

## Quotation in Wittkower's Neo-Palladianism

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### Abstract

*The application and extension of his theory of the "migration of symbols" to architecture, and thus the development in architecture of his departure from Erwin Panofsky's theory of iconography and iconology, Rudolf Wittkower's 1943 essay "Pseudo-Palladian Elements in English Neo-Classical Architecture" is a seminal text for what later came to be understood as the 'linguistic turn' in architecture. The methodology inscribed in Wittkower's text and his subsequent consideration of Neo-Palladianism – the discriminations Wittkower interposed between the functional and symbolic aspects of architectural motifs, their intentional and habitual copying, and their figuring as articulate elements per se – established interpretive tropes that would be applied by Wittkower's followers and interpreters to the reading of twentieth-century architecture. The modes of Wittkower's historiography – which, following Giulio Carlo Argan's understanding of Panofsky, we can conceive as a proto-structuralist comprehension of architecture – became operative as architectural strategies for a subsequent generation of architects, and thereby constituted an important vector contributing to the rise of architectural Post-Modernism. In this way, Wittkower's concern with the transfer of architectural motifs presages the procedural explorations of the neo-avant-garde. Revisiting Wittkower's text in the light of the idea of 'quotation' emphasises the interpretive assumptions and stakes at work in architecture's genealogical practices, be they historiographic or creative.*

### Emblems of Dysfunction

Rudolf Wittkower published the essay “Pseudo-Palladian Elements in English Architecture” in the sixth issue of the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* in 1943. It was Wittkower’s first published essay on English architecture, preceding his seminal – more well-known – essays on Palladio published, about a year later, in July, 1944 and August, 1945.

The essay focuses on the deployment and development in eighteenth-century Britain of two architectural motifs thought to have been drawn from the Venetian architect. Primarily, Wittkower was concerned with the so-called “Venetian” or “Palladian window” – an arched opening flanked by trabeated openings. While fundamental to the Basilica Palladiana in Vicenza, Wittkower asserted the motif belonged only to Palladio’s early production and had been deployed by the Italian as an isolated element on but a single occasion in the manner common to the English. Offering an exhaustive account of the use and development of the motif in sixteenth-century Italian architecture, Wittkower concluded that Palladio had probably borrowed from Serlio. But the motif had an earlier widespread usage in ecclesiastical architecture, where typically, Wittkower informs, “it appears as a window [...] often designed for church facades where it was brought into a functional relationship with the entrance”.<sup>1</sup> By the mid-Cinquecento it was usually deployed in domestic architecture, “to emphasise the centre of the façade and, as with Palladio”, Wittkower expanded, “it is frequently framed by a large order”.<sup>2</sup>

Wittkower suggested, that, introducing the motif to England in the early-seventeenth century, Inigo Jones had followed, particularly in his designs for Whitehall Palace, the precedent of Vincenzo Scamozzi. But, unlike Jones, to whom Lord Burlington and his circle often looked, early-eighteenth-century architects, such as Colen Campbell, applied the motif peripherally, as concluding emphases at the wings of a building, dissociated from an entrance. Wittkower argued that in its central use in the Italian palazzo, the motif had a structural value, spanning the wider bay of the entrance, and a formal logic, its combination of flat and semicircular arches reconciling the horizontality of the façade with the vertical emphasis of the central axis. In Campbell’s domestic architecture the motif marks instead the end bays culminating a string of windows, its formal function transformed. In these houses and his designs for Whitehall, the windows appear above a wall with punched openings, their structural function diluted. Moreover, the windows are dissociated from the entablature, with large blank wall surfaces above, further undermining structural engagement. The motif “has been chosen for its decorative and festive quality and not for its intrinsic functional value [...]”, Wittkower concluded.<sup>3</sup> It “appears”, he continued later in the essay, “from a functional point of view, as a casual element, and not necessitated by the structural logic of the building itself”.<sup>4</sup> Evidently, Wittkower asserted, the English usage had betrayed the tenets of Italian theory: Palladio had argued that voids should be placed above voids and solids above solids, and Scamozzi had asserted that windows above one another should be of the same width. Wittkower contrasted these statements with Isaac Ware’s belated suggestion in *A Complete Body of Architecture* (1756) that the Venetian window is pompous and for show.

