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INTRODUCING THE NEWSLETTER

The Baroque Routes perhaps represent the most eminently European cultural movement of early modern history. By acknowledging and attempting to revive this movement through research and other activities, the Council of Europe has literally resurrected the spirit of Baroque Europe – a spirit which contributed in no small way to an elegant form of living in urban and rural environments which are still there to be admired and lived in today. Understandably, a number of countries have since 1996 responded generously to the Baroque Routes initiative of the Council of Europe by organizing exhibitions, conferences, concerts of baroque music and even by producing high quality publications on specialist subjects or general themes, such as guidebooks to important baroque monuments in cities as far apart as Valletta and Vilnius. These Council of Europe events have shown the wonderful interaction, indeed interweaving, of several different European expressions during that period of time between the last third of the sixteenth century and the second third of the eighteenth century. The Baroque network logo shown on the cover of this newsletter is a fitting symbol of such interaction, expressing in this way the Baroque spirit of Europe – its full significance has been very ably described by Jerneja Batic in the first issue of this newsletter published in March 1997.

Malta has enthusiastically taken up several initiatives in connection with the Baroque Routes network of the Council of Europe, soon after an initial meeting of the subject which was held on the island in December 1994. The setting up on this International Institute for Baroque Studies at the University of Malta and the commencement of a postgraduate MA in Baroque Studies course which has already led to the graduation of eight persons specialized in different spheres of Baroque Studies, were, perhaps, the most important steps taken by Malta in this respect. The publication of this second newsletter comes at an important time when steps have been taken by the University of Malta to reinforce the above mentioned Institute by the appointment of an executive co-ordinator and two research assistants, needed to operate an ambitious programme shown elsewhere in this newsletter, covering the period 2000-2003. Among the salient points in the programme, one can mention (a) Research projects leading to the publication of books and conference papers as well as the formation of data bases on baroque buildings and artifacts in Malta and publications concerning the Baroque European heritage (b) Courses leading to the award of a Mastership in Baroque Studies as well as to certificates in various aspects of baroque studies; also the organisation of public lectures by distinguished personalities concerning the Baroque heritage (c) Activities including exhibitions, photographic competitions, seminars and conferences on the Baroque heritage and (d) Consultancy services including the provision of advice and admittance in the conservation of the Baroque heritage of Malta in liaison with all the authorities involved in this exercise such as the Mdina, Valletta and Cottrenera Rehabilitation Committees. One interesting project on which the Malta Institute is presently working upon concerns a video in three languages on Baroque Malta, the first of its kind to cover the scenario of seventeenth
and eighteenth century Malta during the rule of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John the Baptist, who were responsible for the introduction and diffusion of Baroque art and architecture in Malta during the first half of the seventeenth century.

The undersigned welcomes contributions from participants of the Baroque Routes Network of the Council of Europe, for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter. The contact address is attn: Monica Floridia, Executive secretary, International Institute for Baroque Studies, University of Malta, Msida MSD 06 Malta (telephone/facsimile: 00356-333919; e-mail address: mflo1@um.edu.mt.)

Denis De Lucca
THE BAROQUE ROUTES: A BRIEF RECORD OF ACTIVITIES

An international conference on ‘Le Vie del Barocco in Europa tra Musica, Letteratura e Architettura’ has been held at Como, Villa Olmo, 13-14 December 1996 under the auspices of the Council of Europe, the Italian Government and the Commune of Como. The proceedings of the conference were introduced by Maestro Italo Gomes, artistic director of the Festival Autunno Musicales at Como and at the conclusion of the conference participants were treated with Johann Sebastian Bach’s Messa in si minore held in the Duomo of Como. Papers at this conference were presented by Paolo Emilio Carapezza, Dinko Fabris, Stanislav Tuksar, Alberto Colzani, Stefano della Tone, Roberto Sanesi, Andrea Luppi, Gilberto Finzi, Ursula and Warren Kirkendale, Maurizio Padoan, Lucia Trigilia and Nelda Bagdonavicui. There was also a tavola rotonda presided over by Giovanni Mangion from the Council of Europe. This meeting dealt with current and future activities of the Baroque Route network.

A seminar in honour of Gabriel de Gabrieli, one of the best known architects of the Magistri Grigioni, announced in the last newsletter March 1997, was organised within the framework of the ‘Baroque Routes Network’ in Eichsatt/Bavaria from 17-21 September 1997. At the beginning of the seminar the book ‘Graubündner Baumeister und Stuckateur. Beiträge zur Erforschung ihrer Tätigkeit im mitteleuropäischen Raum’, edited by Michael Kühlenbach, was presented. The seminar was accompanied by an exhibition on the work of the Magistri Grigioni in Europe. The proceedings were concluded with an interesting guided visit to the Baroque monuments of Eichsatt and an organ concert in the Guardian Angels Church.


In 1998/1999 a project within the framework of the Raffael program of the European Commission was run by the Michael Kuhlenthal with the title ‘Techniques of Façade Decoration’. Participating countries were Bavaria, Austria, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. The final documentation of the project was published in November 1999. The documentation in the German language is available through the Bavarian State Conservation Office. The introduction to the publication is reproduced in the special features section of this newsletter.

