many a talentless soldier – Peter III and Grand Duke Paul come to mind – he believed that enough inspections and parades would transform him into Frederick the Great. Potemkin politely escorted him to inspect the Russian army, but evidently found his strutting pace tiresome. When Joseph kept mentioning one of Potemkin's 'magnificent regiments', which he had not yet inspected, the Prince did not want to go because of 'bad weather that was expected at any moment'. Finally, Catherine told him like a nagging wife to take Joseph, whatever the weather."[325]

On May 27, Joseph II visited a mass in the Carmelite monastery. In the morning of May 30, he laid the first stone of a church in the name of St Joseph with Catherine II. In the afternoon the whole party travelled to Smolensk where they arrived two days later, on June 1. After a three-day stay, the emperors temporarily parted ways – Joseph II headed to Moscow. Potemkin joined him on the road while Catherine II returned to St. Petersburg.[326]

"'Prince de Potemkin wants to go to Moscow to explain everything to me,' Joseph told his mother. 'His credit is at an all-time high. Her Majesty even named him at table as her true student … He has not shown any particularly impressive views so far,' added Joseph, but 'I don't doubt he'll show himself on the journey.'"[327]

Joseph II arrived in Moscow on June 6, 1780 and went straight to inspect the Imperial Gardens. He was received by its director, Count Tiufiakin, and was shown around the newly built Catherine Palace with its adjacent buildings, as well as its floor plans and elevations. Afterwards, they visited the Kremlin.[328]

The next day, after visiting the catholic church, Joseph II went back to the Kremlin. He was received by Archbishop of Moscow, Plato, and Prince Potemkin, who showed him around Tschudow church, the Uspenski Cathedral and the Archangelski Cathedral. He was then introduced to the architectural model of the new Kremlin which was commissioned by Catherine II.[329]

As always, the emperor and his surgeon paid special attention to the social and medical facilities of the city. In the afternoon Joseph II visited the main hospital in Moscow where he inspected everything thoroughly, the sick rooms, the anatomical ward, the pharmacy, the courtyard and the two gardens adjourning the hospital.[330]

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[323]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 225-6

[324]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 9

[325]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 226

[326]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 9; Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 226

[327]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 227

[328]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 11

[329]Cf. Ibid., pp. 11-2

[330]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 12; Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 62

Figure 71 *The Kremlin, Moscow, 1814*

On June 8, after speaking to the Archbishop Plato and the Moscow Governor Fiodor Ostermann, Joseph II visited the local orphanage and was satisfied by what he saw.[331] Later that day, he travelled to the outskirts to enjoy a good view over the city. From there he visited the small village Tsaritsino where he inspected the Gothic architecture together with Potemkin and General Ivan Ivanovich Shuvalov.[332]

On June 9, 1780 Joseph visited the archives of the Imperial College and the Lomonosov Moscow State University where the emperor, similar to his previous trips to France, attended several lectures, participated in various experiments with electricity and had many conversations with students and professors. The rest of the day was spent in the Church of Resurrection where he was particularly impressed with the church's architecture.[333]

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[331]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 13

[332]Cf. Ibid., pp. 15-6

[333]Cf. Ibid., pp. 16-7

The following day he visited the new “Catherine Hospital” and the “House of Invalides" as well as the Bolshoi (Grand) Theatre which was established in 1776, and paid a visit to Prince Potemkin afterwards. In the afternoon of the same day, he visited the zoo at the Palace in Kuskovo.[334]

The next two days were spent with more visits to hospitals and another trip to the orphanage. He also visited the Imperial Palace and had the architect show him all building plans, elevations and proportions in meticulous detail before he started preparations for his departure from Moscow and said his goodbyes to the city’s nobility.[335]

Joseph II said about the city, “It is much bigger than anything I have ever seen. Paris, Rome, Naples, none of them come even close to Moscow's size.”[336] Sebag Montefiore wrote about Joseph’s impression of Potemkin, “Joseph could not understand Potemkin … While he ceaselessly gave pedantic perorations of his own views, in between brisk expeditions of inspection, Potemkin drifted away into silent reveries. The Prince wanted Joseph’s alliance, but he was no sycophant and was not as impressed as he should have been to have the head of the House of Habsburg in his company. Once in Moscow, Joseph told ‘very dear mother’ that Potemkin ‘explains to me the necessary’ about some sights but ‘to others I go alone’. It was entirely characteristic of Potemkin to doze in bed while the inspector-Emperor rose at dawn for more inspections. By the time they left, Joseph was indignant that Potemkin ‘very much took his ease. I’ve only seen him three times in Moscow and he hasn’t spoken to me about business at all.’ This man, he concluded, is ‘too indolent, too cool to put something into motion – and insouciant’.”[337]

Joseph II arrived in St. Petersburg on June 17, 1780. He immediately made his way to Tsarskoye Selo where he met up with the empress and attended dinner, where he was introduced to her son, Peter.[338]

Figure 72 *Nevsky Avenue in St. Petersburg, watercolours by Lamoni, 1780.*

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[334]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, pp. 17-20

[335]Cf. Ibid., pp. 20-1

[336]Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 62

[337]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 227

[338]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, pp. 21-3

Sebag Montefiore wrote about a practical joke that Prince Potemkin played on Joseph II, "At Tsarskoe Selo, Potemkin arranged a treat for the Comte de Falkenstein. He recruited Catherine's English gardener from Hackney (originally from Hanover), the appropriately named Bush, to create a special tavern for the Emperor, who loved inns. When Baroness Dimsdale, the English wife of the doctor who inoculated the imperial family, visited a year later, the gardener proudly told her how he had hung a sign outside the building on which he wrote 'The Count Falkenstein Arms'. He himself wore a placard reading 'Master of the Inn'. Joseph dined at the 'Falkenstein Arms' on boiled beef, soup, ham and the most 'agreeable yet common Russian dishes'. One wonders if the humourless pedant got the joke."[339]

On June 23, 1780 Catherine II came to St. Petersburg where she and Joseph II attended the consecration of a church and had dinner together. The next few days were marked by various spectacles like fireworks, lavish dinners, and departures of large frigates from the St. Petersburg shipyard.[340] "Throughout the fun, the Russian ministers and the diplomats were on edge as they sensed vast yet so far invisible changes. When the party returned to Petersburg, Joseph encountered Nikita Panin. 'This man', noticed the Kaiser, 'has the air of fearing that one address oneself to his antagonist Prince Potemkin.'"[341]

On June 26, 1780 they visited Peterhof where they held talks with Potemkin.[342] Afterwards, Joseph II started off on one of his usual tours, visiting the Imperial Science Academy where he read the code of law that was drafted by Catherine II and received a copy from the academy's president. The emperor also visited printing offices, copper blade workshops and various other facilities. He also studied maps of Russia showing itineraries of other monarchs.[343] Joseph II spent his time meeting with various ministers and important people of Russian society.[344] He visited Shlisselburg east of St. Petersburg, took a trip on the Ladoga channel, saw the shipyard and harbor in Kronstadt which is located on Kotlin island in the Baltic Sea and was impressed by the strength of the Russian Navy. [345] Joseph even wrote, "I am relieved that it is not possible to sail into Bohemia and Galicia." The last days in St. Petersburg were spent visiting a monastery with Catherine II and having further conversations with the empress. According to the travel journals, which were written by Donnert and Reinalter, one could spot tears in Catherine's eyes when she said goodbye to her "Count von Falkenstein".[346]

The admiration was mutual. Catherine II wrote to Count Grimm: "Joseph II has the most solid and deep education of any person I know". Even though Joseph once said "Catherine's vanity is boundless and she only cares about herself", he otherwise had only positive things to say about the empress.[347]

On August 9, 1780 the emperor arrived back in Vienna and Maria Theresa was overjoyed that her son was back home. He had covered a distance of almost 5000 kilometres and it ended up being the longest trip

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[339]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 227

