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Church of Concord at the marketplace

18th Century

JÜRGEN KRÜGER

In 1715, Charles III. William, Margrave of Baden (r. 1709–1738), founded the city of Karlsruhe, on the perimeter of the Hardtwald Forest and at a convenient distance to several historical settlements. The Margrave of Baden, or more precisely, of Baden-Durlach, was lord over a miniscule territory on the Upper Rhine, one that would expand considerably over the next 100 years. And, in contrast to his neighbours, the Roman Catholic relatives in Baden-Baden and the reformed Prince Elector of the Palatinate in Mannheim, he was of Lutheran denomination. It was in this environment that his domicile of origin lay, the little town of Durlach, and it was from here that he would plan the new residency.

The new palace with its ministries and civic settlement formed the heart of the Baroque residential city. In the letter of privileges dated 24 September 1715, the Margrave granted numerous rights to its new citizens. Freedom of religion was mentioned in first instance, preceding even many financial advantages: 'None shall be excluded from the right to settle and to enjoy these freedoms due to his religion. Rather, all who belong to one of the religions prevalent in the Holy Roman Empire shall be admitted and encouraged in their trade and commerce.' (Letter of Privileges, Chap. 1). 'All religions' meant not only the own Lutheran faith, but also the Roman Catholic and the Reformed denomination. In the following letters of privilege also the Jewish religion, only touched upon indirectly in the first letter, was specifically mentioned. Such rulings were not uncommon in the late 17th and 18th century, but it was the first time they were applied to a residential city. The right to religious freedom, however, did not automatically imply the right to public practice of religion; such rights were reserved for the monarch, the

Lutheran one, that is. All others had to be content with home churches for the time being. Moreover, Jews were permitted to settle. Within only a few years, the number of Jewish settlers surpassed ten percent of the overall urban population and remained relatively stable thereafter.

The bourgeoisie city emerged beyond the circus where the government ministries were located, along the old connecting road stretching from the former residency city of Durlach to Mühlberg, today's *Kaiserstraße*. The young residency city boasted but few sacral buildings. There was, of course, a palace chapel in the Residential Palace, which was destroyed during WWII and on the site of the present one stood the Lutheran Church of Concord. It was consecrated in 1722 and demolished in 1807 to make way for the construction of the newly built Protestant Town Church. Nonetheless, the earliest city plans foresaw not only a church building for the Church of Concord but also for the Roman Catholic and Reformed parishes, symmetrically along the *Langen Straße*, grouped around the Lutheran Church, even leaving a site for a synagogue. But none of these plans ever came to fruition save for the Reformed Church (today's *Kleine Kirche*), and so it remained for the rest of the century.

From Karlsruhe, the eye wanders across to the former residential city of Durlach, also known as the 'mother' of Karlsruhe. Durlach, today an eastern district of Karlsruhe, is one of the manifold cities established during the Hohenstaufen period in the late 12th century. Its rise to becoming the ducal seat was the result of several circumstances: in 1535, the margraviate was divided among two dynasty lines, the name-giving one since called Baden-Baden. Ernst, bearer of the second dynasty line, moved his centre of regency to Pforzheim, his son, Charles III., finally relocating it to Durlach in 1565. In 1556, he had introduced the Lutheran Reformation, so that from 1565 to 1715, Durlach became the residency of the Protestant-Lutheran line of the House of Baden. The biggest calamity during this time was undeniably the city fire of 1689 when Durlach, along with a large proportion of the settlements and regions along the Upper Rhine, was entirely devastated by the French army of Louis XIV. The conflagration and the difficult period of reconstruction was what finally led to the relocation of the seat of residency.

Two nearby towns, today both part of the city of Karlsruhe, were exemplary for religious tolerance: the Huguenot settlements in Neureut and those of the Waldenser in Palmbach. On 18 October 1685, the French King had issued the *Edict of Fontainebleau*, thus depriving the French Calvinists (or Huguenots) of their civil and religious rights. Most fled to the Netherlands or to Prussia, with many first seeking refuge in Switzerland. There, a group originally from Provence, was expelled again in 1699 and finally arrived in the Margraviate of Baden-Durlach. Margrave Frederick Magnus granted them a piece of land in the district of Neureut, then known as Welsch-Neureut (*welsh* being a term for foreign, pertaining specifically to the Romanic peoples). The *Waldenserkirche* – a more correct name would have been Huguenot Church – hails back to this tradition. Similar can be said of Palmbach.