Dr. Michael Kuhlenthal has recently participated in the project ‘Museum with no frontiers’. It is a series of illustrated guides with elaborated routes that can be followed by the visitor from monument to monument, enriched with articles on various topics. The idea of this international project is to bring the visitor to the objects instead of the objects into the museum and thus to the visitor. In 1999 the Baroque and Rococo routes in Southern Bavaria were published. Bavaria and Austria are mainly cooperating in the creation of more International Baroque Routes.

During the period 11-13 March 1999 an International Congress on ‘East Asian and European Lacquer Techniques’ was held in Munich as the closing event of a six years’ German-Japanese joint venture. The subject of the project was research on European lacquers in the Baroque and Rococo as well as the interactions between East Asia and Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Within the framework of this project two publications have until now been edited: Baroque and Rococo Lacquers, and Japanese and European Lacquer Ware.

A follow up of the above-mentioned project has been initiated by the Bayeusch’s Landesamt für Denkmalpflege of Munich in July 1999. The theme concerns ‘Historical Polychromy’ and the German side will promote research work on the original historical polychromy of Baroque and Rococo sculptures. Readers will be interested to learn that a similar project dealing with the use of colour in Baroque buildings will be in the near future initiated by the International Institute for Baroque Studies at the University of Malta in conjunction with Prof. Arch. Paolo Brescia of Cromoambiente, Monopoli (Ba), Italy.

The Centro Internazionale di Studi sul Barocco in Sicilia has organised the fifth International course in Architectural History in Siracusa 9-13 December 1999. This course focused on the theme ‘Le Capitoli Europee del Barocco’ and discussions on the eminently European dimension of Baroque architecture were based on four basic subjects entitled Il Barocco a Roma e nelle città italiane, Il Barocco nelle grandi e piccole capitali, Il Barocco in Italia e in Europa and Il Barocco nel Val di Noto. Among the participants presenting papers at the conference were several experts on Baroque art and architecture from the universities of Naples, Turin, L’Aquila, Bologna, Palermo, Madrid, Malta, Venice and Catania. During the proceedings of the Syracuse course contacts were established which should prove to be beneficial to the future working of the International Institute for Baroque Studies of the University of Malta, in collaboration with Italian institutions of higher education having an interest in promoting Baroque studies at teaching and research levels. A newly published book on Maltese Baroque architecture authored by Denis De
Lucca, Director of the Malta Institute, was also presented to Prof. Lucia Trigilia, Director of the Baroque Institute in Syracuse, this representing the fruit of research work carried out in Malta during the past years focusing on the hitherto unexplored close links that existed between the Baroque school of design known as Accademia di San Luca in Rome and early eighteenth century architectural project work in Malta commissioned by the Order of St. John and other important personalities during the period 1700-1750. The Syracuse course was concluded with visits to important centres of Baroque architecture in Sicily including Acireale, Modica, Ragusa, Catania, Scicli and Noto, where conference participants were given the opportunity to experience the spatial and design implications of Baroque buildings and urban spaces, following the intensive reconstruction activity that happened in Sicily after 1693 earthquake which had devastated several towns in the region.

The President of Malta, Professor Guido de Marco on 25 March 2000 presided over the launch of the book *Carapeccchia: Master of Baroque Architecture in Early eighteenth century Malta* by Denis De Lucca, Director of the Malta International Institute for Baroque Studies, at the Palace in Valletta. President de Marco said that the book deserved to be launched in the President’s Palace because he believed that the Presidency should be closely associated with culture and the heritage of Malta. Other speakers at the launch were Professors Peter Serracino Inglott and Victor Mallia Milanes of the University of Malta and the author who explained his work within the framework of the 2000-2003 business plan of the Malta Institute. More details about the new book on Carapeccchia are available in this newsletter. On 8 May 2000, the book was presented to Professor Francesco Adorno, President of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Florence at a seminar held at the academy.

The Innsbruck festival of early music will later on this year be presenting a series of special concerts commemorating the 250th anniversary of the death of the Baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). These performances will take place on 27,28, and 29th June in the Spanischersaal and the Reitersaal of Ambras Castle. The same venues will on 22 August host 'The Birth of Opera' performing early Baroque works by Jacopo Peri (1561-1633) and Giulio Caccini 1545-1618. Other events in the Innsbruck Festival will include a 23 August organ recital at the pfarrkirche of works by Cernohorsky (1684-1742), Seger (1716-1782), Brix (1732-1771), Kozeluh (1747-1818), Fuhrer (1807-1861) and Kuchar (1751-1829) and a 24-27 August presentation at the Tiroler Landestheater of La Division del Mondo by Giovanni Legrenzi (1626-1690) based on a Greek mythological theme. Further information about these Innsbruck festival performances can be obtained from Innsbruck – Information, Burggraben 3, A-6020 Innsbruck (tel. 0043-0512-561561; Fax0043-0512-535643 e-mail: lbk.ticket@netway.at.
The M.A. in Baroque Studies Course brochure
COURSES IN BAROQUE STUDIES

The International Institute for Baroque Studies at the University of Malta has finalised preparations for the commencement of a 15 month postgraduate course leading to the award of an M.A. in Baroque Studies. This course, due to start in October 2000, is presented in a newly prepared course brochure outlining (a) the aims of the Institute (b) the Institute Programme 2000-2003 (c) the course regulations governing the M.A. in Baroque Studies programme (d) the course syllabus (e) an explanatory essay on European Baroque.

