

RUDOLF WITTKOWER  
ART AND ARCHITECTURE  
IN ITALY  
1600 TO 1750



БИБЛИОТЕКА  
ОДЕЉЕЊА ЗА ИСТОРИЈУ УМЕТНОСТИ

Инв. бр. 14109

Сигн. 11-2061

ФИЛОЗОФСКОГ ФАКУЛТЕТА  
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТА У БЕОГРАДУ



PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN BOOKS

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Sculpture: If the medium is not given, it is always marble

Painting: If the medium is not given, it is always oil

Abbreviation: G.F.N. Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, Rome

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Rudolf Wittkower died 11 October 1971

*THIS page is an editor's obituary appreciation of an author, but it is also the farewell to a friend.*

*The public events are easily recorded: born in Berlin 1901, studies at the universities of Berlin and Munich, assistant and then research fellow at the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome, one of the two German centres of research into the history of art. After that, lecturer at Cologne University 1932-3, a move to London, work at the Warburg Institute as co-editor of the Journal of the Institute, and, with Fritz Saxl, on the atlas called British Art and the Mediterranean, a publication which opened many English eyes to the intricate pattern of Italian sources of English art and architecture. Then chair of art history at University College, London, 1949-56, and chairman of the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University, New York. He retired from Columbia in 1969, but not from ceaseless work: he went on to serve as Kress Professor in Residence at the National Gallery, Washington, and as Slade Professor at Cambridge, and his countless later activities included the unbelievably thoroughgoing revision of the present volume for this edition, leaving no stone of recent research unturned.*

*Wittkower's principal fields were the Italian Baroque and the architecture of the sixteenth century in Italy and the eighteenth in England. Fully to realize the range of his publications one has to go to the list at the end of the monumental two-volume Festschrift which his friends and pupils presented to him in 1967: Michelangelo Bibliography (with Ernst Steinmann) 1927, Bernini's Drawings (with H. Brauer) 1931, the dome of St Peter's and papers on Michelangelo's Laurenziana Library 1933-4, Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism 1949, the first edition of the present volume 1958, the Phaidon Bernini 1966. The published list of papers in journals adds up to over a hundred and fifty. Yet their standard of scholarship is consistently of the highest.*

*Wittkower was a born teacher, devoted to his students and for that reason demanding. But his was not a dry-as-dust erudition; he could inspire young artists - for his chair at University College meant the teaching of the students at the Slade School - and perhaps even more young architects. It can safely be said that scores have profited from, and been inspired by, his Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism and its lesson of the importance of consistent modular relations. No other book on a subject of architectural history written by scholars of his generation has had such a creative effect on men in practice. No wonder that when Wittkower had settled down in New York he succeeded in a few years in making his department the most lively and the most respected in America.*

*Rudi Wittkower was a big man physically as well as in his warmth, kindness, and generosity to students as well as to colleagues and friends; his loss to them and to scholarship is immeasurable.*

## FOREWORD

IN all fairness, I feel the reader should be warned of what he will not find in this book. Such a first sentence may be psychologically unwise, but it is morally sound. I am concerned with the Italian Baroque period in the widest sense, but not with the European phenomenon of Neoclassicism. Thus Winckelmann and his circle as well as the Italian artists who followed his precepts fall outside the scope of my work. Nor will the struggle between the supporters of Greece and those of Rome be reported, a battle that was joined in the 1750s from Scotland to Rome and in which Piranesi took such an active part. In addition, little or next to nothing will be said about the festive life of the period: the Baroque stage and theatre, and the sumptuous decorations in easily perishable materials put up on special occasions often by first-rate artists. Finally, the development of the garden, of town-planning, and of interior decoration could hardly be touched upon, though I am only too well aware that all this is particularly relevant for a comprehensive picture of the Baroque age. My aim is narrower, but perhaps even more ambitious. Instead of saying little about many things, I attempted to say something about a few things, and so concerned myself only with the history of painting, sculpture, and architecture.

Even so, the subject and the space at my disposal dictated severe limitations with which the reader may want to be acquainted before turning to the pages of this book. It was necessary to prune the garden of history not only of dead but, alas, also of much living wood. In doing this, I availed myself of the historian's right and duty to submit to his readers his own vision of the past. I tried to give a bird's-eye view, and no more, of the whole panorama and reserved a detailed discussion for those works of art and architecture which, owing to their intrinsic merit and historical importance, appear to be in a special class. Intrinsic merit and historical importance – these notions may be regarded as dangerous measuring rods, and not every reader may subscribe to my opinions: yet history degenerates into chronicle if the author shuns the dangers of implicit and explicit judgements of quality and value.

