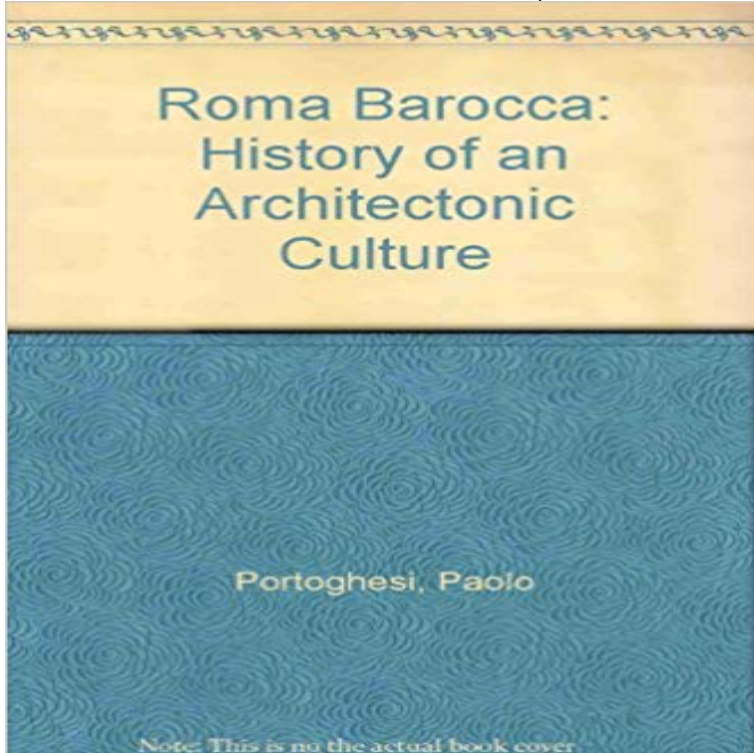


Roma Barocca: The History of an Architectonic Culture



Roma Barocca comprises a complete history of building activity in Rome from about 1600 to 1750. But it acquires a far broader interest because of the critical method which it applies to one of the key periods and centers in the history of architecture and urbanism. The discussion includes a broad summary of the urban policies and building programs of the popes as well as an analytic history of the artistic culture of Rome as documented by the theoretical writings and architectural publications of the period. Against this historical background the basic formal principles and compositional methods of the Baroque are verified through critical and technical analyses of the monuments themselves. In this way the author is able to define those great themes which held the attention of the artistic world in the complex period known as Baroque: the themes of infinity, of the relativity of perceptions, of the popular and vernacular artistic expression and the communicative force of art, of history conceived as a continual development, of technology as a factor of independence and autonomous authority for the arts, and the theme of nature interpreted as a dynamic process. The three great masters Bernini, Borromini, and Cortona are treated in individual chapters. The dynamic eruption of creative energy manifest in the works of these architects, whose contributions comprised the revolutionary use of light, the unification of all the arts, and above all the ability, on both the architectonic and urban scales, to operate directly on space, is here analyzed with penetrating perspective. But the lesser architects who worked contemporaneously with the masters are also fully discussed. Architects of the generation following that of the masters, such as Carlo Rainaldi and Carlo Fontana, are studied critically in light of the rich legacy to which they fell heir and which they seriously undermined through

their essentially regressive and conservative positions. An integral part of the authors analyses are the many fascinating detailed photographs, in great part executed by the author himself. The illustrative-analytical material is still further enriched by drawings inserted in the text or contained in the drawing appendix.

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