As he traces the concatenating lineage of the motif in England, the regulating authority of sixteenth-century theory is at once a constant and recessive touchstone, as Wittkower weaves a pervasive tension between the influence of continental and local precedents. For example, Wittkower concluded Burlington’s placement of the Palladian window beneath a relieving arch in General Wade’s House (1723-1724) owed debt to drawings attributed to Palladio in his collection even as he asserted that it “exerted an extraordinary influence on English architecture”.<sup>5</sup> In particular, Wittkower thought Burlington had referred to a drawing, also influential on others, that incorporated the motif into a rusticated wall on the ground floor and into a smooth wall surface on the piano nobile.<sup>6</sup> Of particular interest to Wittkower in this regard was William Kent’s use of the motif, also beneath a relieving arch, in the Treasury Building and at the Horse Guards. The Doric order of the sixteenth-century façade had been lost and as a consequence, Wittkower argued, the reading of the rustication is entirely

different. In the earlier design, “The rustication is attached to the wall like a strengthening scaffold”.<sup>7</sup> But in these works by Kent, “the rustication has considerably gained in importance and appears as a continuous wall, and not as applied framework”.<sup>8</sup>

At work in the British context was a divergent deployment of Italian content. Moreover, Wittkower believed the divergence in the various instances were in general consistent, betraying a sensibility shared by Burlington, his associates, and followers. It was this sensibility that adjudicated the tension between foreign and domestic usage. For example, Wittkower attributed the original use of three Palladian windows in what were then thought to be Kent’s designs for Burlington’s Villa at Chiswick to another drawing by Palladio in Burlington’s possession. Palladio’s design “was quite exceptional” – “it was probably never meant to be executed, and nothing like it is to be seen in Italy”, Wittkower claims; but Burlington’s “peculiar and essentially un-Italian arrangement” exercised “strong appeal” in England. A peculiarly British affiliation had overridden the historical value of the precedent.

In particular, Wittkower believed Italian motifs lost their corporeal integrity and were flattened by English usage. Describing the garden façade of Burlington’s Villa at Chiswick, Wittkower writes, “The relieving arches of the Venetian windows appear here as if cut out of the flat wall with a knife, [...]”.<sup>9</sup> The motif had been deployed without regard for the functional logic expounded by Cinquecento theory. For Wittkower, this logic was structural and formal. But it was also material. Comparing the smooth flat walls of Chiswick with the rusticated Parade Front of Kent’s Horse Guards, Wittkower suggested “the employment of a different surface medium did not necessitate a great change of design [...]”.<sup>10</sup> In short, Wittkower asserted English architects deployed the Palladian window as a decorative design. Despite the widespread English use of the window, Wittkower, noting that he had restrained himself from a more extensive survey, concluded “in almost all these fronts the same law of a decorative relationship between wall and voids remains binding”.<sup>11</sup> In short, English architects conceived façades as designs rather than plastic works; these motifs were deployed as symbols on a page.

