

SPRING 2026

The Mario di Valmarana Center *for Studies in Venice and Vicenza*

WILLIAM SHERMAN

The University of Virginia has opened its first academic location abroad for The Mario di Valmarana Center for Studies in Venice and Vicenza. The Center will welcome its first students in June for the 51st year of the Vicenza program.

After decades of study abroad programs in the Veneto region, the UVA School of Architecture found its permanent site in the Palazzo Vescovado in Vicenza. Vescovado was formerly the seat of the Bishop of Vicenza. Here, the program will expand its offerings to adult learners, build new partnerships in the region, and house students and faculty. It will also provide additional research opportunities for faculty and other scholars.

Last year, on the 50th anniversary of the Veneto programs, the Mayor of Vicenza, UVA leaders and others voiced their aspiration to create the Center for immersive education and collaborative scholarship. The enthusiastic support from the Valmarana Family, alumni donors, Architecture School Dean Malo Hutson, and other UVA leadership made the Center a reality.

UVA's Italian programs began in the early 1970s, when Architecture School Dean Joe Bosserman invited Mario di

Valmarana to teach for only one semester. Mario, as he was known to all, remained for 30 years. Shortly after coming to UVA, he led a group of students to Vicenza, his family's hometown, to study the architecture and culture of the Veneto. Vicenza had also become a hometown of Andrea Palladio, whose famous treatise, the *Four Books on Architecture*, significantly influenced Thomas Jefferson's design for the University of Virginia.



Palazzo Vescovado, Vicenza, Italy

Courtesy of Wikipedia.org

During his tenure, Mario had a tremendous impact on the Architecture School and the lives of thousands of students who became immersed in a culture where the boundaries between disciplines dissolved. He introduced them to the cultural connections across scales of design, patterns of life, and the persistence of a commitment to place.

After a few years, Mario started the Venice program, allowing students to devote an entire semester to the study of design, history, and the urban form of that most unlikely of cities. For the students in both the Vicenza and Venice programs, the experience was transformational. As alumni, they tell how

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Member Update

Call for Board Members

BRYAN CLARK GREEN AND DALE HILTON, CO-PRESIDENTS

We are pleased to offer this update on recent work related to CPSA Board development. Many readers already know that Board participation provides a meaningful way to contribute to the Center: we welcome recommendations of potential nominees—whether colleague, friend, or yourself.

Over the past several months, we have undertaken a careful review of governance practices in order to develop a more coherent and sustainable structure. As a result we have adopted staggered three-year terms to strengthen continuity across cycles of service; created an Advisory Committee to recognize emeritus board members and utilize their accumulated expertise; recommended ex officio appointments to reinforce institutional connections; and established a Student Board Representative to encourage participation by emerging scholars in Palladian studies.

Bruce Boucher, Gardiner Hallock, Susan Stein, Betty di Valmarana, Richard Guy Wilson, and John Zeugner have joined the Advisory Committee, where their longstanding involvement with the Center will continue to inform our work. Stay tuned for future announcements about new Advisory Committee members.

Reflecting his thoughtful engagement with the organization, Noah Duell has moved from the role as student representative to become a regular Board member. Another change is the resignation of Erik Bootsma, who is stepping away to devote more time to family; we extend appreciation for his contributions to CPSA.



Palazzo Vescovado, Vicenza, Italy
UVA's new Valmarana Center, see pages 1, 12-13
Photograph by Patrick Suuk, Lino's & Co., Verona, Italy

For those considering a Board nomination, whether for yourself or someone else, several groups outline the responsibilities and best practices associated with nonprofit board service: The Center for Nonprofit Excellence, BoardSource, and Nonprofit Leadership Lab.

Board nominees must be current CPSA members. Please direct interested persons to the website's membership section. The past year has demonstrated that our robust program of webinars and both domestic and international travel, including the proposed 2026 trip to Ireland, has encouraged new members to engage more fully. Gift memberships have also proven an effective point of entry for potential members.

Finally, we wish to express our gratitude The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation for its significant support in recent years. If you are interested in contributing to the Center through a foundation, making a special gift, or exploring other avenues of support beyond annual dues, we would welcome a conversation with you. ■

Design Under Constraint

Palladio's Design Negotiations at Villa Gazzotti

VICTORIA BITRICK

In designing the 1542–1543 Villa Gazzotti Grimani Marcello Curti (Villa Gazzotti), Andrea Palladio encountered two challenges: the incorporation of a pre-existing medieval tower in the villa and a change of ownership in the middle of the project.

In June 2025, the 3D documentation of the villa by a collaborative team, comprising several professors and me from the School of Architecture, University of Virginia, and Italian partners, provided insight into this important and fascinating early Palladian villa.¹

Villa Gazzotti at Bertesina was commissioned by a tax collector, Tadeo Gazzotti, on the outskirts of Vicenza between 1542 and 1543. However, by 1550, before the completion of the villa, Gazzotti went bankrupt after a failed investment in a speculation on salt taxes. Gazzotti's bankruptcy forced him to sell the incomplete villa to a Venetian patrician, Girolamo Grimani, who completed the villa a few years later.²

Palladio was tasked with the design challenge of incorporating a pre-existing medieval tower into the design of the villa. His original design had a nine-bay façade with bays separated by Ionic semi-columns. The salon and loggia occupied the three central bays with a narrow staircase dividing the two spaces and three-room apartments at each end of the villa. However, this design was modified to include a seven-



Axonometric view of Villa Gazzotti's south and east facades and immediate surroundings
Rendering by the author

bay façade rather than a nine-bay façade, and the Ionic semi-columns were replaced with Composite pilasters.³ Interestingly, the corners of the front façade are capped with one pilaster rather than doubled columns, implying that the façade was intended to include the original nine bays.⁴ The result is a facade that ends abruptly at its front corners.⁵

The floor plan thus deviated from Palladio's original proposal with the rectangular salon being replaced with a cross-vaulted, cruciform salon; the original narrow staircase dividing the salon from the loggia was replaced by the two haphazard staircases situated between the salon and the loggia. With the omission of the end bays, the plan became more compact, although both apartments still retained three rooms.⁶ Additionally, the retention of the pre-existing medieval tower further hindered Palladio's ability to fulfill his initial plan, resulting in the necessity to mirror the tower on the opposite end of the plan.⁷

Although the realized villa strayed from its original design, it also introduced new features into Palladio's work. For example, it was among the first instances where Palladio employed a cross-vaulted, cruciform salon. In addition, for the first

