Architectural History's Indeterminacy:
Holiness in southern baroque architecture

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This article is a critique of architectural history's tendency to over-determine in thinking about practice and theory in general, and in thinking the relationship between architecture and spirituality in post-Tridentine ecclesiastical architecture in particular. It first demonstrates what is meant both by over-determination and resistance to interdisciplinarity within mainstream architectural history before critically exploring in relation to this how post-Tridentine architecture and spiritual life or religious devotion might be thought together, the sorts of relationships between the two that may be thought to take place, and asks where this relationship might be located. Suggesting that it might be profitable to follow Deleuze's philosophy of the Baroque in refusing the tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (in his case the book, in ours, architecture) and a field of subjectivity (the author, the architect), and rather to adopt like him, the notion of rhizome — without beginning or end, always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*, indeterminate. The article seeks to consider Baroque architecture as rhizomatic construction, rather than the usual (and unhelpful) preoccupations with it as dichotomous, expressive, or 'propagandistic'.

1   The term refers to the Alpine city of Trent ('Tridentum' in Latin), where a Council of Church leaders met in three phases between 1545 and 1563. Among much else, the Council reaffirmed medieval teachings on the authority of tradition, transubstantiation in the Mass (repudiating Protestant beliefs in consubstantiation), the sacraments and veneration of saints and relics. On the Council of Trent, see H. Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient,* 4 vols (Freiburg im Breisgau: 1958-75); John W. O'Malley, *Trent and all that: renaming Catholicism in the early modern era* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); R. Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700,* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 45-70.

2   See G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). For treatment of baroque architecture as expressive of context, and/or as representation of the will of the architect or patron, see S. Ostrow, *Art and Spirituality in Counter-Reformation Rome: The Sistine and Pauline Chapels in S. Maria Maggiore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1996); John Beldon Scott, *Architecture for the Shroud: Relic and Ritual in Turin* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003). For an interpretation of baroque architecture as 'propaganda', see E. Levy, *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). For the problems with such an account, see Helen Hills, 'Too Much Propaganda', *Oxford Art Journal,* 29(3) (2006): 446-453.

3   Of course, all scholarship is informed, consciously or not, by theoretical frameworks of some kind. I refer here, however, to the overt articulation of theoretical or political approaches. While theoretical sophistication is welcomed in architectural historical analysis of modern or contemporary architecture, this is not the case with pre-modern architecture (including medieval, Renaissance and baroque). The reasons for this are complex and have to date not been adequately analysed.

Last year I was invited to write a short paper on 'architecture and spiritual life in Tridentine Naples'.[1] My first inclination was to dismiss the idea: there seemed so much that was wrong with the underlying assumptions. But in articulating what I felt to be wrong, I found myself on new ground. The ensuing problems might, I think, be pertinent to the aims of this special issue of *field* in thinking about architecture and 'indeterminacy'. This is, then, both a consideration of architectural history's tendency to reductively over-determine, both in thinking about practice and theory in general, and in thinking the relationship between architecture and spirituality in post-Tridentine ecclesiastical architecture in particular. How might we think post-Tridentine architecture and spiritual life or religious devotion together? On what terms may architecture speak in regard to anything as slippery as 'spirituality'? What sort of relationship between the two may be thought to take place? And where would this relationship be located? Might we profitably follow Deleuze in refusing the tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (in his case the book, in ours, architecture) and a field of subjectivity (the author, the architect), and rather, adopt like him, the notion of rhizome, without beginning or end, always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*, indeterminate? Baroque architecture as rhizome, perhaps, rather than as dichotomous, expressive, or 'propagandistic'?[2]

First, I turn to architectural history's generally steadfast resistance to such ideas, indeed to any ostensibly theoretical intrusion at all — a resistance which increases in intensity with regard to early modern architecture.[3] This is neatly encapsulated in a recent edition of the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (USA), which, for the sake of argument, can be described as the leading architectural history journal. Volume 64 n.4 Dec 2005 was a special issue dedicated to 'Learning from Interdisciplinarity'. It contains 8 short essays encompassing less than 24 pages or one-fifth of the volume on inter- and multi-disciplinary issues. After this relatively brief space dedicated to these 'interdisciplinary' reflections, follow four longer articles (totalling 110 pages). While each author might adopt knowledge from disciplines other than art or architectural history, none of its four principal articles pays the slightest attention to interdisciplinarity or to the theoretical developments discussed in the first part of the volume.[4] In one volume, therefore, we are presented with a strange chimaera — an architectural history which promises to be porous, to welcome ideas from other disciplines and between disciplines, to '*learn* from interdisciplinarity' (my italics), but which nevertheless *in the same issue* blithely turns its back on these challenges, ignores them in an untroubled familiar fortress island of architectural history, shut up behind a *cordon sanitaire*. Of course, all disciplines harbour these radically divergent approaches. But what is remarkable here is that there is no embarrassment

4   I am drawing a distinction between
     'multidisciplinarity' whereby scholars
     use additatively ideas and knowledge
     from more than one discipline (e.g. the
     use by an architectural historian of the
     history of mathematics or geometry), and
     'interdisciplinarity', or the development
     of approaches to problems and questions
     arising between, rather than within
     disciplines (e.g. sexuality), which then
     require changes in the precepts and
     practice of all involved disciplines.

5   Nancy Steiber, 'Learning from
     Interdisciplinarity; Introduction',
     JSAH, 64(4) (Dec 2005): 417-419.

6   Steiber structures her 'Introduction'
     around the question 'Is architectural
     history an autonomous field?' Steiber,
     'Learning from Interdisciplinarity', p. 417.

7   'What happens when the passivity of verbs
     "symbolise, represent, and reflect" that
     we use to describe architecture's relation
     to society and culture is replaced with the
     forcefulness of verbs such as "transform,
     perform, inform"?' the editor asks, before
     singling out one essay, which 'proposes
     a new social history of architecture that
     explores its contribution to identity
     formation, considering the built
     environment as the *stage* for performing
     identity' (p. 417). Here then architecture,
     having been pushed towards agency, is
     quickly steered out of the limelight, simply
     to form a *stage* on which the real action
     takes place, architecture as backdrop,
     as stage, not as player. Architecture,
     in this model, does not take place.