The latter third of Wittkower’s essay concerned a second motif, “a characteristic arrangement of door or window frames. It is a simple moulded frame which has blocked quoins at regular intervals superimposed on its sides and a compact mass of three or five voussoirs in its lintel”. Early-eighteenth-century English architects deployed this motif in a manner consistent with their use of the Palladian window. In short, it was “characteristic” that the openings under discussion “stand out against a large and ‘empty’ wall”. In this isolated presentation on a façade, a “decorative re-interpretation” by the English of what was erroneously thought to be Palladian is again evident.<sup>12</sup> This was particularly interesting to Wittkower because he felt the motif was intrinsically Mannerist and thus not prone to lucid articulation. Tending against the emblem’s legibility was the ease with which the quoins of the frame could interlock with and thus disappear into the surrounding wall. Wittkower identified a number of examples where this had occurred. Referring to the appearance of the motif in Serlio’s *Extraordinario Libro* (1551), he suggested: “In its simplest form it is a rusticated wall in which alternating bosses overlap the frames of doors and windows”.<sup>13</sup> In this and other examples the motif appears as though sections of stonework remain unfinished.<sup>14</sup> Partially integrated with the wall surface, the motif evokes a sense of temporality, appearing as a more or less refined articulation vis-à-vis the surrounding wall plane. In its English usage, commonly abstracted from the wall plane and isolated as an individual element or occasionally lent the same treatment as the wall surface, the ambiguous, mannerist temporality of the original motif is destroyed and the motif is drained of its original meaning.<sup>15</sup> And again, the different usage indicated a different sensibility. The ‘blocked quoin’ motif had been stabilised, its contours formalised, its deployment conventionalised, and its meaning intellectualised. By contrast with the personalised pathos of the Mannerists, Wittkower argued, in the minds of the English Neoclassicists the motif “was legalised and academically petrified”.<sup>16</sup>

### The Iconography of Architecture

This process that Wittkower considers at once academicisation and legalisation is, of course, the constitution of precedent. Wittkower's text implicitly posits that the very supposition that these motifs were Palladian constituted the Italian's authority as guarantor of their usage. "The academic architects of the Burlington circle felt themselves to be the custodians of the tradition formed by Palladio and Inigo Jones, in whose works they believed that they had discovered the eternal rules of architecture", Wittkower opened the essay. "In theory and practice they attempted to restore this great art to its former glory, and it is well known how closely they followed the precepts of their models". But, Wittkower continued, "In reality, their Palladianism is a good deal more English than is generally realised".<sup>17</sup>

In the context of the war, an emphasis on the native traits of English art alongside its deep connection to the classical culture of Italy was a shrewd claim, embodied in a program of exhibitions, by the predominantly émigré faculty of the Warburg Institute.<sup>18</sup> Wittkower published his essay on the heels of the successful photographic exhibition, *English Art and the Mediterranean*, which he had organised with his fellow Warburg scholar and the Institute's director, Fritz Saxl. Although it first opened in London in December, 1941, the exhibition was still in circulation when Wittkower published his essay two years later, "appearing in at least eighteen cities in 1943 alone".<sup>19</sup>

In the short pamphlet that accompanied the exhibition, Wittkower established the foundation for his later conclusions on eighteenth-century English architecture under the title "The Dictatorship of Taste". Burlington, "the heart and soul of the new movement", he explained, "aimed at the restoration of classical rule and order, as a reaction from the Baroque exuberance of [Christopher] Wren and [John] Vanbrugh".<sup>20</sup> Saxl and Wittkower exhibited images of the architectural production of the Burlington circle, but, importantly, this followed, under the subheading, "Lord Burlington's Literary Propaganda", evidence of the group's discursive activity, represented by pages from William Kent's *Designs of Inigo Jones (1727)*, Robert Castell's *Villas of the Ancients (1728)*, and Isaac Ware's translation of Palladio's *Quattro Libri (1738)*, all works supported by Burlington, as well as an example of Burlington's own unpublished interpretation of Palladio, *Fabbriche Antiche diseguate da Andrea Palladio Vincentino (1730)*. Bracketing these texts, Wittkower displayed George Knapton's portrait of Burlington (holding an English publication of Palladio's drawings, a bust of Inigo Jones in the background) and William Hogarth's "The Man of Taste", a satirical response to Alexander Pope's summary, in his *Epistle on Taste (1731)*, of Burlington's intent to extend the lineage of Vitruvius, Palladio, and Jones. As Wittkower noted in the exhibition pamphlet, "Pope also saw the dangers which lay in a close adherence to a fixed canon of taste", specifically the manifest consequences of untalented dogmatic followers, a critique Hogarth found ironic, given Pope's evident exuberance for Burlington's program.<sup>21</sup>

