

“Vilnius. A Baroque City”: Changing Perceptions of Baroque Heritage during the Twentieth Century

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Abstract

Vilnius presents itself today as the easternmost and northernmost European city of the Baroque, and the Baroque heritage played an important role in 1994 when the historic centre of Vilnius was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Throughout the twentieth century, the Vilnius Baroque attracted the attention of artists and scholars. However, the approaches to research into this field differed both in terms of methodology and in relation to their political aims. The lively intellectual debate on Vilnius’ Baroque art and architecture that went on in the inter-war period was followed by a time of rather vague and unproductive research during the Soviet period, and it flourished again after the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990. The first part of this article gives an overview of the main debates on and interpretive models of Baroque architecture in Vilnius before the Soviet occupation. The second part explores the Soviet reinterpretation of Baroque art and architecture and the various techniques that were used to create new values of this heritage for the then new Socialist society of Lithuania.

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Introduction

[1] *Vilnius. A Baroque City* was the title of a richly illustrated book published in 2006 by the art historian Giedrė Mickūnaitė.¹ Yet its message was not entirely new for the citizens or visitors to the city. As early as 1939, architect Piotr Bohdziewicz had written a similarly titled paper: “Wilno – miasto baroku” [Vilnius

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine. – Giedrė Mickūnaitė, ed., *Vilnius. A Baroque City*, Vilnius 2006.

- a Baroque City].² And he was not the only one - throughout the twentieth century, the Baroque art and architecture of Vilnius attracted the attention of a variety of artists and scholars, even if their research approaches differed in terms of methodology, not to mention in relation to their political aims. It is both curious and important to follow how and why the approaches have changed in the historiography of the Vilnius Baroque in the twentieth century.

[2] Lithuanian art historiography recently focused on the role of political and national agendas in art history (mostly concentrating on the first half of the twentieth century and the inter-war period).³ However, the art historiography of the socialist period is no less interesting, especially in adapting the Baroque heritage to its political requirements. This article gives an overview of the main debates on, and interpretive models of Baroque art and architecture in Vilnius before the Soviet occupation. It then explores the various techniques employed by Soviet scholars in reinterpreting the topic and in constructing new values for Baroque art and architecture in the then new Socialist Lithuania. The sources examined in this paper are art history publications, press articles and books on cultural ideology from the period under scrutiny. Of special importance is Irena Vaišvilaitė's dissertation *Baroko pradžia Lietuvoje* [The Beginning of Baroque in Lithuania], written during the Soviet era, but only published in Lithuanian as late as 1995.⁴

The Vilnius Baroque in the art historiography of the first half of the twentieth century

[3] The first professional research into the Baroque art and architecture of Vilnius dates back to 1914. At that time the city was still a part of the Russian Empire, but Lithuanian and Polish national cultural organisations were tolerated. It was then that a young art historian from Lwów by the name of Tadeusz Mańkowski (1878-1956) wrote a small book entitled *Z refleksji o Wilnie i o baroku polskim* [From (My) Reflection on Vilnius and on Polish Baroque]⁵ in which he depicted the Baroque as an expression of the mentality and lifestyle of the nobility of

² Piotr Bohdziewicz, "Wilno - miasto baroku" [Vilnius - a Baroque City], in: *Wilno. Kwartalnik poświęcony sprawom miasta Wilna* 1 (1939), no. 1, 2-13.

³ Katrin Kivimaa, ed., *The Geographies of Art History in the Baltic Region*, special issue of *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/ Studies on Art and Architecture* 19 (2010), no. 3-4; Nijolė Lukšionytė and Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Slavinskienė, eds., *Meno istorijos riboženkliai* [Landmarks of Art Criticism], special issue of *Meno istorija ir kritika/ Art History and Criticism* 7 (2011); Nijolė Lukšionytė, "Vilniaus architektūra menotyrininko žvilgsniu - nuo Mariano Sokolovskio iki Vlado Drėmos" [The Architecture of Vilnius in the Eyes of an Art Historian - from Marian Sokołowski to Vladas Drėma], in: *Atrasti Vilnių: skiriama Vladiui Drėmai* [Discover Vilnius: Dedicated to Vladas Drėma], ed. Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Vilnius 2010, 257-272.

⁴ Irena Vaišvilaitė, *Baroko pradžia Lietuvoje* [The Beginning of Baroque in Lithuania], Vilnius 1995.

⁵ Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Z refleksji o Wilnie i o baroku polskim* [From (My) Reflection on Vilnius and on Polish Baroque], Wilno 1914.

seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Vilnius. This line of argument led him to the conclusion that the Vilnius Baroque was specifically Polish in style. In a rather ahistorical move, he equated the culture of the eighteenth-century Polish-speaking nobility with the Polish nation of his own time, voicing his belief that the style expressed the character of the nation. Here Mańkowski drew on the work of the two most influential authors in the study of Baroque art and architecture in the German-speaking academia, Cornelius Gurlitt⁶ and Heinrich Wölfflin⁷. However, the most influential of Mańkowski's theses turned out to be his view on the 'spirituality' of the Vilnius Baroque. Vaišvilaitė has noted that this thesis was later taken up by the majority of Polish and Lithuanian researchers working on the topic in the context of the reception of the influential book by Werner Weisbach (1873–1953), *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation* [The Baroque as the Art of the Counterreformation] (1921),⁸ which had contributed to the re-evaluation of the Baroque style at that time.⁹

[4] In the early twentieth century, the Baroque heritage of Vilnius played an important role for both Polish and Lithuanian scholars in the construction of a national collective memory. Jolita Mulevičiūtė notes that the development of art was described in various texts as a teleological evolution towards some sort of metaphysical national character.¹⁰ Both parties claimed the legacy of the statehood of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (dissolved in 1795), which over the course of the nineteenth century was believed to have been brought to ruin by the Russian Empire. The nationalist paradigm remained an important notion during the inter-war period, during which time the recently declared Republic of Lithuania (1918) lost its capital city Vilnius to the new Republic of Poland for almost twenty years (1920 until 1939). Both Polish and Lithuanian scholars agreed that the most valuable artistic heritage of Vilnius was its Baroque architecture.

