

# *Travels of Neoclassical Artists and “Imitation” of the Antique: Robert Wood (1717-71) and Approaches to the Ruins of Palmyra and Baalbek as Journeys through Space and Time*

Lynda Mulvin

University College Dublin

*Neoclassical pictorial representations created new and original images of the ancient world, providing at once access to antiquity and a shared continuity with the past with travel to remote sites as a major achievement of the eighteenth century. This paper focuses on artists who spanned great distances in space and time and the bold range of images produced of ruins which captured the imagination, since early expeditions were published. The reception and stylistic impact of these pictorial creations is measured by simultaneous translations of publications into French and German, as knowledge of the ruins of Roman cities of Palmyra and Baalbek gained a reputation architecturally as jewels in the Mediterranean constellation. The Palmyrene colonnades were lost until seventeenth century when travelling artist Cornelius De Bruin (1652-1726), revealed their glory to the western world in a large scale panorama, recalling Zenobia’s legendary city. Eighteenth century depictions of the “Bride of the Desert,” were portrayed in Johann Bernhard Fischer Von Erlach’s (1656-1723) renowned fish-eye view and Denis Diderot’s (1713-84) reconstructions of the Temple of Bel. Travelling artists noticeably featured sweeping perspectives of the colonnades in Palmyra and Baalbek and varied elements of architectural sculpture and ornament. Unpublished notes by Robert Wood (1717-71) are presented here as this first scientific expedition journeyed to the Levant, resulting in Ruins of Palmyra Otherwise Tedmor, in the desert (1753). This paper questions Neoclassical representations and impact, creating new art historical and theoretical models for modernity from Levantine imagery, opening up vistas of visible remains. Horace Walpole proclaimed “the pomp of the buildings has not a nobler air than the simplicity of the narration.” Gavin Hamilton (1758) captured the moment of discovery of Palmyra, fore-fronting the colonnaded street, revealed as a great capriccio as the crescendo of such wondrous discoveries became a window onto the ancient world.*

*Keywords: Neoclassicism; architectural drawings; Palmyra and Baalbek; space and time; antiquarian travellers; Robert Wood*

Lynda Mulvin, “Travels of Neoclassical Artists and ‘Imitation’ of the Antique: Robert Wood (1717-71) and Approaches to the Ruins of Palmyra and Baalbek as Journeys through Space and Time” in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand 36, Distance Looks Back*, edited by Victoria Jackson Wyatt, Andrew Leach and Lee Stickells (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2020), 287-300. Accepted for publication November 10, 2019.

This paper has a three strand approach: the first explores the legacy of the architectural drawings and the impact of the rediscovery of ancient classical sites of Palmyra and Baalbek on Neoclassicism. This is measured from the wider acclaim of the publications by Robert Wood of *Ruins of Palmyra, Otherwise Tedmor, in the desert* (London: 1753) and *Ruins of Balbec, Otherwise Heliopolis in Coelosyria* (London: 1757). The approach to the archaeological sites is analysed here in terms of responses, as the unpublished extracts from diaries of Robert Wood are presented as his first impressions, as the sites were discovered. From the outset Wood's primary goal was to inform the reader about the discoveries and attract public interest with illustrations of great accuracy and of quality and enough visual architectural detail to enable the drawings to be copied for use in architectural design, serving Neoclassical architecture.

The second strand looks to networks of architectural modernity beginning through the agency of architects and antiquarians in the eighteenth and nineteenth century with Rome as the centre. Their findings published in architectural publications, were disseminated to European capitals, instilling Neoclassical design in architecture and ornament. The reception of ideas and the stylistic impact of these illustrated volumes is measured by the simultaneous translation of publications into French and German. For example, in 1757 *Ruins of Balbec* was translated into French and reviewed by Abbé Barthélemy in the *Journal des Savants*, while Louis Francois Cassas, in *Voyage pittoresque de la Syrie* (1799), complimented Wood's Palmyra volume.<sup>1</sup> Horace Walpole referred to the work on *Ruins of Palmyra* as a noble book, with prints finely engraved "as an admirable dissertation."<sup>2</sup> The impact of Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra and Ruins of Balbec* are seen as a part of innate plans where the politics of ornament created a constant dialogue, as elements of trans-European mobility. Neoclassical style provided models for architecture design, disseminated through public works and private patronage, combined new scientific methods. European cities therefore became building sites for works by some of the most significant architects of the day constructing the built heritage in a Neoclassical paradigm.

