ONE:
INTRODUCTION: BOOKS AND BUILDINGS

Inigo Jones worked as hard on the creation of his architectural persona as he did on the design of buildings for the early Stuart court. Through a program of study in continental architectural and art theory, humanist education, and courtly behavior, Jones redefined the intellectual status of architecture in England and forged a new role for the architect in public life. Since the time of his death he has been variously described as the first educated architect, the first classicist, the first Renaissance architect in Britain, and the savior of British building from the long winter of the Elizabethan style.[1] Yet this reputation has tended to overlook the many ways Jones drew on English customs in order to shape classical architecture for a domestic audience.[2] This book explores the creation of Jones as professional architect and the shaping of classical architecture in England through a study of his reading, writing, and architectural practice in the context of English Renaissance culture.

Jones's own collection of books and related prints and drawings provide a unique archive in the history of pre-modern architecture. This material, preserved between a very few collections, offers an insight into the design method and theoretical processes of this seminal architect in the history of English architecture. In his choice of books for study, the comments he wrote in the margins or in his notebooks, and in the buildings themselves, Jones saw architecture as a complex field of study that drew on all areas of human experience and knowledge. It required, as Vitruvius had stated in his treatise, a knowledge of science, law, mathematics, history, and a range of other disciplines. For an architect in 1600, the wealth of European printed books available in England made this range of knowledge a possibility, and for Jones, a prescription for self-study.

However, classicism was never a native style in England, although Jones and his supporters argued that it had its source in ancient Rome's conquest of Britain. When classical architectural forms were used in England, it was often done in a self-conscious way, with an awareness that their use required a certain level of justification. Yet the foreignness of classical art in England has always been treated a bit hesitantly by scholars. The historian John Summerson recognized that

"in England, a country with fewer Mediterranean contacts than most European nations, our classicism is often haunted by Roman ghosts."[3] To write about the disjunction between English architecture and classical traditions could be seen as an admission of some sort of essential cultural failing, as if English art had to make up for, or catch up with, the development of art on the continent.

The importance of classicism to a British sense of artistic worth has been most strongly asserted when the political and cultural ties to the Mediterranean have been threatened. One such moment was in the late sixteenth century, when Queen Elizabeth instituted a policy of isolationism as part of a political and religious nationalism. Another moment was more recently, in the early twentieth century.

In the 1940s, England was as severed from Italian culture as she had been in the last years of the sixteenth century. The Second World War made travel nearly impossible, collections inaccessible, and the world of the Mediterranean a distant object for scholars and the general public alike. The curators of the exhibition *British Art and the Mediterranean*, Fritz Saxl and Rudolf Wittkower, began their preface with the following:

> In 1941, at a time when the Mediterranean had become a battle-ground, the Warburg Institute arranged a photographic exhibition, on the subject of "British Art and the Mediterranean." The exhibition was on view in London and in a number of provincial museums, and met with a greater response than we had anticipated. At a time when inter-European relations were disrupted by the war, it was stimulating to observe in the arts of this country the agelong impact of the Mediterranean tradition on the British mind.[4]

The exhibition included photographs of a range of media from stone carvings, metalwork, and mosaics in the early section to architecture, paintings, and book frontispieces in the second half of the book (Fig. 1). While "an adequate picture of the extent and quality of the relations between English art and the arts of the Mediterranean would require many volumes," according to the editors, the examples were intended to illuminate the long history and various forms of this relationship: "Every section bears witness to the extent to which English art is indebted to Greece and Italy, and should show the fascinating transformation which the foreign elements have undergone as soon as they were introduced."[5]

In the midst of the war, the exhibition gave an order to the long history of cultural links between northern and southern Europe.[6] With the expanding destruction of Italy's monuments, the photographs offered a visual confirmation of a European order (and unity) as that belief was once again threatened. Through the use of art and visual culture, the organizers of the exhibition (and its hosting institution, the newly established Warburg Institute) avowed a belief in the

1. Fritz Saxl and Rudolf Wittkower, *British Art and the Mediterranean* (London, 1948).

integrity of European culture, and its common roots in classical civilization. As E. K. Waterhouse noted in a review in the *Burlington Magazine*, the exhibition emerged as a response to the sense of cultural loss brought about by war.[7]

For Saxl and Wittkower, the project of the exhibition emerged from both intellectual and emotional circumstance. The cultural as well as emotional deprivation of the war provided the motivation (and the particular limitations) for a photographic exhibition that reestablished, even in its temporary format, the ties between severed cultures.

