

PART THREE
LATE BAROQUE AND ROCOCO

CIRCA 1675—CIRCA 1750

CHAPTER 15
INTRODUCTION

AFTER the death of Alexander VII (1667) papal patronage in Rome rapidly declined, and even the aged Bernini was starved of official commissions. On the other hand, it was precisely at this moment, during the last quarter of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, that the Jesuits and other Orders as well as private patrons gave painters unequalled opportunities. Yet Maratti's international Late Baroque in painting, the fashionable style of the day, had as little power to electrify and galvanize and to lead on to new ventures as Carlo Fontana's parallel manner in architecture. In fact, Rome's artistic supremacy was seriously challenged not only by much more stirring events in the north and south of Italy, but above all by the artistic renaissance in France, which followed in the wake of the amassing of power and wealth under Louis XIV's centralized autocracy. The time was close at hand when Paris rather than Rome came to be regarded as the most dynamic art centre of the western world.

None the less the Roman Baroque had an unexpectedly brilliant exodus. Under the Albani Pope Clement XI (1700-21) Rome began to rally, and the pontificates of Benedict XIII Orsini (1724-30) and Clement XII Corsini (1730-40) saw teeming activity on a monumental scale. It was under these popes that many of the finest and most cherished Roman works saw the light of day, such as the Spanish Stairs, the façade of S. Giovanni in Laterano, and the Fontana Trevi. Moreover, foreigners streamed to Rome in greater numbers than ever before, and artists from all over Europe were still magically drawn to the Eternal City. But the character of these pilgrimages slowly changed. Artists no longer came attracted by the lure of splendid opportunities as in the days of Bernini and Cortona; more and more they came only to study antiquity at the fountain-head.

To a certain extent the French Academy in Rome, founded as early as 1666, anticipated this development, and in the eighteenth century the students of the Academy were almost entirely concerned with the copying of ancient statuary. With the growth of French influence in all spheres of life, political, social, and artistic, the classicizing milieu of the Academy developed into a powerful force in Rome's artistic life; and it was due to this centre of French art and culture on Roman soil that countless French artists were able, often successfully, to compete for commissions with native artists.

The popes themselves nourished the growing antiquarian spirit.¹ Preservation and restoration of the remains of antiquity now became their serious concern. From the mid sixteenth century on antique statues had left Rome in considerable numbers.² This trade assumed such proportions that Innocent XI (1676–89) prohibited further export, and Clement XI's edicts of 1701 and 1704 confirmed this policy. Clement XI also inaugurated a new museological programme by planning the Galleria Lapidaria and the Museum of Early Christian Antiquities in the Vatican. Clement XII (1730–40) and Benedict XIV (1740–58) followed in his footsteps; under them the Museo Capitolino took shape, the first public museum of ancient art. In keeping with the trend of the time, the learned Benedict XIV opened four Academies in Rome, one of them devoted to Roman antiquities. Clement XIII (1758–69) set the seal on this whole movement in 1763 by appointing Winckelmann, the father of classical archaeology, director general of Roman antiquities, an office, incidentally, first established by Paul III in 1534. Finally, it was in 1772, during Clement XIV's pontificate (1769–74), that the construction was begun of the present Vatican museum, the largest collection of antiquities in the world.

Archaeological enthusiasm was also guiding the greatest patron of his day, Cardinal Alessandro Albani, when he planned his villa outside Porta Salaria.³ Built literally as a receptacle for his unequalled collection of ancient statues (now mainly in Munich), the villa, erected by Carlo Marchionni between 1746 and 1763, was yet intended as a place to be lived in – an imperial *villa suburbana* rather than a museum. The Cardinal's friend and protégé Winckelmann helped to assemble the ancient treasures; and it was on the ceiling of the sumptuous great gallery that Anton Raphael Mengs, the admired apostle of Neo-classicism, painted his *Parnassus*, vying, as his circle believed, with ancient murals.

There was, to be sure, a strong nostalgic and romantic element in the eighteenth-century fascination with the ancient world. Nowhere is this more evident than in the work of Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–78), who, coming from Venice, where he had studied perspective and stage design, settled permanently in Rome in 1745.⁴ The drama and poetry of his etchings of Roman ruins (*Le Antichità romane*, 1756) have no equal, even at this time when other artists of considerable merit were attracted by similar subjects, stimulated, more than ever before, by a public desirous to behold the picturesque remains, true and imaginary, of Roman greatness. Although Piranesi was deeply in sympathy with the new tendencies, a devoted partisan of Roman pre-eminence and a belligerent advocate of the great variety in Roman art and architecture,⁵ his vision, procedure, and technique ally him to the Late Baroque masters. Yet he never tampered with the archaeological correctness of his views in spite of his play with scale – contrasting his small, bizarre figures derived from Salvator to the colossal size of the ruins – or in spite of the warm glow of Venetian light pervading his etchings and of the boldness of his compositions, in which, true to the Baroque tradition, telling diagonals prevail. It is the Baroque picturesqueness of these plates, so different from the dry precision of Neo-classical topographical views, that determined for many generations the popular conception of ancient Rome.

Piranesi's *vedute* of ancient Rome no less than those of the contemporary city (*Vedute di Roma*, published from 1748 on) reveal the trained stage designer, whose early and

most famous series of plates, the *Carceri d'Invenzione*, first issued in 1745 and re-etched in 1760-1, are romantic phantasmagorias derived from Baroque opera sets (Plate 198B). The *Carceri* and the *Vedute*, with their oblique perspectives which add a new dimension of drama and spatial expansion, reveal the influence of Ferdinando Bibiena's 'invention' of the *scena per angolo* (p. 408; Plate 198A). Thus in the *vedute* Piranesi wedded two traditions which seem mutually exclusive: that of the Baroque stage with that of topographical renderings of an 'architectural landscape'. Piranesi's case, however, was far from unique, for in the course of the eighteenth century ideas and conceptions of the stage designer invaded many sectors of the other arts.⁶

It should be recalled that during most of the seventeenth century the influence of the stage on painting and architecture was more limited than is usually believed. It is, of course, true that effects first developed for the stage were also used in works of a permanent character.⁷ But the basic High Baroque concept of the unification of real and artistic space, that illusionism which blurs the borderline between image and reality, is not by its very nature a 'theatrical' device. It may be argued that the theatre and the art of the seventeenth century developed in the same direction, for in both cases an emotionally stirring and often overwhelming chain of seemingly true impressions was to induce the beholder to forget his everyday existence and to participate in the pictorial 'reality' before his eyes. Yet Roman fresco painting from Cortona's Barberini ceiling to Gaulli's work in the Gesù shows as little direct impact from the theatre as Borromini's architecture. In another chapter I have attempted to demonstrate that the Venetian Baldassare Longhena, by contrast, owed decisive impulses to the stage and that it was he who laid the foundation for the scenographic architecture of the eighteenth century. Similarly, in the history of Late Baroque painting from Padre Pozzo to Tiepolo stage requisites such as the proscenium arch, the curtain, the *quadratura* backdrop, and the painted 'actors' stepping out of the painted wings play an important and often overwhelming part. To what extent painting in the grand manner and stage design were then regarded as basically identical operations may be gathered from Pozzo's work *Perspectiva pictorum et architectorum* (Rome, 1693) which was to serve the theatre and the Church alike. Statistical facts illuminate the growing obsession with the theatre during the Late Baroque period: in 1678, for instance, 130 comedies were represented on private stages in Rome alone.⁸ In the early eighteenth century the theatre had even greater importance; it was certainly as significant for the creation of visual conventions and patterns as cinema and television are in the twentieth century.⁹

If in the new era it is pertinent to talk of the ascendancy of the stage designer over the painter (often, of course, one and the same person), the ascendancy of the painters over the sculptors seems equally characteristic. There is circumstantial documentary evidence that on many occasions painters were called upon to make designs for the sculptors to work from – a situation utterly unthinkable in Bernini's circle. Only a few examples can here be given. Maratti seems to have had a hand in the work of many sculptors. He was a close friend and constant adviser of Paolo Naldini; he made designs for four allegorical statues in S. Maria in Cosmedin,¹⁰ for Monnot's tomb of Pope Innocent XI, and for the monumental statues to be placed in Borromini's tabernacle niches in the

nave of S. Giovanni in Laterano.¹¹ Gaulli is credited with the designs of Raggi's rich stucco decorations in the Gesù.¹² The Genoese painter Pietro Bianchi, who settled in Rome, maintained close contacts with the sculptors Pietro Bracci, Giovanni Battista Maini, Filippo della Valle, Francesco Queirolo, and others and supplied them with sketches, as his biographer relates in detail.¹³ The new custom appears also to have spread outside Rome, to mention only the Neapolitan Solimena who helped the sculptor Lorenzo Vaccaro with designs.¹⁴ This whole trend, which of course came to an end with the dawn of Neo-classicism, was not in the first place the result of the inability of sculptors to cope with their own problems. It was, to a certain extent in any case, connected with a revaluation of the sketch as such, a question which must be discussed in a wider context.

In the age of the Renaissance, drawing became the basis for the experimental and scientific approach to nature. But drawing remained a means to an end, and the end was the finished painting. The latter was prepared by many stages, from the first sketches and studies from nature to the carefully executed final design and cartoon. As early as the sixteenth century artists began to feel that this laborious process maimed the freshness and vitality of the first thought. Vasari, writing in 1550, made the memorable observation that 'many painters ... achieve in the first sketch of their work, as though guided by a sort of fire of inspiration ... a certain measure of boldness; but afterwards, in finishing it, the boldness vanishes.' So, an academic Mannerist arose as the mouthpiece of anti-academic spontaneity of creation. Throughout the seventeenth and even the eighteenth century the Renaissance method of careful preparation, fully re-instated by Annibale Carracci, remained the foundation of academic training, but a number of progressive artists, although never working on canvas *alla prima* (possibly with the exception of Caravaggio), attempted to preserve something of the brio of spontaneous creation, with the result that the finish itself became sketchy. During the eighteenth century, from Magnasco to Guardi, the masters working with a free, rapid brush-stroke assumed steadily greater importance and foreshadowed the position of romantic painters like Delacroix, for whom the first flash of the idea was 'pure expression' and 'truth issuing from the soul'. It is in the context of this development that the painter's sketch as well as the sculptor's bozzetto were conceded the status of works of art in their own right, and even the first ideas of architects, such as the brilliant 'notes' by Juvarra, were looked upon in the same way.

All this required a high degree of sophistication on the part of the public. The rapid sketches no less than the works of the masters of the loaded brush made hitherto unknown claims on sensibility and understanding, for it surely needs more active collaboration on the part of the spectator to 'decipher' a Magnasco than a Domenichino or a Bolognese academician. The eighteenth-century virtuoso was the answer. Keyed up to a purely aesthetic approach, he could savour the peculiar qualities and characteristics of each master; he would be steeped in the study of individual manner and style and find in the drawing, the sketch, and the bozzetto equal or even greater merits than in the finished product. Behind this new appreciation lay not only the pending emergence of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline of sensory experience, but above all the concept

of the uniqueness of genius. The new interpretation of genius made its entry from about the middle of the seventeenth century on, and comparative changes in the artist as a type were not long delayed. But the early eighteenth-century artist was not the genius of the romantic age who revolted against reason and rule in favour of feeling, naïveté, and creation in sublime solitude. By contrast, the Late Baroque artist was a man of the world, rational and immensely versatile, who produced rapidly and with the greatest ease; and since he felt himself part of a living tradition, he had no compunction in using the heritage of the past as a storehouse from which to choose at will. Juvarra and Tiepolo are the supreme examples.

But now it is highly significant that none of the new terms of reference arising during the Late Baroque were of Italian origin. Aesthetics as an autonomous discipline was a German accomplishment;¹⁵ the nature of genius was defined in England; and it was the Englishman Jonathan Richardson who laid down the rules of the 'science of connoisseurship'.¹⁶ Nor had Italy a collector of drawings of the calibre and discriminating taste of the Frenchman Mariette. The theory of art, that old domain of Italian thought, lay barren. In the eighteenth century the relationship between Italy and the other nations was for the first time reversed: English and French treatises appeared in Italian translations. While in England the whole structure of classical art theory was attacked and replaced by subjective criteria of sensibility, Conte Francesco Algarotti (1712-64),¹⁷ at this period the foremost Italian critic but in fact no more than an able vulgarizer, dished up all the old premises, precepts, and maxims of the classical theory. Not only Roman, but Italian supremacy had seen its day. France and, as the century advanced, England assumed the leading roles.