The third strand explores the varied records of the antique cities of Palmyra and Baalbek by several European explorers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries culminating in the expeditions by Robert Wood and his team of researchers. Wood's expedition is notable as is this sequence of images of discovery of the sites, with new material presented as unpublished notes from Wood's Donation, adding to a growing

<sup>1</sup> See Elisabeth A. Fraser, *Mediterranean Encounters: Artists between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, 1774-1839* (College Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017), esp. chap 2 focus on Cassas.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Cunningham (ed.), *The Letters of Horace Walpole* (Edinburgh: Dobson, 1906), vol. 2, 364. See Bruce Redford, *Dilettanti: The Antic and the Antique in Eighteenth-Century England* (Los Angeles: John Paul Getty Museum, 2008), 45-56.

body of knowledge detailing the approach to the ancient cities.<sup>3</sup> His unpublished notes provide insights into the expeditions' working methodology and first impressions of Palmyra and Baalbek, as the rediscovery of these cities. Wood's notes provide a personal account of an undisturbed setting of continuously occupied settlement, during the first moments of this unique discovery, coupled with impressions on seeing the elaborate Orders of Architecture: his opinions on ornament deserves to be integrated into the growing discourse on Taste and the Antique. When taken together with topography of these sites and local peoples, this new material demonstrates Wood's intention of presenting classical antiquity imperpetuity. Moreover, this material evidence, when added to the range of scientific images produced by this excursion, and to the other travelling antiquarians and artists, demonstrates the prescience of these travellers, from the first expeditions, published in the seventeenth century to the approaching Age of Enlightenment in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The expedition in the Levant and the idea for the voyage of James Dawkins, John Bouverie and Robert Wood grew out of knowledge of pending Athenian expeditions, with the "advantage to the publick" as the incentive for these expeditions.<sup>4</sup> These publications would advance Neoclassical studies well into the nineteenth century, as they evolved from the myth of Palmyra and Baalbek, and the approach to the ruins captured the neoclassical imagination. These mythical sites became a trope for the classical scholar, as revealed in drawings, engravings, and paintings from

3 Extant diaries of Robert Wood, James Dawkins, John Bouverie and Giovanni Battista Borras's sketchbooks were deposited in the Institute of Archaeology, Society of Hellenic and Roman Studies, London; transcribed and catalogued by late Professor Michael McCarthy, UCD School of Art History in 1975 and made available by his family after his untimely death. His notes are in the Irish Architectural Archive. Grateful thanks also owing to the Librarian of the Joint Libraries of the Hellenic and Roman Societies who facilitated this research.

4 C. A. Hutton, "The Travels of 'Palmyra' Wood in 1750-51," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 47 (1927): 102-28; and Dora Wiseman, *Sources of Greek Revival Architecture* (London: Zwemmer, 1969), 30-31.

Figure 1. Palmyra Colonnaded Street. (Photograph by author.)





seventeenth century onwards: Cornelius De Bruijn (1652-1726), Fischer von Erlach (1656-1723), Giovanni Battista Borra (1713-70), and Denis Diderot (1713-83) would illustrate the experience of visiting these ruins, meticulously detailed as part of the human experience and these responses then made available to the growing network of Grand tourists.<sup>5</sup> Neoclassical pictorial representations created new and original images of the ancient world, providing at once access to antiquity and a shared continuity with the past. Such art images propagated the Neoclassical concept of imitation of the past, through reproduction of accurate observations and representations of the antique building tradition in published monographs.

## 2 Ruins of Palmyra

Since antiquity, Palmyra was depicted from the perspective of the colonnaded streetscape. A thriving city from its establishment, with the Hellenistic settlement clustered along the Wadi-al-Suraysir from north-west to south-east stopping at the oasis.<sup>6</sup> The city expanded to include the construction of the Temple of Bel on one side and a colonnade towards the Agora by the end of the first century AD. The colonnade was cut by a transverse street, the main open space an oval forum inside the Damascus gate and a third and fourth intersecting street, with a tetrapylon adjusted for the orientation of the temple site. A necropolis lay outside the walls. During the third century AD, this was a flourishing cosmopolitan centre at an oasis crossroads, in which the Persian and Greco-Roman world merged in complex ways with Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, the leader who challenged the might of Rome and Emperor Aurelian, an idea that later fired Romantic sensibilities (fig. 1 & 2).

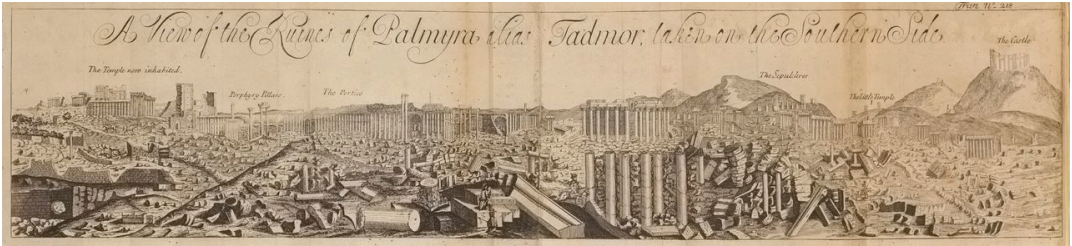
### 2.1 Seventeenth Century Expeditions to Palmyra

Tadmor (Tadmor) grew up around the ruins of Palmyra, as the Roman city was abandoned overtime to be occupied overtime by Arabs settlers. The ruins would become a destination for European travellers in the seventeenth century, evoking the

Figure 2. Palmyra Colonnaded View. Engraving by Thos. Major, for Robert Wood, *The Ruins of Palmyra, otherwise Tedmor, in the Desert* (1753). (Private Collection.)