8   J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the
     Barbarians* (London: Vintage, 2004).

9   Steiber, 'Learning from
     Interdisciplinarity', p. 418.

10   For a nice discussion of this, see Andrew
     Benjamin, *Eisenman and the Housing of
     Tradition: Art, Mimesis, and the Avant-
     garde* (Routledge: London, 1999).

11   Crucially, the conservative core remains
     the principal organ for scholarship on
     early modern architectural history. While
     JSAH may well be amongst the more
     conservative scholarly journals, it is also
     the only journal dedicated to architectural
     history including pre-modern architecture
     from countries beyond the USA and

in such a brazen juxtaposition. The Editor's 'Introduction' presents the interdisciplinary ideas, not as inherently divisive issues for debate — but rather as a bouquet of interesting ideas on which *future* architectural history might usefully draw, but the avoidance or ignorance of which presents no handicap to *present-day* architectural history.[5] Indeed, the packaging presents them as a whimsical sideline.

I wonder how this special issue now functions. As encouragement to architectural historians to absorb some of the selected ideas labelled 'Learning from interdisciplinarity'? Perhaps. But surely far more readily as reassurance, that it's perfectly OK to ignore them, as the really significant portion of the same volume does. The message from this volume seems to me to be 'Business as usual': either you can 'learn from interdisciplinarity' or you can do real (autonomous) architectural history.[6] Never the twain shall meet. The lesson to learn from interdisciplinarity is that it is irrelevant to the serious business of architectural history.[7] We are shown an Architectural History that is, in JM Coetzee's sense of the phrase, 'Waiting for the Barbarians'.[8]

Steiber ends her Introduction thus: 'Despite their varied and contrasting points of view, these essays make clear the objective of an interdisciplinary yet autonomous architectural history: to reveal the often unarticulated ways that architecture embodies how people have lived, thought, and worked'.[9] Architecture, then, as *embodiment* of lives, thought, and work. Architecture is understood here as an apparently magical materialisation of, at worst, verbs, and at best, ideas. This is to limit architecture in a manner characteristic of much architectural history, proceeding on the assumption that there is an autonomous 'base' or 'origin' '*outside*' of architecture which can serve to '*explain*' architecture, and which architecture seeks to '*represen*t', to house, to embody (or exclude).[10]

The special issue of *JSAH* is a useful demonstration of contemporary debate within architectural history — at least at its not unsophisticated, if conservative, core.[11] The question of why architectural history as a whole, and particularly early modern architectural history, has been so peculiarly resistant to theoretical approaches and learning from interdisciplinarity — far more than any other branch of art history — is an important one whose scope extends beyond this paper.[12]

The conjunction 'and' in 'architecture and spiritual life' stages an agon in which architecture's social vocation is enabled but also contained by its own powers of representation. How might we think of architecture and spirituality, then, without treating architecture as simply the enactment of idea? I should like to offer, rather than definitive answers and interpretations, some questions and issues for reflection, attempting

Britain. The terminology 'pre-modern'
is awkward, but it reflects what is, I
believe, a divide in scholarship between
the history and theory devoted to
modern / contemporary architecture
and that which addresses architecture
from earlier periods. See note 3 above.

12   The claim that architectural history
is 'conservative' because both
architecture and history 'conserve' is
insufficient as an explanation of this.

13   This is not the distinction between sacred
and profane indicated architecturally
by Michael Camille. For Camille, the
architecture of Chartres 'manifests the
desire' to encompass and structure
official exegesis in opposition to the
instability of the 'countless unofficial
and indecipherable meanings that are
projected onto it and that proliferate in
the profane world it seeks, but fails, to
exclude.' Michael Camille, 'At the Sign
of the "Spinning Sow"' in Axel Bolvig
and Phillip Lindley (eds.), *History and
Images: Towards a New Iconology*
(Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 250-251.

14   'The manipulation of a space that
exists prior to the parade is necessarily
accompanied by the production
of a space that is specific to it.' L.
Marin, *On Representation,* trans.
Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford
University Press, 2001), p. 42. The best
discussion of the procession in this
regard remains Marin's, pp. 38-52.

to move away from an interpretation based on secure identities, an
hermeneutics of depth, and linear historical time, to thinking instead
about the relationships between architecture and spirituality in Tridentine
Italy — as a continuing travail of openings, fissures, and delays. I want to
avoid defining either 'architecture' or 'spirituality' by confining them to a
box of periodisation in terms of a (finished) past. Instead I consider both
architecture and spirituality as pluralistic, while also tending to produce
each other's limits.

'Architecture' in Tridentine Naples was not homogenous or unitary. It
would, in any case, be wrong to foreclose the discussion by restricting it
from the start to ecclesiastical architecture, to assume that architecture
built for the Church had an exclusive relationship to spiritual experience.
What is it to say of spirituality outside ecclesiastical buildings, in wayside
shrines, in domestic chapels, or in kitchens, storerooms, bakeries and
laundries, and numerous other places sometimes occupied or preoccupied
by spirituality?[13] The sacred and profane did not occupy separate
architectures. The church was a place of transaction and conflict, as much
as of transcendence and tranquillity. Always fractured, always spilling out
into the street and into more registers of meaning than can be contained
within a rubric, church architecture cannot be contained by a verbal
logos. What is it to say of spirituality outside of buildings, above all in
processions which unfolded through the city, articulated at specific sites
by temporary altars, triumphal arches, facades laced with epigraphs and
encomia, but not composed of them?[14]

Spiritual lives extended beyond the liturgical to all religious practices and
beliefs. In Tridentine Naples, just as the practices of architecture, including
ecclesiastical architecture, were many, contested and contradictory, so also
— though in different ways — were the practices and precepts of spiritual
lives. There was no single spiritual life to which all adhered, and there
was no distinct form of life that was 'spiritual', separate and autonomous
from other aspects of life. Even within the main religious orders, religious
practices varied considerably. Outside these groups, 'spiritualities' also
embraced those beliefs and forces, which were marginalised and repressed
by (certain groups within) the Church. This outside imprinted even
the 'official' architecture of orthodox Catholicism with its marks. In so
far as church architecture of this period made it its business to exclude
difference, to divide and taxonomise those accepted within, it bears the
imprint of all it sought to exclude.