It is all the more surprising that never before had Italian art attracted so many foreigners. The treasures of Italy seemed now to belong to the whole of Europe and nobody could boast a gentleman's education without having studied them. It is equally surprising that never before were Italian artists a similar international success. In an unparalleled spurt they carried the torch as far as Lisbon, London, and St Petersburg – just before it was extinguished.

CHAPTER 16
ARCHITECTURE

INTRODUCTION: LATE BAROQUE CLASSICISM AND ROCOCO

AN authoritative history of Italian eighteenth-century architecture cannot yet be written. Many of the monuments are not at all or only insufficiently published; the dating of many buildings is controversial or vague; the buildings without architects and the names of architects without buildings abound. It has been pointed out that in one corner of Italy, the province of Treviso alone, about 2,000 palaces, churches, and oratories were built in the course of the century. Nobody has seriously attempted to sift this enormous material, and it is only recently that a number of major architects have been made the subject of individual studies.¹ Any attempt at a coherent vision of the period would therefore appear premature. And yet it seems that certain conclusions of a general nature may safely be drawn.

From the end of the seventeenth century onwards architects looked back to a dual tradition. There was close at hand and still fresh before everybody's eyes the great work of the Roman seventeenth-century masters, which decisively altered the course of architecture and formed a large reservoir of new ideas and concepts. There was, moreover, the older tradition, that of the Cinquecento, and behind it that of classical antiquity itself. It is at once evident that from the end of the seventeenth century onwards the repertory from which an architect was able to choose had almost no limits, and it is a sign of the new period that architects were fully aware of this and regarded it as an asset. Juvarrá is a case in point. His studies ranged over the whole field of ancient and Italian architecture without any aesthetic blinkers – from measured drawings of the Pantheon to Brunelleschi, Sanmicheli, the Palazzo Farnese, Bernini, and Borromini, among many others. This attitude is nowadays usually condemned as wicked, academic and eclectic, and, to be sure, it cannot be dissociated from the intellectualism of the academies and their steadily growing influence. Hesitatingly, however, I have to pronounce once more the all-too-obvious commonplace that every artist and architect in so far as he works with a traditional grammar and with traditional formulas is an 'eclectic' by the very nature of his activity. It is the mixture and the interpretation of this common 'language' (and, naturally, also the reaction against it) on which not only the personal style and its quality but also the evolution of new concepts depend. The longer a homogeneous artistic culture lasts – and to all intents and purposes the Italian Renaissance in its broadest sense spanned an epoch of more than 350 years – the larger is, of course, the serviceable repertory. How did the architects from the late seventeenth century onwards handle it?

No patent answer can be given, and this characterizes the situation. On the one hand, there are those, typical of a waning epoch, who reach positions of eminence by skilfully

manipulating the repertory without adding to it a great many original ideas, and among their number Carlo Fontana, Ferdinando Fuga, and Luigi Vanvitelli must be counted. Then there are those who fully master the repertory, choose here and there according to circumstances, and yet mould it in a new and exciting way. The greatest among these revolutionary traditionalists is certainly Filippo Juvarra. Finally there is the band of masters, possibly smaller in numbers, who contract the repertory, follow one distinct line, and arrive at unexpected and surprising solutions. They are still the least known and often not the most active architects of the period; thus the names of Filippo Raguzzini, Gabriele Valvassori, Ferdinando Sanfelice, and Bernardo Vittone, to mention some of the most important, convey very little even to the student of Italian architecture.

Admittedly our division is far too rigid, for architects may at different periods of their careers or in individual works tend towards one side or the other. But on the whole one may safely postulate that the first two groups drew on the store of classical forms and ideas rather than on the Borrominesque current, without, however, excluding a temperate admixture from the latter. The last group, by contrast, found its inspiration directly or indirectly mainly in Borromini. When discussing Bernini's and Cortona's architecture, I tried to assess the specific quality of their 'classicism'. Architects could follow their lead without accepting the dynamic vigour of their work. Dotti's draining of Cortona's style in the Madonna di S. Luca near Bologna is as characteristic as Vanvitelli's formalization of Bernini's S. Andrea al Quirinale in the Chiesa dei PP. delle Missioni at Naples (c. 1760). The classicism that emerged often replaced the wholeness of vision of the great masters by a method of adding motif to motif, each clearly separable from the other (p. 244); to this extent it is permissible to talk of 'academic classicism', but we shall see that the term should be used with caution.

A rather severe classicism was the leading style in Italy between about 1580 and 1625. After that date a tame classicizing architecture (e.g. S. Anastasia and Villa Doria-Pamphili in Rome; cathedral at Spoleto) was practised by some minor masters parallel to the work of the giants of the High Baroque. Towards the end of the century a new form of classicism once again became the prevalent style. In the process of revaluation Carlo Fontana must be assigned a leading part. Venice with Tirali and Massari soon followed, and various facets of a classicizing architecture remained the accepted current until they merged into the broad stream of Neo-classicism. But by comparison with the architecture of Neo-classicism the classical architecture of pre-Neo-classicism appears varied and rich and full of unorthodox incidents. We may therefore talk with some justification of 'Late Baroque Classicism', and it would be a contradiction in terms to circumscribe this style by the generic epithet 'academic'. The process of transition from 'Late Baroque Classicism' to Neo-classicism can often be intimately followed, and before the monuments themselves there is not a shadow of doubt when to apply the terminological division.

What differentiates Late Baroque Classicism from all previous classical trends is, first, its immense versatility,² and to this I have already alluded. In Rome, Turin, and Naples it may be flexible enough to admit a good deal of Borrominesque and pseudo-Borrominesque decoration; even Late Mannerist elements, such as undifferentiated

framing wall strips, often belong to the repertory. One of the strangest cases is the façade of S. Maria della Morte in Rome, where Fuga weds Ammanati's Mannerist façade of S. Giovanni Evangelista (Florence) with the aedicule façade stemming from Carlo Rainaldi. Venice, by contrast, steers clear of any such adventures and returns straight to Scamozzi, Palladio, and beyond, to classical antiquity. The second feature characteristic of the style is its deliberate scenic quality, which is not only aimed at by men born many years apart, like Fontana, Juvarra, and Vanvitelli, but also by the masters of the non-classical trend, as a glance at Raguzzini's Piazza S. Ignazio proves. Finally, both classicists and non-classicists favour a similar kind of colour scheme: broken colours light in tone, blues, yellows, pinks, and much white – in a word typically eighteenth-century colours, and in Carlo Fontana's work the turning away from the warm, full, and succulent colours of the High Baroque may be observed. Thus, on a broad front the classical and non-classical currents have essential qualities in common.

In the over-all picture of eighteenth-century architecture Late Baroque Classicism appears to have the lead. But one should not underestimate the importance of the other trend, which may safely be styled 'Italian Rococo' – not only because of the free and imaginative decoration and the relinquishing of the orders as a rigid system of accentuation, but mainly because of the rich play with elegant curvilinear shapes and spatial complexities. Most of the architects who brought about the anti-classical vogue were born between 1680 and 1700, the majority in the nineties, just like the sculptors and painters with similar tendencies. From about 1725 on and for the next twenty-five years these masters had an ample share in the production of important buildings. Next to Rome, the chief centres are Naples, Sicily, and Piedmont; but other cities can also boast a number of unorthodox Rococo designs, of which we may here remember Gianantonio Veneroni's majestic Palazzo Mezzabarba at Pavia (1728–30), so similar to Valvassori's Palazzo Doria-Pamphili,³ the extravagant Palazzo Stanga at Cremona (Plate 147A),⁴ and the façade of S. Bartolomeo at Modena (1727) which recalls works of the southern German Baroque.⁵

By and large it may be said that the official style of the Church and the courts was Late Baroque Classicism and that the Italian version of the Rococo found tenacious admirers among the aristocracy and the rich bourgeoisie. In Rome, in particular, numerous palaces of unknown authorship were built⁶ which form a distinct and coherent group by virtue of their elegant window-frames and by the fact that the windows in different tiers are interconnected; so that for the first time in its history the Roman palace shows a primarily vertical accentuation accomplished not by the solid element of the orders but by the lights.

There cannot be any doubt that the rocaille decoration which one finds in Northern Italy rather than Rome derives from France, whence the Rococo conquered Europe. Yet it would be wrong to believe that France had an important formative influence on the style as a whole. The Italian Rococo has many facets and cannot be summed up by an easy formula; but far from being foreign transplantations, all the major works of the style, such as the Spanish Stairs in Rome or Vittonè's churches in Piedmont, are firmly grounded in the Italian tradition and have little in common with French buildings of

the period. It is not so strange, however, that it was the other, the classical current that often took its cue from France; for French classicism, filtered through a process of stringent rationalization, gave the world the models of stately imperial architecture. And from Juvarra's Palazzo Madama in Turin to Vanvitelli's palace at Caserta the French note makes itself strongly felt.

It was also in France that two theoretical concepts, Italian in origin, were taken up and developed which, when handed back to Italy, became instrumental in undermining the relative freedom of both the Late Baroque Classicism and the Italian Rococo. One of these, proportion in architecture, which had always fascinated the Italians, was turned into an academic subject during the seventeenth century by Frenchmen like M. Durand and F. Blondel.⁷ When in the course of the eighteenth century it was taken up again by the Italians Derizet (a Frenchman by birth), Ricciolini, Galiani, F. M. Preti, G. F. Cristiani, Bertotti-Scamozzi, and others, it had the stereotyped rigidity given to it by the French. Canonical proportions can, of course, be applied only where divisions are emphatic, unambiguous, and easily readable – in a word, in a rational, i.e. classical architectural system. The age of reason was dawning, and to it also belongs the second concept in question. The Frenchman de Cordonnet (1651–1722) had first preached in his *Nouveau Traité* of 1706 that truth and simplicity must dictate an architect's approach to his subject and that the purpose of a building must be expressed in all clarity by its architecture – intellectual requirements behind which one can sense the rational concept of a 'functional' architecture.⁸ Antique in origin, the principle of the correspondence between the purpose of a building and the character of its architecture had always been a cornerstone of Italian architectural theory; nothing else is adumbrated by the demand of 'decorum'. But now, interpreted as simplicity and naturalness, the concept had implicitly a strong anti-Baroque and anti-Rococo bias. The new ideas found an energetic advocate in the Venetian Padre Carlo Lodoli (1690–1761);⁹ he in turn prepared the ground not only for the influential works of the French Abbé Laugier but also for the neo-classical philosophy of Francesco Milizia, who, by describing Borromini's followers as 'a delirious sect', determined the pattern of thought for more than a hundred years.

Venetian architects returned to pure classical principles at a remarkably early date, probably owing to an intellectual climate that led to the rise of Lodoli, the prophet of rationalism.¹⁰ This helps to explain what would otherwise look like a strange paradox. Venice, where in the eighteenth century gaiety had a permanent home, the city of festivals and carnivals as well as of polite society, the only Italian centre where the feminine element dominated – Venice seemed predestined for a broad Rococo culture, and her painters fulfil our expectations. But in contrast to most other Italian cities, Venice had no Rococo architecture. In the privacy of the palace, however, the Venetians admitted Rococo decoration. It is there that one finds rocaille ornament of a daintiness and delicacy probably without parallel in Italy.¹¹

It is in keeping with the political constellation that, next to Rome, the two Italian kingdoms, Naples in the South and Sardinia in the North, absorbed most of the great architects of the period and offered them tasks worthy of their skill. While we can, therefore, discuss summarily the rest of Italy, these three centres require a closer

inspection. By far the most interesting architectural events, however, took place in the Piedmontese realm of the Kings of Sardinia, and it is for this reason that a special chapter will be devoted to architecture in Piedmont.