[5] Polish art historians, who came to Vilnius to work at the restored *Uniwersytet Stefana Batorego* (Stefan Batory University)¹¹ and at other Polish cultural organisations, created a section for art history at the *Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk*

⁶ Cornelius Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles, des Rokoko und des Klassizismus* [History of the Baroque Style, Rococo and Classicism], 3 vols., Stuttgart 1887-1889.

⁷ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock* [Renaissance and Baroque], Munich 1888.

⁸ Werner Weisbach, *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation* [The Baroque as the Art of the Counter-Reformation], Berlin 1921.

⁹ Vaišvilaitė, *Baroko pradžia Lietuvoje*, 9.

¹⁰ Jolita Mulevičiūtė, "New Aims, Old Means: Rewriting Lithuanian Art History of the National Revival Period", in: *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimus/ Studies on Art and Architecture* 19 (2010), no. 3-4: special issue *The Geographies of Art History in the Baltic Region*, ed. Katrin Kivimaa, 42-55: 43.

¹¹ It was established in 1579, closed in 1832 by the Russian government, re-established in 1919 by the Polish State, then re-established as Vilnius University by the Republic of Lithuania, then re-established as Vilnius Vincas Kapsukas University in Soviet Lithuania in 1944, and re-named Vilnius University in 1990.

w Wilnie (Vilnius Society of Science Fellows). From 1935 to 1939, fellows of the society Marian Morelowski (1884–1963), Stanisław Lorenz (1899–1991) and Euzebiusz Łopaciński (1882–1961) edited the section's research results in a journal titled *Prace i Materiały Sprawozdawcze Sekcji Historii Sztuki Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk w Wilnie* (Works and Proceedings of the Art History Section of the Vilnius Society of Science Fellows), mostly dedicated to the Vilnius Baroque.¹² It was this enterprise that laid the foundations for more systematic research into the city's Baroque heritage.

[6] Through this initiative the Baroque epoch was subdivided into two main periods, the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, and the notion of a Vilnius School of Baroque was first conceived: it described the art and architecture of the eighteenth-century churches in Vilnius created by local masters (naturalised foreigners): Joannes Valentinus Tobias de Dyderszteyn [Jan Walenty Tobiasz de Dyderszteyn] (d. 1770), and especially Johann Christoph Glaubitz [Jan Krzysztof Glaubitz] (1700–1767). Polish researchers rated this Vilnius School of Baroque higher than the architecture of the seventeenth century, which was seen as derivative. For example, Władysław Tatarkiewicz, a well-known Polish art historian and researcher on aesthetics defended this evaluation in his paper “Dwa baroki: krakowski i wileński” (The Two Baroques: that of Cracow and of Vilnius) comparing the Baroque styles of the two cities.¹³ He gave preeminence to the Vilnius School as being “more creative”.¹⁴

[7] Another important question discussed by the scholars related to the origins of the Vilnius School of Baroque. Starting in the 1920s, the main focus was on Italian influences. Italy was seen as representing the connecting link to the wider European context, confirming the aesthetic value and synchronicity of the Vilnius Baroque with other European centres of the style.¹⁵ Morelowski, who had studied

¹² Laima Laučkaitė, “Nacionalinės dailės istorijos rašymas: XX a. I pusės strategijos” [Writing National Art History: Strategies of the First Half of the Twentieth Century], in: *Meno istorija ir kritika/ Art History and Criticism* 7 (2011), special issue *Meno istorijos riboženkliai* [Landmarks of Art Criticism], eds. Nijolė Lukšionytė and Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Slavinskienė, 88-95.

¹³ Władysław Tatarkiewicz, “Dwa baroki: krakowski i wileński” [The Two Baroques: of Cracow and of Vilnius], in: *Prace komisji historii sztuki* 8 (1939), 183-224.

¹⁴ Cited after: Vaišvilaitė, *Baroko pradžia Lietuvoje*, 9.

¹⁵ Stanisław Lorenz, “O architekcie Janie Zaorze i dekoratorach kościoła św. Piotra i Pawła na Antokolu w Wilnie” [On the Architect Jan Zaorz and the Decorators of the St Peter's and St Paul's Church on the Antokol in Vilnius], in: *Dawna Sztuka* 1 (1938), 51-64; Stanisław Lorenz, “Z materiałów do historii architektury na ziemiach b. Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego” [From the Materials Concerning the History of the Architecture on the Territory of the Ancient Grand Duchy of Lithuania], in: *Prace i Materiały Sprawozdawcze Sekcji Historii Sztuki Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk w Wilnie* (Works and Proceedings of the Art History Section of the Vilnius Society of Science Fellows) 3 (1938/39), 335-348; Euzebiusz Łopaciński, “Nieznane dane archiwalne i wiadomości źródłowe do historii sztuki. Wilna i b. W. K. Litewskiego od XVII. do początków XIX. w.” [Unknown Facts from the Archives and Source Information on Art History. Vilnius and the

at the universities of Cracow, Vienna and Paris and worked at the Wawel castle in Cracow, arrived in Vilnius in 1930 at the invitation of Ferdinand Ruszczyc, the dean of the Fine Arts faculty, to take up the newly established position of head of the Art History Department. After his arrival in the city, his interest in Baroque art and architecture intensified.¹⁶ In 1940 he published on his own expenses the monograph *Znaczenie baroku wileńskiego XVIII. stulecia* [The Significance of the 18th-Century Vilnius Baroque],¹⁷ in which he argued that the genius of the Vilnius Baroque was based on the good knowledge that the practitioners of the style had derived directly from the best Italian sources.

[8] Morelowski's thesis had probably also inspired his assistant, the aforementioned Piotr Bohdziewicz, who published two papers on the genesis of the Vilnius Baroque in 1938 and 1939, asserting that it had originated from South Italian sources, namely from Naples,¹⁸ praising the Vilnius Baroque as one of the major schools of the style.¹⁹ He continued his research in post-war Lublin (Poland), where he published three monographs on Baroque architecture.²⁰

[9] Polish art historians followed a nationalist paradigm that was already fully formed by the end of the nineteenth century, and perceived the Baroque cultural heritage of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth as an integral part of the Polish national history. In contrast, Lithuanian art historians in the Republic of Lithuania in the years between 1918 and 1939 were much less engaged in the field of Baroque research. As in other East and Central European countries, Lithuanian researchers (based for the most part at the Lithuanian University and Museum of

Ancient Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the 17th up to the Beginning of the 19th Century], in: *Prace i Materiały Sprawozdawcze Sekcji Historii Sztuki Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk w Wilnie* 3 (1938/39), 49-107.

