'New Classical' Contemporary Architecture: Retrotopic Trends and Phantasms of Tradition

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As many commentators have recently observed, major movements on the populist right, or plain far-right, have become involved in the active promotion of neo-traditional (whether neo-vernacular or new classical) architecture in a 'metapolitical' perspective[1]: Identity Evropa [sic], an American white supremacist movement campaigning in favour of a return to neoclassical architecture;[2] the German nationalist party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) promoting a deliberately völkisch architecture;[3] Thierry Baudet, leader of the xenophobic anti-European party Forum voor Democratie, victorious in the Dutch senatorial elections in May 2019, denouncing the ruin 'of what was once the greatest and most beautiful civilization the world has ever known, a civilization… that reached all corners of the world, that was full of confidence, and that created the most beautiful architecture.'[4] But this kind of argument may also come from the less extreme areas of the conservative right. In British context, for example, Prince Charles's personal and long involvement in a return to pre-modern traditions helped to frame a thriving milieu of architects who share a desire to revive a largely idealised and reinvented 'classical architecture'.

This phenomenon of metapolitical use of architecture, that occurs, with variations, in several western countries and echoes grim precedents from the interwar period, is of first concern for the political sciences, and could be interpreted as the umpteenth instrumentalisation of culture (in this case architecture) for ideological, identity-related ends and/or straightforward propaganda. It could

thus be analysed as an architectural extension of the realm of politics, architecture being envisaged as the weapon, the prolongation, the reflection, or the translation of an ideology.

However, the history of architecture can also help us enrich and add nuance to our understanding. Firstly, it allows us to distinguish 'neoclassicism', a historiographic notion designating a complex sequence of phenomena that have punctuated the history of architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from 'new classicism', an auto-appellation designating the circle of architects who, over the past three decades, have been calling for a return to what they call a classical tradition. Secondly, from neoclassicism (which in France went from being the face of the reign of Louis XV, and then, only a few years later, that of the First Republic) to interwar modernism (which was as much the expression of fascisms as it was of social democratic regimes), architectural history shows to what extent the political hijacking of architecture is always relative, unstable, and equivocal, never definitive or entirely accomplished. Which is why, to analyse this recent phenomenon, we must move away from the Manichaeism at work in the rhetoric of those who are animated by the 'far right's obsession with modern architecture'.[5] We must move beyond the caricatural opposition that they wish to establish between the classical tradition, essentialised and supposedly immemorial, and modern architecture, seen as a homogeneous and indivisible whole, encompassing the early twentieth-century avant-garde right up to the starchitecture of the early twenty-first century.

What precisely does this invocation of the architectural past, or rather, a certain architectural past, largely fantasised and rebuilt in the present, oppose itself to? What are the reasons? To avoid turning architecture into a simple illustration of a strictly ideological and political phenomenon that takes place beyond itself, and to understand the sociohistorical logic of this return to the past that motivates certain contemporary architects, it is necessary to go back to the concrete terrain of their practice and resituate them within the complexity of architectural debate over recent decades.

A classical event

On 10 May 2010, a singular event took place in the magnificent art-deco building designed by George Grey Wornum situated at 66 Portland Place, London, seat of the venerated Royal Institute of British Architects since 1934. It was a remarkable public performance, a 'drawing marathon', that began at 10 o'clock in the morning and finished at 6 o'clock in the evening.[6] [Fig. 1] Three youngish British architects participated in this unbroken eight-hour session to make, with six hands, a huge drawing: Ben Pentreath (born 1972), Francis Terry (born 1969) and George Saumarez Smith (born 1973).

The event occurred in the grand reception hall on the building's first floor, above the main entrance. Upon a huge sheet of paper, two and a half metres high by five metres wide, fixed across a large window, the three men produced a hand-drawn copy of an architectural drawing, a neo-classical *capriccio*, perhaps an eighteenth-century theatre backdrop, in the style of Bibiena. The sporadic groups of spectators who witnessed the performance did not contemplate a finished, static drawing, delimited by its frame; rather, they observed the act of creating the drawing, its making. The performance, independent of what the drawing itself represented, put on display, as if under a magnifying glass, the graphic skills of these three architects, their mastery of the tools and codes of representation, the precision of their movements.

In addition, the size of the drawing set it apart from the usual format of architectural representation and put it closer to the scale of a real space. Rather than representing architecture, it was almost as if the drawing was architecture. Substituting itself for the large window, the drawing effectively opened a new space within the room. Much more than the decor or the backdrop of the performance, this classicising drawing was the goal: its graphic elaboration was the object of the show. It was a sort of theatre, but one in which the actors turned their backs to the audience and where the attention was focused on this emerging decor and its collective production.

Beyond its intriguing character, why pause upon this architectural event? For a start, because it was atypical if we consider its setting. In the spring of 2010, this event, the aim of which was to 'raise awareness of classical architecture and the enjoyment of drawing', was something of an exception at the RIBA, where modernism followed by the architectural neo-avant-gardes have largely dominated since the post-war period.[7] It would appear that by 2010, the mood within the RIBA had changed sufficiently for the institution to open itself to the disciples of a return to the classical tradition. The graphic performance that took place on 10 May, alongside a retrospective exhibition entitled *Three Classicists* dedicated to the work of these three fortysomething English architects who were gaining increasing media recognition, was in fact just one part of a wider whole. The exhibition shows their architectural projects, of deliberately neo-Georgian, neo-Palladian, or neo-Regency lexicon, their numerous drawings (measured surveys, project drawings, shaded perspectives), prototypes of elements from their buildings (mouldings, bas-reliefs, capitals). Strangely, there were almost no photographs, nor models. However, a collection of antique furniture, precious rugs, and decorative art objects borrowed from renowned London antique dealers colonised the grand gallery of the RIBA, creating an atmosphere that was less like an architecture exhibition and more like the drawing room of an aristocratic house.

The *Three Classicists* event was the work of the Traditional Architecture Group, affiliated to the RIBA, founded in 2003 by the architect Robert Adam, and presided over by Francis Terry since 2016. Relatively restricted, the group has gradually expanded to include around one hundred members today. The Traditional Architecture Group organised the exhibition in response to a minor controversy that blew up when the jury of the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy of Art refused two drawings in 2008: a 1:1 scale drawing of a Corinthian capital for Hanover Lodge, the extension of an aristocratic residence near Regents Park designed by Francis Terry (2003–2010), and an ink drawing of the dressed stone façade of the small building in central London that George Saumarez Smith designed for the gallerist Richard Green in 2009. The uncontemporary workmanship of these two drawings purposefully set them apart from the eclectic and pop visual universe favoured by the Royal Academy jury. [Fig. 2]

The *Three Classicists* exhibition and all the associated events (drawing marathons, conferences) at RIBA in the spring of 2010 – to which we can add the itinerant exhibition *Palladio and His Legacy: A Transatlantic Journey* produced by the RIBA and touring the United States in 2010 and 2011– must thus be situated in the context of the internal tensions within the discipline of architecture.[8] These events are the work of young architects who have produced a considerable body of built projects and who demand access to the dominant channels of architectural recognition. Beyond its cool and hushed atmosphere, the exhibition they organised at the RIBA should be seen as a manifesto, a propaganda operation for the movement to which they belong. The drawing marathon expresses not only an attachment to 'classical architecture' as an ideal and a model, whose contours are nonetheless rather unclear, but above all to the collective dimension of this neo-traditional ethos, as the antithesis to contemporary pluralist architectural production marked by its stylistic individualism.