The Steeple

Does a church need a steeple? There are no theological grounds for having one; during the first 700–800 years of their existence, churches did without towers. It was only in the Middle-Ages that it became common to construct church buildings with a tower on one side – such as the Italian campaniles – or with a tower façade. The purpose of the tower was first and foremost to hang up bells and later to install a bell tower clock.

But a steeple is also a means by which architecture is symbolic, an expression of the ruler's power. Since medieval times they have also always been a signal for the sovereign, a sign that his dominion was by the grace of God who defended and determined the religion of his subjects. In times of schisms, this symbolism gained utmost importance: the steeple symbolizes the right of its parish to worship in public services. Any other, merely tolerated church, had to remain towerless while services took place in a building not recognizable as a one.

Church towers also have a practical purpose; the telling of time, from on high and far across the land for everyone to see and hear. The bells and the tower clock with their chime mechanisms can be heard throughout the town and across the surrounding fields. The bells usually ring on the quarter of the hour during the day (approx. 8 a.m.– 8 p.m.), and in some villages still today, all day and night. Despite the ubiquitous smartphone watch, this still comes in very handy. Thus, the steeple is a familiar part of our regular infrastructure. Due to its role as time announcer, many a steeple today has remained property of the municipality.

Incidentally: The Luther Church boasts the oldest mechanical steeple clock in Karlsruhe, hailing back to the year 1907 and is still in operation.

Today, these steeples often serve as ideal panoramic viewpoints. Unfortunately, in Karlsruhe

① Small Church (Protest.)

The *Kleine Kirche* is one of the last relicts of the pre-Weinbrenner city. The first Reformed Church on this location had already been consecrated on 6th September 1722; a fact that deserves special mention, as it was the first church building of all, finalized in Karlsruhe, even before the Lutheran Church! Markgraf Charles William provided the building site and had Baron von Welling (1655–1727) commence with the construction of a simple wooden church. On its roof, it had a little tower (ridge turret) symbolizing a tolerated religious community.

After assuming regency in 1746, Margrave Charles Frederick, grandson of the above mentioned, started with a complete renovation of the city: all houses hitherto made from wood – even the Palace was a wooden construction! – were successively replaced by stone buildings. In the years 1773/76, as part of this endeavour, the margravian architect, Wilhelm Jeremias Müller (1725–1801), constructed a larger and new building, which is

still standing today. Red mottled sandstone from Grötzingen was the construction material of choice. The *Saalkirche* with its well-proportioned portal and the façade tower rising above it faces the *Kaiserstraße*. The façade itself, densely structured with flat pillars, segmental and triangular gables are a small masterpiece of late baroque architecture. At the time, the tower was a shining example of tolerance because it was the symbol for religious freedom. The steeple top is surmounted by a princely coronet, covered in once gilded bronze, as a sign of the bond between the Lutheran Prince and his Reformed subjects. After wartime damages, a modern replica was surmounted.

The interior has structured pilasters of Corinthian order, the walls and the trough vaulting held in soft hues. Opposite the entrance, and under the arch of triumph, altar, chancel, and organ are positioned one above the other, a typical Protestant assembly dating back to the 17th century. The depictions on the pulpit show the lamb above the Book with the Seven Seals from the Revelation of John. The interior of the Reformed church is sure to have looked differently. A simple wooden table would have stood against the wall with an undecorated pulpit mounted above it.

After the 1821 union of the Lutheran and Reformed Church (→ p.20, 52), the *Kleine Kirche* initially was no longer of much importance. Between 1823 and 1833 it served as a garrison church, however, already in the later part of the 19th century, she became the second inner city church, giving off a more intimate impression alongside the big Town Church. Razed down to her enclosing walls in WWII, she soon after reached particular significance; due to her small size, Senior Church Architect, Hermann Zelt, was able to reconstruct and use her as the first inner city church in 1946–49. Most recent renovations





St. Cyriac

Heinrich Hübsch and Historicism

Throughout the 19th century, Karlsruhe grew to become the metropolis of the Grand Duchy. Aside from the new administrative institutions, Karlsruhe was blessed with cultural buildings such as the Theatre and the Botanical Gardens, Art Gallery and Polytechnic, all institutions that retain national importance still today. Karlsruhe's first railway station finally became the city's first connection to the Industrial Age. Weinbrenner's School of Architecture was of paramount importance, later merging into the Polytechnic, the nucleus of today's Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT).

