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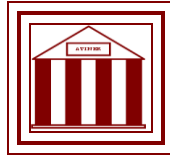## ATINER

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Tectonic Modalities in Baroque Architecture: An Alternative Historiography

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Tectonic Modalities in Baroque Architecture:
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Abstract

Erwin Panofsky's 1934 essay, entitled "What is Baroque?" provides an opening to discuss the state of the tectonic in Baroque architecture. His text raises a number of issues including: what was missing in the available literature on the art and architecture of Baroque that Panofsky wanted to bring to the reader's attention? Should Panofsky's take on Baroque be considered as part of a general problematic that sees *Baroque* as a unique state of mind and aesthetics, an understanding that has been revisited whenever the culture of Humanism faces its historical limits? To explore the broader theoretical connotations and implications of the questions raised here, this essay will investigate the position of two other major art historians on the subject, Heinrich Wölfflin and Alois Riegl. These historians will be discussed in connection to their discursive commonality with Gottfried Semper's theory of tectonics. I will give particular attention to various interpretations of the tectonic of column and wall, if only to index the possibility of a different reading of Baroque architecture. These readings will make the following historiographic points: I will argue that neither rhetoric nor Jesuit propaganda was tooled enough to deconstruct the tectonic potentialities of a masonry construction system practised within the representational system of Humanism, Baroque architecture included. I will also discuss the singularity of Baroque architecture in its complex rapport with the culture of Humanism; I will consider its deviations from the Humanist ethos, and the possibility of opening a new chapter where the major concerns and principles of Humanism can continue to be relevant in a different historical circumstances. Finally, I will present the historicity of the 1930s, and the emergence of the thematic of critical historiography, as the missing point in most contemporary theorization of Baroque in general, and of Panofsky's text in particular.

Keywords:

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Introduction

What Is Not Baroque?

This play on the title of Erwin Panofsky's 1934 essay "What Is Baroque?" provides an opening to discuss the state of tectonics in baroque architecture. I will give special attention to the analysis of two well-known churches, Francesco Borromini's S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (1638-41), and S. Ivo della Sapienza (1642-50). These readings will make the following historiographic claim: that neither rhetoric (Argan, 1989), nor Jesuit propaganda (Levy, 2004) was tooled enough to deconstruct the tectonic potentialities of a masonry construction system that informed the representational system of the architecture of Humanism. Another facet of the same claim is of a geographic nature. Whereas the origins of baroque art and architecture are identified with Rome (Italy), the tectonic implications of the separation of column from wall, a development central to architecture's departure from baroque, is associated with the age of Enlightenment, and the French architect Claude Perrault in particular (Harry-Francis Mallgrave, 2011, 26-34).

Panofsky wrote the aforementioned essay after his migration to the United States. Much of the migration of western intelligentsia to the new world was a reaction against atrocities committed under fascism in Germany and Stalinism in the Soviet Union. In addition to disseminating their knowledge, most art historians took the new world as an opportunity to see the past afresh. Karen Lang argues that Panofsky consciously avoided considering "the conditions of possibility of style" and that his iconographic method has less to do with his migration to the States than "with the discovery of a method that made his particular theoretical pursuit unnecessary" (Lang: 2006, 36). Needless to say that, through Cassirer's writing, Panofsky was methodologically well equipped to avoid reading the work of art synchronically across a given culture. He was rather interested to study the work of art diachronically, and in relation to elements of what is called series. For a critical understanding of Panofsky's position, his text on baroque needs to be historicised with reference to a body of literature that was epoch-making on both sides of the Atlantic. Significantly, works such as André Breton's "Crisis of the Object' (1932) and Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), among other texts, address "the question concerning technology," a subject to be taken up by Martin Heidegger in an essay with the same title written earlier but first presented in 1949. These texts address the key issue of technology, exploring its implications for critical historiography, a subject Panofsky dismissed throughout his oeuvre (Foster, 1993). In the tradition of art history, Panofsky attempted to close the gap between the historicity of the work and the subject (in this case himself). In doing so, he dismissed the historical conditions that were not available to the artists he chose to investigate (Forster, 1972). This shortcoming was in part due to art history's habitual reinvention of its tropes, primarily themes inherited from Heinrich Wölfflin. It was also due to the fact that a formalistic interpretation of the work of art gained a new

momentum during the 1930s surge toward the notion of autonomy (Greenberg, 1939).