Although the links between England and Mediterranean culture are undeniable, that relationship has always been fraught. Even at its most fervent, during the reign of the early Stuarts for example, there were many opponents of

foreign influence on the native style. Examining the complexity of that interaction through the lens of Inigo Jones offers us an insight into a moment of stylistic change.

The history of Renaissance architecture has primarily been a history of the development, dissemination, and spread of architectural classicism primarily in Florence and Rome. The histories of Italian building are almost uniform in their presentation of the story: that classicism emerged in first flower in the work of Brunelleschi in Florence, where it was transformed in various ways in the major court centers and architects who sought to recreate the innovative work of the first half of the century. This lineage then takes into account the not-quite-classical architecture in the peripheries, the other hubs of architecture outside the major centers. Thus, the work of Biagio Rossetti in Ferrara is in the second wave of classical building, based on Brunelleschi, and so on. The great moment of classical building emerges, not surprisingly, in high Renaissance Rome in the architecture of Bramante, Raphael, and to a lesser degree Michelangelo, all of whom reworked the models of ancient Rome in their creation of a new monumental and magnificent architecture of political and religious power for the Papacy. As an organic object, classicism spawns progeny that move out over the Italian landscape, and eventually through the power of print, the experience of travel, and the life of the forms themselves, classicism is taken up throughout Europe. Many aspects of this story are correct, at least in hindsight. Classicism did become the fashionable style in the courts of Europe. As humanistic scholarship changed the face of education, so too did architectural classicism become a sign of learning, education, and international aspirations for patrons and architects throughout Europe and, eventually, in the New World. Much of classical architecture (and architectural theory) as it developed in the Italian peninsula in the sixteenth century centered on the imitation of antiquity as the starting point for design. Antiquity offered models (*exempla*) for study and reuse contingent upon the demands of individual building requirements. At the heart of this process was an approach to modern building as the transformation of authority, derived in part from the ancients and equally from the invention of the architect. These two sides of the design process, invention and imitation, could be traced out and developed in other realms as well, such as literature, philosophy, history, political theory, and theology. What all these disciplines shared was a textual dimension, an external referent.

However, this standard history of Renaissance architecture needs to be tempered with an understanding of local competing desires and conditions. Classical architecture in England had periods of popularity (in the circle around Protector Somerset for example) and periods when it was less popular in favor of more national, English, forms of ornament.[8] Stronger yet were the exigencies of the building process itself.[9] Local patterns of building are notoriously resistant to change. Masons develop well-tested ways of working stones, joiners follow

2. Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, portico added in 1610.

prescribed patterns of carving, and metalworkers know the best methods of forging raw materials. The demands of local conditions and practices are more pervasive than the often abstract ideas and images contained in books. Nationalism, and the desire to form ever more sophisticated cultures in the vernacular, were equally important compared with any more international desires of competition and uniformity.

In the practice of building, English builders and patrons integrated classical elements (columns, loggia, balusters, and even floor plans) within traditional English forms. Classical elements were adapted into new building projects, but they were rarely used in isolation from more traditional and usual forms of building. Loggia, for example, were incorporated into houses or public buildings, but more often than not as isolated elements, as signs of the new style without giving over the whole of a building to a foreign style.[10] The marble loggia at Hatfield House is embedded between two brick towers with ogee domes (Fig. 2). And when the term was translated in a glossary of Italian architectural terms in an early seventeenth-century glossary to Andrea Palladio's *I quattro libri dell'architettura*, it was given a particular English twist: "loggie: a gallerie, a dyning rome, a faire hall, a walking place, a faire porch upon the streate side, a lodge, a banquetting house."[11] Classicism was always translated into an English idiom.

