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Neo-Palladian Architecture and the Construction of Britishness in *An Epistle to Burlington*[1]

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ABSTRACT

In Alexander Pope's *An Epistle to Burlington* (1731), Burlington is regarded as a British virtuoso whose neo-Palladian country house epitomises moderation, practicality and elegance. The simple but elegant structure of Burlington's house, which is in harmony with the cultivated natural world, becomes an emblem of British artistic taste. Furthermore, Burlington's house and garden are not decorative but have a functional role in the British moral agrarian economy, which is based on the reciprocal relationship between the landlord and his labourers. His house also embodies the classical virtues espoused by the Protestant Whigs, suggesting liberty, tolerance and democracy against tyranny and hegemony, which are related to French rule. This study examines Alexander Pope's *An Epistle to Burlington* to show that Burlington's neo-Palladian country house becomes a political agent in the construction and promotion of Britishness, revaluing the virtues of the classical heritage and embracing the legacy of pre-industrial, feudal British culture.

Keywords: *Alexander Pope, An Epistle to Burlington, Neo-Palladian Architecture, Country House, Britishness.*

An Epistle to Burlington Adlı Eserde Neo-Palladyan Mimari ve Britanyalılığın İnşası

ÖZET

Alexander Pope'un *An Epistle to Burlington* (1731) adlı eserinde Burlington, neo-Palladyan kır evi ölçülülük, pratiklik ve zarafetin temsilcisi olan Britanyalı bir virtüöz olarak görülür. Burlington'ın evinin insan eliyle geliştirilmiş doğal dünyayla uyum içindeki sade ama zarif yapısı, Britanya'nın sanatsal zevkinin bir simgesi haline gelir. Ayrıca, Burlington'ın evi ve bahçesi dekoratif değil, toprak sahibi ile işçileri arasındaki karşılıklı ilişkiye dayanan Britanya ahlaki tarım ekonomisinde işlevsel bir role sahiptir. Evi aynı zamanda Protestan Whig'ler tarafından benimsenen klasik erdemleri somutlaştırmakta, Fransız yönetimiyle ilişkili olan baskı ve hegemonyaya karşı özgürlük, hoşgörü ve demokrasiyi çağrıştırmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Alexander Pope'un *An Epistle to*

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Burlington adlı eserini inceleyerek, Burlington'ın neo-Palladyan kır evinin, klasik mirasın erdemlerini yeniden değerlendirerek ve sanayi öncesi, feodal Britanya kültürünün mirasını kucaklayarak, Britanyalılığın inşasında ve tanıtımında siyasi bir unsur haline geldiğini göstermeyi amaçlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Alexander Pope, An Epistle to Burlington, Neo-Palladyan Mimari, Kır Evi, Britanyalılık.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Neo-Palladian architecture, which was popular in early eighteenth-century Britain, favoured the simplicity of classical architecture against the excesses of French baroque architecture. Baroque style fall from favour since baroque houses were considered to be ostentatious and ornate. They were also incredibly expensive to build and were intended for social gatherings rather than residential purposes (Stuart, 1979, p. 24). On the other hand, British neo-Palladian country houses and the landscape gardens surrounding them were a counterpart to the grandiose and spectacular French baroque architecture. Hence, neo-Palladianism was "a manifestation of neo-classical feeling" to return to classical antiquity, associated with simplicity and regularity (Stutchbury,1967, p. 101; Townsend, 2006, p. 221). The interest in classicism, which "emphasized rule, form, [and] symmetry," was inspired mainly by the works of the ancient Roman architect Vitruvius, as well as by the Italian Renaissance architect "Andrea Palladio's early modern interpretation of them" (Day & Lynch, 2015, p. 59). In the seventeenth century, Inigo Jones influenced British architecture by combining the features of Jacobean architecture with the principles of classical Roman and Italian Renaissance styles (Tavernor, 1991, p. 145). On the other hand, Colen Campbell (1717), a proponent of British Vitruvio-Palladianism, highlighted the distinction of British architecture and its ability to compete with its European counterparts, thus he argued that the British should not "have so mean an Opinion of what is performed in [their] Country" (p. 1). Lord Burlington was also interested in the new style and initiated almost single-handedly a revival of Palladianism, considering the principles of ancient Roman architecture (Stuart, 1979, p. 25).