¹⁶ Marian Morelowski, *Zarysy syntetyczne sztuki wileńskiej od gotyku do neoklasycyzmu* [Synthetic Outlines of Vilnius Art from the Gothic to Neoclassicism], Wilno 1939; Marian Morelowski, "Problemy wileńskiej architektury barokowej XVII i XVIII w." [Problems of Vilnius Baroque Architecture of the 17th and 18th Centuries], in: *Prace i Materiały Sprawozdawcze Sekcji Historii Sztuki Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk w Wilnie* 2 (1935), 245-256.

¹⁷ Marian Morelowski, *Znaczenie baroku wileńskiego XVIII. stulecia* [The Meaning of 18th Century Vilnius Baroque], Wilno 1940.

¹⁸ Piotr Bohdziewicz, "O istocie i genezie baroku wileńskiego z drugiej i trzeciej ćwierci XVIII-go wieku" [On the Character and the Genesis of Vilnius Baroque of the Second and Third Quarter of the 18th Century], in: *Prace i materiały sprawozdawcze Sekcji Historii Sztuki Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk w Wilnie* 3 (1938/39), 175-217.

¹⁹ Bohdziewicz, "Wilno – miasto baroku".

²⁰ Piotr Bohdziewicz, *Zagadnienie formy w architekturze baroku* [The Issue of Form in Baroque Architecture], Lublin 1961; Piotr Bohdziewicz, *Studia do dziejów sztuki polskiej w okresie baroku i rokoka* [Studies for the History of Polish Art in the Baroque and Rococo Period], Lublin 1973; Piotr Bohdziewicz, *Późny barok i rokoko w architekturze dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* [Late Baroque and Rococo Architecture of the Former Republic], Lublin 1976.

Vytautas the Great in Kaunas, the provisional capital of Lithuania from 1919 to 1939) focused mainly on the search for the ethnic foundations of the national culture and folk art. This nationalist paradigm in Lithuanian art scholarship confronted the problem of how to interpret the art produced in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795; also known as the Commonwealth of Two Nations), with its alleged lack of ‘ethnic purity’, a notion referring to the Commonwealth’s Polish-speaking nobility.²¹

[10] However, Kazimieras Jasėnas, a Catholic priest and amateur art historian, argued rather strongly in 1935 that the “Baroque is the Lithuanian national style”.²² In his theory he drew a parallel between the winding shapes of the Baroque and the emotional (as opposed to rational) aspects of Lithuanian culture, with the rational being expressed in the straight lines and shapes of neoclassical art. His theory led him to the conclusion that the Lithuanians were a hearty, emotional nation, who received God through an open heart rather than through reason, which implied that Baroque and Rococo churches expressed the country’s national character. He not only referred to the Baroque church heritage of Vilnius and Kaunas, but also to the Baroque churches in the countryside: “Lithuanians invited it [the Baroque] and never let it go. Soon the whole of Lithuania had decorated itself in Baroque robes and built as many undulating buildings as nowhere else in the world.”²³ It seems that Jasėnas avoided historical issues and was only concerned with the emotional expression of the nation’s character and faith, but politically he presented Vilnius (then a Polish city) as an inseparable part of Lithuania (and cited its Baroque heritage as evidence for his case). Jasėnas also emphasised the Italian influences on Lithuanian Baroque art.²⁴

[11] It may be claimed that Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jaciniėnė (1896–1984), a student of Heinrich Wölfflin and the first Lithuanian to receive a PhD in Art History (she defended her dissertation on the Pažaislis Baroque monastery ensemble in Lithuania at Zurich University in 1926)²⁵, commenced professional Lithuanian scholarship on the Baroque of Lithuania.²⁶ Kairiūkštytė-Jaciniėnė and others trained at universities in Germany and France were convinced that Lithuanian

²¹ Laima Laučkaitė, “Writing the Art History of the City: From Nationalism to Multiculturalism”, in: *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/ Studies on Art and Architecture* 19 (2010), no. 3-4: special issue *The Geographies of Art History in the Baltic Region*, ed. Katrin Kivimaa, 71-86: 72.

²² Kazimieras Jasėnas, “Baroko stiliaus monumentai Lietuvos sostinėse” [Baroque Style Monuments in the Capitals of Lithuania], in: *Židinys* 21 (1935), no. 3, 278-285: 279.

²³ Jasėnas, “Baroko stiliaus monumentai Lietuvos sostinėse”, 279.

²⁴ Jasėnas, “Baroko stiliaus monumentai Lietuvos sostinėse”, 281.

²⁵ Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jacynienė, *Pažaislis, ein Barockkloster in Litauen. Abhandlung zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde der philosophischen Fakultät I der Universität Zürich*, Kaunas 1928.

²⁶ Jolanta Marčišauskytė-Jurašienė, “[žymi, bet nepažinta meno istorikė Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jaciniėnė]” [Famous Yet Unfamiliar Art Historian Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jaciniėnė], in: *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 62 (2011), 65-79.

scholarship on art history should not be restricted simply to the study of folk art. They aimed at positioning the most valuable art works in Lithuania within the broader context of Western European art. In her dissertation, published in Lithuanian in 1930, she applied a stylistic analysis to her subject, the Pažaislis monastery, emphasising the ensemble's strong Italian connections.²⁷

[12] In October 1939, when Vilnius was restored as the capital city of Lithuania by the Soviets, the Ministry of Education declared its intention to support the citizens of independent Lithuania to intellectually and emotionally recover the cultural heritage of the historical capital. Two books on the architectural heritage of Vilnius were published in 1940: *Vilniaus meno paminklai* [Monuments of Vilnius Art] by Jonas Grinius,²⁸ and *Vilniaus menas* [Vilnius Art], a monograph by Nikolaj Worobiow (1903–1954),²⁹ who presented the architecture to his readership with great passion, mainly as an object of aesthetic contemplation.³⁰ The Baroque, the most distinct style of Vilnius, had been at the centre of Worobiow's professional interest since he had written his dissertation on *Die Fensterformen Dominikus Zimmermanns* at Munich University from 1927 to 1933, supervised by Wilhelm Pinder.³¹

[13] Giedrė Jankevičiūtė discovered that during the Nazi occupation Worobiow had been offered the opportunity to write a paper on the German influence on Vilnius Baroque for the propaganda organisation *Große Gilden im Ostland* in Riga in 1943.³² Worobiow never finished the paper, but began instead to collect material for a study on the work of Johann Christoph Glaubitz, the most important architect of the Vilnius School of Baroque, who had arrived in Vilnius from Silesia in 1737. In the beginning, Worobiow supported Morelowski's view that the Vilnius

²⁷ Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jacynienė, *Pažaislio vienuolynas ir jo meninės vertenybės* [The Pažaislis Monastery and its Artistic Value], Kaunas 1930.

