

INAR 328
History of Furniture and Interior Decoration
Lecture 9: Baroque and Rococo Furniture and Interior Decoration

Baroque Style: Louis XIV Style

- ◆ In many respects Baroque furniture shared characteristics of style with Baroque paintings and architecture, displaying an element of theatricality, and strong contrasts of light and dark. Baroque furniture shared with architecture of the era an interest in the contrast of textures and shapes, as illustrated by the designs of the lavish show-cabinets created during the Baroque era, which were made from a dazzling array of exotic materials.
- ◆ Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, German and Baltic States, Italy, France, Britain and North America developed their own characteristic styles.
- ◆ With the Louis XIV style we enter the high French Baroque period. This gives to a style that is majestic, solemn, pompous, rich heavy, and eminently regal – all in accordance with feelings of grandeur and the eagerness for the ostentation of power shown by Louis XIV from the time he ascended to the throne in 1643. The style will culminate, from the second half of the eighteenth century, in the Louis XV style.
- ◆ The harmonious ornamentation of the Louis XIV style is subject to three defining codes: symmetry, the use of gilt wood, and the inclusion of motifs from ancient Rome.



Fig. 16.1 Classical Baroque. Badmington Cabinet: A cabinet on stand in ebony, pietra dura, emethyst, lapis lazuli jasper, agate. This cabinet was sold at an auction in Christie's in 2004 for 36 million dollars. This is the highest bidding for a decorative object. **Fig. 16.2** The influence of Baroque sculpture. A cabinet in ebony and tortoiseshell, with painted panels under glass after Ovid's metamorphoses. Italian, Neapolitan. C. 1630-70. **Fig. 16.3** A state bed in carved and gilded mahogany, possibly designed by John Linnell and made by James Gravenor at Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire. British c. 1726. **Fig. 16.4** Broken curves and curvilinear interlace in the Mirror Room, Schloss Pommersfelden, with marquetry of an allied type on table tops and floor. Designed by Ferdinand Plitzner. German, 1714/ 18.

Louis XIV Style: The rich, formal style of Decoration in vogue under King Louis of France. It combines elements borrowed from the Italian BAROQUE with devices taken from the standard CLASSICAL repertoire of ornament. GOBELINS tapestries, BIZARE SILKS, and BOUILLE MARQUETERY were among the luxurious products manufactured.

- ◆ **Chippendale Style:** English furniture in Rococo taste with much ornamental carving, often OPENWORK (e.g. in chairbacks and crestings). It takes its name from the designer and the cabinetmaker Thomas Chippendale (1718-79), who produced a book of designs in this style in 1754. The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director.

Fig. 17.1 Chairs designed by Thomas Chippendale. British. **Fig. 17.2** A commode in tortoiseshell and brass marquetry, with gilt-bronze mounts and marble top. Designed by A.C. Boulle, French 1708. **Fig. 17.3-4** Chinoiserie lacquered consoles.

Rococo Style:

- ◆ Following the baroque period, which had dominated the scene until the first half of the eighteenth century, the emergence of liberal forms began subsiding to give rise to a decadent age represented by the rococo. The most genuine French rococo is represented by the Louis XV style, which will appear as a clearly determined phenomenon.
- ◆ Thus under the name of this king a furniture style will come to be recognized, situated between the years 1735 and 1770. It coincides with an age of seclusion and intimacy, with an abundance of rooms and small nooks in palaces and the houses of nobles. This will also condition the dimensions of the furniture, the sizes of which determine the main difference in regard to the creations of the previous period.

Rococo Furniture

- ◆ Rococo ornament on furniture developed in three distinct stages. The first stage was influenced by Jean Berain (1637-1711), Louis XIV's chief designer in the last years of the seventeenth century. Berain adopted the heavily grotesque ornament of Renaissance Italy and developed his designs for brass-inlaid furniture, chimney-pieces, ceilings and wall panellings on which fanciful beasts, classical gods, Chinese or Turkish figures as well as surrounded by symmetrical arrangements of arabesque motifs, lacy or foliage motifs.
- ◆ Louis XV Style: The French version of ROCOCO, popular between 1720 and 1750 and already out of fashion by the time of the King's death in 1774. It is typified by the love of asymmetry, and shell-and rockwork ornament. ROCAILLE.
- ◆ Nicolas Pineau was one of the most influential of all Rococo designers. He designed carved wood panelling for Peter the Great besides other interiors, hangings, furniture and wall decoration. Most of his works copied by furniture makers.
- ◆ During this time upholstery and textile design and production gained much importance.

Fig. 18 Rococo Candel stand in stained and painted pine designed by Thomas Johnson. British c. 1758.
Fig. 18.2 Decorative element: a casket on stand in mother of pearl, gilt bronze and gilt copper, designed and made by Pietro Pifetti, Italian c. 1745. **Fig. 18.3 A cradle in carved and painted wood, Italian c. 1750**
Fig. 18.4 Clock in gilt bronze and Vincennes or Mennecey porcelain. French, Signed Gauron 1754.

Fig. 19.1 A design for a Commode Table and two candle stands by Thomas Chippendale, British, 1761. (From the Gentlemen and Cabinet Maker's Director.) 1762 **Fig. 19.2 A chair made up of shells, dolphins and rocaile ornament with two pearls in carved and gilded wood. French c. 1760-70.**

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- ◆ Chippendale Style: will be well accepted in North America.

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