

## **Art Forms & Society**

# ***‘Baroque and Rococo Art’***

### **Assignment 1 VIS 1103**

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## **Abstract**

This assignment was submitted for assessment in 1995 as part of my studies at Edith Cowan University, Bunbury Campus as part of the Associate Degree in Visual & Performing Arts. I attended this full-time course between February 1995 and December 1995 all as part of the greater Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts. My lecturer at the time for this unit was Geoff Lummis.

## **Keywords**

student, art, culture, university, undergraduate, baroque, rococo, society, assignment



Art Forms and Society

## **Baroque and Rococo Art**

### **Assignment 1**

Edith Cowan University  
W. A Academy Of Performing Arts

Unit : VIS 1103

Lecturer : Geoff Lummis

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## 1.0 Baroque and Rococo (General)

Baroque and Rococo art forms developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, spreading rapidly across continents leaving a trail of ornate, finely crafted forms permeating nearly every aspect of sculptural, architectural and fine art paradigms. This influence was carried well into the eighteenth century on all continents. Although originally of Italian origin, Baroque influence was felt in neighbouring countries culminating with France embracing the Rococo movement, a direct, extreme embodiment of the Baroque. ✓

From a social perspective, the abandonment of the primacy of logical, hence universal, rules during these times not only brought a new repertoire of forms but facilitated the transition from humanism to individualism, revealing peculiarities of the individual and of the soul, in keeping with western philosophy. The decline of traditional principles and the move from Mannerism, to Counter Reformation away from Renaissance with emphasis on intelligence, logic and harmony (through suppression), led to attacks on the Church and its rigidity. Regression in the form of traditional religious iconoclasm depicting holy ascent and not humane concerns, gave way to impulsive, emotive and complex creations. ✓

Baroque and Rococo art confirmed the proposition that art responds to the tension between the infinitely complex, restless real world and the fundamental principals of the human spirit. Considering the embrace of impulsive human nature Baroque and Rococo



art influenced all social circles and had a lasting effect on the political, social and religious institutions of that time.

It is the intention of the author to examine within this paper, specific and differing forms of Baroque and Rococo architecture, focussing primarily on the influences each art form had upon architecture in different countries. General references will be made to other art forms of note, referred to either by sculptural qualities or structural significance.

This focus will draw comparisons between architecture, furniture, decoration, tools, iconography and fine craftsmanship. The key figures and significant events during the Baroque and Rococo periods will only be addressed briefly, to bear relation to building practices and aspects of the social norm of that time.

*Include references,  
ie Indirect quotes.*



## 4 BAROQUE ART





# THE GRAND PERIOD

"Like the adjective Gothic, Baroque was first used as a term of disparagement, a synonym for the strange, the capriciously contrived or the bizarre."

Schaack ( 1964, pp. 3) //



## 2.0 Baroque - The "Rough Pearl" (*barocco*)

"Man's capacity to bring such change about is to gamble on the future. Art is an ordering of the present even when it is looking to the past for its sources of inspiration; but it may also be a herald of the future"

Hook. J (1976, p. 75) ✓

Baroque according to Schacck (1964 pp. 3) originated about 1600 in Italy and lasted in form till 1725. Hook (1976) states that Baroque drew inspiration from Renaissance works both classical and monumental in scale.

"The art of Sacchi and Pietro da Cortona epitomise the main artistic trends during this period"

Schaack, V. (1964, pp.7) ✓

Cortona worked for the Sacchetti family, but soon came to the attention of the Barbeni family, who commissioned him to conduct such grand works as the frescoed ceiling in the Gran Salone of Palazzo Barbeni. Light and movement were dwelled upon mainly with colour play taking it's optimum forms.

Contrasting this Italian conception and around the same period were works found to be taking place in England such as the Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire (refer appendix 3) also using play on light, shape and movement within architectural lines apparent.

The reigning figure of this <sup>b</sup>Baroque period as far as architects and sculptors are concerned is that of Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, born of high parentage whose father was also a renowned sculptor.

Schaack(1964) dwells upon his major achievements such as St. Peters, Rome (/refer appendix 23,24,25) where his skills of organisation and direction led to such masterpieces of architecture being executed. Bernini apparently thought of himself first as a sculptor and so sculpted works of his patron, Scipione Borghese before conducted fine works such as the Ecstasy of Saint Theresa found in Corona Chapel, Rome.

Hook (1976) draws our attention to English architecture conducted under the guidance of Vanburgh who drew inspiration from such architects as Bernini, instructing sculptors such as Cibber, in forms of eloquence and grandeur. (refer appendix 1-3)

*Link up  
your  
paragraphs*

The ecclesiastical commissions continued right through the Baroque period with a classical baroque masterpiece found in Florence the perpetual centre for baroque development, known as the decorative architectural painting by Bolognese artist Angelo Michele Colonna (1600 -87), interior Palazzo Pitti, Florence, (refer to appendix 23 - also appendix 15).



*Reference.*  
Saachi, also another famous Italian architect and painter of this period despondent with the growing Rococo opulence and attention to detail wrote;

“a rogue hunting for lice best describes this advent of supposed eloquence”  
when asked of the growing movements in France away from that of the grand Baroque.

*Name*  
Luca Giodarno's travels took him far and wide and being an Italian Baroque court artist he visited Rome, Venice and Florence. His tributes to allegorical and mythological figures particularly the Medicis can be seen in his rich, glowing architectural domed ceiling paintings such as in Palazzo Medici- Riccardi in Florence (refer to appendix 22).

*This is referring to English Baroque ceremonial on pg 5.*  
This brief interlude encompasses that of English Baroque where baroque art was essentially a court art, small in stature due to the oppression of the monarchy.

Examples of Baroque architecture, can be seen reaching right throughout England particularly with the works by Wren, Vanburgh and Van Nost. James (I) was the first official patron of Baroque arts and his continuing patronage saw architects such as Inigo Jones develop into the most accomplished architect of this period.

According to Hook (1976) however, Wren's works (refer appendix 7 -15) surpass Inigo's attempts at classical revivance rather capturing the austere and grand master style work particularly evident in works such as St. Stephens Walbrook. ✓

English Baroque shows attention to play of light, grandeur and scale for effect and the taking of ideas in emulation form for the most functional styles of architecture particularly residences, churches and mausoleums (refer to appendix 2). Like Italians <sup>during</sup> at the time of the Renaissance, the English knew they were part of a new generation and played upon this virtue to the point of satirical fantasy. English Baroque drew upon many aspects of Italian development, expressing a heady excitement, flavour and imagination typical of cultural change.

Dryden (1968) states; " 'Tis well an old age is out, And time to begin a new" which sums up the culminate effects of Rococo development upon the Baroque although the English were not to adopt this style as other countries surrounding were to revel in.

Re think  
this sentence

Why  
single  
Spelling?



## Rococo - Child of Baroque

"A masterpiece could be born from a tiny picture of a Delft vase with a few freesias or from a simple two figure study. It is their very delicacy and refinement that links them to Rococo"

(Davis, T. (1973, pp. 6)



### 3.0 Rococo - A Style Of Fantasy

Rococo has been described as the frivolous wayward child of the noble, grand Baroque. Its transitional style, often embracing icons developed during the Baroque age, was firstly coined by Baroque sculptors and gardeners to explain avant garde' garden designs. The term "Rococo" <sup>according to</sup> Hooker (1989, pp.284) <sup>13</sup> explains, derives from the French term 'Rocaille' or 'an extravagant garden setting'.

To examine its initial creation one must acknowledge that many factors from further afield influenced, fostered and nurtured this style. Due to the complexities of detailing specific events, social occasions, key figures and dominant philosophies of this time, the author has examined the masterpieces of this period from differing regions of the world, detailing and emphasising architectural forms typical of the Rococo period. General attention has been given to other art forms which reflect change in artistic representation during this time.

