ARCHITECTURE AND LANGUAGE

Constructing Identity in European Architecture c. 1000–1650

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

Paul Crossley and Georgia Clarke

Any study of architecture and language dives into familiar but dangerous waters. It touches, first of all, on the celebrated humanistic theory of the 'sister arts' and on the classical analogy between linguistic and visual style. The architecture-language analogy is at least as old as Vitruvius, and the related comparison between poetry and painting – Horace's *ut pictura poesis* – goes back to Aristotle's *Poetics* and (according to Plutarch) to Simonides of Ceos. The Renaissance humanists made the analogy into a central principle of architectural theory. The search for a canon of architectural rules was likened to the literary imitation of the Latin masters. The vocabulary of humanists' Latin, particularly of classical rhetoric, classified and clarified (but also limited) artistic experience. And in the classical orders, and the sets of rules that governed their combination and distribution, sixteenth-century Renaissance architects and theorists created a recognisable grammar of ornament, what amounted to a syntax. On these classically impeccable foundations the architecture-language comparison, in all its manifestations, entered the mainstream of Renaissance and post-Renaissance architecture in western Europe, as a theory of design and a practical technique for classification and knowledge. The style of individual architects was likened to literary styles; architecture was compared to eloquence, as an art both useful (communicative) and pleasing (emotionally powerful), the evolution of architectural style was likened to the slow growth of a 'natural language', and the nature of architectural composition came to be related to linguistic structures: the elements or parts of the building (profiles, mouldings, etc.) were to architecture what words were to sentences.[1] As the chapters in this book show, the linguistic analogy gave to architecture a theoretical framework and a vocabulary of criticism; and in its range of literary (primarily Latin) reference it enhanced the academic respectability of the architect and the profession.

But the metaphor of language, used figuratively as an illustration or example, could not conceal the fundamental differences between visual and linguistic forms. To theorists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the architecture-language analogy failed to stand up to detailed analysis; it was more of a conceit than a model. Architecture did not permit the same clarity and accuracy of expression as language, nor did it tolerate the same diversity of styles as the vernacular languages. The elementary forms of buildings, unlike words in speech, were not arbitrary, as in language, but derived from permanent, universal, and scientific laws (i.e., those of statics). Architecture's intrinsic qualities were to do with technical and aesthetic values, not the imitative and 'phonetic' properties of sculpture and painting. "Architecture imitates nothing, illustrates nothing, tells no tale."[2] These distinctions joined forces with the most formidable defence of distinct boundaries in the arts, Lessing's *Laocoon,* and its classic distinction between narrative (poetic) and presentative (visual) modes of expression, the former understood progressively and in time, the latter simultaneously and in space.[3] To couple words and forms, verbal and visual signs, seems, at first sight, to join two fundamentally different worlds of experience, that which can be said, and that which can be shown but not said. In laying claim to similar territory, architecture and language have provoked a fundamental debate about the essential nature of their discourses, about what separates them as much as what unites them.

The battle lines between these two extreme positions – one emphasising the similarities between architecture and language, the other seeing each as generically different – have, if anything, been sharpened in the last half century by the enormous importance given by most philosophers and aestheticians to language in human life and experience. Linguistic philosophers, semioticians, and literary theorists have argued that language provides the model for all the symbolic systems that constitute the arts, including the visual.[4] If all human activity is expressive, and all modes of expression – verbal and visual – share certain permanent structures of the mind, structures that are essentially linguistic, then architecture, along with the other visual arts, behaves much like a text, and the relations between architecture and language are resolved, ultimately, around questions of grammar. "Architectural language," claimed Umberto Eco with confidence, "is an authentic linguistic system obeying the same rules that govern the articulation of natural languages."[5] But can the elements of architecture be compared to the classic units of linguistics, and if so, do they behave in similar ways? What is the exact relation between the rules of grammar in the written and spoken word and the conventions used for the ordering of architectural parts, particularly the classical orders? Both might be described as systems of communication, but what is the nature of the architectural sign, and what is the specific mode of knowledge presupposed by architectural and 'natural' languages? Architectural signs are surely perceived very differently from those of speech or text; unlike texts, art cannot construct discrete linear sequences carrying information. Susanne K. Langer has adapted Lessing's distinction between narrative and presentative modes into an aesthetic position that separates language as, primarily, a "discursive form," and the arts as essentially "presentational forms" symbolic of feeling.[6] The former derives its meaning by placing one symbolic element – words, punctuation marks, figures, letters – after another in a significant order, sequentially, and therefore in the dimension of time. The latter presents us with a form of an entirely different kind, a *Gestalt,* an organic unity, perceived and apprehended as a whole and therefore inexpressible in any other way than through itself. To this neo-Kantian view of an inexpressible, ideal unity of art, George Steiner has added his own reading of artistic language – literary as well as visual – as a hermetic system that conceals rather than reveals its true meanings. For Steiner the communicative powers of languages as the conveyors of information are far less important than the function of languages – all languages – to conceal, to make fictional.[7]

There is no sign of consensus between these two extreme positions – the one preoccupied, some would say disproportionately, with language as the primary category of experience, the other eager to cordon off each system of representing the world as generically different discourses. The chapters in this book were not intended to settle these disagreements, nor do they address the theoretical debates with one voice. On the contrary, they bear the pluralistic character of their origins in the session 'Architecture and Language' convened by the editors at the conference of the Association of Art Historians of Great Britain held at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London University, in 1997. More by chance than planning, each of the six original papers related to the others with a coherence and thematic closeness that suggested the foundations of a book. Five other contributors were asked to submit essays, on subjects ranging from Angevin Naples to Inigo Jones, and these, too, much to the editors' pleasure, enriched the thematic coherence of the project. The result is a publication that, we hope, goes beyond the sum of its interesting parts to address the diverse relations between architecture and language across five hundred years, from Scotland to Sicily, from the Romanesque to the Renaissance.

