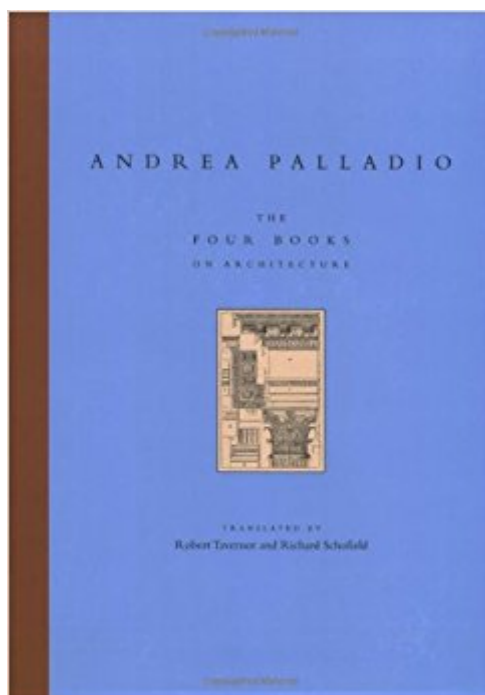


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# The Four Books On Architecture



## Synopsis

The Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio was one of the most influential figures that the field of architecture has ever produced. For classical architects, the term Palladian stands for a vocabulary of architectural forms embodying perfection and beauty. Of even greater significance than Palladio's buildings is his treatise *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (The Four Books On Architecture), the most successful architectural treatise of the Renaissance and one of the two or three most important books in the literature of architecture. First published in Italian in 1570, it has been translated into every major Western language. This is the first English translation of Palladio in over 250 years, making it the only translation available in modern English. Until now, English-language readers have had to rely mostly on a facsimile of Isaac Ware's 1738 translation and the eighteenth-century engravings prepared for that text. This new translation by Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield contains Palladio's original woodcuts, reproduced in facsimile and positioned correctly, adjacent to the text. The book also contains a glossary that explains technical terms in their original context, a bibliography of recent Palladio research, and an introduction to Palladio and his times. The First Book discusses building materials and techniques, as well as the five orders of architecture: Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite. Palladio describes the characteristics of each order and illustrates them. The Second Book discusses private town houses and country estates, almost all designed by Palladio. The Third Book discusses streets, bridges, piazzas, and basilicas, most of ancient Roman origin. The Fourth Book discusses ancient Roman temples, including the Pantheon.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Perhaps the most influential practitioner in the history of Western architecture and one of the earliest neoclassicists, Palladio created a singular corpus of architecture, the legacy of which is seen and felt in buildings of all types throughout the Western world. His theoretical and promotional treatise, *I Quattro Libri dell' Architettura*, was first published in Venice in 1570 and sets forth a grammar of architecture. From building materials to residences to Roman temples, Palladio covered an incredible breadth of topics in his four volumes. This new translation in English, the first since Isaac Ware's of 1738, is simultaneously elegant and readable. The organization of the volume is immaculate: in addition to the informative introduction which serves as a bibliographic essay on the various editions of the work, the list of illustrations from the 1570 edition, glossary, and bibliography all enrich the value of this treatise immeasurably. This edition also features the original woodcut illustrations, which are not as pristine as the engravings produced for Ware's edition but are carefully interleaved with the text. An important addition to academic libraries, architectural collections, and libraries collecting in the theory of art and architecture. Paul Glassman, Pratt Inst. Lib., Brooklyn Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Tavernor and Schofield's beautiful edition brings us...the Palladio we had always hoped to meet.  
(John McKean Architects Journal)

Palladio was not the first to publish a book illustrating principles of classical architecture but he was the most convincing. Palladio's finely detailed, measured wood cut illustration --reproduced at a slightly smaller scale in this translation--, made the long lost principles of Roman architecture and construction easy to understand. In his *Four Books of Architecture* of 1570, Andrea Palladio balanced illustrations of ancient Roman construction, that he had drawn from observing ruins, with brief, straightforward practical interpretations of historical descriptions of Roman architectural design and construction from Vitruvius's First Century BC *Treatise on Roman And Greek architecture*, which had been found a century before in a Swiss monastery. To this treatise on Roman architecture, Palladio added examples of his own imaginative designs to demonstrate how ancient principles of engineering, planning, construction and decoration could enhance public and private buildings of his day. Palladio's successful *Four Books* were published and translated many times.