[340]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, pp. 21-3

[341]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 227

[342]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 23

[343]Cf. Ibid., pp. 23-25

[344]Cf. Ibid., pp. 28-33

[345]Cf. Ibid., p.33

[346]Cf. Ibid., pp. 35-6

[347]Cf. Kratzer, Roland: *Die Reisen Josephs II*, Diplomarbeit zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines Magisters der Philosophie, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, 2014, p. 102, author's translation

Figure 73 *Charles-Joseph, Prince de Ligne by C. Leclercq*

of his lifetime. The two monarchs remained friends and started a regular and frequent exchange of letters.[348] The two sides got closer, however no decision or action was taken in regard to their alliance while Maria Theresa still ruled in Vienna.[349]

Joseph II's visit to Russia created great interest at the Russian Imperial Court and had left many people guessing at its real meaning.[350] "Joseph's successful visit truly put the cat among the pigeons. The Prussian party, Panin and Grand Duke Paul, were in disarray. Frederick the Great decided to send a Prussian Prince to Petersburg to counteract the Habsburg success." However, sending Frederick William, Frederick the Great's nephew and heir, was not such a good idea, states Sebag Montefiore – in contrast to Joseph II, the "Prussian boor" lacked social qualities." Besides, Frederick's plan had already been undermined by the arrival of Joseph II's secret weapon – the Prince de Ligne."[351]

"Charles-Joseph, Prince de Ligne, now fifty, was an eternally boyish, mischievous and effortlessly witty aristocrat of the Enlightenment. Heir to an imperial principality awarded in 1602, he was raised by a nurse who made him dance and sleep naked with her. He married a Liechtenstein heiress but found marriage 'absurd for several weeks and then indifferent'. After three weeks, he committed his first infidelity with a chambermaid. He led his Ligne regiment during the Seven Years War, distinguishing himself at the battle of Kolin. 'I'd like to be a pretty girl until thirty, a general … till sixty,' he told Frederick the Great after the war, 'and then cardinal until eighty.' However, he was eaten by bitterness about one thing – he longed to be taken seriously as a general yet no one, from Joseph to Potemkin, would ever give him an independent military command. This rankled.

Ligne's greatest talent was for friendships. The charmer of Europe treated every day as a comedy waiting to be turned into an epigram, every girl as an adventure waiting to be turned into a poem, and every monarch as a conquest waiting to be seduced by his jesting. His flattery could be positively emetic: 'What a low and brazen sycophant Ligne is!', wrote one who observed him in action. But it worked. Friends both with

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[348]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 62

[349]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 227

[350]Cf. Donnert und Reinalter: *Journal der Rußlandreise*, p. 35

[351]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 228

Joseph II and Frederick the Great, no mean feat in itself, as well as with Rousseau, Voltaire, Casanova and Queen Marie-Antoinette, he showed how small the *monde* was in those days. No one so personified the debauched cosmopolitanism of the late eighteenth century: 'I like to be a foreigner everywhere … A Frenchman in Austria, an Austrian in France, both a Frenchman and an Austrian in Russia.'

Ligne's letters were copied, his *bons mots* repeated, across the salons of Europe – as they were meant to be. He was a superb writer whose bitchy portraits of the great men of his time, especially Potemkin, who fascinated him, were never bettered. His *Melanges* are, along with Casanova's *Histoire*, the best record of the era: Ligne was at the top and Casanova at the bottom of the same faro society. They met the same charlatans and dukes, prostitutes and countesses at balls and card tables, operas and bordellos, roadside taverns and royal courts, again and again across Europe.

Ligne entranced Potemkin. Their friendship, bringing together two of the best conversationalist of the age, would wax and wane with the intensity of a love affair, chronicled in Ligne's many unpublished letters contained in Potemkin's archives, written in his tiny hand but dripping with wit and intelligence before sinking again into illegibility. This 'jockey diplomatique', as he called himself, was invited to all the Empress's private card games, carriage ride and dinners at Tsarkoe Selo. The bovine Prince of Prussia did not stand a chance against the man Catherine called 'the most pleasant and easy person to live with I've ever known, an original mind that thinks deeply and plays all sorts of tricks, like a child'."[352]

It was only seven years later, during the Second Turkish War in 1787, when Potemkin found out that Joseph II ordered Prince de Ligne to use his friendship with Serenissimus to spy on him. "'You will report to me on a separate piece of paper in French', Joseph secretly instructed Ligne, 'which will be concealed and placed in an ordinary packet with the envelope addressed carefully: For His Majesty Alone.' The 'jockey diplomatique' did not know this fell into the hands of the Russian Cabinet Noir – it remains in Potemkin's archives – but he did notice Serenissimus' reserve … 'The Prince de Ligne, whom I love, is now a burden', Potemkin told Catherine. War was the ruin of their friendship."[353]

Sebag Montefiore continues, "… Ligne's criticisms, widely propagated and accepted by history as truth, were factually wrong and based on his Austrian partisanship. His rightly famous accounts of Potemkin at war, which he repeated in his fine letters to Joseph, Ségur and Marquise de Coigny and thus to the whole of Europe, never deliberately lied but they have to be read in the context of his job, which was to spy on his friend, and persuade him to take the heat off his own Emperor. He was also bitterly disappointed not be given his own command."[354]

Although the truth about Ligne's espionage and his "lying letters to his friends"[355], revealed in 1787, relate to the period of the Second Turkish War, the possibility of Joseph II using Ligne as a spy at the Russian Court already from the beginning of his stay is very high. Joseph II was apparently successful, as in 1780 the empress and Potemkin did not want to let Ligne leave, and after his departure kept asking Cobenzl when he was returning. "This was exactly what Austrians wanted," states Sebag Montefiore. The Russians "were relieved when Frederick William finally departed, having achieved nothing."[356]

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[352]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 228-9

[353]Ibid., p. 391

[354]Ibid., p. 391, footnote

[355]Ibid., p. 393

[356]Cf. Ibid., pp. 229-30

When Maria Theresa passed in November of 1780, Ligne joked to Potemkin that Joseph II "seemed to me so profoundly filled with friendship for you" and both sides began their rapprochement.[357]

"Joseph and Catherine had meanwhile agreed the terms of a defensive treaty, including the secret clause aimed at the Sublime Porte – but Potemkin's grand enterprise now hit a snag that was very much of its time. This was the so-called 'alternative', a diplomatic tradition by which monarchs signing a treaty put their name first on one copy and second on another. The Holy Roman Emperor, as Europe's senior ruler, always signed first on both copies. Now Catherine refused to admit Russia was lower than Rome, while Joseph refused to lower the dignity of the Kaiser by signing second. So, amazingly, the realignment of the East ground to a halt over a matter of protocol."[358]

"This was one of those crises where the difference between Catherine and Potemkin was clearest", states Sebag Montefiore, "because, while the Empress was obstinate, the Prince begged her to be flexible and get the treaty signed. The bickering of the partners echoes through their letters and Cobenzl's despatches. Potemkin rushed back and forth between the two sides. Catherine at one point told him to inform Cobenzl 'to give up such nonsense which will imminently stop everything'. Everything did stop." But then, "Catherine devised an inspired solution for Potemkin to suggest to Joseph: they would each exchange signed letters, setting out their obligation to each other, instead of a treaty…"[359] And it worked out. "Joseph agreed to sign the secret defensive treaty with the exchange of letters. For six months, Europe believed that negotiations had collapsed but, secretly on 18 May, Catherine signed her letter to 'My dear Brother' – and Joseph reciprocated. She agreed that Russia would aid Austria against Prussia; but, more relevantly, for Potemkin, Joseph promised to defend Russia if it was attacked by the Turks – 'I am obliged three months after…to declare war …'. Austria therefore underwrote Russia's peace treaties with Turkey. This realignment of Russian policy was Potemkin's personal triumph."[360]

"Catherine and Potemkin enjoyed fooling the international community", suggests Sebag Montefiore, "French, Prussian and British envoys tossed bribes around to learn what was happening. Harris suspiciously noticed that 'my friend' was in 'high spirits' but 'avoided every political subject'. Cobenzl, who knew everything of course, enjoyed himself too. 'The whole affair', he told his Emperor, 'is continuing to be a mystery here for everyone except Prince Potemkin and Bezborodko.' It was not long before Joseph realised that Catherine usually got what she wanted", the author continues, "In spite of the priority of the Greek Project, she did not allow the Armed Neutrality to drop and persuaded both Prussia and Austria to sign. 'What Woman wants, God gives, goes the proverb,' mused Joseph, 'and once in their hands, one always goes further than one wants.' Catherine and Potemkin were exultant: Catherine was so excited by one flattering letter from Joseph that she actually blushed.

