Introduction

The Concept of Baroque Latinity

Gesine Manuwald and Andrew Taylor

Nowadays the term 'Baroque' is well established in a variety of contexts, including music and art in particular, and is also applied to forms of literature.[1] For several reasons, however, the definition of the term may be seen as problematic, including the fact that it can be used to denote a distinctive style, a historical period, a specific world view or the preference for certain themes or subjects.[2] For Latin texts, the label has occasionally been applied to writing in Neo-Latin, usually understood as late-Renaissance Latin, but typically without a clear definition, and existing scholarship on Neo-Latin literature tends to deal with Neo-Latin style monolithically, mainly in terms of the nature or degree of classical imitation. Indeed, certain ancient models might themselves be thought of as 'Baroque'. Yet, since the field is currently constrained by the lack of this kind of critical vocabulary, it is crucial to find ways to talk about the differences in form, style and characteristic genres between different phases of Neo-Latin (post-medieval Latin); one could distinguish, for instance, between the Latin of the humanistic Quattrocento, the ideas contested through the Ciceronian controversy, the Lipsian turn, and so forth.

Accordingly, the chapters collected in this volume contribute to this discussion by exploring manifestations of what could be called 'Baroque' in relation to Neo-Latin literature, looking at potential examples of 'Neo-Latin Baroque' in a variety of literary genres from different countries and from different phases within what is conventionally regarded as the Baroque period in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Since the chapters mostly focus on case studies, this introduction attempts to discuss broader issues of definition and scope. The range of a single volume can bring only so much into view, and so consideration of the global reach of Latin during this period of ongoing European expansionism (into the New World, for example) has been deferred. It is hoped that this collection of essays achieves a productive balance between coherence and

breadth in presenting Latin writers from northern, southern, western and eastern Europe, while spanning the period from the later sixteenth to the early eighteenth century.[3]

While critical distinctions around the term 'Baroque' as applied to the Latin literature of the period are a key desideratum, it is to be expected that any definitions may be partial and contestable. Indeed, this introduction presents tentative approaches to the topic alongside alternative views to help frame and stimulate further discussion.[4]
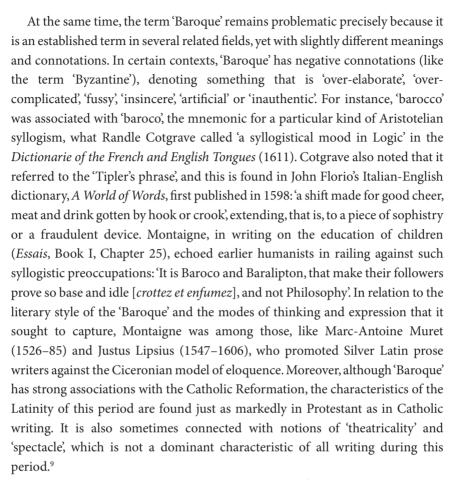
This volume's engagement with the term 'Baroque Latinity' was prompted by the impression that the characteristics of Neo-Latin writing change over the period from *c.* 1400 to 1800 typically denoted by 'Neo-Latin', that the period usually referred to as 'Baroque' displays specific features different from the preceding and subsequent periods also with regard to writing in Latin (although, as always, strict periodization is problematic and change is rather gradual), and that this could be indicated by transferring an established term to Neo-Latin writing. At the same time, the word 'Baroque' comes with its own problems and baggage. To start, therefore, one should consider whether this is the most appropriate term to denote the envisaged concept (before any description can be ventured).[5]