Palladiania

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NEWSLETTER CREDITS

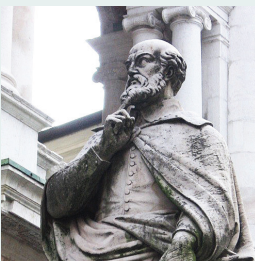
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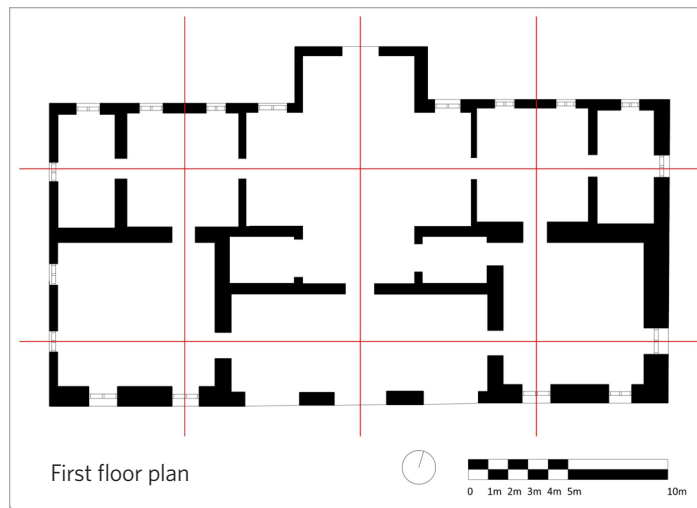
Submissions

Our deadline for the Fall 2026 issue is August 15 for images and September 1 for copy. We appreciate early submittal of potential articles of no more than 1000 words.

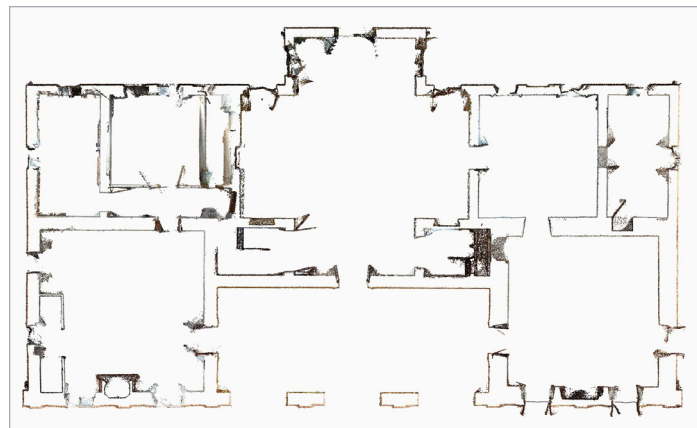
Images for digital printing must be jpegs at a minimum size of 350 dpi, 9-inch width. Check size by clicking on image, "tools," "adjust size," which will provide the dpi and width of your image.

If images are not 350 dpi/9"w, please consult with state libraries or departments of historic resources, Library of Congress, historical societies, or house museums to request high resolution images. While cell phones' cameras are used by many and may be acceptable for web or other formats, the results produce lower resolution than necessary for *Palladiania*.

If you have questions, prior to submission please email katherineslaughter61@gmail.com. Send images to her and essays to Editor Calder Loth, cloth@verizon.net.



Villa Gazzotti, first floor plan, without later modifications to west apartment with red lines depicting enfilade strategy
 Rendering by the author



First Floor Plan, Villa Gazzotti
 Rendering by the author



First floor plan, Villa Gazzotti, showing location of medieval tower, red outline on right
 Rendering by the author

time he implemented into the villa a pedimented loggia, which would evolve into porticos seen in later works. Furthermore, Palladio ingeniously utilized Composite pilasters both to conceal the villa's chimneys and also as a classical embellishment to divide the façade into regular bays.⁸

Palladio's use of a stuccoed brick façade concealed evidence of the medieval tower as well as the two construction campaigns built by Gazzotti and Grimani by presenting one cohesive façade. However, the deterioration of the stucco today reveals both the location of the medieval tower at the villa's southeast corner as well as the location of the two phases of construction by Gazzotti and Grimani. On the east façade, the location of the medieval tower is revealed by distinct ghost marks of the edges of the tower, as well as ghost marks indicating the location of the tower's medieval windows that were later filled in. Furthermore, the west façade reveals additional ghost lines in the brickwork, indicating two distinct campaigns of construction sponsored by Gazzotti and Grimani. Therefore, the material evidence at the villa corroborates the story of the absorption of the medieval tower in the villa as well as Gazzotti's sale of the incomplete villa to Grimani.

Today, the western apartment includes later renovations with its northern room subdivided to accommodate a restroom and narrow hallway. In addition, the southwest room that mirrors the medieval tower was divided sectionally by the insertion of a floor dividing the room into two stories. These modifications result in a distinct difference between the spaces in the east and west apartments. However, 3D documentation of the villa shows these modern renovations and simultaneously provides the possibility to envision the original form of the villa before alteration.

The data collected from the 3D laser scans of the villa allows for architectural documentation of the villa in its current condition, analysis of the original realized design of the villa, and confirmation of the location of the absorbed medieval tower in the villa. The complete dataset of the villa provides the opportunity to produce plans, sections, and elevations that document the villa in its current state. The first-floor plan documents the location of the renovations made to the western apartment and provides accurate dimensions that allow for the reproduction of the original plan. With this reproduction, the precise dimensions recorded by the 3D data allow for an analysis of both the location of the medieval tower and the proportional design of the villa modified to accommodate the tower.

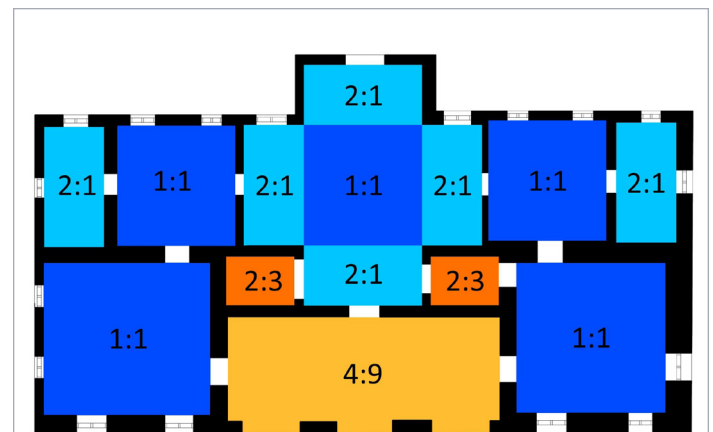


Villa Gazzotti, section perspective facing north: west apartment on left; loggia, center; and medieval tower, right
 Rendering by the author

The location of the medieval tower is indicated in the 3D data from the first floor by its thicker walls, measuring approximately 0.9 meters. Furthermore, the dimensions captured by the 3D data provide accurate dimensions of the tower, measuring approximately 9 by 9 meters, conveniently fitting a 1:1 ratio. Palladio incorporated this square tower in the design of the villa by mirroring it with an equally sized room in the western apartment.

