

Fall 2007

Reviewed Work(s): Inigo Jones and the Classical Tradition by Christy Anderson

John E. Moore

Smith College, jmoore@smith.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.smith.edu/art_facpubs

Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Moore, John E., "Reviewed Work(s): Inigo Jones and the Classical Tradition by Christy Anderson" (2007). Art: Faculty Publications, Smith College, Northampton, MA.
https://scholarworks.smith.edu/art_facpubs/12

This Book Review has been accepted for inclusion in Art: Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Smith ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@smith.edu



Review

Reviewed Work(s): Inigo Jones and the Classical Tradition by Christy Anderson

Review by: John E Moore

Source: *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Fall 2007), pp. 958-959

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Renaissance Society of America

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1353/ren.2007.0304>

Accessed: 09-07-2018 15:53 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Renaissance Society of America, The University of Chicago Press are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Renaissance Quarterly*

Christy Anderson. *Inigo Jones and the Classical Tradition*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xvi + 276 pp. index. append. illus. bibl. \$90. ISBN: 0-521-82027-8.

In her introduction, Christy Anderson contends that it was through books — either written in English or translated from other languages — that designers and their patrons increasingly absorbed information about architecture (be it ancient Roman or contemporary Continental), and that these same individuals experienced buildings as embodiments of wonder. Students of Elizabethan and early Stuart culture will recognize that analytical category as well as that of self-fashioning, which subtends the second chapter in particular and subsequent ones, too. Extensive travel, coupled with the purchase, comparative scrutiny, and annotation of books, allowed Inigo Jones both to master his art and to become a professional architect.

The strength of the book under review lies in the link established between the events of Jones's life and interpretations widely adopted by critics of literature and historians, such that Jones emerges as a man of his time, as today's scholarly community productively construes it. Anderson demonstrates that the architect treasured, read, and otherwise used books in ways similar to those more learned or of a higher social class than he: we thus newly appreciate why they esteemed him. In the book's seventh chapter, entitled "Practices," the discussion of Covent Garden adds something to what is already known.

Surely the destruction occasioned by the Great Fire of 1666 may explain why documentation concerning Jones's education in the capital cannot be located today. Still, the author's claim that "it is unlikely [that Jones] had any formal schooling" (26) is difficult to substantiate. Having mastered the physical ability to manipulate a quill pen, he wrote letters, words, sentences, and a literate, expansive English prose, first in a secretary's hand, and subsequently in italic script. He used pen, ink, and other media to make beautiful drawings. Most strikingly, he could read complicated French and Italian texts and thus possessed an unusual linguistic ability that Anderson does not historicize. Perhaps Jones arduously learned to perform all these activities by himself, but it would be useful to understand if or how others of his contemporaries specifically accomplished something analogous.

In 1606, Edmund Bolton, a famous polymath, gave Jones Giovanni Francesco Bordini's *De rebus praeclare gestis a Sixto V*, an illustrated book with Latin panegyric poems that describe that pope's building projects, whose scale, cutting-edge

modernity, and conspicuous positioning Jones would hardly have overlooked while in Rome. Bolton outfitted his present with a Latin inscription, but I missed any engagement with the question of whether Jones could handle this language, an important vector of the classical tradition. In an annotation to the 1601 edition of Andrea Palladio's *I quattro libri dell'architettura*, Jones wrote two Latin nouns, "Porta Populi," instead of the "Porta del Popolo" found in Palladio's Italian original (239, n. 110). Moreover, an inscription panel in a design for a portal at Hatton House bears a Latin inscription that Anderson neither transcribes, nor translates, nor discusses (206–07). These hints arguably indicate a skill that still requires explanation and may imply that Jones, a clothworker's son, did cross a grammar-school threshold.

Anderson misstates the case when asserting that "surprisingly, Jones's library only contains one architectural treatise that is not Italian" (71). Forgetting a point she made earlier — namely, that the full extent of Jones's library is unknown — she likewise fails to recall the impression of Bordini: once in the library at Worcester College, Oxford, and now untraceable, this book was certainly, and importantly, about architecture. Extant books include the illustrated *De origine et amplitudine civitatis Veronae*, whose inscribed title page is reproduced (76): Anderson later implies that Jones read the book without saying if it has annotations or other telling signs (131). Elsewhere, faced with a lack of annotations, she inconsistently draws a negative conclusion regarding Leandro Alberti's *Descrittione di tutta Italia* (75) and a positive conclusion regarding Euclid (83). In the latter case, evidence that Jones read the Greek mathematician can be brought to bear, but one can adduce nothing from supposedly absent writing.

In close contexts or *passim*, repeatedly used words and countless restatements of overarching ideas make for a redundant narrative that lacks the rigorous editing that may have caught misspellings, confusions of proper names ("Henry" for Horace Walpole [47, 276]), some factual errors, and even some misreadings (such as that regarding the Scottish William Lithgow [148]). When specific page numbers or additional guidance is missing in the endnotes, it remains unclear what readers should look for in the cited texts.

JOHN E. MOORE
Smith College