What unites all the contributions is their historical bias, their belief that any attempt to assimilate architecture to language must be judged on the specific historical relations between buildings and texts, and on the history of the architecture-language analogy itself. The theoretical links between the visual arts and language suggested by linguistic philosophy, structuralism, or the science of semiotics cannot and must not be ignored in any discussion of a unified theory of the arts, but nor can the theoretical issues be isolated from the particular pressures, values, conflicts, and interests that produced them. Critical analysis goes hand in hand with historical contextualism. With this approach in mind, the chapters here take a broad view of the relations between architecture and language. As the book's title suggests, these studies are about architecture *and* language, as well as architecture *as* language. The language analogy was enlisted by architects and architectural theorists for all sorts of purposes that have little to do with what architecture intrinsically is. From the Renaissance onwards, social and professional status, for example, was enhanced by Latinity. There are frequent references here to the architect's use of the literary analogy to elevate the scholarly and intellectual credentials of his work and his profession. One way, therefore, of looking at the linguistic model is to see it as a response to a socio-professional crisis of identity. The issues that language and literary culture raised in early-sixteenth-century Italy, issues about slavish imitation of antique precedent versus inventive and eclectic modernity, also touched directly on questions of snobbery and patronal competition. Language is, just as obviously, bound up with problems of architectural description, interpretation, and the creation of a critical vocabulary. One theme in this book is the question of ekphrasis and the acquisition of a terminology of description and analysis, particularly for the Middle Ages, where a critical architectural vocabulary had to be re-created, all over again, from *topoi,* moral *exempla,* and the more promising tradition of factual narrative. Across the whole of our period new terminologies were borrowed from other discourses – moral theology and exegesis for the twelfth-century lives of Benedictine abbots and their work as builders, mystical anagogy for the architectural fantasies of mediaeval poets, and the vocabulary of classical rhetoric for Renaissance architectural theory. If a new and increasingly refined vocabulary provided the basic linguistic elements for architectural analysis, language, in this case classical treatises on the productive arts, provided part of the conceptual framework for the whole enterprise of architectural theory. As Caroline van Eck shows in her chapter on Alberti's *De re aedificatoria,* classical treatises on *poesis,* on making things, offered the categories, classes, and definitions for the first methodical analysis of architecture and its principles since Antiquity.

But what of the essential resemblances between architecture and language? How do these chapters define architecture *as* language? What does architecture 'say,' and how does it say it? The first, and obvious, identification between architecture and language lies in their shared semiotic and semantic powers. Many of the contributions in this book identify architecture as a system of communication and expression, though the ambiguities of image and form versus the clarity of verbal discourse mean that architectural significance will never have the semantic precision of the spoken or written word. Architectural style, for example, was often identified as a potent sign of national identity, whether of French cultural imperialism in the Angevin Gothic of southern Italy, or of Anglo-Norman 'English' in the distinctively 'English' Gothic of the British Isles in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Sanmicheli's deployment of the Composite order for Ludovico Canossa, and the role of Serlio in its use and presentation as an 'Italic' order, may, according to Paul Davies and David Hemsoll, have been due to its associations with notions of Italy. The parallels between national and architectural languages, and between vernacular usage and local styles, figure prominently in this book. Peter Draper's observation that linguistic usage reflected social hierarchy in thirteenth-century England, with vernacular architecture constructed and used largely by English-speakers and the grander stone structures built by those conversant with Latin and French, corresponds, at the other end of our chronology, to Christy Anderson's analysis of the linguistic and stylistic divisions in early-seventeenth-century England. Here the distinctions were more sharply drawn – on the one hand, an eclectic and regionally differentiated Elizabethan architecture, associated by Inigo Jones and his literary apologists with a multi-lingual, vernacular, and barbarous culture, and on the other, Jones's Latinate classicism, heralded as a literate architecture, the official language of the Stuart court, and by extension, a national style that transcended regional variety and expressed the aspirations of a modern and united England. But classicism could also evoke supranational values for social groups whose class interests transcended national identities. Deborah Howard points to the Tron Kirk in Edinburgh, whose Dutch-inspired classicism spoke of the high Calvinist virtue and the material success of the Covenanters who founded it. Whatever the precision and diversity of its messages, architecture in these chapters emerges as a semiotic system of some flexibility and strength.

The second obvious, and much-cited, identification between architecture and language lies in an area diametrically opposed to the semiotic or semantic powers of languages: in the structural and non-mimetic character of both discourses. These chapters are constantly referring to the analogies between the basic elements of architecture – materials, ornaments, individual parts – and the basic units of linguistics (words, vocabulary, etc.). They draw parallels between architectural composition and the syntax of sentences, and they liken the laws of grammar, which structure language and give it meaning, to rules of architectural composition, particularly the ‘grammar’ of the classical orders, the elements around which Summerson built his famous analysis of the “classical language of architecture.”[8] Like grammar (the rules governing the relations of words in a sentence and their correct usage), the classical theory of the orders gave architects a set of rules for the combination and distribution of architectural parts into the equivalent of syntax (in linguistics the combination of individual words to convey meaning). Cammy Brothers argues that the orders (unlike other aspects of classical architecture such as ground plans or spaces) were easy to integrate into a modern building; they established a system of mutual constraints that controlled the design of an entire façade, from the largest containing elements to the smallest decorative details. Beside this ‘grammatical’ discipline, which made the building – like a sentence – expressive and intelligible, the more flexible proportions of mediaeval constructive geometry, into which a myriad of details were slotted without a coherent set of modular ratios, seemed to some Italian commentators, particularly Vasari and Palladio, like babble and confusion.[9] As we shall see, the parallels between linguistic and architectural structures are more ambiguous and more complicated than these comparisons suggest, but the Italian humanists themselves saw the analogy when they likened their search for a canon of rules for the composition and combination of architectural forms to the literary imitation of the Latin masters, particularly Cicero.