Institute director Denis De Lucca emphasised the multi-disciplinary nature of the new course syllabus which is to be based on nine study units and a dissertation. The study units consist of BST 401, An Introduction to Baroque Europe: Political, Religious, Intellectual and Scientific Scenarios; BST 402, The Baroque Route 1; Fortification Building, City Planning and Landscape Design; BST 403, The Baroque Route 2: Architecture; BST 404, The Baroque Route 3: Sculpture; BST 405, the Baroque Route 4: Painting; BST 406, The Baroque Theatre and Music; BST 407, Baroque Literature; BST 408, The Conservation of the Baroque Heritage 1: Conservation Philosophy and BST 409, The Conservation of the Baroque Heritage 2: Conservation and Recording Techniques.

The Conservation part of the course will be supplemented by a number of practical sessions dealing with the conservation of Baroque Architecture in Malta and Sicily, this including a study tour to the Baroque Centres of Catania and Noto in S.E. Sicily. A number of guest lecturers from Italian Universities specialising in Baroque will be invited to participate in the teaching sessions of the M.A. in Baroque Studies course.

Further information can be obtained from the International Institute for Baroque Studies at the University of Malta on telephone/facsimile: 333919 or e-mail address: mflo1@um.edu.mt 00356-333919.

The Malta Institute will in the near future be also organising short courses in Baroque Studies, with special reference to the conservation of the Maltese Baroque heritage.
SPECIAL FEATURES

BENITO PELEGRIN: THE BAROQUE, BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

Note: This paper has been reproduced from the publication EUROPEAN CULTURAL ROUTES edited by Giovanni Mangion and Isabel Tamen (Council of Europe, 1998)

The troubled end of a century

The Baroque is a movement which is generally considered to have begun in the last third of the sixteenth century and to have ended in the mid eighteenth covering the period between classicism and neo-classicism. During this period, however, the Baroque civilisation expressed itself in a multitude of different styles and forms, whether in artistic, philosophical or social terms.

To perceive the movement’s relative unity, it is therefore necessary to understand that it emerged at the end of a dark, troubled century, one in which human values had gone astray and people had lost their ideological references. It was a century rife with unanimous protests against the state of a society which people dreamt of reforming, merciless disputes as to the way in which this reconversion, or conversion, should be achieved, and struggles between the supporters of the Reformation and of the Counter-Reformation, between Catholics and Protestants. Europe was in a state of crisis, torn apart by religious dissent, pulled to one side by the call of reason and to the other by the call of faith, caught between the triumphs of science and the triumphalism of theology. The continent aspired to a new order in the wake of these questions and upheavals.

The Baroque must therefore be seen as coming between the enthusiasm inspired by the great discoveries of the early Renaissance, the excitement engendered by the exploration of the globe during that period, and these religious disputes and discouragements between the humanist optimism which prevailed at the beginning of the 16th century and the human doubts that overshadowed its end. It was a movement tinged with both pessimism and enthusiasm, a period of exaltation and discovery, a bold movement but one attached to the past, a period when human beings continued their conquest of the world, their occupation of the land, when they sought to explain they mysteries of the sun, when people were curious about the earth and preoccupied with heaven, inspired by human achievements and ablaze with faith in God.

From a closed to an open world

For 2000 years Europe had lived with the reassuring idea of a closed world, a world confined to the West, between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, by the famous Pillars (today’s Gibraltar), where Hercules had written nec plus ultra. In the 15th century the Spanish and the Portuguese proved that something lay beyond those
limits, and Charles V, on whose lands the sun was said never to set, was able to add the motto ‘Plus oultre’ to his coat of arms, inspired by an insane, yet noble dream of universal monarch and concord: one king, one law, one faith.

Ever further, ever higher could also have been the motto of Renaissance Europe as it set out boldly to explore the world and sought knowledge of the universe beyond.

However, with the widening of the geographical stage and the discovery of the New World, Europe was suddenly perceived as the Old World, a continent showing its age, where the evangelical ideals and the dreams of a perfect Christian society, the City of God on earth, had come to nothing.

Renaissance and Renewal

The New World needed a new human being; it was this dream which all those disappointed by the failure of Europe’s ideals would take with them to the fantastic lands beyond the sea, to that ‘elsewhere’ where they could cultivate it and bring it to fruition.

A perfect society was perhaps not unattainable on those islands, those shores of paradise, where the ‘Noble Savage’ lived in the first state of innocence and had perhaps not yet been contaminated by the virus of original sin, which had corrupted the human race in a Europe punished by God for its evils and its fratricidal hatred.