<sup>5</sup> See the discussion of the reception of the archaic Greek temples at Paestum with reference to diversity of visitors' engagement and responses, in the recent publication of Sigrid de Jong, *Rediscovering Architecture: Paestum in Eighteenth-Century Architectural Experience and Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Ross Burns, *Origins of Colonnaded Streets in the Roman East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 239-51.



glorious past of the grandeur of the Roman Empire. Combined efforts to establish the archaeological legacy of Palmyra, in an excursion of British merchants in 1678 and 1691 led by William Halifax (1655-1718), Chaplain of Aleppo (1688-95), were reported to the Royal Society and published in *Philosophical Transactions* (1695). The account detailed landscape and environment of natural surroundings, including landmarks such as castles, aqueducts and ancient inscriptions, and references to local inhabitants. Halifax’s narrative was divided into ten parts from “Tadmor Castle,” “The Valley of Salt,” “Tadmor,” “The Temple,” “A Mosque,” “An Obelisk,” “The Banqueting-House,” “The Palace,” “The little Temple” and “The Sepulchres” written into the margins.<sup>7</sup> These points of interest would become a visual narrative of the city. The panoramic engraving “A view of the Ruines of Palmyra alias Tadmor, taken on the Southern Side” (fig. 3) resulted from this expedition.

A coinciding tour involving Dutch explorer Cornelis de Bruijn (1652-1727) with artist Gisbert Cuper (1644-1716), combined with information from a diplomatic travelogue of Consul Coenraad Kalkbrenner (1687-89), resulting in an image copied by de Bruijn (1652-1727).<sup>8</sup> Political manoeuvres by British and Dutch East India companies, vied for information for trade along the silk roads (fig. 4).

The painting viewpoint has a wide vantagepoint as the city was revealed in glorious panorama, recalling the Halifax expedition and in all likelihood drawing on this earlier image.<sup>9</sup> Another early eighteenth century depiction, Johann Bernhard Fischer Von Erlach’s renowned fish-eye view, was also based on this panoramic sweep over the site with a focal point of the triumphal arch in the background along the colonnaded street (fig. 5). Von

Figure 3. “A view of the Ruines of Palmyra alias Tadmor, taken on the Southern Side.” Reproduction from *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (London) 218 (1695), before 125. (Private Collection)

7 See “An extract of the Journals of Two Several Voyages of the English Merchants of the Factory of Aleppo, to Tadmor, Anciently Call’d Palmyra”, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (London) 19 (1695), 129–160; and “A view of the Ruines of Palmyra alias Tadmor, taken on the Southern Side,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (London) 218 (1695), 83–110.

8 This painting has undergone recent restoration at Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam, and is on loan to an exhibition on Palmyra, N.Y. Carlsberg Glyptotek Copenhagen in September 2019. This information was kindly provided by Director of Allard Pierson Museum, Professor Wim Hupperetz. Gerald Jurriens-Helle, *Cornelius de Bruijn Voyages from Rome to Jerusalem and from Moscow to Batavia* (Amsterdam: Allard Pierson Museum, 1988), 4-7. The dynamism of several English Chaplains of Aleppo would create a momentum, published in notes recorded in *Philosophical Transactions* (1695).

9 Gregorio Astengo, “The Rediscovery of Palmyra and its Dissemination in *Philosophical Transactions*,” *The Royal Society* (2016): 1-9.

Figure 4. Cornelis de Bruijn and artist Gisbert Cuper with Consul Coenraad Kalkbrenner. (Courtesy of Allard Pierson Museum Amsterdam.) (Photograph by author)





Figure 5. Fischer Von Erlach, Interior View Palmyra 1700. (Private Collection.)



Figure 6. Denis Diderot, Palmyra Temple of Bel, engraving by J.A. Defehrt, *The Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire raisonne des sciences, des arts et des metiers, par une Societe de Gens de lettres* (1767). (Private Collection.)