The presence of Cicero as a model for emulation is a constant theme of these chapters. All the contributions on Renaissance architecture remind us of the dominance of classical Latin in humanist culture and the easy application of terms and values in language, particularly classical rhetoric, to categories of experience in the visual arts. The power of Latin, lexically and grammatically, to clarify and classify artistic and architectural experience is perhaps the most critical factor in the divide between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in their uses of language. The chapters here on mediaeval buildings concentrate on ekphrasis, and on architecture as a language of political and national identity; but they tell us very little about how language classified architectural experience, still less are they concerned with the uses of language in any critical theory of architecture. This silence is due to the simple fact that writings on mediaeval architecture, strictly as architecture, had no clearly defined theory to fall back on. Church building conformed to a largely neo-Platonic aesthetic of beauty (much of it derived from the symbolism of light), and it invoked certain biblical *topoi* (the Temple of Solomon, Noah's Ark, the Tabernacle of Moses, the Heavenly Jerusalem). Indeed, mediaeval writings on architecture can sometimes reveal literary pretensions.[10] But as a practical skill *(ars mechanica)* rather than a liberal art, even ecclesiastical building fell outside the range of serious theoretical thinking. Mediaeval architects had no Vitruvius or Alberti.[11] In the creation of a systematic architectural theory by Italian humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the vocabulary and *figurae* of classical rhetoric, indeed the conceptual structures of classical treatises and discussions on rhetoric, had a decisive influence. All the chapters in this book devoted to Renaissance architecture and language underline the intimate connections between an *all'antica* (in the antique style) vocabulary of architecture and the revival of classical rhetoric, grammar, and orthography. They emphasise that the recovery of the classical style was not a matter of rigid rules but of creative imitation, for which the closest parallel was the literary emulation of the Latin masters. The contrast between the mediaeval reluctance to formulate any independent aesthetic principles for architecture and the humanists' use of language and metaphor to create the structures and terms of a systematic theory is nicely exemplified in the notion of decorum – the fitness of form to purpose and meaning. There can be little doubt that mediaeval builders and their clients registered what was, and was not, proper form. Peter Draper argues that the distinctly 'English' character of early Gothic architecture in the British Isles reflects the belief that it carried the appropriate connotations of the commission and expressed the requisite degree of pretension. But until fourteenth-century artists and writers on social conduct began explicitly to address notions of decorum in painting and behaviour, architectural decorum in the Middle Ages was probably externalized as nothing more precise than a general sense of what was apt. But when Alberti articulated decorum as a category of visual interest in painting, sculpture, and architecture, he set it within a theoretical framework and confirmed its value as an instrument of art criticism up to the Enlightenment. He couched the notion in humanists' Latin, and – most significantly – he borrowed the idea and its associations from language, from Aristotle's and Cicero's justification of the need for decorum in poetry, rhetoric, and architecture. Just as the poet and orator must work within the boundaries of propriety and decorum if their words are to be affective and persuasive, so the painter must render the human body according to character, age, and status, and the architect "adapt the magnificence of the building to the dignity of the owner."[12]

The humanists' Latin of the fifteenth century was a passive and compliant language in relation to the authority of the ancients; it led a rarified existence both in relation to day-to-day Italian and to all the unliterary experiences of life. But these very restrictions, as Michael Baxandall has argued, only served to clarify artistic experience with a new linguistic rigour.[13] Words, said Wittgenstein, are the gears that mesh with our behaviour; and in the defining way in which humanist Latin and its vocabulary classified and enforced observation, Renaissance theories of the visual arts exemplify the broad conclusions of modern philosophies of language – that language is not just a label that attaches names to already-existing, objectively separate things, but is a set of concepts that help to create the very categories in which we experience the world.[14] Latin rhetoric and grammar, more than any other single agent, defined and reorganised the humanists' visual consciousness. Baxandall neatly summarises the process: "The words were the system."[15]

THE CHAPTERS

Peter Draper's chapter provides a significant starting point for our discussions of architecture and language, since he raises the issue of choices and developments in architectural styles and in the languages spoken and written in post-Conquest England. By highlighting contemporary perceptions as well as modern-day categories, he sets up a model of the complicated interconnections that can be unravelled in this area. This complex picture includes the ability of architecture to register shifts in identity and allegiance, and the multiple presence that such an exploration can offer.

Caroline Bruzelius identifies a much more particular and defined association of architectural style and linguistic (in this case standing for local, national, or foreign) identity. She registers the presence of, and resistance to, the 'French' Gothic style in architectural projects in southern Italy as responses to the dominion of foreign, Angevin rulers.

The need and desire in this period to describe architecture, whether for legal or more literary purposes, forms the subject of Lindy Grant's chapter. Her focus on the development of richer descriptions of architecture in a series of biographies of eleventh- and twelfth-century bishops identifies both classical and mediaeval texts as sources but also discerns a Benedictine tradition in the concerns and inclinations of their writers. The poetic possibilities of architectural description in a German epic poem of the thirteenth century provides Achim Timmermann with an opportunity to explore the connections between the literary and the architectural imagination. Albrecht von Scharfenberg's rich and dynamic account of the fictional Temple of the Holy Grail is revealed as a counterpart to contemporary miniature architectural reliquaries and to chapels such as those constructed by the Emperor Charles IV in Karlštejn and Prague.

The search for a language for discussing and describing architecture is also evident in Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* in the mid–fifteenth century. Although in the past Alberti's model has been identified as Vitruvius's *De architectura,* Caroline van Eck argues that the fundamental organisation of knowledge and information in *De re aedificatoria* was that of classical works on rhetoric by authors such as Aristotle and Quintilian. Classical models – both architectural and literary, Vitruvian and Albertian – were developed further in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and one area of especial concern was the idea of *imitatio* (imitation). As Cammy Brothers shows in the case of Rome, this interest was allied with contemporary building and visual depictions of the remains of ancient architecture; the resulting drawing books often attempted to order and categorise architectural elements in a way comparable to contemporary grammatical works.

Another aspect of the close relations and interactions between scholars and architects, such as Bembo and Raphael, who moved in the same élite cultural circles, is identified by Paul Davies and David Hemsoll in their discussion of Italian architectural and linguistic enterprises in the 1520s and 1530s, particularly in Rome and the Veneto. Both groups were seeking to turn classical examples to contemporary use, and each saw parallels and shared aspirations with the other. As Alina Payne demonstrates, these same themes and issues continued to inform architectural and linguistic debate in Italy in the mid–sixteenth century, especially in Florence and the Florentine Academy. In the process many of the ideas and terms of the debates became even more deeply entwined.

The development of a classical 'language' of architecture, whose constituent parts could be put together from defined elements, was, as Yves Pauwels shows, particularly fruitful in mid-sixteenth-century France. Not only did this architectural formulation draw on pedagogical traditions related to rhetoric and grammar, but a relationship between different rhetorical 'modes of speaking' and architectural style seems to have been clearly understood by architects such as Philibert De L'Orme and Jean Bullant. A similar preference for Italianate and European classical architecture was shown by Inigo Jones and the Stuart court in England in the early seventeenth century. Christy Anderson's chapter discusses not only how classical architecture was seen as a suitable representation of the élite but also how in England, too, there were many connections between architectural and linguistic debates over style and national identity. In Scotland, as Deborah Howard reveals, such discussions were equally significant but far more complicated because of the complexities and shifts of national, linguistic, and religious identities. She shows how visually sophisticated contemporary Scottish viewers, many of whom were well-travelled, would have been in their ability to decipher and read the buildings around them.