The toponyms of these newly discovered lands are as much symbols of this dream of renewal as signs of national ownership: New Spain in the south, New England in the north, not forgetting New Zealand, the New Hebrides and the entire retinue: New Granada, New Cordoba, New Santiago, New Orleans, New York.

All of Europe appeared to be undergoing a renaissance, a rebirth with its old myths: the Amazons, the Sirens, the Patagonians. It seemed to be experiencing a revival in new countries with regenerative powers like those of the Fountain of Youth, which the Europeans sought in Florida, the land of eternal spring.

Across the seas the grass seemed greener, the outlook more favourable (the Cape of Good Hope). Everything seemed better, even the air (Buenos Aires). Everything was purer and truer (Vera Paz, Vera Crus,…). The explorers left the mark of their devout hopes and dreams on these new shores: San Francisco, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Santa Monica, Los Angeles (the hill of angels). There they found the valley of paradise (Valparaiso), before seeking to satisfy their cupidity in Argentina, La Plata (the land of silver) or Eldorado (the land of gold).

The poor and hungry of Europe, more ingenuously, also transplanted their dreams of a land of milk and honey to the lands over the ocean, a place across the seas with gingerbread or sugar-loaf mountains.

As far back as 1515, Thomas More, a fervent egalitarian and Christian, set his ‘Utopia’, the first book of a new genre, on a newly discovered island (Cuba), where he located the ideal society to which the reformers would aspire for centuries to come – those idealistic reformers of an outdated world, a world which they could not
change and to which they therefore hoped to give a new way of life; it was this society which the missionaries, the Franciscans and the Jesuits, would attempt to set up here below on earth, or rather on that new, distant earth.

**Far-off Utopias**

Scarcely one hundred years later, in the very midst of the Baroque age, Shakespeare’s ‘The Tempest’ (1611) described a from of counter-utopia, which was probably also located on Cuba, the nearest of the distant islands. His Noble Savage had become the stupid, cruel Caliban (or cannibal), slave to the white magician Prospero, all in all the prosperous colonialist.

Authors no longer described ideal cities, but still wrote of utopias. However, these were increasingly distant, always elsewhere and ever farther away. Campanella sited his *Citta del Sole* (1602-1626) somewhere near Ceylon, and Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1627) lay between China and Peru*. As to paradise, since there was no trace of it here below on earth, people had to resign themselves to the idea that it must be somewhere very high above, up there in heaven.

**Europe in a State of Crisis**

But what had become of this faded Europe’s old dreams?

The Roman Church was no longer in Rome. The Reformation had been continuing unchecked since 1517, and for the time being was destroying more than it was building. Ten years later, 1527 saw the inconceivable sack of Rome by Charles V, the most Catholic of monarchs. The Pope no longer acknowledged his ‘most Catholic son’, and that son brought to his knees a Holy Father who had forfeited his rights by joining the French, the allies of the Protestants and the Turkish infidels! Europeans were killing one another in the name of a God of love.

At a time when humankind was exploring and measuring the physical world, the course it had set itself was becoming indistinct and the issues increasingly clouded in the vast confusion that reigned at the tragic end of the Renaissance.

**The Circle**

Copernicus, who was linked to the Papal office, overturned the reassuring, ordered concept of the universe, with the earth immobile in the centre, orbited by the sun, when he showed in 1543 that only the sun remained in place, whereas the earth revolved. But, as if to repair this anomaly in a cosmos where the earth was not the centre of all things, close to the eyes of God, Copernicus put the situation right by describing the Platonic harmony of the planets' circular orbits around the sun. His approach was that of a man of the Renaissance fascinated by circular geometry, like Raphael or Durer, and of someone seeking to prove the universe’ ideal perfection, a reflection of the perfection of its creator.

Along with the circle, the square and the equilateral triangle were the ‘perfect’ figures on which those steeped in the classicism of the Renaissance based their world of everlasting, mathematical certainties.
Rosato Rosati: S. Carlo ai Catinari, Rome
The Ellipse

However, early in the century of the Baroque, Kepler discovered to his horror that the planets did not move in harmonious circles around the sun, but that their orbits were elliptical. Not only did the earth turn on itself, like someone possessed, but its movement described an ellipse, a geometrical aberration in that it was a figure without a centre.

Like the circle during the Renaissance, the ellipse, the spiral, the ‘serpentinata’ line and all kinds of unstable forms were to become the insignia of Baroque painting, sculpture and architecture, in a jumble of curving lines, of convex and concave shapes, which are to geometry what discord is to harmony, what an enigma is to common sense, the metaphor to the concept, a tortured, jarring sentence to plain, simple prose.

Kepler’s ‘Astronomia nova’ (1609) would seem to find an echo in Caccini’s ‘Musiche nuove’ (1600), Monteverdi’s ‘Seconda prattica’ (1607) and Lope de Vega’s ‘Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo’ (1609), as signs of a will to break away from the old order or of a need for reform.