The Seventeenth century was an age of grandeur and splendour, driven by the meteoric rise of France, although Italy nurtured the first Rococo stirring's. Against the formality and starkness of Italian court etiquette, arose an art form eagerly embraced by France, already a catalyst for novelty and theatrics. <sup>?</sup> Main steps were taken in interior design and decoration, paradoxically heralded in paintings, carried forward by the delicate eroticism of French painter Francois Boucher (1703 - 70). The extravagantly overlaid sinuous

*Why a paradox?*

forms found within these paintings reflected also in architecture and furniture from this period, heavily and intricately decorated by twisting shapes and figures adorning every aspect of exterior facade. ✓

According to Davis (1973, pp. 3), the Rococo was first acknowledged as a developing movement in France in the early seventeenth century, although rightly associated with later works of art in the French eighteenth century. The Rococo style developed most strongly during the Regency of the Duc d'Orleans (1715 - 23), during a time of scientific investigation, where the newly rich full of fun, wit and elegance were embraced by the previously stayed, conservative Court social groups. The stultifying use of marble and bronze common to architectural forms found frequently in residences of high court standing during the Baroque period, turned away to decorative forms made of wood paneling and paler colours.

According to Levey (1966, pp. 453), Baroque had found its own extreme form, indeed found its own mannerism in this Rococo art form. High standards were attained and stood the test of time till the advent of mechanisation. He <sup>Levey</sup> draws comparisons between the unbridled agitation of Rococo artisans, to the stiff, logical Baroque court masters, evoking scenes of conflict and resentment. Forms of art during the Rococo period were no longer submitted to the dictate of the upper class aristocracy, and rules of logic were flung afar by the need to create from human impulse and feeling.



The fine forms drawing attention to detail and no attention to expense, typified the craftspeople's workshop supported by the doting patron. The intricate, delicate carvings and moulds found within architectural forms from the Rococo period, exemplify this sensuous moulding of feminine form and reflect a growing appreciation for finely executed, elaborate masterpieces. This notion drew resentment from the Church and other forms of social control, deemed frivolous, sinful and in contempt of the teachings of Christ.

*Link this please!*

Davis (1973, pp. 6) however, favours a constructive correlation between the creation of Rococo motifs; rich in the feminine element with that of a growing middle class thriving on new found prosperity through science. Society in general were trying hard to discard the traditional patriarchal elements typical of art during the Baroque period. These elements of male suppression according to Davis, were evident in Baroque paintings, capturing a society steeped in Christian indoctrination.

*You hint at the feminine/patriarchal debate but you do not explain!  
& spell it out!*

### 3.1 Rococo In Italy

Architecture and decorative sculpture was dominated at the turn of the century by two distinguished artists, namely Bernini ( refer to Appendix 24, 18) and the greatest of all Rococo architects, Borromini ( refer appendix 14). Italians as opposed to the French were concerned with conveying immediate expression on the exterior of buildings.

This is particularly evident by works emulated in other parts of the world such as England where this style was taken to the extreme and emulated (refer appendix 11, .16)

Juvarra would have to be the most renowned of the Rococo architects if Italy with Stupigni being his most exciting creation. Spatial acrobatics and colour dominate his work based on theatrical drawings and fantasies. Vittone on the other hand born in 1738-39, was limited to a single patron so his works were of domestic architecture, not of essentially interior design.

Unfortunately, Italian rococo furniture didn't follow such an easy pattern as the architecture and pieces of work became quickly outdated by the French for style, feeling and grandeur. Da Udine (refer appendix 17) developed a style of interior decoration surpassed by known at the turn of the 17th. century, although nothing of great significance can be noted as in other parts of Europe - particularly in ceramics, wood, or stone.



Rococo motifs were developed (refer appendix 16) to a certain extent but Italy was never happy with Rococo style as in preceding or compared to preceding ages. Tupelo will be remembered as the greatest view painter ( refer domed ceiling paintings, appendix 15)and Bernini as the architect.

This is  
jumping  
about a  
bit !!!



### 3.2 Rococo in France

If Rococo was specifically a French creation many factors from other areas of the world influenced the way it developed as a style, Louis XIV played a large role in sustaining its beginnings particularly in Versailles. ?

Juste Aurele Meissonier (1695 - 1750), the greatest of French interior Rococo design (refer appendix 16) was compared often to earlier works by Boucher, more of a two dimensional format painter. The subtle treatment of stonework, delicate sculpture, grandeur of scale, decadence in product all dominate French Rococo works heralded mainly by painters, developed in later public works as sculptures, delicate with eroticism yet bordering on the melancholy. One can't pass the interior decorators and painters such as Boucher, Fragonard or Rococo's founder, Watteau due to their contributions as painters to this movement. ?  
Re think sentence!  
check!

Rococo style in France represented the greatest artistic contribution before the rise of Impressionism and due to the amazing quality in work it maintained high standards throughout its reign. Architects such as Jean Courtonne and Germain Boffrand produced the leading works for exterior treatment to emulate although it is debated as to the extent of draughtsmen sharing this accolade for grandeur.

### 3.3 Rococo in England

England probably paid the least amount of attention to Rococo than any other country of leading architecture during its time although revivals came thick and fast following its turn in France. Architect, Walpole's Strawberry Hill in Twickenam ( Refer Appendix 6) is an example of Gothick buildings as opposed to Gothic myths, where Rococo was only referred to as a style for decoration not internal structure design.

French designers were often commissioned to execute works, with Meissonier (refer appendix 16) as the leading French designer, with his army of draughtsman. Claydon House in Buckingham, had a series of rooms decorated by an architect known as "lightfoot". Hogarth (1697 - 1764) and Gainsborough (1727 - 88) reacted strongly against this rococo style despite living in its prime stages passing it off as amateurish, although never themselves reaching a stage of meticulous scrutiny and fine craftsmanship. and never quite surpassing the grandeur of this decadent time.

What do you  
want to say?



### 3.4 Rococo in Germany

Germany as opposed to England, produced outrageous examples of Rococo architecture and furniture although not comparable to those of French origin. German Rococo can be seen to have traces of Roman influence throughout its conceptions of renowned architecture, where colour, light, grandeur of scale and intricacy all dominate the forms produced.

One of the most exciting features of German Rococo design and architecture was the highly dramatic settings for each example where secular buildings were built atop mountains with turrets and ramparts all extravagantly decorated in the Rococo style. Munich was the centre for such activity, although Dresden and Potsdam have exciting exciting examples also.

Particular mention must be given to artisans and architects Zimmerman and Knobelsdorff. Zimmerman (1685 -1766) designed the most elaborate interior workings such as pulpits and domed ceilings (refer appendix 19) with sheer scale, opulence and overpowering grandeur being the key to his works. Knobelsdorff however was less decorative on exterior buildings preferring to explore colour, nature and flowing forms throughout his forms. Decorative detail and sheer contrasts typifies the German Rococo and its examples of fine architecture.