THEMES AND VARIATIONS

The diversity of these contributions registers the complex intersections between architecture and language over a period of five hundred years. They touch on relations between architecture and ekphrasis, national identity, political power, the humanist theory of the sister arts, the structures of the written and spoken word, and the uses, in architecture and in language, of intentional utterance. All this certainly does not amount to a theory, still less a complete history, of the linguistic analogy, nor does it pretend to confront the serious differences between artistic enterprises and linguistic activity. But it does place some of the most frequently drawn comparisons between architecture and language in their historical and ideological contexts, and it points to the range of overlaps and connections that any systematic theory would have to address. Above all, these chapters are designed to open questions as much as to answer them, to raise a variety of issues without feeling the need to pursue all of them with equal determination.

One theme that these chapters address is the nature of ekphrasis and the difficulties of finding an adequate language to describe the experience of architecture. How far do the words we use, the conceptual categories we employ, in description and evaluation, shape the experiences they name? Would it be possible to have certain architectural experiences without a mastery of the appropriate vocabulary? Historically, these questions permit no easy answers, but this book makes clear that description can be less a representation of a building than a representation of thinking about a building, and that all descriptive vocabularies bring with them pre-existing structures of experience and interpretation. Lindy Grant, for example, examines the growing interest in the twelfth century in France and Italy in the detailed shape and aesthetic properties of architecture and the corresponding challenges this posed to a threadbare tradition of architectural description. This interest may have been part of a wider curiosity about the visual and the specific in the twelfth century, but it was primarily from a distinct literary tradition, with its standard concerns for altars and images, that a new architectural vocabulary slowly emerged. And this was because the narratives and moral messages of figural art, and *ars sacra*, fitted more comfortably into an established vocabulary of exegesis than the new, essentially abstract, language of architectural description.

If Grant's ekphraseis trace the application of a vocabulary from literary traditions – principally Benedictine – to architecture, Achim Timmermann's transfers run in the opposite direction: from architectural, or quasi-architectural observation to literary description. Timmermann turns the classic procedure of ekphrasis on its head; instead of literary conventions pressed into service to evoke real buildings, real architectural experience now becomes the basis of literary fantasy. The description of the Temple of the Holy Grail in Albrecht von Scharfenberg's *Jüngerer Titurel* offers intriguing clues to the architectural imagination in the later Middle Ages. Far from representing – as the German Romantics inferred – a 'real' building, or even a 'Gothic' structure, the aesthetic discourse of Albrecht's description pointed to a different medium altogether. The lack of scale or spatial coordinates in Albrecht's Temple, its sense of a structure floating or airborne, its transparency, its concentration not on structure but on ornament, particularly precious stones and jewels – all this evokes the world of small-scale metalwork objects of fabulous material preciousness: shrines, reliquaries, translucent enamels or even precious automata. Like all ekphrasis, the description of the Holy Grail temple tells us more vividly about Albrecht's experience of the holy distilled in visual splendour than it does about an archaeologically reconstructable architecture.

Alberti's observations on architecture, and his architectural vocabulary, were just as transparent to the culture and literary tastes of his period. To replace Vitruvius's Greekisms he found straightforward descriptive Latin terms for architectural features, based on the physical world. As Caroline van Eck argues, his literary debts were primarily to classical rhetoric, that critical system of general application that allowed humanists to categorise and describe artistic experience with a precision and complexity unknown to the Middle Ages. Alberti's *concinnitas* (placing things elegantly and skilfully together) and his *varietas* (expressing social differentiation and pleasing variation of tone), both central concepts of his aesthetics, are shown by van Eck to derive from Ciceronian principles in rhetorical theory, just as his distinctions between the Doric and Corinthian orders reveal the language of antithetical characterisation developed by Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Almost a century later, in the debates on language (the *questione della lingua*) conducted in the Florentine Academy in the mid–sixteenth century, Alina Payne demonstrates how similar descriptive terms – 'license' *(licenzia),* 'admixture' *(mescolanza),* and 'inventive composition' *(composito, composti)* – were used by architectural and literary theorists as interchangeable terms of value, each reinforcing those same qualities in the other discipline. Here, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the transactions between language and architecture cease to be one-way; the lexical and grammatical virtues of Latin still shape the evaluation of buildings, indeed at first preceded it; but architectural values, in turn, now condition and defend literary practice.

The Florentine debates on good speech and a modern acceptable language took place around the central issue of imitation *(imitatio)* versus emulation *(aemulatio)* in both architecture and literary style. It is an issue that dominates a number of chapters in this book, for it touches on the proper use of various languages – of a pure, Ciceronian Latin, of the Tuscan vulgate of the fourteenth century, and of a new, modern Italian language applicable to the whole of Italy – and on the correspondingly proper formation of a 'modern' but classically based architecture.

Ever since Petrarch had referred to the literary remains of Rome as *ruinae*, metaphors of loss had freely moved between architecture and literature. Faced with the ruins of the Roman past, Alberti (and Filarete) had exhorted the architect to study the buildings of the ancients with the same care that the writer should take to read and memorise every classical author. But should writers and architects faithfully follow the rules laid down by the common practice of the ancients, usually in the form of a pure and single model *(imitatio)* (by the mid–sixteenth century Serlio and many others had identified that model as Vitruvius's *De architectura*), or should they choose a loose imitation based on free invention and a multiple and eclectic use of models *(aemulatio)*? Should the recovery of ancient practice, as Alberti advocated, be a process of reshaping fragments from the past into a new whole, almost like a scavenger among *spolia*? Cammy Brothers assesses the effect of these debates on literary and architectural imitation in Rome in the last years of the fifteenth century, and particularly in the circle of Cardinal Raffaele Riario and the *letterati* associated directly or indirectly with him. Paolo Cortesi's exchange of letters with Angelo Poliziano, in which the former argues for Cicero as the prime model of good Latin style and the latter for a variety of models from which to cultivate a personal voice, is taken by Brothers as a paradigm for approaches to classical models in Roman architecture of the late Quattrocento. Cardinal Riario's Cancelleria palace, in particular, exemplifies Poliziano's principle of eclectic composition, with its range of classical precedents and its use of Roman *spolia,* combined to create a contemporary palace. Here, like all the finest literary achievements, the imprint of ancient examples acquired an authoritative coherence only after a proper assessment of contemporary models. In effect it became itself a modern model of an *all'antica* palace, a single exemplar of the kind advocated by Cortesi.