Published in the institute's organ, the expected audience for Wittkower's essay was, unlike this exhibition, academic. Excepting the brief introduction, the essay assumed the reader's knowledge of Burlington's ambitions and rather than the devotion to Italian models, Wittkower emphasised the tension between Italian precedent and English usage. The motifs abstracted by the English were either marginal or falsely attributed to Palladio's activity and they were, in Wittkower's view, at least by the standards of their Italian precursors, erroneously applied. Wittkower argued early-eighteenth-century English architects "gave a new meaning to almost all the elements which they derived from Palladio".<sup>22</sup>

During the previous half-decade a significant number of Wittkower's published essays had traced the transformation in meaning of particular symbols in painting.<sup>23</sup> Wittkower spilled near as much ink on studies of iconography during this period as he did on the history of architecture. The essay on English Palladianism applied a methodology Wittkower had been developing through the investigation of painted iconography to the examination of architectural symbols, synthesising the two strains of his

preceding research. At the time, the analytical rigour of such iconographic study was understood to be a central component of the objective art historical scholarship the Warburgians had introduced into Anglophone discourse.<sup>24</sup>

In retrospect, Christy Anderson has suggested the isomorphism between this methodological focus on motifs and Wittkower's assertion that the Burlingtonians isolated, developed, and presented certain architectural elements with a particular clarity.<sup>25</sup> But in this respect the distinction between the general and the particular is crucial. Wittkower would come to believe the discrimination and articulation of visual elements was the definitive preoccupation of art theory.<sup>26</sup> His consideration of English Neo-Palladianism appears formative in this regard. For it was the particular manner of discrimination and articulation, rather than discrimination and articulation in general, that was his concern with respect to the Burlington circle. Such was the import of Wittkower's focus on motifs that, thought to be derived from Palladio, were in fact drawn from non-Palladian sources or were marginal in Palladio's production. The consistency of the departure from Palladian precedent demonstrated that a coherent architectural conception was operative in the Burlington circle. And thus Wittkower bracketed from the essay those obvious consistencies between Palladian and Neo-Palladian practice – the standard deployment of portico with a giant order, the use of equivalent proportions, and similar plan organizations – acknowledged elsewhere. The similarities were obvious; it was the differences that required elucidation. And it is with this perspective that we can now reflect on Wittkower's decision to focus on two motifs in particular, one more demonstrably Palladian, the other, being Mannerist, evidently not.

### **Precedent and Quotation**

Wittkower included himself within a cadre of critical historians that believed they had rediscovered, in the second-quarter of the twentieth century, a sensibility that had been all but extinguished by the strictures of Counter-Reformation orthodoxy and the scientific pretensions of Neoclassicism. Eighteenth-century Neo-Palladians were unable to grasp the expressive Mannerist comportment of much sixteenth-century Italian art. It is not that the English Neo-Palladians were indiscriminate per se, Wittkower acknowledged, "for it is well-known that they were careful critics in matters of taste", but, rather, "It is much more probable that they had no eye for the intricate complexity of the motive and saw in it a decorative pattern which could be useful employed to enliven a bare wall".<sup>27</sup>

An aesthetic predisposition had simultaneously attracted Burlington and his circle to these motifs and blinded them to their significance. By sixteenth-century criteria, English Neo-Palladians presented their sources indiscriminately, legibly, and too literally. Their work evinces not only a tendency toward the use of sources, but also the formal – if not historical – clarification of these motifs, which is to say, their engagement with sources is saturated with a rhetorical investment in imprimatur. It was important to discover and take up these classical laws of design, but it was equally and perhaps even more important to discern, clarify, and express those forms that made absolutely clear one had done so. It was this rhetorical imperative, depending on the knowledge and manner of Renaissance architecture in English usage, rather than the lawful intention and standards of historical usage, that governed the manner of the articulation and transformed the respective motifs, even if aesthetic judgement remained constrained by its adherence to historical forms and their interpretation.

