

roque, whose extravagant ornament made it a powerful symbol of the state's authority. In the 18th century, in reaction against the Baroque, especially in North America, the Georgian style was favoured for its classical simplicity.

By making known European painting, engraving and sculpture, and training local artists, missionaries played an essential role in spreading the techniques and tastes of the 'Old World'. In this way themes treated by African, Asian and Native American artists were linked with Europe.

But the traffic was not all one way. Oriental artistic creations inspired, in Europe, the multicoloured decoration of porcelain and furniture, the building of Chinese pavilions and gardens.

Literature was enriched with new themes. Travel writers described distant lands and the customs of their inhabitants – as did William Dampier, author of *Voyage around the World*, written in 1697, who in the course of his voyages rescued Alexander Selkirk, who had been marooned for four years on Juan Fernandez Island and who inspired Daniel Defoe's famous novel *Robinson Crusoe* (translated into several languages). Count Louis Antoine de Bougainville, who combined his skill as a navigator with his training as a scientist, wrote an interesting *Voyage autour du monde*. In Italy in the 17th century a whole school of travel writing developed, much consulted by merchants. In Vienna, an academy was founded to study the curiosities of nature. Ships' logs also gave valuable information about their voyages and the cultural contact between civilizations. The epic *Os Lusíadas*, or *The Lusíads*, by the Portuguese poet Luis de Camões (1572), in which European culture is blended with Oriental experience, is a great poetic exploration of humanism.

A universal dimension

The voyages of discovery were one of humanity's great adventures. They revealed that the world was larger than had been imagined. Europeans had now met peoples little known to them, and in many cases not known at all.

The Europeans' arrival had been a shock from which some native societies, as in the Caribbean, never recovered. In other cases, as in the Amerindian empires, there was simply a change of rulers. The most ancient civilizations, in the Indies and in China, were better able to resist. But the slave trade decimated the peoples of Black Africa.

In the longer term, however, Europe's preponderance gradually gave way to reciprocal influence, and the confrontation of civilizations evolved in the direction of a better understanding of the human family as a whole.



3 CUZCO CATHEDRAL IN THE ANDES

Cuzco, which means the umbilicus of the world, was the centre of Inca civilization. It retained its importance in Spanish Peru, as witness the Spanish colonial architecture of its cathedral.



4 DUTCH ARCHITECTURE IN THE WEST INDIES

These houses, whose façades so obviously follow Dutch influence, were built on the fortunes made from the slave trade, of which the island of St Martin was one of the centres.



5 THE 'PORTUGUESE' SCREEN

Landing of the Jesuits in Japan, 16th century

The Jesuit Francis Xavier found in Japan an advanced civilization and an ancient religion. He went about converting the Japanese with endless patience. By the end of the 16th century the Japanese Church had 300,000 members.