New versus neon-classicism

How might one explain this convergence of events in London in the spring of 2010? At first glance, it is tempting to draw a parallel with the major political transition underway at the time in the United Kingdom. After thirteen years of Labour rule (ten of which were dominated by the figure of Tony Blair), the Conservative Party regained power in May 2010.[9] However, the conservative right's return to power cannot be considered the cause of the emergence of a movement of neo-traditional architecture. To understand the structuring of the network of architects calling for a revival of the classical tradition in contemporary architecture we must go back thirty years, to the architectural debates of 1980s England that were dominated by the subject. One of the principal sites of these debates was the English architecture journal *Architectural Design*, the most effervescent of the post-war period, that had been bought in 1977 by Andreas Papadakis (1938–2008).[10] Having branched into bookselling and then publishing, in 1967 the Cypriot entrepreneur and doctor in physics founded Academy Editions, an active publishing house that in 1977 would publish, at great expense but profitably, Charles Jencks's *The Language of Postmodern Architecture*. Though untrained in architecture, Papadakis relied on his intuition and personal network to federate the best writers of the moment, and he created an eclectic and inclusive editorial space, open to a new generation. He regularly invited writers to take over the editorship of the journal for specially themed issues, and collectively, these diverse figures, including Kenneth Frampton, Charles Jencks, Demetri Porphyrios, Colin Rowe, and Léon Krier, would turn the journal into the principal stage for architectural debate. Evidently, on one front, the disciples of postmodernism opposed those arguing for loyalty to modernism and the avant-garde. But another, more subtle front opposed different nuances within postmodernism itself. The subject of referencing classicism, and the attitude of contemporary architects towards this practice, incited a great deal of

Fig. 1

Greek Ionic capital for Hanover Lodge, Regent's Park, London, 2003
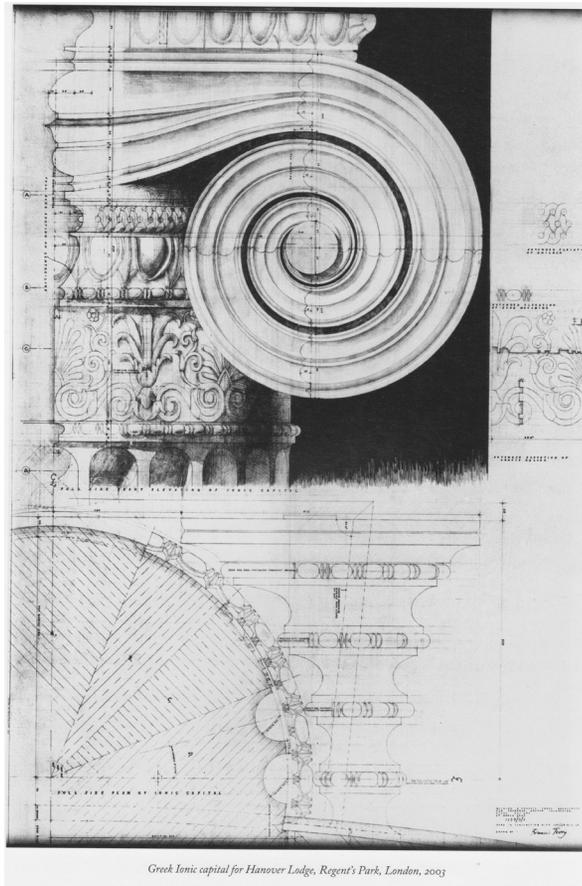
Fig. 2

Fig. 1: Francis Terry, Ben Pentreath, and Georges Saumarez Smith after their Drawing Marathon at RIBA, 10 May 2010. Photo: Benjamin Moore.

Fig. 2: Francis Terry, drawing of the Doric capital of Hanover Lodge, Regent's Park, London, 2003. Source: *Three Classicists: Ben Pentreath, Georges Saumarez Smith, Francis Terry*, exhibition catalogue.

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig . 3: Spread from *Architectural Design 50*, 'Post-Modern Classicism', edited by Charles Jencks.

Fig. 4: Spread from, *Architectural Design 52*, 'Classicism is not a style' edited by Demetri Porphyrios.

intense debate within the journal. No fewer than four special editions were dedicated to the subject between 1979 and 1982, and the number increases if we extend the period to the early 1990s.[11]

According to the architect and theorist Geoffrey Broadbent, who edited the 1979 *A.D. Profile* no. 23, classicism is first and foremost a language that has been in continual use throughout the history of architecture and that is thus available for any contemporary utilisation.[12] The term 'neo-classical', removed from an ideological or political context, designates, according to Broadbent, all architectural production that, since the Renaissance, has made use of classical references (understood as originating in antiquity), from Ledoux to Grassi via Schinkel, from fascist architecture to the 1970s neo-rationalists via Russian constructivism: 'the neo-classical architect obviously can choose any one of these – or even a combination of them – for the purposes of architectural expression.'[13] [Fig. 3] In the two issues of *A.D. Profile* dedicated to the subject, which he edited in 1980 and 1982, the historian and critic Charles Jencks suggests a less linguistic and more stylistic approach to the return to classicism, which he considers to be one possible path among others within postmodern eclecticism.[14] From Thomas Gordon's Tuscan and Laurentian Houses to Robert Venturi's Eclectic House, via Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia, he focuses on examples in which the codes of classicism have been voluntarily disrupted, subjected to mannerist games of distortion, deformation, even caricature. According to Jencks, 'the past becomes a field for rhetorical operation with paradox and elision becoming major figures, and amplification and hybridisation minor ones'.[15]

A few months later, in manifest contradiction with Jencks, whose position he argued would lead to nothing but a 'neon-classicism', the Greek architect Demetri Porphyrios, who graduated from Princeton in 1975 and set up his architectural practice in London in 1985, published another special issue of *Architectural Design*, affirming the notion that 'classicism is not a style'.[16] Some important doctrinal elements, that continue today to nourish the field of new classical architecture, were formulated in this issue.