### 3.5 Other Noted Key figures during The Rococo Period

**Boucher, Francois** (1703 - 70) - Rococo painter, interior decorator and protege of Madame de Pompadour.

**Cressent, Charles** (1685 - 1768) - Trained as a sculptor renowned for floral marquetry

**Cuvilles , Francois** (1695 -1768) - German architect famed for the Hall Of Mirrors.



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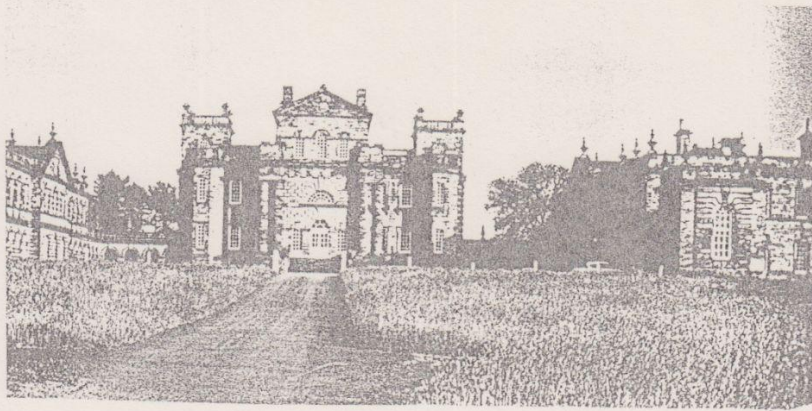
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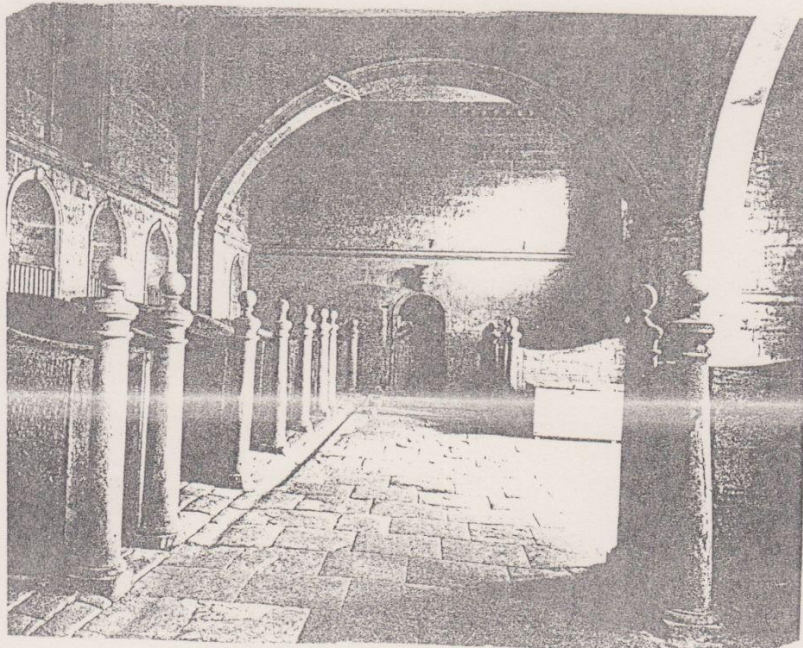
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Appendix 1



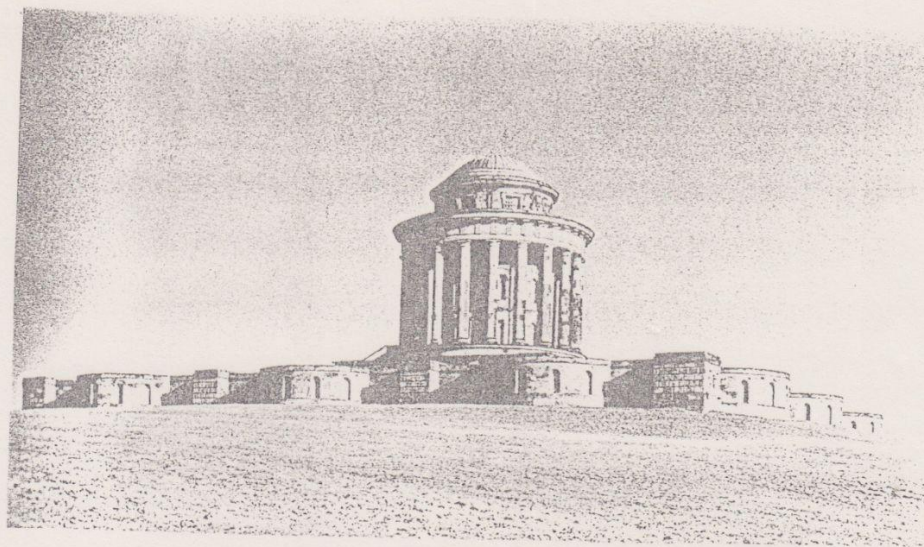
1. Seaton Delaval, Northumberland (Vanbrugh's)



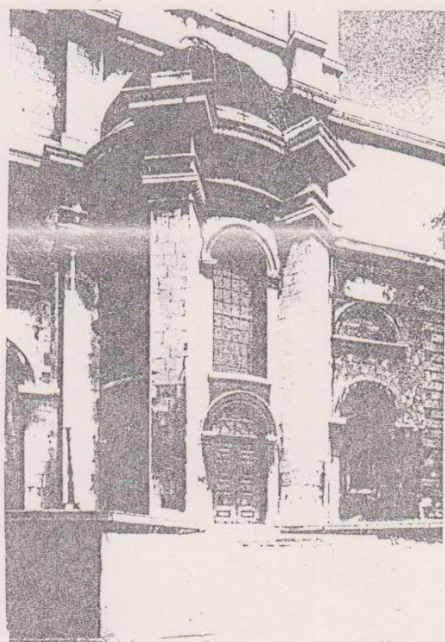
2. Monumental stables, Seaton Delaval (Vanbrugh)