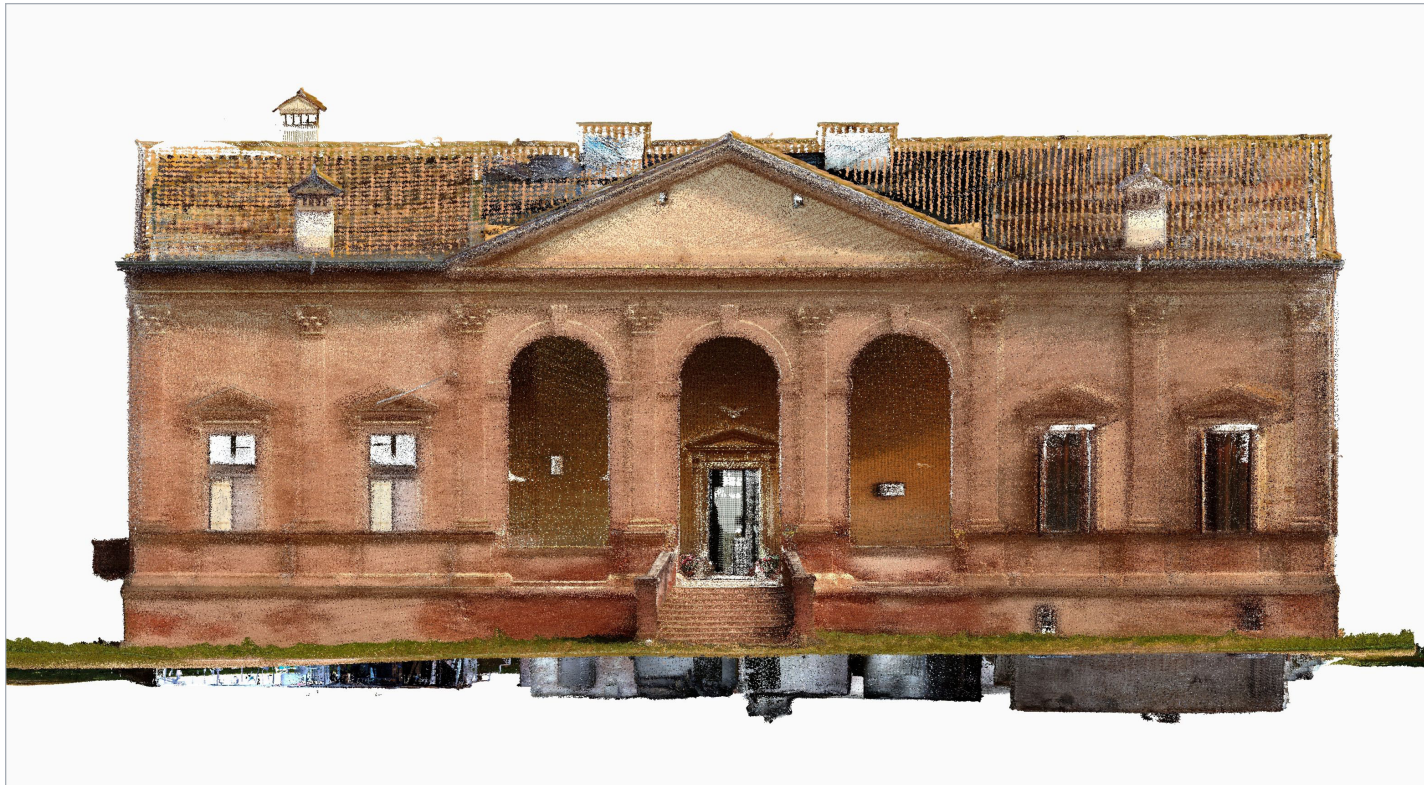
Looking at the rest of the first-floor plan, Palladio's typical ratios are present in the majority of the villa's floor plan with 1:1, 1:2, and 2:3 ratios used for the spaces on the first floor.¹⁰ However, the loggia adopts an uncommon 4:9 ratio, which Palladio used once again for the loggia at the Villa Poiana in 1549.¹¹ It appears that the use of this uncommon ratio was Palladio's solution to accommodate the medieval tower within the villa's floor plan while simultaneously creating a proportionally satisfying plan.

In addition, Palladio produced an axially symmetrical plan with the enfilade modeled on the medieval tower.¹² Interestingly, the only exception to the symmetry of the plan is the omission of a second window on the eastern wall of the medieval tower. However, ghost marks in the brick imply the previous presence of a door or window at this location.



