

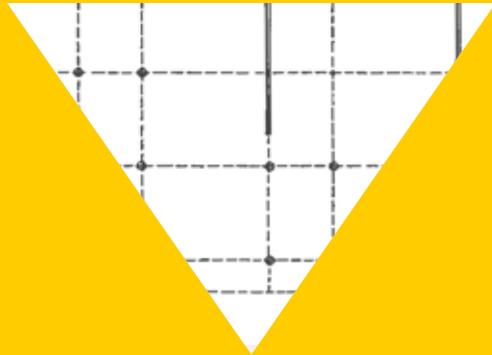


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with texts by
Colin Rowe
Peter Eisenman

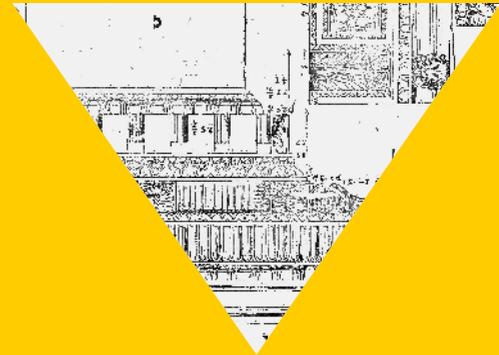


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of the issue #5 of *Fuoco amico*
is addressed to the students of

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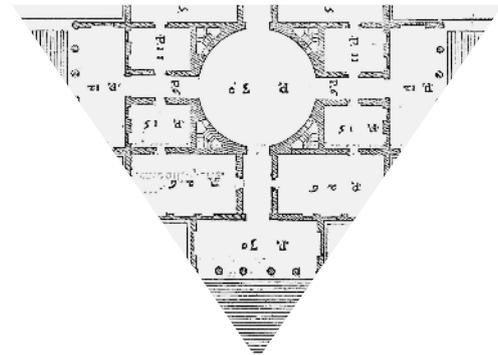
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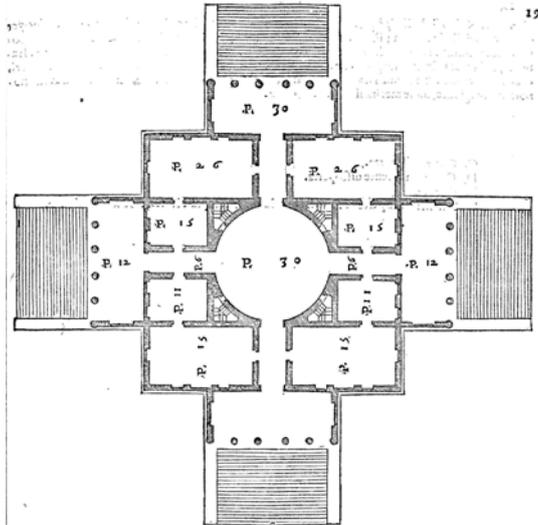
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Rotonda's plan; from Palladio A., *I quattro libri dell'architettura*, Venezia 1570, *Libro secondo*, p. 19.

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Alessandro Rocca
Measures and Proportions, in the Virgil's Dream

The idea that design is a mathematical exercise is fascinating and, at the same time, illusory. The result of this famous Colin Rowe text, *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa*, is that, in different ways, architecture takes advantage of mathematics, uses it, folds it and transgresses it. But it is also true that this divide between the means (math) and the ends (architecture) does not diminish the importance of composition at all. On the contrary, is the architect's ease, the arbitrariness and the originality of his choices, which manage to transform mathematics into a process that generates order, proportion, form and meaning.

At first, at the beginning of his complex argument, Rowe is in perfect continuity with the classical culture and, using a statement by Christopher Wren, bases the legitimacy of architecture on the laws of the natural world. The quotation from Wren's *Parentalia* covers the role of an overture that, promptly, directs the reader to Rowe's reasoning: nature is not the occasional actor that, as in the story of Vitruvius about the birth of the Corinthian capital, suggests the architect a new architectural form. Rather, nature is the set of abstract rules, set by Neo-Platonic Humanism, which architecture alone is able to receive and return to a material representation of the world of ideas.