First, this new classicism defines itself not so much as the antithesis of modern architecture, but rather as a criticism of postmodernism, and in particular of the pluralistic aesthetic proffered by Jencks or by Paolo Portoghesi in the 1980 Venice Biennale. 'Contemporary architecture bathes in the pantheistic limbo of eclecticism', Porphyrios laments.[17] His criticism of this postmodern eclecticism concentrates on the way in which it transforms the reference to historical architecture into a surface system of quotation, an almost advertising-like form of communication. Confronted with this problem, his position is clear: 'Renouncing novelty, ephemeral pleasurability, consumable iconographic individualism, and unmediated industrial production, we make an urgent plea for closing architectural discourse towards the constructional logic of vernacular and its mimetic elaboration: classicism.'[18]

Under Porphyrios's pen, the return to classicism expresses itself above all as an essentialist invocation of the premodern and vernacular traditions of the act of building and its aesthetic, mimetic, and mythical expression in architecture. He sees postmodernism has having reduced classicism to a surface show, to one option among others in a big game of referencing and style, whereas it should, like the early twentieth century 'Scandinavian doricism' that he writes about in the same issue, be the expression of an 'ontological essence of building', as the 'summation of the essential knowledge of building and dwelling'.[19] He adds: 'showing itself in a form of primitivist essentialism, it indicates the way by which "truth" may be acquired'.[20] Rather than a language, a style, or a reference, this fundamentalism defines classicism as an absolute truth, as the general and universal ethic of architecture. [Fig. 4]

In the same issue, the Luxembourgian architect Léon Krier, who was based in London since 1969

and close to Porphyrios, deplores the ugliness and shoddy materiality of contemporary architecture, to which he too opposes the perennity, universality, and timelessness of classical architecture, values that are rooted in its constructive legitimacy: 'By means of a series of fixed and permanent symbols and analogies, Architecture succeeds in expressing its very origin in the constructive logic of Building, based on nature, work and human intelligence.' [21] Against modern material engineering and industrialised construction, these architects championed a radical return to traditional craftsmanship and the art of traditional construction. Expressing his resolutely anti-modern perspective, Krier states: 'For the classical architect the notions of progress and innovation do not exist, since classical architecture has definitively solved its technical and artistic problems in solidity and permanence, in beauty and commodity.'[22]

Unbracketing the past

Another important doctrinal aspect that Porphyrios formulates in *Classicism is not a Style* concerns the relationship to the past and to history. Very hostile to what he calls 'abject pluralism' and to eclecticism, whether that of the nineteenth century or the 1980s, he effectively criticises the historicist conception of time that they presuppose, bracketing each episode of history. [23] [Fig. 5] Porphyrios developed his thinking on the philosophy of history in the second half of the 1970s, while working on his PhD on Alvar Aalto at Princeton and encountering important historians, such as Anthony Vidler, Alan Colquhoun, Carl Schorske, Kenneth Frampton, David Coffin and Stefan Morawski.[24] He formalised his thinking in 1981 in a special issue of *Architectural Design* under his editorship, dedicated to the methodology of architectural history, in which he invited historians of varied allegiances, from Joseph Rykwert to David Watkin via Manfredo Tafuri, to lay out their theoretical and historiographic positions.[25] In his contribution, Porphyrios defended his own stance, which was to denounce the Hegelian theory of

history and the legacy that it has left upon art and architectural historians, from Heinrich Wölfflin to Sigfried Giedion via Aloïs Riegl, Rudolf Wittkower, and Nikolaus Pevsner. His main point of disagreement with this historiographic tradition concerns the definition of architecture that it presupposes, deploring that 'against the classical category of "imitation of nature", Hegel proposed that of the "Representation of the Idea"'.[26] In the Hegelian perspective, the function of architecture would no longer be to imitate nature – classic mimesis – but to express the idea of its creator, which itself translates the spirit of the times – the zeitgeist.

If one adopts this Hegelian point of view, the past is never anything more than an elapsed present. The course of time rips it irreversibly from the present and transforms it mechanically into historical matter. The architecture of the past appears as 'bracketing historical unities on the basis of calendar contemporaneity, or on the basis of stylistic filiations'.[27] Hegelian historicism would thus have two main problems: it tends not only to render history lifeless, but above all to cut it off from the present of architecture. Consequently, we see that Porphyrios's criticism is as relevant to the epistemology of history as to the practice of architecture. Essentially, the aim of this contestation of the bracketing of the past is no more than an attempt to reconnect the practice of contemporary architecture with classical tradition. Léon Krier would tackle the same issue in his writing. For example, in *Architecture: Choice or Fate*, he denounces the 'rupture with the past, its historization', meaning its transformation into a historical object separate from the present.[28] Against this phenomenon, the position of Krier and Porphyrios is paradoxical. It consists in both overvaluing and dehistoricising the past, with the aim of turning it into the norm for the present. Torn from its proper chronology, classical architecture changes in nature. Rather than a past episode of history, it becomes a timeless and transhistorical living tradition.

In this sense, the neo-traditional doctrine set out by Porphyrios and Krier establishes a completely

alternative regime of historicity than that which was being formulated by the postmodern theorists at the same time. According to Paolo Portoghesi, for instance, it is memory – meaning the idea of a presence of the past as an inexhaustible raw material feeding the individual creativity of architects in an extended and perpetual present – that substitutes history as the grand modern narrative of time.[29] 'The Presence of the Past', the title of the 1980 Biennale, must be understood in this perspective of memory and presentism, like the recapitalisation of the past in this immobilised present time. In Portoghesi's view, 'memory can help us leave our impotence behind, and exchange the magical act that once deluded us into exorcizing the past and building a new world without roots, for the lucid and rational act of the reappropriation of the forbidden fruit.'[30]

In an equally post-historical, even counter-historical, perspective, Porphyrios and Krier substituted another concept for that of 'history': not 'memory', but 'tradition', as a cyclical vision of time that implies an entirely different way of making the past available in the present, abolishing the idea of it as 'past'.
In face of the same uncertain horizon, the neo-traditionalist architects dreamt of abolishing linear time, which no longer carries with it the promise of a radiant future, and of restoring cyclical time regulated by immemorial and comforting tradition. As Manfredo Tafuri and Georges Teyssot noted in *Classicism is not a Style*, 'classicism is the art of the eternal recommencement'.[31]

The invention of a classical tradition
The 'classical tradition' that George Saumarez Smith, Francis Terry, and Ben Petreath refer to in their drawing, writing, and projects, has thus in large part been shaped by the preceding generation of neo-traditional architects, in the context of the early 1980s architectural debates in London. As we have seen, this period was an intense and controversial moment of radical and essentialist theorisation, even revision, of classical architecture

by a small group of architects, both practitioners and theorists, who rejected modern historicism as much as postmodern presentism, and were looking for an alternative route in neo-traditionalism. By extracting classical architecture from architectural history and from the memory repertoire of past styles, Porphyrios and Krier were looking to redefine it as tradition. If we transpose the theories of the historian Eric Hobsbawm onto the phenomenon, we could even consider them to have 'invented' this tradition.