They became one of the most cited references for architects in the West, where they dominated architectural studies until academic training for architects became standard in the 19th century. Variations on Palladio's designs are everywhere. Thomas Jefferson's house, Montecello, is one of the best known examples in the U.S.. Jefferson owned a copy of Palladio's 1570 edition of the Four Books. Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield's well written, carefully annotated scholarly, 1997 translation of Palladio's Four Books --the first new English translation since 1738-- from MIT Press is a pleasure to read for what it reveals much about both great principles and fine detail of classical design and construction practices. The text explains how Palladio organized rooms in urban palaces as well as how he arranged living, storage and work areas in his rural villas to take advantage of the climate. Practical details about construction include building foundations, sizing windows, designing classical columns as well as instructions for selecting and harvesting timber: Cut trees only in the fall after the sap has run out. Cure the lumber, covered with excrement, under a shelter for two years to prevent rot. The text also details how to quarry, cut and set stone --always in place--, how to prepare cement, mortar and concrete and how to build masonry formed concrete walls, as the Romans did. The reinforced masonry used today is the same in principle as Roman walls. We have merely modified the practice in this century with larger hollow bricks, Portland cement and steel reinforcing. It's not possible to understand Roman and modern architectural history in the West or building technology with without studying Palladio. Original editions of Palladio's 1570 book are available in a few rare book libraries. Occasionally a copy turns up in rare book auctions. Robert Tavernor's new English translation of the Four Books makes Palladio accessible to modern English readers.

In the 16th century, Palladio set himself up as the arbiter of function form and good taste in Architecture. Who am I to argue? Especially since all I seem to have to offer as 20th century competitors are the disneyesque Geary and Gaudi. Timeless Architectural Elegance will always outlast the comedic, which by necessity only has a contemporary context.

This book is a must have for any architecture student. It is an excellent reference for precedent. I got a lot of use out of it in the first few year of school and still enjoy look through it!

Condition was listed as very good, and indeed it is nearly perfect. It came in a nice strong box. Very pleased.

I would recommend this book to anybody who's searching for something real classical architectural mold or old type building design! #1

Great

Palladio was recommended to me as the "go to" source in understanding classical architecture. The first book (on the construction of foundations and vocabulary) didn't particularly hold my interest, but the terms and concepts were important to his later discussion of the construction of aqueducts and the Pantheon. The clincher for me, however was the number and variety of plates - almost every third page has an illustration that reinforces and shows the ideas Palladio is discussing. A must-have for serious students of architecture; a recommended read for anyone vacationing in Italy, as the details Palladio shows will enrich the experience.

This is one of the most important of architectural manuals. Palladio's influence was enormous; one magnificent example of American Palladianism is Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia Library; others can be found in the work of Philip Johnson. The design of *The Four Books of Architecture* is one of the reasons for this success. Drawings and plans fill the page, comments are sparing, invitations to use the eye and imagination as well as practical instructions. In this respect Palladio's book resembles that of the equally influential, equally visionary Paul Klee in his *Pedagogical Sketchbooks*. Seeing so much of his influence in public buildings, it is hard not to find the original sourcebook refreshing. I'd suggest looking through it alongside a general survey of the buildings themselves, like translator Robert Tavernor's *Palladio and Palladianism* (in Thames and Hudson's *World of Art* series). Tavernor has done his job very well. The English translation is neither anachronistic nor colloquial, but as lucid as the original. The book's designers have really done brilliantly in finding the most suitable typefaces to match Palladio's original woodcuts and in choosing a size and format, down to the weight and colour of the paper, that makes these ideas handsome and vivid now. An exemplary edition. Richard Bernas.

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