The full significance of this artistic position does not seem to have been entirely clear to Wittkower in 1943. The earlier exhibition text offered little insight in this regard. Rather, the formal analysis of English Neo-Palladianism exercised in penning the 1943 essay seems to have constituted the material for later conclusions. Wittkower's most concise articulation of the value of the Neo-Palladian position would only occur after he had laid out an alternative to Burlington's neoclassicism.

Two years after his essay on English Neo-Palladianism, in the concluding and influential section of the second of his two seminal essays on Palladio (which would constitute the basis of his 1949 book

*Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*), “The Break-Away from the Laws of Harmonic Proportion in Architecture”, in a manner consistent with his iconographic studies, Wittkower sketched out the post-Renaissance history of architectural proportion as a contiguity of form but a gradual inversion of meaning. “Palladio’s work remained canonical for those academic architects who abode by the conception of harmonic ratios”, Wittkower wrote, “However, in the long run time was against them and the classical ideas on proportion were completely reversed”.<sup>28</sup> By the seventeenth century, the presumption that an adherence to eternal laws was sufficient to produce a work of beauty had been undermined. Even before Charles Perrault’s radical discussion of conventional beauty, François Blondel’s “approach to the problem is historic and apologetic”, Wittkower writes, for, in contrast to his Renaissance predecessors, he has to prove a case of which many of his contemporaries were ignorant”.<sup>29</sup> For Robert Morris, “an architect associated with the Burlington group”, Wittkower pointed out, “proportion in architecture was a mystery the knowledge of which had to be rediscovered”.<sup>30</sup> Yet it was precisely these vain absolutist efforts which portended the ultimate collapse of the classical system. “It was [...] in England”, Wittkower writes, “that the whole structure of classical aesthetic was overthrown from the bottom”. For Hume, “Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty”.<sup>31</sup>

In the compartment of the Neo-Palladians, Wittkower had identified a position that had, at least for a time, held the antitheses of precedent and license, object and subject, in check. In Wittkower and Saxl’s *British Art and the Mediterranean*, a 1948 book substantially expanding the content and insight of the 1941 exhibition, Wittkower reiterated his claim that the movement promoted by Burlington occupied an equivocal position, at once a reaction to Baroque license but also subject to satirical critique for its over-emphasis on standards of taste.<sup>32</sup> But unlike previous discussions – both the exhibition and the essay discussed above – Wittkower now emphasised that Burlington had deliberately employed non-Palladian motifs in an intentional effort to reform Palladian precedent. “But Burlington’s house is not a copy”, Wittkower explains in a passage new to the book, “He wanted something at the same time more festive and more classical than the Rotonda. His deviations from Palladio are, however, not free inventions but based on other models. He sought an architectural whole out of a mosaic of single motives, each of which is covered by one or more authorities”.<sup>33</sup> In addition to Palladio, Wittkower identified Scamozzi and Jones. Rather than a misprision or affected interpretation of Palladian precedents, as the 1943 essay suggested, Burlington’s combination of sources was now presented as a careful method of creative departure. This shift of emphasis surrendered to Burlington a greater degree of artistic credit: the historical understanding of precedent in English architecture had been subtly transformed; the architect’s agency had been enhanced.

Two years later, in a radio address on the BBC’s Third Programme, broadcast in May, 1950, Wittkower offered his clearest statement yet on Burlington’s approach. Wittkower contended that “[...] in spite of the rigid application of rules, English Palladianism is not a static style. There was a development. [...] In this early phase of Palladianism everything was still fluid, but Burlington was soon to advocate a severely classical conception of architecture”.<sup>34</sup> The talk, which provides a more extended account of the development of Burlington’s career and thought than the earlier essay, hinged on the literary production of Burlington and his circle. Reiterating his formal conclusions, Wittkower stressed the group’s invention and its theoretical reflection:

I have called English Neo-Palladianism ‘a style’. Is this term applicable to an architectural movement that seemed to rely on a close imitation of foreign models? The answer is in the affirmative, for the academic apparatus of forms and motives was used in England in an unprecedented way, far removed from anything Italian. [...] The Venetian window, for instance, which in Italy has its clearly assigned place in the structural logic of the building, emerges in England as a purely decorative feature. While Italian architecture must always be judged for its plastic and functional values, an English Palladian building should be seen from a distance like a picture.<sup>35</sup>

This last line restates the formal conclusion of the 1943 essay.<sup>36</sup> But, here subsumed within a broader concern, Wittkower added, "It is this transformation and re-valuation of their models that made the Burlingtonians create an architectural idiom in its own right".<sup>37</sup> Wittkower now stressed that English Neo-Palladian architecture, despite its loose borrowings from and applications of Italian precedent, had fabricated a cohesive position under the direction of a well-articulated theoretical program.

In the conclusion of the address, Wittkower, perhaps mindful that his audience was likely to have contained not a few architects swayed by modern ideas, engaged the question of creativity at stake in the Burlington program.<sup>38</sup> Wittkower sought to make clear that Burlington's methodology, while it re-deployed historical content, was distinguishable from historical eclecticism precisely because its borrowings were unified by a consistent sensibility. "When Horace Walpole defended Sir Joshua Reynolds against the accusation of plagiarism", Wittkower recalls, "he argued that the borrowing of attitudes from great masters was not plagiarism but quotation".<sup>39</sup> Wittkower was citing Walpole's 1762 *Anecdotes of Painting in England*: "and a quotation from a great author, with a novel application of the sense, has always been allowed to be an instance of parts and taste; and may have more merit than the original", to which Wittkower added, "This is precisely the theoretical position of Palladian architects".<sup>40</sup>

While he wished to emancipate the creativity of Neo-Palladian quotation from the bonds of twentieth-century judgement that relegated it to slavish copying, Wittkower was also careful to qualify the creativity at play in the Burlington circle. The restrained creativity of quotation should not be mistaken for the free creativity associated with genius. "True, it must be admitted that there was no genius amongst them", he acknowledged, "None of them, neither Burlington nor Kent, Campbell, Flitcroft, Ware, Morris and the rest, matches the genius of a [John] Vanbrugh or a Robert Adam".<sup>41</sup> Rather, the architects of the Burlington circle exemplified what Wittkower now took to be the neo-classical feeling: "their noble and temperate buildings express perfectly the mood of the Augustan era", he asserted. He compared this comportment to the contemporaneous "temper" of Alexander Pope's "urbane style", the prose of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, and the poetry of John Gay and James Thompson. In short, Wittkower associated the Neo-Palladianism of the Burlington circle with that comportment which Samuel Johnson had identified in the literature of the early-eighteenth century and for which Johnson took Addison to be exemplary.<sup>42</sup> "The Burlingtonians set the model of the middle style in architecture", Wittkower announced, "and it was this quality more than anything else that guaranteed the wide acceptance of the Palladian idiom and the survival of many of its features far into the 19th century".<sup>43</sup>

### **An Iconology of Architecture**

For his BBC audience, the comparison with Johnson no doubt associated Burlington's endeavours with Johnson's extraordinary feat in constructing *A Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1755, which in the hearts, if not the minds, of the mid-twentieth-century listener had yet to be eclipsed as the standard reference by the first edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, issued in its entirety only a short twenty-two years earlier (1928). Moreover, the aims of Johnson's project resonated with Wittkower's claims about the ambitions of the Burlington group. Johnson had sought to establish, now that printing had become commonplace, the basic elements, meanings, and combinatory rules of the English language, and, by contrast to other lexicographers, who were focused on the *a priori* technical meanings of words, emphasised language as used. Although Johnson is nowhere mentioned in the 1943 essay, Wittkower now implied that Burlington participated in a broad and enlightened, cross-disciplinary eighteenth-century project to ensure the precise, standardised, and creative use of modern language. The comportment necessary to such ambition looked to both the past and the present; it required felicity in the selection and clarification of precedent and liberty of deployment.