For Jones the new style of classical architecture was juxtaposed against the traditions of English building as a necessary part of the reform process. The new style was superior because he described the old (English) style as barbarous.[12] Jones

formulates a proto-classical theory that defines itself in terms of what it is not. Classicism is based on the "reason of proportion": it is masculine, not feminine; literate, not barbarous. Jones forges dichotomies, clear definitions of what falls into the classical camp and what is outside the boundaries of acceptable taste. He creates a normative idea of the classical – where there had been none – against the more fluid use of classical forms by other English architects.

Classicism and the Aesthetics of Wonder

In contrast to any sense of the classical as a logical, rational, or systematic architecture, Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture sought to amaze the viewer through the inventive use of decorative elements, materials, and planning. The pattern of English building from the medieval period on gave central place to buildings that evoked wonder in the viewer in both sacred and secular contexts. These two ideas about architecture – classicism with its authority in ancient models and an English preference for inventive and marvelous effects – coexisted in this period and in the work of Jones. This book addresses the dialogue between these two traditions, and between books and buildings, in the formation of Jones and the creation of the English Renaissance.

Discovery, wonder, and amazement were all common categories used in the appreciation of architecture during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When William Thomas describes the antiquities he has seen in Rome, he comments on their marvelous ornament, great scale, and precious materials. In his *Historye of Italye* (1561), Thomas praised the Pantheon for its excellent state of preservation and the beauty of its design.

> The temple of Pantheon is the perfectes of all the antiquities, and standeth whole unto thys daye. It is round, and hath but one gate to enter in at: the doores wherof are of brasse, very great and antike. The circuite within forth is very large, and the height proporcionable. The roofe is all vaulted like the halfe of an egge, of so greate compasse, that it is a wonder to beholde: and in the verie toppe is a greate rounde hole, through whiche the temple receiveth lyghte. For other wyndow it hath none, and yet is the light so much that if all the sides were made in wyndowes, it coulde geve no more: under the which in the middest of the floore is such holow provision made, that the raine passeth away wythout offendynge the eie or place. Finallye the walles are furnished round aboute with faire marble, and a noumber of goodly pillers: so that the temple beyng old, is yet thought goodlier than any new building that can be found, and is now called Santa Maria Rotunda.[13]

Even when Thomas attempts a characterization of the use of the columns, he is less interested in formulating a taxonomy than in relating their evocative hold on the viewer:

> It shalbe necessary to declare, that there be, iiii. kinde of pyllers, rounde, square, and striped.
>
> These are alwaies of one peece, and the chaipter of the piller called in latine Epistylium, is the stone that sta[n]deth on the toppe of the pyller, like as the base called Basis in Latine, is the stone that the pyller standeth on.
>
> Of which bases therebe. iii. sundry facions, Ionici, Dorici, Italici, & Corinthici, or Tuscani, as Vitruvius writeth. . . . So that to consider the infinite number of these pyllers that were in Rome, and that yet amongeste the olde ruines are to bee seene, it seemeth a wonder where they should be had, and what a treasure they cost. For I have seene dyvers almost two fathome aboute, and above. 40. foote hyghe. And nothynge more earnestly desyred I, than to see some of those wonderfull temples or edifices upon pyllers in theyr olde facion, with the presence of some of those au[n]cie[n]t Romaines, that with their naked maiestee durst passes through the power of theyr victorious enemies, as Livie writeth, that Caius Fabius dyd, when the frenchemen had gotten Rome, and beseiged the Capitol.[14]

Thomas refers to Vitruvius, though the ancient text is less an authority than his own first-hand visual experience.