The term 'Baroque' is attractive because it is an established term with certain stylistic and aesthetic connotations; additionally, it can be applied not only to denote a particular period, but also to indicate a specific character.[6] The word has, moreover, currency in all the main languages of contemporary Neo-Latin scholarship, with at least roughly mappable meanings. The term is also detached from the developments or historical periodization in any one particular country (such as 'Elizabethan' in relation to the British Isles) and thus is useful for a movement that can be observed across a large number of different countries (even if with some differences). This is especially apposite for the description of writing in Latin, which is transnational in both its language and in its shared foundation in the literary models of antiquity, unlike works in the individual vernaculars.[7] As a stylistic term, 'Baroque' has strong associations with the chronological period it denotes, lying between Renaissance Humanism and the Classicism typical of the eighteenth century and the Enlightenment period, which makes it preferable to other terms that have been used to characterise Latin style between the mid sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries (such as 'Anti-Ciceronian' or 'Attic').[8] Thus the concept of the 'Baroque', however defined, needs to be placed and understood within a diversification of styles (and their definitions and labels) during the period under consideration.

At the same time, the term 'Baroque' remains problematic precisely because it is an established term in several related fields, yet with slightly different meanings and connotations. In certain contexts, 'Baroque' has negative connotations (like the term 'Byzantine'), denoting something that is 'over-elaborate', 'over-complicated', 'fussy', 'insincere', 'artificial' or 'inauthentic'. For instance, 'barocco' was associated with 'baroco', the mnemonic for a particular kind of Aristotelian syllogism, what Randle Cotgrave called 'a syllogistical mood in Logic' in the *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611). Cotgrave also noted that it referred to the 'Tipler's phrase', and this is found in John Florio's Italian-English dictionary, *A World of Words*, first published in 1598: 'a shift made for good cheer, meat and drink gotten by hook or crook', extending, that is, to a piece of sophistry or a fraudulent device. Montaigne, in writing on the education of children (*Essais*, Book I, Chapter 25), echoed earlier humanists in railing against such syllogistic preoccupations: 'It is Baroco and Baralipton, that make their followers prove so base and idle [*crottez et enfumez*], and not Philosophy'. In relation to the literary style of the 'Baroque' and the modes of thinking and expression that it sought to capture, Montaigne was among those, like Marc-Antoine Muret (1526–85) and Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), who promoted Silver Latin prose writers against the Ciceronian model of eloquence. Moreover, although 'Baroque' has strong associations with the Catholic Reformation, the characteristics of the Latinity of this period are found just as markedly in Protestant as in Catholic writing. It is also sometimes connected with notions of 'theatricality' and 'spectacle', which is not a dominant characteristic of all writing during this period.[9]

Accordingly, it has to be considered what kind of alternative terminology might be available. One option might be 'early modern': but in the combination 'early modern Latin' this term is frequently used as an alternative to 'Neo-Latin', which then denotes the entire period of *c.* 1400 to 1800 and does not help to distinguish between different phases of post-medieval Latin. Moreover, 'early modern' is also often employed semi-interchangeably with 'Renaissance', and 'Renaissance Latin' often implies Humanist style and form, from which the 'Baroque', however defined, needs to be distinguished.[10] This situation is made even more complex by the fact that the term 'Renaissance' can suggest different periods in different countries or European regions (for example, the Italian Quattrocento, but considerably later in the English setting). Another alternative might be 'post-Reformation': this term captures something of the aetiology and the importance of religious identity, without suggesting Catholic over Protestant; yet, this suggests that the Reformation ends or loses influence towards the end of

the sixteenth century. The term is, moreover, complex (if not problematic) and emphasizes religious developments over a focus on literary aspects of Latin writing. An issue that might be noted is how the relationship between Latin and vernacular maps variously onto the interplay of national and religious identity (the vernacular Bible and the Vulgate, for example). Yet that is not to say that the demands of theology and religious controversy are irrelevant to the shaping of Latin style. In fact, shared Latin aesthetics might be considered a way of bridging religious divides – extending the expression of a common language in sustaining a conversation – as much as being a site of contest, antagonism and adversarial exchange.