Despite its apparent methodological connection with the essays that immediately preceded it and Wittkower's direct comparison between the approaches of eighteenth-century painting, literature, and architecture, "Pseudo-Palladian Elements in English Neoclassicism" was later divorced from Wittkower's essays on symbology. It was placed in the volume of collected essays *Palladio and English Palladianism* (1974), underscoring its role in Wittkower's ongoing consideration of Palladio and his influence.<sup>44</sup> The essays on symbology were collected in *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (1977), an apt description for these texts, which traced the lineage and changing significance of certain motifs in literature, painting, and sculpture.<sup>45</sup>

Included within the latter volume was an essay reflecting on methodology, in which Wittkower explicitly aligned his historiography with the iconology practiced by Panofsky.<sup>46</sup> Wittkower opened this 1955 essay, "Interpretation of Visual Symbols in the Arts", with a fundamental question about the formation of symbols as such: "Visual messages crowd upon us, and we are all blind to most of them. [...] the only visual messages which find response in our brain are those which we judge in some way or other useful or important to us. When that happens, the visual sign or symbol communicates a meaning".<sup>47</sup> Wittkower thus made clear that intrinsic to the contours of iconography – the very formation of motifs – were varying interpretations and manifold layers of functional significance. Where "function" had been used in a restricted sense in his 1943 discussion of architecture, referring to the structural, formal, and material performance of a particular motif, and thus to the inherent relationships internal to the work, in the 1955 essay on artistic practice in general, the term incorporated the cultural significance of artistic works. It is clear that by 1950 Wittkower understood the function of architectural elements in terms consistent with the function of visual elements in the other arts.

In his 1943 discussion of the English Neo-Palladians, Wittkower had emphasised the functional misprision of English Neo-Palladianism. It is precisely the absence of a structural, formal, and material understanding in the English use of Palladian motifs that Wittkower evokes in his use of the word "decorative". Lacking a technical directive, the architectural motif becomes nothing but form. And this assertion – that form is drained of function – is the direct equivalent in architecture of that loss of meaning that Wittkower had pursued in his discussions of painted motifs. But by 1950, misprision had been recast as quotation, and Neo-Palladian architecture had been saturated by intent. The motifs borrowed by the Burlingtonians had been invested with a new and compelling significance. As Wittkower's association of Burlington and Johnson makes clear, in the course of his consideration of English Neo-Palladianism, Wittkower had come to identify a fundamental development in the understanding of architectural language. But one might also suggest that in formulating his understanding of Neoclassicism in architecture, Wittkower's developing examination of English Neo-Palladianism had transformed his understanding of the operations of architectural language in general.

In 1975, Giulio Carlo Argan, asserting Panofsky's iconological method was proto-structuralist, suggested Wittkower's *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* had applied Panofsky's method to non-figurative works of art.<sup>48</sup> A consideration of Wittkower's ongoing consideration of Neo-Palladianism suggested that in his application of the iconological method to architecture, Wittkower was concerned with the erosion of an essentialist understanding of architectural language. In the context of the Neo-Modern architectural practice of immediate post-war Britain, to which Wittkower's self-conscious remarks in the 1950 radio address seem directed, the stakes of quotation, the function of architectural language, the question of creativity, and the possibility and desirability of a "middle style", were issues with an attentive audience.