Erlach spent years as court architect to Charles IV, gathering information on the most notable buildings in the known world for his *A Plan of Civil and Historical Architecture* (1721), featured Palmyra and this image also learned from the Dutch/English panorama as a precedent.<sup>10</sup>

Equally, Denis Diderot (1713-84) in *Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire raisonne des sciences, des arts et des metiers, par une Societe de Gens de lettres* (1767), produced a reference work for the arts and sciences focused on specific reconstructions of the Temple of Bel, Palmyra, engraved by J.A. Defehrt. These images paved the way for politicisation of ruins. As Diderot said “The ideas ruins evoke in me are grand. Everything comes to nothing, everything perishes, everything passes, only the world remains, only time endures ...”<sup>11</sup> His engravings featured plans, sections and perspectives of the colonnades in Palmyra and Baalbek (fig. 6).

## 2.2 An Expanding Network of Scholars from Rome Outwards

A major archaeological expedition to the Levant in 1750-51, was led by Irish Classical scholar Robert Wood (1717-71). Wood developed a keen interest in classical antiquity at Oxford, and together with James Dawkins (1722-57) and John Bouverie (1723-50) and Giovanni Battista Borra (1713-70), explored the remote regions including “most of the islands of the Archipelago, part of Greece in Europe; the Asiatick and European coasts of the Hellespont, Propontis, Bosphorus, as far as the Black-sea, most of the inland parts of Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine and Egypt.”<sup>12</sup> Wood’s tour to the Levant was a joint enterprise and one that turned “antiquarian tradition of individual voyages into a collaborative enterprise of a team of experts with a clear distribution of assignments.”<sup>13</sup> Wood had interest in translating inscriptions and capturing topography, Dawkins was the patron who funded the expedition and the ensuing publications, Bouverie was the antiquarian and Borra the draughtsman.<sup>14</sup> These publications combined architectural and topographical elements (fig. 7).<sup>15</sup>

Borra was receptive of this attitude and his ability to draw architecture and render detail accurately is indicative in his 103 rendered plates, for both publications, now held in Royal Institute of British Architects London.<sup>16</sup> Wood was elected to the Society of the Dilettanti, in 1763 and recommended that Richard Chandler with Nicolas Revett and William Pars be sent on mission in 1764 to record *Antiquities of Athens* (1764)

10 C.A. Hutton, “The Travels of ‘Palmyra’ Wood in 1750-51,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 47 (1927): 102-28.

11 Denis Diderot was a French philosopher, art critic and writer. Jean le Rond d’Alembert (1717-83) was a French mathematician, mechanician, physicist and philosopher. These plates are engraved by J.A. Defehrt and Bonaventure/Benoit-Louis Prevost after J.R. Lucotte or Goussier. Size (in inch): The overall size is ca. 16.1 x 10.2 inches. The image size is ca. 13 x 8.3 inch. Size (in cm): The overall size is ca. 41 x 26 cm. The image size is ca. 33 x 21 cm. The *Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire raisonne des sciences, des arts et des metiers, par une Societe de Gens de lettres* was published under the direction of Diderot and d’Alembert, with 17 volumes of text and 11 volumes of plates between 1751 and 1772.

12 In 1750 Wood travelled to the Troad and his pioneering survey of the area is added to his later pioneering study, *Essay on the original Genius and Writings of Homer*, published posthumously in 1776. He spoke here of “the humble duty of bearing testimony as an eye witness,” Wood (1757), 16. See John V. Luce, *Celebrating Homer’s Landscapes Troy and Ithaca Revisited* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 23-28; Olga Zoller, “Giovanni Battista Borra And Robert Wood: Arguments for the Revival of a Mid Eighteenth Century Book Project” in *A Culture of Translation: British and Irish Scholarship in the Gennadius Library (1740-1840)* ed. Lynda Mulvin, *The New Griffon*, 13 (Athens: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2012), 61-70. Grateful thanks is due to the Late Professor Emeritus Michael McCarthy, University College Dublin, School of Art History and Cultural Policy who transcribed the extant diaries of Robert Wood, James Dawkins and John Bouverie, where they are deposited in Joint Library of Hellenic and Roman Societies. His notes and sources are in the Irish Architectural Archive.

13 Zoller, “Giovanni Battista Borra and Robert Wood,” 28-35.

14 See Zoller, “Giovanni Battista Borra and Robert Wood,” 28-35. Also Baalbek recorded by Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East and Some other Countries* (1745). See Rachel Finnegan, *English Explorers in the East (1738-1745), The Travels of Thomas Shaw, Charles Perry and Richard Pococke* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 181-269.

15 Robert Wood, *The Ruins of Palmyra otherwise Tedmor, in the Desart* (1753), v.

16 The drawing for the plates published in the books of Palmyra and Baalbek are preserved in the Royal Institute of British Architects library there are 98 finished wash drawings in Yale Centre for British Art and 400 sheets of drawings taken in situ are complemented by sketch books held in Society of Promotion of Hellenic studies in University of London. With Dawkins death 1757 and Robert Wood entering political life, halted any further publication of this varied rich seam of work. James Stuart wrote “the world will have the pleasure of admiring the number and beauty of the remains of Asia Minor when Mr Wood’s leisure will permit him to publish that part of his travels.” Wood was a keen supporter during his life elected as FSA in 1763.