In this sense, it is interesting to note that at the turn of the 1980s the discussion around the concept of tradition was as intense in the field of humanities as it was in architecture. In 1977 the social history journal *Past and Present*, run by members of the Communist Party Historians Group, organised an important conference in London, 'The Invention of Tradition'. This event formed the basis of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's eponymous collective publication, which shows how certain traditions that we believe to be the most immovable, are in fact relatively recent cultural, social, and political constructions.[32] The rituals surrounding the British monarchy, which have been incessantly invented and reinvented since the 1820s, and with particular fervour since 1953 under the reign of Elizabeth II and the advent of mass media, are one example.[33] Two aspects of 'invented traditions' are worth recalling here. First, 'insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, … the continuity with it is largely factitious'.[34] This collective fiction is mobilised to guarantee the mythical stability of tradition despite the chronic instability of the modern world. Secondly, this phenomenon makes manifest what Hobsbawm calls the 'social function of the past'.[35] From this standpoint, the invention of tradition is rendered particularly necessary by 'the widespread progress of electoral democracy and the consequent emergence of mass politics'.[36] Hobsbawm does not link the recourse to tradition exclusively to populism. And it must be noted that the English neo-traditional architects operate within a realm that

Fig. 5

«Le troisième genre de cabane qui donna naissance à l'ordre dorique», reconstruction de Quinlan Terry d'après Williams Chambers.

Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Title page of *Architectural Design 51*, 'On the Methodology of Architectural History', edited by Demetri Porphyrios.

Fig. 6: Photo of the 'rustic hut' that Quinlan Terry designed for the gardens of West Green House, Hampshire, 1976–1978. Source: Demetri Porphyrios, 'L'infâme pluralisme', in Quatremère de Quincy, *De l'Imitation*.

is more elitist than populist. But, in their work, the political instrumentalisation of tradition, including architectural tradition, appears in its full complexity. During the same period, diametrically opposed to this undertaking of the deconstruction and demystification of tradition by Hobsbawm and the Past and Present historians (whom he would frequently criticise) the conservative and anti-Marxist philosopher Roger Scruton wrote numerous reactionary texts about art and architecture.[37] In 1979 he published *The Aesthetics of Architecture* in which he called upon the timeless principles of classical harmony and beauty to banish the aesthetic deadlock and mediocrity of contemporary construction.[38] Mixing erudite analysis of great Renaissance and Mannerist works with caricatural analysis of modern and contemporary architecture, Scruton's text endlessly naturalizes 'tradition' and invokes the return to it as the unique ethical and stylistic perspective for the present:

> The achievement represented by the classical tradition, the translation of the aesthetic demand into an agreed and flexible language of signs, a language which facilitates at every juncture the outward projection and realization of the self, is not just a passing object of respect, a temporary speciality in the arcanum of taste, but on the contrary, the perfect representative of all that is good in building, all that building contains by way of decency, serenity and restraint.[39]

This conviction struck a chord with the London network of neo-traditional architects, who despite their militantism, remained a small group at the start of the 1980s. Other than Demetri Porphyrios and Léon Krier we can count Quinlan Terry (born in 1937), trained at the Architectural Association School, a 1968–1969 Rome Scholar, brief collaborator of James Stirling, and then the associate of Raymond Erith from 1962, before setting up his own practice after Erith's death in 1973. A former student of the traditionalist Bryanston School, Terry never hid his Christian faith and his belief in

the divine origin of Classicism.[40] Another important protagonist was Robert Adam (born in 1948), who trained as an architect at the University of Westminster, was Rome Scholar in 1972–1973, and worked for a while as an architectural journalist before becoming an associate, and ultimately director, at the Winchester-based practice Evans, Roberts and Partners.[41] In 1982, the publication year of *Classicism is not a Style*, these architects had little built work to their names. Robert Adam had completed a few terraces of neo-Victorian or neo-Georgian housing in Hampshire (such as the modest operation of Hyde Church Path in Winchester).[42] In the continuation of his projects with Erith (such as the new country house in Kings Walden Bury, Hertfordshire, 1969–1971), Quinlan Terry had built little but for the aristocratic elite in heritage contexts, such as his classicising pavilions in the gardens of West Green House, Hampshire, for Sir Robert McAlpine, between 1976 and 1978. With its archetypal form, its archaic timber frame roof, and its peristyle of barely squared-off trunks – which calls up the Vitruvian origin myth , revisited by Sir William Chambers – the 'rustic hut' that he created in this setting prefigures Porphyrios's essentialist definition of Classicism.[43] [Fig. 6]

In *Classicism is not a Style*, to illustrate his thoughts on Classicism, Porphyrios is thus obliged to broaden the focus and include some less orthodox projects. He publishes, notably, some of the protagonists of Italian rationalism such as Giorgio Grassi and Aldo Rossi, but also some of the figures that Léon Krier brought together in his exhibition at the Art Net Gallery in London in March 1975, such as the Spanish architects Miguel Garay and José Ignacio Linazasoro, or even Krier's own unbuilt project for a school in Saint-Quentin en Yvelines (1977–1979), a transitional work more inspired by Tessenov than strict Neoclassicism.[44]

The construction of a 'classical tradition' is thus founded less upon the identification of a vast and coherent whole of projects in the present, and more upon a discursive and mediatic strategy of

reconfiguring architectural culture and history. Frequently republishing Wittkower's book, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (first published in 1949) ever since he bought the rights from the publisher and bookseller Alec Tiranti, Andrea Papadakis was an active participant of this reconfiguration, publishing for example an 'Architectural Monograph' on John Soane by John Summerson, the curator of the Sir John Soane Museum since 1945.[45] At the start of the 1980s, Summerson, a historian and the author of the classic text *The Classical Language of Architecture*, received particularly favourable critical attention. He had worked not only to shape the classical tradition into a concise and appropriable form (even if, for him, this appropriation concerned mostly modern architects) but also to turn it into a central part of the narrative of English identity, and he saw his work on Inigo Jones, John Nash, and on London's Georgian architecture undergo a significant editorial revival.[46] The construction of the classical tradition finally makes a detour via the rediscovery of twentieth-century British architectural figures who had followed an alternative path from that of modernism. The works of Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944), Charles Holden (1875–1960) and Raymond Erith (1904–1973), were published, re-evaluated, and retrospectively redefined as milestones of this tradition.[47]

Political support

Despite its activism and proselytising tendencies, the English new classical architecture circle would certainly have remained marginal and confidential, restricted to elite commissions, if, from the early 1980s, it had not received powerful political support. In 1980 Margaret Thatcher, within a year of coming to power, appointed Quinlan Terry as architect in charge of the renovation and decoration of 10 Downing Street, the same year that he formed part of the British selection in the first Venice Architecture Biennale.[48] As Michela Rosso has noted, the New Right's interest in heritage, tradition,

and architectural classicism joins with a systematic questioning of the values advocated by English social democracy since the post-war period: 'in economics, the Keynesian precepts of full employment and moderate inflation, in the cultural field, state support for the arts, and in architecture, the dominance of modernism.'[49] The paradox of this right-wing populism is that it advocates, in the name of defending the 'people' against the 'elite', a return to an architecture of classical tradition, despite its historical association in England with elitist, scholarly, and reformist dynamics.