ROME

Carlo Fontana (1638-1714)

Carlo Fontana, born in 1638¹² near Como, in Rome before 1655, was the man on whose shoulders fell the mantle of the great High Baroque architects. He began his career in the later 1650s as an architectural draughtsman and clerk of works to Cortona, Rainaldi, and Bernini. We have often come across his name in these pages. His suave and genial manners and his easy talent made him an ideal collaborator, and one soon finds him playing the role of mediator between the masters whom he served. Bernini employed him for about ten years on many of his major undertakings, and it was he who had the strongest formative influence on Fontana's style. Before 1665 he came into his own with the interesting little church of S. Biagio in Campitelli (originally at the foot of the Capitol but now reassembled on Piazza Capizucchi). His manner is fully formed in the façade of S. Marcello al Corso (1682-3; Plate 144A), probably his most successful work, which impressed the younger generation of architects very much. This façade must be regarded as a milestone on the way to Late Baroque Classicism; it is, in fact, separated by a deep gulf from the great High Baroque façades, despite the use of such devices as the concave curvature and the illusionist niche of the upper tier. Here everything is unequivocal, proper, easily readable. Like Maderno at the beginning of the century, Fontana works again with wall projections dividing the whole front into single bays framed by orders. But by contrast to Maderno, every member of the order has its precise complement (thus a full pilaster appears at the inside of each outer bay below, behind the column, corresponding to the pilaster at the corner), and this is one of the reasons why the façade is essentially static in spite of the accumulation of columns in the centre. By contrast to Maderno, too, the wall projection corresponds exactly to the diameter of the columns, so that the encased column forms an isolated motif, clearly separated from the double columns of the central bay. The aedicule framing this bay is, as it were, easily detachable, and behind the pairs of free-standing columns are double pilasters which have their precise counterpart in the upper tier. Thus the orders in both tiers repeat, which is, however, obscured by the screening aedicule. It is precisely the 'detachability' of the aedicule motif that gives its superstructure - the broken pediment with the empty frame¹³ between the segments - its scenic quality. The principle here employed corresponds to that of theatrical wings which are equally unconnected, a principle, as we have noted before (p. 194), that is foreign to Roman High Baroque structures but inherent in Late Baroque Classicism. Essentially different both from the Early and the High Baroque, the conception of the façade of S. Marcello provides a key to Fontana's architecture as well as to many other Late Baroque classicist buildings.

A study of Fontana's largest ecclesiastical ensemble, the Jesuit church and college at Loyola in Spain, reveals the limitations of his talent. The layout as a whole in the wide hilly landscape is impressive enough; but the church, designed over a circular plan with ambulatory (p. 195), lacks the finesse of Longhena's Salute, among others, because the shape of the pillars is determined by the radii of the circle, which makes trapezoid units in the ambulatory unavoidable.¹⁴ In many respects the design echoes current Roman conceptions; the high drum derives from that of S. Maria de' Miracoli on the Piazza del Popolo,¹⁵ while the façade is a classicizing adaptation of Rainaldi's unexecuted plan of 1662 for S. Maria in Campitelli. Other features,¹⁶ besides the idea of the ambulatory, point to a study of S. Maria della Salute. Even if Fontana cannot be made responsible for the details, this gathering together of diverse ideas into a design of dubious merit is characteristic for the leading master of the new era.

Apart from some undistinguished palaces, he built many chapels in Roman churches, of which the Cappella Ginetti in S. Andrea della Valle (1671), the Cappella Cibò in S. Maria del Popolo (1683-7), the Baptismal Chapel in St Peter's (1692-8), and the Cappella Albani in S. Sebastiano (1705) may be mentioned. In these smaller works, which hark back to the rich polychrome tradition of the Roman High Baroque,¹⁷ he gave his best. An endless number of designs for tombs (among them those of Clement XI and Innocent XII),¹⁸ altars, fountains, festival decorations, and even statues came from his studio, and it is probably not too much to say that at the turn of the century there was hardly any major undertaking in Rome without his name attached to it. His eminence was publicly acknowledged by his election as *Principe* of the Academy of St Luke in 1686 and, again, for the eight years 1692-1700 - a mark of esteem without precedent. As a town-planner he indulged in somewhat fantastic schemes on paper, such as the building of a large semicircular piazza in front of the Palazzo Ludovisi (later Montecitorio, which he finished with classicizing alterations of Bernini's design) or the destruction of the Vatican Borghi, finally carried out in Mussolini's Rome. A second, less ambitious project for the completion of the Piazza of St Peter's (Figure 23) elaborates Bernini's idea of erecting a clock-tower outside the main oval, set back into the Piazza Rusticucci. But in contrast to Bernini's decision to make this building part and parcel of the Piazza (p. 126f.), Fontana intended to remove it so far from the oval that the beholder, on entering the 'forecourt', would have seen the main area as a separate entity. The near and far ends of the arms of the colonnades, moreover, would have appeared in his field of vision like isolated wings on a stage - a model example of how, by seemingly slight changes, a dynamic High Baroque structure could be transformed into a scenographic Late Baroque work.¹⁹ Theatrical in a different sense would have been Fontana's planned transformation of the Colosseum into a forum for a centralized church. A telling symbol of the supersession of the crumbled pagan world by Christianity, the ancient ruins would have formed sombre wings to the centre of the stage on which the house of God was to stand.

As an engineer, Fontana was concerned with the regulation and maintenance of water-ways and pipe-lines and, above all, with an investigation into the security of the dome of St Peter's. He supported many of his schemes and enterprises with erudite and

lavishly produced publications, of which the *Templum Vaticanum* of 1694 must be given pride of place. Numberless drawings and many hundred pages of manuscript survive as a monument to his indefatigable industry.²⁰ It was this man, methodical and ambitious and without the genius of the great masters of the earlier generation, who brought about in Rome the turn to a classicizing, bookish, and academic manner in architecture. Nevertheless his influence was enormous, and such different masters as Juvarrá in Italy, Pöppelmann and Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt in Germany and Austria, and James Gibbs in England looked up to him with veneration.

Even at the time when Carlo Fontana was the undisputed arbiter of taste in Rome, the spirit of adventure was not quite extinguished. Proof of it are Antonio Gherardi's (1644-1702) Avila and Cecilia Chapels, the former in S. Maria in Trastevere built before 1686, the latter in S. Carlo ai Catinari dating from a few years later (1691). Both chapels are daring essays in a strange type of picturesque architecture, translations of *quadratura* painting into three dimensions (Gherardi himself was also a painter), based on a close study of Bernini's use of light and on his experiments in unifying architecture and realistic sculpture. In the S. Cecilia Chapel,²¹ moreover, Gherardi fell back upon the Guarinesque idea of the truncated dome through which one looks into another differently shaped and brilliantly lit space. It is the variety and quantity of motifs, freely distributed over the broken wall surfaces, that stamp the chapel as a work of the Late Baroque.

The Eighteenth Century

Carlo Fontana had a large number of pupils and collaborators, most of whom can safely be left unrecorded. Mention may be made of his son Francesco (1668-1708), whose death preceded that of the father. He is the architect of the large but uninspired church of SS. Apostoli (1702-24). Carlo's nephew, Girolamo, designed the academic two-tower façade of the cathedral at Frascati (1697-1700, towers later); in spite of its traditional scheme it is typical for this phase of the Late Baroque by virtue of its slow rhythm and an accumulation of trifling motifs. Among Carlo's other pupils, three names stand out, that of the worthy Giovan Battista Contini (1641-1723),²² who erected a number of tasteful chapels in Rome but had to find work mainly outside, e.g. at Montecassino and Ravenna and even in Spain (Cathedral, Saragossa); further, those of Carlo Francesco Bizzaccheri (1656-1721) and Alessandro Specchi (1668-1729). The former, the architect of the façade of S. Isidoro (c. 1700-4), would be worth a more thorough study;²³ the latter is a better-defined personality, known to a wider public through his work as an engraver.²⁴ The Palazzo de Carolis (1716-22),²⁵ his largest building, somewhat anachronistic in 1720, has been mentioned (p. 189). His name is connected with two more interesting enterprises: the port of the Ripetta (1704), formerly opposite S. Girolamo degli Schiavoni, and the design of the Spanish Stairs. The port no longer exists and Francesco de Sanctis superseded him as architect of the Staircase.²⁶ But in these designs Specchi broke with the classicizing repertory of his teacher and found new scenographic values based on an interplay of gently curved lines. Thus the pendulum began to swing back in a direction which one may associate with the name of Borromini.

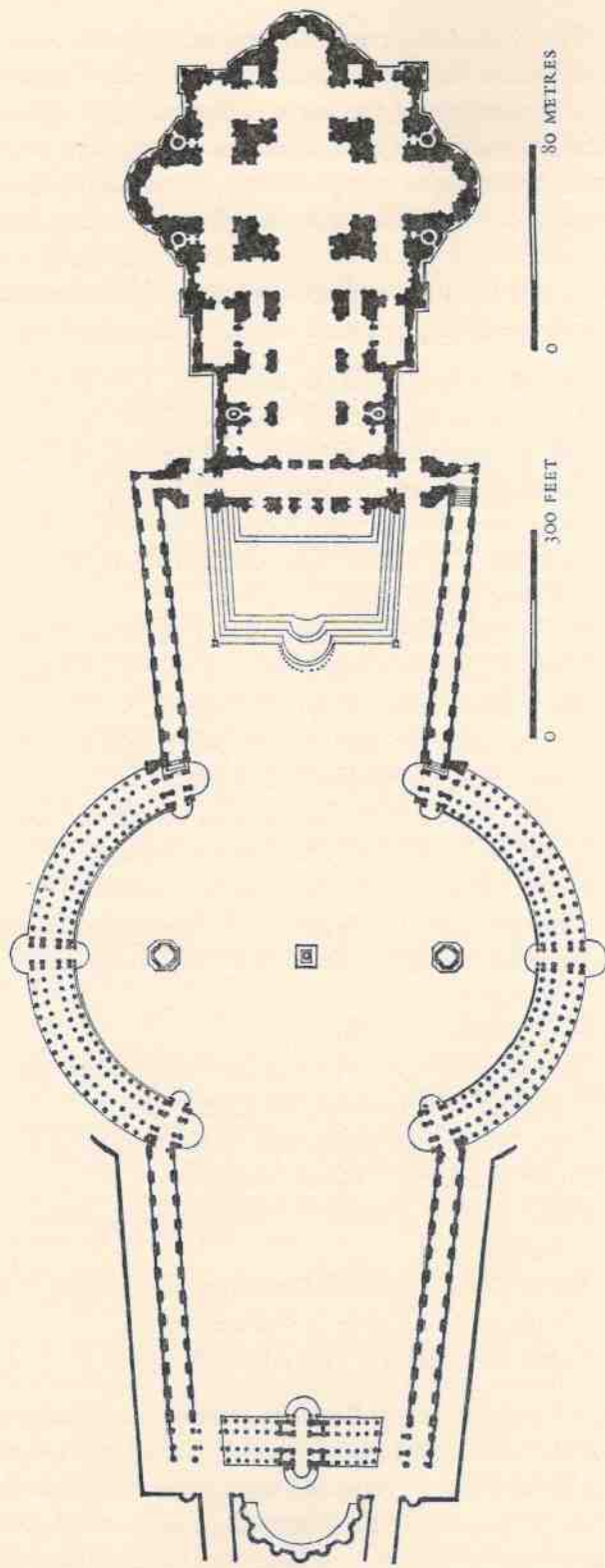


Figure 23. Carlo Fontana: project for the completion of the Piazza of St Peter's, Rome, 1694

At the beginning of the eighteenth century there was a dearth of monumental architectural tasks in Rome. While during the seventeenth century Rome had attracted the greatest names, it is characteristic of the early eighteenth that the real genius of the period, Filippo Juvarra, left the city in 1714, to return only on rare occasions. The whole first quarter of the new century was comparatively uneventful, and it looked as if the stagnation of the Fontana era would last for ever. But once more Rome recovered to such an extent that she seemed to reconquer her leading position. For twenty years, between about 1725 and 1745, talents as well as works of sublime beauty crowded there. A chronological list of the more important structures of the period may prove it:

1723	Francesco de Sanctis: façade of SS. Trinità de' Pellegrini ²⁷
1723-6	De Sanctis: the Spanish Staircase (Plate 145 and Figure 25)
1725-6	Filippo Raguzzini: Hospital and Church of S. Gallicano
1727-8	Raguzzini: Piazza S. Ignazio (Figure 24)
1728-52	Girolamo Teodoli: SS. Pietro e Marcellino ²⁸
1730-5	Gabriele Valvassori: Palazzo Doria-Pamphili, wing towards the Corso (Plate 144B)
1732-7	Ferdinando Fuga: Palazzo della Consulta (Plate 146A) ²⁹
1732-7	Fuga: Chiesa dell'Orazione e Morte, Via Giulia ³⁰
1732-5	Alessandro Galilei: Cappella Corsini, S. Giovanni in Laterano
1732-62	Nicola Salvi: Fontana Trevi. After Salvi's death in 1751 finished by Giuseppe Pannini (Plate 170)
1733-6	Galilei: façade of S. Giovanni in Laterano (Plate 149)
1733-5	Carlo de Dominicis: SS. Celso e Giuliano ³¹
1734	Galilei: façade of S. Giovanni de' Fiorentini ³²
1735	Giuseppe Sardi(?): façade of S. Maria Maddalena ³³
1736-41	Antonio Derizet: church of SS. Nome di Maria in Trajan's Forum ³⁴
1736-after 1751	Fuga: Palazzo Corsini
1741	Manoel Rodrigues dos Santos ³⁵ (and Giuseppe Sardi): SS. Trinità de' Spagnuoli in Via Condotti
1741	Fuga: monumental entrance to the atrium of S. Cecilia
1741-3	Fuga: façade of S. Maria Maggiore
1741-4	Paolo Ameli: Palazzo Doria-Pamphili, façade towards Via del Plebiscito ³⁶
1741-4	Pietro Passalacqua and Domenico Gregorini: ³⁷ façade and renovation of S. Croce in Gerusalemme
1743-63	Carlo Marchionni: Villa Albani ³⁸

The new flowering of architecture in Rome is mainly connected with the names of Raguzzini (c. 1680-1771),³⁹ Valvassori (1683-1761),⁴⁰ Galilei (1691-1737),⁴¹ De Sanctis (1693-1731, not 1740), Salvi (1697-1751), and Fuga (1699-1782).⁴² Each of the first five created one great masterpiece, namely the Piazza S. Ignazio, the façade of the Palazzo Doria-Pamphili, the façade of S. Giovanni in Laterano, the Spanish Stairs, and the Fon-

tana Trevi, and only the sixth, Fuga, the most profuse talent of the group, secured a number of first-rate commissions for himself.

Our list opens with two major works of the Roman Rococo, the Spanish Stairs and the Piazza S. Ignazio – the one grand, imposing, fabulous in scale, aristocratic in character, comparable to the breathtaking fireworks of the Baroque age; the other intimate, small in size, and with its simple middle-class dwelling-houses typical of the rising bourgeois civilization. Also, in the urban setting these works belong to diametrically opposed traditions. The Spanish Staircase⁴³ is in the line of succession from Sixtus V's great town-planning schemes focused on long straight avenues and characteristic viewpoints. For seventeenth-century Roman architects the town-planner's ruler had far less attraction. But influenced by Carlo Fontana, the early eighteenth century was again smitten with the concept of long perspectives, to which the French of the seventeenth century had so enthusiastically responded. A comprehensive vision unites now the whole area from the Tiber to the Trinità de' Monti, and although Specchi's port (unfortunately no longer existing) and De Sanctis's staircase are not on the same axis, they look on old town-plans (e.g. that by G. B. Nolli of 1748) like the overture and the finale of a vast scheme: exactly equidistant from the little piazza, a 'nodal point' widening out on the main artery, the Corso, they lie at the far ends of straight, narrow streets which cut the Corso at similar angles.

While the Spanish Staircase is composed for the far as well as the near view – the more one approaches it the richer and the more captivating are the scenic effects – the enclosed Piazza S. Ignazio only offers the near view, and on entering it an act of instantaneous perception rather than of progressive revelation determines the beholder's mood. The Roman masters of the seventeenth century preferred the enclosed court-like piazza to a wide perspective and exploited fully the psychological moment of dazzling fascination which is always experienced at the unexpected physical closeness of monumental architecture. Raguzzini's piazza is in this tradition. But he performed an interesting volte-face, for, in contrast to the square of S. Maria della Pace, it is now the dwelling houses, arranged like wings on a stage – and not the (older) church façade – that form the scenic focus.

What unites the conceptions of the Spanish Staircase and the Piazza S. Ignazio is the elegance of the curvilinear design,⁴⁴ and the same spirit may also be found in the playful movement of the window pediments, the balconies and balusters of Valvassori's façade of the Palazzo Doria-Pamphili. Works like the façade of S. Maria Maddalena or the Fontana Trevi are in a somewhat different category. In spite of its flourishing rocaille decoration, the former is structurally rather conventional; it contains, however, distinctly Borrominesque motifs, above all, the dominating central niche, so close to that

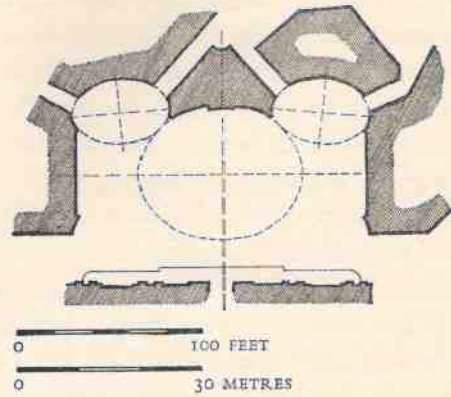


Figure 24. Filippo Raguzzini: Rome, Piazza S. Ignazio, 1727-8. Plan

of the Villa Falconieri at Frascati. The Fontana Trevi is not without marginal Rococo features such as the large rocaille shell of Neptune, but Salvi's architecture is remarkably classical.⁴⁵ Taking up an idea of Pietro da Cortona, who had first thought of combining palace front and fountain (p. 162), Salvi had the courage and vision to wed the classical triumphal arch with its allegorical and mythological figures to the palace front. It was he, too, who filled the larger part of the square with natural rock formations bathed by the gushing waters of the fountain. The Rococo features in the Fontana Trevi are entirely subordinated to a strong Late Baroque classical design that is as far from Fontana's formalization of Bernini's manner as it is from the puristic approach of Neo-classicism.

The years 1731-3 are the most varied and exciting in the history of Rome's eighteenth-century architecture. To them belongs the peak of the regeneration after the Fontana period. Next to Valvassori's Palazzo Doria-Pamphili and Salvi's Fontana Trevi, Fuga's Palazzo della Consulta was rising in these years. Based on the simple rhythm of light frames and darker panels, this palace contains a superabundance of individual motifs, which to a certain extent are elegant re-interpretations of Michelangelo's Mannerism. Fuga's easy virtuosity resulted at this early phase of his career in an extremely refined style with a note of Tuscan sophistication, so different from Valvassori's deft brilliance and Salvi's sense for Roman grandeur. To the same moment belongs Galilei's reticent Cappella Corsini, a balanced Greek-cross design articulated by a uniform Corinthian order crowned by a simple hemispherical dome with classical coffers. Severely classical when compared to the other works of these years, the chapel is still far from real Neo-classicism, mainly on account of the sculptural decoration (p. 291) and the subtle colour symphony of its marbles with pale violets and mottled greens prevailing. The year 1732 also saw the most notable architectural event of the period, namely Galilei's victory in the competition for the façade of S. Giovanni in Laterano arranged by Pope Clement XII.

Never before in the history of architecture had there been such a mammoth competition.⁴⁶ Twenty-three architects, a number of them non-Romans, took part. The jury under the chairmanship of Sebastiano Conca, president of the Academy, was entirely composed of academicians, and the intrigues were fabulous. Nevertheless, it was an historic event that Galilei's model was chosen. It meant the official *placet* to a severely classical design at a time when the prevalent taste was non-classical. But a good deal that is less than half-truth has been said about Galilei's work. Critics usually believe that it reveals the impact of English Palladianism. It is true that Galilei had spent five years in England (1714-19) before he returned to his native Florence. Although at the time of his departure from London hardly any Neo-Palladian building had gone up,⁴⁷ the façade of S. Giovanni shows a family likeness to certain projects by the aged Sir Christopher Wren. In actual fact, however, the façade is firmly rooted in the Roman tradition, combining, among others, features from Maderno's façade of St Peter's (Plates 148 and 149) and Michelangelo's Capitoline palaces; features, incidentally, which belonged to the repertory of all Italian architects of the period and were usually incorporated into the highest class of monumental design. Thus some of Galilei's competitors worked with the same vocabulary. What distinguishes his façade from its great model, the façade of

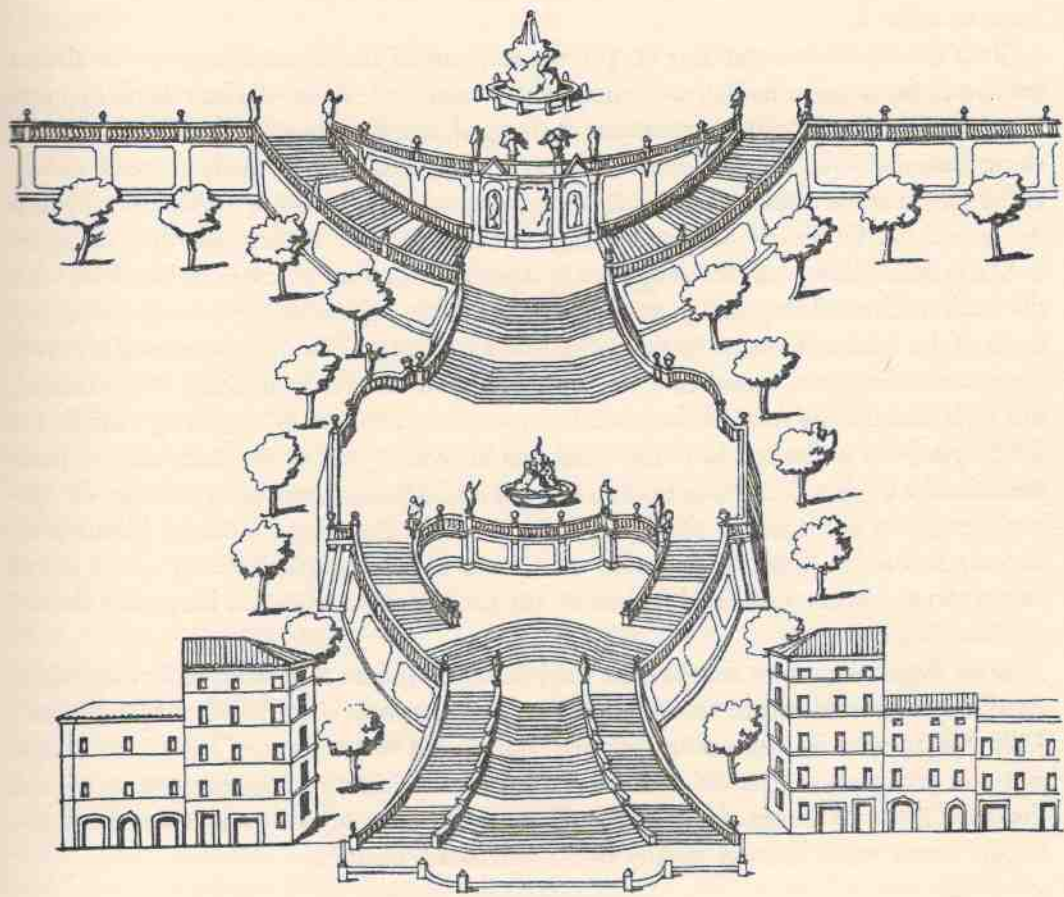


Figure 25. Francesco de Sanctis: Rome, the Spanish Staircase, project, 1723, redrawn from the original in the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris

St Peter's, is not only its essentially static structure, achieved by a process similar to that described in the case of Fontana's S. Marcello, but also the new relationship between open and closed parts. Here the whole front is practically opened up so that the *chiaroscuro* becomes most important; it helps define the orders and entablatures sharply. The effect of classical discipline and precision is partly due to this pictorial device which is an element of Late Baroque Classicism rather than of Neo-classicism. In his façade of S. Maria Maggiore, Fuga used exactly the same compositional characteristics. Add to all this Galilei's magnificent sense of scale, so similar to Maderno's in the façade of St Peter's and much superior to any of his competitors, further the crowning of the façade with the traditional Baroque figures and the freak design of the central pedestal with the blessing figure of Christ – and it must be admitted that we have before us a severe work of Late Baroque Classicism that is intrinsically less revolutionary than art historians want to make it.