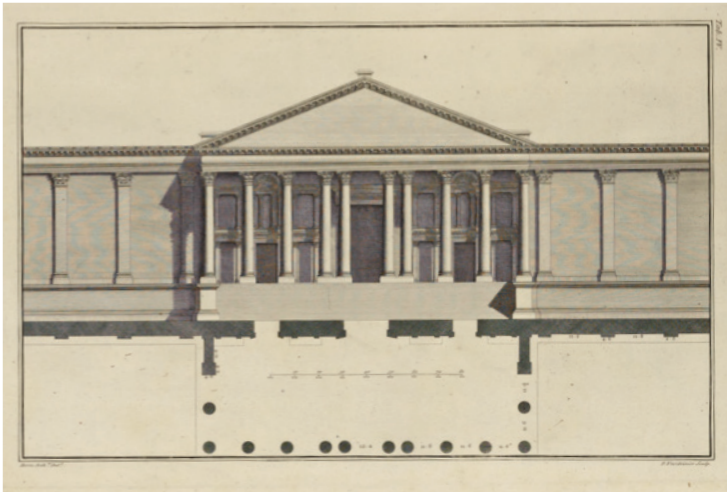


Figure 7. Drawing by G.B. Borra and engraving by P. Fournier for Robert Wood, *The Ruins of Palmyra, otherwise Tedmor, in the Desert* (1753).

and publish *Ionian Antiquities* (1769). The combined effect of the Stuart-Revetts proposal was already being made felt.<sup>17</sup> The social circles that they moved in in Rome encouraged intellectual debate with the discovery of antique at the forefront of the cultural conversations.<sup>18</sup> The written English language narratives would make their way into contemporary learned libraries, a copy of *Ruins of Palmyra* was collected in Library of Archbishop Marsh of Dublin established in 1707, where accounts of first hand travelling experiences and volumes dealing with inscriptions and epigraphic findings.<sup>19</sup>

The corresponding set of unpublished notes by Robert Wood (1717-71) presented here, demonstrate the expansive nature of this undertaking as this first scientific expedition journeyed to the Levant. Wood expressed in the introduction to *Ruins of Balbec*, the empirical attitude combining information to cater for the meticulous copying of classical orders with a view to informing modern design. The notes below are descriptive with a level of detail which does not find its way into the published volume.

17 Lynda Mulvin, "Charles Robert Cockerell and *Ionian Antiquities*," in *A Culture of Translation*, ed. Mulvin, 95-109.

18 Later the network would be expanded in Rome to include the Circle of Caledonians, which included Allan Ramsay and Robert Adam. Adam would design a mausoleum for Wood. The portrait of Wood painted by Ramsay 1755 depicts a fresh young man writing with a map of Greece *ILLESPONTO/EVROPA*. Brendan Cassidy, "The Reception of Gavin Hamilton's Paintings" in *The Fusion of Neoclassical Principles*, ed. Lynda Mulvin (Dublin: Wordwell, 2012), 41-53.

19 Muriel McCarthy and Caroline Sherwood-Smith, *The Wisdom of the East, Marsh's Oriental Books* (Dublin, Marsh's Library, 1999), 1-10.

### 2.3 Wood 18A Unpaginated in the hand of Wood's Daughter

*We entered the plain extending itself northward and a little to the east a perte de vue and having on our right and left a chain of hills which might be about ten miles or more distant from each other. This plain is like the desert that I passed in going to the Euphrates, being gravelly, though not equally so, some parts being hard,*



*others soft and sandy with tufts of wild thyme here and there of a fine smell, also great quantities of Kele, particularly towards Palmyra. ...*

*We had at the same time the prospect of a most extensive desert plane to the south but advancing a little further we discovered the Ruins of the city, which the hill had covered.*

*I was vastly struck with so surprising a number of stately columns without any other sort of building all within, but of a stone which when it has lost its polish discovers a course vein though it looks extremely well.*

*We were led to what they call the Castle which is a most magnificent temple with a vast colonnade which has been built up in some parts to make a place of strength by the Turks. Within are about 20 or 30 mud houses which contain all the recent inhabitants of Palmyra making the wall round the temple serve as a defence against the wandering Arabs. ...*

*Upon the first survey that we made of these ruins, I observed in general, a most immoderate profusion of expence in the buildings that remain, No Order appears but the Corinthian, except a few Ionic pilasters mixed with the former in the great temple. The Windows, doors and all the pieces of frieze and cornice are loaded with ornament most of it extremely well finished; in short everything look like the work of Power and Riches and surprises no doubt greatly with its magnificence but seemed I think to show how the decline of good Taste. ...*