The treaty remained secret. It was 25 June, a month later, before Harris first suspected that a treaty had been signed, thanks to a bribe of £1,600 to Bezborodko's secretary, but amazingly the secret was kept for almost two years. Only Catherine, Potemkin and Bezborodko knew everything; Grand Duke Paul was not told … The partners congratulated each other…"[361]

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[357]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 230

[358]Ibid., p. 232

[359]Cf. Ibid., p. 232

[360]Ibid., p. 234

[361]Ibid., pp. 234-5

4. Potemkin as Co-Ruler, Builder and Visionary

Figure 74 *Prince Potemkin-Tavrichesky as the triumphant warlord in 1791*

In autumn of 1782, Potemkin persuaded Catherine to annex Crimea, which was to become "his own Russian paradise". "Believe me, that doing this will win you immortal glory greater than any other Russian Sovereign ever. This glory will force its way to an even greater one: with the Crimea, dominance over the Black Sea will be achieved.", he wrote. And he finished: "Russia needs paradise". Potemkin could see the potential and value of Crimea's strategic importance due to its beneficial location as the controlling point of the Black Sea.[362]

Over the next months Potemkin worked very hard to make his dream come true, and finally, in December 1783, the Turks accepted the loss of Taurida (Crimea) in "the new convention of Ainalikawak". Potemkin was promoted to field marshal. After that he decided he wanted Constantinople – 'the city of Caesars' and spent much of his time in the south:There were cities to build, fleets to float, kingdoms to found."[363]

Potemkin moved south in mid-March, as the "Prince of Tauris". As S. Werrett claims, "His intention was to create an idealisation of what Russia might become under the Enlightened Empress." Catherine II throughout her reign was portrayed as a "planter" or "creator of Eden" and her policy of imperial expansion, colonisation and "civilization" was compared to the establishment of "a paradisical new Eden in Russia".[364]

"Every hour I encountered some fresh, fantastic instance of Prince Potemkin's Asiatic peculiarities," wrote the Comte de Damas, who observed the energetic and creative way the viceroy of the south worked in the late 1780s. "He would move a *guberniya* [province], demolish a town with a view to building it somewhere else, form a new colony or a new industrial centre, and change the administration of a province, all in a spare half-hour before giving his whole attention to the arrangement of a ball or a fête…". These words are a great example of how the Prince was seen among westerners – they always presumed that "barbaric" Russians could never really do anything properly, not like Germans or Frenchmen. However, as

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[362]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 244

[363]Cf. Ibid., pp. 258-60

[364]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, p. 8

they found out later, they were very much mistaken. What Potemkin managed to achieve in a very short time was remarkable, almost miraculous. Not willing to recognise it and being extremely jealous, westerners and enemies of Russia propagated yet another fantastical story about Potemkin – the so-called "Potemkin Villages". This term first appeared in German (Potemkinsche Dörfer) coined by biographer Georg von Helbig who accused Potemkin of stage-managing the whole visit of Catherine to the south and showing her painted paper facades instead of real houses. Sebag Montefiore, however, assumes that it was no more than just a lie and cites one of the first biographers of Potemkin: "Attempts have been made to ridicule the first foundations of towns and colonies. Yet such establishments are not less entitled to our admiration… Time has justified our observations. Listen to the travellers who have seen Kherson and Odessa…". The so-called "Potemkin Villages" of the past are today cities inhabited by millions of people.[365]

According to Sebag Montefiore, such miraculous achievements were possible due to the Prince's unique ability of "combining the creative ideas of an entrepreneur with the force of a soldier and the foresight of a statesman."

After the annexation of the Crimea, the empress and the Prince had split their powers – "Catherine let Potemkin run the south and control it absolutely". Serenissimus set up his own Court in the south and acted pretty much like a tsar (an emperor). According to Sebag Montefiore, Potemkin "cared for poor folk, disdained the nobility and granted ranks and estates in his lands." His power and his prestige now depended on his own personal successes and no longer on his closeness to the empress alone.[366] By the 1780s, he governed his own private chancellery with at least fifty clerks and he even had his own prime minister – Vasily Popov, whom he trusted absolutely. He was constantly in motion. [367]

Potemkin then began his city-founding period. The first town – Kherson – was designed as a future base for a new Black Sea fleet. Potemkin started planning it in 1778 and summoned dock workers and carpenters from all over the empire. In spite of difficult obstacles like hot weather, bad soil, the proximity of the powerful Ottoman fortress Ochakov, no access to raw materials like timber and food supplies, Potemkin kept going. He hired over 500 carpenters and thousands of workers, founded the shipyards and planned the town. He employed the army for building tasks, soldiers, sailors, peasants were all used. In 1780 a young English engineer, Samuel Bentham, already found about 180 houses in Kherson and "one sixty-four gunned ship-of-the-line and five frigates". Potemkin encouraged trade in his new-built city, wax, flags, rope, timber were the main goods for trade in Kherson.[368]

Potemkin struggled with getting things accomplished as quickly as he wanted. "The Prince himself approved every plan, each building façade – from the school to the archbishop's house to his own residence – and it began to take shape."[369] It is also known, that Potemkin ordered the construction of hospitals, two baths for fighting the plague, and the beautiful church of St Catherine's. "The Prince tried to control local health and keep the fevers at bay. He took special care with hospitals and breweries (to provide drinking water), even telling the inhabitants to eat greens, and personally appointed the doctors to his hospitals."[370]

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[365]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 263

[366]Cf. Ibid., p. 264

[367]Cf. Ibid., p. 265

[368]Cf. Ibid., pp. 268-70

[369]Ibid., p. 270

[370]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 270

Figure 75 *St. Catherine's Cathedral in Kherson*

He was constantly demanding more experts from all over the empire and ordered trees to be planted to help overcome the hot weather. “The town continued to grow…”[371]

Visitors to Kherson witnessed the development of the town over the years with its many “very good houses built on stone”, the fortress and fourteen churches, St Catherine’s Church and synagogue, battle ships and merchant ships and, according to the South American revolutionary Francisco de Miranda, in December 1786 the population reached about 40,000 people - three quarters of them military, the rest civilian.[372] Potemkin had the ambition to create “a Petersburg of his own” in the South and called Kherson “the southern capital of my Souvereign”. After the end of the Crimean Khanate, Kherson became more of a commercial trade town and less of a naval base.[373]

In June of 1783, Potemkin had chosen Akhtiar as the site of Russia’s new principal naval base. Potemkin referred to it as “the best harbour in the world”and gave it the Greek name Sebastopol. According to Sebag Montefiore, the Prince was in a hurry to build a strong fortification and shipyards and planned a road across the peninsula which was to be ”as good as a Roman” one, which the Prince decided to name “Catherine Road”. His engineer Korsakov agreed that the place chosen by Potemkin was the most suitable.

