

Friday, 15 June
9.00-11.45

Track: Discovery and Persistence
Room: *National Library, Corner Hall (Nurgasaal)*

THE PERSISTENCE OF A PROVINCIAL BAROQUE

Session chairs: Maarten Delbeke, ETH Zürich
Edoardo Piccoli, Politecnico di Torino

The historiography of the baroque has involved concepts and periodization drawn from religious and political history combined with, or opposed to, formal and stylistic categories. This session wants to add to—and challenge—existing historiography by postulating the existence of an at once persistent and provincial baroque. We hypothesize that the recatholization of large parts of Europe over the course of the seventeenth century not only spurred the dissemination of architectural models and vocabularies first developed in the centres of power, but also made available an architectural repertory for centuries to come, to the extent that in certain regions—in Europe but also elsewhere—a long baroque period almost imperceptibly segued into the neo-styles of the nineteenth century.

This session wants to provide an opportunity to map the phenomenon of an at once persistent and provincial baroque, by beginning to address the following questions:

- Is the *longue durée* of the baroque a function of repeated campaigns of reinforcing or sustaining the Catholic identity in certain areas, or have other programmes (institutional, political, etc.) adopted the baroque repertory as well?
- Is the concept of a ‘popular’ appreciation and adoption of provincial baroque a provable fact, or a myth based on the opposition between an ‘urban’ classicism and a ‘rural’ baroque (Tapié)?
- What does provincialism mean in the context of the baroque: a zone of passive reception, of invented traditions, or of unfettered experiment?
- Is the ‘provincial’ a matter of boundaries and topographies, or rather of political, religious, and economic conditions?
- Is the persistence of the baroque conditioned by zones of liminality and (confessional) conflicts, or does it depend on continuity, cross-fertilization, and patterns of dissemination?
- How can we define the formal repertory of a provincial baroque and understand the conditions of its definition, transmission, and practice?
- Is the repertory a matter of typology, structure, materiality, ornament, etc.?

The session brings together case studies from across Europe, over a period ranging from the early seventeenth century up to the twentieth, each demonstrating how a persistent baroque emerged in the interplay between canonical and internationally known models and the requirements of local circumstances, be they religious, political, artistic, or technical. Above all, they sketch the contours of a baroque presence that transcends the confines of Rome, Turin, or even Italy, and of the seventeenth century, and that touches on questions of regionalism, the vernacular, and the long history of neo-classicism.

PAPERS:

Extra moenia: The Developments of Roman Baroque in Romagna During the Eighteenth Century.

Iacopo Benincampi, Sapienza Università di Roma

The baroque experience renewed the face of Rome and at the same time changed the outlook of all those local centres that adopted this experience as a modern cultural direction. The process of diffusion and internationalization, however, was not immediate,

nor a linear one. In fact, Roman baroque architecture and urban planning was characterized by a rigorous spatial configuration and a solid internal coherence, which made most built organisms unavailable to a process of direct emulation. An operation of simplification and geometric clarification seemed a necessary prerequisite to develop this heritage. In this regard, Carlo Fontana (1636–1714) played a key role, both in the definition of new models through his professional pursuits and in the academic teachings that were based on a process of depuration and regularization of these innovations. Subsequently, the baroque models started to be more easily translated and exported into more peripheral areas. In fact, within the Pontifical State itself, only at the beginning of the eighteenth century did local architects take advantage of this build-up of expertise and offered fully developed interpretations of the baroque, thanks to the diffusion of prints and the opportunity to pursue a local version of the Grand Tour.

To explore this process, the case of the Legation of Romagna—one of the most peripheral regions of the Pontifical State—is an interesting case study, not only because architectural results are perfectly aligned with the practices we have outlined above, but, above all, for the particular dialogue that its operators established with Rome. This debate was not settled in a relationship of dependence. Instead, it allowed the periphery to autonomously adapt the Roman lesson and to develop its contents, constituting itself as ‘*pars construens*’ of the very concept of late baroque.

***Translatio*: Provincial Architecture of the Baroque Baltic Relic, c. 1600-1800**

Ruth Noyes, Wesleyan University

The proposed paper interrogates the historiography of the provincial baroque taking up the question of the issues of baroque provincial architecture attending historical incidents of *translatio*—the ceremonial physical relocation of relic remains of saints and holy persons—within territories of Counter-Reformation Catholicism along the Baltic littoral circa 1500-1800, with an emphasis on architecture conceived for relics of indigenous Baltic so-called ‘*Beati moderni*’ (modern Blesseds), would-be saints contemporary to the early modern period. The paper plots a cluster of intra- and extra-Baltic *translatio* case studies in architecture and attendant performative ritual, against the fluctuating territories historically comprising principally Old Livonia, a region claimed for the Roman Church by Medieval crusaders and largely lost or endangered—but vigorously mythologized—according to early modern Catholicism, and corresponding to present-day areas in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Belarus. It frames the ritualistic movement of sacred relics between frontier zones at the perceived edges of Catholicism and the conventional center, Rome. Postulating the existence of an at one persistent and provincial baroque enacted through the translated relic, the paper considers the hypothesis that the recatholisation of the Baltic over the course of the 17th century by means of the practice of building for relic translation was vitally implicated in the fashioning of long-duration geographical, political, and ideological borderland peripheries, in the service of volatile intra-European colonial dynamics, inter-religious relations, and emergent episteme encompassing the (super)natural and manmade worlds that played out through architectural morphologies for centuries to come; ultimately raising the question of possibility of the *longue durée* of the Baltic baroque relic-as-architecture.