Once the façade was standing (1736), the impetus of the Roman Rococo was almost broken as far as monumental structures were concerned. After Galilei's death in 1737, Fuga's predominant position was never challenged, and that alone spelled a development along Late Baroque classicist lines. Moreover, the vigour of his early manner slowly faded into a somewhat monotonous form of classicism. I do not mean his felicitous design of the façade of S. Maria Maggiore; but for this aspect one may compare S. Maria della Morte with his design for S. Apollinare or the Palazzo della Consulta with the Palazzo Cenci Bolognetti (c. 1745; see p. 355, Note 87) and with the long, rather dry front of the Palazzo Corsini. In the coffee house in the Gardens of the Quirinal (1741–3) his puristic classicism was already firmly established, but far from being Neo-classical, this style was mainly modelled on late Cinquecento examples. In 1751 Fuga left Rome for Naples – an indication how the wind was blowing – and it was there that he practised during the last decades of his life. In 1752 he began the enormous Albergo de' Poveri (length of the façade c. 1000 feet) and in 1779 the even larger Granary (destroyed). Shortly before his death he designed the Chiesa dei Gerolamini (1780), which shows that up to a point he remained faithful to the Late Baroque tradition long after the rise of Neo-classicism.

With Fuga's departure from Rome the brief and brilliant flowering of Roman eighteenth-century architecture was to all intents and purposes over. Neither Marchionni's Villa Albani with its impressive Late Baroque layout⁴⁸ nor Piranesi's few picturesque essays in architecture⁴⁹ could retrieve the situation. Contrary to what is usually said, the Late Baroque lingered on in Rome until the days of the great Valadier (1762–1839), whose work belongs mainly to the nineteenth century.

NORTHERN ITALY AND FLORENCE

Longhena's activity in Venice was not in vain.⁵⁰ Although he had no successor of the highest rank, architects vacillated for a time between the ebullient plasticity and *chiaroscuro* of his manner and the linear classicism of Scamozzi. This is apparent in the work of

Giuseppe Sardi (c. 1621–99), Alessandro Tremignon, and the younger Domenico Rossi (1657–1737). They may turn Longhena's High Baroque sense for structure into typically Late Baroque diffused and flickering pictorial effects, for which only Tremignon's notorious façade of S. Moisè need be mentioned.⁵¹ Rossi, in particular, who built the richly decorated Baroque Chiesa dei Gesuiti (1715–29),⁵² prepares in the Palazzo Corner della Regina (begun 1724) the return to a classical architecture. The real master of transition from one manner to the other is Andrea Tirali (1657–1737). Although he designed in 1690 the Late Baroque chapel of S. Domenico in SS. Giovanni e Paolo and the profuse Valier monument in the same church (1705–8),⁵³ he turned his back on the Baroque tradition in the façades of S. Nicolò da Tolentino (Plate 150A) and S. Vidal (Vitale). Both façades are Palladian revivals: the first (1706–14) resuscitates a Vitruvian portico in the wake of Palladio's project of 1579 for S. Nicolò,⁵⁴ the second (datable 1734)⁵⁵ follows closely S. Giorgio Maggiore.

More important than Tirali and probably the greatest Venetian architect of the first half of the eighteenth century is Giorgio Massari (1687–1766).⁵⁶ His masterpiece, the Chiesa dei Gesuati (1726–43; Plate 150B), has a powerful temple façade derived from the central portion of Palladio's S. Giorgio Maggiore, while the interior is indebted to Palladio's Redentore, a debt hardly obscured by the typically eighteenth-century features. Massari's finest domestic work is the majestic Palazzo Grassi-Stucky (1749 ff.); its staircase hall with the frescoes formerly ascribed to Alessandro Longhi^{56a} is the grandest in Venice. But the façade, which remains faithful to the characteristics of the Venetian palazzo type, is almost as sober and flat as Scamozzi's (Plate 146B).⁵⁷

It will be noticed that, in contrast to the course of Venetian painting, Venetian architecture of the eighteenth century lived to a large extent on its tradition,⁵⁸ and this is also true for its last great practitioner, Giovanni Antonio Scalfarotto (c. 1690–1764), the architect of SS. Simeone e Giuda (also called S. Simeone Piccolo, 1718–38; Plate 151A, Figure 26). This church, which greets every visitor to Venice on his arrival, is clearly based on the Pantheon. But above the classical portico, to which one ascends over a staircase modelled on ancient temples, rises a stilted Byzantine–Venetian dome. The interior somewhat varies the Pantheon motifs. There is, however, one decisive change: the congregational room opens into a domed unit with semicircular apses, a formula derived via the Salute from Palladio. This blending of the Pantheon with Byzantium and Palladio is what one would expect to find in eighteenth-century Venice, and that it really happened is almost too good to be true.⁵⁹

The analysis just made has shown that Scalfarotto did not yet take the definite step across the Neo-classical barrier. Nor can his pupil Matteo Lucchesi (1705–76) be dissociated from a vigorous Late Baroque classicism. It was only with Tomaso Temanza (1705–89)⁶⁰ and his pupil G. Antonio Selva (1753–1819) that Venetian architecture became a branch of the general European movement. In S. Maria Maddalena (1748–63), Temanza, the friend of Milizia, produced a corrected version of his teacher's and uncle's design of SS. Simeone e Giuda: it spelled an uncompromising return to classical standards.

In Vicenza Antonio Pizzócaro (c. 1600–80), Carlo Borella, and others kept Scamozzi's

LATE BAROQUE AND ROCOCO

classicism alive throughout the seventeenth century.⁶¹ The eighteenth century witnessed a splendid Palladian revival to which such a great master as Francesco Muttoni (1668–1747) contributed with sensitive works (Biblioteca Bertoliana, 1703)⁶² and which ran

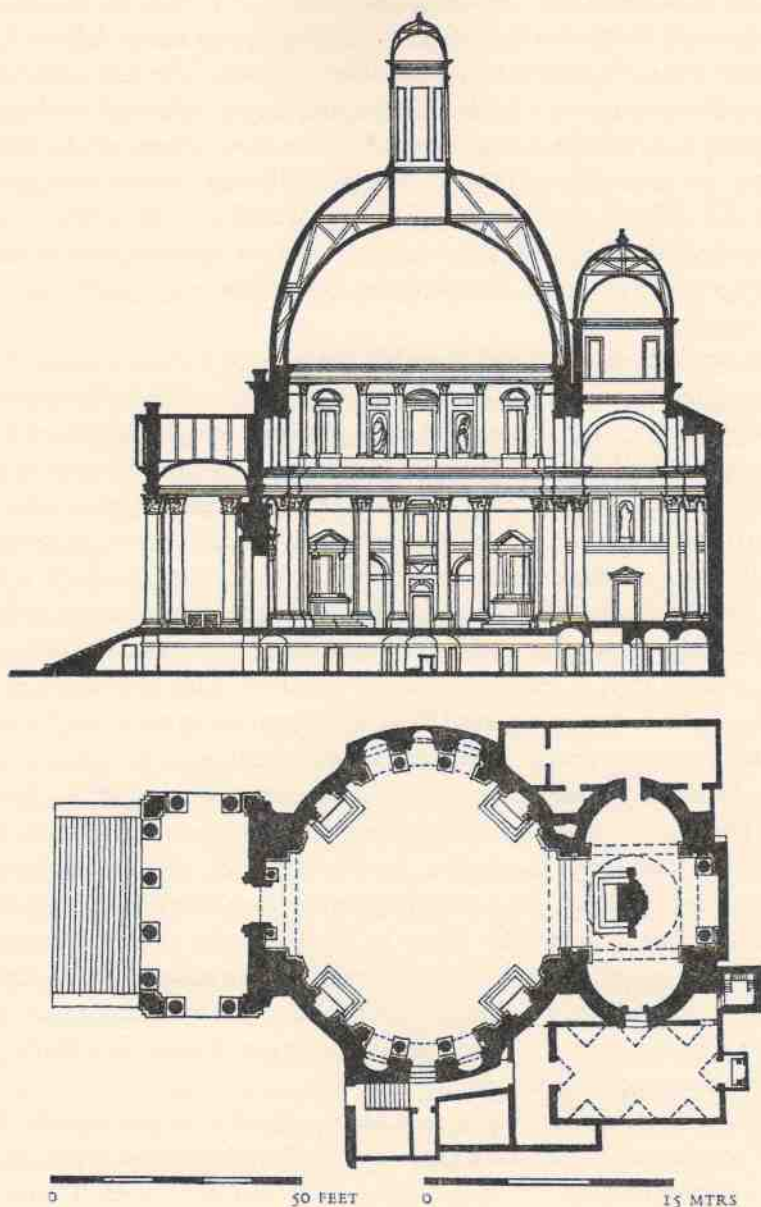


Figure 26. Giovanni Antonio Scalfarotto: Venice, SS. Simeone e Giuda, 1718–38. Section and plan

its course with the Palladio scholar and architect Ottavio Bertotti-Scamozzi (1719–90) and Count Ottone Calderari (1730–1803).⁶³

A word must be added about the villas of the *terra ferma*.⁶⁴ Most of the villas of the

Venetian hinterland, numbering at least a thousand, were built in the eighteenth century, and although their variety is immense, certain common features can be found. The splendid Palladian tradition of the aristocratic villa *all'antica* had, of course, an indelible influence, and even in the pearl of the Settecento villas, the imposing pile of the Villa Pisani at Stra (1735–56; Plate 147B), the Palladian substance is not obscured by Baroque grandeur. A second type, no less important than the first, derives from the Venetian palace as regards spatial organization as well as the typically Venetian grouping of the windows in the façade. The simple house which Tiepolo built for himself at Zianigo

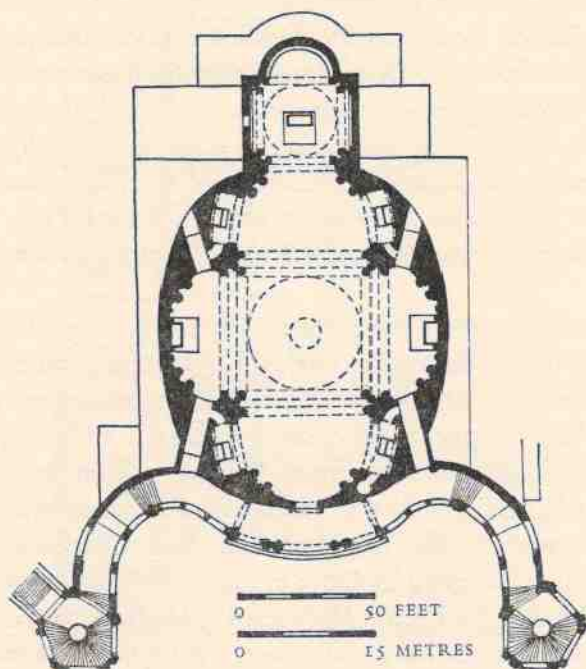


Figure 27. Carlo Francesco Dotti: Bologna, Madonna di S. Luca, 1723–57. Plan

may be mentioned as an example. This type of house also illustrates the middle-class aspect of eighteenth-century civilization, the primary reason for the enormous growth in the number of villas at the time. There are infinite transitions to the princely villas, which vie in magnificence though not in architectural style with Versailles, such as the Villa Manin at Passariano (1738) and the Villa Pisani, which has been mentioned.⁶⁵ The latter, built to a design by Francesco Maria Preti, possesses in its rich painterly decoration – traditional since Palladio's day – a veritable museum of the Venetian school, a pageantry which culminates in Tiepolo's *Glory of the Pisani Family* painted on the ceiling of the great hall.