"Geometric figures are naturally more beautiful than

irregular ones: the square, the circle are the most beautiful... There are only two beautiful positions of straight lines, perpendicular and horizontal" writes Wren, and Rowe seems to be warning us that all his reasoning will take place within these beliefs, trying to explore and explain the breadth of this territory through two apparently far-off masters, such as Andrea Palladio and Le Corbusier. Rowe's discourse resumes the idea of classical architecture as a discipline organized according to abstract laws of nature, but also engaged in a dialogue, specific, physical, with the most obvious and most architectural aspect of nature: that is, with landscape.

Christopher Wren's short text can sound astonishing, and even paradoxical, when it says that there is nothing more beautiful than the right angle, the square and the circle, because these are the most natural forms. We know that this is not true, literally, and that, on the contrary, these forms represent exactly what in nature does not exist. The idea of the beauty of nature, declaimed in Virgilian terms by Palladio himself, thus coincides with the idea of an architecture that includes and incorporates the deepest, most hidden laws of natural beauty. The classical order is, for Palladio, and, perhaps, for Rowe too, the measure of all human things, the knowledge and the discipline that allow

us to transform the world respecting its most secret and truest order. It is a non intuitive reasoning, based on an intimate adherence to the values of the classical age and to the conviction that, for modern culture, classicism is a living and working reference.

The Rowe's parallel, between Palladio's Rotonda and Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye, reveals a profound analogy on design, and also about the common confidence in the harmonic possibility of architecture, in its potentiality and vocation to present itself as a sublimated nature, such as visual focus and architectural reason of a natural landscape.

But, proceeding beyond the Virgilian idyll, Rowe leaves the two most known masterpieces and prefers to concentrate on two more complex, and maybe more difficult, projects. Then, he enters into the heart of the composition by comparing plans and facades of villa Foscari, the so-called Malcontenta, with those of Villa Stein in Garches. The analysis starts from the observation that both follow a similar scheme, based on the repetition of eight units, the alternation of simple and double spans, and a tripartite body. The adopted diagrams follow the theoretic principles of architects: Palladio considers the symmetry necessary for building stability, while Le Corbusier asserts that free plan is the inevitable consequence of the punctual

structure and Rowe, not without malice, notes that there are buildings built in traditional masonry that are asymmetrical and perfectly stable, as well as there are perfectly symmetrical framed, punctual, structures. The relationship between structure and form, therefore suggests Rowe, is essentially a theoretical production and, moreover, we may say that, for these two masters, this relationship gives life to ideological, tendentious syllogisms that pretend to derive from imaginary technological constraints pure formal determinations.

This is especially evident for Le Corbusier, because of the clarity of its five points: the free plan and the free facade (thanks to the independent structure), the window in length or the glass pane, the pilotis, the roof garden; and we can also consider, for our discours, the interior service facilities that allow to free up space from the furniture. The Corbusian theory grows on a series of operations and goals where the keyword is 'to free', to make each building's fundamental element independent of one another: the plan, the facade, the structure. The project is therefore derived from the composition of parts that, in some way, have evolved and refined independently and are later assembled into the unit of the complete building.

After carefully measuring the observance and

discretion that Palladio alternates with respect to the predetermined proportional relationships, Rowe comes to a remarkable observation that rescues the four centuries separating the two masters with one simple and convincing equivalence: Palladio found in section the same freedom which Le Corbusier, through the application of the five points, gained in plan. As Rowe writes: "Instead of the free plan (Palladio uses) the free section". And it follows that, for Le Corbusier, the drawing that shows the formal matrix (proportional, but not only) of the project is the façade, while for Palladio is the plan, because is there that the rule wins, while the same rule is no more readable in the drawings related to the 'freed' parts, elevations and sections.

The beautiful dissertation of Rowe ends with the recognition of the mastery of both architects, whose works have generated, for good and for evil, a long series of replicas and imitations where rules are transformed in styles, leaving intact the incredible values of their theoretical and practical *oeuvres*.

In the following pages, the first publication of Colin Rowe's *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa. Palladio and Le Corbusier compared*, in «The Architectural Review», March 1947.