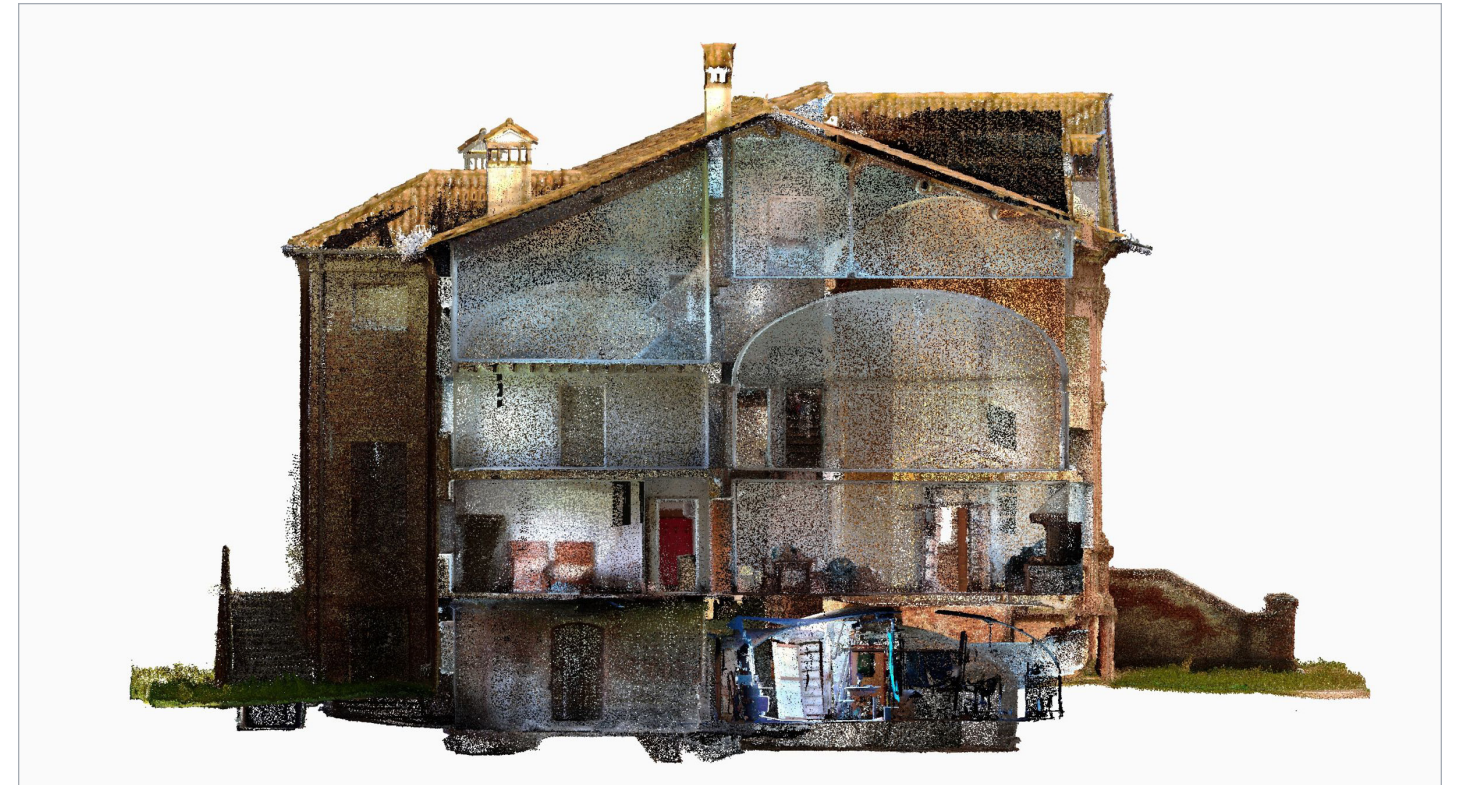
First floor plan

Diagram, first floor, ratios employed by Palladio
 Rendering by the author



South Elevation, Villa Gazzotti

Rendering by the author



Section perspective viewing west apartment, Villa Gazzotti

Rendering by the author

The combined analysis of the material evidence and the 3D documentation of Palladio's Villa Gazzotti confirms the villa's incorporation of a pre-existing medieval tower in its plan, as well as its two distinct phases of construction sponsored by Gazzotti and Grimani. The insight into Palladio's innovative strategy for overcoming these challenges provided by this analysis presents Villa Gazzotti as a fascinating experimental precedent for Palladio's later mature villas. ■

Victoria Bitrick is a fifth-year Master of Architectural History student at the School of Architecture, University of Virginia, pursuing a certificate in Historic Preservation. She visited Villa Gazzotti this past June as part of her research funded by the CPSA Scholarship Program.

1 In 2025, Dr. Andrew Johnston, Director of the UVA Program in Historic Preservation, was a visiting scientist to the Heritage Digital Survey and Representation Research Group within the Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering, University of Padua, hosted by Dr. Andrea Giordano, Director, Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering, University of Padua. Funding was provided by The Project of Excellence for the Smart Engineering Infrastructures group of the Department of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering SEI-ICEA. As part of Dr. Johnston's visit, this 3D laser scanning was undertaken by a UVA team consisting of Andrew Johnston; UVA Library

Scholars' Lab's 3D Data and Content Specialist Will Rourk; Dr. Jessica Sewell; and Victoria Bitrick, in collaboration with Dr. Rachele Bernardello, Assistant Professor at the University of Padua, and Dr. Paolo Borin, Associate Professor at the University of Brescia. The team would like to thank Dr. Ines Martin Robles for her assistance in gaining access to the Villa and the Villa owners for permitting access and documentation.

- 2 Bruce Boucher, *Andrea Palladio: The Architect in His Time*, 2nd. ed. New York: Abbeville Publishing Group, 2007, pp. 72-73; Kim Williams and Andrea Giovanni Giaconi, *The Villas of Palladio*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003, p. 36; "Villa Gazzotti - Bertolina - (1542)," Centro Internazionale Di Studi Di Architettura Andrea Palladio, accessed December 22, 2025, <https://web.archive.org/web/20071106230745/http://www.cisapalladio.org/veneto/scheda.php?sezione=4&architettura=29&lingua=e>.
- 3 Boucher, *Andrea Palladio*, p. 73; Centro Internazionale, "Villa Gazzotti."
- 4 Williams and Giaconi, *The Villas of Palladio*, p. 36.
- 5 Boucher, *Andrea Palladio*, p. 73.
- 6 Boucher, *Andrea Palladio*, Ibid.
- 7 Centro Internazionale, "Villa Gazzotti."
- 8 Boucher, *Andrea Palladio*, p. 73; Williams and Giaconi, *The Villas of Palladio*, p. 36.
- 9 Boucher, *Andrea Palladio*, Ibid.
- 10 Roberta Spallone and Michele Calvano, "Parametric Experiments on Palladio's 5 by 3 Villas," *Nexus Network Journal* 24 (February 2022): 289, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00004-022-00592-1>.
- 11 Spallone and Calvano, "Parametric Experiments," p. 296.
- 12 Spallone and Calvano, "Parametric Experiments," pp. 290, 293.

Invite Your Friends And Colleagues

CPSA

Helping CPSA can also enhance your participation as well:

- Provide a friend with a gift membership. Individuals \$50/year and students \$15/year.
- Attend a lecture or pop-up tour together.
- Pass along information connected to a research theme of mutual interest.
- Issues of our journal *Palladiana* are available on the CPSA website as well as links to websites related to classical architecture:
 - For *Palladiana* visit palladiancenter.org, click on the Publications tab, click on Archives, and enter your search term.

- For related websites visit palladiancenter.org, click on the Resources tab for a variety of links to websites such as The Institute of Classical Architecture and Art (ICAA) where you can find lectures by our own Calder Loth. At this tab, you can also find Palladian resources in England and Italy.
- Share with friends links to video and recorded lectures sponsored by CPSA.
 - Use YouTube.com to search for Center for Palladian Studies to find illuminating talks by Bryan Clark Green, Madison Spencer, Calder Loth, Bruce Boucher, and others.