Soon after Weinbrenner's death in the 1826, Heinrich Hübsch (1795–1863) was called into the Baden civil service but his rise to a position of influence was far more difficult for him than it had been for his teacher, Friedrich Weinbrenner. He was assigned as building school director at the Polytechnic only in 1832, where he would teach until 1854.

Contrary to Weinbrenner, Hübsch had not only explored classical monuments such as temples during his Mediterranean studies but also the early Christian churches. In his 1828 programmatic writings titled 'In Which Style Shall We Build?' he stated how nonsensical it would be to give a church the shape of a temple, as firstly, this would 'virtually go against the requirements... of a church, secondly demand a great cost investment and thirdly is not made to last in our northern climate as her forms belong to a southern temperature and would require continuous repairs. Such a church, lacking the two main demands of architecture – functionality and duration – can therefore neither be beautiful'. Regarding functionality, he also reflected on the interior of a normal three-nave church hall: 'As far as current requirements are concerned, our buildings demand a size that does not come close to that of the Greek constructions. How small would even a large Greek temple appear when positioned next to our current town church!

The longest stone-covered tension was on the ceiling of the Propylaea in Athens and measures 20 feet [approx. 6 metres; JK]. What, then, does this mean regarding our interior free spaces, where moreover the maximum slimness of the pillars and the width of the pillar span is required? If one, for example in a church partitioned into three naves by two rows of columns, would spread the columns in the widest possible Greek constellation; the people in the side naves, even in the case of a significantly broad middle nave and already from the third column onwards, no longer be able to see altar or chancel. The side naves would be rendered useless [...]. For Heinrich Hübsch, functionality, duration, and cost were the key criteria for the attribute of beauty. In his new role of ducal master builder, he provided entirely new guidelines for church construction in the following decades, which led directly to Historicism. Hübsch preferred the wide, early Christian spaces with their columnar design fashioned in the shape of arcades, the round-arch style. Hübsch differed from his predecessor in yet another area: whereas Weinbrenner's building had all been plastered, Hübsch's building programme adhered to the idea of 'honest' building materials. Natural stone constructions should therefore retain the visibility of the stones, a demand that, in the latter part of the 19th century, often led to mistake of removing colourful or protective plaster coatings in many buildings. To a certain extent, Heinrich Hübsch managed to realize his visions in the village of Bulach, today a part of the city of Karlsruhe.

The question posed by Hübsch, which construction style could be matched to which construction assignment, led, in the second half of the century, to the answer that specific building assignments were to be assigned specific styles. Thereby, the medieval architectural style was reserved for sacral buildings, the Renaissance and Baroque style for civic or governmental



Heinrich Hübsch

* 9.2.1795 Weinheim, † 3.4.1863 Karlsruhe

Heinrich Hübsch initially studied philosophy and mathematics in Heidelberg before he joined Friederich Weinbrenner's school of architecture in 1815. After years of studying in Rome and Greece, he returned to Karlsruhe but could not immediately follow in the footsteps of Weinbrenner. Only in 1832 did he take over the management of the school of architecture and in 1842, he became Head of the Baden Building Directorate. With his paper 'In Which Style Shall We Build?' (1828) he positioned himself against the teachings of Weinbrenner and propagated the round-arch style.

Among his most prestigious constructions in Karlsruhe are the main building of the Polytechnic, the Art Gallery, the Botanical Garden, the *Trinkhalle* (Pump Room) in Baden-Baden and the Men's Penitentiary in Bruchsal. He designed over 30 churches for both denominations, not only in Baden, and among the most distinguished works is the western façade of the Dome in Speyer. The focal point of Heinrich Hübsch's ideas and creations always was Rome and the early Christian churches, which he visited repeatedly. This might lead to an understanding of why he, past the age of fifty, converted to Roman Catholicism.