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Palladio and his Books

In addition to his achievements as an architect, [ANDREA PALLADIO](#) (1508-1580) was an accomplished author and illustrator. He wrote three best-selling books and provided illustrations for new editions of three books written by others. Several collections of his drawings have also been published, as well as one example of his correspondence.

I. Andrea Palladio

I quattro libri dell'architettura

Venice: Dominico de' Franceschi, 1570



Andrea Palladio's literary masterwork, *Four Books on Architecture*, profoundly affected Western architecture both in its original Italian and in translation, including editions in Spanish, French, English, German, Russian, Swedish, Polish, Romanian and Czech.

At least 23 partial or complete English language editions were available to American builders, architects and their patrons prior to the American Revolution. Several of them, notably the Leoni/Dubois editions, altered Palladio's original text and illustrations in material ways which impacted subsequent British and American Palladianism.

The creation of *Four Books* was a long-term project. Palladio had begun work on it by 1555, the year Anton Francesco Doni mentions it in *La*

seconda libreria del Doni (Venice, 1555) as a work in progress. The work is referred to again by Daniele Barbaro in his 1556 edition of Vitruvius' *Ten Books on Architecture* and by Giorgio Vasari in his 1568 edition of *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*. The archives of the Correr Museum in Venice hold a manuscript from the 1561-1565 period with major segments of Books 1-3.

The work was first brought forward in 1570 as two volumes, *Two Books on Architecture* and *Two Books on Antiquities*, but was quickly reorganized as a unified *Four Books*.

Although *Four Books* gave rise to the phenomenon of Palladianism across Europe and America, Palladio's own constructed works in the Veneto region of Italy have always impressed visitors. 'All of Palladio's works are lighter than in the drawings,' the English architect Inigo Jones wrote when he visited in 1610. Almost a century later, the director of the French Academy in Rome shared that view. 'Although Palladio's book is well printed, his works, when viewed in the original, give a different impression,' he observed.

English language editions

A. Godfrey Richards

The First Book of Architecture by Andrea Palladio: translated out of the Italian with diverse other designs necessary to the art of well building

London: John Macock, 1663



A translation of only Book 1 of Palladio's work, dealing primarily with the Orders of architecture. Descriptions of certain English construction techniques are included. The illustrations, much of the text, and some additional material on doors, windows and staircases, are based on Mons. Pierre Le Muet's partial French translation of Book 1, entitled *Traicté des cinq Orderes* (Paris: Langlois, 1645; reprint 1647). The Richards' volume also includes original designs by

William Pope for roof construction and timber framing.

The Richards work was reprinted in eleven subsequent editions, all in London: John Macock, 2nd ed. 1668; N. Simmons, 3rd ed. 1676 *et al.*; T. Passenger, 4th ed. 1683 *et al.*; T. Parkhurst, 5th ed. 1693 *et al.*; T. Braddyl and E. Tracy, 6th ed. 1700 *et al.*; 7th ed. 1708 *et al.*; Eben. Tracy, 8th ed. 1716; H. Tracy, 9th ed. 1721; S. H. and H. T., 10th ed. 1724; Edw. Midwinter, 11th ed. 1729; [A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, et al., 12th ed. 1733 et al.](#)

B. Giacomo Leoni, editor; translation by Nicholas Dubois; frontispiece by Sebastiano Ricci; engravings by Bernard Picart, Michael Vandergucht, John Harris and John Cole

The Architecture of A. Palladio, in Four Books

London: John Watts, 1715-1720

The English translation is accompanied by two separate volumes, one with the original Italian text and the other with an amended version of Fréart de Chambray's French translation (1650). Leoni changed Palladio's original illustrations by introducing 'many necessary Corrections with respect to Shading, Dimensions, Ornaments, &c.'

In promoting his own competing translation in 1737, Isaac Ware accurately observed that Leoni 'thought fit not only to vary from the scale of the originals, but also in many places to alter even the graceful proportions prescribed by [Palladio], by diminishing some of his measures, enlarging others, and putting in fanciful decorations of his own. . . .'

