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DI PADOVA



DATE: 22nd August 2016

TIME: 15:30 – 17:00

LOCATION: University of Padua, Stradella S. Nicola 3 - 36100 Vicenza, Room no. 3.

Palladio's Architecture

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ABSTRACT

Andrea di Pietro della Gondola was born in Padua in 1508 and in 1524 he began his apprenticeship as stone mason in Vicenza.

It was only in 1538 that the Humanist poet and scholar Giangiorgio Trissino took interest in this unknown thirty-year old stonecutter, encouraging him to develop a well-rounded classical education.

A profound knowledge of antiquity and a good command of new architectural language, acquired from the study of ancient and modern Roman architecture, made him become Andrea Palladio.

The main objectives of this lecture will be to show how Palladio sublimely combined Renaissance style, classical architecture and the needs of his wealthy clients. His motifs originate from the classical temple pediments - invariably used to decorate his villas - and in a revolutionary development of classical portico.

Starting from the project for the public meeting-hall of the city council of Vicenza, known as the Basilica (1546-1549), Palladio's reputation grew quickly. It was in this commission that he was able to obtain a grandiose result taking advantage of the challenges of the early gothic palace.

It is only in 1560 that Palladio was introduced to the Venetian elite and received important commissions from the local clergy and from the Venetian Senate. In his fifties, after having constructed many palaces and villas, he starts to build churches.

Inspired by drawings of classical temples, the *Rendentore* (Christ the Redeemer - 1577) is surely one of his masterpieces. This votive church is both simple and impressive. Palladio manages to create a majestic effect of light to emphasize the liturgy on the axial nave during the ducal procession.

In 1580 Palladio returned to Vicenza to build the first modern-classical theatre. Thanks to his extremely precise use of ramps, terraces and hemicycles he demonstrates an intimate knowledge of Greek and Roman theatre design.

Palladio's artistic legacy cannot be ignored. His impressive capacity to use classical language, solve practical problems and obtain grandiose architectural structures by using poor materials (bricks and plaster) should never be forgotten.



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With evident pride, Palladio described many of his projects in *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (*The Four Books of Architecture*, Venice 1570) and it is also thanks to this publication that Palladio became one of the most influential architects in the Western world.

FURTHER READINGS

- 1) James A. Ackerman, *Palladio*, Harmondsworth 1966
- 2) Bruce Boucher, *Andrea Palladio: the architect in his time*, New York 1998
- 3) Tracy E. Cooper, *Palladio's Venice: architecture and society in a Renaissance Republic*, New Haven 2005
- 4) Richard Goy, *Venice, the city and its architecture*, London 1997
- 5) Richard Goy, *Building Renaissance Venice: patrons, architects, and builders, c. 1430 – 1500*, New Haven 2006
- 6) Andrew Hopkins, *Baldassare Longhena and Venetian Baroque architecture*, New Haven 2012
- 7) Deborah Howard, *Jacopo Sansovino Architecture and Patronage in Renaissance Venice*, New Haven-London 1975
- 8) Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice*, London 1980
- 9) John McAndrew, *Venetian architecture of the early Renaissance*, Cambridge (Massachusetts) 1980