The expense and visual richness of ancient architecture allows Thomas to summon up images of the ancient Romans, an event which typifies the magical quality of the ruins. He mentions that there are different types of bases, which he believes is what Vitruvius meant when he wrote that there were families of columns, "Ionici, Dorici," etc. But categorization is not what is most important. Thomas "earnestly desyred" to have the temples live again, peopled with ancient Romans he would have known about through a reading of ancient histories. His interest in the architecture is real and potent, for it has the power, he believes, to call forth the dead. The wonder of the buildings is not just a visual marvel but also a powerful bridge through time to another civilization.[15]

As many scholars of the sixteenth century have noted, wonder was a general characteristic of many of the arts in England during this period. Whether in *The Faerie Queene*, Shakespeare, descriptions of new lands, or writings on the occult, the praise of the wonderful occurs so often as to seem a fundamental aesthetic category.[16] Through the translation of ancient texts into English such as Plinius Secundus, *A Summarie of the Antiquities, and wonders of the worlde, abstracted out of the sixtene first bookes of the excellente historiographer Plinie, wherein may be seene*

the wonderfull workes of God in his creatures, translated out of French into Englishe, by I.A. (London: Henry Denham for Thomas Hacket, [1566]), descriptions of the marvels of the ancient world were available for a more general reader, whose interest was not necessarily scholarly study.[17]

In the English translation of Francesco Colonna's fifteenth-century adventure, the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, classical architecture provides a fantastic setting for a story of passion and self-discovery. The eponymous R. D. translated only part of the Latin original into English, and included woodcuts taken after those of the 1499 Aldine edition.[18] In the dream of Poliphilus, the quest for his beloved Polia takes him through a palace with fantastic architecture, described at length as part of the narrative. The architecture, and its descriptions, are as fantastic as the story itself. The richness of the language, creation of new terminology, and descriptive detail add to the wonder of the story.

> And in the utmost partes of the aforesaide court, to the right hand, and the left, towards the mountaines, there was two straight rowes of pillars, with a space betwixt for the intersect Areostile, as the quantities of both columnes required . . . With their capitels or heads, wrought with a waved shell worke, and cyllerie or draperie, their corners bearing out and inanulated or turned in like a curled locke of hayre, or the upper head of a base Viall above the pinnes, which straine the stringes of the instrument to a musicall concord.[19]

The wonder of the original *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* appears with even greater force in the English translation. Printed marginal annotations by the translator R. D. explained the unusual terms – some accurate translations and some imaginative creations – and characters. We are told that "Thores and Cymbies be the outward parts of a chapter or head of a pillar sticking out further than the pillar wrything and turning in, wrought with leaves, the worke is called of carvers & painters draperie and celerie."[20]

Yet throughout the *Strife of Love in a Dreame*, the narrator insists that verbal description is insufficient to capture the appearance of the building.

> And I beeying desirous and not satisfied, turned mee about towardes the conspicuous Poarch, to beholde diligently the artificious Pallaice, wonderfull and perfinite of the Art of building.
>
> The subtiltie of which, no humane excogitation is able to imitate.[21]

Architecture is a substitute for the beloved, and fulfills a desire for her which remains unsatisfied.[22] The connection of desire and architecture is repeated in Robert Peake's dedication of his translation of Serlio "To the Lovers of

Architecture."[23] Classicism in Renaissance England was equated with the exotic and sensual as both setting and stimulus. It could be a substitute for the beloved, or a private devotion to her memory.[24] And, like love itself, the vision of a beautiful building holds the viewer enraptured, unable to speak, but "desirous to staie and look."[25]

Afflicted with a wish to capture the object of desire, always just out of reach, Poliphilus as narrator sublimates longing within the rich description of the architecture and objects he encounters.