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[371]Cf. Ibid., p. 271

[372]Cf. Ibid., p. 271

[373]Cf. Ibid., p. 272

Figure 76 *Bird's-eye view over Sebastopol city, harbour and fortifications, 1850s, lithography*

Visiting the city four years later, Francisco de Miranda had counted "fourteen frigates, three ships-of-the-line of 66 guns and a gunboat" and reported that "the harbour could hold a fleet of over 100 vessels". Maria Guthrie, visiting soon after Potemkin's death, called Sebastopol "one of the finest ports in the world". It still remains one of the greatest naval bases in Russia and Ukraine. The monument above the port still reads, "Here on 3(14) June 1783 was founded the city of Sebastopol – the sea fortress of South Russia."[374]

Potemkin was reported to have "fallen in love" with "that magical place" called Crimea – with its "hills of greenery and vines", medieval "fortresses overlooking white cliffs and azure bays". Imagining the empress visiting his "paradise", Potemkin began planting trees, laying out avenues of bay trees and olive plantations.[375]

He was also kind to the local population of the conquered land and "ordered his generals to treat the inhabitants kindly and not to offend them." He even assigned special observers for the protection of the villagers and ordered "to report to him all forbidden actions".[376]

Potemkin decided to build the Crimean capital in the middle of the peninsula and called it Simferopol, which still remains the capital to this day.[377]

In 1784, he decided that his southern "paradise" needed a luxurious, sumptuous capital and had chosen a matching name for it: "Ekaterinoslav", which means "Catherine's Glory". As Werrett stated, it was planned to be one of Potemkin's greatest "idealised towns", "based on the rational planning of the capital."[378]

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[374]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 272

[375]Cf. Ibid., p. 273

[376]Cf. Ibid., p. 273

[377]Cf. Ibid., p. 273

[378]Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, p. 9

"Potemkin envisaged a neo-Classical metropolis; its courts of law were to resemble "ancient basilikas", its marketplace a huge semi-circle "like the Propylaeum, or threshold of Athens". The governor-general's house would be in "Greek and Roman style". Potemkin considered possible designs for more than one year and finally, in 1786, ordered the French architect Claude Giroir to design the central square and a grid of streets, which was later perfected by Potemkin's architect Starov in the final plans. In January 1787, Serenissimus presented theses plans to Francisco de Miranda, who praised their "Roman grandeur and architectural taste". Potemkin had a grand plan to accomplish everything in Ekaterinoslav within nine or ten years, but it was too ambitious and the Prince never lived to see it.[379] Work did not begin until mid 1787, and was further delayed by the war, so very little of the original plans was ever built. As Sebag Montefiore states, "Ekaterinoslav never became southern Petersburg … The gap between hope and reality made this Potemkin's biggest failure and it has been used to discredit much else that was done well."[380]

The same author claims, that "the only part of the city that existed from the beginning was the University of Ekaterinoslav, with its own musical *conservatoire",* and that "the Prince really was hiring musical staff in Italy before a city was constructed", as well as painters for teaching art at the university and even a French historian at the Academy and told the local Governor to improve the public schools to provide the university with good students. "Overall, 300,000 roubles was assigned to the educational establishments alone."[381] Potemkin had the ambition to create an international Orthodox college, where students from Poland, Greece, Wallachia and Moldavia would study and put special focus on producing sailors for the Empire. "In 1787, after Catherine's visit, he united all the naval academies in the region and Petersburg and moved them to Ekaterinoslav."[382]

In 1790, Starov arrived in the south, and laid new plans for the city, especially its cathedral and the Prince's Palace, all approved by Potemkin at the beginning of the year. The professors' residences and the administrative buildings for the university were finished. "By 1792, there were 546 state buildings and just 2,500 inhabitants." Construction of the Orthodox church, which Potemkin planned to build in the middle of the city with classical pillars and golden cupola, was begun in 1788 during the war and completed long after his death in 1837. Potemkin's Park still contains the massive Potemkin's Palace.[383]

The last cities sponsored by Serenissimus were Nikolaev and Odessa. In August of 1789, Potemkin ordered to found Nikolaev, which was "named after St Nikolai, the saint of seafarers on whose day Potemkin finally stormed Ochakov". It is said that Nikolaev was the best planned and most successful of his cities, with the notable exception of Odessa, as it was built following Potemkin's precise orders. "In a twenty-one point memorandum, he ordered Faleev to build a monastery, move naval headquarters from Kherson to Nikolaev, construct a military school for 300 students, fund a church from the income of local taverns, recast the broken bell of the Mejigorsky Convent and adding copper to it, cultivate the land "according to the English method as practised by three British-educated assistants of Professor Livanov, build hospitals and rest-homes for invalids, create a free port, cover all fountains with marble, build a Turkish bath and an admiralty – and then establish a town council and a police force … Shipyards were built first. Peasants, soldiers and

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[379]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 274

[380]Cf. Ibid., p. 276

[381]Cf. Ibid., p. 275

[382]Cf. Ibid., p. 276

[383]Cf. Ibid., p. 276

Turkish prisoners built the city … In 1791, the main shipyards were moved from Kherson to Nikolaev."[384] "Four years later, the visiting Maria Guthrie, acclaimed its 10,000 inhabitants, 'remarkably long, broad, straight streets' and 'handsome public buildings'. The city's position even today is ideal: it is well laid out and planned, though few of Potemkin's buildings survive. Its shipyards still work where they were built by him 200 years ago."[385]

Odessa was neither named nor started until after Potemkin's death, though the Prince ordered a town and fortress to be built there after he took the Ottoman fort of Hadjibey in 1789 and recognised its outstanding strategic location. He ordered the demolition of the old castle and chose the site for the port and settlement himself, as Sebag Montefiore recalls. The town itself was formally founded three years later by his protégé Jose (Osip) de Ribas, the Spanish adventurer from Naples. Catherine had given the port the name Odessos after the Ancient Greek town. Odessa is considered one of the remaining jewels of Potemkin's legacy.[386]

Potemkin is considered as the "father of the Black Sea Fleet", comparable to Peter the Great and his Baltic fleet. Ships-of-the-line or "floating fortresses" were considered the eighteenth century's most prestigious weapons. The scale of work required for the construction of the fleet "has been compared by a modern historian to the cost and effort of a space programme." Catherine granted Potemkin an initial sum of 2.4 million roubles in June 1786. "By 1787, the Prince had created a formidable fleet that the British Ambassador put at twenty-seven battleships. If one counts ships-of-the-line as having over forty guns, he had twenty-four of them, built in nine years, starting at Kherson. Later Sebastopol's perfect harbour became the naval base of Potemkin's fleet and Nikolaev its main shipyard. This, together with the thirty-seven ships-of-the-line of the Baltic Fleet, instantly placed Russian seapower almost equal to Spain, just behind France – though far behind the 174 ships-of-the-line of Britain, the world's only naval superpower."

"When Miranda, who had no European prejudices and broad military experience, visited five years later, he reported that neither the timber nor the design of the ships could be bettered and considered the workmanship of a better standard than those of either Spanish or French vessels. They were built, he said, offering the highest praise one could give a ship in those days, 'in the English manner'… Yet Kaiser Joseph, who was no expert on naval matters, claimed the ships were 'built of green timber, worm eaten'."[387]

Another "Herculean effort" of Potemkin was "to attract the ordinary folk to populate these vast empty territories"of New Russia and Azov. Potemkin and Catherine started recruitment campaigns and issued all kinds of privileges for the new settlers such as tax exemptions for the first ten years, "free cattle or farming equipment, spirits or brewery franchises". "Hundreds of thousands were moved, housed, and settled, and received welfare gifts and ploughs, money and oxen,"as claimed by Sebag Montefiore. "He advertised in foreign newspapers and created a network of recruiting agents across Europe … Potemkin had been an enthusiastic colonist since coming to power. Even in the mid-1770s, he was recruiting immigrants for his new settlements on the Mozdok Line of the north Caucasus. His ideal settlers would plant, plough, trade and manufacture in peacetime, and, when war came, ride out against the Turks. Potemkin's first settlers were the Albanians from Orlov-Chesmensky's Mediterranean fleet of 1769, and the Crimean Christians. The former initially settled Yenikale, the latter in their own towns like Mariupol. The Albanians were soldier-farmers.

