

Baroque Culture Part II

Lead: One of the great influences of the seventeenth century “Baroque” style was the ecumenical council held by the Roman Catholic Church between 1545-1563 – known as the Council of Trent.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: The Baroque era with its rich style, elaborate ornamentation and dramatic design ran from 1600 about to 1750. It began in Italy, spread throughout Europe and across the Atlantic to the Americas. One of the historical events which influenced the artisans of the period was the Counter-Reformation - that is the reaction and the reforms within the Roman Catholic Church in response to the Protestant Reformation. To counter Protestant success, Pope Paul III convoked an ecumenical council in 1545 in the northern Italian town of Trent hard against the Austrian border.

The Council, which was actually a series of conferences or gatherings of the bishops, met in three sessions from 1545 to 1563. As a result of this

Council, the Catholic Church instituted internal reforms, established new militant orders such as the Jesuits, and reaffirmed some controversial doctrines, which had stimulated the Protestant rebellion, such as the veneration of saints, transubstantiation, the granting of indulgences, clerical celibacy, and the importance of tradition and works on the pathway to salvation.

Much more than their Protestant opponents, Catholics looked to the arts as a way to slow down the Reformation's spread, and by appealing to the natural human appreciation for art, hoped to restore faith and trust in the church by the people. The Church made a conscious effort to patronize and promote art as a way of reaching the masses, but it insisted that art so supported should have a religious theme that would inspire awe and evoke an emotional response. Catholic leaders believed that dramatic and ornate visual art overtly hammering away on the eye and the heart would restore lost prestige to the church and encourage Protestant converts to come home.

The style that emerged was later called "Baroque," and it was practiced by painters, sculptors, architects, and musicians, who with some important exceptions, such as George Friedrich

Handel and Johan Sebastian Bach, practiced primarily in Catholic countries far into the 1700s.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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