Palladianism in the Deep South

NOAH DUELL

On a lone hilltop surrounded by cultivated fields in northern Alabama sits Belle Mont, a stately historic site and museum displaying aspects of Thomas Jefferson’s idiosyncratic architectural style. With its tripartite form and courtyard plan, the house stands out as a distinctive, rare, and early example of Palladianism in the Deep South, one worth exploring in greater detail.

Belle Mont was once the centerpiece of a large cotton plantation established by Alexander Williams Mitchell (1788–1862). Mitchell was born in Goochland County, VA, to Thomas Mitchell and Isabella Jerdone, who was the daughter of Francis Jerdone, onetime owner of the Farmington plantation outside Charlottesville, VA.¹ Mitchell spent most of his early life at a plantation called Braehead in Louisa County, about 35

miles east of Monticello.² After his rearing in central Virginia, Mitchell studied in Edinburgh to become a physician before moving to northern Alabama in 1820.

Northern Alabama was a natural destination for a man of Mitchell’s generation and class. After the disastrous and unusually cold period dubbed the “Year without a Summer” in 1816, and the subsequent financial panic of 1819, many elites in the Upper South moved to the Deep South to pursue economic opportunity, chiefly through the cultivation of cotton. Mitchell’s first few years in Alabama remain mysterious, but he soon became a well-regarded medical practitioner and one of the largest slaveholders in the region, enslaving 115 people on his 1,680-acre plantation, according to the 1830 Census.³

The first structure on the property was probably a no-longer-extant kitchen on the east side of house, which may have served as quarters for Mitchell while the house was under construction.⁴ Enslaved laborers eventually connected this kitchen, like the “outchamber” at Monticello, to the main house through a service wing, although its lack of a balancing wing to the west finds closer resemblance in the asymmetry of Villa Saraceno and Jefferson’s Poplar Forest.



Belle Mont, Tuscumbia, AL

Photograph by Carol M. Highsmith
George F. Landegger Collection of Alabama Photographs, Carol M. Highsmith’s America, Library of Congress



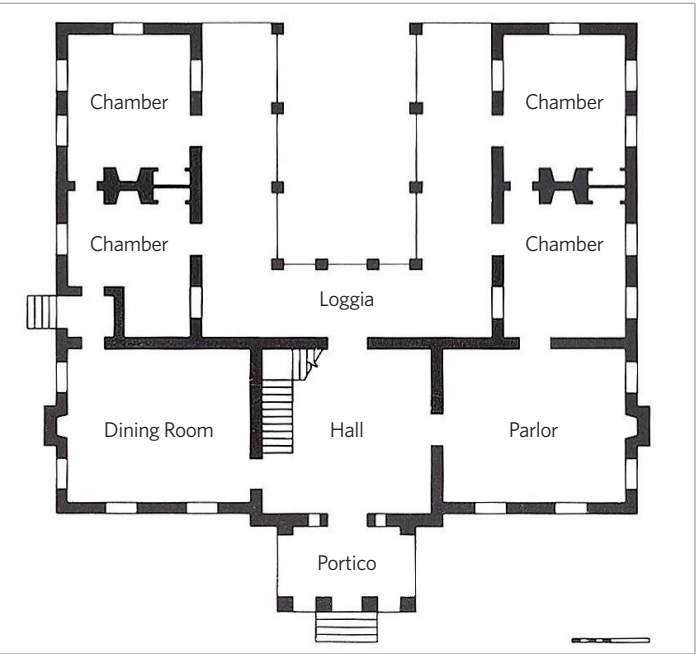
Belle Mont
Faux ashlar in the courtyard before restoration, May 30, 1936
Photograph by Alex Bush
Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress



Pavilion VII, University of Virginia
Exposed faux ashlar on inside corner
Photograph by author

On the long approach from the main plantation road, Belle Mont’s Palladian influence is unmistakable. Its tripartite form and two-tiered portico resemble not only Palladio’s Villa Cornaro and Villa Pisani at Montagnana, but also Jefferson’s design for the first Monticello. While architectural historian Robert Gamble noted that a drawing by Jefferson for an unknown house bears some resemblance to Belle Mont, no concrete evidence exists as yet that Jefferson or any of his workmen had any involvement in its design.⁵

As one gets closer to the house, several Adamesque or Federal period details become apparent. Features like the attenuated, squared-off columns on tall plinths, the semi-oval entrance fanlight, and exterior polychrome on the east wing door reflect the taste of the time. Interior Federal-style details include simple baseboards and door and window surrounds with bullseye plinths. Taken together, these suggest the informed but provincial work of a local architect or builder. From the portico, the visitor enters a large and airy stair hall that takes up the entirety of the central block. In warm weather, this space must have served as a salon or living area like the loggia or sala in Palladian villas.⁶ On the second floor, another room,



Belle Mont, first floor plan with labels
Mills Lane, *Architecture of the Old South: Mississippi and Alabama*, Savannah
Beehive Press, 1989



Entrance door surround with Federal style fanlight, rubbed brick elliptical jack arch, and neat Flemish bond brickwork
Photograph by author



View of the east wing dining room
Photograph by author



View of east wing looking southwest, with rubbed brick flat jack arches, polychrome door, and replaced brickwork dating to restoration
Photograph by author

probably an office or bedchamber, has a floating staircase leading to the attic. To the west is a wing containing the parlor, and to the east, a wing with the dining room. Behind each wing are two spacious bedchambers, creating a distinctive U-shaped courtyard plan.⁷

The richest decoration is in the courtyard, where the builders of Belle Mont further tied the house to the ancient world by applying blue-grey Pompeiian faux ashlar to the walls of the piazza, probably around the time of the house’s construction. Wood rustication was a feature of Anglo-Palladian architecture, but painted or stuccoed faux ashlar was a comparatively later and rarer practice that emerged from the mid-18th-century excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum.⁸ Recent restoration work has uncovered similar faux ashlar on Pavilion VII at the University of Virginia, suggesting a possible parallel. While only a few patches of this faux ashlar survive today at Belle Mont, a 1936 photograph as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) shows how the house must have appeared in the 19th century. Its richness is indicative of Mitchell’s aspiration to construct a fashionable neoclassical estate on a remote hillock in northern Alabama.