Just as the practices of architecture, including ecclesiastical architecture, were many, contested, and also contradictory, so also — though in different ways — were the practices and precepts of 'spiritual life'. There was no single spiritual life to which all adhered, and there was no distinct form of life that was 'spiritual', separate and autonomous from other aspects of life that were not. Spirituality is also the relationship between oneself and infinite alterity that sees without being seen, the *mysterium tremendum*, the terrifying mystery, the dread and fear and trembling of the Christian in the experience of the sacrificial gift. Rather than a substantive, spirituality as having an essence that can be identified and stated as such, is better termed an actative. This actative was conflictual and therefore unable to support an essential. Thus these categories — 'architecture' and 'spirituality' were never sharp-edged, and our analysis of them should not be so either. 'Spirituality' seems to proffer a useful key to unlock architecture, to explain it (away). Indeed, the 'spiritual' is readily seen as opposed to the architectural, and therefore 'outside' it (rendering the displacement of architecture almost salvational, redemptive). *Spiritus*, immaterial breath, is the counterpart to the materiality of architecture; the immateriality of the spirit and of spiritual matters is readily opposed to the body and matter that constitutes architecture. Some approaches, effectively Hegelian, nevertheless search for a commonality between (or above) thought and matter (architectural and philosophical) seeing architecture as the materialisation of the spirit.[15] The Protestant hermeneutic that conflates the Holy Spirit with the spirit of the biblical text also works against architecture in this regard.[16]

In offering for consideration 'architecture and spirituality', architecture is thereby conceived as separate from 'spirituality' and as constituting its material embodiment or its material evocation — a 'pointing to' of something which either is imagined or actually exists already 'elsewhere'. This 'elsewhere' haunts much architectural history, displacing and replacing architecture with its imagined predecessor ('religion') or destiny ('spirituality'). Architecture thus becomes a sort of interloper — the illegitimate occupier of a space, which is more appropriately occupied by word or deed, by 'origin' (birth) or 'destiny' (death). Architecture approached this way is off-limits, already always elsewhere.

If architecture is conceived as a technique separate from thought (and affect and spirit) and either as coming after, or preceding it, then it produces affect and spirit. Architecture, especially ecclesiastical architecture, appears like a gigantic butterfly net, able to trap 'spiritual experience' and pass it on to its users. This conception of architecture as 'capturing' pre-existing transcendental effects, termed 'spiritual', or better still, recognised as such by viewers / users (like the identification of the butterfly in the net by reference to the pre-existing wallchart) reduces architecture to little more than a conveyor belt or tunnel through which

15   Such a conception underpins Erwin Panofsky's famous attempt to incorporate into one explanation the principles of Gothic architecture and Scholasticism. He searches in two contemporaneous but diverse phenomena, the University disputation and the system of Gothic vaulting, for common principles of clarification and conciliation of opposing forces. Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (Latrobe PA: Arch Abbey Press, 1951).

16   'For by a kind of mutual bond the Lord has joined together the certainty of his Word and of his Spirit so that the perfect religion of the Word may abide in our minds when the Spirit, who causes us to contemplate God's face, shines; and that we recognise him in his own image, namely, in the Word.' in Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* trans. John Allen, 3 vols (London: SCM, 1961) I, bk.1, p. 95.

precious (pre-determined) feelings can be transmitted. Like the butterfly, such 'spirituality', deemed to be immanent within certain buildings, is divorced from history. As we have seen above, that architecture 'reflects' or 'expresses' remains a common assumption in architectural history practice, but it is fundamentally flawed, as its dependency on the mode of the mimetic, relies on binary logic to describe phenomena of an entirely different nature. However, rather than simply dismiss this manner of practising architectural history, I shall return to it below as not coincidental to what is habitually presented as the Council of Trent's own architectural history.

Might we think instead of spirituality, not as restricted to church architecture (nor as chronologically or teleologically corralled within a 'pre-modern' period enclosure), but as intensity of affects which may both mobilise architecture and be mobilised by it?

Reading Trent: Architecture as Representation

The Council of Trent has little to say about architecture directly. The Decrees show concern for images, but little interest in architecture. Indeed, Catholic treatises throughout the sixteenth century, largely ignore architecture and are overwhelmingly concerned with images, especially paintings.[17] While word and image (painting) have readily been seen as competitors for the status of revelation, architecture has not.

Nevertheless, for Rudolf Wittkower and others, the Council of Trent set in motion a spirit, which artists pursued and caught up with (or not): 'Are we at all capable to judge whether, where, and when the artists caught up with the spirit of the Council?'[18]

Consequently, architectural history has tended to treat liturgy and the Decrees of the Council of Trent as principal explanators for Counter Reformation church building. The most familiar model is the analysis of the Gesù in Rome (Fig. 1) (rising from 1568 and consecrated in 1584), as if it were an illustration of the Decrees of the Council of Trent. Thus Rudolf Wittkower in 1958 treated it as the archetype of a typology, its form read in terms of its function (more or less a container for the masses being preached at):

> The beginning was made with the Gesù, the mother church of the Jesuit Order. With its broad single nave, short transept, and impressive dome this church was ideally suited for preaching from the pulpit to large numbers of people. It established the type of the large congregational church that was followed a hundred times during the seventeenth century with only minor variations.[19]

17   This point has been made, but not critically considered, by several scholars: C. Dejob, *De l'influence du Concile e Trente sur la literature et les beaux-arts chez les peoples catholiques* (Paris: 1884), p. 265; Giuseppe Scavizzi 'La teologica cattolica e le immagini durante il XVI secolo', *Storia dell'arte,* 21 (1974): 171-212; Scavizzi, *The Controversy on Images from Calvin to Baronius* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 242-248; and Pamela Jones 'Art Theory as Ideology', in C. Farago (ed.), *Reframing the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 127-139.