Thus, set against alternatives and despite its inherent problems, 'Baroque' presents itself as the most appropriate term to describe the qualities of this particular phase of Neo-Latin writing. 'Latinity' has been chosen (instead of 'literature', for example) to indicate Neo-Latin writing of any kind, irrespective of whether it might be regarded as particularly 'literary' in a narrow sense, thus including, for instance, Latin's important role as the language of scholarship.[11]

Following the justification of the term 'Baroque Latinity' to describe the characteristics of writing in Latin during a particular period, attempts can be made at defining the period, the kind of writing included and its characteristic features (the contributions by Lucy Nicholas, Beate Hintzen, and James A. Parente / Jan Bloemendal are particularly pertinent here).

The period of 'Baroque Latinity' is understood to extend from the end of the sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century.[12] Clearly, over such a long period Latin style does not remain consistent; variations arise in different national and geographical settings, manifesting themselves in different literary genres in a far from uniform way. Nevertheless, sufficient coherence exists to distinguish this style from those of adjacent periods, however gradual the transitions. Instead of a sudden, sharp shift to Baroque Latinity, the emergent style retains residual elements of 'Renaissance' writing (see the discussion by Lucy Nicholas),[13] while, equally, towards the end elements of 'Classicism' or 'Neo-Classicism' become increasingly apparent.[14]

The concept of Baroque Latinity involves identifying literary features of the Latin writing of this period in various literary genres, including types of writing that might not ostensibly be considered 'literary'. Moreover, the literature of that period developed in constant interaction with movements in politics, religion, society and art more generally, and these played their part in shaping Latin style.

Like any phenomenon that eventually becomes so distinctive that it demands recognition and attempts at definition, 'Baroque Latinity' does not suddenly appear fully fledged *ex nihilo*, but is the result of developments in the preceding period. As Lucy Nicholas' discussion of rhetoric suggests, there were developments in the sixteenth century against the dominance of Ciceronianism and towards richer diversity in imitation and greater experimentation with a wider variety of literary models.[15] These movements paved the way for the application of a larger variety of stylistic forms and interaction with a wider range of models in the Baroque period (including, for instance, Apuleius; see the contribution by Valérie Boutrois-Wampfler).

Conversely, towards the end of the period, stylistic exuberance, at least in certain contexts, became to be seen as inappropriate. For instance, in later editions of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* the author Isaac Watts (1674–1748) comments, in the context of writing in the vernacular, but pertinent also to Latin style (Preface, pp. viii–ix):[16]

> I have aim'd at Ease of Numbers and Smoothness of Sound, and endeavoured to make the Sense plain and obvious. If the Verse appears so gentle and flowing as to incur the Censure of Feebleness, I may honestly affirm, that sometimes it cost me Labour to make it so: Some of the Beauties of Poesy are neglected, and some wilfully defac'd: I have thrown out the Lines that were too sonorous, and have given an Allay to the Verse, lest a more exalted Turn of Thought or Language should darken or disturb the Devotion of the weakest Souls. But hence it comes to pass, that I have been forc'd to lay aside many Hymns after they were finish'd, and utterly exclude them from this Volume, because of the bolder Figures of Speech that crouded themselves into the verse, and a more unconfin'd Variety of Number, which I could not easily restrain.

Such considerations demonstrate the emergence of categories and features typically associated more with the subsequent Neo-Classical period.

The self-reflective aspect of Baroque Latinity manifests in both the meta-poetic statements found in prefaces and in its more sustained attempts at developing a theory of contemporary writing.

As explored in Tomas Riklius' essay on the theory of Baroque literary style, Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski (Matthias Casimirus Sarbievius, 1595–1640) described the poetic and literary principles of Baroque as *discors concordia*, which refers to the fusion of classical concepts with Renaissance rhetoric and poetics. In the treatise *De acuto et arguto* his aim was to define the concepts of

acutum ('sharpness') and *argutum* ('wit'), as a contribution to the discussion of aesthetic and rhetorical concepts. In the vernacular, another Jesuit, Emanuele Tesauro (1592–1675), likewise concentrated on the concept of *argutezza* (= *argutum*). Furthermore, in the *Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico* (1654; Latin 1698) he provides an analysis and guide to the new form of 'literary inscription'.