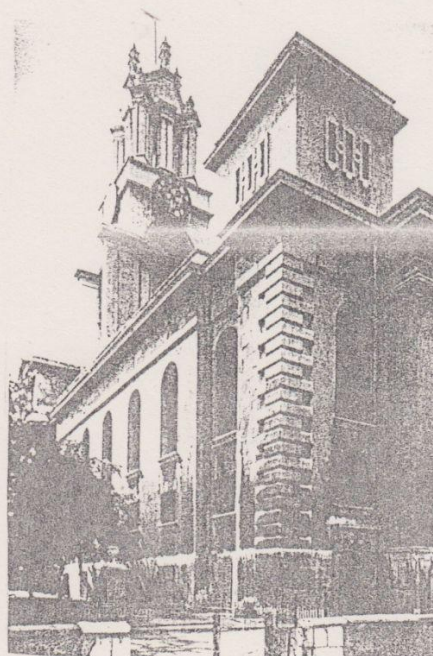
## Appendix 2



3. Hawksmoor's Mausoleum at Castle Howard



4. St. Anne's Limehouse (1714 -30)



5. Hawksmoor's London Church



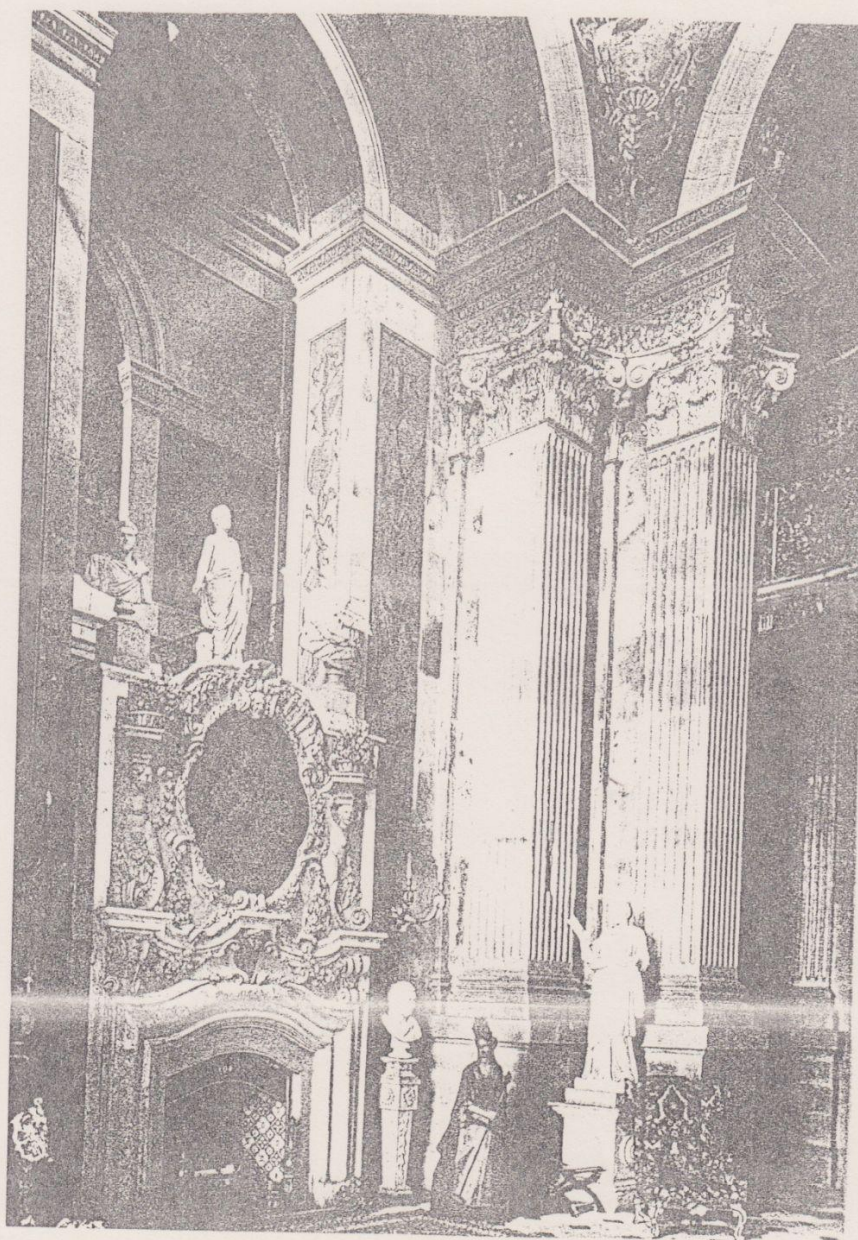
Appendix 3



6. Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (Vandbrugh)