Digging a little deeper into this paradox, the most valuable and powerful support for the new classical circle would come from the royal family itself. Overstepping the reserve usually expected of the monarchy, Prince Charles became personally implicated in the 1980s architectural debates, criticising the formal cacophony of contemporary architecture, between brutalism, high-tech, and postmodernism.[50] Ever since his famous speech to RIBA members at Hampton Court on 30 May 1984, during which he castigated modern architects' 'imagination without taste' and invoked people's 'natural preference … for the more "traditional" designs', he has tirelessly contested major architectural and urban projects in London.[51] He has fought them with words, but also with his support of classically inspired counter-projects, notably for the reconstruction of Paternoster Square next to Saint-Paul's Cathedral (1988–1992), led by John Simpson and Terry Farrell, responsible for the masterplan, and 'a heterogeneous group of Classicists and traditionalists', including Robert Adam, Thomas Beeby, Allan Greenberg, Demetri Porphyrios, Quinlan Terry.[52] [Fig. 7]

Throughout his speeches, Prince Charles's populism has been focused on a favourite theme: the return to classical architecture. Through its importance to national history, classical architecture would work in favour of a narrative of English identity and Englishness that fits with his communitarian and natural vision of society.[53] Through its obvious

stylistic contrast with modernist architecture, classical architecture promises to mark a rupture with the socio-democratic architectural and urban landscape, and to provide a spatial manifestation of this 'internal antagonistic frontier separating the 'people' from power' that is at the source of all populism.[54] But at the same time, as a meticulously essentialised and naturalised tradition, possibly associated with a divine origin, it does not, in any way, oppose itself to the values and aspirations of the conservative aristocratic elite that the Prince of Wales is part of.[55] The prince thus manages to overcome the apparent paradox of his position and make classical architecture both the expression of general common sense and elitist good taste.

In the alliance of Prince Charles with the traditional architecture movement, it is difficult to distinguish the different contributions of one side from the other. The small group of architects (including Léon Krier, John Simpson and Theo Crosby) that the prince associated himself with in 1987 seems to have had a significant role in clarifying his position in relation to architecture, notably ahead of his Mansion House speech on 1 December 1987, and the BBC documentary 'A Vision of Britain' shown on primetime television on 28 October 1988.[56] By polarising and politicising the architectural debate, Prince Charles certainly contributed, in his turn, to radicalising this network of architects, and, consequently, isolating them from the architectural intelligentsia that they had belonged to until the turn of the 1980s, ultimately excluding them permanently from the main institutional and mediatic scene (prizes, magazines, museums, schools, and so on).

At the same time, Prince Charles provided these architects with an alternative institutional framework, via his foundation,[57] created in 1986 as a grouping of not-for-profit organisations devoted to diffusion, charity fundraising, and teaching, such as the Prince's Institute of Architecture,[58] set up in 1992 and integrated in the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment in 1998. Renamed The Prince's

Foundation in 2018, it federates other parent institutions such as the Urban Villages Group, founded in 1989 and the International Network of Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism (Intbau), founded by Robert Adam in 2001.[59]

A precise social history of the neo-traditional architecture network in the United Kingdom and beyond remains to be undertaken. It would reveal the Prince of Wales's crucial role in the structuring of a specific doctrinal, institutional, mediatic, and academic framework in London. It would also reveal his role in the shaping of the professional field. Effectively, the fortunes of figures such as Prince Charles, or in the United States, the philanthropist Richard H. Driehaus, have also sustained this international network of neo-traditionalist practitioners thanks to commissions for architectural and urban projects, including some of quite considerable scale.[60] In his role as the Duke of Cornwall, Prince Charles has notably instigated the development of the 450-acre model urban project of Poundbury in the suburbs of Dorchester (Dorset). In 1988 Léon Krier was appointed in charge of the masterplan, and the project, designed according to the principles of polycentrism, low density, programmatic mixing, and above all, strict stylistic control, has been on site since 1993.[61]

Progetto e retrotopia

Honoured by the RIBA in May 2010, architects such as George Saumarez Smith and Francis Terry are perhaps the biggest beneficiaries of this story. They are the descendants, even the inheritors, of the militant founding generation of this architectural traditionalism: Francis is the son of Quinlan Terry, George is the grandson of Raymond Erith and one of the directors of Adam Architecture since 2004. They were trained in architecture, the art of drawing, and the classical tradition by their fathers and colleagues.

They have benefitted from a constant stream of commissions, not only from Prince Charles, but also private developers, wealthy landowners, or

Fig. 7

Portico of Hanover Lodge, 2008
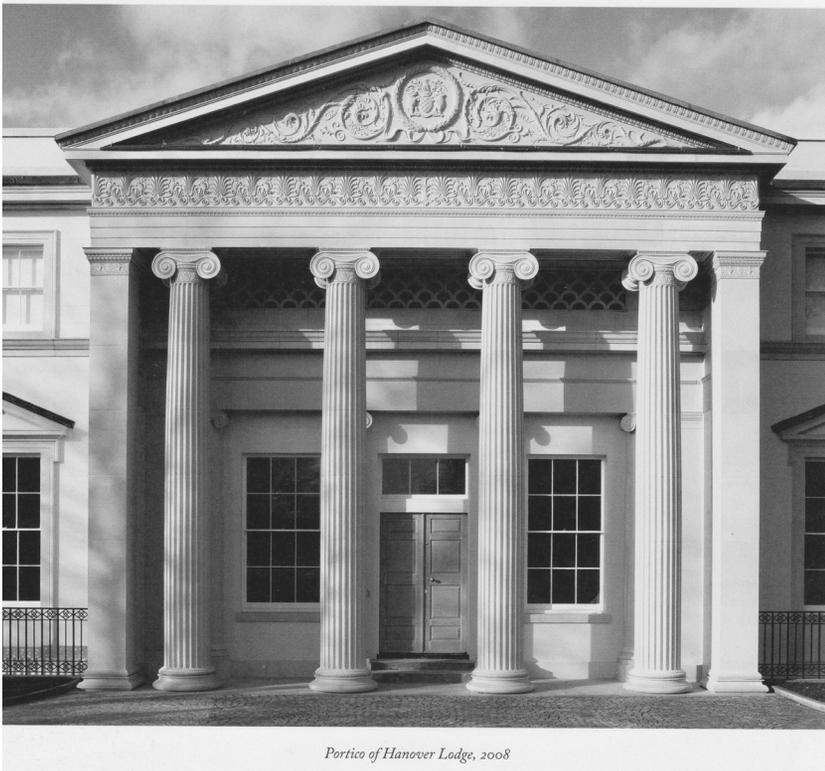
Fig. 8

Fig. 7: Carl Laubin, The Square Mile,182cmx305cm, oil on canvas, 1997. Trained as an architect, Carl Laubin was the favoured illustrator for numerous new classical projects in the 1980s and 1990s, from Paternoster Square to Pounbury, via Atlantis (Léon Krier's utopian project on Tenerife, 1987–1988). This painting was commissioned by Linklaters, owners of The Square Mile in London. Source: https://www.carllaubin.com/projects/st-paul- s.

