

LIFE OF ANDREA PALLADIO

Andrea Palladio was born in Padua on November the 30th 1508. His parents were humble people: his father, *Paolo della Gondola*, was a miller and his mother Marta a housewife. It was his godfather, the sculptor Vincenzo Grandi who was the first to introduce him to sculpture, design and managing projects.

Young Palladio grew up in a time of conflict, when the Venetian Republic, who ruled Padua, was fighting for power on the mainland with the League of Cambrai. In 1521 at the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to Bartolomeo Cavazza, a highly regarded stonemason. At the age of fifteen he moved to Vicenza, where he was introduced by Vincenzo Grandi to the Pedemuro workshop of Giovanni di Giacomo da Porlezza e Girolamo Pittoni. In 1524 he was accepted into the guild of bricklayers, stonemasons and sculptors of Vicenza.

Working with Pedemuro brought him in touch with important buyers, influential local families, intellectuals and architects. These were formative years of practice and study, when Palladio expanded his circle of acquaintances, deepened his knowledge and studied ancient art. They also led to his meeting with Gian Giorgio Trissino, who was to have a great influence on him, and who was to introduce him to the theories of Vitruvius. Andrea changed his name (to Palladio) and in 1541 visited Rome with Trissino: this journey was to be essential for him, allowing him to finally see and experience the arts that he had for so long studied and imagined. This immersion in beauty and ancient art was to inspire him for ever.

In 1534 Palladio married Allegradonna; the couple was to have 5 children.

In the 1530s he received the first commissions to design and build the *villas*: the first was Villa Godi, in Lonedo, designed in 1537; then Villa Pisani in Lonigo (1542), Villa Pojana in Pojana Maggiore, Villa Chiericati in Vancimuglio, Villa Pisani in Montagnana, Villa Cornaro in Piombino Dese (1552), Villa Badoer in Fratta Polesine (1554), Villa Barbaro and the Tempietto Barbaro in Maser, Villa Emo in Fanzolo, Villa Foscari (known as La Malcontenta) in Mira, and one of his last works, the Villa Almerico-Capra (La Rotonda) in Vicenza.

Palladio built a number of important buildings in Vicenza, including several palaces for noble families, the Basilica Palladiana, the Teatro Olimpico, as well as works in Venice (Convento della Carità, church of San Giorgio Maggiore, and the facade of the church of the Redentore).

In 1570 he published his theoretical work, the Four Book of Architecture, which was to inspire generations of architects.

Palladio died in 1580 at the age of 71, at Maser, of unknown causes and was buried in the church of Santa Corona in Vicenza. In 1844 a new tomb was built in a chapel devoted to him in the principal cemetery of Vicenza.