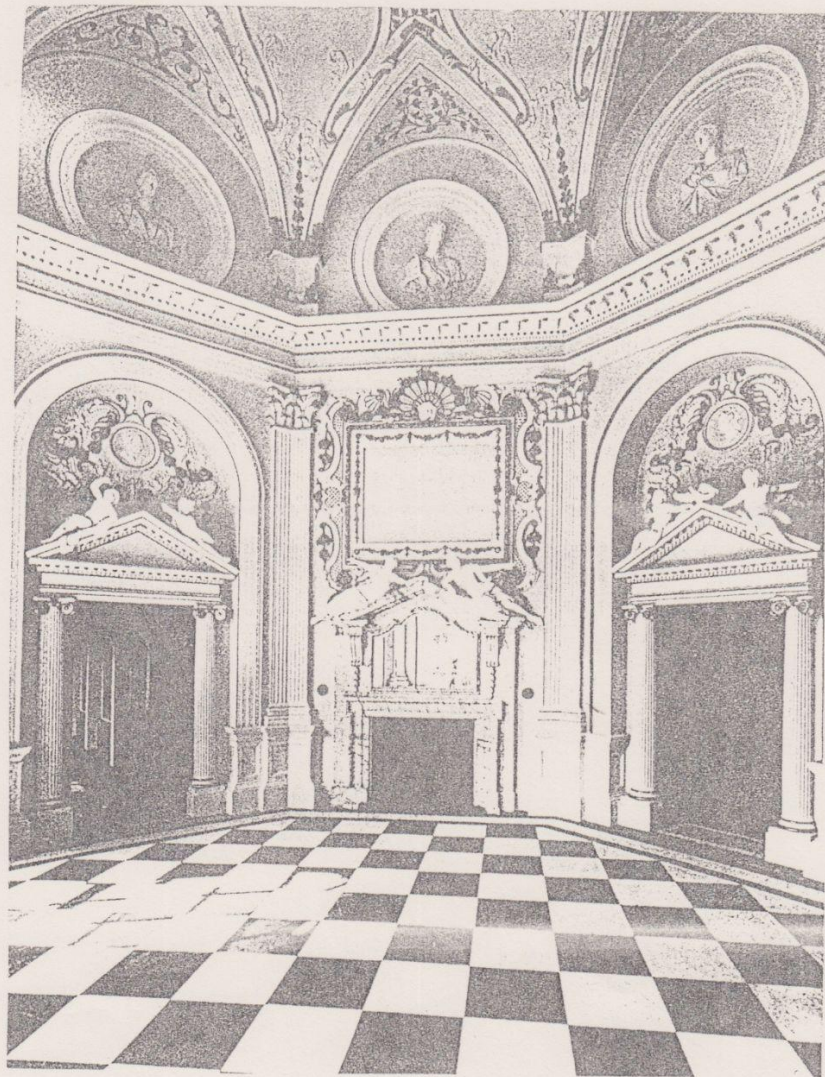
Appendix 5



8. Castle Howard , Yorkshire (Vanbrugh)



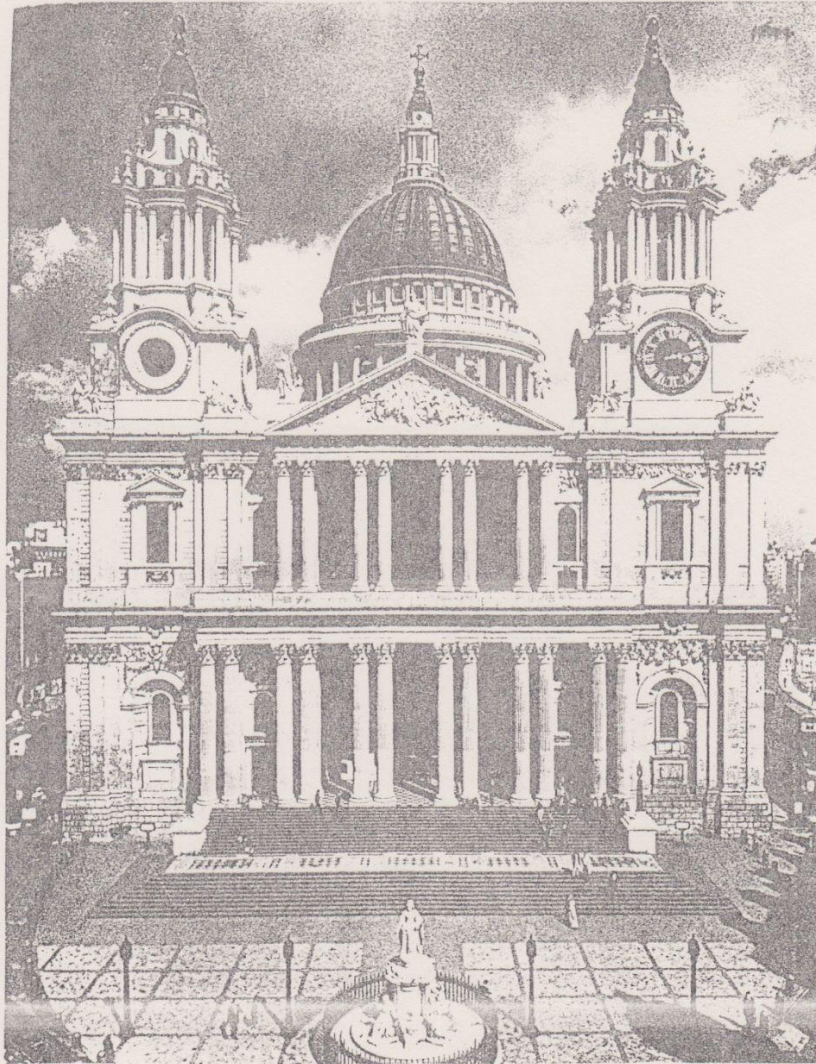
Appendix 6



9. Octagon Room, Orleans House, Twickenham (Gibbs)



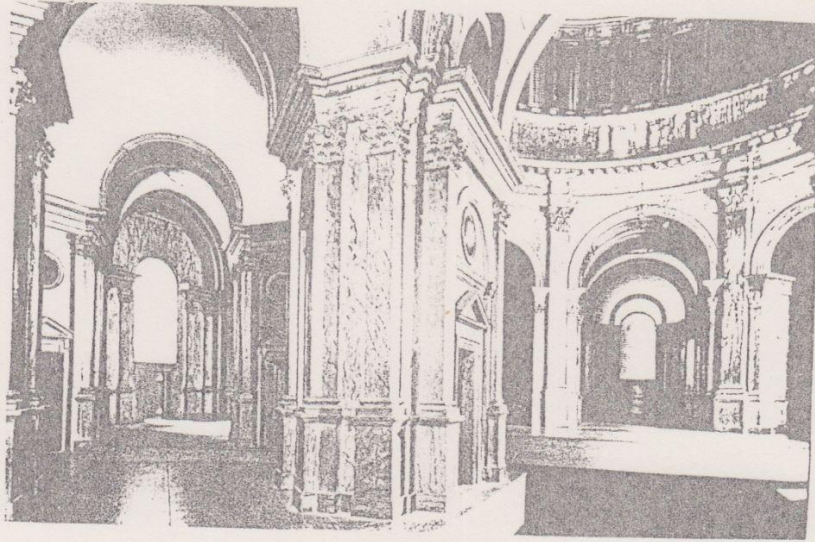
Appendix 7



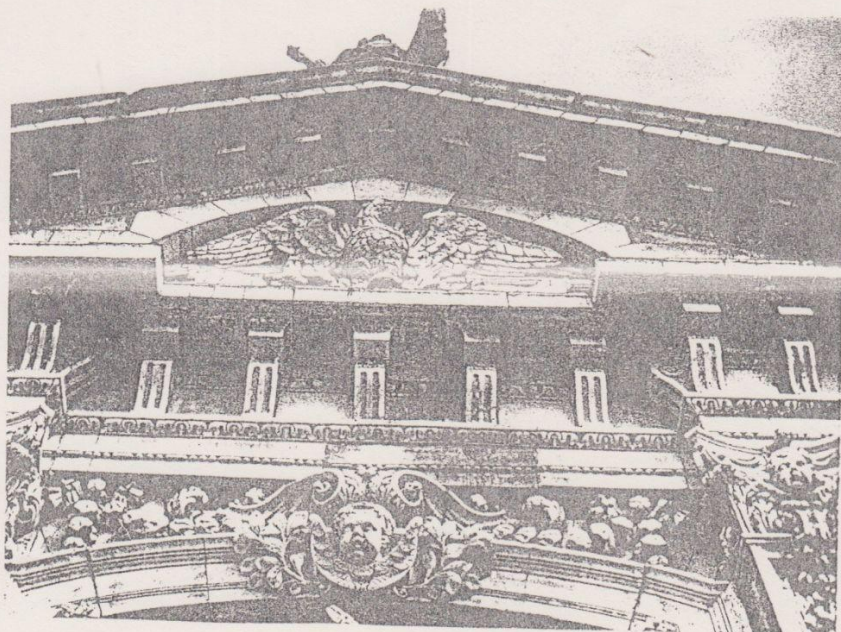
10. St. Pauls Cathedral (West Wing)



Appendix 8



11. Interior for St. Pauls.



12. Symbolic Phoenix carved by Cibber



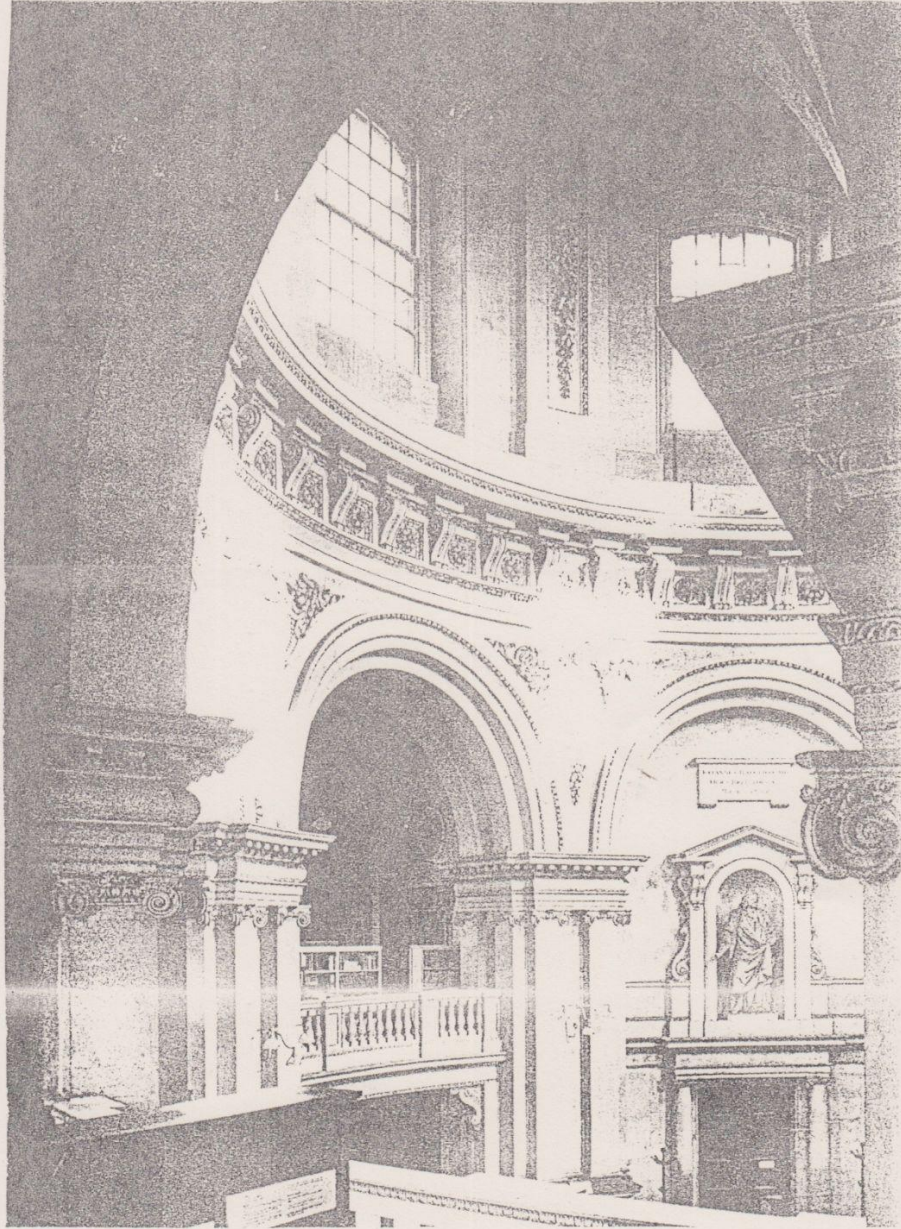
Appendix 9



13. St. Stephens Walbrook (Wren)



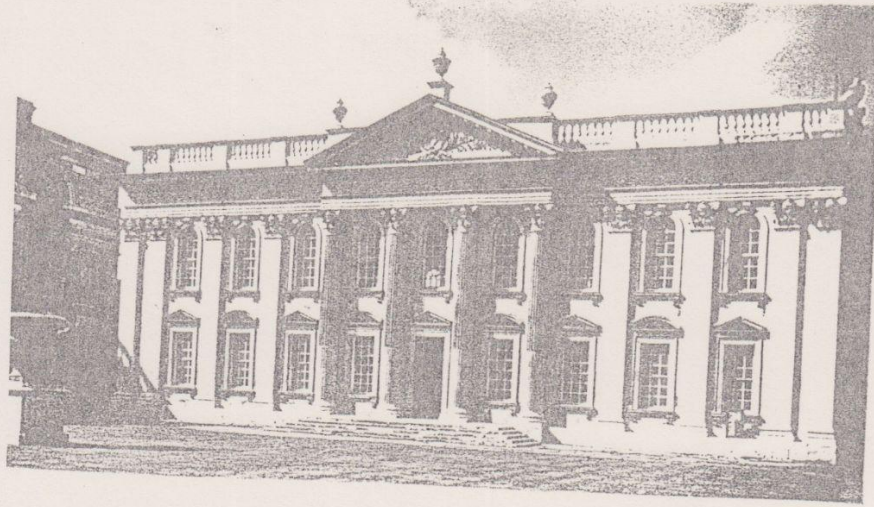
Appendix 10



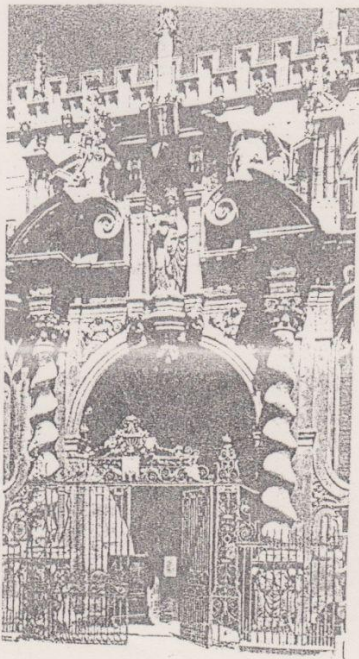
14. Radcliffe Camera by Gibbs (Hawksmoor)