²⁸ Jonas Grinius, *Vilniaus meno paminklai* [Monuments of Vilnius Art], Kaunas 1940.

²⁹ Nikolaj Worobiow, *Vilniaus menas* [Vilnius Art], Kaunas 1940.

³⁰ The book's relevance did not erode during the later Soviet period as it gave its readers the chance to experience a link with the lost epoch of independence and presented a portrait of Vilnius as a city of ideal beauty. See: Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, "Apie Mikalojaus Vorobjovo monografijos *Vilniaus Menas* skaitymą ir skaitytojus" [About the Reading and Readers of Nikolaj Worobiow's Monograph on the Art of Vilnius], in: *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 57 (2010), 191-213.

³¹ Nikolaj Worobiow, *Die Fensterformen Dominikus Zimmermanns. Versuch einer genetischen Ableitung*, Munich 1934. From 1924 to 1926, Worobiow had studied at the University of Marburg, and later, supported by an Alexander von Humboldt research fellowship, at Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin in 1935–1936.

³² Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, "Lietuvos meninio paveldo dalybos nacių okupacijos metais ir Mikalojaus Vorobjovo veikla" [Sharing the Lithuanian Artistic Heritage in the Years of the Nazi Occupation and the Activities of Nikolaj Worobiow], in: *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai* (2012), no. 5, 315-318: 317.

Baroque was rooted in Italy, though through his study of Glaubitz he later became convinced of a German connection.³³

[14] After the lively scholarly debate on the Vilnius Baroque that went on during the inter-war period, academic research on Baroque art henceforth came to a halt. After the Soviet occupation in 1940 and in the post-war Soviet years, Lithuanian historiography was forced to adapt to the Marxist-Leninist approach and methodology. Worobiow emigrated first to Germany and later to the USA; Polish scholars (Morelowski, Lorentz, et al.) were forced to move to socialist Poland; and Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jacinienė, who relocated to Vilnius, preferred the 'safer' and more neutral field of ethnographic research,³⁴ which dealt with the culture of the common people rather than that of the nobility.

The Socialist period and Marxist-Leninist interpretation of Baroque architecture

[15] In the late 1940s and early 1950s, as there was no scholarly journal specializing in art history being published at the time, the tasks of Marxist-Leninist art history in Soviet Lithuania were communicated through newspapers and magazines. What was the role of art history in a Socialist society? The Marxist-Leninist approach required researchers to deal with the past always bearing in mind the utopian ideal of the classless Communist society. Historians were expected to play a part in the achievement of this future ideal, following Lenin's concept of two cultures. Lenin's account implied that each national culture should select only elements of the working classes and leave aside the elements of bourgeois culture.³⁵ History (and art history) was responsible for the correct assessment of the past and for the designation of the country's cultural heritage:

*The assimilation of cultural heritage is an important political matter, inextricably linked to the construction of communism and proletarian culture [...] party and government therefore pay great attention to the correct assessment of the past and cultural heritage.*³⁶

[16] In Soviet Lithuania, the historical period of the Baroque was officially perceived with special sensitivity because of its unfavourable association with

³³ Jankevičiūtė, "Lietuvos meninio paveldo dalybos nacių okupacijos metais ir Mikalojaus Vorobjovo veikla", 317.

³⁴ Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jacinienė, *Lietuvių liaudies menas: Audiniai* [Lithuanian Folk Art: Textiles], vol. 1, Vilnius 1957.

³⁵ Zenonas Norkus, "Istorizmas, modernizmas ir futurizmas XX amžiaus istoriografijoje" [Historicism, Modernism and Futurism in Twentieth-Century Historiography], in: *Lietuvos sovietinė istoriografija. Teoriniai ir ideologiniai kontekstai* [Soviet Lithuanian Historiography. Contexts of Theory and Ideology], eds. Alfredas Bumblauskas and Nerijus Šepetyš, Vilnius 1999, 274-320: 279-280.

³⁶ N.N., "Už marksistinį kultūrinio palikimo įvertinimą" [On the Marxist Evaluation of Cultural Heritage], in: *Literatūra ir menas* (26. April 1953), no. 17, 1.

Lithuanian statehood, the aristocracy, feudalism and the Catholic Church. Accordingly, Baroque art in Soviet culture had come to represent at least two ideological enemies: the Catholic Church (religion) and the nobility (the exploiter class). In order to preserve the most valuable objects of Baroque art, the period and style would need to be revised, selected and legitimated within the new Socialist society.³⁷ Referring to similar historical situations, John Tunbridge and Gregory Ashworth identified the concept of reinterpretation as a strategy to permit the continued use of relics of the past for the purposes of the present.³⁸ According to Soviet ideology (with atheism and the theory of class struggle as central tenets), sacred Baroque art needed to be secularised,³⁹ whereas the heritage of the aristocracy attached to it needed to be reinterpreted in such a way that it eliminated 'class antagonism'.