After Wittkower

In the academic year 1945-46 Colin Rowe (1920-1999) was the lonely student of Rudolf Wittkower (1901-1971), at the Warburg Institute in London, where he obtained his Master in History of Arts with a thesis entitled *The Theoretical Drawings of Inigo Jones: Their Sources and Scope*. The relationship between the German historian of architecture and arts and the young architect from Liverpool was crucial, for the education of the second, and there is no doubt that there is a close continuity between the Wittkower's *Principles of Palladio Architecture*, the seminal essay published in two separate sections, in 1944 and 1945, in «The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», and then included in the *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism (1949)*, and Rowe's *The Mathematics (1947)*. The Wittkower tractatus was based on a wide bibliographical and architectural research, and, along with the analysis of Alina Payne, was in a clear relationship, deeper than evident, with the themes of the architectural modernism that were under discussion in those years. In particular, Payne identifies two aspects which make the Wittkower' text completely different, in comparison with the previous studies on Italian Renaissance architecture, and absolutely modern.

The first aspect is the theoretical process adopted from Wittkower, who starts from a close reading of the texts which determined these architectural principles: first, the

The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa

Palladio and Le Corbusier compared

"There are two cases of beauty—natural and customary. Natural is from geometry consisting in uniformity, that is equality, and proportion. Customary beauty is begotten by the use, so familiarity breeds a love to things not in themselves lovely. Here lies the great occasion of error, but always the true test is natural or geometrical beauty. Geometrical figures are naturally more beautiful than irregular ones: the square, the circle are the most beautiful, next the parallelogram and the oval. There are only two beautiful positions of straight lines, perpendicular and horizontal; this is from Nature and consequently necessity, no other than straight being firm." SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN

By Colin Rowe

Palladio's Villa Capra, called the Rotonda, has perhaps more than any other house, imposed itself on the imagination of subsequent generations, and as the ideal type of central building, it has become part of the general European experience. Mathematical, abstract, four square, with no apparent function, its dry aesthetic derivatives have enjoyed universal diffusion; when Inigo writes of it

"The site is as pleasant and delightful as can be found, because it is upon a small hill of very easy access, and is bounded on one side by the Brookhouse, a navigable river; and on the other it is encompassed about with most pleasant rings, which look like a very great theatre and are all cultivated about with most excellent fruits and most exquisite views; and, therefore, as it enjoys from every part most beautiful views, some of which are limited, some more extended, and others which terminate with the horizon; these are begotten in all four fronts."

When the mind is prepared for the one by the other, a passage from Le Corbusier's *Projections* is unavoidably reminiscent of this. No less lyrical, but rather more cryptic, he is describing the site of his Maison Savoye at Poissy:

"Le site, un vaste plateau baigné en deux points... Le maison est vue belle en l'air en milieu des prairies dominées le regard. Il est à un point plan dans l'égale prairie de France. Les habitants venus ici pour que cette campagne agricole soit belle, arrivent au site de campagne, ils sont étonnés de ne pas voir de la maison, ils se demandent sur les quatre faces de leurs bastions un langage. Leur vie domestique sera insérée dans un site vierge."

The Savoye House has been given a fair number of interpretations: it may be a machine, or it may be, in an arrangement of interpenetrating volume and external space, another emanation of space, time and architecture. It is probably all these things; but the suggestive reference to the dreams of Virgil, and a certain similarity of site, solution and feeling put one in mind of the passage in which Palladio describes the Rotonda. The landscape there is more agrarian and bucolic, there is less of the sustained pastoral, the scale is larger, but the effect is somehow the same.

Palladio, writing elsewhere, supplies the ideal site of the villa. Its center, from within the dependent of created order, will watch the maturing of his possessions, and favour the pregnancy of contrast between his fields and his garden, reflecting on suitability, he will metamorphose, through the years the agrarian virtues of a simpler rural, the baroque ordering of the site and estate, will be an analogy of paradise.

"The ancient says commonly used to write in such places, where before the ruins were visited by their virtuous friends and relations, having houses, gardens, fountains and such like pleasant places,

and above all their virtue, they could easily attain to so much happiness as can be attained here below. Perhaps these were the dreams of Virgil. If so, interpreted, they have gathered round themselves, in the course of time, all those ideals of Roman virtue, excellence, imperial splendour and glory, which make up the imaginative reconstruction of the ancient world. It would have been, perhaps, the landscape of Pausanias that Palladio would have longed to penetrate, to roam among the porticoes apartments of the antique; it is possibly the landscape of this landscape, the pregnancy of contrast between the disengaged cube and its setting in the passage agraria, between geometrical volume and landscape which has the look of unimagined nature, which led behind Corbusier's Roman solution. If architecture at the Rotonda forms the setting for the good life, at Poissy it is certainly the background for the lyrically efficient cube; and if the contemporary pastured is not yet sanctified by conventional usage, apparently the Virgilian nostalgia is still present. From the hygienically equipped hoodless, passing while ascending the ramps, the ramency of the Georges no doubt interposes itself, and, perhaps, the historical reference adds much as to the one path out for Paris.