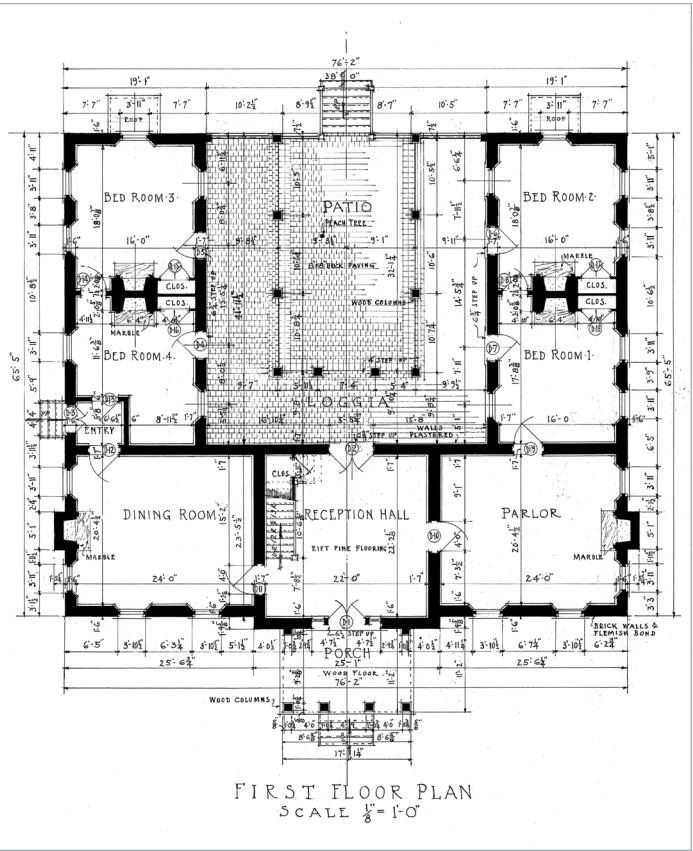
In her pioneering exhibition catalog, *Palladio in Alabama: An Architectural Legacy*, Louise Joyner cited Belle Mont among the “‘primitive’ Alabama interpretations of the Villa Cornaro,” and indeed there are many notable parallels between the two houses.⁹ Belle Mont’s plan is in some ways a clipped version of Villa Cornaro, turning an otherwise enclosed atrium into a courtyard. For his part, Palladio tied his use of atria at Villa Cornaro and elsewhere to his understanding of the Roman villa, which, while not without its inaccuracies, proved to be of enduring influence. “Backwards one sees the master’s habitation,” Palladio wrote of the Roman villa, “the principal front of which is opposite to the front of the house for the uses of the villa: so that in these houses, built out of the city, the atrio’s [*sic*] were in the back part,” as at Villa Cornaro and Belle Mont.¹⁰

With its Jeffersonian painted white trim and red brick, Palladian tripartite form and two-tier portico, Federal-style detailing, and Pompeiian courtyard, Belle Mont presents a synthetic blend of neoclassical architectural features that is unexpected for its remote location. The forces that made this blend possible—like the proliferation of Palladian pattern books, Jefferson’s influence on the landscape of central Virginia, archaeological excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, and the spread of plantation slavery, to name a few, offer many avenues for further research.

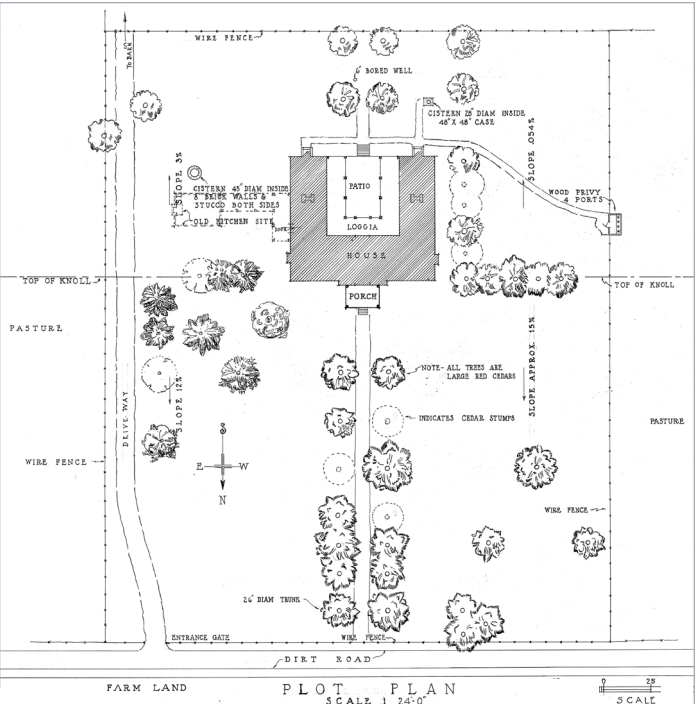
Belle Mont, a museum owned by the State of Alabama, is open to the public. For those who can visit, it offers a rare glimpse into a Jeffersonian villa far from its kin in Virginia; for those who cannot visit, one hopes this essay provides some insight into the site’s many curiosities. ■

Noah Duell is an independent architectural historian focusing on Thomas Jefferson and the architectural reception of the Classical world in the late-18th and early-19th centuries, especially in Virginia. He received his Master of Architectural History from the University of Virginia in 2025. He lives in New York, NY.

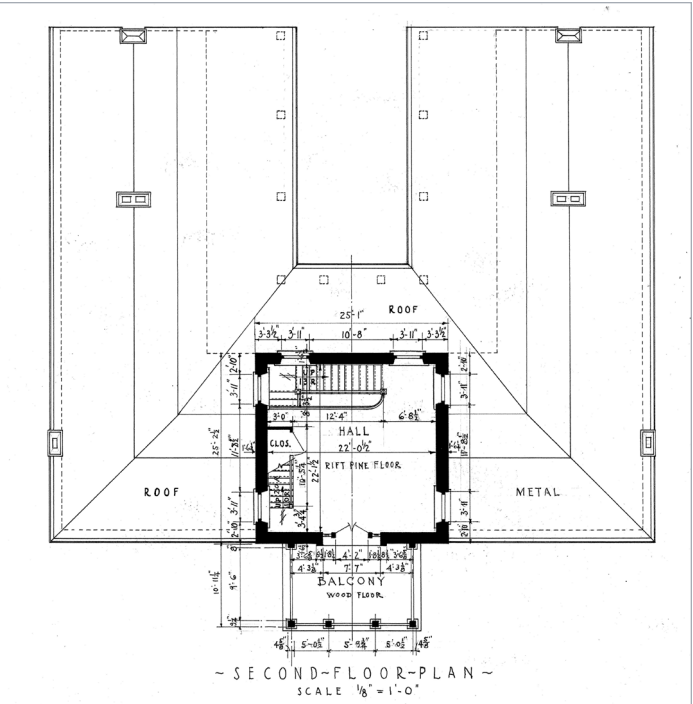
- 1 “Alexander Williams Mitchell (1788-1862),” *FamilySearch*. Retrieved from <https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/L1Q2-738/alexander-williams-mitchell-1788-1862/>.
- 2 Staff of The Thomas Jefferson Planning District, “Architectural History Identification and Assessment of Louisa County, Virginia,” Virginia Department of Historic Resources, p. 34. Retrieved from https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/SpecialCollections/LS-024_AH_History_ID_&Assessment_Louisa_Co_1995_TJPDRC_report.pdf.
- 3 1830 U.S. Census. Franklin County, Alabama, Population Schedule, Roll 1, p. 62, under “A.W. Mitchell,” cited in Seth Armstrong, “Belle Mont Educator’s Resource Packet,” Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area, April 2022. Retrieved from <https://msnha.una.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Belle-Mont-educators-resource-packet.pdf>.
- 4 This fact was suggested in a typewritten training manual for guides at the site, probably dating to the late 1980s or 1990s.