Bologna had at least two Late Baroque architects of distinction, Carlo Francesco Dotti (1670–1759)⁶⁶ and Alfonso Torreggiani. Dotti's masterpiece is the Sanctuary of the Madonna di S. Luca, on a hill high above the city (1723–57; Figure 27). The Baroque

age was fond of such sanctuaries. As widely visible symbols, they dominate the landscape: they suggest nature's infinitude controlled by men in the service of God. The architect's task was made particularly difficult since he had not only to emulate the grand forms of nature herself by creating a stirring silhouette for the view from afar, but had also to attract those who would ascend the hill of the sanctuary. This dual problem was solved by Dotti in a masterly way. A homogeneous elliptical shape, encasing a Greek-cross design, is crowned by the dome – an effective combination of simple geometrical forms to be seen from a distance. For the near view he placed before the approach to the church a varied, richly articulated, and undulating building, reminiscent of the work of the eighteenth-century Bolognese *quadraturisti*. Less interesting is the interior, where Dotti followed Cortona's SS. Martina e Luca. But the changes are even more telling than the analogies. Dotti conventionalized Cortona's dynamic motifs, returned to traditional conceptions (e.g. in the form of the drum), emphasized the vertical tendencies, and, by reducing the transverse arms to deep elliptical chapels, gave the building a distinct axial direction. The attached sanctuary, into which one looks from the congregational room, owes not a little to Rainaldi's S. Maria in Campitelli. Thus adapted to new conditions, the Roman prototypes retain their formative influence.

Alfonso Torreggiani (d. 1764), the architect of the charming Oratory of St Philip Neri (1730, partly destroyed during the war), led Bolognese architecture close to a Rococo phase. This is also apparent in his façade of the Palazzo Montanari (formerly Aldrovandi, 1744–52), which represents the nearest approach at Bologna to Valvassori's style in Rome. Like G. B. Piacentini (staircase, Palazzo di Giustizia, 1695; Plate 152A)⁶⁷ and Francesco Maria Angelini (1680–1731; staircases, Palazzo Montanari and Casa Zucchini) before him, he was a master of grand scenic staircases. He executed that of the Palazzo Davia-Bargellini, designed by Dotti in 1720 – the impressive stuccoes are by G. Borelli – and later those of the Palazzi Malvezzi-De Medici (1725) and the Liceo Musicale (1752), where the ornament has a particularly light touch. The tradition of this type of monumental staircase was continued at Bologna right to the end of the century, mainly by Dotti's pupil Francesco Tadolini (1723–1805),⁶⁸ and in other cities near Bologna not a few splendid examples may also be found.⁶⁹ A climax is reached in the largest and most complex of all, that of the Palazzo Dati at Cremona (Plate 152B, Figure 28), attributed to the otherwise unknown architect Antonio Arrighi (1769). Bologna also possesses in Antonio Bibiena's elegant Teatro Comunale (1756–63) one of the finest Baroque theatres in Italy.⁷⁰

Lombardy was comparatively unproductive during this period.⁷¹ In Milan, after the building boom of the Borromeo and post-Borromeo era, church building declined. Next to Bartolomeo Bolli's (d. 1761) Palazzo Litta (p. 385) with Carlo Giuseppe Merli's impressive staircase,⁷² only Giovanni Ruggeri's (d. c. 1743) Palazzo Cusani need be mentioned. Both palaces are very large in size but not as similar as they are usually believed to be: Ruggeri, the Roman, is much more reticent than the Milanese Bolli.⁷³ Like the latter, Marco Bianchi favoured the Rococo in his almost identical façade designs of S. Francesco di Paola (1728) and S. Pietro Celestino (1735). With Vanvitelli's pupil

Giuseppe Piermarini (1734-1808), the builder of the Scala (1776-9), the period of true Neo-classicism opens at Milan.⁷⁴

Genoa, by contrast, harbours Late Baroque work in unexpected quantity and quality. But, surprisingly, it still remains almost a *terra incognita*. While late seventeenth-century palaces, such as the monumental Palazzo Rosso (1671-7) built by Matteo Lagomaggiore for the brothers Brignole Sale, are well known,⁷⁵ the eighteenth century has attracted little attention. Who knows the names of Antonio Ricca (c. 1688-c. 1748), the architect of S. Torpète (1730-1); of Andrea Orsolino, who built the majestic Ospedale di

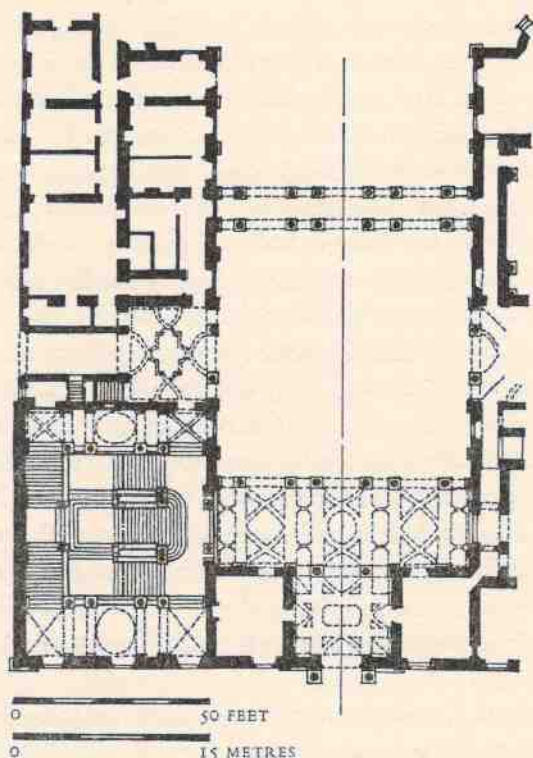


Figure 28. Cremona, Palazzo Dati. Plan; staircase by Antonio Arrighi, 1769

Pammatone (1758-80); of Gregorio Petondi, to whose genius we owe the present Via Cairolo and the rebuilding of the Palazzo Balbi with its scenographic staircase, in the same street (1780); of Andrea Tagliafichi (p. 81), who erected superb villas in the vicinity of Genoa? The city is rich in Late Baroque churches, among which the delightful Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri may be singled out, and typically eighteenth-century palace designs, usually anonymous, abound (e.g. the palace at Piazza Scuole Pie 10). But Genoa's main glory are the interior decorations. The relationship of the Genoese nobility to Paris was particularly close, and French Rococo designs are therefore common.⁷⁶ Side by side with this foreign import, however, developed an autonomous Genoese Rococo, dazzling, ebullient, and masculine. The most splendid example of this manner is the gallery in the Palazzo Carrega-Cataldi (now Camera di Commercio, Via

Garibaldi) designed by Lorenzo de Ferrari, surely one of the most sublime creations of the entire eighteenth century.⁷⁷

Equally autonomous is the development of the Genoese villa. The layout of the Villa Gavotti at Albissola, built in 1744 for Francesco Maria della Rovere, Genoa's last Doge, has few equals: terraces, grand undulating staircases, and water combine to wed the house to the landscape. Staircases and terraces extend from the house into the hilly landscape like enormous tentacles. Man's work ennoble the landscape without subduing it; this is as far from the French method of making the landscape subservient to the will of man as it is from the 'natural' English landscape garden which came into its own at precisely this moment.

Florence has some typically Late Baroque chapels built by Foggini and decorated by him and his school (p. 296). Among the late palaces that of Scipione Capponi and the Palazzo Corsini deserve special mention. The former, erected in 1705 by Ferdinando Ruggieri (d. 1741), possibly from a design by Carlo Fontana, is a reticent and noble building with a very long front. The large, airy staircase hall is placed, according to tradition, in one wing far away from the entrance. This disposition is as antiquated as the staircase itself with its four flights ascending along the walls (thereby forming a well). How different are the imaginative staircase designs in the cities of the Po valley! The extensive, sober mass of the Palazzo Corsini, designed by Pier Francesco Silvani (p. 391) for Marchese Filippo Corsini (d. 1706), may not appear very attractive, but the interior contains Antonio Maria Ferri's (d. 1716) masterpieces.⁷⁸ The monumental staircase (c. 1690), richly decorated with stuccoes by Giovanni Passardi in the manner of Raggi, is revolutionary for Florence; yet it is a clever adaptation of the new Bolognese type rather than the work of an independent talent. Equally unorthodox for Florence is the *gran salone* with its canopies formed of heavy coupled columns and, above them, the undulating entablature and gallery encompassing the entire hall. Once again Ferri's imagination was fired by foreign examples, this time by such Roman works as Borromini's nave of S. Giovanni in Laterano.

The major ecclesiastical Settecento structure in Florence is the impressive front of S. Firenze. Ruggieri executed the façade to the Chiesa Nuova (on the left-hand side) in 1715.⁷⁹ Zanobi Filippo del Rosso (1724-98), who had studied with Vanvitelli and Fuga, copied this front between 1772 and 1775 for the Oratory on the right-hand side and united the two façades by the palace-like elevation of the monastery. The design of this remarkable front is to a certain extent still tied to Mannerist precepts; thus the inverted segments of pediments, derived from Buontalenti, provide a conspicuous crowning feature. To the end the Florentines remained faithful to their anti-Baroque tradition.⁸⁰

NAPLES AND SICILY

For no less than two hundred years southern Italy was as a rule misgoverned by Spanish viceroys. At the Peace of Utrecht, in 1713, Philip V of Spain lost his south Italian dominion for good, but in 1734 his son was crowned King in Palermo as Charles III, and

for the next sixty-four years until the Napoleonic era the Bourbons remained in possession of their throne, only to return in 1816 for another uneasy forty-five years. Charles III governed his country by enlightened despotism until 1759, when he inherited the Spanish crown. It is mainly during the twenty-five years of his reign that Naples and Sicily saw an unprecedented flowering of the arts, and to this period belong some of the largest architectural schemes ever devised in Italy. Such vast enterprises as the palaces of Capodimonte⁸¹ and Caserta, the Albergo de' Poveri, the Granary, and the theatre of S. Carlo may be recalled.

After Fanzago's long and undisputed lead, architecture in Naples developed in two stages. A specifically Neapolitan group carried architectural design over into the style usually associated with the term 'barocchetto'. The principal practitioners of this group were pupils of the painter Francesco Solimena, who also has some architectural works to his credit. Among his followers, Giambattista Nauclerio (active 1705-37), Domenico Antonio Vaccaro (1681-1750), painter, sculptor, and architect, and Ferdinando Sanfelice (1675-1750) are the most important. The second, later phase has a more international, Late Baroque classicist character; Fuga and Vanvitelli are the architects who were responsible for most of the monumental buildings in this manner.