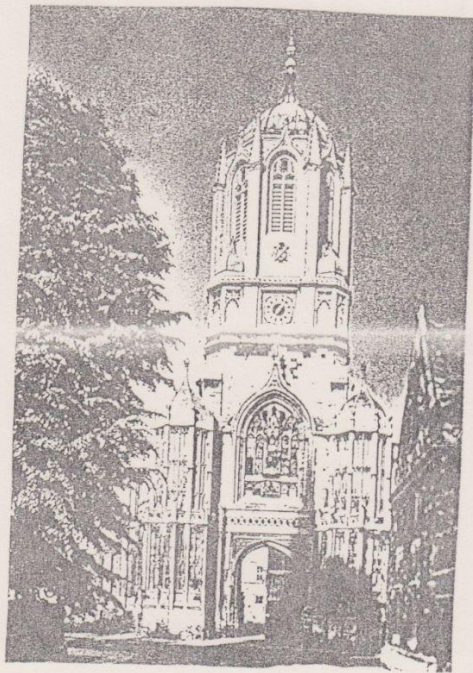
Appendix 11



15. The Senate House, Cambridge (Gibbs)



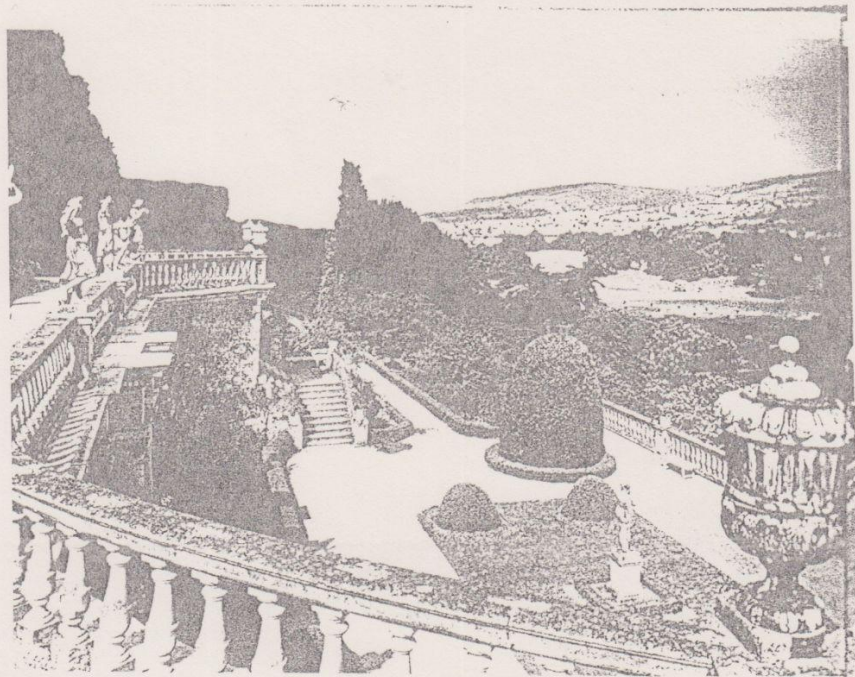
16. St. Mary the Virgin Oxford (Nicholas Stone)



17. Tom Tower, Oxford (Wren)



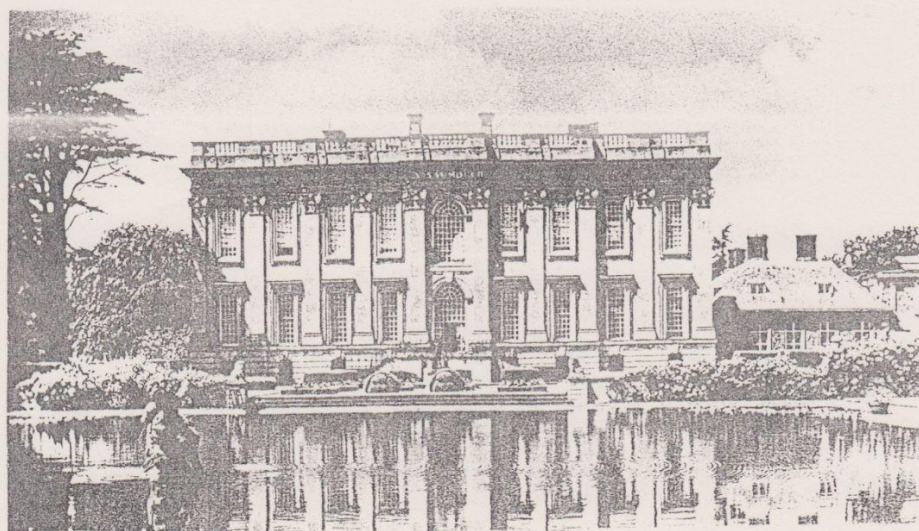
# Appendix 12



THE BAROQUE GARDEN  
at Powis Castle, North Wales

18. Powis Castle, Van Nost

Archer's



19. Easton Neston, Northhamptonshire



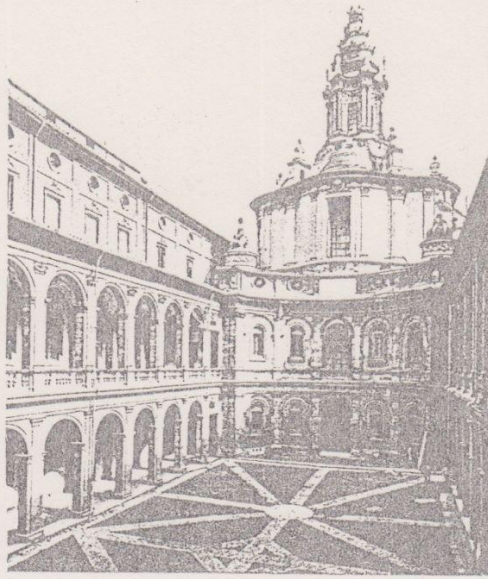
Appendix 13



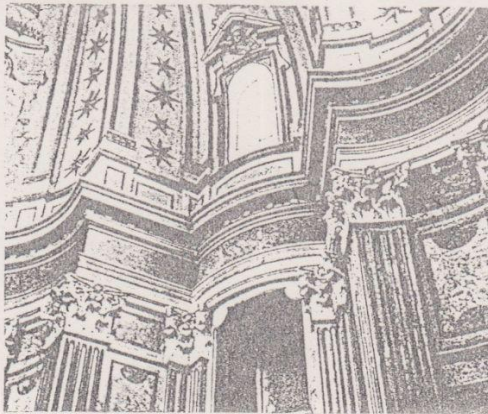
20. Three Wren Steeples, St. Mary Le Bow, St. Vedast  
(Wren)



## Appendix 14

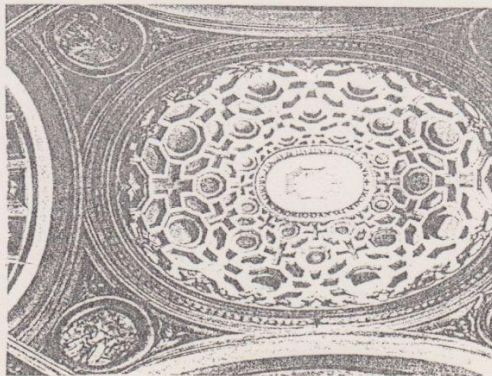


902. ITALY, FRANCESCO BORROMINI (1599-1667).  
Exterior of the church of S. Ivo della Sapienza. 1642-1650.



903. ITALY, FRANCESCO BORROMINI.  
Detail of the entablature in S. Ivo della Sapienza.

904. ITALY, FRANCESCO BORROMINI.  
Interior of the dome of the church of S. Carlo  
alle Quattro Fontane, Rome. 1638-1641.