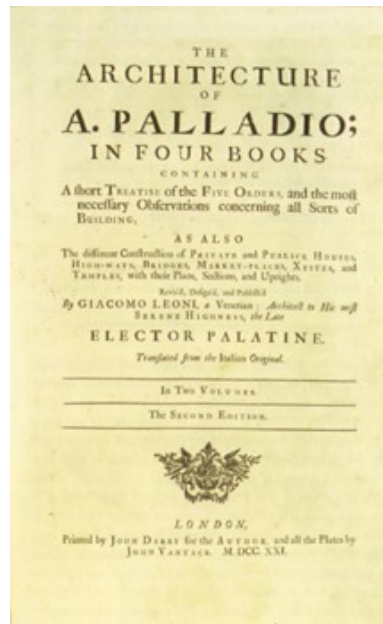
Ware could have added three other complaints. Leoni states that the text is "translated from the Italian original," when in fact it was translated from a French edition; the frontispiece said to be based on a painting by Palladio's contemporary Paolo Veronese is actually an original eighteenth-century concoction by Sebastiano Ricci; and the engravings said to be by Amsterdam artist Bernard Picart although only 36 of them are his work..

Leoni, who was--like Palladio--a native of the Veneto region of Italy, came to England to be in the employ of Henry, Duke of Kent, after previously serving as architectural advisor to the Palatine Elector in Düsseldorf. One scholar has speculated that Leoni may have been invited to England for the specific purpose of creating an English edition of Palladio's *Four Books*.

C. Giacomo Leoni, editor; translation by Nicholas Dubois; frontispiece by Sebastiano Ricci; engravings by Bernard Picart and others

The Architecture of A. Palladio

London: Giacomo Leoni, 2nd ed. 1721



The Leoni/Dubois 1721 edition is a reprint of the English language volume of their original 1716-1720 edition.

D. Colen Campbell, editor

Andrea Palladio's First Book of Architecture

London: Samuel Harding, 1728

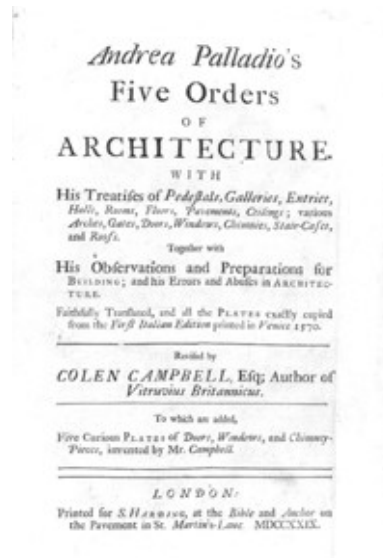


Book 1 of Palladio's work, dealing primarily with the Orders of architecture. The illustrations accurately reproduce the plates from Palladio's *Four Books*, but the text is a revision of the translation prepared by Nicholas Dubois for Giacomo Leoni's 1715-1720 edition.

E. Colen Campbell, editor; engravings by Paul Fourdrinier and Benjamin Cole

Andrea Palladio's Five Orders of Architecture

London: Samuel Harding, 1729



A reprint of the Campbell 1728 edition with a new title and five additional plates of Campbell's own designs.

F. Edward Hoppus, editor; engravings by Paul Fourdrinier, Benjamin Cole and Isaac Ware

Andrea Palladio's Architecture, in Four Books . . . and embellish'd with a large variety of chimney pieces collected from the works of Inigo Jones and others

London: Benjamin Cole, 1735



A plagiarization of Book 1 from the Campbell edition, Books 2, 3 and 4 from the Leoni edition, and additional plates from Isaac Ware's *Designs of Inigo Jones and Others* (1731). First appeared in parts, 1733-1734.