A more specific comparison that presents itself is that between Palladio's Villa Pisani at the Malcontenta, and the house which in 1927 Corbusier built for M. de Monzie at Garches. A

diagrammatic comparison will reveal the fundamental relationship:

In general idea, as can be seen, the system of the two houses is closely similar. They are both conceived as single blocks, with one projecting element and parallel principle and subsidiary facades. Allowing for variations in roof treatment and in blocks of corresponding volume, eight units in length, by five and a half in breadth, by five in height. In both cases six "transverse" lines of support, rhythmically alternating double and single bays, are established; but the rhythm of the parallel lines of support, as a result of Corbusier's use of the cantilevered element. At the villa at Garches it is 1:1:1:1:1:1:1, and at the Malcontenta 1:1:2:2:1:1:1. In plan, Corbusier obtains a sort of equilibrium for his central bay, and interest seems transferred to his outer bays, which are augmented by the extra half unit of the cantilever; while Palladio secures a dominance for his central division, and a progression towards his portico, which focuses interest there. In both, more the projecting element, terrace or portico, occupies 1/4 units in depth.

Structures, of course, are entirely different, and both architects look to structure to some extent as a justification for their dispositions. Palladio employs a solid bearing wall, and of this system he writes:

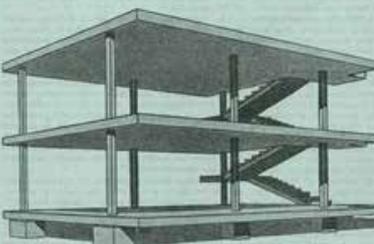
"It is to be observed, that those (rooms) on the right correspond with those on the left, that the middle may be the same in one place as in the other; and that the walls may equally bear the burden of the roof; because if the walls are made large in one part and small in the other, the latter will be more fit to resist the weight, by reason of the nature of the walls, and the lesser more weak, which will produce in time very great inconvenience and ruin the whole work."

Palladio is concerned with the logical disposition of masses diagrammatically accepted; but he attempts to discover a structural reason for his planning symmetric. Corbusier, who is giving a one-for-structure as a basis of the formal elements of design, contrasts the new system with the old. He is a little more radical:

"Je vois rappelés en plan paraisît le maison de Pierre et Paul et qui sont mêmes arrivés avec le maison de fer sur le ciment armé."

Plus late:
maison indépendante
Realises en langage au pas de vers
Rien.
tail Jardin
de l'intérieur nous de mètres et de mètres et l'encadrement des fenêtres."

Palladio's structural system makes it almost necessary to repeat the same plan on every level of the building, and point support allows Corbusier a fairly flexible arrangement; but both architects seek a classic, which is somewhat in excess of the advance. Solid wall structures, Palladio desires, demand absolute symmetry; a frame building, Corbusier announces, requires a frame building. Corbusier announces, requires a



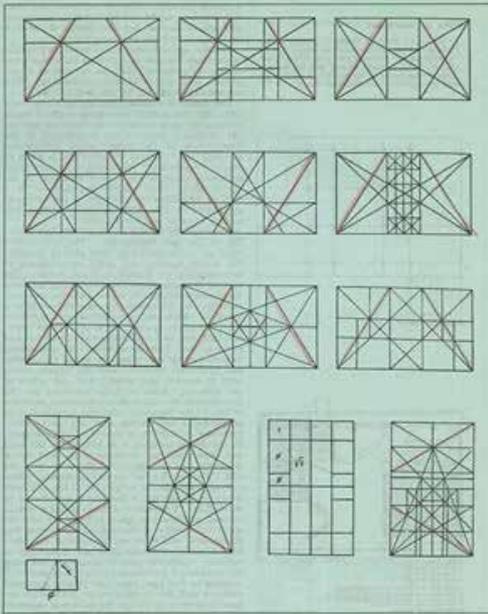
Diagrammatic comparison of Le Corbusier's Maison Maullin, Garches in 1927 for comparison with Palladio's Villa Pisani at Malcontenta, which shows how the quality of the ground, in the plan of solid wall buildings such as Corbusier's Villa Maullin is in reinforced concrete, allows a cantilevered portico in the section.

the Mediterranean world, and there is also present a purely French delight in the more comprehensible aspects of mechanics . . . the little pavilion on the roof at Greenwich is at the same time a temple of love and the bridge of a ship, the detail is precise, the most complex architectural volumes are fitted with pleasing water.