Detail of first floor plan
By Philip S. Mewhinney, ca.1936-37
Historic American Buildings Survey. Library of Congress



Detail of plot plan
By Athiel C. Johnson, ca.1936-37
Historic American Buildings Survey. Library of Congress



Detail of second floor plan
By Clive Richardson, ca.1936-37
Historic American Buildings Survey. Library of Congress

- 5 That drawing is K231 / N462: "Miscellaneous Buildings: house (study plan), [1789-1794]," Thomas Jefferson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. Retrieved from https://www.masshist.org/thomasjeffersonpapers/doc?id=arch_N462; for Gamble's analysis, see Robert Gamble, "National Register of Historic Inventory—Nomination Form for Belmont," United States Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, January 20, 1982, pp. 5-6. Retrieved from <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/2166a296-d496-4894-be5a-ca2673399ad2>; the most convincing evidence of any Jefferson connection comes not from the drawing, but from Gamble's observations about the house's construction: "Belmont's extraordinarily fine brickwork is yet another hallmark of the Jeffersonian ideal in architecture....The workmanship evidenced in the masonry walls at Belmont, some 14 inches thick and laid in a carefully worked Flemish bond pattern, is unexcelled if indeed equalled by no other structure of the same period in the state. Gauged and rubbed lintels accentuate the principal openings, while the three-eighths inch mortar joints are themselves meticulously tooled."
- 6 Louise Joyner noted that "[a] breezeway, creating a draft through the circulation core when the front and rear doors were open, was as vital during the summer months in nineteenth-century Alabama as it was in the sixteenth-century Veneto." Nevertheless, she also observed that "[v]ast cultural, socio-economic and geographic conditions separate Alabama from the Italian Renaissance and eighteenth-century Britain, and likewise differentiate European prototypes from Southern variations," reflecting Howard Burns' insight. See Louise Joyner, *Palladio in Alabama: An Architectural Legacy*, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, 1991, pp. 17, 9.

- 7 It is worth noting that nothing in Jefferson's built work—not even the expansive U-plans of Monticello and the University of Virginia—share the form and function of the courtyard at Belle Mont. Similar plans elsewhere in the Deep South (like Linden in Natchez, MS) suggest instead that the courtyard was a regional climatic adaptation that co-opted Roman and Palladian design features to suit the often sweltering weather. See Mills Lane, *Architecture of the Old South: Mississippi and Alabama*, Savannah: Beehive Press, 1989, pp. 30-31, 40-41.
- 8 Prominent examples of wood rustication (i.e., painting and sanding wood to resemble ashlar blocks) include the exteriors of Mount Vernon in Fairfax County, VA, the Redwood Library and Vernon House in Newport, RI, and the northeastern entrance of Monticello near Charlottesville, VA.
- 9 Louise Joyner, *Palladio in Alabama*, pp. 17, 20.
- 10 See Isaac Ware, *The Four Books of Architecture by Andrea Palladio*, London: Printed for R. Ware, 1738, Book II, Chapter XVI, p. 53; as Guido Beltrami wrote, "[T]he interesting thing is that this invention of a new type of building stems from a mistake on Palladio's part. He saw and measured the ruins of the Temple of Hercules Victor at Tivoli, but he was convinced that they were the ruins of a great imperial villa. He mistook the temple cell for the block of the landowner's house, and the temple porticos for the barchesse. In reality, the ancient Roman villa had nothing of this 'Palladian form' but rather was a shapeless group of buildings encircling some courtyards. Nonetheless, on the basis of this inspired error, Palladio changed the way of living in the country." See Guido Beltrami, "Found in Translation: Palladio-Jefferson," *Journeys and Translations*, Canadian Center for Architecture, August 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/issues/5/journeys-and-translation/2138/found-in-translation-palladio-jefferson>.

Continued from page 1.

the study paved a unique way to think about architecture, life, the world, and their place in it. Like many facets of Mario's legacy, including his founding of the Center for Palladian Studies in America, these programs have continued. The Valmarana Center will provide new offerings to complement the legacy programs with continuing education opportunities for professionals and lay people. In addition, the Center has invited other UVA schools, Italian schools and museums to collaborate in developing joint programs, symposia, and workshops. Eventually, the facility hopes to offer residencies for scholars, artists, and designers, fostering a lively year-round community in Vicenza. These programs will be presented through collaboration with the City, the Palladio Museum and the Centro Internazionale di Studi Architettura Andrea Palladio, the University of Padua, the Università Iuav di Venezia (the architecture university of Venice), and Cà Foscari University of Venice, and other institutions.

In addition to the rich historical legacy of Venice and Vicenza, the landscape of the region, including its coastal ecosystems, form an important focus for the future of the built environment, a core principle of the Architecture School's mission. Such study brings into high relief issues like the future of historic preservation, urban design, sea level rise, over-tourism, cultural intersections, and global trade—relevant to the US and across the world.

The building and location are ideal for these aspirations. Palazzo Vescovado is located on the Piazza del Duomo, in the center of Vicenza. Sited atop Roman foundations, still visible in its

basement, the building previously served as the bishop's residence beginning in the 12th century but underwent substantial modifications during the intervening centuries. Unfortunately, the area, including the Palazzo, was badly damaged during World War II by Allied bombing.

After the War, the complex was reconstructed in its present form. Portions of the building are maintained by the Diocese of Vicenza as a museum with archives housed in an adjacent building. The University will occupy the south side of the courtyard formerly used as the bishop's residence; this area will provide classrooms, studios, and a common kitchen, as well as housing for faculty and visiting scholars. This wing includes terraces facing a 2.5-acre walled trellised garden and a small orchard dating to at least the 16th century. On the *piano nobile* facing the piazza, four "noble rooms" provide a venue for daily activities and special events and gatherings. To the west of the primary courtyard, the *Seminarietto* contains six apartments, which can house 25 students. Together, these elements form a small campus for the school.