The issues at the centre of the Cortesi-Poliziano exchange were replayed throughout the sixteenth century, with fruitful results for both literary and architectural disciplines. Brothers points to the exchange of letters between Pico della Mirandola and Pietro Bembo in 1512–13, where Pico castigates the snobbish rejection of modernity for the "empty shadow" of all things ancient. Bembo, who defined "perfection" in the making of "new things" resemble "old things," believed in a modern Italian language *(la volgar lingua)* buttressed by a modern Italian architecture – a view shared, as Davies and Hemsoll point out, by Bembo's acquaintance Count Ludovico Canossa, who was almost certainly the model for the ideal courtier in Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier.* Canossa's (the courtier's) progressive desire to universalise the Italian language, and to model it not only on Petrarch but on more recent writers, was consistent (as Davies and Hemsoll observe) with the first private palace in the Veneto built in the new classically ordered style, the count's Palazzo Canossa in Verona of the late 1520s. Sanmicheli's design incorporated a Composite order (called by Alberti 'Italic' and associated with Italy as a nation) and local Veronese precedents, both ancient and modern. Here a modern, universal Italian language went hand in hand with a modernised *all'antica* architecture.

Bembo's 'modern' partnership between a contemporary *volgare* and an inventive Italian architectural classicism anticipated the energetic discussions on imitation and emulation conducted in the middle of the century in the Florentine Academy. Alina Payne reminds us of the critical position of the Academy in the 1540s and 1550s as a forum for exchanges between verbal and visual disciplines. When Florentine *letterati* recommended literary *aemulatio,* the assimilation of the ancients through personal interpretation, eclecticism, and invention, they buttressed their case with reference to contemporary architecture, particularly Michelangelo's licentious treatment of ornament. Payne lays special emphasis here on the place of Vasari in these exchanges, for it was through the *Vite* that this easy commerce between literary terms and architectural forms fundamentally affected artistic and architectural discourse. The identification of the Composite order in the *Vite* with Michelangelo's unorthodox assemblages of classical ornament allied the literary and architectural discussions on neologisms, *mescolanze,* and *composti* with one of the fundamental concepts of the *Vite,* the notion of artistic progress and of licence as the leading strategy for contemporary art. The fact that architecture played such a central role in presenting this new policy for artistic development, and for art history, was, contends Payne, a direct consequence of the importance of architecture in the discussions between literary and artistic theorists at the Florentine Academy.

The flexibility of the classical framework, architectural and linguistic, allowed 'Italian' forms to be adapted to, and transformed by, the demands of other national cultures and other languages. Yves Pauwels demonstrates how the rhetorical device of the 'commonplace', and one of its visual equivalents, the triumphal arch, were used by French Renaissance architects, especially Philibert De L'Orme, to reshape an Italian classical vocabulary into forms and compositions appropriate to local contexts and traditions. Christy Anderson discusses the transformation of Palladio and Scamozzi for an English audience by Inigo Jones, and highlights Jones's belief in a new style of classical, court architecture, applicable to the whole nation. Deborah Howard describes the process in seventeenth-century Scotland whereby imported building motifs (French conical roof turrets) became part of the traditional imagery of the Scottish country house, to such an extent that their initial foreignness was mediated, just as foreign words gradually lose their alien character as they are absorbed into a native language.

Pauwels, Anderson, and Howard confront another major theme of this book: the relations between national languages and a national style of architecture, and the role played by the vernacular languages in sharpening an awareness of local and regional architectural styles. Peter Draper tests these issues against an especially 'insular' episode in the history of English architecture, the so-called Early English Gothic of the British Isles in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Draper is reluctant to see any obvious connection between the increasing sense of national identity in England in this period and the undoubted insularity of English Gothic up to about 1250. The tight cultural associations that Onians has argued between the promotion of the Tuscan vulgate and Brunelleschi's adoption of a version of Tuscan Romanesque simply did not operate in twelfth-century England.[16] The real parallel, Draper argues, between architecture and language in England in this period is the clear and accepted separation between English and Ile-de-France Gothic and an equal acceptance of the differences between Anglo-Norman French and Francien. In turn, this separation suggests that English Gothic buildings should not be seen as an architectural *Franglais*, an inferior hybrid, but as positive creative statements; and that contemporaries probably saw them as such – assertions of regional, even national identity within a common cultural milieu.

In thirteenth-century France the spread of Francien went hand in hand with the extension of Capetian political and cultural power in France beyond the royal heartlands in the Ile-de-France – a process almost exactly echoed in the expansion of the Gothic style from its base in and around Paris into the French provinces and beyond. By the mid–thirteenth century French Gothic in Europe was known simply as "French work" *(opus francigenum)*. Its Rayonnant vocabulary of tracery and glass was as obviously French as the conically roofed turrets of Scottish castles, which, right up to the seventeenth century, were recognised as French in origin (Howard). But *opus francigenum* also acquired political connotations, some of them pejorative, especially when associated with French hegemony. In southern Italy, in the second half of the thirteenth century, a series of self-consciously 'French' churches were built by French masons and staffed by French clergy on the initiative of Charles of Anjou. They amount, as Caroline Bruzelius convincingly argues, to one of the most blatant attempts in the history of Gothic architecture to impose a French, specifically Parisian, cultural language on a subject population, and they combined a sense of Parisian cultural superiority with brutal political oppression. Bruzelius suggests that it may have been precisely this political 'text' that gave Gothic a bad name in Italy to the end of the Middle Ages. The much-quoted unwillingness of the Italians to come to terms with the real implications of northern Gothic may, therefore, not stem simply from traditionalism, taste, or even incomprehension – as most authorities have assumed – but from a deep-seated political distrust.

The conflicts – aesthetic and political – between different architectural styles, and their specific identification with competing languages, is the subject of Christy Anderson's essay on language and style in the English seventeenth century. Whereas in southern Italy the Italian linguistic 'resistance' to imported French culture is difficult to define, and in twelfth-century England the relations between an 'English' Gothic and its French and Latin-speaking patrons remains problematic, in seventeenth-century England the competing notions of 'nationality' and vernacular diversity in architectural style can be much more clearly related to their linguistic equivalents. The appearance in England of Inigo Jones's austere Italian classicism contrasted dramatically with the free and inventive mannerisms of Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture. It was a conflict of styles conducted, writes Anderson, against a background of acute linguistic self-consciousness; and the analogies between architecture as language, enlisted by the protagonists to support their positions, were explored with a new seriousness and urgency. The linguistic analogy also went to the heart of discussions about national and cultural reform in early-seventeenth-century England. As a would-be national style, Jones's classicism emerged, like all languages, as an instrument of expressive communication. As the official architecture of the Stuart court, as the voice of its classical culture, it acted as a political statement of national identity, in which all local styles, like local dialects, were superseded by an official language based on Roman ideals.