At this point it is useful to ask what motivated Panofsky to take up the subject of baroque. What was not already said about the art and architecture of baroque that Panofsky wanted to bring to the reader's attention? Provisionally, I would like to suggest that baroque represents a unique state of mind and aesthetics that many scholars have turned to whenever the culture of Humanism feels exasperated by the project of Modernity (Broch, 2002). The significance of this proposition is twofold: firstly, it implies that, unlike the Renaissance, baroque did not produce a historical consciousness; indeed none of the mid-seventeenth century artists and architects discussed their own work as a style that broke away from that of the Renaissance. Secondly, the missing point in most contemporary theorization of baroque is a historical consciousness of the concepts of loss and nihilism, both instigated by technology, as discussed by the three authors signalled at the outset of this paper. Their critique of the nihilism of technology was convincing considering the emergence of the modernist idea of image, and its persuasive power as far as the discussion concerns the spectator's rapport with the work of art. Even though it was a common practice throughout the Renaissance to use paintings that depicted biblical stories to propagate a Christian ethos, what was unique to baroque was its capacity to envision the interior space itself as a persuasive ensemble.

My own take on the subject of spectacle draws from Gottfried Semper's theory of the tectonics of theatricality. In addition to the famous debate between Alois Riegl and the Semperians, Semper is relevant to this paper on another account. Panofsky acknowledged the traces of formalism in Riegl, and recognized Riegl's misunderstanding of Semper's emphasis on textile as the progenitor of artistic work. However, what does connect Riegl to Panofsky is Hegel's notion of 'spiritual history,' a theme they used against the allegedly materialist Semper. As I have discussed elsewhere (Hartoonian, 20012), it is important to make a distinction between the tectonic of theatricality and theatricalization. An examination of this difference and its implications for a critical historiography of baroque architecture is the main contribution of this essay.

Introducing the concept of the 'painterly Wölfflin's 1888 text *Principles of Art History* maps the scope of baroque art and architecture, and highlights the differences between baroque and Renaissance (Wölfflin, 1950). Central to Wölfflin's discourse is the paradox between tectonics and painterliness. He claimed that, using techniques of persuasion that originally belonged to visual arts, baroque architecture abandoned the characteristic elements of the art of building. On the other hand, addressing issues such as "massiveness," material, and "movement," he saw the role of wall in baroque architecture as being independent of both the plan and the tectonic articulation of the corner, the line where the main façade of a building meets the adjacent wall. The presence of atectonic and undulating walls in baroque architecture inspired him to make the

claim that architecture is neither painterly nor sculptural, but essentially the art of shaping space.

Wölfflin also contended that the interrelationship between different arts was theological and motivated by techniques particular to each art. Presenting 'the painterly' as a technique shared by baroque artists and architects, he made general conclusions concerning the formal attributes of baroque style. In addition, he conflated the time invested in the production of an artwork with the lived time of the historian. Furthermore, and of particular interest here, is Wölfflin's characterization of baroque as an autonomous entity (a mental construct), and a transitory period in comparison to the longevity of the Renaissance, which, according to him, lasted until 1520 (Wölfflin, 1964). Nevertheless, in the background of the nineteenth-century style debate, and the prevailing historical revivalism, Wölfflin's discourse on baroque provides the clue for a comprehensive understanding of the spirit of modern times, the obsession with temporality and change in particular.

Riegl is important for this essay for two reasons. Firstly, he used the concept of *Kunstwollen* as an ideal unifying force to challenge those historians who would associate the meaning of the work of art with an artist and/or a place. This strategy conforms to Panofsky's position that, before embarking on historical inquiry, the historian must be armed with a philosophical principle (Holly, 1984). We should also recall Riegl's agreement and disagreement with Semper's interpretation of the tectonic of column and wall in Gothic cathedrals. Secondly, the perceptual dialogue Riegl established between the work, the spectator, and the critic aimed to solidify the historian's position as an external observer skilled to study the work and the spectator simultaneously. To discuss these two points further, it is useful to recall Riegl's manuscript, *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome*, first published in Vienna in 1908. I have discussed aspects of this book elsewhere (Hartoonian, 2012). What I want to add here is that, during the first decade of the twentieth century, and because of the emergence of expressionism in German poetry and painting, the phenomenon of artistic feeling was understood in the light of baroque literature and its search for a proper style (Benjamin, 1985). This is also evident from Semper's work in Vienna, which, according to Alina Payne, had "crossed into the neo-Baroque" (Payne, 2010). Her observation underlines the difference between opulent material embellishments (cladding), itself part of the aesthetic of the tectonic of theatricality, and theatricalization (spectacle) permeating the best of baroque buildings. By theatricality, I mean the aesthetic dimension of an artistic reasoning that Semper considered essential for the tectonic articulation of the duality between the art-form and the core-form of architecture. The theatricalization informing baroque architecture, by contrast, connotes neither the "irrational," nor the tectonic proper. The aesthetics informing baroque architecture is rather an autonomous phenomenon, a subjective technique of persuasion that can be appropriated in various periods; this contradicts Panofsky's Hegelist tendency to present baroque as the synthesis between Mannerism and the Renaissance.