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[384]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 277

[385]Ibid., p. 278

[386]Cf. Ibid., p. 278

[387]Cf. Ibid., pp. 279-80

Potemkin founded schools and hospitals as well as towns for these immigrants … The Prince specifically designated Mariupol for the Crimean Greeks … By 1781 the Azov Governor reported that much of it was built. There were four churches, the Greeks had their own court and it grew into a prosperous Greek trading town. Later Potemkin founded Nachkichevan, on the lower Don near Azov, and Gregoripol (named after himself, of course), on the Dniester, for the Armenians."[388]

Potemkin was looking for "productive citizens inside the Empire, attracting noblemen and their serfs, retired and wounded soldiers, Old Believers or *raskolniki*, Cossacks and, naturally, women to make homes for them…Outside the Empire, he offered amnesty to exiles, such as fugitive serfs, *raskolniki*, and Cosacks who had fled to Poland or Turkey. Families, villages and whole towns of people moved, or returned, to settle in his provinces. It is estimated that, by 1782, he had doubled the population of New Russia and Azov."

"I am using all my powers," he told Catherine. "From diverse places, I have summoned colonists knowledgeable in all spheres of the economy…". "He wielded his massive powers to decide who should and should not be taxed and how much land settlers, whether noblemen or foreigners, should receive. Immigrants were usually freed from taxes for a year and a half, later raised to six years."[389]

The list goes on, "In 1782, sixty-one Corsican families arrived to be settled near Kherson … The Prince also managed to attract the most industrious, sober settlers any empire-builder could wish for: the Mennonites of Danzig, who asked for the right to have their own churches and no taxes for ten years … The 228 families, probably 2,000 people, set off on their long journey to found eight colonies in early 1790. At the same time, over in Kherson, he was ordering … to welcome a party of Swedes for the Swedish settlement … Another 880 Swedes were settled in the new city of Ekaterinoslav. Thousands of Moldavians and Wallachians, Orthodox Rumanians under Ottoman rule, also flocked across the borders. By 1782, some 23,000 had arrived…"[390]

"Almost uniquely among Russian soldiers and statesmen, Potemkin was more than just tolerant of Jews: he studied their culture, enjoyed the company of their rabbis, and became their champion", states Sebag Montefiore. " The Enlightenment had already changed attitudes to Jews…Maria Theresa hated Jews…But her son Joseph II greatly improved their lot… The Partition of Poland in 1772 brought large numbers of Jews – about 45,000 – into Russia for the first time … On 30 September 1777, he set the policy: Jews were allowed to settle in his lands…, providing they brought five Polish settlers each and money to invest. Later he made this even more appetising: no taxes for seven years and the right to trade in wines and spirits; they would be protected from marauding soldiers; have their disputes adjudicated by rabbis; be permitted synagogues, graveyards and the right to import their wives from Jewish communities in Poland."[391] The Prince also had the idea of importing British convicts to settle them in the Crimea.[392]

For Potemkin, the embodiment of southern paradise myth was an "'Enlightenment garden', where 'people are encouraged (rather than forbidden) to partake of the tree of knowledge and rewarded with a paradise of perpetual progress'. New Russia would reflect the ancient metaphor of the 'cultivation' of knowledge, it would be the 'garden of the sciences'…", writes Werrett. So "Potemkin's garden soon mixed

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[388]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 280-1

[389]Ibid., p. 281

[390]Ibid., pp. 281-2

[391]Ibid., pp. 282-3

[392]Cf. Ibid., p. 284

imperial splendour and economic advancement. In the wake of the liberation of the nobility from state service, Potemkin geared his southern development to the production of profit, the real fruit of the new Russian Eden. As Bentham noted, Potemkin planned 'a Botanical Garden in the Crimea in which if possible all the vegetable productions of the world are to be collected' and a model dairy for the production of 'as many different kinds of cheese as possible'. To enhance this 'happy garden state' Potemkin also planned to 'introduce the use of Beer in his governments and permit the sale of it without any excise'. In Sevastopol, he recruited Admiral Thomas Mackenzie to construct a new port, dairy, vineyards and botanical gardens. To demonstrate the fruits of this Enlightened gardening, Potemkin planted his botanical and agricultural projects amidst paradisical surroundings. Palaces were constructed at Sevastopol and Bakhchisaray and English gardens were arranged at Simferapol."[393]

To sum up Potemkin's magnificent achievements in city planning and building, using Sebag Montefiore's words, "The massive scale of Potemkin's plans extended from Kherson to Sebastopol, from Balaclava, Theodosia, Kerch, Yenikale and back to Kherson again. In all these places new cities were founded or existing fortresses expanded into towns … Within five years, Sebastopol and its fleet were ready to be inspected by the two Caesars of the east."[394] As Potemkin once said to Catherine, "Nobody can encourage me to undertake something when there's no profit in it and nobody can discourage me when there's a useful opportunity."[395]

5. Catherine II's and Joseph II's Visit to the South in 1787

"Potemkin knew that the success or failure of Catherine's journey would either make him unassailable – or ruin him. The cabinets of Europe were watching. England, Prussia and the Sublime Porte stirred uneasily as Potemkin created new cities and fleets to threaten Constantinople. The empresses Crimean trip had been delayed because of the plague, but there was always a suspicion that it could not take place because nothing in the south had been completed – "there are people who supposed", Cobenzl told Joseph, "that all necessary to make the tour cannot be ready."[396]

On January 5, 1787, "three of the most extraordinary men of their epoch" set off at high speed in one carriage – Potemkin with his new travelling companions[397], the Venezuelan "father of South American liberation", Francisco de Miranda, and an adventurous Prince Charles de Nassau-Siegen, who married the Polish princess and was sent to Potemkin by King Stanislas-Augustus, and was also hoping to "win trading rights to Kherson."[398]

Meanwhile "on the freezing morning of 7 January, fourteen carriages, 124 sledges (and forty reserves) set off from Tsarskoe Selo to the sound of cannon salutes. Five hundred and sixty horses awaited them at each post. Catherine's entourage of twenty-two consisted of her senior courtiers and Ségur, Cobenzl and

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[393]Cf. Werrett: *Potemkin and the Panopticon*, pp. 8-9

[394]*Sebag Montefiore: Prince of Princes, pp. 273-4*

[395]Ibid., p. 395

[396]Cf. Ibid., pp. 352-3

[397]Cf. Ibid., p. 353

[398]Cf. Ibid., p. 352

Figure 77 *Kiew, around 1835*

Fitzherbert, the ambassadors of France, Austria and England."[399] They headed to Kiev, where they arrived on January 29 and stayed for three months, waiting until the ice on the Dnieper melted. "A 'multitude of travellers from all parts of Europe' awaited her – including Ligne. The roads to Kiev were jammed with grandees…" It is interesting to note that Jeremy Bentham, left to manage Potemkin's estate Krichev during the absence of his brother Samuel, saw her progress down the main street, "edged with branches of firs and other evergreens, and illuminated with tar barrels", as the empress passed through the estate on her way to Kiev. "There were balls everywhere: 'that's how we travel', she boasted…"[400]

For this short moment in time, Kiev had become "the Russian capital".[401] "When everyone had arrived, there were three luxurious *tableaux:* first, 'the eye was astonished to see, all at one time, a sumptuous court, a conquering Empress, a rich and quarrelsome nobility, proud and luxurious princes and grandees' and all the peoples of the Empire: Don Cossacks, Georgian princes, Kirgiz chieftains and 'savage Kalmyks, true image of the Huns'. Ségur called it a 'magical theatre that seemed to confuse and mix antiquity with modern times, civilisation and barbarism'."[402] Ligne was amazed too: "Good Heavens! What a retinue! What a noise!