Two Infinities

Moreover, the universe was far more vast than either Copernicus or Kepler had imagined. With his telescope, Galileo not only discovered other planets, but began to comprehend the previously inconceivable size of the universe, while Cavalieri, his pupil, invented infinitesimal calculus. The Dutch too revealed a form of infinity, using their microscope to discover the infinitely small world of nature. People living at the time of the Baroque were overcome by the frightening lure of the infinite reaches of space above their heads and the minuteness of the infinitesimal beings beneath their feet. Slowly, human minds began to accept the incredible idea of the infinite, although Giordano Bruno had been burnt at the stake in 1600 for having dared to speak of it.

Geography, which was revealing the unimaginable distances that existed on earth, and the new science of cosmology, which was pushing back the hitherto accepted bounds of the universe, threw into upheaval the accepted, harmonious view of the cosmos, with the earth in its proper place at the very centre, alone in the eyes of God.

The result was that God was driven further away into the vastness of space, with its infinity of other possible worlds, the God that people had thought so close and attentive to their unique world, God the infinite being who had become such an estetic idea that only the learned could explain it, a God fading away into infinite space, where for some people He would be lost forever.

The Man-God or Man and God

The Protestants, those who had been reformed, would leave man standing alone, face to face with God without any mediator, thereby emphasising the complete
dissimilarity between the two and showing a tragic awareness of the gulf which separated the creature of sin from his unknowable, perfect creator.

From the Roman Church's point of view, only the angels could cross that fearsome gulf as they wished, descending to earth as guardians or flying high above in the heavens around the Father. But man, who at the outset was a divine being and who had been imprisoned in the material world by the original sin, was an angel in his soul and a beast in his corrupt body. For his sake the terrible frontier between the microcosm and the macrocosm must be bridged.

The Catholics reacted with the Counter-Reformation, frantically filling the unbearable void, the heavens that had suddenly become too vast, with ladders and steps, with a hierarchy of intermediaries, of intercessors between heaven and earth: Christ, the Virgin Mary, the saints, the blessed, the martyrs, the mystics, the Pope, the bishops, the priest, the entire Church built stone on stone, on Peter the rock, a whole pyramid of beings, reaching to the sky, floating on the clouds, in a state of Ascension or Assumption, depicted in ecstasy in paintings, sculptures and carvings: sensitive, human, close images and faces of a God who had become abstract and distant.

The classical Renaissance building, standing within a square or an equilateral triangle, confined within a circle of perfect figures, seeks like the Greek temple, its ideal model, to give geometrical ideas concrete form in eternity, in the ever-lasting marble. It occupies the ground, fills space, spreads out wide, standing firm on a pedestal of immaterial certainties. It knows truth, beauty and goodness; it has drunk at the pure source of Plato. It brings down to earth the rationality and the clear light of Olympus. It descends majestically from an ideal heaven to live a serene existence in a world in equilibrium, a world without shadows or hidden recesses. Classicism soothes its fears with a guileless dream: that of the transparency of beings and object.

The Baroque building preserves its classical, pagan roots, which anchor it to the ground, but is torn apart, tortured and overshadowed by spiralling columns and contorted shapes. It is a return to the loftiness of Gothic architecture, reaching desperately towards an unattainable heaven.

It has the weight and authority of the classical style, but none of its serenity. It shares the Gothic movement's soaring towers, but not its certainty.

Try as it may to make a moving statement of faith, the dark night of its soul, even lit up by the golden rays that sometimes stream across these buildings, is riddled with doubt. It has lost the lightness of the Gothic style, although it has kept that movement's momentum, and sometimes seems to be at risk of tumbling down the higher it climbs, like an elastic band, stretched vertically towards the sky, which will snap when the inevitable pull of the earth's gravity becomes too great.

**The Collapse of Dogmas**

With the crisis in people's values and the collapse of dogmas at the end of the century, the sceptics progressed from a relative lack of belief to fully-fledged disbelief. Against a background of religious conflict, their gazing at the infinite heavens did not reveal any God, invisible among the clouds and unfathomable as to his intentions, but
merely a clear cosmos, filled with stars but inaccessible and less fascinating that the earth, the material world below, which had at last been brought within man's reach.

Conversely, the mystics, having renounced the idea of uselessly circumnavigating the globe, whose roundness caused travellers always to come back to their starting point, remained immobile, rooted in their intimate contemplation, their journey to discover their innermost selves, in search of a God in the infinite reaches of their souls.

The Baroque, caught between paganism and Christianity, between reason and faith, is therefore this difference in focus, this tension between heaven and earth, between beliefs which lifted man upwards and material concerns which brought him down to earth, this hesitation, this conflict between gravity and grace, between body and soul, between doubt and faith. It corresponded to modern man's move away from transcendency and towards the immanence of human beings and of their worldly society, here and now on earth, and no longer in heaven. This was the new world view which was gradually taking over.

The Baroque, at its best when cushioned by the clouds and at its worst when divided by a contrast, torn apart by an antithesis, floats along, drifting or hesitating between heaven and earth, uplifted by grace or pulled back down by gravity.
MICHAEL KUHLENTHAL:
FAÇADE DECORATING TECHNIQUES

The idea for the project ‘Façade Decorating Techniques’ germinated at the Austrian Conference for the Conservation and Preservation of Cultural Heritage in September 1997. Among those invited were also representatives from Bavaria, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. Discussions had revealed that there was still a good deal to clarify in the preparation phase of various restoration measures that were to be carried out in 1998. Therefore, it was agreed to discuss and clear up these questions, which after all were of general conservational interest within the framework of a Raphael Project.