*There is no such thing as an elegant simple piece of architecture. Ornament and expence supply the place of Proportion ...; but that there are some things which might please even in Athens or Ionia. There is a particularity which I have never before saw which is that most of the columns have about the middle of the shaft a sort of modillon Sticking out, sometimes of the same stone with the shaft, and sometimes fixed in a hole cut in the column. It is I think they served as pedestals for statues. For most of the honorary inscriptions are either upon the face of those modillions or immediately under them on the column, and on top of the modillions are two marks for iron cramps with the places cut for feet, one foot a little before the other in the usual position of statues.*

Wood had strong views on the topic of design and taste versus the ornamentation of architecture. The published description was less copious and restrained, these notes demonstrate his first response expressing wonder at the discovery of the ruins in their historic setting. It is a significant view which will become part of the mainstream discourse on the decline of Taste in the Neoclassical discourse.<sup>20</sup>

*Those buildings which I have seen in Greece of the best architecture are almost all of the more simple plain Doric and Ionic, rarely the Corinthian. Which came later in vogue upon the decline of Taste. I observe that Order is most esteemed and still more ornamented than before, and I believe if we examine a little it into the rise and progress of all the fine arts. Architecture painting music and we may add poetry etc. in countries where they have flourished we shall in that after their happiest period the first stet to decay is always by too much never by too little ornament.*<sup>21</sup>

The Valley of the Tombs was a revered part of the site, and the expedition recorded the site making enduring observations (fig 8). Wood expressed his interest in these in his notes also.

*In the sepulchres at Palmyra are several mummies. Perhaps Zenobia, who was proud of being descended from Cleopatra, might affect to imitate Egyptian customs. ...*

*Such were the ruins of Palmyra, the most considerable remains of ancient expence and magnificences perhaps in the world; though both Rome and Athens no doubt show piece of architecture much more worth seeing for Taste and Proportion.*<sup>22</sup>

20 Joshua Reynolds (1723-92) in his *Discourses* wrote on the distinction between imitation and copying as a creative exercise and an artistic progression which reflected the many concerns of the new style of Neoclassicism explored principally through the work of Robert Wood. Fuelled by these discoveries the Society of the Dilettante in London would fund artistic drawings of the compilation and publication of *Antiquities of Athens* (1762) and *Ionian Antiquities* (1769) as the artist James Athenian Stuart (1713-88) and Nicola Revett (1720-1804) together with William Pars (1742-82) and Richard Chandler (1738-1810) would hence to Rome, Athens and Asia Minor. The expedition that led to the two volumes of *Ionian Antiquities* being published in 1769 and 1797 by order of the Society of the Dilettanti, London, has been well documented. R. Chandler was the “classical part of the plan and director of the whole operation,” N. Revett, the “province of architecture,” and W. Pars was the “painter taking in views and copying Bas reliefs.” Robert Wood was a guiding hand in the expedition, and his death in 1771 overshadowed the production of the latter volumes. They departed for the expedition from England in 1764 and went to Athens, Aegina, Epidaurus, Argos, Mycenae, and Delos. In 1766, they left for Ionia where they visited the Temple of Apollo Didymaeus, the Temple of Minerva in Priene, and the Temple at Teos, among other sites. These voyages are recorded in Lionel Cust, *History of the Society of the Dilettanti*, ed. Sidney Colvin (London and New York: Macmillan, 1914). For further analysis, see Jason M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti: Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

21 Two stone capitals from Baalbek were presented to the National Museum of Ireland, now untraced.



Figure 8. *Left*. Site Plan. (Drawing by G.B. Borra and engraving by P. Fournier for Robert Wood, *The Ruins of Palmyra, otherwise Tedmor, in the Desert* (1753)). *Right*. Valley of the Tombs. (Photograph by author.)

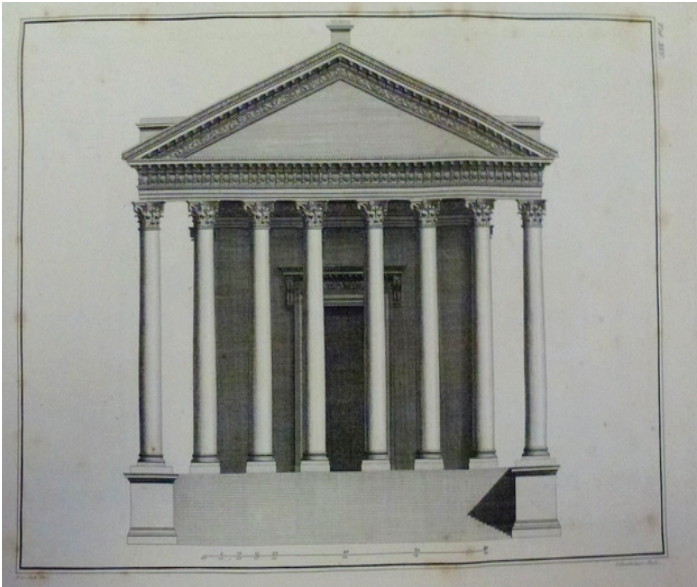


Figure 9. Drawing by G.B. Borra and engraving by P. Fournier for Robert Wood, *Ruins of Baalbek, otherwise Heliopolis in Coelosyria* (1757).