The parallels between architecture and language as instruments of communication, as 'bearers of meaning', naturally go far beyond the ability of both to convey a sense of national identity. Architecture, like language, is (potentially) infinitely expressive and communicative, though with very different degrees of precision and definition. These chapters explore the different modes of knowledge presupposed by architectural and linguistic signs. The Aristotelian and Vitruvian idea and use of decorum in painting and architecture figures prominently in this book as an authoritative classical theory for correlations between form and meaning. In his notion of decorum, of the fitness of form to purpose and meaning, Alberti, as we have seen, drew a direct connection between architecture and classical rhetoric. Like rhetoric, buildings must move, delight, and instruct; but they must also convey the dignity of the gods, or of civic institutions, or simply the status of their patrons (van Eck). Sanmicheli was doing just that when, according to Davies and Hemsoll, he gave his Palazzo Canossa a Doric order with carved weaponry and a large inscription extolling the Canossa family – all designed to present his patron as the ideal courtier, soldier, and aristocrat. Raphael was resorting to the Albertian and Vitruvian principle of decorum when, in his Letter to Leo X, he declared that the various "styles" *(maniere)* of architecture, based on the five "orders" *(ordini)* should be matched to a building's "purpose" *(intentione)* (Davies and Hemsoll). The decorum rule could also be used as an instrument of criticism, as when Inigo Jones singled out "the composed ornaments" of Elizabethan architecture "brought in by Michill Angell and his followers," as suitable for the private spaces of gardens or interiors, but not appropriate for public façades, which require gravity and seriousness based on rule (Anderson). Jones's architecture, by contrast, spoke of the literate and Latin culture of the Stuart court. All these examples of appropriate forms link architecture to meaning and association in the general but imprecise sense of propriety and 'matching'. Compared to the clarity of verbal discourse, architecture, with all the ambiguities of a non-mimetic art, will never have the semantic precision of the spoken or written word. There are profound differences between linguistic and non-linguistic meaning, verbal and visual signs, differences that so far the 'science' of semiology has proved unable to pin down.[17] Van Eck isolates one aspect of this divide in Alberti's remarks on architectural splendour in Book 9 of *De re aedificatoria*. Buildings *demonstrate*, but unlike texts, they do not *argue*. Just as the orator demonstrates the nobility of his subject by ekphraseis of people, actions, times, and seasons, translating what is said into what can be almost seen, so buildings demonstrate the greatness of their owners and their users by their splendour and beauty. But they cannot argue discursively. Architecture, to borrow the distinction in rhetorical theory, has the equivalent of *verba* (the apt formulation of meaning, figures of speech, ornament), but not of *res* (content, message, argument). The closest it comes to the latter category is its rhetorical demonstration of its meanings through the emotional impact of its beauty on the spectator. This alliance of meaning with audience also figures prominently in Deborah Howard's analysis of the communicative powers of Scottish sixteenth- and seventeenth-century architecture. Like van Eck, Howard acknowledges the distinctions between verbal and visual meanings and recognises that architecture presents no easy correlation between form and content, style and meaning. The sheer variety of languages in Scotland from 1500 to 1660, and the diversity of its religious and political affiliations, make it a rich field for a reading of architecture as language, but one where nuances of vocabulary and semantics have to be carefully registered.

To clarify the intricate relationships between such architectural and linguistic signs Howard starts with the linguists' clear distinction between 'language', which is a way of communication, and 'text', which is content or meaning. Texts consist of 'semantics', the content understood by everyone in the community, and 'pragmatics', the implications arising from a more informed awareness of the text. As we shall see, this distinction can sometimes coincide with that between language and dialect. Architecture, she argues, is not the text but the language; it is, to borrow Saussure's famous distinction, not the signified but the signifier. But the relations between form and content in architecture are fluid and ambiguous; nuances of meaning, for example of religious and political affiliation in church building, had to be most precisely delineated. And here the meaningful use of language depended not just on the intention of the architect or the patron but on an anticipated audience able to decode the implications of the choice of 'tongue' through recourse to memory and experience. The critical discourse of the 'readers', especially their sensitivity to the pragmatics of the architectural text, was, therefore, vital in the communication process. Howard's examples of this delicate process centre on a series of Gothic churches or chapels (Holyrood Abbey, Fenwick, and Dairsie), each, despite their shared general style, conveying a very different position on the religious spectrum. Howard thus allows us to watch an architectural 'dialect' at work. All the buildings were more or less associated with the single language of Gothic, a language whose 'semantics' everyone would recognise, but within that language the dialect conveyed to a distinct audience a special social and religious meaning; the 'pragmatics' – the implications arising from the text – presuppose from the spectator a nuanced and knowledgeable awareness of social hierarchy and religious denomination. The semiotics are further complicated by the fact that similar 'texts' do not require similar 'languages' (e.g., Tron Kirk in Edinburgh). Again, recognition of ideological intention would have depended on the public's knowledge of the international associations of the building's style and patronage. Many of the variations described here resemble what linguists call register: the same thing can be said in different ways (in different words, intonation, or accent, in slang or jargon), ways that indicate awareness of social situation or solidarity with particular social groups or professions.[18]