Semper and Riegl agreed on at least one point: that beyond contextual constraint, and in addition to technique and skill, important for the production of high arts were motifs developed in the applied and decorative arts. Their disagreement, however, was centred on Riegl's concern with surface and image, and Semper's focus on the tectonic. Payne discusses the ways that these two important figures of the nineteenth century established a complex rapport between fabrication and surface. She writes that, for Riegl, the "carpet was not an example of fabrication, of manipulation by the hand, tied into an anthropological explication of the development of shelter-making as it had been for Semper. Instead, he looked at the carpet as a decorative, painting-like surface, displaying a will-to-form that reached all artistic production and manifested itself in the predilection for a particular range of decorative motifs" (Payne, 2002).

The transition from the material to the cultural is another convergent point between Semper and Riegl. Semper's theory of tectonics provides a useful strategy to critique the notion of period style where an abstract idea, painterliness for example, is attributed to artworks produced in a given time. Semper instead underlined the "fabricated" quality of the artefact, whose aesthetic is not predetermined by the beholder, but rather revealed through the embellishment of material and purpose (ur-form), as it attains meaning in the realm of culture. From this we can conclude that the surface of the carpet has no life of its own; its aesthetics are rather woven into the technique of fabrication. And yet, in contrast to Riegl, Semper's theorization of architecture does not end in a closed system, or *structure* as such. Once the tectonic is recognised as that which is particular to architecture, the autonomy of architecture is secured in the matrix of the disciplinary history of architecture and techniques developed outside of that history. This proposition offers a different understanding of how perception works in architecture, and how tectonics differs from Riegl's *Kunstwollen*, "will to form."

What is Baroque?

If the debate between Riegl and Semper's followers was anchored in the generic difference between art history and architectural praxis, Panofsky's text demands a different frame of references. In the first place, his essay is primarily focused on baroque painting and sculpture. Interestingly enough, the "conflict between wall and the structural members" (Panofsky, 1997) is the main topic of the few pages of his essay that are dedicated to architecture. Furthermore, to solidify his interpretation of baroque, Panofsky pitted Borromini's S. Ivo della Sapienza against Michelangelo's entrance hall of the Laurentian Library. He wrote: "For baroque architecture breaks up, or even curves, the walls, so as to express a free dynamic interaction between mass and the energies of the structural members, and to display a quasi-theatrical scenery that integrates the conflicting elements into spatial ensemble, enlivened by Chiaroscuro values and even indicating a kind of cosmic interrelation between exterior and interior space." (Panofsky, 1997). Obviously Panofsky was concerned with the conflict between the expressive potentialities of wall and

the structural members of the S. Ivo. Confining "structural members" to the column, we are left with the impression that for him the wall was inherent and *natural* to architecture. To follow Panofsky, it is not far-fetched to claim that what is unique to baroque architecture is a planimetric organization that deviated from the Renaissance orthogonal system. We can go further and associate the implied duality between the column and the wall with Panofsky's interest in morphological investigation. For him, the meaning of architecture is accessible through analytical investigation of the plan, the wall, and the column. For him, the undulating wall of baroque architecture was in synchrony with other elements of the culture of the time, and remained free of "meaning and unaffected by symbolic interpretations" (Holly, 1984). The column, on the other hand, with limited connotations beyond its symbolic references to the human body, remained a classical analogue for the ontological aspect of architecture. Much like painting, the plan is a two-dimensional visual composition and susceptible to symbolic interpretation. If Panofsky looked for the meaning of a painting in the diachronic dimension of the work, for him architecture's meaning arguably resides in the plan and in the playful walls, both two-dimensional surfaces. Baroque's difference from the classical is thus "pictorial," the visible implications of which Panofsky traced in the plan and in the undulating walls.