### 3 Ruins of Balbec

Wood's expedition continued north to Baalbek, resulting in *Ruins of Baalbek, otherwise Heliopolis in Coelosyria* (1757), with attention given to the temple of Bel engraved by G. B. Borra (1713-77) who captured the temple with scientific accuracy (fig. 9).

The situation and site of Heliopolis was noted for its scenic beauty, in the Bekaa valley between Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon ranges, Roman Syria.<sup>23</sup> The religious sanctuary began in the first century BC and completed by c. 250 AD.<sup>24</sup> Roman Baalbek had featured in Pococke's *A Description of the East* (1745), yet the publications of the drawings by Wood, were landmark by the addition of their measurements. From his diary entries which present further intimate knowledge about the site at Baalbek and his views on ornament are outlined more particularly here.

#### 3.1 Unpublished Diary Extract "Wood 18A" Temple at Balbec

*The inside of the temple where the statues etc. were standing must have been the richest imaginable Near this are the remains of a larger temple of which only nine pillars are standing with their entablature. They have the grandest air of anything I ever saw in architecture, It appears on the bases of four other parts*

<sup>22</sup> Wood also made reference Abulfeda (1273–1331), an Arab historian and geographer born at Damascus. *An Abridgment of the History of the Human Race*, 2 vols (Constantinople, 1869), written in the form of annals extending from the creation of the world to the year 1329. Wood's references to Athens are relevant as part of the circle in Rome. Wood encouraged their expedition by Stuart and Revett. Likewise Richard Chandler would join there expedition for the second such expedition published as the *Ionian Antiquities* in 1769, Chandler was a subscriber to *Ruins of Palmyra*. Wood went into politics. Wood remained part of the network in London after 1763 ensuring financial support to these expeditions to Athens and to Ionia.

<sup>23</sup> Francis Ragette, *Baalbek* (New Jersey: Princeton, 1980); Dell Upton, "Starting from Baalbek: Noah, Solomon, Saladin and the Fluidity of Architectural History," *Journal of Society of Architectural Historians* 68, no. 4 (2009): 457-65.

<sup>24</sup> John B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman and Imperial Architecture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), fig. 202. Much recent research has been carried out by French, Lebanese and German archaeological missions from 1930s, 50s and 60s and more recently the German mission led by Klaus Rheidt is in the process of completely surveying each building individually, refer to Margarete van Ess and Klaus Rheidt (eds.) *Baalbek – Heliopolis – 10000 Jahre Stadtgeschichte* (Darmstadt: Verlag Philip von Zabern, 2014).

of columns standing on the opposite side that the whole peristyle consisted of 10 in front and 19 on each side. ...

If we consider the architrave of the grand door (which is I think the most beautiful piece of rich work I ever saw), Consisting of one stone, and what is still more surprising the cornice of the Great temple at Balbec with several other immense stones raised to vast height. It will much lessen our surprise as to the raising of such stones as we have an account of in the temple of Diana at Ephesus See Pliny's description ... the ore I reflect upon these surprising works of Balbec and Tadmor, the more I am surprised there should be no satisfactory account handed down to us of them, Had they existed in Pliny's time the architrave of the temple of Diana would not have wanted the assistance of a goddess.

Subsequently, three of nine columns of the Temple of Jupiter drawn by GB. Borra fell in the earthquake in 1759, also recorded by James Bruce after 1759.<sup>25</sup> Wood described the grandeur of Baalbek before the destructive earthquake of 1759 and in these reflections appears to literally put the site on the map.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4 Reception and Responses in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The reception and stylistic impact of these pictorial creations is measured by simultaneous translations of publications into French and German, as knowledge of the ruins of Roman cities of Palmyra and Baalbek gained a reputation architecturally as lost cities of the Mediterranean.<sup>27</sup> Neoclassical painter Gavin Hamilton (1723-98) captured the moment of discovery of Palmyra by Wood, Dawkins and Bouverie in 1758, witnessing the event in Roman dress, in this viewpainting which forefronted the colonnaded street revealed through a theatrical frame, as a great *capriccio*, and window on to the ancient world. This genre was reflected in explorer paintings such as the depiction of Benjamin West (1738-1820), by Joseph Banks (1743-1820) in 1773 (a botanist on the HMS Endeavour expedition to Australia and New Zealand, 1768-71) and David Roberts (1796-1864) would later create such historicist scenes of the Baalbek keystone in his *Travels in the Holy Land* (1855).