Fig. 8: View of the portico of Hanover Lodge, Regent's Park, London, designed by Quinlan Terry, 2008. Photo: June Buck, in *Three Classicists: Ben Pentreath, Georges Saumarez Smith, Francis Terry.*

even the major Oxford and Cambridge colleges, keen to expand without devaluing their architectural heritage. [Fig. 8] George Saumarez Smith is notably the author of important residential developments in Poundbury, in The South West Quadrant (229 homes) and the North East Quadrant (500 homes). They have frequently worked on large urban or suburban homes for the English aristocracy, such as Terry's extension of John Nash's neoclassical villa Hanover Lodge, in the Regent's Park district of London (2003–2010), or the neo-Palladian country house designed by Saumarez Smith in Hayes, Hampshire (2003–2007), explicitly inspired by Andrea Palladio's unbuilt Villa Ragona.[62] Author of the new Howard Theatre, for Downing College, Cambridge, built in dressed stone, Francis Terry drew not only the plans, but also the Doric ornamentation, and the mural of the Acropolis that forms the backdrop to the stage (2009–2010). All these projects look to embody, both through their forms and through their construction methods (enlisting as much as possible traditional craftspeople, such as ironworkers, plasterers, cabinetmakers or stonecutters), this reinvented classical tradition.

Likeable and accessible, these architects, nicknamed the 'classical peaceniks' in the press, present an infinitely less militant front than their elders, who were involved in intense postmodern doctrinal debates, struggling with real ideological adversaries.[63] Yet, the large neo-classical drawing that Pentreath, Saumarez Smith, and Terry performed at the RIBA in May 2010 is a direct manifestation of the neo-traditionalist doctrine formulated at the turn of the 1980s, combining a critical posture towards the contemporary period, a rejection of the idea of progress and historicism more generally (in the sense of a historical and teleological conception of time), and a desire to dehistoricise the past to render it active in the present.

This classical architecture, whose 'tradition' has been retroactively shaped by authors such as Porphyrios, Krier, Terry and Adam, defines itself, above all, as a new narrative of time, a sort of regressive uchronia that contests the generally-held view of history. Uchronia, a utopian genre common within English literature, is a fictional process that, by altering a part of the past, modifies the trajectory of history, making it diverge from the path it actually took. An author of uchronia 'writes history, not as it was, but as it could have been, as he believes and he doesn't warn us of his intentional errors, nor of his aims'.[64] Usually, this literary genre serves a revolutionary project, modifying a past event to give, fictitiously, a preponderant importance to a minor actor and to reverse a status quo. Paradoxically, neo-traditional architects use the uchronic process in the opposite way, to erase major aesthetic and technological ruptures of the past (artistic or architectural avant-gardes, major technological innovations, major politico-economic shifts), and to establish a natural continuity with a chosen, idealised, and massively reconstructed past.

Known for his intense practice and regular teaching of 'measured drawing', George Saumarez Smith effectively establishes a direct relationship that works to suppress historical distance with the buildings that he surveys.[65] Through this graphic ritual, he claims an immediate experience with objects from the past, focusing on their timelessness as supreme quality.

Another illustration of this immediate, revisionist, and nostalgic relationship to the past can be found in Prince Charles's book, *A Vision of Britain*.[66] On a double-page spread he publishes a full colour reproduction of Canaletto's famous landscape of the Thames, painted between 1746 and1754, that embodies, for him, the idealised neoclassical past that history has torn us from: 'when Canaletto painted it, this landscape was still untouched, and the streets remained more or less intact until 1960'.[67] But in the book, the painting is covered by a sheet of tracing paper onto which has been printed a contemporary photograph of the same landscape with the current skyline of sky-scrapers and cranes. The visual and editorial device works in both directions: when we overlay the tracing paper

Fig. 9: Carl Laubin, Poundbury, 71 x 91cm, oil on canvas, 1992. Source: https://www.carllaubin.com/album/buildings-and-archi- tecture.html?p=1.

on the painting, it functions as a criticism of the present, as a demonstration that current architecture and urbanism has destroyed the harmony of the neoclassical landscape, causing perhaps even more damage than the German bombings; when we lift the tracing paper, it functions inversely, as the representation of a strange project, conceived as the unveiling of a past that subsists by fragments in the present, and of which it would suffice to recreate the disappeared fragments to restore the whole.[68]

This project, both idealist and regressive, resembles in many ways what Zygmunt Bauman has called 'retrotopia', that is, a utopia with an inverted front, a 'symmetrical inversion' of the utopia that we observe in western civilisation where 'the global epidemic of nostalgia' has replaced 'the frenetic progressist epidemic'.[69]

In the final paragraphs of his book *Architecture: Choice or fate*, Léon Krier clearly describes this nostalgic motor that animates new classical architecture:

> We all come from somewhere, and we all feel the need to belong. If that desire is not fulfilled it turns to pain. That is the literal meaning of nostalgia – the longing to return, the pain of being severed. Our ideal of a beautiful city, of a beautiful house, of beautiful architecture is not utopian; nor is it a fantasy or an impossibility. We have all experienced the reality of it and it works strongly inside us. We have found there an unimaginable feeling of freedom, a possibility of happiness, a dream of well-being. … A beautiful village, a beautiful house, a beautiful city can become a home for all, a universal home. But if we lose this aim, we build our own exile here on Earth.[70]

Is retrotopia not precisely this construction of an ideal and perfect topos, which allows us escape from a nightmarish future and to rekindle links with a past that we have lost touch with? However, there are some important differences with what Bauman describes. For him, retrotopia is a neoliberal negation of all state order, a project focused on the

individual and fundamentally despatialised: 'the projects of human happiness … have lost all fixity, have ceased to be connected to a particular *topos*, becoming individualised, privatised, personalised projects ('outsourced', carried by individuals as a snail carries its shell).'[71] On the contrary, the neo-traditionalist movements project themselves onto a horizon that is certainly regressive, but profoundly conservative and anti-liberal, centred not upon the individual but on an idealised 'community', identified with a common architectural and urban space of classical tradition, federated by its beauty and harmony.[72]

In November 2018, Theresa May's conservative government appointed Roger Scruton to preside over a highly controversial commission of enquiry into architectural quality. Baptised 'Building Better Building Beautiful', this commission argued for the 'beauty' of the built environment as a civic value: 'Understood as the overall Gestalt character of a place, beauty is not only an intrinsic value: it has social and economic value too and is indeed fundamental to the happiness and well-being of human communities.'[73] If this beauty, guaranteed by traditional architecture, has an economic value, it resides within what Luc Boltanski and Arnaud Esquerre have called the economy of enrichment, symptomatic of late, deindustrialised capitalism, no longer extensive but intensive.[74] According to the two sociologists, over the past years, rather than focusing on the production of new objects, capitalism's development has focused on the never-ending revalorisation of already produced objects, through their incessant recycling on the antique, art, and historic property markets, or in the realms of second-hand trade, heritage, or tourism. The enrichment economy, which 'is based on the exploitation of a deposit none other than the past', could be seen as the economic model of retrotopia.[75] [Fig. 9]

It is interesting to note that, to describe their respective models, Bauman, Boltanski and Esquerre all make a detour via the work of Walter Benjamin. Bauman reinterprets Paul Klee's 1920

painting *Angelus Novus* in the inverse sense of the German philosopher: no longer as the representation of a historical angel being carried to a radiant future by the winds of progress and progressist utopia, scanning the catastrophe that he is fleeing, but rather as the representation of a retrotopian angel flying towards a reassuring past, eyes fixed on the apocalyptic future announced. Boltanski and Esquerre invert the Benjaminian reflection on the phantasmagoria of merchandise: no longer the fetishisation of the value of the newness of objects, but rather a mise en scène of their aura of oldness, or at least their familiar, accustomed character, their conformity to tradition.[76]

To conclude, we can ask ourselves if, much more than an epiphenomenon, the neo-traditional and new classical architecture that is flourishing today in several national contexts, and that is promoted by populist ideologues more or less close to power, might not be, on the contrary, the most well-developed architectural incarnation of the spirit of late capitalism, animated by this retrotopic phantasmagoria of the past.