18   Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600-1750, Early Baroque* I, (ed.) J. Connors and J. Montagu (Singapore: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 1.

19   Ibid., p. 15.

Fig. 1. Rome, Il Gesù. Interior view east towards main altar. Photo: Helen Hills.

This can, of course, be read as another of architecture's founding myths. By this account the Neapolitan church of S. Maria degli Angeli a Pizzofalcone (1600), with its vast and luminous dome at the crossing (Fig. 2), S. Caterina Formiello, or the fabulously decorated San Gregorio Armeno, simply repeat a 'solution' (the bare bones of the Gesù) invented in Rome.[20] By this account, architecture elsewhere was merely a repetition of the Gesù that was itself little more than reactive representation. Beyond this, Wittkower's account treats architecture as *expressing* the social forms, which are also those capable of generating and using it. The building of the church sets up a place that did not exist before; yet, at the same time, its inhabitants — God, clergy, worshippers — required the place before it was invented. Indeed, the 'spiritual' is readily seen as opposed to the architectural, and therefore 'outside' it (rendering architecture's displacement almost redemptive).

Any assumption that liturgy and architecture (often even further reduced to architectural plan) encompass each other in corresponding form is problematic. Analysed in terms of liturgy, architecture is seen as accommodating a pre-existing 'function' that is coherent and productive. It is usually envisaged that architecture houses liturgy, as if 'liturgy' were conceived independently, already, and in existence somewhere

20   For these churches, see Anthony Blunt, *Neapolitan Baroque and Rococo Architecture* (London: Zwemmer, 1974); Helen Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in 17th C Neapolitan Convents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Silvana Savarese, *Francesco Grimaldi e l'architettura della Controriforma a Napoli* (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1986).

else, quite autonomously from architecture, which is then produced to house it. Parallel to this is a tendency within architectural history to see the architect as explanator, as originator of the new. The architect, understanding the requirements of liturgy, produces a new form, all the better to house it. The liturgico-architect, positioned outside of architecture, is then advanced as its explanation and cause. The architect is spiritual prophet as his architecture presences the divine. Yet such an account uncomfortably matches the ambitions for architecture of Trent.

Fig. 2. Naples, S. Maria degli Angeli a Pizzofalcone (1600), with its vast and luminous dome at the crossing. Photo: Tim Benton.

The Tragedy of Trent

The tragedy of Trent was that the command was mistaken for something to be understood, obedience for knowledge itself, and being for a *fiat*. This was the resort of the Catholic Church in a state of emergency, threatened by Protestants (as historians always remember), and by Muslims (as they often forget).[21] The Council of Trent claimed separation for the Roman Catholic Church: separation from the Protestant churches and from secular Catholic powers. Yet Trent declared the Church to have responsibility for spiritual (as opposed to temporal) matters, in an era where the spiritual seeped into all aspects of life.

Catholicism's culture was to shield it from Judaism, Islam and Protestantism. The Council of Trent sought to influence culture, to contain the unconstrained, and to martial the errant in a mode familiar to us today by which 'clarity' of message becomes key, martialling art to tame and recuperate, a sort of ethics of knowledge, directed when expedient at unlettered people and those who were, in a range of ways, considered to be inferior, in need of corrective instruction:

> The Decrees of Trent treat art as being in the service of religion and spirituality, their docile instrument, servile and exterior to the dominant power of 'Catholicism'. But the Decrees' institutionalisation, and their institutionalised interpretations, imply a performative and interpretative force, a call to faith, in the sense of architecture that would maintain a more internal, more complex relation to what is called spirituality, faith, religion.[22]

Architecture and intensification

It may be more fruitful to think of architecture as tracing the spiritual, or that which cannot be contained, of gesturing elsewhere, as allowing through one space — though not in a hermeneutics of depth — an opening to another beyond, hidden, invisible, transcendent. Might we think of the sacred and architecture as producing each other at the edge of the same limit? Both architecture and religion not only institutionalise but shift and transform. Both cannot be except as they constantly distance themselves from their own boundaries. They are continuously in the process of becoming and changing, even while they are institutionalising and establishing.

Ecclesiastical architecture does not only contain worshippers; it is that place where people become worshippers. It finds them, refines them, defines them, and limits them. The church gives to worshippers their outlook both on God and on themselves as worshippers of God. Yet

[21] 'Our impious and ruthless enemy the Turk was never at rest.' J. Waterworth (ed. & trans.), *Decrees of the Council of Trent, The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Œcumenical Council of Trent* (London: Dolman, 1848), p. 2.

[22] Ibid., p. 235.

the church is not the place where worshippers feel 'at home'; they are displaced, in another's house, in the house of the Other. Ecclesiastical architecture assumes the task of letting God be present, letting God be, being God's house, housing God, domesticating God, bringing God down to earth.

Architecture inevitably played no small part in the Christian technology of the believer. We are told 'the Christian sacralisation of space is not as old as Christianity itself', that 'Christianity sacralised people, not objects.'[23] Early Christian apologists strove to distinguish their Christian God from pagan gods by denying Him a home. While pagan temples housed their gods, the Christian God was boundless, uncircumscribed. For St Augustine (*Sermon* 337) the true dwelling place of God was in baptised Christians' hearts, rather than in their churches.[24] Yet although the location of a church was not sacred, the celebration of the Eucharist sacralised the church: *Haec est corpus meum*.[25] Like the sacrifice of the Eucharist, the sacrifice of martyrdom sacralised Christian place, too, as soil stained with the blood of martyrs and their tombs marked the place for Christians to worship. Here the idea of the sacred, while appearing to be spatial, is in fact temporal — or atemporal, the sacred as abolition of time. The Church, by encompassing and enclosing these sites, thereby sought to enclose both place and time. Together, the Eucharist and martyr saints formed a specifically Christian way to sacralise both space and time through each other.[26] By affirming the cult of saints and of relics, Trent attempted to sacralise both location as temporal, and the temporal as location. Architecture was central, not incidental, to this work and both its measure and its limit.