Geometrically, both architects may be said to have approached something of the Platonic archetype of the cube, which the Virginian dream could be held to represent. The idealisation of the cube house must lend itself very readily to the purposes of Virginius drossing. Here we see the conflict between the contingent and the absolute, the natural and the abstract; the gap between the ideal world and the too human exigencies of realisation receives its most pathetic presentation. The building must be as completed and compelling as a well-crooked finger, changed as in these cases with almost religious seriousness, or sophisticated, witty allusion; it is an intellectual feat which reconciles the mind to the fundamental discrepancy of the programme.

Palladio is the courteous element with the sixteenth century repertoire of well-humoured forms. He translates this "customary" material with a passion and a high seriousness fitting to the continued validity that he finds it to possess; the reference to the Pantheon in the superimposed portico; to the temple in the cruciform saloon; the ambulatory profused, in both idea and form, in the equivocal conjunction of temple front and domestic block. These are charged with meaning, both for what they are and for what they signify; and their impression is poignant. The ancient house is not re-created, but there is in its place a concrete apparition of antique virtues, maxims, imperial splendour and station: Rome is there by allusion, the ideal world by geometry.

By contrast, Corbusier is in some ways the most ingenious of eclectic. The orders, the Roman allusions, are the apparatus of authority, customary, and in a sense universal forms. It is hard for the modern architect to be quite so emphatic about any particular civilisation; and with Corbusier there is always present an element of wit, suggesting that the historical reference has remained a quotation between inverted commas, possessing always the double value of the quotation, the associations of both old and new context. The world of classical Mediterranean culture, on which Palladio drew so expressively, is closed for Corbusier. The emblematic representations of the moral virtues, the loves of the Gods and the lives of the Saints, the ornamental adjuncts of humanisms, have lost their former historical sacrosanctity. Allusion is displaced at Greenwich, concentrated at the Malcoventris; within the one cube the performance is mixed, with the other, Roman. Corbusier selects the irrelevant and the particular, the fortuitously picturesque and the picturesque and the significant forms of mechanics, as the objects of his virtuosity. They retain their original implications of classical landscape, mechanical precision, recessive intimacy; one is able to cease hold of them as known objects, and sometimes as basic shapes, but they become only fantastically provocative. Unlike Palladio's forms there is nothing flat about their relationship; their most important would seem to be affected by the artificial emptying of the cube, when the senses are con-



Normalised decompositions of the Φ rectangle, from *Metals, Signs, The Geometry of Art and Life (Ethos and World)*. The Φ rectangle, whose proportions are explained by the usual diagram at bottom left, is used in creating the golden section, the basic form of countless sorts of art, including Palladio's Villa Malcoventris and Le Corbusier's Villa of Geneva.

founded by the apparent arbitrations, and the intellect more than convinced by the intuitive knowledge, that here in spite of all to the contrary, there is order and there are rules.

Corbusier has become the source of fervent pastiches, and witty exhibition techniques; the neo-Palladian villa because the picturesque object in the English park. Contrast is different in both

cases, and a bad pastiche is usually more convincing than an ill-executed incident. It is the insignificance realisable quality of the originals which one fails to find in the works of neo-Palladians and exponents of "le style Corbusier." The difference is that between the universal, and the decorative or merely contingent; perhaps in both cases it is the adherence to rules which has lapsed.

Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* (first edition in 1450) and, of course, *I quattro libri dell'architettura* by Andrea Palladio. This narrow connection between the books and the buildings means, for example, a subterranean but clear parallel with the phenomenon of the Modernist architecture which, again, put the writing – books, essays and magazines – as a complement directly integrated in the process of definition of the new architecture. And this strong relation between theory, criticism and practice evolved especially thanks to the scholars of the German area who, for political reasons, gathered in London and in the United States, such as historians and theorists Sigfried Giedion, Nikolaus Pevsner, Ernst Gombrich, and leading architects such as Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

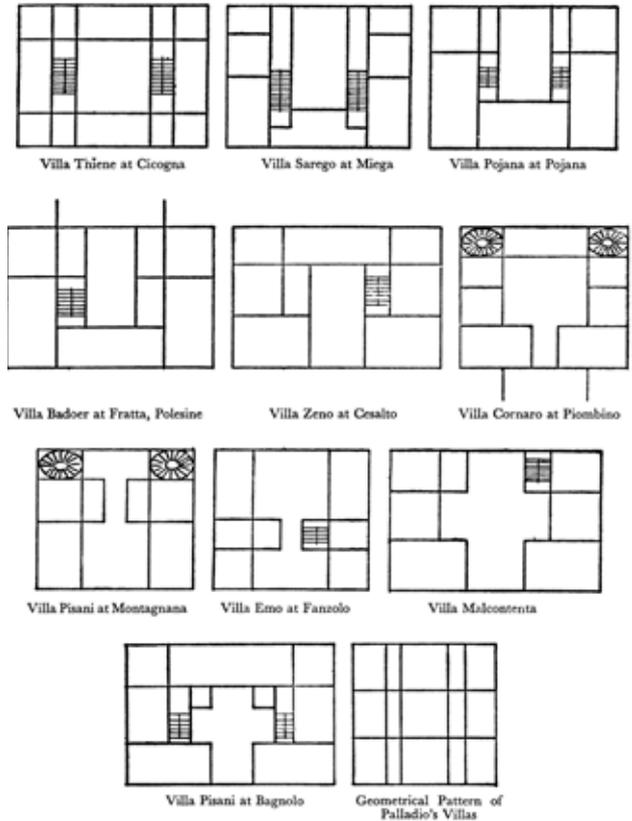
The second aspect which made of *Principles* a main reference book and a best seller in the modernist arena, was a quite loosian refusal of the ornament. Wittkower was radically indifferent to the materiality of the construction, to colors, textures and ornamental apparatus; Italian architecture of XV and XVI century, for him, was a refined and cerebral application of the sophisticated principles which were able to translate the myth of Roman architecture and culture in a brand new, 'modern', architectural language, a new classicism which becomes the timeless basis of our modern, and modernist, era.

Humanistic architecture, in the perfect Wittkower's enunciation, is absolutely similar and coherent with the

methodological premises and formal aims of the rationalist and hermetic wing of modernist architecture, the modern movement, of the twenties and thirties of XX century.

The tools that really made Wittkower's arguments perfect to be transferred and applied to contemporary architecture of his time were his meta-historical, timeless diagrams, which made immediately understandable the relationship between proportions, program, typology and spatial organization; eliminating, on the other side, any reference to technology, materials, and tridimensional perceptions.

The diagrams, imagined to explain the planimetric schemes of the Palladian villas, became a by-pass which projected Renaissance architecture in the middle of the modernist debate. And it was his pupil Colin Rowe who, first, jumped over a gap of 450 years and compared the Palladian with the Corbusian diagrams as if they were made of the same matter, for the same world. This extremely abstract approach allowed to go straight to the compositional questions, and, in its radical nakedness, it was perfectly aligned with two of the main currents of Modernism: the ideals of the Corbusian purism, and the functionalist reduction to the typological schemes operated, in particular, by Ernst Neufert (1900-1986), the German architect who, in the Bauhaus years, was a collaborator of Walter Gropius and Otto Bartning. Neufert's *Bauelementelehre* (*Architect's Data*), firstly published in 1936, sprawled widely the use of diagrams as a simplified and effectual international language for learning the principles of modernist architecture. It is also important



Schematized Plans of Ten of Palladio's Villas, from: Rudolf Wittkower, *Principles of Palladio's Architecture*, in «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», vol. 7 1944, pp. 102-122.

to remember that, in those years, one of the editors of «The Architectural Review» was Nikolaus Pevsner, the leading modernist historian and ideologist who, like Wittkower, arrived in London fleeing racial prosecution in Nazi Germany. In this perspective, in the Wittkower's Palladian diagrams we can see a reduction of the Renaissance villas to an orthodox modernist approach and, of consequence, the starting point of the Palladio's transfer into the domain of modernist architecture operated, through the comparison with Le Corbusier, by Rowe.