Notes

1. In the sense that Karlheinz Weißmann uses the term, as an 'occupation of areas in the pre-political realm'. Cited by Stephan Trüby, 'Right-wing Spaces', *e-flux,* 23 January 2017, https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/superhumanity/68711/right-wing-spaces/.

2. Hettie O'Brien, 'How Classical Architecture Became a Weapon for the Far Right', *The New Statesman,* 21 November 2018, https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2018/11/how-classical-architecture-became-weapon-far-right.

3. Trüby, 'Right-wing Spaces'.

4. Speech made by Thierry Baudet, 20 March 2019, cited by Bart-Jan Polman in 'A Masochistic Heresy', *The Avery Review* no. 40 (May 2019), https://www.averyreview.com/issues/40/masochistic-heresy.

5. Joe Mathieson and Tim Verlaan, 'The Far Right's Obsession With Modern Architecture', *Failed Architecture,* 11 September 2019, https://failedarchitecture.com/the-far-rights-obsession-with-modern-architecture/.

6. See the time-lapse film by Benjamin Moore, https://vimeo.com/11735656.

7. George Saumarez-Smith interviewed by the author, 2 February 2018.

8. Charles Hind and Irena Murray, eds., *Palladio and His Legacy: A Transatlantic Journey* (Venice: Marsilio, 2010). The exhibition toured to the Morgan Library & Museum, New York (2 April – 1 August 2010), the National Building Museum, Washington, DC (2 September 2010 – 9 January 2011), the Milwaukee Art Museum, (27 January – 1 May 2011), and the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (3 September – 31 December 2011).

9. After the dissolution of parliament by the queen, at the request Gordon Brown, the Conservative Party, led by David Cameron, claimed a narrow victory in the general election held on 6 May 2010.

10. Steve Parnell, 'Acroshaw: Forgotten, but not Forgiven', *Architecture and Culture* 6, no. 1 (2018): 37–59.

11. Elizabeth Keslacy, 'The Alibi of Style: Reading Classicism in *Architectural Design* Magazine (1979–1982)', in *Mediated Messages: Periodicals, Exhibitions*

and the Shaping of Postmodern Architecture, ed. Véronique Patteeuw and Léa-Catherine Szacka (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 175–96.

12. Geoffrey Broadbent, ed., *Architectural Design*, 49, no. 8–9 (1979) (*A.D. Profile* no. 23: *Neo-Classicism: Schinkel, Johnson, Stirling*).

13. Ibid., 6.

14. Charles Jencks, ed., *Architectural Design* 50, no. 5–6 (1980) (*A.D. Profile no. 28*: *Post-Modern Classicism*); Charles Jencks, ed., *Architectural Design* 52, no. 1–2, (1982) (*A.D. Profile no. 39*: *Free-Style Classicism*).

15. Charles Jencks, 'Introduction' to *Free-Style Classicism*, 10.

16. Demetri Porphyrios, ed., *Architectural Design* 52, no. 5–6 (1982) (*A.D. Profile* no. 41: *Classicism is not a Style*).

17. Demetri Porphyrios, 'Classicism is not a Style' in Porphyrios, *Classicism is not a Style,* 52.

18. Ibid*.,* 56.

19. Demetri Porphyrios, 'Scandinavian doricism: Danish and Swedish architecture 1905–1930' in Porphyrios, *Classicism is not a Style,* 22–35; 30.

20. Ibid., 28.

21. Léon Krier, 'Classical architecture and vernacular building', in Porphyrios, *Classicism is not a Style*, 40. Krier and Porphyrios collaborated on a re-edition of Quatremère de Quincy, *Essai sur la nature, le but et les moyens de l'imitation dans les Beaux-Arts* (Brussels: Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1980).

22. Krier, Classical architecture and vernacular building', 40.

23. Demetri Porphyrios, 'L'infâme pluralisme', in Quatremère de Quincy, *Essai sur la nature*, vii.

24. In 1980 Demetri Porphyrios defended his PhD on Alvar Aalto, published under the title: *Sources of Modern Eclecticism: Studies on Alvar Aalto* (London: Academy Editions/New York: St Martin's Press, 1982).

25. Demetri Porphyrios, 'On the Methodology of Architectural History', *Architectural Design* 51, no. 6–7 (1981) (*A.D. Profile* no. 35: *Building & Rational Architecture,* ed. Demetri Porphyrios).

26. Porphyrios, 'Note on a method', in ibid., 96.

27. Ibid., 99.

28. Léon Krier, *Architecture: Choice or fate* (Winterbourne: Papadakis Publisher, 1998), first published in French in 1996, 199.

29. Anthony Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); epilogue, 'Postmodern or Posthistoire?' 191–200.

30. Paolo Portoghesi, 'The End of Prohibitionism', in *The Presence of the Past, First International Exhibition of Architecture*, ed. Gabriella Borsano (Milan: Electa,1980), 9.

31. Manfredo Tafuri and Georges Teyssot, 'Classical Melancholies', in Porphyrios, *Classicism is not a Style*, 7.

32. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

33. David Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c. 1820–1977', ibid., 101–64.

34. Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in Hobsbawm; *Invention*, 1–14.

35. Eric Hobsbawm, 'The Social Function of the Past: Some Questions', *Past and Present* 55, no. 1 (May 1972): 3–17.

36. Eric Hobsbawm, 'Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914', in Hobsbawm and Ranger *Invention of Tradition*, 267.

37. Notably in Roger Scruton, *Fools, Frauds and Firebrands: Thinkers of the New Left* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

38. Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Architecture* (London: Methuen, 1979).

39. Ibid., 256.

40. Lynn Barber, 'The Shock of the Old', *The Guardian,* 7 March 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/mar/07/architecture.

41. Robert Adam became an associate of Evans, Roberts and Partners in Winchester in 1977. The firm was reformed under the name Winchester Design in 1986, then Robert Adam Architects in 1992, and finally ADAM Architecture in March 2010.

42. Richard John, *Robert Adam: The Search for a Modern Classicism* (London: Images Publishing Group, 2010), 164–65.

43. William Chambers, *A Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture* (London: J. Haberkorn, 1759), 105 and further.

44. See Alan Colquhoun's criticism, 'Rational Architecture', *Architectural Design* 45, no. 6 (June 1975): 365–70; the catalogue was published later: *Rational Architecture Rationnelle* (Brussels: Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1978).