Such theoretical considerations show the heightened awareness of changes and developments in style, form and genre and the growing importance attached to them. Yet such treatises need also to be understood as co-existing with Cicero's continued promotion as a stylistic model in both new and reprinted works as well as in the schoolroom. So, where Beate Hintzen, for instance, identifies the positions taken against rigid Ciceronianism by such figures as the Neo-Latin poet and philologist Friedrich Taubmann (1565–1613) and his student Caspar von Barth (1587–1658), whose commentaries on Claudian and Statius further signal an interest in stylistic eclecticism, it is perhaps better to think of Ciceronianism – hardly uncontested from the outset – as suffering a slow decline across the seventeenth century, rather than rapidly succumbing to Lipsian and other varieties of broad anti-Ciceronian reaction that, nevertheless, contribute to the ways in which Baroque Latinity may be characterized. In the long run, Cicero the philosopher overtakes Cicero the orator, with the reasons lying in how the needs of political and scientific discourse were deemed poorly served by the assumptions of Renaissance humanism and the stylistic fullness and elegance modelled by, and for some strictly limited to, Cicero: 'the whole inclination', as Francis Bacon put it in *The Advancement of Learning*, 'towards copy than weight'. Yet Mario Nizzoli's *Observationes in M. T. Ciceronem*, the highly influential Latin lexicon based solely on Cicero's writings first published in 1535, was printed at least twenty-four times – in Basel, Venice, Lyon, Geneva, Aachen, Frankfurt and Paris – between 1600 and 1630.[17]

'Baroque Latinity' found expression in all literary genres in which pieces in Latin were produced during the period, though it has been studied most with respect to drama and poetry, reflected also in the case studies presented here (see in particular the contributions by James A. Parente / Jan Bloemendal, Alison Shell, Stephen J. Harrison and Beate Hintzen). A reason might be that these literary genres are generally more researched and more easily accessible, that they played a role in education, that their institutional settings have been studied, that the interest in them reflects a hierarchy of genres and that their equivalents in the vernaculars are also explored in relation to 'Baroque' features. Elements of the

Baroque are observable too in oratory, texts of literary theory, prosimetra, musical writings, historiography or in the language of scholarship.

In addition, there are distinctive innovations in form and genre characterizing this period, including free verse forms and literary inscriptions, as well as treatises on the theory of such writing, emblems and novels. Pindaric and free verse forms become fashionable in the latter half of the seventeenth century and can be found in commemorative texts of various kinds, panegyric, satiric and invective pieces and also in more technical contexts. The *Peruviana* by Claude-Barthélemy Morisot (discussed by Valérie Boutrois-Wampfler) is an example of a prosimetric novel, a genre characterized by stylistic variety. Technical writings, such as treatises on musical theory (as explored by Eric Bianchi), could be written in elegant Latin and thus also make a statement about the status and the aspiration of their writers.

As regards the key influences on Latin Baroque writing, a widening of models beyond canonical authors such as Cicero (discussed by Lucy R. Nicholas) and Vergil can be observed. There is a particular importance of late antique models in shaping Baroque style; late Greek rhetorical theory (especially Hermogenes; see the discussion by Javiera Lorenzini Raty) is also significant, while the stylistic influence of spreading knowledge of Hebrew, influential upon the emergence of the 'Protestant Baroque', cannot be ignored. Those wrestling with Hermogenes in the context of Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem* (1561) develop considerable theoretical complexity and refinement, again, part of the emerging phenomenon.