Indeed, quite different façade decorating techniques were involved. The facades of the burggraviate of Cesky Krumlov are decorated with wall paintings which had, however, been restored at some later date. The materials employed in this previous restoration were the source of special problems, a situation very often encountered when working with exterior wall paintings.

On the other hand, the Baroque façade of the former monastery church of Kostanjevica is, and this is an absolute rarity, a free-standing façade placed at a distance in front of the monastery church in order to ensure the unity of the monastery façade. This façade is decorated with rich architectonic plastering with glossy stucco finish which originally gave it the appearance of marble. This glossy stucco finish was not discovered until the preliminary examination, because it had been overpainted several times. The restoration and partial reconstruction of this glossy stucco finish confronted the Slovenian restorers and colleagues with very special problems they had never dealt with before.

The Grotto Pavilion of the Castle in Neuburg am Inn demonstrates, like all grotto architecture, a complicated mixture of techniques: coloured, painted smooth plaster, figures of dyed stucco, mosaics of pebbles and mussels, etc. The restoration of such mixed techniques demands especially comprehensive preparation, and new problems are always cropping up once work is in progress.

The façade of the ‘Glasscherbenvilla’ (broken glass villa) in Passau presented similar problems. With its whole façade decorated with unusual materials such as gravel, broken glass, scoria and fragments of china from the nearby porcelain factory, it is too, quite unique for its time.

The stucco-decorated theatrical façade of the choir of the church of Stift Grienzen converges into a niche housing a statue of the Virgin Mary standing on a world globe. The decoration around the windows of the monastery buildings is partly stucco and, what is unusual, of terra cotta mouldings. Terracotta restoration on exterior facades was, therefore, new for Carinthia.

The great variety of façade techniques guaranteed that the collaboration was a learning process for all the participants. Being able to apply what was learned from the problems encountered in the restorations in Neuburg and Passau to the grotto hall in Castle Cesky Krumlov let the Czech colleagues profit directly from the experience gained here. The Carinthian colleagues were particularly interested in current documentation methods, so they hired a restorer specialised in documentation for
further examination of the Stift Griffen façade. On the other hand, a Bavarian stucco specialist was sent to assist the Slovenian colleagues in tackling the problems of the restoration and reconstruction of the glossy stucco in Kostanjevica. A one-week course was run and the needed samples were made. The stucco marble appearance of this façade was a sensation for all the participants. Apart from direct assistance and suggestion, the main goal of this collaboration was to discuss problems, exchange ideas about various concepts and finally assert a high common standard.

At the beginning of the project, the individual objects, the results of the preliminary examinations and the restoration difficulties were presented together at the first meeting on 12/13 March 1998 in Munich. Thus, the same information was available to all the participants and the type and manner of collaboration could be agreed upon. The restoration concepts, planned methods and restoration measures were discussed at two other meetings on 28/29 May 1998, in Neuburg, Passau and Cesky Krumlov, and on 25/26 June 1998, in Stift Griffen and Kostanjevica. Due to the tremendous work load of the participants, further communications was conducted by telephone or fax. The finished restorations were presented at the final meeting on 22/23 October 1999 at Stift Griffen and in Kostanjevica, followed by a discussion of the final report which was then agreed upon.

The project included most of the façade decoration techniques commonly used in Europe, e.g. types of plaster, stucco, wallpainting, graffito, terracotta, mixed techniques, etc. in view of the fact that all the usual material compositions and art technologies were dealt with, the found and applied solutions to these conservation problems are valid for all of Europe. The documentation of the monuments are testimony that the restorations were carried out by interdisciplinary collaboration of art historians, restorers, scientists, architects and craftsmen, who exchanged their experiences in meetings as well as via fax and telephone.

The long winter this year prevented resumption of the restoration work on the exterior until quite late. Nonetheless, the work on the facades of the burggraviate of Castle Krumlov, the Grotto Pavilion in Neuburg and Stift Griffen was completed. However, the difficulties presented by the restoration of the Passau ‘Glasscherbenvilla’ and the free-standing façade in Kostanjevica made it impossible to finish the whole facades in time so that a total photograph of the restored facades could not be included into the present documentation. There is no full photograph of the restored facades, because the scaffolding was still in place. Instead, photographs of finished parts which are representative for the restored facades taken from the scaffolding have been included.

The final meeting in October 1999 demonstrated that all the participants evaluated the project positively. The contacts made here will not end with the termination of the project but will continue in the future and thereby ensure the important sustainability.
VLADIMIR KROGIUS: RUSSIA OPENS ITSELF TO EUROPE IN GRAND BAROQUE STYLE

Note: This paper which has been specially prepared for this newsletter by architect Vladimir Krogius of INRECON, Moscow is based on publications on Russian art history mainly by V. Zgura (1926), B. Vipper (1978) and A. Icomikov (1990).