In a closer inspection of the planimetric organization of both S. Ivo and S. Carlo, one cannot help but agree with Panofsky that the walls curve independent of the structural system. How does this work? Most analytical drawings of these two churches highlight the multiple circles and triangles that inform the geometrical composition of the plan. In addition, the plan of both buildings is carved out of the orthogonal system of the fabric of the adjacent monastery. Beyond the implied formal contrast between the curved interior surfaces (the oval), and the orderly subdivision of the surrounding service spaces, the structural system of these two churches emerged out of an orthogonal grid system, marked by either the position of the columns (S. Carlo), or the pilasters (S. Ivo). There is no evidence that Borromini started the design of his two most important churches from a sketch up drawing of the interior space. It is reasonable to assume that his design was figured out in the manner of the Renaissance, that is, that the volume was projected from the plan. The ground floor plan was for Borromini "the footprint of an integral, three dimensional body" (Steinberg, 1977). It was indeed part of the culture of Humanism to establish a sequential order through which one could relate conception, representation, and the production of the object to each other (Carpo, 2011).

As with the planimetric organization of Renaissance architecture, and in order to coordinate the body's movement through the interior space, the grid system of S. Carlo and S. Ivo had to align the entrance to the altar. Obviously, what makes the interior of these churches engaging is the domination of a different geometric system over the orthogonal grid that runs parallel and perpendicular to the location of the main load-bearing elements. The dialogue between the load-bearing and the undulating wall-surfaces creates a visual

spectacle that, interestingly enough, is attenuated by the placement of columns. The hybrid geometric system, the cross-shape, the oval, and the octagonal elements (Steinberg, 1977), are employed to coordinate what Rudolf Wittkower calls the "two spiritual centers" of the church (Wittkower, 1973), the oval and the altar. In S. Carlo, for example, the positions of the altar and the oval are defined by two sets of four columns that are located at an equal distance from the central axis of the plan. The sixteen columns of the interior space, instead, are "grouped and differentiated so as to yield three overlapping rhythms, and ... each of these rhythms corresponds to one modality of the structure" (Stienberg, 1977). Steinberg's analysis establishes a logical coherency among various formal element of S. Carlo. Even though there is no major load-bearing function assigned to the columns, he sees their strong presence as a symbolic reference to the triformity, which according to him was essential for the realization of Borromini's design (Steinberg, 1977). Wittkower, on the other hand, suggests that the columns were intended to accentuate the undulating walls. He also makes the observation that the balance between the altar and the oval, evident in most baroque churches, benefits from architectonic means employed by Palladio (aedicule in case of Bernini's S. Andrea). Needless to say that the plan of Bramante's St. Peter had already established a geometric interplay between the diagonal and the orthogonal system, a device radicalized in S. Ivo. It was perhaps the invisible presence of the Renaissance compositional system in Borromini's work that caused Bernini to cast the following judgement while visiting Paris. According to Bernini, Borromini "erected fantastic ('chimerical') structures," where the "classical anthropomorphic conception of architecture" is thrown overboard (Wittkower, 1973). Interestingly enough, Bernini considered Borromini to be a Gothic artist, who would passionately master the material (Argan, 1989).

If a tight rapport with platonic geometry was the only way for Renaissance artists to present a meaningful and totalised unity, in baroque, theatricalization, complexity and richness of expression were part of architecture's response to *history* and the crisis of meaning signalled earlier in this essay. This Tafurian reading is supported by what is called Borromini's realism; the assumption that he felt heir to "the troubled Mannerist issues" (Tafuri, 1980). Borromini's bricolage, therefore, should be understood as part of a historical experience in which, among other developments, the tectonics would attain a double function. On the one hand, it exhumes the ontology of construction as the deeper layer of meaning; on the other hand, architecture's engagement with the nihilism of technology entails *loss*, a force that in time would haunt the tectonics from within.