Baroque Latinity is often associated with Catholic, but, as Lucy Nicholas acknowledges, there is equally an element of 'Protestant Baroque', a version of Protestant grand style bearing the hallmarks of what is otherwise termed 'Baroque'. Religious aspects were also relevant for texts set to music (as explored by Adrian Horsewood). Protestant Baroque has to be considered further in relation to Judaica and 'Christian Hebraism'; Catholic authority was at best ambivalent about the study of Judaica, defending the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament against the Hebrew Bible, ever undermining the reliability of the text so as to underpin the authority of the Church's tradition of interpretation and the place of the Vulgate in it.[18]

Moreover, issues of Baroque style could become elements of religious controversy. This is illustrated by Alison Shell's discussion of a poem by Clarus Bonarscius (Carolus Scribani, 1561–1629) dealing with the Virgin Mary and the Christ child. The poem, which could be regarded as 'Baroque' in its recourse to conscious artfulness in the interest of religious devotion, precipitated a polemical

exchange. Its criticism by the Protestant William Crashaw provoked a response from the Jesuit John Floyd, who defended Bonarscius and alleged that Crashaw had misread the poem due to a lack of familiarity with literary conventions, a misunderstanding of the register and a generally unscholarly approach to interpretation. As a result, all participants in the debate engaged in close reading of texts and confronted contemporary issues of poetic style (on religious poetry see also the contribution by Patryk M. Ryczkowski).
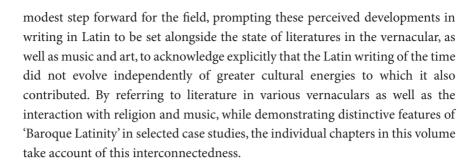
Despite religious controversies, people were influenced in their writing by each other across boundaries of various kinds. For instance, the dissenter poet Isaac Watts developed a style on the basis of the influence of the Baroque devotional verse of Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, a Jesuit poet. The Calvinist reformer Théodore de Bèze (Theodorus Beza, 1519–1605) created Latin psalm paraphrases in an array of metres that combined Protestant scriptural literalism, styles and forms independent of those modelled in classical poetry, such as elements of rhyme. The shift in style between the mid-century, more richly classicizing Latin paraphrases of the Psalms by George Buchanan (1506–82) and Beza's stricter, more concise renderings reflects both the intensification of the controversies over the authority of the Greek Septuagint against the Hebrew 'original' and, arguably, also the emergence of what would be termed 'mannerist' and 'Baroque'.[19] The Lutheran Matthias Flacius Illyricus, in his *Clavis scripturae sacrae seu de sermone sacrarum literarum* (1567), associated biblical style with the 'Atticism' of Thucydides – his laconic brevity – and Sallust, setting it against the 'Asiatic' Cicero. In the Bible, Flacius found and approved obscurity resulting from compression, just as Lipsius did in Tacitus; Greek rhetorical theory is influential here, too.[20] Moreover, the paraphrasing and imitating of the Psalms was so vigorous and sustained across the sixteenth century into the period associated with the Baroque (as was the interplay between Latin and vernacular versions) that it offers further opportunities to trace and interpret the changes in literary aesthetics and pursue the questions of periodization and terminology addressed in this collection of essays.

This introductory consideration of the potential meaning and application of the term 'Baroque Latinity' suggests that, if employed in full awareness of its inherent complexity, it could serve as a useful label to describe writing in Latin from a specific post-medieval phase. On balance, potential alternatives are yet more problematic or lack the kinds of specificity charted above and explored in more detail in the essays that follow. Moreover, subdividing the period of post-medieval Latin writing termed 'Neo-Latin' or 'early modern Latin' constitutes a

modest step forward for the field, prompting these perceived developments in writing in Latin to be set alongside the state of literatures in the vernacular, as well as music and art, to acknowledge explicitly that the Latin writing of the time did not evolve independently of greater cultural energies to which it also contributed. By referring to literature in various vernaculars as well as the interaction with religion and music, while demonstrating distinctive features of 'Baroque Latinity' in selected case studies, the individual chapters in this volume take account of this interconnectedness.