The new neo-Palladian style, which superseded the baroque, was related to patriotism, and it was an embodiment of "the new self-confident nationalism" (Tavernor, 1991, pp. 152, 153). Although there are debates over the origin of the term of "nationalism," some scholars argue that "nations and nationalism are a product of the second half of the eighteenth century" (Schwyzer, 2004, p. 8). Emphasising the poltical aspect of nationalism, Gellner (2006) defines nationalism as "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (p. 1). In a similar vein, Hobsbawm (1990) claims that "[n]ationalism comes before nation" (p. 10) as ethnic groups must have "a political agenda" before forming a nation (Joireman, 2003, p. 12). Although scholarship on nationalism has generally focused on the political aspect of nationalism and "the features fundamental to nations (e.g., myths of origin, common laws, a public culture)," they "rarely if ever make mention of aesthetic appeal" (Schwyzer, 2004, pp. 49-50). For instance, in

Britain, since the Tudor period, "most versions of English and British nationalism" have emphasised the socio-political aspects of nationalism, but Edmund Burke, an eighteenth-century British scholar, believed that what really achieves unity among a nation is aesthetics (Schwyzer, 2004, p. 49). Therefore, he accentuated the importance of aesthetics in fostering a love of one's country: "To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely" (Burke, 1846, p. 100). In the early eighteenth century, British nationalism was promoted through aesthetics and literature (Crocco, 2014). For instance, "*bardic criticism*," a form of literary criticism, promoted the idea of "the vernacular poet as a national bard" while advocating for "a vernacular national canon over the traditional European and Latin canon" (Crocco, 2014, p. 3). On the other hand, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the British looked to the Medieval Ages to find the roots of their national identity. In so doing, they sought to show their "unique qualities," including "the purported sincerity, honesty, and courage of their medieval ancestors," such as King Arthur, to rival and surpass other nations (Barczewski, 2000, pp. 27, 28). In search of "the historical foundations of their nation," including the origins of their socio-economic and political systems, they attempted to forge "a glorious and distinctive national history" (Barczewski, 2000, p. 28). Neo-Palladian style was also employed as a form of aesthetics to promote a sense of Britishness and to demonstrate Britain's emancipation from the influence of contemporary, decaying civilisations, like France and Italy. Both neo-Palladian country houses and the gardens around them were transformed and redesigned in response to foreign artistic influences in Britain. The gardens of neo-Palladian houses were aligned with the English landscape movement, which began in the early eighteenth century as a reaction to the formality brought by French artistic taste. The movement demanded "less contrived scenery" and refused French domination in both art and politics (Hunt & Willis, 2000, p. 8). As nature was valued in its wild and irregular form, country house owners used more natural, serpentine features in their gardens in the mid-eighteenth century (Williamson, 1995; Jacques, 1990). Moreover, English gardens, unlike French formal gardens, had belts and serpentine lakes instead of regular and geometric landscapes (Williamson, 1995). The English landscape movement also supported freedom and tolerance against oppression and dictatorship, and democracy against tyranny (Hunt & Willis, 2000), thus the English landscape garden became a symbol of political liberty in Britain (Weltman-Aron, 2001).

Neo-Palladian architecture can also be associated with British imperialism and Protestantism. Britain was a proponent of the Palladian style in Europe and worldwide because of its vast colonial power (Guerrieri, 2021). British neo-Palladianism was introduced to India by Lord Wellesley, who was made Governor-General of the Indian Colonies in 1798 (Guerrieri, 2021). The Government House in Calcutta was a public building which was among Lord Wellesley's building projects, and it was meant to be a sign of British imperial power (Guerrieri, 2021). Therefore, Wellesley's aim to make an advance in architecture in India was merged with a desire to enforce and foster British imperial power (Nilsson, 1968). It was also supposed to contribute to "the construction of a recognisable British colonial identity" (Guerrieri, 2021, p. 2). Lord Wellesley recognised that the French architectural style employed in India was influenced by the rococo and