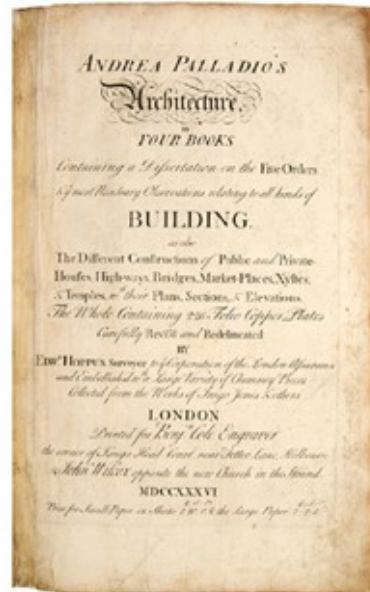
Writing two years later in support of his own translation, Isaac Ware commented that the Hoppus work was 'done with so little understanding, and so much negligence, that it cannot but give great offense to the judicious, and be of very bad consequence in misleading the unskilful, into whose hands it might happen to fall.'

G. Edward Hoppus, editor; engravings by Paul Fourdrinier, Benjamin Cole and

Isaac Ware

Andrea Palladio's Architecture, in Four Books . . . and embellish'd with a large variety of chimney pieces collected from the works of Inigo Jones and others

London: Benjamin Cole and John Wilcox, 1736



A slightly expanded reprint of the Hoppus 1735 edition.

H. Isaac Ware, editor and translator

The Four Books of Andrea Palladio's Architecture

London: Isaac Ware, [1737] 1738



The most accurate English translation of Palladio's Italian original available for more than 250 years. Ware's engraved illustrations, however, are reversed mirror images of Palladio's woodcut originals.

In dedicating the edition to Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington and fourth Earl of Cork, Ware credits the earl with having personally taken the trouble to revise the translation.

I. Isaac Ware, editor and translator

The First Book of Andrea Palladio's Architecture

London: Isaac Ware, 1742

A reprint, in a larger format edition, of Book 1 from Ware's complete 1738 edition.

J. Giacomo Leoni, editor; translation by Nicholas Dubois; frontispiece by Sebastiano Ricci; engravings by Bernard Picart, Michael Vandergucht, John Harris and John Cole

The Architecture of Andrea Palladio in Four Books. . . With notes and remarks of Inigo Jones . . . and also an appendix, containing the antiquities of Rome

London: A. Ward, S. Birt, D. Browne, C. Davis, T. Osbourne and A. Millar, 1742

A reprint of the Leoni/Dubois edition supplemented by Inigo Jones' marginalia from his personal copy of *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*, as well as Andrea Palladio's *Le antichità di Roma* and *Discourse on the Fires of the Ancients*.

K. Isaac Ware, editor and translator

The Four Books of Andrea Palladio's Architecture

London: Isaac Ware, 1755

A reprint of Ware's 1738 edition.

L. William Halfpenny, John Halfpenny, Robert Morris, and Thomas Lightoler; Colen Campbell, editor

The Modern Builder's Assistant, or, A Concise Epitome of the Whole System of Architecture

London: Robert Sayer, [1757]

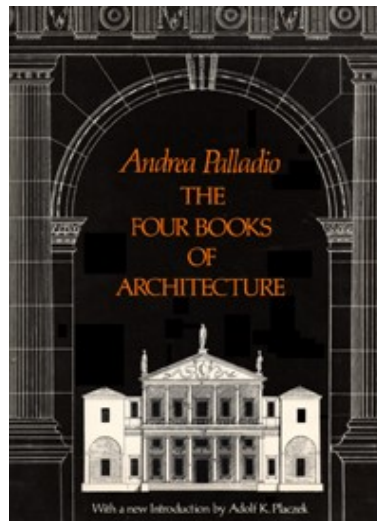
Notwithstanding its title, the book is a reprint from Colen Campbell's 1729 edition of Book 1 of Palladio's *Four Books* (the seven chapters on the Orders). Also included is a group of architectural designs by William and John Halfpenny, William Morris and Thomas Lightoler. A second edition was published later the same year by James Rivington, J. Fletcher and Robert Sayer.

Curiously, six years earlier William Halfpenny was the author of a treatise which, despite being on the subject of perspective, was published under the title *Andrea Palladio's First Book of Architecture, corrected from his original edition printed at Venice, 1581* [sic], wherein is pointed out the various mistakes and contradictions between the chapters and the figured draughts (London: J. Brindley and R. Sayer, 1751).

