

Publications on the occasion of the official inauguration of the new university building

The new university building was not big enough to meet all academic needs, and the university therefore continued to use other locations, as it had done in some way or other for a long time. In Maria Theresa's concept, Jean Nicolas de Jadot's new building was seen to form the "principal university building" (Justus Schmidt) and the ideational centre of all the other decentralised locations. The Empress not only intended the old buildings to continue to be used by the university but at the same time sought to acquire other buildings in the vicinity to accommodate lodgings for the teachers as well as lecture halls.

Construction of the building was completed in the summer of 1755 and the official inauguration took place on 5 April 1756. Kneeling before the Empress, the President of the Directorate, Friedrich Wilhelm Graf Haugwitz (1702–1765), received the keys of the university from her hands and passed them on to the University Protector Archbishop Johann Josef Graf von Trautson, who handed them over to the Rector Magnificus, Regierungsrat Johann Adam von Penz.

A number of informative publications appeared on the occasion of the inauguration of the new university building, such as the

festschrift edited by the epicist and art theoretician Franz Christoph Scheyb (also known as Orestrio) (1704–1777) entitled "Musae Francisco et Mariae Theresiae Augustis congratulantur ob scientias bonasque artes eorum iussu et munificentia Vindobonae restitutas" (Vienna 1756). This interesting publication, which begins with the age of the Babenberg Duke Heinrich II. Jasomirgott, constitutes an apotheosis of the reigning couple Franz I Stephan and Maria Theresa. It sings the praise of the Habsburg rulers as generous patrons of the arts and the sciences. "[...] Ye are the couple the muse sang of,.. [...]". This panegyric was not the only one to be published on the occasion: In the same year, Scheyb composed "Heinrich Jasomirgott – eine Lobschrift auf Ihre Kaiserliche und Koenigliche Majestaeten bey Gelegenheit der uralten Universität zu Wien von dem Arkader Orestrio" ("Heinrich Jasomirgott – a panegyric on their Imperial and Royal Majesties on the occasion of the Old University of Vienna by the Arcadian Orestrio" [Vienna 1756]). In this work, the activities of the Imperial couple are seen as the culmination of the century-old munificent patronage of the Babenbergs and Habsburgs: "[...] A pair that brings peace and wards off misery, the rulers of all hearts that only the vicious fear, whose rule

is rich in love, compassion and mercy [...].

The glorification of the Habsburgs culminated in the 47-page “Panegyricus Francisco et Mariae Theresiae Augustis ob scientias optimasque artes suis in terris instauratas, ornatas (...)” (Vienna 1756) written by the Viennese Jesuit and Professor of Rhetoric Georg Maister, which was also

published in a French version. It contains a verbose description of how the sciences have now moved from humble and miserable buildings to a new regal palace (“novum regale palatium”) and how the previously neglected academic disciplines are now imbued with new life. Since the new building was dedicated to all faculties, it is even called a “castle of common felicity” (“arcem communis felicitatis”), as “Austria’s hope” (“spem Austriae”) and as “Germany’s jewel” (“decus Germaniae”). The panegyric reaches its climax in the praise of Jadot’s architectural creation and calls it a “firmament of peace, religion, justice and universal weal” (“firmamentum pacis, religionis, justitiae, salutis universorum”). The commitment of the Imperial couple to the sciences is exuberantly praised as “paternal solicitude” (“Paterna Sollicitudine [sic!]”) and “maternal clemency” (“Materna Clementia”). The document does not contain any relevant comments on the building as such and mentions only the group of statues



in the Great Hall as allegories of the arts, the sciences and virtues.

The glorification of the generous patronage of the Imperial couple as the central message of Gregorio Guglielmi’s ceiling fresco in the Great Hall (1755) was thus the central issue of all the panegyrics published on the occasion of the in-

auguration of the new university building. Like Guglielmi’s fresco, the authors do not focus on the broad spectrum of intellectual activities of the university but rather on the Imperial patrons, who claimed to usher in a “Golden Age” of scholarship and science. It is in this spirit that the “Ode à leurs majestés imperiales et roïales à l’occasion du rétablissement de l’université de Vienne (Vienna–Prague 1756) have to be read, which – in connection with Jadot’s new building – sees the advent of an “heureux siècle de Titus” and a “beau siècle d’Auguste”, the glorious ages in Roman antiquity under the Emperors Augustus and Titus. Franz I Stephan and Maria Theresa were also honoured as patrons of the sciences on a medal designed by Matthäus Donner (featuring the façade of the new university building and the circumscription “MUNIFICENTIA AUGUSTORUM.” [1756]), which was distributed on the occasion of the inauguration of the new building.

PORTRAIT OF ARCHBISHOP JOHANN JOSEPH GRAF VON TRAUTSON, COPPER ENGRAVING BY G. A. FALDONI (FIG. 8)