At the Peripheral Edge: Baroque Architecture in Malta

Conrad Thake, University of Malta

Malta can be considered the southernmost frontier of baroque culture in Europe. The flourishing of baroque architecture in Malta coincided with the period when the Order of St John ruled the island between 1530 and 1798. The Order of St John, as a military and religious institution, introduced baroque architecture in Malta by engaging various architects and military engineers from Italy, France, and Spain. The foundation of the new city of Valletta, in the aftermath of the Great Siege of 1565, followed by its gradual transformation was only possible by the contribution of eminent foreign architects such as Laparelli, Carapecchia, Blondel, and Ittar. However, beyond the foreign academic

tradition, there was also a rich local building culture centred around the activities of the master mason or *capo maestro* under the supervision of the local architect. Beyond the urban centres in various local towns and villages, baroque churches were being built in accordance to the local vernacular and beyond the formal strictures of the academy.

The paper will argue that the baroque as it evolved depended on the cross-fertilization and synergy of both the academic architects and that of the local non-academic practitioners. Following the departure of the Order of St John and the establishment of British Colonial rule, the baroque as disseminated in the local towns persisted and thrived in counter-response to the various historicist revival styles that were being promoted by the British authorities. One can argue that the prevailing baroque language at the local grassroots level constituted a so-called 'architecture of resistance' to the Anglicizing efforts of the British colonial authorities. Although during the nineteenth century the baroque was considered to be *passé* on the continent, a provincial baroque still persisted in Malta.

Baroque(s) in Piedmont: Survival, Revival, Regionalism, 1780–1961

Mauro Volpiano, Politecnico di Torino

The use of baroque language, its critical reconsideration among architects, and the revival of its forms in the contemporary age has often been considered in Italy as a negligible phenomenon, if not one of bad taste. While in the case of the rediscovery of the Middle Ages, a well-established historiography has highlighted not only the stylistic drifts, but also the meaningfulness of proposals and the legitimating role that the medieval period had throughout the nineteenth century, the same cannot be really said in regard to baroque (and Piedmont is no exception). Criticism has, in fact, often given the same negative account of phenomena that are indeed very different: the continuity of construction sites between the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries; maintenance policies, along with the persistence of craftsmen trained to work in continuity with ancient buildings; regionalist approaches searching for new identities through the valorization and proposition of local traditions; the dynastic legitimation of the House of Savoy, in the new buildings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, through the reproduction of language linked to the 'magnificent' ages of the dynasty; the bourgeois eclecticism of the palaces and elegant interiors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—luscious, epidermic, and heterodirected—often inspired by non-native models transposed by international magazines and repertoires; the stylistic restoration of major buildings in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The re-use and continuity of the baroque is therefore a complex practice between ingenuity and erudition, continuity and invention, centre and provinces—nevertheless shaping an area of freedom and experimentation. This paper therefore suggests a reflection on the baroque provinces/frontiers in geographical terms, as well as in terms of chronologies and practices often at the margins of an official historiographic recognition. Some examples will be discussed: late baroque building sites in the years of the neo-classical vogue; the application in architecture of early studies on the Piedmontese baroque; the eclecticism of interiors and exhibitions (Turin 1911); down to the scarcely known restorations 'à l'identique' in the context of 'Italia 61', the 1961 celebrations related to the 150 years of national unification.

The Neobaroque Style in Private Secular Architecture in Spanish and French Catalonia in the First Half of the Twentieth Century: From a Cosmopolitan to Vernacular Model

Esteban Castañer, Université de Perpignan Via Domitia

The rediscovery of baroque was one of the components of *Noucentisme* in Spanish Catalonia, as shown by the interests of historiography (Eugeni d'Ors, *Du baroque*, 1935) as well as by the use of formal languages inspired by this tradition (school architecture in Barcelona by Josep Goday and the Coliseum theatre by Francesc de Paula Nebot, among many examples). The *Noucentist* phenomenon has been treated by historiography for the

city of Barcelona and for most of Catalonia. In this paper we will focus on the comparative phenomenon of the neo-baroque along the border zone between France and Spain, and more specifically in the towns of Figueres and Perpignan. South of the border, the reference to baroque in private architecture represents an evolving regional cultural and ideological component. On the one hand, baroque represents a regional historical component represented within vernacular architecture—the baroque *masia* (peasant mansion house), for example. On the other hand, baroque is a reminder of a Mediterranean cosmopolitan tradition that embodies different ideological contexts: a statement of Catalan nationalist politics under the *Mancomunitat*, Hispanic rhetoric under the dictatorships (in the 1920s and after 1940)—in each case the traditional position in relation to the ideologies conveyed by modernism. The buildings and town houses by architects such as Ricard Giralt Casadesus and Joan Gumà Cueva at Figueres, among others, stand as examples of this.

On the French Catalan side, the national aesthetics of the *Beaux-Arts* and the emergence of a Roussillon regionalism defined the framework in which a taste for baroque appeared, in a more fractioned and timid way. French 'taste', the *Beaux-Arts* aesthetics, is confirmed in the great stately architecture of Viggo Dorph Petersen. Yet the ambition of some patrons also called for the use of baroque solutions of composition or ornaments, in an eclectic approach. Simultaneously, from the beginning of the twentieth century and coinciding with *Noucentisme*, French Catalonia saw the emergence of a regionalist aesthetic advocated by architect and sculptor Gustave Viollet. The architectural transcription of this regionalism was late, starting in the 1930s, and took on the stylistic model of Romanesque Art. Yet the regional baroque taste was not entirely excluded from it, as the Paynard house by Pierre Sans in Perpignan illustrates. Around the neo-baroque, intellectual attitudes and identity quests converged, but differ—within their respective historical contexts on both sides of the border—due to the cultural traditions of two states and by the expectations of the patrons.