More importantly, as far as the tectonic of column and wall is concerned, baroque architecture does follow the classical language wherein the freestanding column is primarily perceived in association with the entablature. Likewise, the pilasters are interpreted in rapport with the wall and/or in congruity with the wall's profile. These tectonic considerations are dramatized in Borromini's work. In S. Carlo, for example, the columns stand as sculptural and yet they look freestanding and almost as if they were dancing. What holds

them in place is their massive cornice, which not only separates the earthly domain from the heavenly (the oval), but also wraps the main interior space like a fabric covering the body. The perception of a wrapped space is perhaps one of the unique characteristics of Borromini and Bernini's churches. Paradoxically, in S. Ivo the overwhelming presence of wrapping undermines the presence of columns. The six piers supporting the structural ribs of the dome look like two perpendicular pilasters rotated in forty-five degree. Here, similar to Bernini's S. Andrea, the wall that wraps the interior space is ornamented by pilasters, a strategy used by Alberti in Palazzo Rucellai (1446-51). Far more interesting is the position of two pairs of columns in Bernini's church; they evoke, metaphorically, the notion of entering – the act of entering the building and/or entering into the realm of the spiritual, represented by the altar. In addition "the isolated altar-room answers in reverse to the projecting portico, and this is expressive of their different functions, the latter inviting, the former excluding the faithful." Thus, concludes Wittkower, the "outside and inside appear like 'positive' and 'negative' realization of the same theme" (Wittkower, 1973). In both cases the wall terminates in a pilaster, either as an ornament (in the interior space), or as the profile of the wall (in the exterior facade).

In an effort to deconstruct the anthropomorphic principles underpinning Renaissance planimetric organization, Borromini undermined the tectonic rapport between the plan and the cupola. To the same end, Borromini recoded the principles of Gothic cathedrals as far as the tectonic of the dome was concerned. We see in S. Ivo the way the ribs are coordinated and aligned with the position of the piers, a strategy paramount in Gothic structures. And yet, to emulate a cloud-like and free-floating surface, the cupola of S. Carlo had to reinterpret Gothic tectonics. In most cathedrals, the ribs were built first and the surface between them was filled later. A few architects, according to Robin Evans, used the term stereotomy to refer to forms that were considered "unGothic and also unclassical"; they were not even baroque. In the choir vault of Gloucester cathedral (1367), for example, the ribs look as if they are attached to a huge cambered sheet covering the entire choir. Absent from this cathedral is the emphatic differentiation between the column and the wall, where *decorum* hinges on the tectonic rapport between structure and ornament (Evans, 1995). The reverse is at work in S. Carlo, where there is an intermediate zone, the pendentives, which according to Wittkower is inspired by the Greek cross-plan.

Central to the suggested recoding of classical and gothic architectonics is the allegoric dimension of baroque churches. The image-laden extravagance of baroque interiors demands that we rethink the Renaissance's approach to the element of dome. This claim is better understood in the light of Walter Benjamin's metaphoric observation about "sky" in Renaissance painting. He wrote: "Whereas the painters of the Renaissance knew how to keep their skies high, in the paintings of the baroque the cloud moves, darkly or radiantly, down towards the earth." He continues, "In contrast to the baroque the Renaissance does not appear as a godless and heathen period, but as an epoch

of profane freedom for the life of the faith, while the Counter-Reformation sees the hierarchical strain of the middle ages assume authority in a world which was denied access to the beyond" (Benjamin, 1985). Benjamin's analogy can be used to further elaborate on the position of the dome in the two churches under consideration here. The compelling and low profile of S. Carlo's dome complements the aforementioned idea of wrapping. The architectonics of the undulating walls and the ceiling (dome) bring the heavenly myth of Christianity "down" and to the face of the faithful. The baroque recoding of the element of dome – of "the anthropomorphic measure of the orders, the platonic geometry of the elevation and plan, the pure representation of an idealised classical past, the perfect depiction of reality in single-point perspective" – heralds nothing short of the crisis of Humanism (Leach, 2010). In contrast to the dome's central position in Renaissance architecture, the cupola in S. Carlo is reduced to a small lantern overshadowed by the portion of the street façade that supports the undulating main entry to the church.

In S. Carlo, the façade is "no longer regarded in terms of the building to which it belongs; it becomes a surface area which can be extended infinitely (Argan, 1989). The freestanding and undulating posture of the entry plane is further emphasised by the building's massing. It soars up in triple layers, where each architrave is rendered in reference to one of the constituent forms of this building. The main entry façade, by contrast, is composed of two tiers, and is dramatised by the disappearance of the corner where two orthogonal planes meet each other. To this we should add the central position of the main entrance, which is overshadowed by a convex portal and an oval medallion placed at the top. Framed and tilted over the main entrance, and originally ornamented with an image of the holy Trinity, the blank medallion is an additional mirror image of the absent present, ruination. It is a stark reminder to the faithful entering the church.