If particular languages (Saussure's *langue*) occupy much of Howard's essay, her concern is also with the relations between the structures of architecture and those of language as such (Saussure's *langage*). Syntax (in linguistics the combination of individual words to convey meaning) is a critical concept here, since it has its architectural equivalent in spatial and liturgical orderings that express meaning. These may amount to nothing more than placing the parts of the structure in the correct order (capitals over columns), or organising spaces in the correct way (towers over crossings); but they can also involve particular placements that convey a more specialised meaning. Placement can also suggest literary quotation. The persistence of the Gothic style in Scottish chapels, set within the predominantly classical language of the country houses that contain them, were like biblical quotations within contemporary speech. In a similar way, the use of *spolia*, such as the Roman marble columns set into the Cancelleria palace, find a parallel in the use of Latin words in modern sentences. Raphael had referred to the architecture of Antiquity not as 'Roman' but as 'Latin' – the "antique mother" of "modern Italian renown" (Davies and Hemsoll). Architecture, like language, can easily be seen as an assemblage of basic elements (like words) into a composition (like sentences or whole pieces). Castelvetro's commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* (1570) compared the architect to the poet, architectural materials (e.g., bricks) to words, and the whole house to the finished poem (Payne). The transfer of words and other elements from one language to another – 'linguistic appropriation' – is often seen as analogous to the grafting of one set of architectural elements or styles onto another. Carlo Lenzoni, one of the central figures in the language debates of the Florentine Academy, specifically compared the inventiveness of the Composite order with, first, the farmers who graft various types of fruit "so as to obtain more grace, size, goodness and life in their trees" and, second, with Dante's creative mixture of styles (Payne). A similar process of 'hybridisation' is traced by Draper in the grafting of French Gothic forms onto essentially Romanesque structures in the early-thirteenth-century Gothic of England and the Lower Rhine. The result is a compromise of 'purity' in favour of vigorous variety. On this point Draper puts down a methodological warning aimed at both linguists and architectural historians. Historians of language who think of this process as corruption rather than enrichment and who construct an unblemished development of French from the vernacular to a full literary and philosophical language share the same dubious notion of linguistic 'purity' as the architectural historians who locate the course of a 'true' Gothic solely in the Ile-de-France and discount the idea that significant developments in the history of Gothic could have taken place outside northern France. Issues of 'purity' versus 'progress' dominate modern as well as Renaissance attitudes to the architecture-language analogy.

If the parts of buildings find an obvious analogy with a vocabulary, then their significant relationships can also be compared to syntax. No architectural device brought the two closer together than the classical orders, which have usually been seen, however imprecisely, as the equivalent of a grammar.[19] And the systematic definition of the orders was, in turn, part of a wider trend at the beginning of the sixteenth century to purify architectural vocabulary and classify its usage, a trend encapsulated in the emergence of the architectural treatise. In this general move towards the systematic, Cammy Brothers links the attitudes towards imitation and the presentation of models in the Codex Coner with codifications of Latin usage by humanists such as Lorenzo Valla, Alberti, Pomponio Leto, and Paolo Cortesi. Literary theorists, like architects, saw their problems as largely formal and compositional. The recovery of an ancient vocabulary for poets and scholars and the purifications of Latin use presented in the grammar books have obvious similarities to the revival of a classical thesaurus and usage in architecture; but the drawings of classical architecture in the Codex Coner, or Serlio's Book 3 on antiquities, also share a similar purpose with the grammar books: they refashion a model to make it more accessible to a wider audience and they record, classify, and present their ancient subject matter in a coherent form. The Codex Coner has standard methods of representing elevations, sections, and plans, and buildings are shown and arranged on the page with extraordinary consistency. But as Brothers points out, this amounts only to a step on the way to a proper architectural grammar. The systematic organisation of a drawing book like the Codex Coner may parallel the grammarians' formation of a vocabulary, as Pauwels also argues, or it may resemble their assembly of whole books of Latin or vernacular grammar, but it does not tell us how these forms and their fragments could be employed, nor what precepts governed their production. They give the modular units of a statement, but not the set of rules that make the 'sentence'. This, Brothers argues, could best be done by a new kind of codification: the architectural treatise, where components are given aesthetic coherence – a grammar – principally through the orders, those aspects of architectural ornament most subject to 'Vitruvian' rules. The architectural treatise also makes those rules explicit by coordinating illustration and textual explanation. The distinction between the Rome of Cardinal Riario and his circle and the treatises of Serlio, Vignola, and Palladio is the distinction between the freedom and invention of Quattrocento architectural practice and the 'Ciceronian' canonisation of the orders by the mid–sixteenth century.

The origins of this new grammar of architecture and its debt to theories of the orders in early-sixteenth-century Rome and the Veneto is the subject of Davies and Hemsoll's investigation of Sanmicheli's architecture, particularly its differentiated and systematic use of the orders. Bembo's *Prose* (composed in Rome in 1515–16), one of the classic texts of the language debates of the sixteenth century, presented formal compositional principles for literary style ("good judgement," "proper ordering," "appropriate styles") general enough to be easily applied to architectural design. Indeed, these were the precepts that Raphael and Castiglione had identified as those of ancient architecture in their famous letter to Leo X on the antiquities of Rome. The main thrust of Davies and Hemsoll's argument is that these principles had emerged as fully formed concepts in the Veneto as early as the 1530s, in the work of Sanmicheli and Sansovino, and that Bembo and Castiglione were almost certainly the main agents in this transfer. Just as the language debates in the Florentine Academy were inextricably bound up with corresponding debates on architectural emulation, so in the Veneto, a generation earlier, discussions between writers and architects ensured that good literary style and a proper use of the orders could develop sets of interchangeable principles in a spirit of mutual exchange. In Florence these transfers bolstered notions of novelty and artistic progress; in the Veneto they helped to define the fundamental principles of the classical orders and to work out appropriate systems for their use. This process, where a linguistic model could be applied to the grammatical shaping of the orders, can also be followed in Pauwels's essay on the architectural uses of the rhetorical 'commonplace' in sixteenth-century France.

The increasingly rigorous use of the orders, and their appropriate lexicon and syntax, therefore grew out of the procedures of literary theory and went hand in hand with a separate discourse, the architectural treatise, which, from Serlio to Vignola and beyond, progressively formalised an architectural grammar. The printed language of architectural theory radically altered architectural practice and the status of the architect. As Christy Anderson reminds us, Inigo Jones's professional identity was buttressed by bookishness. Jones's library helped to earn him George Chapman's praise as England's "only Learned Architect," while the architectural treatise, in its availability to a wider audience and its discussions of all architectural problems independent of real building, set up a new discourse, parallel to the buildings themselves. Books also changed the context in which architecture was discussed. In seventeenth-century England, the reputation of Latin literature and the scholarly and literary values of the text conferred legitimacy on a classical architecture and authority on its courtly proponents.

It was not, however, grammar – principally the orders – alone that gave coherence to the architectural treatise. The second stage of the mediaeval *trivium*, rhetoric, that most effective of the humanists' critical resources, also shaped the organisation and contents of the first modern treatise on architecture, Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*.