At this point I make bold to express a view which may be unpopular with some students of the Italian Baroque. Excepting the beginning and the end of the period under review, i.e. Caravaggio, the Carracci, and Tiepolo, the history of painting would seem less important than that of the other arts and often indeed has no more than strictly limited interest – an ideal hunting-ground for specialists and 'attributionists'. This fact has been somewhat obscured by the great mass of valuable research made during the last forty years in the field of Italian Baroque painting at the expense of studies in the history of architecture and sculpture. Roughly from the second quarter of the seventeenth century on, the most signal developments in easel-painting lay outside Italy, and Italian painters became the recipients rather than the instigators of new ideas. It is, however, in conjunction with, and as an integral part of, architecture, sculpture, and decoration that Italian painters of the Baroque made a vital and internationally significant contribution with their large fresco cycles. The works without peer are Bernini's statuary, Cortona's architecture and decoration, and Borromini's buildings as well as those by Guarini, Juvarra, and Vittone.

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*But it was Bernini, the greatest artist of the period, who with his poetical and visionary masterpieces created perhaps the most sublime realization of the longings of his age.*

*Based on such considerations, I have placed the accents in the story that follows. Approximately one-fourth of the text is devoted to Bernini, Cortona, and Borromini; the chapter on Bernini alone takes up over ten per cent of the book. Another ten per cent is concerned with Caravaggio, the Carracci, and Tiepolo, while roughly the same space is given to Sacchi, Algardi, Duquesnoy, and the great Piedmontese architects. This accounts for more than two-fifths of the text. Since hundreds of artists, many of them of considerable stature, share between them as much text as I have given to a mere dozen of the greatest, my narrative may be criticized as lopsided. But I am prepared to accept the challenge. New and pregnant ideas have always been few and far between. It is the origin, unfolding, and expansion of these ideas with which I am here concerned. Their echo and transformation in the work of minor artists can be sketched with a large brush.*

*My story begins with the anti-Mannerist tendencies which arose towards the end of the sixteenth century in various Italian centres, and the curtain falls over the Baroque scene at different places in different decades. If one postulates the year 1750 roughly as the water-shed between the Late Baroque and Neo-classicism, it appears that the three main sections of this book comprise spans of approximately thirty, sixty, and again sixty years. Two-fifths of the text have been devoted to the two generations limited by the beginning and the end of Bernini's career, since I consider the Roman High Baroque of Bernini, Borromini, and Pietro da Cortona the most exciting years of the century and a half under review and one of the most creative periods of the whole history of Italian art; the remaining three-fifths are equally divided between the first and third parts. Some readers may regret that this disposition has resulted in an all too brief discussion of eighteenth-century painting, particularly of the Venetian School, but a fairly full treatment would in any case have gone far beyond the space at my disposal; also I believe that the structure I wanted to give the book justified and even demanded this brevity.*

*For the main divisions of the whole period I have used the terms, by now well established, of Early, High, and Late Baroque. Only recently have we been reminded<sup>1</sup> that such terminological barricades contain fallacies apt to mislead the author as well as his public. Yet no historical narrative is possible without some form of organization, and though the traditional terminology may have – and indeed has – serious shortcomings, it conveniently and sensibly suggests chronological caesuras during one hundred and fifty years of history. If we accept 'Baroque' – like 'Gothic' and 'Renaissance' – as a generic term and take it to cover the most diverse tendencies between roughly 1600 and 1750, it will yet be seen in the text of the book that the subdivisions 'Early', 'High', and 'Late' indicate real historical caesuras; but it became necessary to expand the 'primary' terminology by such terms as 'transitional style', 'High' and 'Late Baroque classicism', 'archaizing classicism', 'crypto-romanticism', 'Italian Rococo', and 'classicist Rococo', all of which will be explained in their proper place.*

*I dictated a rough draft of large parts of the manuscript in the summer of 1950. Most of my spare time in the following seven years was given to elaborating, revising, and completing the work. The manuscript reached the editor in batches from the beginning of 1956 on; by the summer*

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of 1957 almost the entire text had been dispatched. I mention these facts because they explain why recent research is not so fully incorporated as I should have liked. Since new and often important results appear in an uninterrupted stream, it was virtually impossible to keep the older chapters of the manuscript permanently up to date. I have attempted, however, to incorporate in the Notes all the major publications until the autumn of 1957.

It is not possible to mention all the names of friends and colleagues who answered my inquiries. I am particularly indebted to Peggy Martin, Sheila Somers, and St John Gore, through whose assistance the manuscript made progress at a difficult period. Paolo Portoghesi and G. E. Kidder Smith allowed me to use some beautiful photographs. Howard Hibbard helped with the search for, and supply of, illustrations. In addition, I am greatly indebted to him for many corrections of facts and for allowing me to use some of the results of his researches in the Borghese archive. Philip Pouncey and Henry Millon emended some errors at proof stage. My gratitude goes above all to Ilaria Toesca and Italo Faldi, who year after year put their time and resources unflinchingly at my disposal. I am deeply grateful for what they have done for me by correspondence and during my regular visits to Rome. Milton J. Lewine took upon himself the self-denying task of reading one set of proofs. Ever watchful and scrupulously conscientious, he covered the galleys with comment; his many constructive suggestions as to content and style considerably improved my final text.