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[399]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 354

[400]Cf. Ibid., p. 355

[401]Cf. Ibid., p. 358

[402]Ibid., p. 357

What a quantity of diamonds, gold stars and orders! How many chains, ribbons, turbans and red caps brimmed with furs or sharp-pointed!"[403]

After three months, everyone was already "exceptionally tired of Kiev", but luckily "the ice had melted and the show could begin". "At midday on 22 April 1787, the Empress embarked on her galley in the most luxurious fleet ever seen on a great river."[404]

"The dazzling, almost mythical, memory of this cruise remained with all its guests for the rests of their lives." The fleet "looked like something out of a fairy-tale", described Ségur. "The seven imperial galleys of the Prince's sublime fleet were elegant, comfortable and majestic, painted in gold and scarlet on the outside, decorated in gold and silk inside, propelled and served by 3,000 oarsmen, crew and guards, and attended by over eighty other boats. Each had its own orchestra, always on deck, which played as the guests embarked or disembarked…Each barge had a communal drawing room, library, music-room and canopy on deck. The sumptuous bedroom suites were hung with Chinese silk… the studies had mahogany writing-tables… The floating dining-hall could seat seventy."[405]

Nassau told his wife: "our gathering on this galley is one of the most unique things ever seen." "The journey is a truly continual party and absolutely superb," he reported and added:"A charming society because Ligne and Ségur make it great."[406]

As Sebag Montefiore describes, Potemkin "presented a perpetual spectacle along the riverside… Towns, villages, country houses and sometimes rustic huts were so wonderfully adorned and disguised with garlands of flowers and splendid architectural decorations that they seemed to be transformed before our eyes into superb cities, palaces suddenly sprang up and magically create gardens."[407]

The two emperors, Kaiser Joseph II and Tsarina Catherine II, were getting closer towards each other. "On 30 April, the flotilla rowed late into Kremencuk, delayed by a high wind. Joseph, again in incognito as Comte de Falkenstein, waited downriver at Kaidak, bristling with military impatience."[408]

As for Joseph II, this trip was probably the most difficult one in his life. In addition to his deteriorating health, he was very strained due to his sole regency which was now stretching back for seven years. The difficult domestic political situation as well as his high workload further weakened his already poor health. At first the emperor declined to travel to Russia for a second time after receiving an invitation from Catherine II in 1786. He was reluctant to accept and even said, "She thinks all she needs to do is wave her hand and I follow her all the way to Kherson. I will sleep on it before I make my decision." Only in late December the emperor could be convinced to accept the invitation, partly because he was interested in visiting the newly annexed territories of the Russian Empire on the Crimean peninsula. Potemkin, who he met during his first trip to Russia and with whom he had extensive conversations, was able to kindle the emperor's interest.[409] Sebag Montefiore suggests that Joseph II "was keen to inspect Russian military forces but, in his heart, was determined to find they could not do anything properly, unlike his Austrians. He wrote ironically to Potemkin

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[403]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes.*, p. 358

[404]Cf. Ibid., p. 362

[405]Cf. Ibid., p. 363

[406]Cf. Ibid., p. 364

[407]Ibid., p. 364

[408]Cf. Ibid., p. 367

[409]Cf. Kratzer: *Die Reisen Josephs II*, p. 104, author's translation

that he looked forward to seeing his 'interesting arrangements and surprising creations'."[410] In addition to that, there were political reasons to pay a visit to the Russian Empire, namely to strengthen anew and demonstrate their alliance to each other. This can be viewed as a glimpse to the future, as merely six months later Russia and Austria joined to declare war on the Ottoman Empire.

The start of Joseph II's journey was originally scheduled for April 1, 1787. But contrary to the original plans he did not directly travel to Kherson but instead arrived at Kaidak fortress on the Dnieper River.[411]

"Catherine fretted – where was Joseph? … The Empress landed at Kremenchuk and inspected an elegant palace surrounded, of course, by an 'enchanted English garden' of shady foliage, running water and pear trees. Potemkin had had huge oak trees, 'as broad as himself' joked Ligne, transported from afar and assembled into a wood. William Gould had been there. 'Everything is in flower,' the empress told Grimm. Catherine then inspected 15,000 troops, including seven regiments of Potemkin's new light cavalry, which Cobenzl acclaimed for its men and horses. After giving a ball for 800 that night, Catherine headed downriver for her imperial reunion."[412]

Figure 78 *Catherine II's departure from Kanev in 1787*

[410]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 367

[411]Cf. Kratzer: *Die Reisen Josephs II*, pp. 104-5

[412]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 367

At this point, a hero from an earlier chapter reappears in our story. "Just as the boats disappeared down the river, Samuel Bentham, leaving brother Jeremy to manage Krichev, sailed into view with his proudest creation: the six-link state vermicular for Catherine. [The whole floating worm was 252 feet long and almost 17 feet wide, propelled by 120 rowers] … Potemkin ordered him to moor near his barge. Next morning, he inspected it and 'was pleased, as can be', according to Samuel. When flotilla set off again, Bentham went too. He claimed the Empress noticed his vessels and admired them…"[413]

Potemkin also had to face some difficulties of his own along the way. "Twenty five miles short of Kaidak, where they were to meet the Emperor, some of the barges ran aground. The flotilla anchored. Potemkin realised they could not go all the way by river. There was a danger that the spectacular would descend into embarrassing chaos: one Empress was grounded; one Emperor was lost; there was a shortage of horses; and the barges containing the food provisions and kitchen grounded on sandbanks. Bentham's 'floating worm' saved the day. Leaving the Empress behind, Potemkin changed boats and, to Bentham's delight, pushed ahead in the vermicular to find the Emperor." The next morning Potemkin disembarked in Kaidak and found Joseph II.[414]

"That evening, the Emperor returned the compliment on Bentham's vermicular," states Sebag Montefiore and Samuel proudly told his brother, that "There is no doubt, that everybody else praised the invention."[415] However, the historian argues that the Englishmen was "deluding himself". "Bentham was puffed up by the praise of two Caesars and one Prince – but they were much more interested in meeting each other than in viewing ingenious English barges."[416]

Also, Samuel Bentham's wife mentioned in her biography about her husband that Samuel received Joseph II on board of his vermicular during the Imperial tour through the South. "This Vermicular was completed just in time, it was hoped, to have received the Empress at Krementchuk, but, unfortunately, Bentham arrived in it at that place, just two hours after her Majesty, tired of her heavy boats, had left it to pursue her journey to the Crimea by land; but he received on board not only the English and the French ambassadors, Mr. Fitzherbert, and the Count de Ségur, but also the Emperor Joseph II."[417]

Whether it is true that the emperors were more interested in discussing politics and each other, than they were in ships and their engineer, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the following fact: the visit of the Southern Russian provinces brought all three – Joseph II, Prince Potemkin and Samuel Bentham – together at the same time to the same places for over a month and Samuel's vermicular was brought to Joseph II's attention and the emperor had praised it. It is not very clear from the author's words though, whether Joseph II had met Samuel Bentham in person, or had just "returned the compliment" on Samuel's invention through Potemkin that day. It is uncertain whether they had met on any other days, because according to Sebag Montefiore, "Samuel Bentham's vermicular barges had been left behind and forgotten when the Empress's tour headed for Kherson, leaving him to tag alone behind."[418]

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[413]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 367-8

[414]Cf. Ibid., p. 368

[415]Cf. Ibid., p. 368, footnote

[416]Cf. Ibid., p. 368

[417]Bentham Mary Sophia: The Life of Brigadier-General Sir Samuel Bentham, p. 83

[418]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 395

But what is certain is that Potemkin was proudly displaying his fleet to the emperors – the naval engineering achievements were at the centre of attention throughout the whole visit of the South, and knowing Joseph II's Enlightenment-oriented nature, it is very reasonable to suggest, that this "obsessive inspector", being truly impressed by the Russian fleet, would be interested to learn about the ships in more details and talk in person to "the most ingenious shipbuilder" in Russia. The fact that Samuel Bentham was there and that he was on very good terms with Potemkin makes a meeting with the emperor fairly likely and there is almost no doubt that the two of them would have had a lively talk about all different kinds of engineering inventions. During those conversations, Samuel might have very well mentioned his brother's work on the design of the Panopticon, and Joseph, in return, might have told him about his Narrenturm. The fact that Jeremy Bentham was still at Krichev when the Imperial tour took place, working on the Panopticon and sending letters to his father, which remained unpublished until 1791, is another reason to entertain the possibility that Jeremy was inspired by the Narrenturm design principles, which he would have heard about from his brother, and which so corresponded to the ideological concept of Panopticon's observational mechanism. Jeremy might have seen in Narrenturm, which was already built and operational, a physical expression of his own theoretical "diagram of power".