For many, the colonnaded city of Palmyra and the temple at Baalbek became a sublime trope in the Age of Enlightenment and the defining image circumscribing Neoclassical art values. As foremost radical thinkers of the eighteenth century Diderot's

25 Norman N. Lewis, "Baalbek Before and After the Earthquake of 1759: the Drawings of James Bruce," in *The Journal of the Council for British Research in the Levant* 31 (1999): 241-53.

26 The publication *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) by fellow Irishman Edmund Burke linked Baalbek and the picturesque movement and implemented a change in the history of architecture and landscape in Europe, as intrinsic elements of Neoclassicism.

27 Mordecai Feingold, "Oriental studies," *The History of the University of Oxford* ed. N. Tyacke, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011), 449-503; Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London: F. Cass, 1935).

focus on presenting the monuments in the city in these drawings, was a further measure of the impact of Robert Wood's study. The encyclopaedia served as a treasury of Enlightenment ideas with knowledge coming from all corners of the globe.<sup>28</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

Robert Wood brought to bear a scholarly difference in his interest in combining the topography with the landscape vistas, completing the narrative with the details written down in his unpublished notes, and supplying information for a comprehensive land survey as well as images of the architectural detailing, plans, elevations and sections. The visualization of a building in this fragmented manner was a first, to become part of the canon of building studies utilized by James Stuart and Nicolas Revett in *Antiquities of Athens* (1762). The published accounts were well-rounded as the implied sequences of topographical maps and prospects of landscapes became central to the Neoclassical debate. The accurate identification of geographical features, followed by measured surveys of the architectural elements as well as recording the setting or geographical location of the sites, which would help to greatly improve understanding of the many isolated architectural members of plans, elevations and sections and decorative motifs in their context as was published.

Neoclassical artistic representations created impact in new art historical and theoretical models from Levantine imagery, attracted by the accuracy of the drawings and fascinated by picturesque sceneries. In translating monographs, notions of imitation from antiquity to present day, were disseminated through publication in several languages and for example were brought to Germany by Heinrich Gentz (1766-1811) who recommended Wood's Palmyra publication to his students at the Bauakademie (1806).<sup>29</sup> The widespread awareness of Wood's drawings of Palmyra and Baalbek was clear as these volumes were acquired by King George III for his library at Cumberland Lodge and acted as a source for details executed by Robert Adam (1728-92) for designs at Osterley and Syon House, and Adam would later design Robert Wood's mausoleum.<sup>30</sup> The nexus of this developing network was Rome where Wood and Borra would meet Adam, Chandler and Par. Wood acknowledges this network in his introduction to *Ruins of Palmyra*.

The impact of the rediscovery of the two most prominent ancient sites of Palmyra and Baalbek, on Neoclassicism was measured

28 Upton, "Starting from Baalbek," 457-65. The excavations of the ruins of Baalbek were later publicised by the visit by Kaiser Wilhelm II and his tour of the Holy Land in 1898, as ancestral homeland of the Holy Roman Empire, and as representing European culture planted autocratically in the east. Scientific analysis was introduced at Baalbek by the German Archaeological Mission 1898 building on Wood's 1750 mission, see van Ess and Rheidt ed., *Baalbek – Heliopolis*.

29 Adolph Doeber, *Heinrich Gentz; ein Berliner Baumeister um 1800* (Berlin: C. Heymann, 1916).

30 Robert Adam, three volume *Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* (published in installments between 1773 and 1822), see Miranda Jane Routh Hausberg, "Robert Adam's Revolution In Architecture" (PhD diss., Penn State University), 33-39. Also part of the Rome network and strategic planner was British architect Charles Robert Cockerell (1788-1863) who elaborated on the earlier expeditions and explorations of the Society of the Dilettanti. See Eileen Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 3-15 and David Watkin, *The Life and Work of C.R. Cockerell* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1974), 3-6. Cockerell recorded his new findings in two volumes of the Society of the Dilettanti's *Ionian Antiquities*. These were his copies. See Lynda Mulvin, "Charles Robert Cockerell and Ionian Antiquities in the Gennadius Library," in *A Culture of Translation* ed. Mulvin, 99-105; See also Susan Pearce and Theresa Ormrod, *Charles Robert Cockerell in the Mediterranean: Letters and Travels, 1810-1817* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer Press, 2017), 42-47.

in their wide acclaim. As more complete knowledge of the ruins filtered through, these cities gained a reputation architecturally by the eighteenth century as the jewels in the Mediterranean constellation. This was due to in part to the perspectives of the colonnades in Palmyra and the temples at Baalbek by artists. The void left by such recent acts of iconoclasm is a empty strike in the face of international community and global patrimony once established so forcefully by the expeditions from Halifax to De Bruijn to Wood and his colleagues, during seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by those most scientific explorers who captured the essence of taste and the antique though space and time.