Notes

1   See e.g. Wellek (1946: 78): 'Baroque is now used in general cultural history for practically all manifestations of seventeenth-century civilization. So far as I know, Wölfflin was the first to transfer the term Baroque to literature. In a remarkable page of *Renaissance und Barock* (1888) he suggests that the contrast between Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516) and Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1584) could be compared to the distinction between Renaissance and baroque.'

2   Warnke (1972: 1) calls 'Baroque' a 'chameleonlike adjective'.

3   For some brief remarks on the characteristics of seventeenth-century Latin in France see Zuber 1997; for a discussion of French Baroque in a European context see Gilbert 1995.

4   This introduction owes a huge debt of gratitude to all members of the AHRC-funded Network 'Baroque Latinity' (see Preface) for many stimulating discussions on 'Baroque Latinity', for the collection of material and questions to address and for constructive comments on early drafts (esp. to Lucy Nicholas and Victoria Moul). Many of the issues touched upon in this introduction are discussed in greater detail in Moul 2022.

5   For a recent survey of aspects of 'Baroque' see Lyons 2019a; for (older) collections of important essays on issues of definitions, features, periodization and the scholarly history of research on 'Baroque' see e.g. Stamm 1956; Alewyn 1966; Buck 1972 Barner 1975; for overviews of scholarly history and definition problems see also Wellek 1946; Lyons 2019b; for the general context see Skrine 1978; Ciavolella / Coleman 2005; for issues of definition from an art historical point of view see e.g. Kitson 1966.

6   It has been pointed out that the label 'Baroque' can be used for historical periodization (variously defined) and refer to a particular form (e.g. Hills 2011: 3–9 [introduction]).

7   See e.g. Buck 1972: 2: 'Unter dem Aspekt des Barock offenbart sich aus komparatistischer Sicht das Gemeinsame in der Geschichte der europäischen Literaturen von der zweiten Hälfte des 16. bis zum Ausgang des 17. Jahrhunderts.';

Ibbett / More 2019: 542: 'Even though the term "baroque" often delineates regional or national styles, the concept has enabled a comparative work thinking beyond national literary tradition, interrogating the political stakes of such a tradition itself.'; see also Irmscher 1989: 91, for a statement of the fact that the poetry of the period, whichever their language, is sufficiently distinctive so that the term 'Baroque poetry' is justified.

8   On the development of style in this period and possible description, see e.g. Croll 1921; D'Amico 1984; Deneire 2012.

9   For the development or modulation of tragic drama during the Baroque period, see Bloemendal / Smith 2016.

10 It has also been noted that 'early modern' might be seen as problematic in itself (Hills 2011: 3: 'But this term is doubly problematic in implying not only a conception of history as smoothly linear, but of the earlier period in subordinate and teleological relation to the "modern"').

11 The term 'Latinity' (obviously derived from Latin *Latinitas*, a rhetorical term in antiquity) is established, at least in English-language scholarship, as a description of the character of the Latin used (see, for example, the section on 'Latinity' in Binns 1990: 297–306).

12 For this definition, see e.g. Skrine 1978.

13 On the transition between the periods of 'Renaissance' and 'Baroque', see e.g. Bouwsma 2000.

14 See e.g. Warnke 1972: 1–20.

15 For discussion of Poliziano's late-fifteenth-century assertion of imitative eclecticism, see D'Amico 1984.

16 Quoted from the eighteenth edition of 1760.

17 Breen 1954: 56, n. 27.

18 On the attitude to Hebrew texts in the Christian church, see e.g. Sutcliffe 2000.

19 For broader discussion of Psalm paraphrases, see Moul 2022, esp. ch. 3; Davidson 2007: 1–24, on ideas of the 'Baroque'.

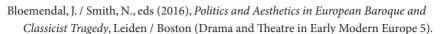20 On these issues in relation to the work of Croll, see Shuger 1985.

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