

2020-09-02 - Lecture 08

10.1 Humanist Italy // Alberti // Giuliano da Sangallo, 1450-1500

1) Humanist Philosophy of Florence

- **Medici** Library
- **Vitruvius** text from Ancient Rome. Marcus Vitruvius Pollio author. 25 BC. **The Ten Books of Architecture**.
- In Book 1, Chapter 3, Paragraph 2 - Vitruvius states the requirements of architecture as:

Durability - Convenience - Beauty

- Other texts translate as:
Firmness - Commodity - Delight

Today, we might think of these requirements as:

Structure - Program - Beauty of Design

- The Humanist Philosophy of the Renaissance leads us to a rebirth of what are understood to be the architectural ideals of the Golden Age — that is the classical ideals of ancient Greece and Rome, or *Classical Architecture*.

2) Let's try to define *Classical Architecture* ::

Classicism — a definition — A system of architecture that is a logical and tectonic expression of, and a symbolic representation of, the craft of architecture and its construction method.

The goal of classical architecture is to achieve physical, geometric, and optical perfection through the arrangement of the classical system. The parts of the classical system may be thought of as a language and its geometrical arrangement its syntax. The parts are embodied as proportional to each other, and the whole, in modular systems that achieves perfect symmetry or balance.

Parts include columns, column bases and capitals, entablatures, pediments, etc. These parts are composed of even smaller parts such as the abacus, echinus, architrave, frieze, etc.

- *Classical Architecture* began in the ancient Greek period and was continued by the Romans, although it changed over time as it was reinterpreted and expanded.

3) **Leon Battista Alberti** (1404-1472)

- Insecure because of his background, he produced many texts in an effort to prove his worth
- Most enduring work, **On the Art of Building (De re Aedificatoria)** (day ray aye di-fi-ca-toria)
 - Alberti's book was the first printed book on architecture (1485).
 - Vitruvius was the second book on architecture to be published (1486).
- Alberti's Client was **Giovanni Rucellai**. His Palazzo designed by **Leon Battista Alberti**.
- **Concinnitas** - A term Alberti used in his treatise that describes a harmony, balance, and congruity of architecture based on symmetry and proportion.
- Concept of **piano nobile** (the noble floor) almost always the 2nd floor in classical architecture. One would enter at the street level and rise to the piano nobile where the drawing rooms were etc and would be expressed architecturally on the facade
- **Alberti's concept of "invention,"** meant that classical elements, when used correctly, harmoniously, and with symmetry, could be arranged to create new structures that would rival the ancients.
- *Important works in Florence* by Alberti include **Palazzo Rucellai**, a Florentine palace which featured a tripartite facade (base // middle // top) in seven bays. Each level is a rational arrangement of pilasters which hold up an entablature. Each level has its own order of pilaster, the top level being Corinthian (simplified) and the middle being an Ionic (invented) and the lower level being Tuscan. Biforium windows within a half-round arch, and a deep cornice or crown caps the entire building creating a deep overhang above the facade.

- Alberti designed the facade of **Santa Maria Novella** in Florence (c. 1450). Santa Maria Novella had been built to this point by two **Dominican** friars. The lower portion of the facade is in the Gothic style. **Alberti invented a classical arrangement to tie together the entire facade**, which included: overlaying geometric proportions (order) to the entire facade, adding pilasters below to support a large symbolic entablature, which, in turn, supported a temple form. The large oculus window is similar in form to the rose windows of the Gothic cathedrals. The large volutes which symbolically support the temple form have no precedent in antiquity - therefore are Alberti's invention.
 - Alberti also designed for Rucellai a mausoleum based on the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.
 - *Important works in Mantua* by Alberti include **San Sebastiano (1470)** and **Sant'Andrea** (begun **1470s**). At Sant'Andrea we see inventive integration of smaller and larger orders of corinthian pilasters to introduce a monumental arch to the facade. This is a rare example of interior being organically continuous with exterior.
- 4) **Luciano Laurana** designed Palazzo Ducale (Duke's Palace) in Urbino (late 1460s) which was an inventive solution to the *interior corner problem* that plagued classical architects.
- 5) **Giuliano da Sangallo** (c. 1445-1516)
- Prepared measured drawings of antiquities of Rome. This project funded by Medici family.
 - His best Client was Lorenzo d' Medici
 - Designed a **Villa Medici at Poggio a Caiano (1486)**
 - It was *Albertian* in concept, as it was an invention of new forms based on classical language of symmetry and proportion (not just replicating classical monuments of the ancients)
- 6) The Ideal Cities - Real and Imagined
- **The Ideal City** (Baltimore), a painting by **Fra Carnevale** c. 1480. They call it the *Baltimore* because it's located now in Baltimore's Walters Art Gallery. Painting commissioned by Federico da Montefeltro of the Ducal Court of Urbino to demonstrate the principles of the new architecture.
 - **The Ideal City** (Urbino), a painting attributed to **Piero della Francesca** or **Luciano Laurana** (c. 1460). Stored at the National Gallery of Marche in Urbino.

Pienza (built)

- **Architecture - as a physical environment - affects human behavior.**
- **Pienza** (1459-1464). Formerly a farm town called Corsignano.
- **Pius II** (family name Piccolomini), having had counsel with Alberti, and frustrated with the politics of Rome, redesigned his hometown into an *Ideal City*, called **Pienza**. Pienza was based on Alberti's treatise, but was executed by architect Bernardo Rossellino
- Pienza had a gently curving widened main street (to create the illusion of a larger town), a gridded central piazza which included a small cathedral with a tower, the family palace **Palazzo Piccolomini**, and a Town Hall. To accommodate displaced citizens, Pius built nine units of affordable housing for the people whose houses were razed for the project.
- Pius II was **creating an ideal city that would be an environment of social equilibrium and justice.**

Sforzinda (unbuilt)

- **Filarete** (actual name Antonio Averlino) c. 1400-1469
- He was a sculptor and architect
- Published an illustrated treatise of an ideal city called **Sforzinda** named after his favorite Client Duke Francesco Sforza of Milan
- Sforzinda's House of Vice and Virtue somewhat like a physical representation of Dante's purgatory in which sinners would end up viewing back to the city from a privileged perspective