M. Isaac Ware, editor and translator

Andrea Palladio: The Four Books of Architecture

New York: Dover Publications, 1965

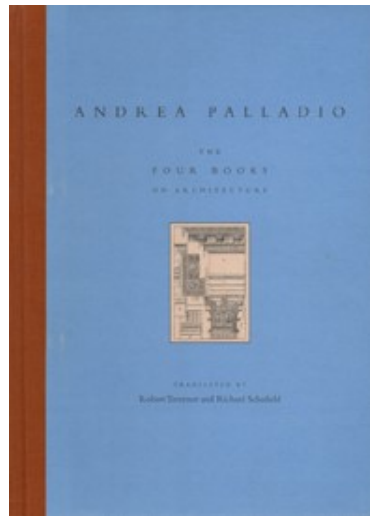


A facsimile of Isaac Ware's 1738 edition, with an introduction by A. K. Placzek.

N. Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield, editors and translators

Andrea Palladio: The Four Books on Architecture

Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997



The first new English translation of *I quattro libri dell'architettura* in more than 250 years.

II. Andrea Palladio

Le antichità di Roma . . . raccolta brevemente da gli autori antichi, & moderni, nuovamente posta in luce

Rome: Vincentio Lucrino, 1554

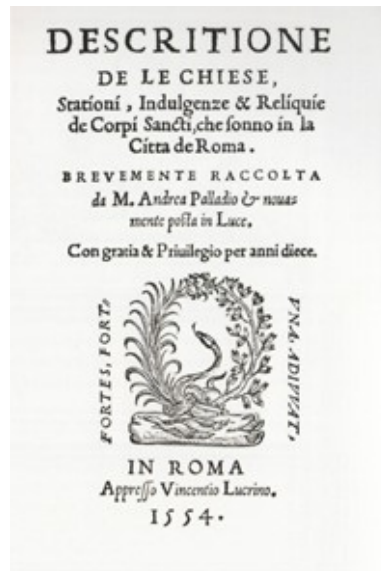


Palladio's *The Antiquities of Rome* . . . , a guide to Rome's classical ruins, was reprinted in more than thirty editions over the next 200 years.

III. Andrea Palladio

Descrizione de le chiese, stationi, indulgenze & reliquie de Corpi Santi, che sono in la città de Roma

Rome: Vincentio Lucrino, 1554



Palladio's *Description of the . . . churches of Rome* was published as a guide for religious pilgrims to the city.

IV. Vitruvius; translation and commentary by Daniele Barbaro; illustrations by Andrea Palladio

I dieci libri dell'architettura di M. Vitruvio, tradutti et commentati da Monsignor Barbaro, eletto Patriarca d'Aquileggia

Venice: Francesco Marcolini, 1556



Palladio provided the illustrations for Daniele Barbaro's commentary on Vitruvius' *De architettura libri decem* [Ten Books on Architecture]. Barbaro was Palladio's friend and, with his brother, patron of Palladio's Villa Barbaro in Maser.

V. Martino Bassi, with correspondence from Giovanni Battista Bertani, Andrea Palladio, Giorgio Vasari and Giacomo Vignola

Dispareri in materia d'architettura, et perspectiva, con pereri di eccellenti et famosi architetti, che li risolvono

Bressa: Francesco, & Pie, 1572

Bassi's *Diverse views in matters of architecture and perspective, with opinions of excellent and famous architects who address them* includes correspondence from four prominent architects of the period whose views Bassi had solicited to support his own position in a controversy involving Milan Cathedral. Palladio's letter, written after consultation with Giuseppe Salviati and Silvio de Belli, is dated 3 July 1570.

VI. Julius Caesar; edited by Andrea Palladio; illustrations by Leonida and Orazio Palladio; translation by Francesco Baldelli

I commentari di C. Giulio Cesare, con le figure in rame de gli alloggiamenti, de' fatti d'arme, delle circonvallazioni delle città, e di molte altre cose notabili, descritte in essi

Venice: Pietro De' Franceschi, 1575



The book, in Palladio's words, 'with great expense and application illustrated all the military dispositions of the Romans as extracted from the *Commentaries* of Julius Caesar.'