Therefore, Tridentine architecture, particularly through its emphasis on sanctity, martyrdom, and relics, was orchestrated by its claims to temporalise place and to localise time. Such ambition was doomed to failure, betrayed by the impossibility of closure, because time is shot through with delay, and place with fissures. Sites could never be enclosed. The *virtus*, or good will of the saint was localised — intensified — in both time (feast days) and place (through relics).[27] Thus a church on a feast day was particularly resonant with sacredness. The gifts piled high on the tomb of Andrea Avellino in Naples, for example, always increased in number around the time of his annual feast.[28]

Much was based on an archaeological regression toward a foundation. Insistence upon the relic as starting-point, or, more precisely, on martyrdom as place through the relic, is at its most spectacular in the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome where Stefano Maderno's famous sculpture, St Cecilia (1600), shows the saint supposedly as her body was found on its excavation from the catacomb (Fig. 3).[29]

23   Béatrice Caseau, 'Sacred Landscapes', in G. W. Bowerstock et al. (eds.), *Interpreting Late Antiquity: Essays on the Postclassical World* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 40, 42; Robert Markus, 'How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places', *Journal of Early Christian Studies,* 2(3) (1994): pp. 257-271.

24   Quincy Howe (ed. & trans.), *Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Selected Sermons* (London: Gollancz, 1967), p. 132.

25   For a development of this claim, see Caseau, p. 41. In the Sacrament the essential body or the bodily flesh of Christ is eaten. This means that the domains of faith and sense-perception intersect. In the real presence spirit and flesh are one.

26   Ibid., p. 42.

27   On relics see especially, E. Bozóky and A. M. Helvétius (eds.), *Les reliques: Objets, cultes, symbols* (Turnhourt: Brepols, 1999).

28   ASN, Corp.relig. sop.S. Paolo Maggiore 1180, ff.1r-93r.

29   For a reading of this sculpture as a 'fulfilment of contemporary liturgical concerns', see T. Kämpf 'Framing Cecilia's Sacred Body: Paolo Camillo Sfondrato and the Language of Revelation', *The Sculpture Journal,* (6) (2001): 10-20.

The sculpture seeks to combine historical truth, represented by the archaeological discovery of the saint's body, with spiritual truth; her martyrdom, thereby combining the spiritual 'origin' with the historical (archaeological) discovery. Or, more accurately, it combines two different sorts of 'origins' of the contact point between human and divine: the point where a woman slithers into martyrdom and sanctity, the end of her life, end of the human being and beginning of the spiritual being; and the *inventio* of the saint's relics. The sculpture shows spiritual truth both as confirmed by archaeology (history, knowledge) and as beyond it. The body bears the wound of martyrdom (Fig. 4). That wound is turned to the viewer, even as the face is turned away. That wound, like a mouth replacing the mouth, is an opening to something, as if to utter something yet being unable to say something; a mouth of the ineffable, the point of entry to the beyond, that beyond which now holds the woman, but which is invisible to her whose head and eyes are turned. The body lies twisted before us, chastely beautiful, the face swivelled away, the wound marking the turning point between the body and the head, between the visible and the ineffable, the unspeakable unseeable of the eyes.

Fig. 3. (Left) Stefano Maderno, St Cecilia (1600), Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome. Photo: Helen Hills.
 Fig. 4. (Right) Detail of the neck wound on Maderno's St Cecilia. Photo: Helen Hills.

The basilica of Santa Cecilia where the statue occupies the key position in front of the main altar, is thereby reinscribed, in relation to the perpetual start that is the martyr's end, the repetition of the sacrifice, back to origins, and therefore the end of something old and the beginning of something 'new'. The wound — a gap — is where spirit and matter become one, the start of something new. The gap, something missing, becomes an opening to something entirely unknown. The wound that marks the death of the subject marks the opening to martyrdom, the transformation of body into relic. The relationship between Self and Other is presented as this gaping slit, this dumb mouth, a departure from history (continuity, human time). The main altar becomes the point at which historical time (the finding of the body) meets spiritual time through the martyred body (the relic), meeting at that juncture which is severed, at the wound. But it is

something 'new' that is positioned outside of historical time. It is the end of history and the start of that which is beyond the edge of history. Here visual analogy represents the embodiment of spiritual faith. Spirituality is embodied at the point where it is disembodied. This is what the Tridentine concern with the relic proffered, and which has been too hurriedly smoothed out by historians into a linear history.

Even as it sought to localise time, Trent described time that was circular: images of saints admonished the people to 'revolve' in their minds articles of faith, whilst other images showed miracles to prompt the imitation of saintly actions in the future.[30] It is perhaps more useful to think of ecclesiastical architecture less as an enactment of the Decrees of the Council of Trent, than as their translation. Such architectural translation is neither an image nor a copy. If there is a relationship of 'original' to version between the Decrees and the architecture that followed, it cannot be representative or reproductive; architecture does not represent or reproduce, nor does it restitute. In writing about translation, Walter Benjamin uses the image of the core and the shell, the fruit and its skin, a body and a cloak: 'the language of the translation envelops its content like a royal robe with ample folds. For it signifies a more exalted language than its own and thus remains unsuited to its content, overpowering and alien.'[31] The royal cloak, floating and swirling about the royal body produces the body underneath it, makes it royal. Likewise, architecture does not seek to rehearse the Decrees, to say this or that, or to house this or that concept, but to exhibit its own possibility, and to do so in a mode that is both anticipatory and prophetic.