## Appendix 15



877. ITALIAN. PARMA. CORREGGIO (before 1489–1534). The Ascension. Detail from the dome of S. Giovanni Evangelista at Parma. 1520–1524.



878. ITALIAN. ROMAN. GIULIO ROMANO (c. 1499–1546). Dome of the Sala de' Giganti. Fresco. 1532–1534. Palazzo del Tè, Mantua.

### CEILINGS AND DOMES

While classicism was based on form, which provided a clear and fixed definition of appearances, the Baroque had by definition to animate form, to escape from it and even to annihilate it. Ceilings and domes, by creating an unreal opening into the air, showed their Baroque nature at an early date. The development can be clearly seen. In the first half of the 16th century Correggio (who in a number of ways can be considered among the masters of the Renaissance as an innovator and a precursor of Mannerism and the Baroque) was reducing the world of solid realities to patches of light animated by moving clouds and flying figures [877]. With Giulio Romano the scale of the figures was reduced and their number increased, and the effect of swarming life was accentuated [878]. The great Baroque decorators increased the intermingling of elements and the asymmetrical composition [879] until Tiepolo, who seemed almost intoxicated by the vibrant brightness of space, dissolved the last vestiges of the solid world into a realm of immaterial light [880].



879. Left. ITALIAN. ROMAN. GIOVANNI BATTISTA GAULLI, called IL BACCICIA (1639–1709). The Glorification of the Name of Jesus. Sketch for the vault of the Gesù, Rome. 1672–1679. Galleria Spada, Rome.

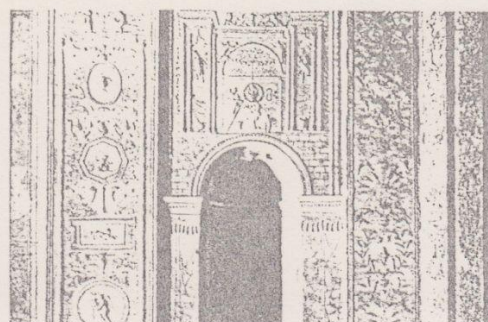
880. Above. ITALIAN. VENETIAN. GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO (1696–1770). The Apotheosis of the Pisani Family. Ceiling of the Palazzo Pisano at Strà. 1761–1767.



## Appendix 16



886. FRENCH. JUSTE AURÈLE MEISSONNIER (1695–1750). Project for a large table centrepiece in silver with two tureens, for the Duke of Kingston. Engraved by Huquier (1695–1772).



887. ITALIAN. GIOVANNI DA UDINE (1487–1564). Detail of a pilaster with stucco decoration. 16th century. Villa Madama, Rome.



888. FRANCO-ITALIAN. STEFANO DELLA BELLA (1610–1664). Cartouche studies with marine motifs. Engraving.



889. FRENCH. PIERRE EDMÉ BABEL (c. 1720–1775). Cartouche in fountain form. Engraving.

890. GERMAN. Ornament designed and engraved by Franz Xaver Habermann (1721–1796).

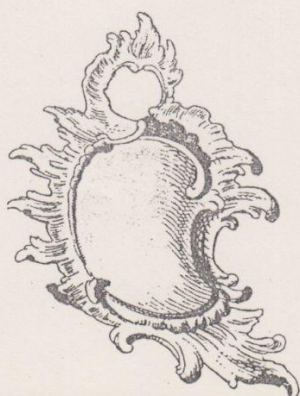
891. GERMAN. PHILIPP ANDREAS KILIAN (1714–1759). Stylised Rococo tree. Engraving.

### ROCOCO MOTIFS

In the 18th century, and especially in the Germanic countries, the Baroque appeared in its most extreme form and, one might say, found its own mannerism in the Rococo. We have only to compare two decorative compositions — both in ternary rhythm but one obeying the dictates of the Renaissance (887) and the other giving free rein to the unbridled agitation of the Rococo — to see how the straight line and its division of surfaces has been abolished and how indeed the exuberance of the curves suggests rebounding movements reminiscent of the rolling of waves [886].

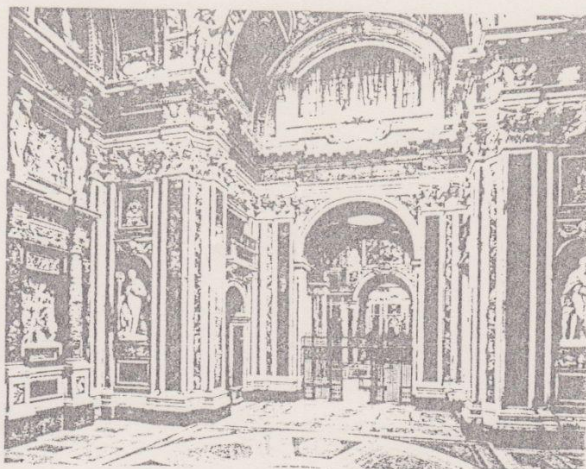
Although Baroque art employed undulations and marine motifs as early as the beginning of the 17th century (Stefano della Bella [888]), we can see all that was added by the Rococo in vehemence, fantasy and systematic asymmetry [889]. Forms were no longer submitted to the dictates of thought and its rules of logic, which had reached their height in the use of contrasting surfaces [887]; they now drew their inspiration from life, from vegetation and from impulse. The combination of the conch [888, 889] and the growing tree [891] resulted in a typical Rococo form; the wavy slanting shell whose asymmetrical outline swirls upward into a crest seems to evoke a casual movement of the hand rather than a preconceived shape [890]. It was a graphic decorative theme which was the basis of composition and which imposed its upward sweep on the structure of objects [892].

892. GERMAN. Clock designed and engraved by Franz Xaver Habermann.

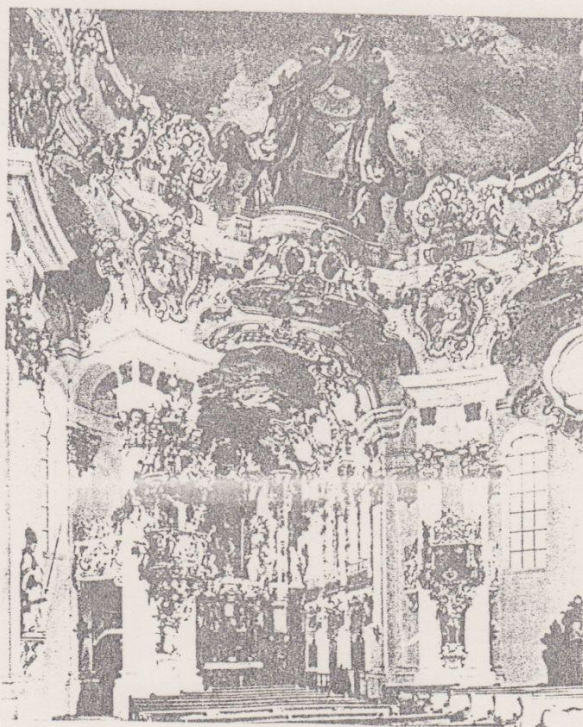




## Appendix 21



899. ITALY. FLAMINIO PONZIO (c. 1570–1615).  
The Borghese chapel. Built 1611–1612 in  
Sta Maria Maggiore, Rome.



900. GERMANY. Interior of the church of Die Wies,  
in Bavaria. Built c. 1749–1750 by  
Dominikus Zimmermann (1685–1766) and painted by his  
brother Johann Baptist Zimmermann (1680–1758).