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements in English Neo-Classical Architecture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 6 (1943), 154.
- <sup>2</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 154.
- <sup>3</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 155.
- <sup>4</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 156.
- <sup>5</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 158.
- <sup>6</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 158-159.
- <sup>7</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 158.
- <sup>8</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 159.
- <sup>9</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 159.
- <sup>10</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 159.
- <sup>11</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 160.
- <sup>12</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 160.
- <sup>13</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 161.
- <sup>14</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 161.
- <sup>15</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 163-164.
- <sup>16</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 163.
- <sup>17</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 154.
- <sup>18</sup> Christy Anderson, 'War Work, English Art and the Warburg Institute', *Common Knowledge*, 18, 1 (2012), 149-159.
- <sup>19</sup> Anderson, 'War Work', 150.
- <sup>20</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, in Rudolf Wittkower and Fritz Saxl (eds.), *Guide to the Photographic Exhibition of English Art and the Mediterranean compiled by the Warburg Institute* (1941; London: Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts, 1943), 70.
- <sup>21</sup> Wittkower, *English Art and the Mediterranean*, 70-72.
- <sup>22</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 154.
- <sup>23</sup> 'Patience and Chance, The Story of a Political Emblem' (1937); 'Chance, Time, and Virtue' and 'Grammatica' from Martianus Capella to Hogarth' (1938); the first section of an essay on 'Titian's Allegory of "Religion Succoured by Spain"', with Neil MacLaren, 'Eagle and Serpent' and 'Transformations of Minerva in Renaissance Imagery' (1939); and 'Marvels of the East. A Study in the History of Monsters' (1942), which picked up a thread of research first hinted in his contribution to a discussion of 'Miraculous Birds' four years earlier.
- <sup>24</sup> Anderson, 'War Work', 159.
- <sup>25</sup> Anderson, 'War Work', 158-159.
- <sup>26</sup> See Rudolf Wittkower, 'Art History as a Discipline', *Winterthur Seminar on Museum Operation and Connoisseurship* (Winterthur: Delaware, The Museum, 1961), 55-69.
- <sup>27</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 163-164.
- <sup>28</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, 'Principles of Palladio's Architecture, II', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 8 (1945), 96.
- <sup>29</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 97.
- <sup>30</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 97-98.
- <sup>31</sup> Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 97, quoting Hume, *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, T. H. Green and T. H. Grosse (eds.) (1889), I, 268ff.
- <sup>32</sup> Rudolf Wittkower in Fritz Saxl and Rudolf Wittkower, *British Art and the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), 53. Cf. Wittkower, *English Art and the Mediterranean*, sections 43 and 44. See also Anderson, 'War Work', 149-159.
- <sup>33</sup> Wittkower, *British Art and the Mediterranean*, 54.
- <sup>34</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, "Palladianism in England", fourth in the series of talks "Aspects of Art in England, 1700-1840", Third Programme, BBC Radio broadcast, May 8, 1950, typescript contained in Rudolf Wittkower Papers, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, box 42, 12.
- <sup>35</sup> Wittkower, "Palladianism in England", 14-15.
- <sup>36</sup> Cf. Wittkower, 'Pseudo-Palladian Elements', 164.
- <sup>37</sup> Wittkower, "Palladianism in England", 14-15.
- <sup>38</sup> Wittkower, "Palladianism in England", 15.
- <sup>39</sup> Wittkower, "Palladianism in England", 15.
- <sup>40</sup> Wittkower, "Palladianism in England", 15, quoting Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (London: Strawberry-Hill, 1771), IV, vi-vii.
- <sup>41</sup> Wittkower, "Palladianism in England", 15.

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<sup>42</sup> Wittkower, "Palladianism in England", 16.

<sup>43</sup> Wittkower, "Palladianism in England", 16.

<sup>44</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, *Palladio and English Palladianism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974).

<sup>45</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, *Allegory and The Migration of Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

<sup>46</sup> Erwin Panofsky, "Introductory", *Studies in Iconology, Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 3-31, repr. as "Iconography and Iconology, An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art", in Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (1955; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 26-54.

<sup>47</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, "Interpretation of Visual Symbols in the Arts", *Studies in Communication* (1955), 109-124, repr. in Wittkower, *Allegory and The Migration of Symbols*, 174.

<sup>48</sup> Giulio Carlo Argan, "Ideology and Iconology", Rebecca West (trans.), *Critical Inquiry*, 2, 2 (Winter, 1975), 300.