

# Baroque Period

# **BAROQUE ARCHITECTURE (ITALY)**

## **Influencing conditions**

**Location:** Rome

**Geography:** City-states of Italy which held prestige and power

**Materials:** marble and travertine, ruins of old Roman buildings

**Climate:** bright, sunny Mediterranean climate, high sun angle

**Time:** 1600-1750

**Concurrent events:** 1642: Galileo dies

## Social conditions:

- World of contrasts and broadening horizons
- Foundations of modern science laid

**Religious conditions:** Questioning, struggle, reformation gave Italian Church more power and unity

**Needs:** Popes and Cardinals required magnificent churches, palaces, tombs to commemorate themselves and to assert their renewed power and authority

## Forms:

- Oval rather than circular forms
- Space and form became much more plastic and sculptural
- Illusion replaced logical visual organization of form and space
- Space-time architecture (Time becomes key component), spatial flow

## Expression:

Three dimension curve, dramatic detail, illusion, visual movement

**BAROQUE AND ROCOCO  
ARCHITECTURE (FRANCE)**

## Influencing conditions

**Location:** Paris and Versailles

**Geography:** Unified kingdom after 1500

**Materials:** stone

**Climate:** cool, dull light, northern climate

**Time:**

- 1600-1715: Baroque
- 1715-1760: Rococo

**Concurrent events:**

- 1598: Edict of Nantes
- 1608: Champlain founds Quebec
- 1643-1715: Louis XIV reigns (Baroque)
- 1715-1774: Louis XV reigns (Rococo)
- 1763: British gain Canada for Treaty of Paris
- 1789-1795: French Revolution

## Social conditions:

- Military dictatorship
- Absolute Monarchy
- Struggle and strife
- Baroque: formal, pageantry, pompous, public
- Rococo: informal, intimate, casual, private

## Religious conditions:

Edict of Nantes in 1598 gave religious rights and freedoms to both Catholics and Protestants

## Needs:

- The absolute monarchs of the Baroque required elaborate palaces to express their supreme position and accommodate the pageantry of their courtly style of living.
- Middle class bourgeoisie required intimate Rococo salons, townhouses, apartments

## Forms:

- Baroque palaces: large, symmetrical, central entry and articulated corners
- Grand scale and oval planning for pageantry
- Rococo mansions: Smaller, more intimate in scale, asymmetrical planning

## Expression:

- French Baroque more restrained than Italian Baroque but more sculptural and decorative than the French Renaissance. Illusion was introduced by means of mirrors. French Baroque landscape was geometrical with axial vistas radiating from the main building
- Rococo interiors were more restrained than those of the Baroque, using light pastel colors, asymmetrical flowing lines and more intimate and delicate spaces



# **BAROQUE ARCHITECTURE (ENGLAND)**

## **Influencing conditions of time and place:**

**Location:** London

**Geography:** Isolation, maritime contact with European continent

**Materials:** stone, brick

**Climate:** temperate, humid, dull

**Time:** 1660-1760

## **Concurrent events:**

- 1560: Restoration of Monarchy
- 1666: London fire
- 1763: Treaty of Paris gives Canada to Britain
- 1776: United States declares independence
- 1768: Watt's steam engine completed.

### **Social conditions:**

- Parliamentary system not permitted
- Centralized, autocratic government
- Continuity of English life from Renaissance times

**Religious conditions:** Glorious Revolution gave religious tolerance to all

**Needs:** Great Fire of London necessitated rebuilding of London and its many churches. Increase of prosperity required mansions for the wealthy class

**Forms:** Refinement of simple geometric massing; spires on churches

**Expression:** English Baroque not as sculptural as Italian; it was more restrained. Homes were designed more for comfort than pageantry, although symmetry and formality were characteristic

## Philosophy

The period of Baroque architecture contains **diverse areas of study**, similar to the Renaissance. Baroque design led to new periods including **Rococo and Georgian** architectural styles. These latter two styles are somewhat sub-texts of the overall Baroque period, though they were sufficiently developed so as to warrant their own labels.

