

Idea and ideal. Vaults and cupolas in Palladio's Villa Foscari

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Abstract In this paper, we present an analysis of a series of interpretive three-dimensional models developed to discuss the form and the geometric solution of vaults proposed by Andrea Palladio for the Villa Foscari – Malcontenta di Mira (1559). Designed to reveal the solution adopted in the four different vaults used as ceiling in the Villa's rooms, these models evince the relationship between each of the parts and the whole of the building. The relationships between breadth, length, and height in each room, between one room and the other, and between each room and the central room can be seen in the models and reveal the organic compositional structure of the whole volume built. We compare the solution specific to Villa Foscari with the ideal definitions presented in *The Four Books on Architecture*, in which Palladio discusses the six possible vault forms to cover the rooms.

Keywords architecture of the renaissance, representation, domes