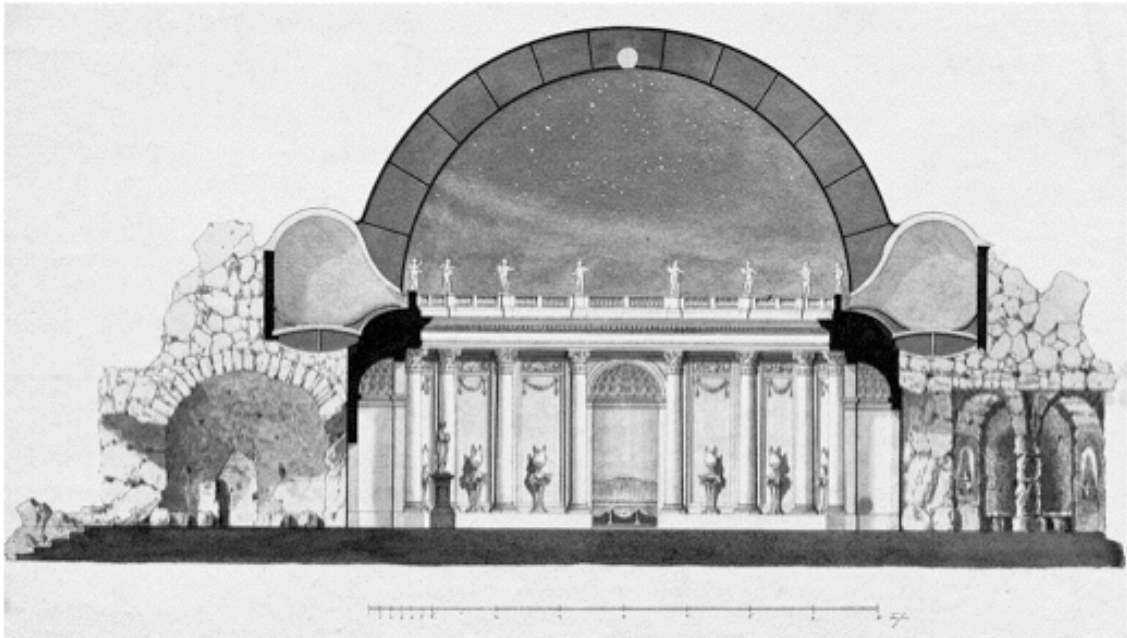


A Recently Published Section of the Temple of Night
at the Liechtenstein Museum, Vienna

One of the high points of *Oasen der Stille*, an exhibition on eighteenth-century Austrian landscape gardens at the Liechtenstein Museum in Vienna (June-November 2008) is a section in pencil and watercolor of the Temple of Night. The curators of the exhibition attribute the drawing (which is apparently unsigned) to the architect of the Temple, Johann Ferdinand Hetzendorf von Hohenberg.



Johann Ferdinand Hetzendorf von Hohenberg (1733-1816), Schnitt durch den Tempel der Nacht im Schlosspark von Schönau/Triesting, um 1800.
Feder über Bleistift auf Papier, aquarelliert, 36 x 49,7 cm, Sammlungen des Fürsten von und zu Liechtenstein, Vaduz-Wien

The drawing shows one of the Temple's four semicircular alcoves directly in the middle, with two other alcoves bisected on the left and right. The alcove at the center has no doorway, but those on the left and right do have doorways that lead to the grotto. These openings allow us to identify the section as bisecting the Temple from southwest (the alcove on the left) to northeast (the alcove on the right). In other words, the bisecting line intersects at right angles the bisecting line in the section presented by Andrew Zega and Bernd H. Dams in the frontispiece of my book.

Instead of seating the goddess Night on a horse-drawn chariot, the artist depicted her standing on a high pedestal in front of the southwest alcove.

The rocky column on the far right is part of what visitors called the *Badegrotte*: a chamber containing a pool from which emerged a column of stone that supported (or seemed to support) a rocky vault (see my Fig. 2.7). The chamber on the far left is the one

that lies directly to the southwest of the Temple. The drawing shows this chamber to have had an opening to the outside, though no such opening now exists. It was presumably by way of this opening that visitors left the grotto.

While the depiction of the grotto and the lower part of the Temple corresponds quite closely to what we know of the ruins and to eyewitness accounts of those who visited the Temple during the early nineteenth century, the upper parts of the Temple raise more questions than answers. The artist conveyed little sense of how the superstructure was (or was to be) built and supported. Of what materials does the dome consist, and what, if anything, lies between its upper and lower surfaces? The dome seems to transfer all its weight to the strange, thin-shelled, balloon-like structures below. It leaves no room for people to stand at the balcony, as we know (from eyewitness accounts) they did. Of the conical roof visible through the trees in Fig. 2.3 there is no trace.

If this lovely drawing, so reminiscent of the works of Boullée and Lequeu, is really by Hohenberg, then he may have left to another architect the production of drawings that show how his vision could be realized in a way that would withstand the realities of rain, snow, and wind.

John A. Rice, November 2008