The book was prepared and written mainly with the resources of the Warburg Institute and the Witt Library (Courtauld Institute), London; the Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome; the German Art Historical Institute, Florence; and the Avery Library, Columbia University, New York. I wish to put on record that without the loyal support of the directors and staffs of these excellent institutions the work could never have been finished in its present form.

Finally, I have to thank the editor, Nikolaus Pevsner, not only for constant advice and encouragement, but also for his infinite patience. Whenever my own spirit began to flag, the thought sustained me of how much easier it was to be an author than an editor.

R. W.

New York, December 1957

## FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN the five and a half years since the appearance of the first edition of this book Italian Baroque studies have taken immense strides forward. Many key figures had then lacked modern monographs but this deficiency has now been partly overcome. Arisi's *Panini*, Bologna's *Solimena*, Briganti's *Cortona*, Constable's *Canaletto*, D'Orsi's *Giaquinto*, Enggass's *Baciccio*, and Morassi's *Tiepolo* indicate the breadth and importance of the research concluded in the intervening period. Moreover, minor masters such as *Carneo*, *Carpioni*, *Cecco Bravo*, and *Petrini* have recently found biographers. Exhibitions from the *Venetian and Bolognese Seicento* to the splendid *Baroque Exhibition in Turin* have brought together, sifted, and submitted to scholarly

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*discussion an enormous mass of new material. One-man shows, often accompanied by bulky and monographic catalogues, have helped to clarify the œuvre and development of Cerano, Cigoli, Morazzone, Pellegrini, Pianca, Marco Ricci, Tanzio, and others. Scores of papers, many of them written by a rising generation of intensely active, perspicacious, and devoted scholars – among whom I gratefully name Borea, A. M. Clark, Ewald, Griseri, Hibbard, Honour, Noehles, Posner, and Vitzthum – have helped to correct old misconceptions and to expand the confines of our knowledge. In a word, much of the groundwork for the book which I rashly undertook to write years ago has only in the last half decade been laid by the concerted endeavour of many scholars.*

*Confronted with this situation, I felt tempted to recast some of the old chapters. In the end, I decided against such a course, because I had regarded it as my primary task to submit a coherent historical vision of the entire period and, despite all the valuable work done in recent years, dismissed the need for a change or disruption of the original structure of the book. Nevertheless, a great many errors have been amended in the text, and facts, ideas, and judgements have been brought in line with new results wherever and whenever I found them convincing.*

*The bulk of the new research has been incorporated in the Notes, to which I have added about 15,000 words. In addition, the Bibliography has been brought up-to-date (until summer, 1964); in some cases I have listed weak and unsatisfactory writings for the sole purpose of saving time to students who might otherwise be misled by a promising title.*

*The reception of the first edition has been favourable beyond expectation. If the test of an author's success lies in the extent to which his ideas percolate and become, acknowledged as well as unacknowledged, common property, I have no reason to be dissatisfied. I hope that the considerably increased critical apparatus will make the book even more useful. But, as before, the text is meant to stand on its own and be perused by those who want to read a coherent narrative rather than use a textbook, without the constant and irritating turning of pages to the back of the book.*

*It only remains to thank the many friends who helped me with comments and corrections. Among them Julius Held and Howard Hibbard should be specially mentioned; their vigilant eye caught a number of blatant errors.*

*Judy Nairn watched over the new edition as she did over the old. Her whole-hearted cooperation spurred me to action. She also took upon herself the unenviable task of compiling a new and fuller index.*

Florence, August 1964

R. W.

## FOREWORD TO THE THIRD EDITION

*IN some fields of the history of art and especially in the field of Baroque studies research has made and is making such giant steps forward that a book first vaguely envisaged more than a generation ago and written in the 1950s can only survive if the process of bringing it up to date*

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*never ceases. Once again, however, I had to abandon the temptation of recasting whole chapters of the text of the book and had to restrict myself to a few extensive and a vast number of minor corrections. The bulk of the new critical material, covering mainly the period between the spring of 1964 and the spring of 1971, has been incorporated in the notes and the bibliography. Both notes and bibliography have grown very considerably and have reached a size that, in my view, should not be transgressed. Even so, it was impossible (nor was it my intention) to aim at anything approaching completeness. The selection of the material newly incorporated in this edition was dictated not only by the importance of contributions, but also by my own interests and reading capacity. Moreover, I have to admit frankly that some fine studies may never have come to my knowledge. Thus I have to emphasize strongly that omission only rarely implies refutation.*

*Once again, I have to point out that the notes and the bibliography supplement each other: a great deal of bibliographical material only appears in the notes, while a good many works are only mentioned in the bibliography, where I have often given fuller comments than in the previous editions. And once again I have to thank many friends who have helped me in one way or another, given me the benefit of their criticism and corrected mistakes. Among them I mention gratefully the names of Diane David, Howard Hibbard, C. Douglas Lewis Jr, Carla Lord, Tod Marder, Jennifer Montagu, and Werner Oechslin.*

Podere La Vescina, Lucignano  
(Arezzo), June 1971

R. W.