45. Stephen Parnell, 'Acroshaw: Forgotten, but not Forgiven', *Architecture and Culture* 6, no. 1 (2018): 7–8; John Summerson, *John Soane* (London: Academy Editions, 1983).

46. Cf. Michela Rosso, 'Classique et anticlassique : récits de l'architecture en Grande-Bretagne, entre XIXe et XXe siècles', in *Louis Hautecœur et la tradition classique*, ed. Antonio Brucculeri (Paris: INHA, 2008) (http:// books.openedition.org/inha/2931); Elizabeth McKellar, 'Popularism versus professionalism: John Summerson and the Twentieth-Century Creation of the "Georgian"', in *Articulating British Classicism: New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*, ed. Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (London: Ashgate, 2004), 35–56. John Summerson, *Inigo Jones* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983 [1966]); John Summerson, *The Life and Work of John Nash, Architect* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980); John Summerson, *Georgian London* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978 [1945]).

47. David Dunster, ed., *Edwin Lutyens* (London: Academy Editions, 1979). In 1988 RIBA organised an exhibition of Holden's drawings at the Heinz Gallery. Lucy Archer, *Raymond Erith, Architect* (Burford: The Cygnet Press, 1985); Lucy Archer, *Raymond Erith, East Anglian Architect* (Sudbury (Suffolk): Gainsborough's House, 1979).

48. Before Quinlan Terry, in 1958 Raymond Erith had been appointed as architect responsible for the site. He undertook the restoration of Nos. 10 and 11, and the full reconstruction of No. 12 Downing Street (1959–63). At the biennale, Terry exhibited the development of seven neo-Palladian houses at Frog Meadow in Dedham (Suffolk), 1967–80. See *La Presenza del passato: Prima mostra internazionale di architettura: Corderia dell'Arsenale: La Biennale di Venezia 1980, settore Architettura* (Venice: Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia, 1980), 300–1.

49. Michela Rosso, 'Heritage, Populism and Anti-Modernism in the Controversy of the Mansion House Square Scheme', in *Re-Framing Identities: Architecture's Turn to History, 1970–1990*, ed. Ákos Moravánszky and Torsten Lange (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016), 233.

50. Cf. Federico Ferrari, *Le Populisme esthétique. L'architecture comme outil identitaire* (Gollion: InFolio, 2015), 118–62 ; Michela Rosso, 'Il principe Carlo e il dibattito pubblico sull'architettura in Inghilterra', in *1970–2000. Episodi e temi di storia dell'architettura*, ed. Francesca Filippi, Luca Gibello and Manfredo Robilant (Turin : Celid, 2006), 97–106; Benoit Jacquet, 'Londres, capitale du post-modernisme ? Transformations des modèles et des pratiques de l'architecture dans la culture britannique à la fin du XXe siècle' (PhD thesis, Faculté de l'Environnement naturel, architectural et construit, EPFL, 2016), 125–185.

51. Charles, HRH The Prince of Wales, 'A speech by HRH the Prince of Wales at the 150th anniversary of the Royal Institute of British Architects', London: Hampton Court Palace, 30 May 1984, https://www.princeofwales.gov. uk/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-150th-anniversary-royal-institute-british-architects-riba-royal-gala.

52. The characterisation is by Charles Jencks, 'Ethics and Prince Charles', *Architectural Design* 59, no. 5–6 (1989) (*A.D. Profile* no. 79: *Prince Charles and the Architectural Debate*), 26. See *Architectural Design* 62, no. 5–6 (1992) (*A.D. Profile* no. 97: *Paternoster Square and the New Classical Tradition*, ed. Andrea Papadakis).

53. Rosso, 'Classique et anticlassique', 1–3.

54. Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London Verso, 2005), 74.

55. The argument that Prince Charles's championing of classical architecture serves a 'Christian Crusade' is

articulated by Jencks in 'Ethics and Prince Charles', 28–29.

56. Charles, HRH The Prince of Wales, speech for the Corporate of London Planning and Communication Committee's annual dinner at Mansion House, 1 December 1987 (https://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-corporation-london-planning-and-communication-committees-annual). Cf. Blaise Dupuis, 'La nouvelle ville traditionnelle: géographies d'un modèle urbain mobile' (PhD thesis, Faculty of Geography, Université de Neuchâtel, 2017), 127.

57. Ibid., 126–29.

58. As Benoit Jacquet has noted (Ibid., 218), the Institute was in operation between 1992 and 2001, located from October 1993 at Gloucester Gate, in one of the neoclassical villas bordering Regent's Park built by John Nash between 1810 and 1811.

59. Inspired by Léon Krier who is one of the founding members, the Urban Villages Group was set up in 1989 as a private organisation, becoming, in 1992, a public organisation under the name of Urban Villages Forum, before being integrated in the Prince's Foundation in 1998. Cf. Michelle Thompson-Fawcett, 'Envisioning Urban Villages: A Critique of a Movement and Two Urban Transformations (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, School of Geography, 1998).

60. Through the foundation he created in 1984, the businessman Richard H. Driehaus (born in 1942) has become one of the mentors of contemporary classical American architecture. The first winners of the Driehaus Architecture Prize, founded in 2003, were Léon Krier (2003), Demetri Porphyrios (2004), and Quinlan Terry (2005).

61. Ferrari, *Le Populisme esthétique*, 91–117; Dupuis, 'La nouvelle ville traditionnelle', 282–97.

62. Ben Pentreath, Georges Saumarez Smith and Francis Terry, Three Classicists: (London: The Bardwell Press, 2010), 64.

63. Alan Powers, 'Classical Peaceniks', *The Spectator*, 22 May 2010, https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/classical-peaceniks. The term 'peaceniks' is a nickname for non-violent anti-war activists.

64. Charles Renouvier, Uchronie (l'utopie dans l'histoire): Esquisse historique apocryphe du développement de la civilisation européenne tel qu'il n'a pas été, tel qu'il aurait pu être (Paris : La Critique philosophique, 1876), II.

65. Pierre Chabard, 'Fresh Classicism', *Criticat* no. 20 (Spring 2018): 66–83.

66. Charles, HRH Prince of Wales, *A Vision of Britain: A Personal View of Architecture* (London, Doubleday, 1989), 56–57.

67. Canaletto, *London: The Thames from Somerset House Terrace towards the City, 1750–51*, The Royal Collection of the UK. Charles, HRH Prince of Wales, *A Vision of Britain*, 55.

68. Prince Charles used this argument in his 1987 Mansion House speech.

69. Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), 14.

70. Krier, *Architecture: Choice or fate*, 205.

71. Bauman, *Retrotopia,* 14.

72. 'Community' is none other than the last of the ten commandments of architecture given by Prince Charles in *A Vision of Britain*, 96.

73. *Creating space for beauty: The Interim Report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission* (July 2019), 19.

74. Luc Boltanski and Arnaud Esquerre, *Enrichment: A Critique of Commodities,* trans. Catherine Porter (London: Wiley, 2020 [2017]).

75. Ibid., 11.

76. Ibid., 10–11.

Biography

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