It could have been by pure coincidence or may be, by divine Providence, that my country’s opening to the present time world, the act which was now and then nicknamed as ‘the window’s cutting open to Europe by Peter the Great’ happened at the time of the domination of the Baroque style in the history of art. The artistic refinement of the Baroque style, its brightness, its festivity, its elegance became the fine space frame for the admission of Russian high society, architects and artists to the modern, enlightened environment of early modern history.

In a comparatively short time Russian art departed from the deep rooted medieval concern with religious themes and stagnation in the creative process to the civil art masterpieces that were created by outstanding individuals. This was also the time of the importation of new town planning ideas which led to the establishment in Russia of the Baroque principles of urban regularity which soon replaced the traditions of the Middle Ages with their reliance on Byzantine cannons. This transition of Russia to the new Baroque mode of life took much more time than it was necessary to cut open a window when constructing a traditional peasant-log cabin. In fact this transition had began soon after the end of the great discord in the country of the early seventeenth century and the accession to the throne of the new dynasty of the Romanovs. In the beginning the Romanovs tried to conserve the traditional values of life, but at the same time they also gradually admitted innovations coming from Western Europe, then at the height of its Baroque splendour. In this respect the period between the last third of seventeenth century up to the middle of eighteenth century can be named as ‘the age of mutations’.

At this time, once can identify many ideas and approaches that were imported from Ukraine, the large part of which had been included into the Moscow State as a result of the Russian-Polish wars of this century. In the field of art these ideas and approaches were decidedly Baroque; they had been brought to Ukraine from Poland and other Western countries.

Soon such signs of novelty formed the art direction that was widely known as ‘The Moscow (or Naryshkin) Baroque’ – a rather conditional term. They represented the first steps to the new style affecting mainly the outer image of buildings. It was the usage of the universal artistic language of architecture, of the architectural orders’ of regularity in elevations’ rhythm and proportions, of putting decorations on walls, of the combination both curved and rectilinear contours.

The architecture included the first public building in Russia – the Sukhareva Tower in Moscow (1698 – 1701, Michael Choglokov), where the mathematics and
navigation schools were located and the archangel Gabriel Church in Moscow (1701–1717 architect Ivan Zarudny from Ukraine) which was built for the Czar’s favourite Prince Alexander Menshikov as the tower ‘under the bells’.

The Peter the Great reforms of the early eighteenth century represented the pinnacle of the age of change in Russia. This period was characterised with the active, emphasised use of modes and forms that were imported from Western Europe, mainly from Holland. The most important applications were the Baroque principles of the spatial organisation of the urban environment. The main site of this application was the new Russian capital of Saint Petersburg. This period of the time covering the four early decades of the eighteenth century was usually named as ‘Peter’s Baroque’ or ‘Petersburg Baroque’. From the new Baroque capital, of St. Petersburg, the new style gradually spread throughout the country.

Two excellent examples of this period occur in two buildings in St Petersburg: they are the St. Peter’s and St. Paul’s Cathedral within the fortress (1712-1733), by architect Dominico Trezzini the ‘Kunstkammer’ Museum (1718 – 1734), by architects Andreas Shluter, Michael Zemtsov, and other).

After a rather difficult time carried by the disturbances of the 1740’s and 1850’s a period of stabilisation followed characterised by the penetration of new ideas of enlightenment and new civil culture’s development. In architecture and fine art this was the period named as ‘Russian Mature Baroque’. Its success was linked with the activity of a whole constellation of bright masters of Baroque architecture. The brightest star was Bartholomeo Francesco Rastrelli (1700-1771) who had come to Russia with his father in the age of 16 and then became the main court architect of the Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great. The Rastrelli style was within the common frame of the Baroque approach, with the use of its Italian, French and Holland lines. But the master also developed the Russian national tradition of spatial organisation around the big central building, of many-coloured images. He especially liked and used the smart combination of green or sky-blue colours with white and gold, the gilt woodcutting, the sculptural plastic.

The most famous works of Rastrelli were undoubtedly palaces and parks in St Petersburg itself and its surroundings. The close links of his projects with Russian national traditions could be seen in the churches that were built with their typical five-cupola structure. Two examples of Rastrelli’s architectural masterpieces were: the Winter Palace in Sankt-Petersburg (1754-1762) and the St. Andrew Church in Kiev (174701753).

It can be said that the life blood of the Russian Baroque spirit was realised in the works of B. Rastrelli and his colleagues. In Western Europe the Baroque replaced the Renaissance, in Catholic countries it was the style of the counter-reformation. In Russia, Baroque replaced deeply rooted medieval traditions and soon became the symbol of a modern life style marked by great enlightenment. The history of art in Russia never experienced Rococo. The Baroque style declined in popularity in the early 1760’s and was soon changed without any struggle into neo-classicism which represented the final transition of Russian art into the modern world.
CARAPECCHIA

MASTER OF BAROQUE ARCHITECTURE IN EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MALTA

DENIS DE LUCCA

Presentation of Carapecchia book at the Accademia delle Arti del disegno, Florence
NEW PUBLICATIONS

“Carapecchia: Master of Baroque Architecture in early eighteenth century Malta” is the title of a new book just published by Midsea Books Ltd. on behalf of the International Institute of Baroque Studies at the University of Malta. The author of this book is the director of the Institute Denis De Lucca, who is also head of the Department of Architecture at the University of Malta.