[17] It seems that art historians, journalists and other authors were rather quick to understand and adapt the new vocabulary. In 1948, art historian Vladas Drėma wrote of the need to preserve important historic buildings in the context of the modernisation of the historic centre of Vilnius, describing the Baroque heritage in the required ideological terms:

*Lithuanian Baroque is not that of a theatrical, artificial, cosmopolitan Jesuit style – it is a unique architecture of palaces and churches that speaks a different language compared to the Baroque of other countries.*⁴⁰

[18] The issue of how to interpret the heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth remained crucial in Soviet-era Lithuanian art historical research. Constant efforts were made to 'Lithuanise' the cultural heritage, and especially that of Vilnius.⁴¹ In Drėma's text one can find the notion of 'Lithuanian' Baroque to reflect the official policy on nationality and of the 'Lithuanisation' of Vilnius. The assertion of the local roots of the styles and masters of art, combined with the attribution to the country's entire people of the original genius of the masterpieces in question produced new key concepts of the 'people's Baroque' (moving away from the nobility), the 'Lithuanian Baroque' (moving towards the nationalisation of heritage), and the purely artistic origins of Baroque art (eliminating its religious roots). The focus was turned from those who commissioned the work (the Church and nobility) to the builders and craftsmen who executed it. Lionginas Šepetys, a cultural ideologist of the Lithuanian

³⁷ Juliusz Starzyński, "Zadania historyków sztuki w świetle konstytucji polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej" [Tasks of Art Historians in the Light of the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic], in: *Biuletyn historii sztuki* 14 (1952), 3-9.

³⁸ John Tunbridge and Gregory Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage. The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, Chichester 1996, 138.

³⁹ Arūnas Streikus, *The Church in Soviet Lithuania*, Vilnius 2012, 27-29.

⁴⁰ Vladas Drėma, "Atkursime Vilnių gražų ir menišką" [We Will Restore Vilnius Beautifully and Artistically], in: *Literatūra ir menas* (12 April 1948), no. 14, 1.

⁴¹ Violeta Davoliūtė, *The Making and Breaking of Soviet Lithuania. Memory and Modernity in the Wake of War*, London 2013, 56-73.

Communist Party, later stated: “[...] there is a question as to whether a masterpiece of Baroque would have been erected if the nobleman Pacas had not oppressed his serfs.”⁴² Keywords such as ‘common people’, ‘folk’, and ‘working people’ took the place of the ‘noblemen’ and ‘aristocracy’ in the new interpretation of the aristocratic legacy.

[19] Soviet atheist propaganda and measures against the Catholic Church also played a significant role, since such activities were intended to confirm that in Lithuania religion had never been an important component or symbol of national culture and identity. Since 1944, in an effort to reduce the number of churches in the Lithuanian SSR, a large number of them were closed, mostly in the cities. Many were turned into warehouses, and some were demolished.⁴³ Monasteries and manors were expropriated, nationalised, and adapted or as office space or to supply housing.⁴⁴ The main strategy in the reinterpretation of Baroque religious art and architecture was secularisation – the emphasis was put entirely on the artistic value, and the religious function that they served was largely concealed.

[20] For example, the avenue to attribute Baroque religious paintings to particular artists was highly valued, as it was believed that the individual style of an artist could take the place of the usual requirements of the cult and religious iconography.⁴⁵ In the long run it was envisioned that the original content and symbols of religious art would eventually become incomprehensible in an atheist society. Architectural historian Algė Jankevičienė wrote in 1966:

*Many cultured people still confuse the church as a religious object of darkness with the church as an artistic monument. It is only fair to explain to the young people the essence of artistic treasures in a Marxist manner.*⁴⁶

Later, in 1985, the ideologist Šepetys wrote along the same lines:

*The claim of the Catholic church to ownership of Lithuanian professional or folk art is not justified by any evidence. [...] The paintings of the artist Smuglevičius, the pioneer of national art, and of other artists depicting biblical subjects are free of religious mysticism and exaltation – sober reality and folk types are present here.*⁴⁷

⁴² Lionginas Šepetys, *Kultūra ir mes* [Culture and Us], Vilnius 1985, 28.

⁴³ For the full record see: Rasa Čepaitienė, “Vilniaus bažnyčių likimas sovietmečiu (1944-1990)” [Destiny of the Churches of Vilnius in the Soviet Period (1944-1990)], in: *Liaudies kultūra* (2002), no. 5, 32-38; for the full chronicle of the devastation of St John’s Church in Vilnius from 1948 to 1965 see: Vladas Drėma, *Vilniaus Šv. Jono bažnyčia* [St John’s Church in Vilnius], Vilnius 1997, 240-258.

⁴⁴ Streikus, *The Church in Soviet Lithuania*, 13-17.

⁴⁵ Rasa Čepaitienė, *Laikas ir akmenys. Kultūros paveldo sampratos Lietuvoje* [Time and Stones: Concepts of Cultural Heritage in Modern Lithuania], Vilnius 2005, 170-187.

⁴⁶ Algė Jankevičienė, “Liaudies architektūra – didis mūsų turtas” [Folk Architecture – Our Great Wealth], in: *Literatūra ir menas* (1966), no. 5, 2.

⁴⁷ Šepetys, *Kultūra ir mes*, 98.

[21] According to the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism, the arts – art historical research as well as contemporary practice – had to provide benefits to the everyday life of the people. Thus the Socialist-Realist approach of Stalinist architecture showed a concern for alluding in contemporary architecture to the national heritage. Not only ethnographical ingredients, but also elements of historical decoration could be applied to new buildings. However, all architectural styles were to be filtered according to their historical value (i.e. whether they were progressive or regressive) to sort out which style was appropriate and which was not. In a review of a conference on cultural heritage in Vilnius held in 1954 the reason was explained as to why Baroque church heritage was not deemed appropriate to be referenced in the new Socialist society, though Baroque townhouse architecture was considered a suitable source for developing contemporary construction:

*Baroque church architecture is full of anti-realist, reactionary moments, such as, for example, excessive splendour, refinement, illogical composition of architectural forms and symbols of religious character, whereas Baroque residential architecture bears realist artistic qualities that are capable of being fully developed in our Soviet architecture.*⁴⁸

[22] Nonetheless it seems that a small number of architects did attempt to incorporate elements of Baroque church architecture into the decoration of new buildings anyway, on the grounds that they were ‘characteristic of Vilnius’. However, their alleged source of inspiration was severely criticized. In a 1952 paper architect Lev Kazarinski wrote:

*Our architects often mechanically apply features of stylized Baroque, which, of course, are foreign to the content of today’s Soviet Vilnius. [...] The main façade of the building inevitably evokes associations with the Baroque gables of Vilnius churches.*⁴⁹

[23] The turning point to a full acceptance of Baroque architecture on grounds of its artistic value can be seen in 1955, when the first post-war album of the historic architecture of Vilnius was published.⁵⁰ In a review written by the critic Julija Maceinienė, the Baroque heritage of Vilnius was received positively.⁵¹ Her text focused on the character of the local Baroque architecture, on its artistic value, and on its integration into the urban texture and landscape. The publication coincided with the beginning of the new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev’s tentative liberalisation of cultural activities and the arts.

