

THE CONCEPT OF BAROQUE AND ITS RELATION TO SIR THOMAS BROWNE'S *RELIGIO MEDICI* AND *URN BURIAL*

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THE word 'baroque' appears to derive from the Spanish *barrueco* or the Portuguese *barroca* meaning an irregular pearl.¹ Helmut Hatzfeld mentions also a far-fetched scholastic syllogism *in barbara*—'baroco'—as being a possible source.² The usage of the word for a long time suggested the odd, the bizarre; and in eighteenth-century France it was applied to painting to mean non-observance of the rules of proportion.³ The principal application of the word, however, was to Italian architecture from approximately 1600 to approximately 1715.⁴

The general characteristics of baroque architecture are agreed to be extravagant embellishment, a sense of power and vitality in design and quantity of materials, movement, multiple changing views, illusion and frank sensuous appeal. Architecture, painting and draperies combine to give these effects.⁵ When Heinrich Wölfflin in 1888 published his *Renaissance and Baroque* he extended the term 'baroque' briefly to literature suggesting that the contrast between renaissance and baroque emerged in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516) and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1584). Thereafter, German scholars in increasing numbers applied the word 'baroque' to an ever-widening group of literary figures from Rabelais to Dryden. 'Baroque' they extended beyond German literature to all European literature. Striking similarities among all the arts were discovered by the Germans, especially in the seventeenth century, and when