baroque styles (Smith-Parr, 1984), thus he preferred to use British neo-Palladianism in India as he "could not afford to permit the identity of the British colony to be confused with that of the enemy" (Guerrieri, 2021, p. 3). Protestantism and the neo-Palladian architectural style are also deeply intertwined. Since Britons were aware of the threats posed by French Catholicism against the safety and welfare of their Protestant country, they associated the political rule of Catholics with tyranny, coercion and ferocity, a thought that was often described as "popery" (Jones, 2020, p. 234). Even the rival British parties, the Whigs and the Tories, "were united in their efforts to ensure a Protestant succession" (Boults & Sullivan, 2010, p. 151). Refuting their ideas on Catholicism, Britons produced "[a] Protestant British imperial identity that celebrated economic prosperity, personal liberty, and religious toleration" to distinguish themselves from their enemies (Jones, 2020, p. 234). Alexander Pope himself was against the tyranny of popery although he was a Catholic, and in a letter to the Bishop of Rochester, he states that he is not "a Roman Catholic, or a French Catholic, or a Spanish Catholic, but a true Catholic" who loves his country (1824, p. 195). Therefore, when the Hanoverians were to succeed to the British throne after the death of Queen Anne's only immediate heir, the Duke of Gloucester, in 1700, it was necessary for the House of Hanover to appear in public as a defender of the Protestant faith (Arciszewska, 2020). As such, Roman baroque architecture was rejected by the Hanoverians because it was adopted by most German Catholic princes (Arciszewska, 2020). Moreover, the Hanoverian court rejected French baroque style since they embraced an anti-French policy that served their political aspirations within the Empire (Arciszewska, 2020).

Alexander Pope celebrates the transition from the baroque style to the neo-Palladian style, which embodies the elegance and simplicity of classical architecture, in *An Epistle to Burlington* (1731). Pope's poem praises Lord Burlington for using his wealth to spread good taste across his lands. Burlington's neo-Palladian country house becomes a symbol of Protestant British imperial identity, epitomising liberty, democracy and tolerance, as well as British artistic taste, characterised by features such as elegance, simplicity, modesty, and harmony. It is also governed by the principles of feudal Britain, which relied on the mutual responsibilities of landlords and their tenants, who were expected to ensure their community's prosperity. The function of architecture and the country house in Pope's epistle has been the subject of some scholarship. William A. Gibson (1971) studies the impacts of the tenets of Renaissance architecture, especially magnificence, use and decor, in *An Epistle to Burlington*, arguing that while Timon's villa appears as "the antithesis of 'Magnificence'," the examples and values of Burlington demonstrate how it can be accomplished (p. 487). Furthermore, Philip Ayres (1990) studies the Vitruvian analogies in the poem, acknowledging "Burlington's and Pope's direct knowledge of Vitruvius," who was not only engaged in architecture but also in public enterprises, like construction of harbours and establishment of buildings against flood and storm (pp. 430, 441). James R. Aubrey (1983), however, focuses on the role of Timon's villa in assisting Pope to convey his ideas on good taste and "his late Renaissance assumptions that good art is moral and hierarchical" (326). On the other hand, Kevin J. Gardner (2004) explores the relationship between generosity, prodigality, and the British country house in Pope's *An Epistle to*

Burlington to show the intricate aspects of Burlington's bounty, which has "some very subtle deflation," and Timon's wastefulness, which "has its benefits" (p. 26). Finally, Peter Dixon (2022) points to the "unexpected nationalism" in the epistle and argues that it might be related to Burlington's sympathy for the Whigs, who were specifically related to Palladianism, which was "strongly patriotic in feeling" (p. 61). Extending the previous arguments, this study claims that in *An Epistle to Burlington*, Pope fosters a sense of Brtishness by idealising Burlington's neo-Palladian country house, which epitomises British identity with its feudal moral economy and classical, elegant and simple design. Accordingly, this study examines Pope's *An Epistle to Burlington* to show that Burlington's neo-Palladian country house constructs and promotes British cultural mores and national identity, exalting the merits of the classical legacy and epitomising the precepts of pre-industrial, feudal Britain.