Before continuing the story of Catherine and Joseph's visit to the South, I want to briefly describe Bentham's future endeavours in Russia. In spring of 1788, Potemkin ordered Samuel Bentham to enrol into the navy and create a light flotilla which would be able to fight the Turkish fleet in the Liman.[419] "Samuel Bentham, working under Admiral Mordvinov and General Suvorov at Kherson, threw himself into creating a rowing flotilla, using all his ingenuity. [In the process, he invented an amphibious cart, perhaps the first amphibious landing craft; a floating time bomb; an early torpedo; and bottle bombs filled with inflammable liquid that had to be lit and then thrown – 160 years before Molotov cocktails…] He adapted Catherine's 'cursed' imperial barges into gunboats, but his real work was to renovate a graveyard of old cannon and fit them on to any light boats that he could either convert or construct ... Bentham's masterpiece was to arm his ships with far heavier cannon than usual on most gunboats. 'The employment of great guns of 36 or even 48 pounds on such small vessels as ships' long boats', Bentham boasted justifiably to his brother, 'was entirely my idea.' It was to Potemkin's credit, that, when he came to inspect in October, he immediately understood the significance of Bentham's idea and adopted it in the construction of all the frigates and gunboats … By the spring, Potemkin had created a heavy-armed light flotilla of about a hundred boats out of almost nothing."[420]

In June of 1788, Samuel was to take part in the naval battle of Liman, where the flotilla was instrumental in winning the battle. Samuel "was promoted to colonel, and awarded the St George with a gold-hilted sword."[421]

Later, "Colonel Bentham was to command two battalions on the Chinese-Mongolian border, create a regimental school, discover new lands, form alliances with Mongols, Kalmyks and Kirghiz and open trading with Japan and Alaska. He also devised a Potemkinian plan to defeat China with 100,000 men. In 1790 he headed back via Petersburg to Potemkin's headquarters in Bender to report to the Prince and get permission to return to England, which he finally did. There ended a unique adventure in Anglo-Russian relations."[422]

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[419]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 395

[420]Ibid., p. 397

[421]Cf. Ibid., p. 402

[422]Ibid., p. 408, footnote

Now we return to the Imperial tour of the South. After Potemkin had found the lost Habsburg Monarch, Catherine II joined them and they stayed at Kaidak. Potemkin and Catherine mainly discussed politics with Joseph II and especially the possibility of an upcoming war against the Ottomans. Joseph II was sceptical about the readiness of the Russians. On the evening of May 8, Potemkin treated the guests with a "revolving firework spinning round Catherine's initial, surmounted by 4,000 rockets, and yet another volcanic hill".[423] Joseph said about it, "… in the evening there was a splendid firework display. I have never before seen such a spectacle of light. To enable the empress to witness such a spectacle, she had to travel more than 2,000 verst (roughly 2,130 kilometres) from St. Petersburg, all the way heavily guarded by her soldiers. The firework was followed by the glow which extended to the length of English Garden and was seen from every high spot in the neighbourhood, the empress' monogram glowed twice. All the preparatory work was also done by soldiers, who had to set up and light about 100,000 lanterns. The fat and tallow for the lanterns were brought from Moscow, but in this country apparently everything is possible and nobody cares how much effort and money is spent."[424] This quote reflects both admiration and anger about the empress' prodigality, which might have reminded him about his own mother's luxurious behaviour.

Figure 79 *Joseph II meets Catherine II in a field near Kaidak during Potemkin's Crimean Progress in 1787*

[423]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 368-9

[424]Cf. Kratzer: *Die Reisen Josephs II*, p. 106, author's translation

Figure 80 *A night illumination in honour of Catherine the Great on the Dnieper River in 1787*

Joseph was also disappointed by the carelessness shown by Russian authorities in regard to the lives and wellbeing of their people, especially their soldiers. About one incident at the Dnieper River, he said, "The river was swollen due to heavy rainfall and someone forgot to bring the horses to a suitable place to cross the river. So they simply ordered 400 soldiers to tow boats filled with wagons and equipment across the river for the whole day. They marched through the deep water for hours without any complaints whatsoever. It is outrageous how little concern for human life exists in this country."[425]

Starting from Kaidak they made a two-day trip to the foundations of Ekaterinoslav where Catherine and Joseph laid first stones for the Transfiguration Cathedral. From there they went straight to Kherson, where they arrived on May 12, passing through an arch which was inscribed with the words: "This is the road to Byzantium".[426]

"Ségur and Ligne were dazzled by Potemkin's achievements there: 'we could not have prevented our plain astonishment', wrote Ségur, 'to see such great new imposing creations'. The fortress was almost finished; there were houses for 24,000; 'several churches of noble architecture'; there were 600 cannons in the Arsenal; 200 merchant ships in the port and two ships-of-the-line and a frigate, ready to launch … Catherine herself, who had evidently been told by Potemkin's enemies that it was all lies, told Grimm, 'They

[425]Cf. Kratzer: *Die Reisen Josephs II*, p. 106, author's translation

[426]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 369

Figure 81 *Transfiguration Cathedral, Dnipropetrovsk (Ekaterinoslav)*

can say all they like in St Petersburg – the attentions of Prince Potemkin have transformed this land, which, at the peace [1774] was not more than a hut, into a flourishing town.'"[427]

After completing their visit of Kherson, the emperors headed across the desert towards the Crimean peninsula, where they visited Khan Giray's Palace and Bakhchisaray and headed onwards to Sebastopol on May 22.[428]

In Sebastopol the Caesars were awaited by "Potemkin's greatest show of all": "a numerous and formidable fleet – at least twenty ships-of-the-line and frigates, thought Joseph – stood at anchor, in battle order, facing the very place where the monarchs dined. At another hidden signal from the Prince, the fleet saluted in unison with all its guns…Nassau said the moment was 'almost magical'…Potemkin had built this entire fleet in just two [years]."[429] Ségur said to Catherine, "Madam, by creating Sebastopol, you have finished in the south what Peter the Great began in the north."[430]

Afterwards the emperors embarked on a tour of the city. "Around them was the new city of Sebastopol, 'the most beautiful port I have seen', Joseph wrote. At last, he was full of admiration: '150 ships were there … ready for all events of the sea.' The port was defended by three batteries. There were houses, shops, two hospitals, and barracks … 'The Empress', noted Joseph, 'is totally ecstatic … Prince Potemkin is at the

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[427]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 370

[428]Cf. Ibid., pp. 370-3

[429]Cf. Ibid., p. 373

[430]Cf. Ibid., p. 374

moment all-powerful and fêted beyond imagination.'"[431] Joseph II later said: "The truth is that it is necessary to be here to believe what I see."[432]

Potemkin and Catherine kept pressuring Joseph II into discussing the timing of the upcoming war with the Turks. "Joseph, terrified of being left out, assured them Russia could count on Austria."[433]

"Their Imperial Majesties" went on exploring Balaclava, Theodosia, again Bakhchisaray and finally parted "on the steppes at Kizikerman" on June 2.[434] It was there when bad news reached Joseph II via a long letter from back home: an uprising had occurred in the Netherlands. The emperor had to refuse the empress' offer to accompany her to Moscow and decided to return to Vienna to take care of the political situation in the western parts of his empire. Before his departure he was able to successfully negotiate a treaty which came into effect only few months later. He arrived back home in mid-June 1787.[435]

Figure 82 *Russian squadron at the harbour of Sebastopol by Aivazovsky, 1846*

[431]Cf. Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 374

[432]Ibid., p. 375

[433]Cf. Ibid., p. 375

[434]Cf. Ibid., pp. 376-9

[435]Cf. Kratzer: *Die Reisen Josephs II*, p. 107

"Catherine issued a charter acclaiming Potemkin's achievements in the south, granted him 100,000 roubles and the new surname title of 'Tavrichesky' – he was henceforth known as Kniaz Potemkin-Tavrichesky, Prince Potemkin of Taurida."[436]

As Kratzer suggests, this trip eventually was the prelude to the war with the Turks, in part because Russia successfully demonstrated its military might to the Joseph II. The emperors didn't merely attend harmless military manoeuvres, fireworks displays and harbour tours, like Joseph did in France, but it was apparent that Russia, and in particular Potemkin, who was now Russia's commander-in-chief, were actively preparing for war, which became a reality in February of 1788.[437]

[436]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 379

[437]Cf. Kratzer: *Die Reisen Josephs II*, pp. 107-8, author's translation

V

Résumé

In the summary I would like to focus on the ideological interconnection between emperor Joseph II and Prince Potemkin, which strengthens the theory that Joseph II could have had a direct or indirect influence on Bentham's Panopticon design.