Excepting Sanfelice, little space can be given to the first group. Solimena's only major architectural work is the simple and dignified façade of S. Nicola alla Carità (1707?). Otherwise, his contribution to architecture consists mainly in the design of tombs (Prince and Princess of Piombino, Chiesa dell'Ospedaletto, 1701) and altars (high altar, Cappella del Tesoro, S. Gennaro, 1706) and, above all, in the influence exercised on his pupils. Nauclerio and Vaccaro⁸² may be passed over in favour of Sanfelice, who is the most gifted and most prolific Neapolitan architect of the first half of the eighteenth century. His work, even more than that of Vaccaro, is the precise counterpart to Raguzzini's and Valvassori's buildings in Rome. It is spirited, light-hearted, unorthodox, infinitely imaginative, and ranges from a severe elegance to decorative profusion and richness. He produced with almost incredible ease, and the vastness of his *œuvre* vies with that of the most productive architects of all time. In this as in other respects he recalls Juvarrá; like the latter, he was also specially gifted as a manipulator of perishable decorations,⁸³ and his sure instinct for scenographic effects is one of the most characteristic traits of his art. His work in ecclesiastical architecture began in 1701 (S. Maria delle Periclitanti at Pontecorvo), to be followed by innumerable additions, alterations, and renovations in Naples and smaller towns. A particular jewel is the small Chiesa delle Nunziatelle, probably dating from the mid 1730s, with a colourful façade which forms a splendid *point de vue* at the end of a narrow street. The simple polychrome nave with two chapels to each side blends perfectly with the lofty vault decorated with Francesco de Mura's grandiloquent fresco of the Assumption.⁸⁴

It is as the architect of domestic buildings that Sanfelice gives his best. One of the most distinguished among the long list of palaces attributed to him by the biographer of Neapolitan artists, de Dominici, is the Palazzo Serra Cassano (1725-6), a long structure on sloping ground with a front of sixteen bays. The rhythm given to the façade is typical of Sanfelice's free handling of the tradition. Giant pilasters over the rusticated ground

floor frame the first, fifth, twelfth, and sixteenth bays (with the pilasters of the fifth and twelfth bays over rich portals); bays 2, 3, 4, and 13, 14, 15 are evenly spaced, without orders, while bays 6, 7, 8, and 9, 10, 11 are grouped together as trios with a large gap between bays 8 and 9, that is, in the centre of the entire façade. The main glory, however, of this and other palaces by Sanfelice is the monumental staircase, which ascends in two parallel flights, each of which returns, forming a complicated system of bridges in a large vaulted vestibule.

Sanfelice's ingenuity was focused on staircase designs (Plate 153A and Figure 29);⁸⁵ in this field he is without peer. It is impossible to give even the vaguest idea of the boldness, variety, and complexity of his designs. In the crowded conditions of Naples these stair-

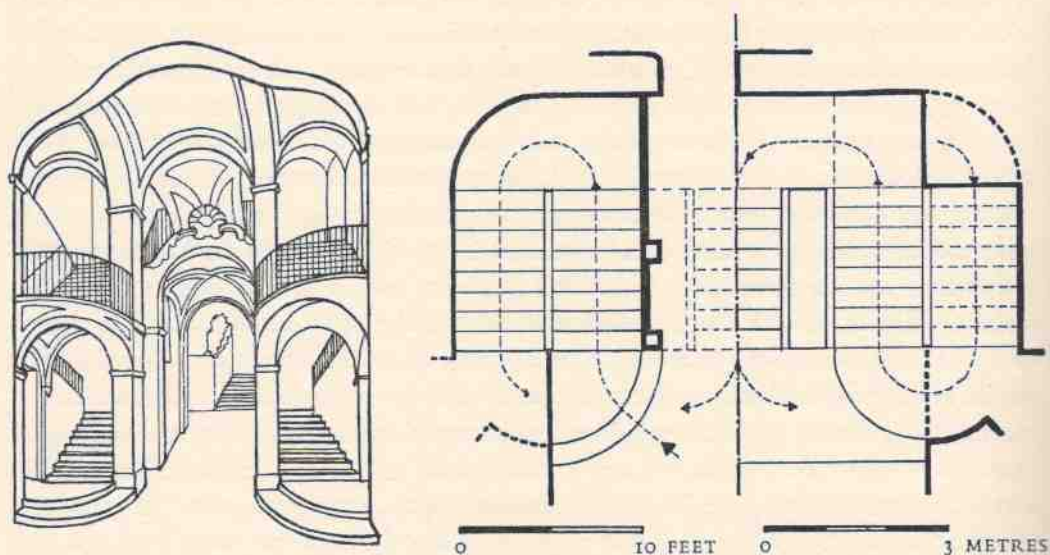


Figure 29. Ferdinando Sanfelice: Naples, palace in Via Foria. Double staircase and plan

cases often seem tucked away in the most unexpected places, and this adds to their surprise effect. De Dominici gives the crown to the staircase of the palace of Bartolomeo di Majo as the most 'capricious' in the whole of Naples – and there is no reason to disagree with him. This staircase ascends in convex flights inside a vestibule reminiscent of the plan of Borromini's S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane. There is nothing in the rest of Italy to match Sanfelice's scenographic staircases; in addition, central and northern Italy took no note of the unconventional development of staircase designs in the South. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that a link exists between some of Sanfelice's and certain Austrian staircase designs.⁸⁶ And contrary to the previous two centuries, it was the North that influenced Naples. At precisely the same time Naples and Piedmont – as will be shown – admit northern ideas, and this invites comment to which I shall turn in the next chapter.

Sanfelice and Vaccaro died in the same year, 1750. The following year the King called

to Naples the two architects Fuga and Vanvitelli, who, at this historical moment, must have been regarded as the leading Italian masters, and it was to them that he entrusted the largest architectural tasks of the eighteenth century in Naples. The two architects were almost exact contemporaries, but while Fuga had passed the zenith of his creative power, Vanvitelli had still his most fertile years before him. Fuga's activity in Naples has already been briefly mentioned (p. 252). It remains to give an account of Vanvitelli's career.

Luigi Vanvitelli (1700-73),⁸⁷ born in Naples, the son of the painter Gaspar van Wittel from Utrecht, spent his youth in Rome, first studying painting under his father. He emerged as an architect of considerable distinction during the Lateran competition, to which he contributed a design. His first period of intense architectural activity coincided with the building boom in Rome (p. 248). Commissioned by Pope Clement XII, he constructed at Ancona the pentagonal utilitarian *lazzaretto*, the austere classical Arco Clementino, began the quay and lighthouse, and erected the Gesù (1743-5), which foreshadowed the infinitely grander late Chiesa dell'Annunziata at Naples. In these years, mainly in the 1740s, he assumed the role of an itinerant architect, so common in the eighteenth century. He worked at Pesaro, Macerata, Perugia, and Loreto (tower, Santa Casa), made a design for the façade of Milan Cathedral (1745), and practised in Siena and again in Rome, where the sober monastery of S. Agostino, the rebuilding of Michelangelo's S. Maria degli Angeli, and, under Salvi, the lengthening of Bernini's Palazzo Chigi-Odescalchi (p. 122) are mainly to be recorded.

Charles III summoned him to Naples for the express purpose of erecting the royal residence at Caserta, about 20 miles north of the capital.⁸⁸ In a sense Caserta is the overwhelmingly impressive swansong of the Italian Baroque. The scale both of the palace with its 1,200 rooms and of the entire layout is immense. For miles the landscape has been forced into the strait-jacket of formal gardening – clearly Versailles has been resuscitated on Italian soil. But it would be wrong to let the matter rest at that, for into the planning has gone the experience of Italian and French architects accumulated over a period of more than a hundred years. The palace is a high, regular block of about 600 by 500 feet, with four large courtyards formed by a cross of wings. The Louvre, the Escorial, Inigo Jones's plans for Whitehall Palace come to mind; we are obviously in this tradition. None of these great residences, however, was designed with the same compelling logic and the same love for the absolute geometrical pattern, characteristics which have a long Italian ancestry and reveal, at the same time, Vanvitelli's rationalism and classicism. A similar spirit will be found in the strict organization of the elevations. The entire structure rises above a high ground floor treated with horizontal bands of sharply cut rustication. Projecting pavilions, planned to be crowned by towers in the French tradition and articulated by a giant order, frame each of the long fronts. The pavilions are balanced in the centre of the main and garden fronts by a powerful pedimented temple motif (Plate 151B). While the long wall of the principal front remains otherwise austere without articulating features, on the garden front the giant composite order is carried across the entire length, creating a long sequence of narrow bays. Apart from certain national idiosyncrasies, such as the density and plasticity of forms and motifs,

LATE BAROQUE AND ROCOCO

this style was internationally in vogue during the second half of the eighteenth century. It may be found not only in France (e.g. G. Cammas' Capitole, Toulouse, 1750-3), but also in England (e.g. Sir William Chambers's Somerset House, London, 1776-86) and even in Russia (Kokorinov's Academy of Art, Leningrad, 1765-72).

But in one important respect Caserta is different from all similar buildings. Vanvitelli had been reared in the scenographic tradition of the Italian Late Baroque, and it was at

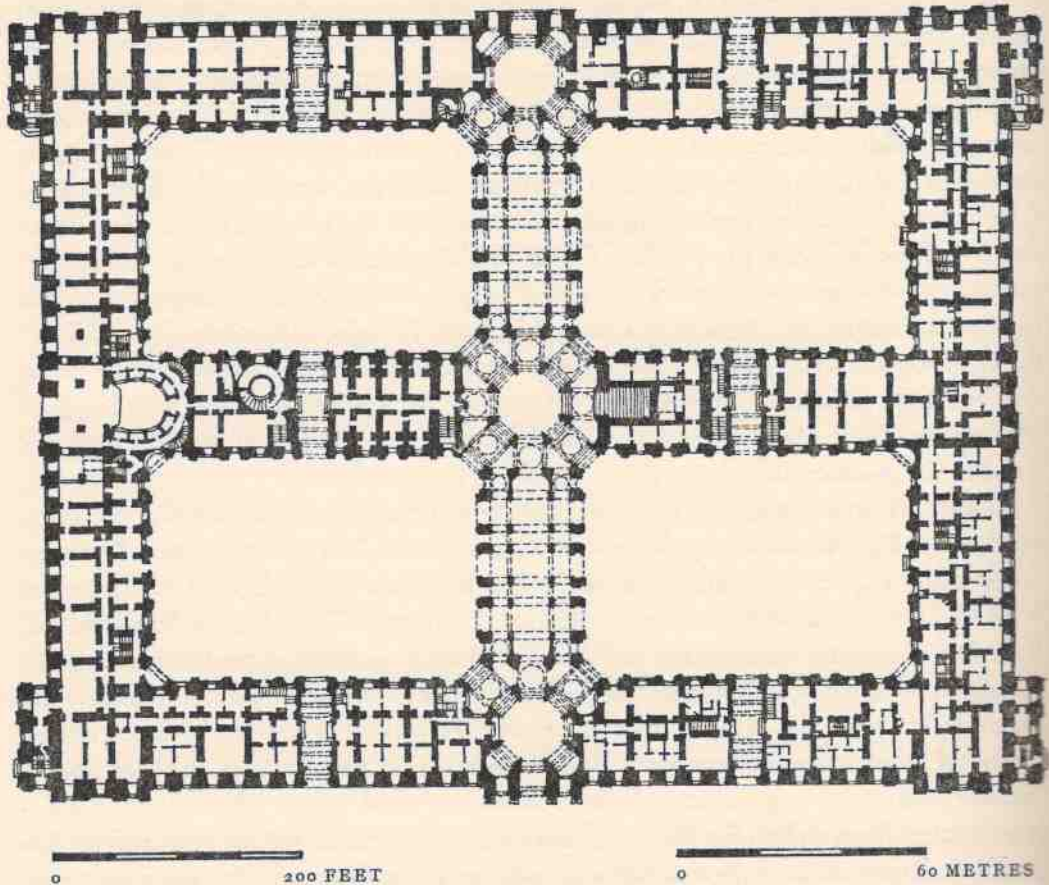


Figure 30. Luigi Vanvitelli: Caserta, former Royal Palace, begun 1752. Plan

Caserta that scenographic principles were carried farther than anywhere else. From the vestibule vistas open in several directions: courtyards appear on the diagonal axes, and looking straight ahead, the visitor's eye is captivated by the vista through the immensely long, monumental passage which cuts right through the entire depth of the structure (Figure 30), and extends at the far end along the main avenue into the depth of the garden. From the octagonal vestibule in the centre Italy's largest ceremonial staircase ascends at right angles. Its rather austere decoration may be fashioned after Versailles, but the staircase hall as such and the staircase (Plate 153B) with its central flight leading to a broad landing from where two flights turn along the walls and end under a screen of three arches

— all this has a North Italian pedigree (Bologna), which ultimately points back to Longhena's scenographic staircase in S. Giorgio Maggiore (Plate I11C). The staircase leads into a vaulted octagonal vestibule corresponding to that on the lower level, and from there doors open into the state rooms and — opposite the staircase — into the chapel, the similarity of which to that of Versailles has always been pointed out.⁸⁹ Once again, from the vestibules on both levels vistas open in all directions, and here Vanvitelli's source of inspiration is evident beyond doubt. These vestibules, octagons with ambulatories, derive from Longhena's S. Maria della Salute.⁹⁰ Although many decorative features of the interior are specifically Roman and even Borrominesque, Vanvitelli's basic approach spells a last great triumph for Longhena's principles. But he emulates all that went before; for from the return flights of the staircase the beholder looks through the screen of arches into stage-like scenery beyond, viewing a Piranesi or Bibiena phantasmagoria in solid stone. The scenographic way of planning and seeing ties Vanvitelli firmly to the Late Baroque, and it is in this light that his classicism takes on its particular flavour.