Appendix 22

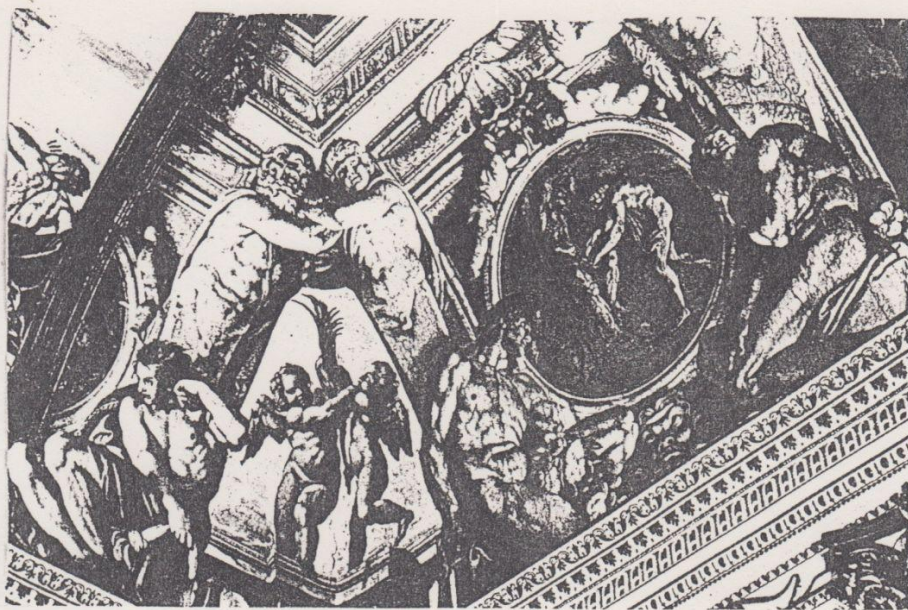


Figure 1. Annibale Carracci:  
*Caryatids and Decorative Figures*  
(Gallery). Palazzo Farnese, Rome

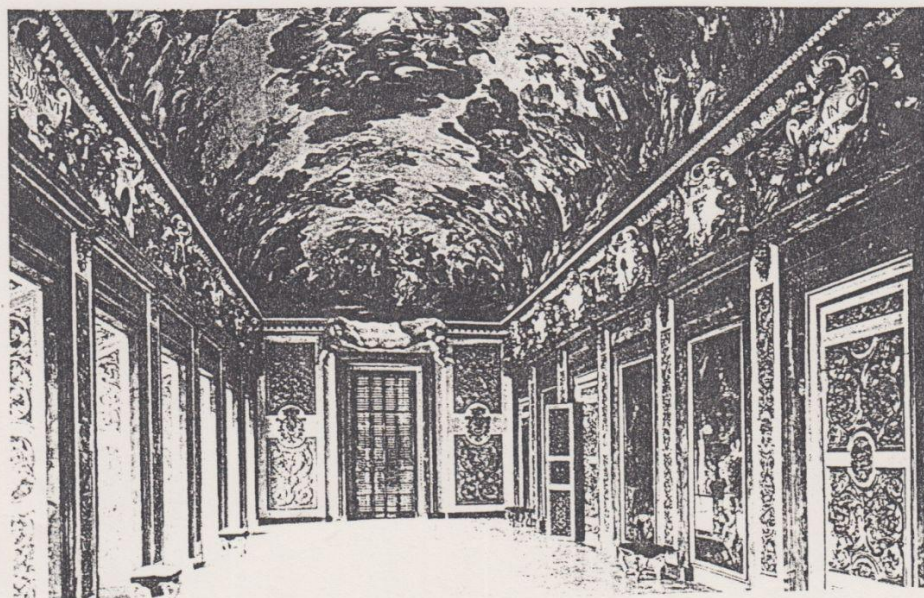


Figure 16. Luca Giordano:  
*Ceiling painting (Gallery)*.  
Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence



Appendix 23

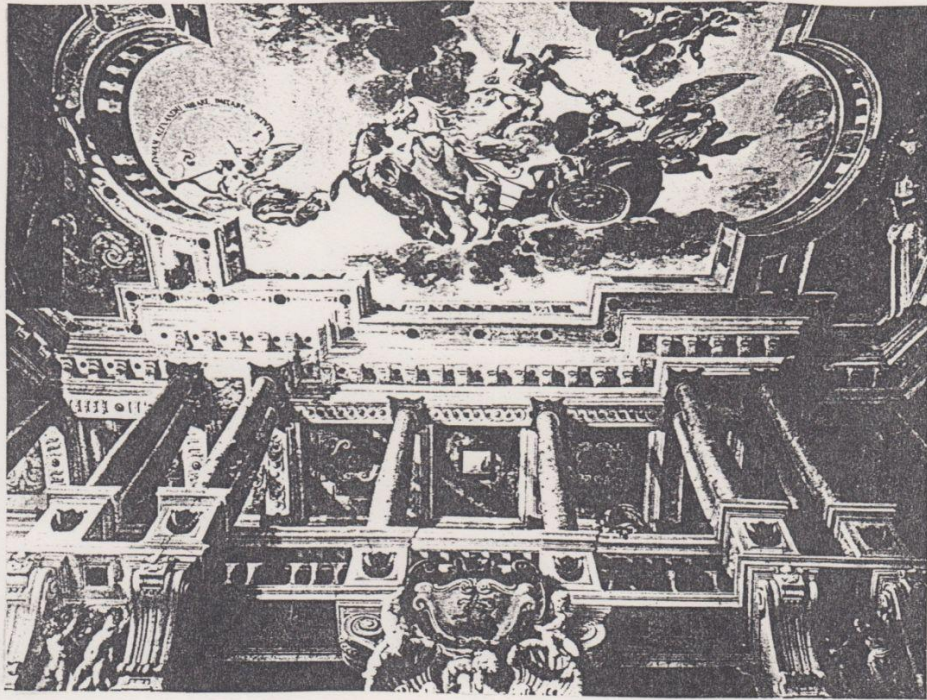
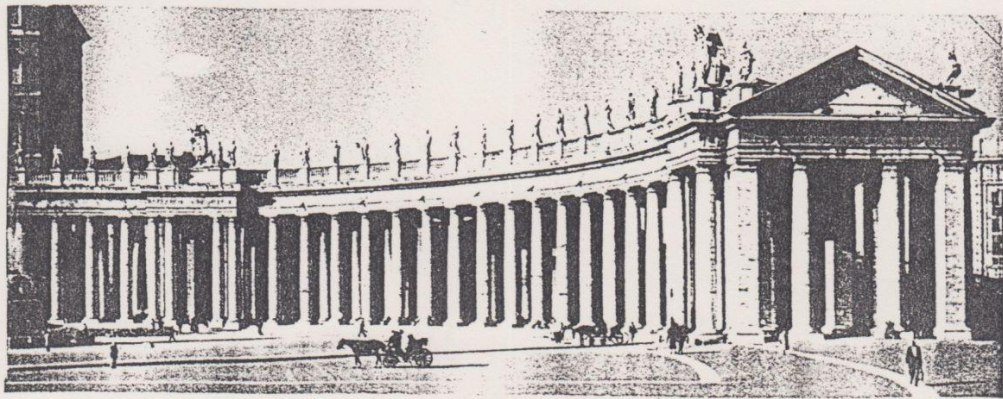


Figure 13.  
Angelo Michele Colonna  
and Agostino Mitelli: Interior,  
Palazzo Pitti, Florence



905. The colonnade of the piazza of St Peter's, Rome.  
1656-1667.



Appendix 24



*Figure 10. Bernini:  
Bust of Scipione Borghese.  
Borghese Gallery, Rome*