The strong input generated by the texts of Rudolf Wittkower, first published in the «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes» and then collected in *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (1949), a book which had a large, immediate and durable echo in the international architectural debate, took Andrea Palladio again at the center of the architectural scenario. The combined effects of the splendid Wittkower's diagrams and the Wölfflinian detailed comparative analysis which Rowe exploited between the Palladio's Malcontenta and the Le Corbusier's villa Stein de Monzie, put again the classical principles at the center of the modernist debate.

As described by Anthony Vidler, the English neo-palladianism of the forties met a short life, quickly overpassed by the interest of other personalities, such as Reyner Banham and the Smithsons, towards technology and informality, tendencies which at the end led to the

construction of the movement called New Brutalism, and, for other paths, to high-Tech architecture.

Nevertheless, the manneristic approach of Rowe found a direct representation, in his times, in the architectural design of James Stirling, who managed and manipulated the modernist images, matters and myths with the refined disenchantment of a modernist mannerist, an analogous of the Italian painters and architects of the second half of the XVI century studied and beloved by Rowe (see the Peter Eisenman's report on *Perspecta* 41).

Stirling shared with Rowe the same citizenship, both came from and were educated in Liverpool, at the same school of architecture, and Stirling got his degree in architecture under Rowe's supervision. But it was interesting another Rowe's link with a great architect, the American Peter Eisenman, who mentored in a memorable Grand Tour through Italy, in 1961. In some way Eisenman, through the intense frequentation of Rowe, arrived to the Wittkower's diagrams, something that he reinvented for his analytical drawings of Giuseppe Terragni's architecture and, recently, for Palladio. And, coming back along the Warburg Institut's cultural origins, Eisenman fixes Heinrich Wölfflin as a father of his own approach to architecture, considering that "Wölfflin argues that Renaissance architecture was autonomous because it was governed by an idea of formal beauty internal to its discipline, one not deduced from the characteristic exhibited in the works of a particular style but that exists in its own right" (Eisenman, 2008).

This full immersion of Eisenman in the classical Italian heritage can suggest the reason of his constant interest towards a classical idea of architectural composition, his fascination and, at the same time, his impossibility to accept a classical explicit influence.

A wide representation of this duplicity, the love and the refusal of the classical, is the reason of his seminal text, *The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End*. In this essay, published in the volume 21 of «Perspecta» (1984), Eisenman establishes a possibility of maintaining the Classical as a fundamental reference, finding for it a new life free of any historicism, nostalgia and revivalism.

Before Eisenman: architecture as a cold case

"Instead of focusing on typology, geometry, proportion, or history, the analytic drawings, models, and descriptive texts presented here place Palladio in a new light, marking a departure in a sense from contemporary concerns with aesthetic ideals of surface representation, parametric projection, or figure-ground reversals in favor of conceptual and topological arrangements of solid and void that are other than the literal solid and void described by geometry and function" Peter Eisenman, *Palladio Virtuel*.