Baroque architecture began as a movement spurred on by **social upheaval on all levels – spiritual, political and cultural**. This period reflected an optimism which arose from a **spiritual victory over the Protestant Reformation**.

The Christian Church had decreased in power and influence during the Renaissance due to the focus at the time on Humanism and Mankind. It was during that time that the Protestant Reformation erupted. The values of the Christian Church had met with sufficient skepticism to produce a religious reformation movement. This movement challenged the Papacy and Christian Church, shaking it to the foundations of the belief system. Once again, the Christian Church survived this challenge to emerge as the dominant religion in the Empire.

At the end of the Protestant reformation, the Papacy was centralized in Rome. Spiritual values that had been challenged were now confirmed and reinforced. This reaffirmation of faith brought new power to the Church. New power meant new opportunities to build, especially for the purposes of the Pope and senior administration. New buildings were a clear means to assert and display the renewed power of the Church.

This period also saw great developments occurring in the field of science. A rational world was defined through the discoveries of Galileo, Newton and Kepler; scientists and philosophers who were solving the puzzles of the world and known universe. The theory of planetary motion relative to the sun was a critical development within the science of the times. The world and the universe were proven in mathematics, line and form. These forms became important elements within the new architectural designs.

Architecture had become international with distinct movements spreading throughout Europe as was seen by the overlap of Italian styles into France during the Renaissance. European countries from Italy to France, including England, Spain, Austria and Germany, as well as the New World of the Americas, benefited from the new design philosophies.

Michelangelo was the driving force in the development of the new style. He produced a radical, sculptural concept of architecture (a living form) that served as the departure from Renaissance styles. Baroque design presented a fluid form and shape with expressive use of the oval, now known as the shape of the planet's pathways around the sun. The oval form symbolically linked the design scheme to the universal planetary pathway; an alliance with the heavens. Baroque architecture served as an umbrella style under which a wide variety of design forms were assembled in previously unknown combinations. This style was much more interpretive and sculptural than the rigid mathematical forms of the Renaissance.

The term 'Baroque' was used to categorize the style of art and architecture that departed from the established norm, without a clear, rigid definition of itself. Baroque styling was dramatic and majestic with the use of illusion to create effects within the space. The lines of structure and sculpture were exaggerated to provide greater prominence. The combination of sculptural, expressive detail with fluid form and space created a new sense of wonder. The Baroque style often appeared bizarre, grotesque, and even irregular when compared to previous classical designs. Baroque forms expressed ornamentation, promoted color variations, and used both direct and indirect lighting for theatrical effects. The key to fully understanding the design concept for Baroque architecture lies in contemplating the plan in conjunction with the presented façade. It is through this method that the grand, theatrical nature of the style can be seen. The Baroque style also contained sub-styles of design development. These sub-styles presented variations of the overall Baroque philosophy. Variations were due to regional differences, stylistic desires and personal talents of the architects. The sub-styles included Mannerism, Rococo, and Georgian architecture.



An elaborate new architectural style lavished buildings. What became known as Baroque was characterized by **complex shapes, extravagant ornaments, opulent paintings, and bold contrasts.**

In Italy, the Baroque style is reflected in **opulent and dramatic churches** with **irregular shapes and extravagant ornamentation.** In **France**, the **highly ornamented** Baroque style **combines** with **Classical restraint.** Russian aristocrats were impressed by the Palace of Versailles, France and incorporated Baroque ideas in the building of St. Petersburg. Elements of the elaborate Baroque style are found throughout Europe.

Architecture was only one expression of the Baroque style. In music, famous names included Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi. In the art world, Caravaggio, Bernini, Rubens, Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Velázquez are remembered. Famous inventors and scientists of the day include Blaise Pascal and Isaac Newton.



Palace of Versailles



Class lecture:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RP1N9PrCXA7R23vUENCHCYhDm\\_rH5bjn/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RP1N9PrCXA7R23vUENCHCYhDm_rH5bjn/view?usp=sharing)

**Thank You.**