Reform meant desire for another form. The desire for a new place, new churches, new cloisters, new corridors, new colleges, new seminaries: not simply new repetitions, but new forms. The re-evaluation of the visible God, following Protestant denunciation, coincided with a re-evaluation of the senses, since it was through the senses that divinity was received.[32] It maybe useful to think of architecture, less as mimetic representation of 'spirituality' (preconceived) / liturgy, etc., but as producing zones of intensity, or pure 'affect', which can enhance the human power to become. Thus rather than as the structuring of and container for Trent, its Decrees and Catholic liturgy, baroque architecture might be thought affectively, as productive and intensificational. Rather than think of the Tridentine church as the container for the well-attended sermon (Wittkower's Gesù), thereby reducing it to a generalisation and (empty) locus for instruction, might we think of it in terms of affect? For Deleuze speakers are the *effects* of investments in language. Might we usefully think of worshippers as the effects of investments in architecture?

30   *Council of Trent*, p. 235.

31   Hannah Arendt, 'The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parsieins'*, in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. H. Zohn, (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 75.

32   The Eucharist is not a Platonic representation (*adumbration*) of historical events. Rather, flesh and spirit, the sensuous and the spiritual, the literal and the figurative are actively involved. It entails a conjunction of categories, a form of transgression.

Here are two contrasting examples to explore this suggestion. First, Cosimo Fanzago's doorways in the large cloister of the Certosa di San Martino, Naples (Fig. 5). About these extraordinary doorways by Cosimo Fanzago, in his classic *Neapolitan Baroque and Rococo Architecture* (1971) Anthony Blunt writes:

> Here the forms are more complex. The triangular consoles, which break the 'pediments' over the doors and support the busts, are squeesed in between the scrolls, the same arrangement being repeated above the niche, but with the scrolls inverted. The arches supporting the vault end on consoles which are linked to the jambs of the door by marble ribbons, from which hang flowers, leaves, and fruit. Over the door itself the architrave bursts into a life of its own, projecting upwards a curl of marble and downwards two scrolls, which [...] seem to act as clamps to the top of the door itself. The whole is so like a grotesque mask — volutes for eyes, curl of marble for the nose, scrolls for lips, cut out lobes for cheeks — that the illusion can hardly have been unintentional.[33]

[33] Blunt, *Neapolitan Baroque*, p. 74.

'[T]he illusion can hardly have been unintentional.' Blunt seems reluctant to greet the puzzled, puzzling faces that look down on us, tongues lolling, in spite of the evident strain placed on his attempt to read them in classical terms of architectural grammar. And indeed, what are they doing poking out impudently below the busts of saints above? Those busts (not finished until the 1640s) which, instead of sitting in niches above the doorways, burst forward, overflow them, just as the elements of mouldings and architrave overflow the boundaries they begin to sketch. Blunt himself ascribes these strangenesses to Florentine artists, Buontalenti and his school, brought to Naples by Michelangelo Naccherino, who, by the 1620s 'had established a fashion for it in tombs, fountains, and other decorative features.'[34] (Compare Fig. 6.)

[34] Ibid., p. 74.

Yet something of the provisionality of these sculptural-architectural forms, seems in danger of being overlooked by this genealogical formal ancestry. Most striking is the way that these hard forms, fashioned in marble and stucco, so evidently are shown to *seem to be*; we are shown the anthropomorphising of architectural mouldings — not their anthropomorphosis — the malleability of form, a fearful slippage of architecture into body and back again.

The mobility of the face, the eyes, the mouth, the tongue, that they evoke, also inherently imply a rapid disbandment and dissolution. It is not just a face that is suggested, but a particularly mobile, expressive face; not just eyes but rolling eyes; not just a tongue, but a cheekily licking one (Fig. 7). This is as far from Gombrich's static duck-rabbit as you can get. This is also what renders them particularly interesting from a Deleuzian perspective. They do not represent a face, though they may suggest one. The saints' busts seem closer to that mimetic idea of representation — though even they, instead of sitting in niches above the doorways, burst

forward, overflow them, just as the elements of mouldings overflow the boundaries they begin to sketch, and their fine light smokiness deliberately undercuts any presupposition that this is a portrait bust, a fleshly body.
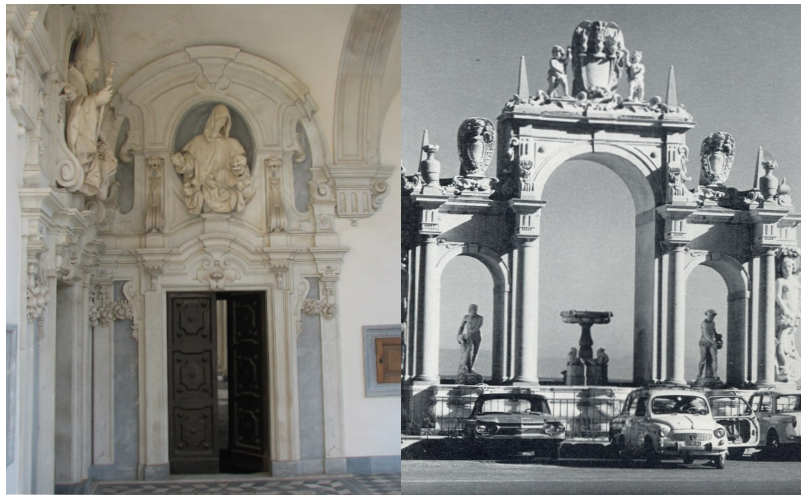

Fig. 5. (Left) Cosimo Fanzago, doorways in the large cloister of the Certosa di San Martino, Naples. Photo: Helen Hills.
Fig. 6. (Right) Michelangelo Naccherino, Fontana dell'Immacolatella, 1601, Naples, Photo: Helen Hills.

For Deleuze any actual thing maintains its own virtual power. What something is, is also its power to become. Art works are singular by transforming the world through images that are at once actual (being) and virtual (having the power to become). Art — including architecture — has the power to imagine and vary affects that are not already given. It is the vehicle for producing holiness rather than its expression. Less important than what architecture is, are the forces or powers of *becoming* that it reveals.