There is no doubt that Emperor Joseph II and Prince Potemkin were two outstanding statesmen, each in their own way. And even if their personalities seem to differ a lot at first glance, one might notice a strong connection in spirit, ideas and the way they ruled and envisioned their monarchies.

In the beginning, they happened to be overshadowed by two great women in power, and then later on were able to prove themselves to be capable rulers on their own. Joseph II shared power with his mother Maria Theresa for fifteen years as co-regent of the Habsburg Monarchy. Even though Potemkin was not an heir to the Russian throne, Catherine II had boundless trust in him and granted him great power and freedom to act, which elevated him to the status of de-facto monarch of the Russian Southern provinces.This became especially apparent after the annexation of the Crimea, when Potemkin established his own court in the South and Catherine gave him absolute control over it.[438]

Joseph II and Potemkin were both known as complex and controversial personalities, famous for their extravagant ideas and unconventional ways, which were the cause of many lies, legends and intrigues that surrounded them.

They were not very popular among the nobility – Joseph II avoided the ceremonial pomposity at any cost and considered the royal court to be an unnecessary and burdensome apparatus. He introduced an austerity program and cut all superfluous expenses. Due to his love for simplicity and closeness to the common folk he was named "Volkskaiser" or "People's Emperor".[439] Potemkin was envied and hated by the majority at the court for his exceptional position. In spite of his strive for greatness and splendour, he also "cared for poor folk, disdained the nobility and granted ranks and estates in his lands," as a viceroy of the South.[440]

Joseph II believed in the "state of one man", "was a workaholic who meticulously studied the details of many different things"[441], similarly Potemkin "… was certainly authoritarian, concerned with the smallest details."[442]

For both men, their state was the highest priority. They put the benefit of the empire before their own and dedicated themselves to the effort of raising the power and prestige of their monarchies. Joseph II proclaimed himself "the first servant of the state" and used his inherited fortune to drive down the debt of his empire.[443] He also financed the construction of the Josephinum, the surgical academy, and the Narrenturm, the first institution for the mentally-ill, using his own money. Potemkin "used his own estates as the arsenal and marketplace of the state, with no boundary between his own money and that of the Empire."[444] When he established new factories, he "asked for no income whatsoever during the ten years – he simply hoped to

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[438]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 264

[439]Cf. Reinalter: *Joseph II*, p. 7

[440]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 264

[441]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 26

[442]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 270

[443]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 23

[444]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 295; http://www.historical-persons.ru/view_post.php?id=35, accessed on 25.04.2017

receive the factories back in a profitable state at the end. His real interest was not profit but imperial benefit."[445]

For both of these two gifted men, Enlightenment was the main driving force. They both fostered knowledge, improvement, development, modernisation and advancement in their own way. Joseph II, driven by his "humanitarian instincts and sincere concern for the general welfare", emancipated the serfs, founded industrial and agricultural schools, civil and military hospitals, and a surgical academy. Potemkin built his "Enlightenment garden" in the Southern provinces, hired English engineers and specialists of different kinds, laid out plans for new cities, built schools, universities, and hospitals, planned botanical gardens, vineyards, dairies, harbours, and various factories all around Southern Russia. In order "to control local health and keep the fevers at bay", Potemkin ordered the construction of hospitals and two baths for fighting the plague. "He took special care with hospitals and breweries (to provide drinking water), even telling the inhabitants to eat greens, and personally appointed the doctors to his hospitals."[446]

Both Joseph II and Potemkin showed great interest in architecture. Talking about planning the city of Kherson, "… the Prince himself approved every plan, each building facade – from school to the archbishop's house to his own residence …"[447] Similar to Joseph, who liked to be personally involved in the modernisation of the city of Vienna, Potemkin participated in planning and designing his cities himself. He made sure to talk to the experts and thoroughly discussed the plans to the smallest details. He was very creative and inventive in his city planning policies, attracting immigrants from different places.[448] "The massive scale of Potemkin's plans extended from Kherson to Sebastopol, from Balaclava, Theodosia, Kerch, Yenikale and back to Kherson again."[449]

Considering the city-planning concepts, they both have seen great value in increasing green and open spaces in order to improve air quality and hygiene in the cities. Joseph II planted trees along the avenues, beautified the Prater and the Augarten, and opened them to the public. Potemkin "created an English garden wherever he stopped for the night…"[450] and ordered trees to be planted in his new Southern cities. "Nobody has even had the sense to plant trees. I've now ordered it."[451]

It is interesting that both men used their soldiers for non-military purposes. Back then, Vienna's city garrison consisted of roughly 10,000 to 12,000 men and represented a valuable work force for the emperor. Soldiers were often used for planting trees on the avenues, as well as for building fortresses. Potemkin also employed the army for building tasks.[452]

In all his undertakings, Joseph II was known for pragmatism and made decisions according to their practical use for the state and its people. For example, the emancipation of serfs and converting them into

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[445]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 301

[446]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 270; http://www.historical-persons.ru/view_post.php?id=35, accessed on 25.04.2017

[447]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 270

[448]Ibid., p. 280

[449]Ibid., pp. 273-4

[450]Ibid., second cover

[451]Ibid., p. 271

[452]Ibid., p. 268

free farmers contributed toward the material welfare of the monarchy[453], raising the number of educated citizens with better skills allowed for better performance and productivity.[454] Potemkin also understood the use of "productive citizens", attracting foreign settlers to his new lands, who "would plant, plough, trade and manufacture in peacetime, and, when war came, ride out against the Turks."[455]

Pragmatism also found its expression in the process of secularisation of the churches in both empires. In Russia "… large monasteries were being dissolved completely, smaller ones were ordered to convert their property to state uses. The 1770s and 1780s witnessed a large-scale conversion of ecclesiastical buildings into hospitals, prisons, schools, and asylums…"[456]. In Austria, Joseph II proclaimed the closure of all church orders that weren't dedicated to health care or education. As a result, an immense amount of financial, material and human resources were set free which made it possible to finance his charity and healthcare projects.[457]

Those two great men were always in a hurry to implement their greatest visions. Potemkin "wanted everything finished 'in a short time' while insisting on both 'durability' and 'beauty inside'"[458], similarly Joseph II was convinced that "… great things must be executed at a single stroke" and "without question and without hesitation."[459] They were "rulers ahead of their time", often envied or ridiculed for their passionate desire to refashion their lands almost overnight and bring "remedies for all the ills of society whether society was or was not prepared to accept them."[460]

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[453]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, pp. 104-5

[454]Ibid., p. 109

[455]Ibid., p. 280

[456]Werrett, Simon: *The Panopticon in the Garden: Samuel Bentham's Inspection House and Noble Theatricality in Eighteenth-Century Russia*, Ab Imperio, 3/2008, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/561286, accessed on 02.09.2016, p. 64

[457]Cf. Swittalek: *Das Josephinum*, p. 81

[458]Sebag Montefiore: *Prince of Princes*, p. 270

[459]Cf. Davis: *Joseph II: An imperial reformer*, p. 113

[460]Cf. Ibid., pp. 59-60

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