In his introduction to this publication on Baroque art and architecture the author writes that ‘rarely has the spirit of the Baroque been more powerfully evoked in Malta than it is in the work of Romano Carapecchia’. Born in 1666 to poor parents residing in the spiritual capital of Catholic Europe, Romano Fortunato Carapecchia was a self-made man. Having received his architectural training in the studio of the great Carlo Fontana, he soon started practising his profession in Rome, where he was responsible for the creation of a number of buildings and theatrical scenes which collectively reflected the academic discipline of the famous Accademia di San Luca, once described by King Louis XIV of France, le Roi Soleil, as the ‘the fount and teacher of the many famous artists who have appeared during this century’. Disappointed with the rather limited opportunities available to him in Rome at the turn of the century, Carapecchia left the city in 1707 to eventually settle in Malta where managed, as a result of the Pope’s intervention, to find favour with Grand Master Perellos. Within the context of an ancient island fortress situated on the southern borderline of European Catholicism, the newly arrived architect soon drew up several projects intended to transform Valletta and its environs into a vibrant hub of Baroque artistic activity. The spirit of the many buildings and interiors that were designed by Carapecchia during the first half of the eighteenth century outlived his death in 1738, since his disciplined and sophisticated approach to architectural composition and detailing became a model and a good for the rapid development in Malta of a rich though rather restrained regional variation of Roman Baroque. More importantly Carapecchia’s architecture provided the Knights with yet another reason to remain firmly rooted in the cultural fabric of an ever changing Europe, where new Baroque buildings and spaces inspired by the teachings of the Accademia di San Luca became important symbols of a unified European identity.

In its six chapters and appendices, this new book on Baroque art and architecture represents the fruit of primary research work carried out by its author over a number of years. Apart from containing beautifully presented illustrations of several buildings and hitherto unpublished architectural projects, the book focuses on some fascinating aspects of European Baroque culture in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries such as its interest in optics, theatre design and water engineering, all intended as a fitting celebration of the very considerable contribution of Romano Carapecchia towards the Europeanization of Malta in the early eighteenth century.

With its splendid format and thoroughly researched text, this new publication by Midsea Books Ltd. will go a long way to offer readers a fresh insight on Baroque
New books on Baroque architecture in Italy and Lithuania
Malta, seen in its proper European dimension and enjoying extraordinary close links with the major architectural and artistic scenarios of contemporary Rome.

The book was launched in Malta on 25 March 2000 at the President’s Palace and in Italy on 8 May 2000 in the Sala delle Adunanze of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, in Florence.

‘Evangelista Menga dal Castello di Copertino al Gran Assedio di Malta’ is the title of a new book published by Adriatica Editrice Salentina of Lecce and authored by Lucio Maiorano. This important book introduces a new chapter in the history of military architecture in Malta and Italy which happened at a time when early Baroque Europe was expecting a massive Turkish onslaught which, had it succeeded, would have radically altered the course of world history.

Having been responsible for works carried out at the castle of Copertino near Lecce, Italy, Evangelista Menga arrived in Malta in 1560 and entered into the service of the Knights Hospitals of St. John the Baptist. As a military engineer, Menga was responsible for the fortifications of Malta during the Great Siege of 1565 for which he was well rewarded after the victory of Christendom over the Grand Turk. This emerges from the contents of a manuscript discovered by the author in the National archives in Valletta which is reproduced in the book. It was this document which, more than anything else, inspired Lucio Maiorano to reconstruct this mine of information about the considerable achievements of Evangelista Menga who is portrayed as a typical military engineer of early Baroque times whose services were required over a wide operative field at a crucial point in European history.

A guide to Lithuania’s Baroque Monuments and Baroque in Lithuania are the titles of two very informative and well researched books that have been authored by Baltos Lankos under the auspices of the Baroque Route Network of the Council of Europe. The books explain the political and social scenarios in the Grand Ducky of Lithuania that led to an exceptional flowering of Baroque art and architecture, the major monuments all being exhaustively illustrated in these publications. On reading these books, the discerning visitor to Lithuania can better understand and appreciate the beauty of Lithuania’s splendid Baroque heritage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Atlante del Barocco in Italia: Terra di Bari e Capitanata is the title of a massive volume authored by Vincenzo Cazzato, Marcello Fagiolo and Mimma Paculli Ferrara dealing with the Baroque art and architecture of Apulia in Italy. Published in 1996 under the patronage of UNESCO’s ‘Les Espaces du Baroque’ this new book on Italian Baroque provides readers with an exhaustive literary and visual insight concerning a rich legacy ranging from large scale religions and secular buildings to various artefacts employing a wide range of colourful materials – artefacts that gave richness and splendour to several baroque interiors in a hitherto little explored, sometimes mysterious, part of the land where Baroque was born in the late sixteenth century.