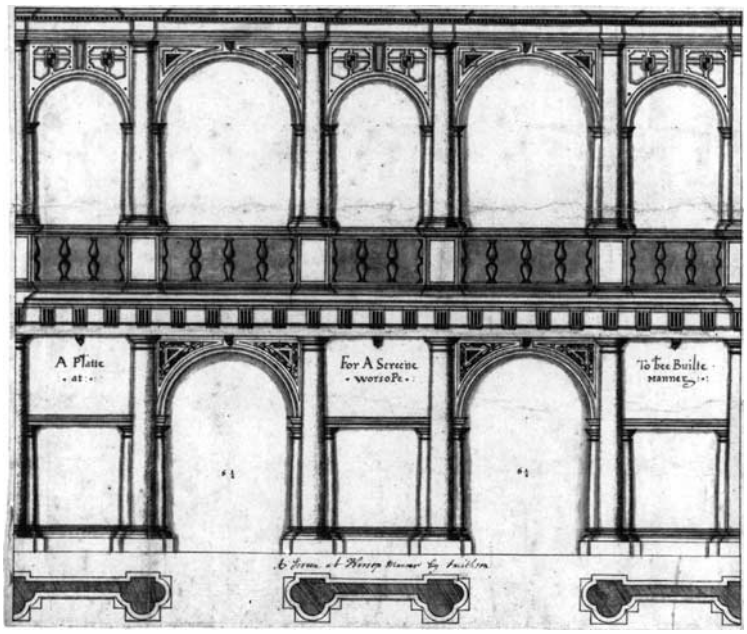
The anonymous designer of the architecture is the designer of the tale, an analogy of the poet as creator. Within sixteenth-century theorizing on the status of the artist, the Neo-platonist Francesco Patrizi defined the poet as the "maker of the marvellous," and classified the power to arouse wonder as a fundamental skill of artists of all media.[26] If the artist is invested with the power to create the marvelous, then he has a skill that elevates his status above that of craftsman to a more powerful level.[27]

The emphasis on the miraculous qualities of architecture marks an attitude toward the visual arts that valued the surprising, the inventive, and the cleverly wrought.[28] Surprise takes place over time; from the state of calm to amazement. It requires a change in attitude, and a corresponding denouement. Wonder destabilizes and shifts the expectations of the viewer to the unexpected.

There are many examples of sixteenth-century English architecture where surprise was part of the architectural effect, unfolding over time as the viewer progressed through the building. At Hardwick Hall, for example, the well-known staircase emphasizes the ceremonial route through the house, using light to amaze the viewers as they progress upward. Robert Smythson used classicism in a surprising way at Worksop, substituting a classical loggia where the viewer would expect the traditional hall screen to be[29] (Fig. 3). Sir Thomas Tresham's Triangular Lodge is an exercise in producing a building of wonder, whose very complexity of symbolism seems intended more to encourage a lengthy experience of devotion in the viewer than to produce any clear analysis of the symbolic meaning (Fig. 4). Wonder was therefore a recognizable, if not clearly definable, quality of English aesthetic experience and artistic creation.

This effect of Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture greatly contrasted with the design aesthetic of classicism. Within the classical paradigm there is an attempt to rationalize and stabilize the world, to compare visible data with external evidence. Even when the Albion tradition is positively presented, the final judgment of modern scholars always seems to be that while the love of devices is of some interest, ultimately that tradition pales before the great authority of Jones's classicism and the study of the antique.[30]

The stability of classicism relies on the armature of proportional relations to maintain an order that is always threatening to degrade into that without shape.[31] Classicism's clarity of organization quells the volatile nature of wonder. Wonder's



3. Robert Smythson, *Screen for Worksop Manor*. Royal Institute of British Architects, London. Photo: Conway Library.

effect is to bring about revelation and the epiphany of understanding, according to Albertus Magnus in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of the Marvellous*.[32] This instability is one of the great differences between the architecture of Albion and that of the classical tradition. Albion's architecture is not fixed, either in design or in understanding. The parts may be easily interchangeable, and the understanding changing over time. In contrast, classical architecture respects rules of composition.

Foreign architecture, that is classicism, could amaze a viewer because of its difference from the native tradition. By definition, that which is exotic causes wonder. Part of the reason for traveling abroad as part of the educational experience was to experience the marvels not available at home. However, Robert Dallington warned the young traveler not to disparage the native English skills.

> Now although (God be thanked) our own countrey is replenished with as manie, and as profound learned men, as anie region in christendome besides, yet there is no man but will graunt that heere is not all the learning in the worlde. No no, the Lord God in his great, and wonderfull providence, as hee hath given ech countrey his commoditie: so hath he placed learned men in everie part of the world, as starres, or precious stones, of whome (such is our nature especially us English)