Fig. 7. Detail of the 'face' in Fanzago's doorways in the large cloister of the Certosa di San Martino, Naples. Photo: Helen Hills.

Thus the setting of the scrolly eyes (architrave becoming face) and the beniched bust (saint becoming architrave) directly one above the other begin to make more sense. One is to illuminate and undercut that which the other is (not). The two becomings interlink and form relays in a

circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialisation further. But while such overspilling and destabilising may seem at home on a fountain, its use in a Carthusian cloister, and particularly at a junction which supports busts of saints, is striking. The gurgling faces seem to undercut the seriousness of St Bruno *et al.*. The participation in the formation of connections and over-runs is unlimited. This sort of architecture-sculpture is particularly rhizomic. Rhizomes can shoot out roots, leaves, and stems from any point. A rhizome has no beginning: no roots; it has no middle: no trunk; and it has no end: no leaves. It is always in the middle, in process. It can connect from any part of itself to a tree, to the ground, to other plants; to itself. Fanzago's swivelly-eyed face as rhizome.[35]

These hump-backed anthropomorpho-architraves, where we seem leered at, jeered at, and in on the joke, show us, half ludically half-threateningly, that 'the middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed'.[36] Deterritorialisation is the chaos beneath and within territories; it is the lines of flight without which there would be neither territory nor change in territory. There is an intensity or enjoyment of movement itself, of openings that reveal further openings; of faces that appear to peer out of curlicues of stone and stucco; of crossing space, and burrowing, disappearing, re-emerging. The sculptured doorways are produced from this movement (rather than being the supposed end of the movement).

[35] 'The rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb "to be", but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and... and ... and...'". Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* p. 25.

[36] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 25.

Fig. 8. Naples Duomo, Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro, interior. Photo: Helen Hills.

My second example is the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro (Saint Januarius, principal patron saint of Naples) in Naples (Fig. 8). This Chapel was built in 1608, within Naples Cathedral but financially and administratively independent of it, to fulfil a vow made during the plague of 1526-27. It remains the most venerated sanctuary in the city, where the

miraculous liquefaction of San Gennaro's blood occurs. This compression chamber boasts not only San Gennaro's prodigious relics, but the fabulously wrought silver reliquaries of all its (competing) protector saints, martyred in diverse places and times and restituted through sanctification at different times (now present both on Heaven and earth). It might therefore be thought of as thwarting linear time and relationships with compressed time and place, with a sort of instantaneous circularity, with intensive time and place rather than with extensive time and place.

If we compare this reliquary chapel to the Chapel of S Francesco de Geronimo in the Gesù Nuovo, where the bones are aligned beneath the busts of their saintly owners, like a barracks — a visual taxonomy of sanctity (Fig. 9) or to the reliquaries of ebony and gilt copper by Gennaro Monte in the Treasury Chapel in the Certosa di San Martino, Naples (1691) (Fig. 10), where the reliquaries and bones are arrayed on each side of Ribera's beautiful *Pietà* altarpiece (1637), as if in jewelcases, immobile and fixed, part of a narrative of Christ's martyrdom, then the Treasury Chapel is striking in its treatment of the saints as living presences, not a peep-show of bones behind glass, but part of our world, mobile and fluid, animating not just the chapel, but out into the street during annual processions back to their church of provenance. Far from Stefano Maderno's St Cecilia (Fig. 3), which locates history and redemption in martyrdom, the Treasury Chapel in Naples looks ahead to the future, to redemption through *repeated* miracle. Hardly does it pause to consider death or loss, unlike the other reliquary chapels, here we see no bones.

Fig. 9. (Left) Wall reliquary display in the Chapel of S Francesco de Geronimo in the Gesù Nuovo, Naples. Photo: Helen Hills.

Fig. 10. (Right) Naples, Certosa di San Martino, Treasury Chapel: reliquaries of ebony and gilt copper by Gennaro Monte (1691), Jusepe de Ribera's Pietà (1637). Photo: Helen Hills.

The silver reliquary busts themselves were modelled on that of San Gennaro, famously donated to Naples Cathedral by Charles II of Anjou in 1305 (Fig. 11). In these exported objects, such as Lorenzo Vaccaro's *St Mary of Egypt* — which belonged simultaneously to Neapolitan convents and churches and to the Treasury Chapel — nature, artifice, and the holy were combined and refracted (Fig. 12). Gilt silver assumes the place of flesh and skin, resplendent with the bones that it both conceals and stages. It is anticipation incarnate, the glory of the saint's body transfigured for eternity, reunited with its happy soul, on earth and in heaven.

Fig. 11. (Left) Reliquary bust of San Gennaro (St Januarius) famously donated to Naples Cathedral by Charles II of Anjou in 1305. Photo: Helen Hills.
Fig. 12. (Right) Unknown Neapolitan silversmith to design by Lorenzo Vaccaro, St Mary of Egypt, silver reliquary bust (1699), Treasury Chapel, Naples. Photo: Helen Hills.

In the re-liquefaction of San Gennaro's congealed blood, the miracle is seen, and seen to be seen. The Treasury Chapel is a striking visible testament to that seeing. Here the miraculous liquefaction of blood is less transcendental than transformative. Twice or thrice a year, spurred on by fervent prayer, worshippers became witnesses to his martyrdom. The severed head and spilled blood, made the miracle inside the chapel, and concentrated the saint's virtus amongst the thronged crowds, thus affirming the future.