As the Valmarana Center opens, it honors not only Mario, founder of the Vicenza-Venice programs, but also UVA's founder, inspired by Palladio's architecture in his design of the academical village. ■

William Sherman, the Mario di Valmarana Professor of Architecture, is the Founding Director of The Mario di Valmarana Center for Studies in Venice and Vicenza.



Mario di Valmarana Center
Palazzo Vescovado, Vicenza, Italy
Left to right
Row 1: stairwell, ceiling of reception room
Row 2: courtyard, common space of residential room
Row 3: dining area, loggia at the Center's opening ceremony, September 2025
Row 4: residential rooms
Photographs by Patrick Suuk, Lino's & Co., Verona, Italy

Canonical for a Reason

A book review

NOAH DUELL

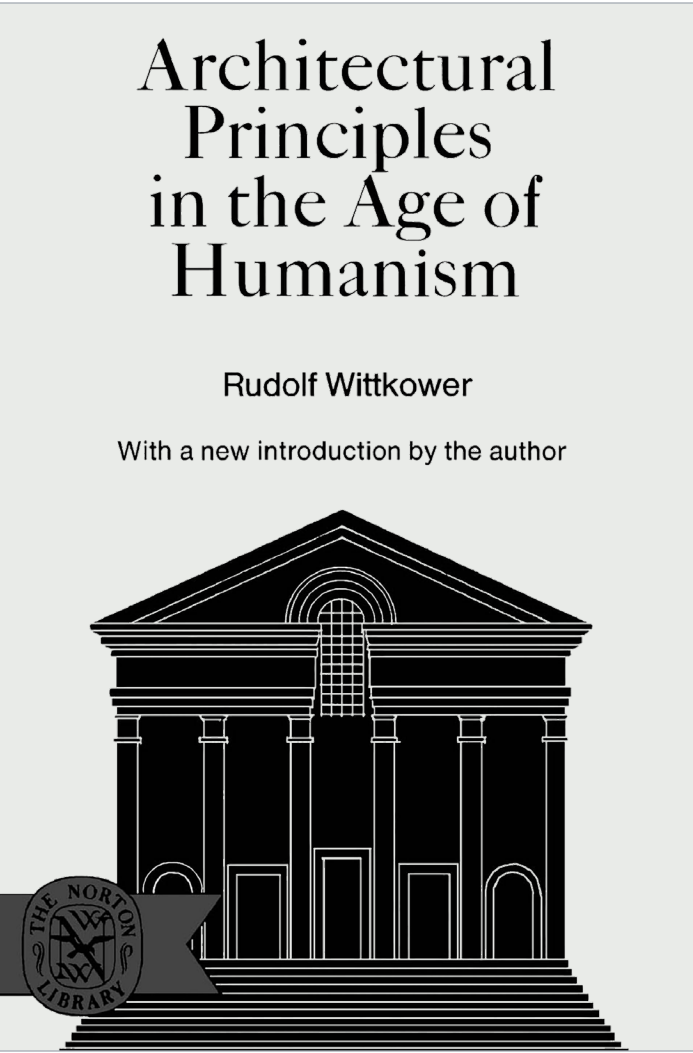
Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism (1949)

Rudolf Wittkower
New York: W.W. Norton, 1971, 173 pp, \$21.99, paperback

Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism, written in 1949, is a monumental work, one that is justly celebrated for its contribution to the architectural history of the Italian Renaissance. Quoting Kenneth Clark in the introduction to the 1971 edition, author Rudolph Wittkower summarized his mission: “to dispose, once and for all, of the hedonist, or purely aesthetic, theory or Renaissance architecture.” Wittkower’s goal was to assert the meaning of Renaissance architecture beyond its aesthetic beauty—a task he completed successfully.

The book has three great strengths: it is succinct (154 pages, exclusive of appendices), remarkably well-researched, and learned without sacrificing legibility. While he does admit that “[s]ome readers may take exception to the many footnotes with long quotations in languages other than English,” I am confident most will be glad to have them. Like any great writer, Wittkower proves his erudition by communicating simply and forcefully in the main text, leaving quibbling and finer points for the notes.

Recipients of *Palladiana* will be particularly delighted with Part III, “Principles of Palladio’s Architecture,” although Wittkower’s discussion of Alberti in Part II is especially important: without Alberti, there would have been no Palladio. “[I]ndeed,” as Wittkower wrote, “Alberti’s influence on him was very great.” Alberti had the notable achievement of writing *De re aedificatoria* (*On the Art of Building*), the first Renaissance architectural treatise as we understand it and the direct forebear of Palladio’s *I quattro libri dell’architettura* (*The Four Books of Architecture*). Alberti’s book, however, was primarily architectural theory in text only. By contrast, Palladio’s *Four Books* has enjoyed world influence largely because he included engraved plates absent in the *Art of*



Building, allowing his work to be distributed across oceans and centuries. Alberti set the standard; Palladio improved on it.

One criticism of Wittkower is that his book is occasionally repetitive. Rather than being tedious, however, the repetitions help connect concepts and reiterate important points. However, some historians and theorists have also disagreed with his interpretations.

I would wager that every recipient of *Palladiana* has more than once set down a book with an intriguing premise because its writing was over-academic or arcane, in short, unintelligible. One has no such trouble with Wittkower. His is a canonical text for a reason. Just as we revisit classics to discover and rediscover their merits, so too should we read or re-read Wittkower. The book is a worthwhile—perhaps even necessary—addition to any Palladian library. *Architectural Principles* has been reprinted several times since its initial publication: You may find it online or perhaps at your local used bookstore. ■

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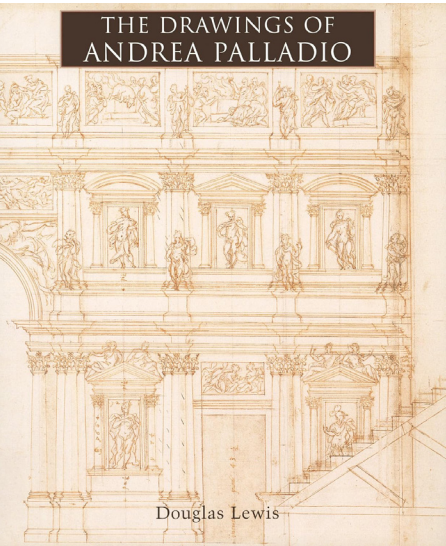
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