The principal ecclesiastical building of Vanvitelli's immensely active Neapolitan period is the Chiesa dell'Annunziata (1761–82). Its concave façade in two tiers is ultimately dependent on Carlo Fontana's S. Marcello, and the scenographic interior with its severely conceived columnar motif that encompasses the three separate units of the church takes its cue from Rainaldi's S. Maria in Campitelli.⁹¹ Among Vanvitelli's remaining works may be mentioned the Foro Carolino (now Piazza Dante, 1757–65). The large segmental palazzo front articulated by a giant order, reminiscent of Pietro da Cortona (p. 162), is interrupted in the centre by the dominating motif of the niche, a late retrogression to the *Nicchione* of the Vatican Belvedere. But the slow rhythm of this architecture calls to mind northern counterparts, such as J. Wood the younger's Royal Crescent at Bath (1767–75), and the similarity — in spite of all the differences — once again shows to what extent Vanvitelli's style falls into line with the international classicism of the period.

Finally, a word must be said about Vanvitelli's uncommon ability as an architect of utilitarian structures. This is demonstrated not only by his cavalry barracks 'al ponte di Maddalena' (1753–74), a work of utter simplicity and compelling beauty (which seems to have had a considerable influence on Italian twentieth-century architecture), but above all by the Acquedotto Carolino (1752–64), the aqueduct of about 25 miles length which supplies Naples with water. As regards engineering skill as well as the grandeur of the imposing bridges this work vies with Roman structures. More than anything else, such works indicate that a new age was dawning.

The last Neapolitan architect of the eighteenth century deserving attention is Mario Gioffredo (1718–85). Schooled by Solimena, he began before 1750 with works still in keeping with the Neapolitan Baroque. Overshadowed by Fuga and Vanvitelli, Gioffredo has never been given his due. After 1760 he steered determinedly towards a Neo-classical conception of architecture. His dogmatic treatise *Dell'Architettura* (1768), of which only the first volume appeared, shows this as clearly as his masterpiece, the church of Spirito Santo, completed in 1774. Unlike Vanvitelli, Gioffredo breaks here for the first time with the polychrome Neapolitan tradition. Moreover, the walls of the nave with

the even, sonorous rhythm of the colossal Corinthian order usher in a new period. And yet even he paid homage to a tradition which he despised: in the interior of the church the attentive observer will discover motifs derived from S. Maria in Campitelli, while the large dome is, in fact, a memorial to Cortona's dome of S. Carlo al Corso.⁹²

★

Little can here be said about the charming, volatile, and often abstruse Apulian Baroque, which has some contacts with the Neapolitan and even Venetian development. It has recently been shown that the often overstated connexions with the Plateresque and Churrigueresque Spanish Baroque are most tenuous. Examples of this highly decorative local style may be found at Barletta, Gravina, Manduria, Oria, Gallipoli, Francavilla Fontana, Galatone, Nardò, and other places. But it has its main home in the provincial capital, Lecce. For its small size Lecce can boast an unequalled number of monumental structures, which form a strikingly imposing ensemble.⁹³

In spite of a building history extending from the mid sixteenth to the eighteenth century, Lecce's Baroque conveys the impression of stylistic harmony and uniformity. The reason is evident: this style is pure surface decoration, often strangely applied to local building conventions which, in this remote corner of Italy, had an extraordinarily long lease of life. What M. S. Briggs wrote in 1910 (p. 248) is still true to-day: 'All that is unique in Lecce architecture may be accounted for by the combination and fusion of these three great elements – the new Renaissance spirit slowly percolating to the remote city, the unrivalled relics of the Middle Ages standing around its gates, and the long rule of Spain.'

The strange union of what would seem incompatible is particularly evident in the façade of S. Croce (also called Chiesa dei Celestini), the most impressive structure at Lecce, where elements of the Apulian Romanesque are happily wedded to wildly exuberant Baroque decoration. At a first glance this façade appears to be uniform, but it was begun before 1582 by Gabriele Riccardi and finished more than sixty years later (1644) by Cesare Penna (upper tier). Again, the adjoining monastery (now Prefettura) would seem of one piece with the church; its dates, however, lie between 1659 and 1695 and the architect is Giuseppe Zimbalo, who built the cathedral (1659–82), S. Agostino (1663), and the magnificent façade of the Chiesa del Rosario (begun 1691). Less bizarre than the window-frames of the monastery, but otherwise close in character, is the front of the Seminario, erected between 1694 and 1709 by Zimbalo's pupil, Giuseppe Cino. The latter was responsible, among other works, for S. Chiara (1687–91), the façade of SS. Nicola e Cataldo (1716), and the Madonna del Carmine (1711); in these buildings a spirit closer to the international Baroque may be noticed. Before taking leave of Lecce, the most eccentric building may be mentioned, namely Achille Carducci's façade of S. Matteo, which is covered over and over with scales.

The Sicilian Baroque would deserve closer attention than it can here be given.⁹⁴ Artists from the mainland supplied to a large extent pre-Seicento art and architecture in Sicily. This situation changed in the course of the seventeenth century, and for more than 150 years most major building operations in cities large and small were carried

out by Sicilians, who, incidentally, were almost without exception priests. Since the eastern towns – Syracuse, Catania, and Messina – were devastated in the earthquake of 1693, it is only at Palermo that a continuous development can be followed throughout the seventeenth century.

During the first half of the new century building practice was on the whole retarda-taire. Witness the three-storeyed Quattro Canti at Palermo, monumental buildings on the piazza (created in analogy to the Quattro Fontane in Rome) where the two main arteries of the city intersect;⁹⁵ or the severe Arsenal (Palermo, 1630), designed by the Palermitan Mariano Smiriglio (1569–1636), painter and architect; Giovanni Vermexio's block-shaped Palazzo Comunale at Syracuse (1629–33) with a portal lifted straight out of Vignola's treatise;⁹⁶ or, finally, Natale Masuccio's imposing Jesuit College and church at Trapani (finished 1636). With Angelo Italia (1628–1700), Paolo Amato (1633–1714) and his namesake Giacomo Amato (1643–1732), Palermitan architecture entered a new, High Baroque phase.⁹⁷ In 1682 Paolo Amato began S. Salvatore, the first Sicilian church over a curvilinear plan. The masterpieces of the Palermitan Baroque are, however, Giacomo Amato's façades of the Chiesa della Pietà (1689, church consecrated in 1723) and of S. Teresa della Kalsa (1686–1706), both with powerful orders of columns in two tiers. Giacomo had spent more than ten years in Rome (1673–85) where he had a share in the design of the monastery of S. Maria Maddalena. His work at Palermo leans heavily on Roman precedent, the façade of the Chiesa della Pietà, for instance, following closely that of S. Andrea della Valle. Thus by Roman standards this belated High Baroque is rather conservative. Angelo Italia's masterpiece is the Cappella del Crocifisso in the cathedral of Monreale, executed between 1688 and 1692, with exuberant and colourful Hispano-Sicilian stucco decorations. They seem to be on the same level of intensity as the hieratic Byzantine mosaics which were possibly a source of inspiration to Baroque architects and decorators.⁹⁸

The stage reached by Giacomo Amato was superseded by Giovanni Biagio Amico from Trapani (1684–1754), who erected important buildings in his native city as well as in other provincial towns and in Palermo. Although his Late Baroque façade of S. Anna in Palermo (1736)⁹⁹ with its convex and concave curvatures is superficially Borrominesque, it is additive in conception and lacks the dynamic sweep of similar Roman structures.

The glory of eighteenth-century Palermitan architecture are the villas in the vicinity, particularly at Bagheria.¹⁰⁰ Some of them have extravagant plans and form part of large and complex layouts, such as the villa built by Tommaso Maria Napoli (1655–1725) for Francesco Ferdinando Gravina, Principe di Palagonio (1715); the Villa Valguarnera, begun by the same architect before 1713; the Villa Partanna, erected 1722–8 for Laura La Grua, Principessa di Partanna; or the villa of the Principe di Cattolica (1737?). The Villa Palagonia is notorious for the strange 'baroque' whim of its late eighteenth-century proprietor, who had the entire place decorated with crudely carved monstrosities – the supreme example of a play with emblematical Baroque *concetti*. Goethe in his often-quoted description of the villa coined the phrase 'Palagonian paroxysm' for what seemed to him the epitome of aberration from good taste.¹⁰¹

Like Naples, Palermo abounds in scenographically effective staircases. The most famous of them in the Palazzo Bonagia, designed by Andrea Giganti (1731-87), forms a picturesque screen between the cortile and the garden. All the large villas can boast extravagant staircase designs of which V. Ziino has made an illuminating study. Once again, the thought of Austrian architecture is never far from one's mind before such works. For twenty years from 1713 to 1734, the political links between Sicily and Austria were close.¹⁰² I do not find records of many Sicilian architects visiting Vienna, but it is known that Tommaso Maria Napoli made the journey twice.

After the earthquake of 1693 the eastern part of the island saw a fabulous reconstruction period. The Baroque Messina in turn was to a large extent destroyed in the earthquake of 1908. Syracuse had an architect of distinction in Pompeo Picherali (1668-1746), who is, however, wrongly credited with the impressive façade of the cathedral.¹⁰³ Magnificent structures arose in small towns such as Modica and Ragusa; Noto and Grammichele were entirely rebuilt on new sites; Noto, in particular, with its array of monumental structures erected by Paolo Labisi, Rosario Gagliardi (worked 1721-70), and the late, neo-classicist Vincenzo Sinatra,¹⁰⁴ is matched only by Catania itself. The greatest figure of the reconstruction period, Giovan Battista Vaccarini (1702-68),¹⁰⁵ turned Catania into one of the most fascinating eighteenth-century cities in Europe. Born in Palermo, he was educated in Rome in Carlo Fontana's studio, but, being a contemporary of the Roman 'Rococo' architects, his development parallels theirs. A protégé of Cardinal Ottoboni, he settled at Catania in 1730 and in the next two decades brought about a Sicilian Rococo by blending the Borrominesque with the local tradition. He entirely superseded the popular 'Churrigueresque' style - that effusive manner which owes so much to Spain and of which Catania has splendid examples in the Palazzo Biscari and the Benedictine monastery,¹⁰⁶ the largest in Europe, the impressive bulk of which dominates the town.

The list of Vaccarini's works is long and distinguished, from the façade of the cathedral (begun 1730, reminiscent of Juvorra's style), which shows an interesting play with the position of the orders, and the powerful and extravagantly imaginative design of the Palazzo Municipale (1732) to the large Collegio Cutelli (1754), where, keeping abreast with the times, he is well on the road to a new classicism. His most important ecclesiastical work, S. Agata (begun 1735), has a façade with a deep concave recession between flanking convex bays - altogether an unexpected transformation of Borrominesque ideas and wholly unorthodox in the detail. Vaccarini's manner was continued in the second half of the eighteenth century by the festive art of the Roman Stefano Ittar. If his Chiesa Collegiata, where he combined features from Carlo Fontana's S. Marcello with some from the façade of S. Maria Maddalena, could almost have been created in Rome between 1730 and 1740, his S. Placido, a refined and subtle jewel of classicizing Rococo taste, has its nearest parallels in Piedmont. Thus it is in the two most distant parts of Italy that the resistance against the cool objectivity of the rising Neo-classicism remains strongest.