Palladio states in the Preface that his sons Leonida and Orazio, who both died in 1572, drew the images for the engravings. Palladio obtained a 15-year *privilegio*, or copyright, protecting his rights in the book.

Palladio used as the text of the book a translation into Italian by Francesco Baldelli which had been published by Gabriele Giolito in 1553.

VII. Polybius; illustrations by Andrea Palladio

Historia

Mss. 1578

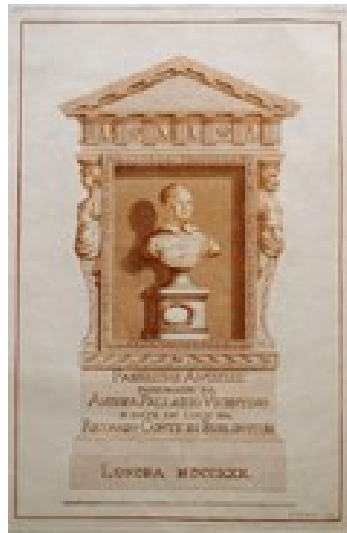
Palladio prepared forty-three illustrations for a new edition of Polybius' *History*. Polybius was a third century Greek historian. Palladio's volume was never published, presumably because of his death in 1580, but in 1977 a manuscript copy of Palladio's introduction and engravings, with annotations in Palladio's handwriting, turned up in the British Library, inserted into a 1564 edition of Polybius (which King George III had purchased from Joseph Smith, his former consul in Venice).

A second copy of the same material surfaced in 1986 in the stock of a Florentine bookdealer, this time with handwriting of Palladio's son Silla and the text of Palladio's September 1579 letter of dedication to Francesco de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany.

VIII. Andrea Palladio; Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington and fourth Earl of Cork, editor; engravings by Paul Fourdrinier

Fabbriche Antiche, diseguate da Andrea Palladio Vicentino

London: [Burlington], c. 1735-1740 (sic: 1730)



Burlington intended his *Ancient Buildings* to be the first of two volumes of Palladio drawings from his personal collection, but the sequel never appeared. Alexander Pope's famous poem 'Epistle to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington' (1732), was originally created to appear in this volume but was ultimately published separately.

IX. Andrea Palladio; Charles Cameron, editor

The Baths of the Romans, explained and illustrated, with restorations of Palladio corrected and improved

London: S. Leacroft and J. Mathews, 1772

An enlarged and revised edition of Boyle's earlier *Fabbriche Antiche*, with the text in English and French. Cameron later found fame as chief architect to Empress Catherine the Great of Russia.

X. Andrea Palladio; Douglas Lewis, editor

The Drawings of Andrea Palladio

Washington, D. C.: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1981;
enlarged and rev. ed., New Orleans: Martin & St. Martin, 2000



The enlarged and revised edition of this comprehensive survey of Palladio drawings was published with support from the Center for Palladian Studies in America, Inc.

Sources: Charles Hind and Irena Murray, *Palladio and His Legacy: A Transatlantic Legacy* (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 2010); Guido Beltramini and Howard Burns, editors, *Palladio* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008); Guido Beltramini, Howard Burns, *et al.*, *Palladio and Northern Europe: Books, Travellers, Architects* (Milan: Skira, 1999); Charles Brownell, 'Necessary Corrections' to Four Books Continue to Distort Palladian Legacy,' *Palladiana: Journal of the Center for Palladian Studies in America, Inc.*, 3:1 (Fall 2008), pp. 2-5; Charles Brownell, 'Lord Burlington and Palladio's drawings of the baths of Rome,' *Palladiana: Journal of the Center for Palladian Studies in America, Inc.*, 2:1 (Fall 2007), pp. 6-7; John R. Hale, *Renaissance War Studies* (London: Hambleton, 1983); Eileen Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield, *Andrea Palladio: The Four Books on Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997); Rudolf Wittkower, *Palladio and English Palladianism* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1974).

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