⁴⁸ Jonas Umbrasas, “Konferencija dailės palikimo klausimais” [Conference on Art Heritage Issues], in: *Literatūra ir menas* (9 January 1954), no. 2, 2.

⁴⁹ Levas Kazarinskis, “Apie Vilniaus architektų darbus” [On the Works of Vilnius’ Architects], in: *Literatūra ir menas* (29 June 1952), no. 26, 3.

⁵⁰ A. Janikas [first name unknown], ed., *Vilnius. Architektūra iki XX a. pradžios* [Vilnius. Architecture until the Beginning of the 20th Century], Vilnius 1955.

⁵¹ Julija Maceinienė, “Vilniaus architektūros albumas” [Album on Vilnius Architecture], in: *Literatūra ir menas* (9 July 1955), no. 28, 2.

[24] During the 1960s, a book series on Architectural Monuments of the Lithuanian SSR, *Lietuvos TSR architektūros paminklai*, was launched in an effort to promote Lithuanian cultural heritage. The first book in the series to be produced was Kairiūkštytė-Jaciniienė's pre-war publication on the Pažaislis monastery complex, which was given a co-author, architect Juozas Baršauskas, who wrote an explanatory foreword that outlined Baroque architecture in Lithuania.⁵² Another book, this time by architect Antanas Spelskis, was dedicated to the church of Saints Peter and Paul in Vilnius.⁵³ Because of 2,000 stucco sculptures in the church's interior, which were described as picturing people of different ranks, the building was featured in the Lithuanian media above all other Baroque churches as a monument of the people's Baroque. Spelskis described it as a "masterpiece of Baroque created by the wonderful minds and most skilful hands of the working people".⁵⁴ Along the same lines Spelskis had already published an album and a paper with the revealing title "Žmogiški veidai altorių šešėly" [Human Faces in the Shadow of Altars].⁵⁵ His writings were based mostly on pre-war research and publications of Polish art historians, in what might be seen as a tentative liberalisation of the interpretation of Baroque heritage. It seems that by the late 1960s the Baroque art and architecture had found its appropriation in the national history of art as an artistic period in its own right.

The formation of the discipline – academic writing on Baroque architecture

[25] It was only after 1955 that the professional discipline of history of architecture was rehabilitated. Following the Moscow model, the *Architektūros ir statybos institutas* (Institute of Research into Construction and Architecture) in Kaunas was established as an institute of the Academy of Sciences (1956). The new institute was supposed to conduct research in architectural history and theory. It was characteristic of Soviet art history that historical periods and styles were divided among researchers whose work then usually concentrated on their 'own' periods only. Following this pattern, in Soviet Lithuania architect Vladimiras Zubovas (1909–2007) and historian Klemensas Čerbulėnas (1912–1986) were responsible for the complex topic of Baroque architecture. Both figures were among the country's most experienced researchers and had benefitted from a pre-war education: Zubovas graduated in 1934 from the Technische Hochschule Berlin (Berlin High School of Technology, re-named Technical University in 1946), and Čerbulėnas graduated in 1941 from Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University. However, even they could not avoid the obligatory Marxist-Leninist

⁵² Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jaciniienė and Juozas Baršauskas, *Pažaislis*, Vilnius 1960 (= *Lietuvos TSR architektūros paminklai* 1).

⁵³ Antanas Spelskis, *Po baroko skliautais* [Under the Vaults of Baroque], Vilnius 1967.

⁵⁴ Spelskis, *Po baroko skliautais*, 20.

⁵⁵ Antanas Spelskis, *Vilniaus baroko perlas* [A Pearl of Vilnius Baroque], Vilnius 1960; id., "Žmogiški veidai altorių šešėly" [Human Faces in the Shadow of the Altar], in: *Švyturys* (1958), no. 13, 14-15.

interpretations. In a co-authored article on late Baroque in Lithuania they cite Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, emphasise the corruption of the feudal state, depict nobility and Church alike as oppressors, and look for the folk origins of the 'people's Baroque'.⁵⁶ They admit that Italian Baroque was crucial in the formation of late Baroque in Lithuania, but also claim Russian, French and Austrian influences. Their essay is comprehensive in form, its analysis based on formal and typological studies, and its conclusion evenly states that the late Baroque heritage in Lithuania is of a very high artistic quality. The authors focus on connections and influences in their efforts to identify the origins and regional features of the Lithuanian Baroque. One can detect direct parallels to the attempt to nationalise the Baroque during the inter-war period, yet the authors claim an interest in social-economic, political and cultural contexts that would help to define regional features of the Lithuanian Baroque. In a separate article, Zubovas deals with the Lithuanian architecture of the seventeenth century. Based on a descriptive analysis of the architectural forms, he argues that it was not a simple appropriation of Italian architecture, but betrays a strong influence of local traditions.⁵⁷

[26] Officially, the pre-war research in the field was considered ideologically harmful, but nevertheless all authors of academic and popular writings on the Baroque in Soviet Lithuania during the 1960s made extensive use of pre-war Polish research, and especially of Morelowski, Tatarkiewicz and Lorentz, as can be seen from the reference lists they provided with their work. However, the authors of that time do not usually give an extensive review of their sources. Čerbulėnas and Zubovas for instance mention previous research only in passing. The tendency to begin papers and books with a reference to ideological interpretation instead of explicating their historiographical or theoretical approach is as evident in popular media as it is in Socialist academic art history. According to Aleksandra Aleksandravičiūtė, researchers into sacred architecture and art were to a certain degree forced to reach an ideological compromise, to neutralise research dimensions, limit iconographic analysis, and avoid religious questions.⁵⁸ Furthermore Laima Laučkaitė tells us that Soviet authorities attempted to prevent the study of cultural phenomena that had a connection with the sovereignty of a nation, its historical statehood and its religious traditions.⁵⁹ All these requirements prompted the development of 'safe' methods of research,

⁵⁶ Klemensas Čerbulėnas and Vladimiras Zubovas, "Lietuvos vėlyvojo baroko architektūros bruožai" [The Characteristics of Lithuanian Late Baroque], in: *Lietuvos TSR architektūros klausimai* (1964), no. 2, 207-244.