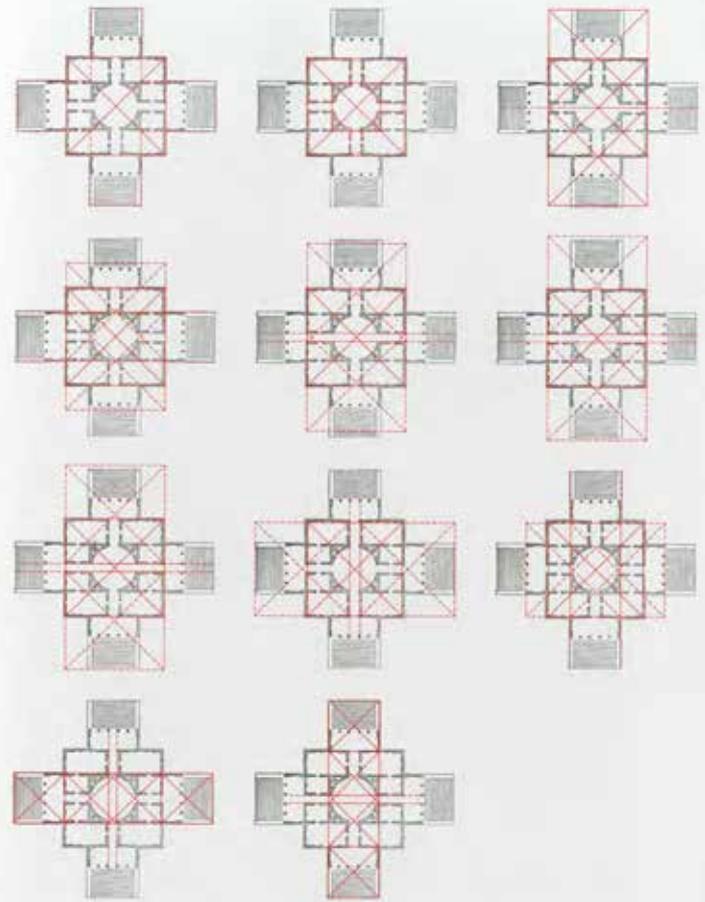
With his recent book about Palladian architectural principles, Eisenman explicitly keeps on the lessons of Wittkower's *Principles* and Rowe's *Mathematics*, but avoiding any trace of historical approach in favor of a pure formal analysis. As already explained in *The End of the Classical*, also in this last research Eisenman wants to act as an architect, as it is in his own words, establishing a strategical point of view: in his study, architectural samples are cleaned from any historical dust and dissected in an anatomical manner, such as pure formal constructs.

The bodies of evidence, the buildings, are transformed in cold cases that, independently from their origin and age, are available to be examined and (dis)solved. The buildings become corps which can be dissected, polished from any soft and liquid matter and reduced to their conceptual and geometric skeleton. Of course, in Eisenman's post-

Rowian perspective, the skeleton is the mathematic ideal or, to better say, the pure spatial and topological idea of the building. Screening the Palladian villas, Eisenman produces a X-rays representation which is quite similar with Wittkower's and Rowe's schemes, but with a great difference. While the first are simply the schematic and univocal (closed) representation of the plan, the Eisenman's are deleuzian (open) series of variations which, tendentially, could be infinite. The matrix of the villa is a palimpsest, rather just a geometrical trace, whose greatness is exactly in its generative capacity. It, the scheme, has the precise duty to proliferate, to incubate and grow infinite possible compositions.

In the Eisenman's infinite jest, there is no difference between the original and the copies, or, to be more precise, there is no original, because Palladio is already working in a post-historical condition, being a Venetian Republic citizen of the XVI century working with forms, tools and images of the archeological – and literary – remains that he studied in Rome. The perfect description of this condition, that Eisenman shares not just with Palladio but, in a sense, with all of us contemporary architects, is dedicated to the end of classical, a text that establishes a possible useful link between us and the history of architecture.

In particular, Eisenman designs a continuity with classical principles through the permanence of three "fictions": representation, reason and history, which are the vehicles to simulate meaning, truth and timelessness. For his



Geometric diagrams of Rotonda. From: Eisenman P., with Roman M., *Palladio Virtuel*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 2015, p.

text, Modernism is in continuity, is still inside classical architecture because it did not cease to follow these three fictions. Now, for Eisenman, it is time to leave these fictions and start with a new beginning, with an architecture freed by these fictional aims and open to the risk of losing meaning, truth and timelessness. An architecture which can use, manipulates and reinvents the simulacra of the Classical as a basic, fundamental material which can give representation, reason and historical meaning to our time. Then, Eisenman's reasoning moves on two interlaced goals. The first is the logical demonstration of the continuity of the classic from the Renaissance to the Modernism and, ultimately, the attestation that we do not have, in fact, an architecture, a history and a culture outside the classical. The second goal is the institution of the possibility to rebuild architecture on a base that, to be quick, could be defined as postmodern, or post-historical, and that he calls with the term: non-classical. An architecture that is defined by subtraction, for its deliberately withdrawal from the simulation of classical architecture. After all, Eisenman's demonstration is based on a process of smuggling, demystification and radical burial, an alchemical distillation process at the end of which remains, it should remain, the essence of architecture. But it is also true that this process is based on the elements of its denial: the potentiality of non-classical architecture can only be measured in relationship with the classical one, and therefore its reasoning is still a long, elliptical reference to representations, reasons and

histories of classical narratives constructed by theorists and architects, as well as Andrea Palladio, of the Italian Renaissance.