

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 Cottenera 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 Florida, 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



Francesco Borromini: GALLERIA SPADA, Rome