The chapel did not represent the power of the Deputies or the power of the saints; it produced a capacity for being affected, a *puissance*. It did not contain something pre-existing elsewhere. Its impetus multiplied Naples' patron saints. Under the aegis of the city's Seggi (Naples' aristocratic political and administrative centres) and right under the nose of the Archbishop, indeed, in the cathedral itself, the chapel gathered together an

37   The march of patron saints in Naples is
      unparalleled. At the end of the sixteenth
      century Naples had seven patrons
      including Gennaro. There followed: 1605
      Tomas Aquinas; 1625 Andrea Avellino
      and Patricia; 1626 Giacomo della Marca
      and Francesco di Paola; 1640 St Dominic;
      1657 Francis Xavier; 1664 St Teresa of
      Avila; 1667 St Philip Neri; 1671 St Gaetano
      da Thiene; 1675 Gregory of Armenia
      and Nicola di Bari; 1688 St Michael
      Archangel; 1689 Chiara of Assisi; 1690
      Peter Martyr, Maria Maddelena de' Pazzi
      and St Blaise; 1691 Francis of Assisi and
      Cecilia; 1695 Giovanni da Capestrano
      and Anthony Abbot; 1699 S Maria
      Egiziaca; 1705 Mary Magdalen; 1711 St
      Augustine, 1731 St Irene of Thessalonica.

38   For their rivalries, see Helen Hills,
      'Nuns and Relics: Spiritual Authority
      in post-Tridentine southern Italy',
      in C. van Wyhe (ed.), *Female
      Monasticism in Pre-Industrial Europe*
      (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

39   On the history of the building and
      decoration of the Treasury Chapel, see A.
      Bellucci, *Memorie storiche ed artistiche
      del Tesoro nella cattedrale dal Secolo
      XVI al XVIII* (Naples: Antonio Iacuelli,
      1915); F. Strazzullo, *La Cappella di San
      Gennaro nel Duomo di Napoli* (Naples:
      Istituto Grafico Editoriale Italiano, 1994).

army of patron saints, martialling an unparalleled spiritual force on behalf of the people of Naples, to protect them from cataclysmic nature; from Vesuvius' eruptions to depredations of the plague.[37] One after another patron saints were promoted by rival religious orders and institutions. The convent of Santa Patrizia advanced St Patricia, the Theatines St Andrea Avellino.[38] They competed over which reliquary bust should occupy the best places in the chapel, whether a mere blessed could take precedence over a fully-blown saint, or whether precedence should depend simply on date of election as patron saint to the city. Meanwhile the Deputies sought to attract famous painters from outside Naples to decorate altarpieces and vaults, and the painters of Naples sought to deter them by threats and violence.[39] The chapel set new currents seering through Naples' already complex devotional practices and civic politics. And thrice a year the deputies, the archbishop and viceroy, aristocrats, and people of Naples gathered to witness the terrible and longed-for liquefaction of the blood of San Gennaro. The Chapel was not simply the setting for that astonishing event, nor did the miracle produce it or it the miracle; they mobilised, intensified, and circumscribed each other.

The citizens of Naples were brought together, even assumed a shared identity, through their worship of their protector saints, particularly San Gennaro. The investment produced the body (not the other way about). The architecture of the Treasury Chapel was not a vehicle for messages about sanctity in general or about San Gennaro in particular, rather it was a creative intensive event that produced its users (believers). Just as the bones become a relic through the reliquary, the reliquary chapel here produced San Gennaro's spiritual consequence.

Conclusion

I have not intended to produce a critique that claims to be a methodological examination in order to reject all approaches except for a single (correct) one. Rather, I hope to have contributed to the problematisation of our understanding of the relationship between architecture and holiness, while seeing religious architecture as necessarily a site of contestation — including while it was built throughout the seventeenth century — and as an object of interpretation today; a site whose meaning has not been closed down, and which is not unified, in spite of all the efforts, architectural and scholarly, to close it down and to unify it.

40   Some art historians persist in seeing
the artist as key explanatory to all
works. Interestingly, those who insist on
'agency' in the artist also tend to treat
'context' as explanation, and to limit
admissible 'evidence' accordingly.

Two precepts, then. First, architecture must be thought of as beyond any patron's or architect's intention (even if that were ascertainable).[40] Second, style or form is not the external or accidental adornment of a message; it is the creation of affects from which speakers and messages are discerned. Style is not something that ornaments voice or content. Voice, meaning, or what a text says is at one with its style. Likewise, there is no message 'behind' architectural affect and becoming; any sense of a message or of an underlying meaning is an *effect* of its specific style.

Thus rather than think of the Tridentine church as a mere container for the well-attended sermon, we might instead, think of it as producing the crowds it housed so well. We might, for instance, think of the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro in terms of its exceptionality, its intensification. We might think of the Chapel as generating its (increasing number of) protector saints, rather than simply housing their reliquaries. If we think of architecture, less as mimetic representation of preconceived 'spirituality' (liturgy, etc.), but as producing zones of intensity or pure 'affect', which can enhance the human power to become, then, rather than as the structuring of and container for Trent, its Decrees, and Catholic liturgy, architecture might be thought *affectively*. Might we think of architecture as presenting singular affects and percepts, freed from organising and purposive points-of-view? In and through spiritual intensity, we apprehend architecture's mobilisation. Architectural location, in spite of Tridentine ambitions and appearances, was never static. Multiple investments, different speeds and plural determinations, albeit drawn together at the same location, sabotaged stasis and coherence. It is, then, architecture itself that is desirable and affective; not a concealed belief or meaning behind it. Architecture is not the expression of meaning, but the production of sense, allowing new perceptions, new worlds.

Architecture makes a promise to spirituality and spirituality to architecture. Unlike promises we may make to each other, these promises can never be broken. But they can also never be fulfilled. Southern Baroque architecture seems to participate in a constant emotional storm in which architecture and ornament are wrested apart and driven together again, like torn and flapping banners, emblematic of the tension between immanence and transcendence. Architecture and decoration work together and challenge each other in the harsh light of their changing resolve. Concertedly architecture and decoration epitomise a state of emergency in the soul, the rule of the emotions.[41] This twisting turning architecture is not a polite representation of an underlying human norm, not an 'embodiment of lives, thought, or work' or of anything else already existing elsewhere, but the creation and exploration of new ways of perception, worshipping, and becoming.

41   cf. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of
German Tragic Drama (Ursprung
des deutshen Trauerspiels)* trans. J.
Osborne (London: Verso 1985), p. 74.