⁵⁷ Vladimiras Zubovas, "Lietuvos XVII a. architektūra ir vietinių tradicijų raida" [Lithuanian 17th Century Architecture and the Development of Local Traditions], in: *Lietuvos TSR architektūros klausimai* (1964), no. 3, 377-402.

⁵⁸ Aleksandra Aleksandravičiūtė, "Sakralinės dailės tyrimai Lietuvoje: specifiniai aspektai" [Specific Aspects of the Sacral Art Research in Lithuania], in: *Lietuvos dailės istorikų draugijos biuletenis* (2006), 14-20: 14.

⁵⁹ Laučkaitė, "Writing the Art History of the City: From Nationalism to Multiculturalism", 73.

characterised by the evasion of historical context, the habit of covering up personal views by means of neutral facts, and a prevalence of extensive formal description (for example of the composition of a plan or the number of towers) over analysis of content.

[27] This defective method of formal analysis was a defining characteristic of research in the later Soviet period,⁶⁰ as is evident in the *Lietuvos architektūros istorija* (History of Lithuanian Architecture), published by the Kaunas Institute of Research into Construction and Architecture. While a group of authors had begun work on the project in 1968, the first volume was not to be published until almost 20 years later, in 1987.⁶¹ The second volume, dedicated to the Baroque and Neo-Classicism, was being worked on in parallel, but was to take a further ten years before it finally appeared in 1994,⁶² in an already independent Lithuania. Yet its content still represents the historiographical approach of the late Soviet era. Dry statements and formal descriptions do little to help the reader either to recognise the origin of the object described or to understand its uniqueness, because the phenomena described are not compared against the relevant art historical contexts. Foreign research is scarcely referred to; one finds no more than a single paragraph mentioning the names of the various Polish and Belorussian researchers “writing about the Baroque” in the context of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.⁶³

Decline of art history – triumph of conservation

[28] The *Mokslinė restauracinė gamybinė dirbtuvė* (Scientific Restoration and Handcraft Workshop) was established in Vilnius in 1950, following a 1948 decree of the USSR Council of Ministers that demanded that such workshops should be established at sites of “rich cultural historic heritage”.⁶⁴ The Workshop initially refrained from carrying out academic research, concentrating instead on practical issues of monument restoration. By the mid-1950s the young architect-restorers at the Workshop had already developed their own specific approach towards the architectural heritage of Vilnius based on the contemporary nationalist discourse

⁶⁰ Vaišvilaitė, *Baroko pradžia Lietuvoje*, 11.

⁶¹ Jonas Minkevičius, ed., *Lietuvos architektūros istorija*, t. 1: nuo seniausių laikų iki XVII a. vidurio [History of Lithuanian Architecture, vol. 1: From the Oldest Times to the Mid-17th Century], Vilnius 1987.

⁶² Algė Jankevičienė, ed., *Lietuvos architektūros istorija*, t. 2: nuo XVII a. pradžios iki XIX a. vidurio [History of Lithuanian Architecture, vol. 2: From the Beginning of the 17th Century to the Mid-19th Century], Vilnius 1994.

⁶³ Minkevičius, ed., *Lietuvos architektūros istorija*, 7.

⁶⁴ Salvijus Kulevičius, “Kultūros paveldo restauravimo principai sovietinėje Lietuvoje: idėjinės kryptys ir jų raiška” [Principles of the Restoration of Cultural Heritage in Soviet Lithuania: Ideological Tendencies and Implementations], in: *Atrasti Vilnių: skiriama Vladui Drėmai* [Discover Vilnius: Dedicated to Vladas Drėma], ed. Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Vilnius 2010, 203-217. The Scientific Workshop was restructured and renamed as Institute of Monument Conservation in 1969.

that inspired a search for the Lithuanian roots of Vilnius. The relatively young Lithuanian school of conservation sometimes even described themselves as cultural resistance.⁶⁵ There was a tendency to interpret the Baroque as not purely Lithuanian, while Gothic art and architecture was seen as bearing national characteristics. Indeed restorer Romanas Jaloveckas remembers that the majority of Lithuanian architects and restorers in Vilnius harboured prejudice against the Polish history of the city.⁶⁶ In the 1960s, during a short period of conservation practice which might be described as a period of 'Gothicisation', the façades of several historic buildings were stripped down to their Gothic red brick in an effort to prove that Vilnius was not a 'Polish Baroque city', but rather a much older centre – the city of Gediminas (c. 1275–1341), Grand Duke of Lithuania.

[29] Against this background art historian Vladas Drėma wrote (but never published) a paper in 1969, "Spalvingas barokinis Vilnius" [Colourful Baroque Vilnius], in which he raised awareness of the disappearing painted facades of the Baroque period that were being so enthusiastically ripped down to uncover the red-brick Gothic beneath.⁶⁷ Drėma, who had graduated from the Art Department of Stefan Batory University in 1936, was himself a citizen of Vilnius. He devoted his work mainly to the history of art of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was well acquainted with previous research on this subject, and maintained contacts with contemporary Polish scholars. He published in the Polish *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* [Bulletin of Art History], however, he was to remain out of favour as an author in Soviet Lithuania: his most important work, *Dingęs Vilnius* [Lost Vilnius], which was written in the late 1970s, was only released to the public in 1991.⁶⁸

[30] During the late 1960s, however, the general approach towards the ecclesiastical heritage of the Baroque began to change. The individual efforts of officials dealing with cultural heritage and restorers, along with their informal ties to party officials, encouraged the re-use of many closed churches as museums, concert halls, cinemas, theatres and libraries (although some were destined to remain warehouses).⁶⁹ Such acts of appropriation of Church heritage were made possible by advancing political arguments, as can be seen from a speech made in 1975 by the chief inspector of the cultural heritage of Kaunas:

⁶⁵ Justinas Šeibokas, "Kai aš patekau į sostinę (1956-1959)" [When I Arrived in the Capital City (1956-1959)], in: Romualdas Vytautas Kaminskas, *Žmogus ir paminklai* [A Man and Monuments], Vilnius 2009, 75-84: 76-77.