Coda

I would like to posit the possibility of two interpretations of the baroque, each with a particular implication for historiography. The first position concerns Panofsky. Identifying the end of the Renaissance with the rise of modernisation, Panofsky makes indirect associations between modernity and baroque. If the *Zeitgeist* means a coherent and totalizing phenomenon, we could then claim that Panofsky's position on baroque did not arise from the 1930s concern with technology mentioned at the outset of this paper. Rather his retrospective remarks on the column and wall exemplify a historiographic vision that sees each period through the lens of that period's own aura. Recalling Panofsky's limited engagement with architecture, we could say that his reflections on painting and sculpture capture the gist of what baroque meant to him. Of his specific considerations, and starting with Bernini's *Cathedra Perti*, St. Peter's, we are reminded of themes such as chiaroscuro; visionary spectacles; play with light and shadow, and a subjective feeling of redemption. Here Panofsky is trying to demonstrate the so-called baroque rebellion against Mannerism of the 1520s. Taking a semi-Hegelian position, Panofsky

interpreted baroque as a period with the capacity to resolve the internal conflicts he attributed to Mannerism. He extended this historical verdict to the Renaissance as well: the best work of the period, he claimed, demonstrates the conflict between a command for perspectival regime and "a Gothic spirit that makes the figures cling to the frontal plane and to each other." Accordingly, "the Baroque appears primarily as a liquidation of mannerism," which itself "was far from the result of a mere whim on the part of oversophisticated artists." Thus, the primary task of baroque artists was to address artistic problems that they inherited from the Renaissance in the first place (Panofsky, 1997).

Furthermore, in identifying baroque with Italy, Panofsky associated the style's manifestation in other European countries with Mannerism. His convictions were partly a reaction against the nineteenth century Gothico-Greek revivalism that kept both the Italian Renaissance and the baroque at arm's distance. Of further interest is his belief that baroque art tried to reconcile contradictions "merging into a subjective unity, and thus resolved, is also, or rather most particularly, to be observed in the realm of psychology" (Panofsky, 1997). To him, baroque is nothing short of a state of ecstasy where the subject is not only capable of expressing his or her feelings, he or she is already self-conscious of such a feeling in the first place. This state of mind, for Panofsky, is the very essence of the modern nested in baroque. It also says something about baroque's capacity to overcome the crisis precipitated by the Counter Reformation. Central to Panofsky's discourse is the suggestion that baroque is a form of art in which all artistic conflicts were reconciled. Thus, as with Wölfflin, Panofsky presents baroque as a transitory period within the long history of the Renaissance, which according to him, lasted until the death of Goethe, and when "the first railroads and industrial plants were built (Panofsky, 1997).

The second position on baroque concerns Sigfried Giedion. It took contemporary historians a couple of decades after the publication of *Space, Time, and Architecture* (1946) to grasp the book's problematic formulation of the idea of 'reconciliation,' read *transparency*. The totalization underpinning Giedion's narrative does camouflage modernity's relentless devaluation of all values, old and new. Constrained by the traditions of art history and the Hegelian idea of the spirit of the time, the urge for transparency is seemingly not negotiable for Giedion (Hartoonian, 2013). And yet, the baroquenity he saw in the mirror image of history is blended with a perception shared by those who had no doubt about the attainability of a modernist vision of totality (project?). Giedion's narrative does indeed draw from the experience of baroque, a period when architecture enjoyed a sense of internal unity, epitomizing the crisis of Humanism. What Giedion saw as central to the compositional language of baroque is a sense of space that differs from that of the Renaissance. This is not to suggest that prior to baroque space was not tangible. What Giedion was saying is that *excess* in baroque is spatial. One might go further and argue that the very presence of spatial excess in baroque expressed a sense of unity that was nurtured by the theological world.

Furthermore, starting with baroque's sublime beauty, Giedion maps the modernity of architecture in the matrix of space and time. Apropos, what both Giedion and Panofsky saw as unique to baroque is a *closure* with mystics attached to it. If for Panofsky baroque remains an ideal closure defining the scope of Mannerism's disengagement with the Renaissance, for Giedion, baroque exemplified a closure the spatial experience of which he took for a mirror image of Modernity. There is a historical truth to this observation: in stark contrast to the rage launched against early modern abstract painting, what visitors to the two churches discussed in this essay saw was neither concerned with tectonics, nor with the Humanist tendency to reduce the scope of representation to that of space. They rather experienced an architecture that exalted aspects of Humanism not attainable through the tropes of Renaissance architecture.

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