Caroline van Eck convincingly shows that Alberti's definition of architecture (its parts and properties, its powers and susceptibilities, its defects and their remedies, even its history) was directly modelled on methods of classification and analysis used by classical treatises on the productive arts, including rhetoric. Since Aristotle had defined architecture, alongside rhetoric, poetry, medicine, and painting, as *poesis* – a productive art, to do with making things – Alberti felt entitled to borrow his models for a methodical and theoretical discussion of architecture from classical treatises on the productive arts. In this way Alberti conferred a classical status on architectural writing and theory, not by proposing a grammar for its correct 'Latin' use but by defining its character according to classical principles. Alberti thus laid the foundations – theoretical, classical, and above all literary – for architectural discourse in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as other chapters in this book show.

Classical, specifically Ciceronian, rhetoric also (as we have seen) played a central role in Alberti's understanding of architecture as expressive communication, particularly in the critical matter of decorum. The rhetorical model, however, had a much deeper impact on architectural thinking, principally through two areas of creativity, both coming from rhetoric: first, in invention *(inventio),* that is, in finding a subject matter, or a formal vocabulary, and ordering or reusing it; and second, in elocution *(elocutio),* that is, in style, expression, delivery, and persuasive effect. If grammar ensured the correct use of a language, rhetoric gave the work its literary and artistic quality. It is not easy to find the exact equivalent of elocution and invention in architecture, since both categories tend to overlap, and architecture, as we have seen, has 'subject matter' *(res)* in an imprecise sense. One example of the two categories at work may be found in Davies and Hemsoll's correlations between literary theory and Sanmicheli's more nuanced use of the orders. Serlio's exploration of the variety of the orders and their treatment in Book 4 (1537) and Bembo's principles governing the precise choice and handling of words in his *Prose* (1515–16), particularly his notions of "sound," "number," and "variation," which impart specific inflections of mood to a text, can both be paralleled with Sanmicheli's particular treatment of the orders by grouping, rhythm, ornament, proportion, and variation in order to create a special effect, again according to the specific circumstances of the commission. In the nuanced use of Doric in the Porta Nuova and Porta Palio in Verona, where each gate reflects its distinct military and symbolic status in the city layout, or in the façade of the Palazzo Bevilacqua in Verona, where finely judged distinctions between the ground floor and the *piano nobile* register the status and character of its occupants, Davies and Hemsoll reveal Sanmicheli's absorption in literary theory through his friendships with Venetian *letterati* in the 1520s and 1530s. Here, plainly, the rhetorical combination of an inventive use of motifs and an eloquent handling of ornament overlaps to create a persuasive and beautiful ensemble.

It was in the domain of rhetorical invention that the humanists developed a strategy that assimilated and interpreted the lessons of Antiquity, both in architecture and other disciplines. Pauwels identifies this "inventive" device as the "commonplace" *(lieu)* – the area, structure, or mental space that provided the framework into which the works of the ancients could be categorised, rearranged, and digested. The commonplace *(locus communis)* was a term of rhetoric associated with invention (with the reuse of older motifs), and it began its life in Antiquity as a bringing together of ethical topics (vices and virtues, socially useful habits). Cicero tells us that Protagoras was the first to gather together and write down the commonplaces, and both Cicero and Quintilian called them "the place of argument," collections of quotations and arguments destined to enrich this or that discourse or literary composition, or – if arranged under moral categories – to improve the conduct of life. The commonplace was really a 'topic' *(topica),* a *topos* or place that provided the content and structure of thinking, the compositional and combinative activity of the mind. As such it applied to many activities beyond the ethical, principally memory and meditation. It also bore directly on the process of understanding. The Renaissance, as Pauwels emphasises, was the culture of the commonplace. The works of the ancients were not considered in their entirety but reshaped into printed commonplace books *(libri locorum)* consisting of extracts, quotations, and ideas, taken out of their original contexts and arranged logically into chapters and *tituli,* so that their primary meanings and functions were modified almost out of recognition. Antiquity, which for some had ceased to be interesting in and for itself, was reduced to a point of departure for a new set of moral and religious constructions. The mental and spatial ordering involved in this habit of mind can be traced back to Alberti's shaping of *De re aedificatoria* according to the methodical categories of classical rhetorical treatises (van Eck). It also tallies with Brothers's analysis of the Codex Coner as an attempt to organise the remains of Antique architecture into a rudimentary grammar, while the creative freedom given to the interpreter within the boundaries of the commonplace corresponds to the literary and architectural neologisms of Vasari and the Florentine Academy.

This sifting process radically altered architectural practice and theory. Serlio's treatise set out the five orders as five *tituli* or headings, each order with its stylistically coherent set of decorative forms subscribing to the same *maniera* (doors, façades, entablatures), and each heading providing a commonplace within which the obscurities of Vitruvius, and the mass of information in drawing books and codices, as well as the fragments of the ancient ruins themselves, could at last be organised and understood. But these 'coherent' collections were themselves parts within parts, frameworks within frameworks. Serlio's 'Corinthian door' in Book 4, derived from the arch at Ancona, became a favourite commonplace among French architects – a basic structure readily adaptable, in terms of rhetorical theory, to a new context and a new ornament. Here 'invention' and 'eloquence' provided the mutually indispensable components of successful creation. Pauwels also draws a suggestive comparison between Philibert De L'Orme's conception of the triumphal arch as a commonplace and Cicero's category of the *quaestio* (inquiry) in oratory. A literary model, based on the rhetorical practice of *inventio,* in which ornaments of speech are reshaped around and within a common matrix, thus determined Renaissance architects' structures of invention.

Quintilian's definition of the commonplace as "the place of argument," the *topos* that provides a suitable forum for bringing related things together, has not outlived its usefulness. The editors hope that this book will be read as just such a 'topic'; as a combination of arguments, materials, and reflections capable of 'expanding the subject', of casting varied light on an intricate set of theoretical and historical questions. The answers do not pretend to be definitive or uniform, but they can claim, at least, to be lively and well informed. Alberti's exhortations to the architect as orator at the end of *De re aedificatoria* might well have been the maxim of all the chapters in this 'commonplace': "Nor do I say that [the architect] ought to be . . . an orator, to instruct his client on what he proposes to do. Let him have insight, experience, wisdom and diligence in the matters to be discussed, and he will give an articulate, accurate, and informed account of these, which is the most important thing in oratory."[20]