⁶⁶ Romanas Jaloveckas, interview with Marija Drėmaitė, "Šaknimi įaugęs į Vilnių" [Rooted in Vilnius], in: *Atrasti Vilnių: skiriama Vladiui Drėmai* [Discover Vilnius: Dedicated to Vladas Drėma], ed. Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Vilnius 2010, 43-48: 44-45.

⁶⁷ Vladas Drėma, "Spalvingas barokinis Vilnius" [Colorful Baroque Vilnius], 23. February 1969 [manuscript], published in: *Atrasti Vilnių: skiriama Vladiui Drėmai* [Discover Vilnius: Dedicated to Vladas Drėma], ed. Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Vilnius 2010, 33-39.

⁶⁸ Vladas Drėma, *Dingęs Vilnius* [Lost Vilnius], Vilnius 1991.

⁶⁹ Romualdas Kaminskas, ed., *Atgimę paminklai* [Restored Monuments], Vilnius 1983.

*These buildings were created by the intellect of architects and artists and realized by the efforts and skills of thousands of ordinary suffering people. Our aim is to de-sacralise those monuments and make them secular spaces where concerts and exhibitions could take place, during which a large number of people could enjoy the architectural expression.*⁷⁰

[31] Architect-restorers also were in favour of turning churches into cultural buildings, as they thought it was their most appropriate use. In the late 1960s and 1970s several museums were established in Baroque church buildings in Vilnius. Usually they had a thematic connection with the particular location or history of the building, such as, for example, the former church of Saint John, which was restored in the 1970s to accommodate Vilnius University's Museum of Science.⁷¹ Another often-cited example, the paradoxical reuse of the Baroque church of Saint Casimir in Vilnius as a Museum of Atheism, was reopened in 1961.⁷² The church itself was thoroughly restored, complete with its rich interior decoration, before the permanent exhibition on atheism was installed, a process that culminated in the 'new altar' – a stained glass composition by Bronius Grušas (1966) dedicated to the historic pioneer of atheism in Lithuania, Kazimieras Liščinskis (Kazimierz Łyszczyński, 1634-1689), a former Jesuit and author of the treatise *De non existentia Dei*.⁷³

[32] All these examples demonstrate that it would be wrong to claim that Baroque was completely erased from the map of Vilnius' cultural heritage. What did happen, however, was that the Baroque heritage experienced a general decontextualisation that erased the social and historical aspects of its architecture, preserving the monuments (and especially churches and their interiors) as objects of purely aesthetic value and as examples of historic styles bereft of any religious or other undesired cultural contexts. This practice had a severe impact upon the criteria used for the evaluation of heritage, so that only highly decorated buildings were considered worth preserving; this resulted in entire monasteries and convents that had up until then been considered intrinsic to the Baroque architectural heritage being left out of the Baroque inventory altogether.

New tendencies after the re-establishment of the State of Lithuania in 1990

[33] It can be concluded that much was done in the field of architectural history during the Soviet period in Lithuania – buildings were researched and restored,

⁷⁰ G. M., "Kultūrinis palikimas ideologiniame darbe" [Cultural Heritage in Ideological Work], in: *Kultūros barai* (1975), no. 4, 34-36: 35.

⁷¹ Vladas Drėma, *Vilniaus Šv. Jono bažnyčia* [St John's Church in Vilnius], Vilnius 1997, 259-261.

⁷² *Lietuvos TSR religijos istorijos ir ateizmo muziejus* [The Museum of the History of Religions and Atheism of the Lithuanian SSR], booklet without paging, text by Julijus Fišas, Vilnius 1988.

⁷³ *Lietuvos TSR religijos istorijos ir ateizmo muziejus*, booklet without paging.

books were published and journals were printed. Nevertheless, a distancing from any contextual approach to the study of architecture can be observed to have grown substantially among scholars during the period. Much of this change can be ascribed to Soviet censorship, but as much can be attributed to a distinct lack of flexibility of the researchers themselves.

[34] By the 1990s it had become clear that the inventory of Baroque heritage in Lithuania had not been completed with the thoroughness seen in other European countries where the task had been finished earlier. This lack of completeness produced a double gap in the art historiography of the Lithuanian Baroque: on the one hand it lacked sufficiently profound empirical knowledge and on the other hand it had not developed its own interpretative tradition.

[35] One strong impetus for a new phase of Lithuanian Baroque art historiography and a theoretical inspiration for younger scholars was provided by the above-mentioned dissertation *Baroko pradžia Lietuvoje* [The Beginning of Baroque in Lithuania], which was defended by Irena Vaišvilaitė at Moscow University in 1984. Vaišvilaitė's dissertation adopted what can be called a social approach to art history, describing extensively the cultural contexts of the environment in which art works and architecture functioned. The unpublished dissertation was well known in scholarly circles from 1985 on, despite the fact that it was published only in 1995.⁷⁴ In her foreword, Vaišvilaitė speaks of the impossibility of defending, let alone publishing, a study on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in Lithuania in 1984. She goes on to explain that that situation had motivated her to pursue her degree in Moscow. Her story illustrates the self-censorship of local scholars in the late Soviet period, and shows that in the academic discipline of art history it was less difficult to present a new social approach in Moscow than it would have been in Lithuania.

[36] After the fall of the Soviet system, studies in Baroque art and architecture started to flourish in Lithuania. Nevertheless, it was to take two decades to develop new conceptual and contextual approaches to the Baroque heritage. In 1995, a new Institute of Art History was established at the Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts, and a Department of Sacred Art was established at the Lithuanian Institute of Cultural Research. From 1998 on a new generation of art historians began to publish studies on the cultural and social contexts in which Baroque art and architecture had developed, dealing with such topics as devotion, the cult of the saints and the history of the country's convents, along with such issues as cultural memory, identity and visual culture.

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⁷⁴ Irena Vaišvilaitė, *Baroko pradžia Lietuvoje* [The Beginning of Baroque in Lithuania], Vilnius 1995.

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