2. NEO-PALLADIAN COUNTRY HOUSE AS AN EMBLEM OF BRITISH TASTE AND IDENTITY IN *AN EPISTLE TO BURLINGTON*

Alexander Pope's *An Epistle to Burlington* celebrates the replacement of ostentatious, ornamental baroque architecture with neo-Palladian British architecture, which was influenced by the classical style. Pope praises Burlington for using his fortune to bring wealth and refinement to his lands, avoiding ostentation and artificiality, which were related to French baroque style. He also praises Burlington's artistic taste that merges nature with nurture to create a simple yet elegant landscape:

> To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
> To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend,
> To swell the Terras, or to sink the Grot;
> In all, let Nature never be forgot.
> Consult the Genius of the Place in all, (Pope, 2003, lines 47-51)

Landscape gardening was a subject that had concerned Pope during the 1720s as he redesigned his Twickenham Garden and encouraged William Kent and Charles Bridgeman to design "the new natural, irregular landscapes," which began to replace "the formal labour-intensive French designs" (Fairer & Gerrard, 2015, p. 154). In the epistle, Burlington, like Pope, designs the grounds of his house by benefitting from his artistic knowledge and consulting nature, which is "the Genius of the Place" (Pope, 2003, line 51). The genius of the place is a translation of the Latin phrase *genius loci*, which "includes both 'natural' aspects of a place, such as climate conditions and topography, and the human landscape" (Cresswell, 2015, p. 130). Therefore, the architect has to study the land and build with an understanding of "the *genius loci*" (Cresswell, 2015, p. 130). It would be wise to consult the genius of the place to find out which features should be improved (Jacques, 1990, p. 15). According to Addison, "the natural Embroidery of the Meadows" can be improved and nurtured "by some small Additions of Art" (as cited in Jacques, 1990, p. 21). Palladio also had an inclination towards simple landscapes and "consulted the 'genius of the place'," thus he never altered the landscape to achieve artistic effects; instead, he

adapted his works to the natural environment (Granziera, 2004, p. 162). There is an affinity between Palladio's preference for simple landscape gardens and the landscape gardens of early eighteenth-century England (Granziera, 2004, p. 162). Burlington's landscape has the traces of this correspondence as it is surrounded by "Spontaneous beauties" whose parts form a harmonious whole (Pope, 2003, line 67). In the landscape, Burlington appears as a painter, who creates a harmony of colour on his grounds by planting plants of various and pleasing colours. Accordingly, Burlington is a landscape painter, who is described by Shenstone as follows:

> Landscape should contain variety enough to form a picture upon canvas; and this no bad taste, as I think the landscape painter is the gardener's best designer. The eye requires a sort of balance here; but not so as to encroach upon probable nature. A wood, or hill, may balance a house or obelisk; for exactness would be displeasing. (Shenstone, 1819, p. 84)

According to Pope, the land designed and painted by Burlington is a complete Edenic place. Surrounded by a diverse array of trees, the landscape symbolises the owner's respect for nature. Burlington crafts a cultivated landscape by nurturing nature without subjecting it to ruthless exploitation. Merging art with nature by paying attention to the arrangement of lines, colours and shapes, Burlington creates a harmonious landscape which "[j]oins willing Woods, and varies Shades from Shades" (Pope, 2003, line 62). Therefore, his house and grounds are entitled by Pope as an artistic work, which demonstrates British taste and becomes a monumental work "to wonder at" (Pope, 2003, line 70). According to Pope, nature should dictate art, thus artists should imitate the beauty and harmony in nature rather than preferring to use an ostentatious, flashy style that lacks simplicity and elegance:

> You show us Rome was glorious, not profuse,
> And pompous buildings once were things of use.
> Yet shall (my lord) your just, your noble rules
> Fill half the land with imitating fools; (Pope, 2003, lines 23-26)

Pope holds Burlington's simple and elegant artistic style superior to extravagant, ostentatious French style, whose "glory falls" as it is not directed by "the genius of the place," or nature (Pope, 2003, lines 71, 57). According to Pope, the new architectural style adopted by Burlington is not "pompous" (Pope, 2003, line 24), but natural because it adapts the natural, classical Roman characteristics to "the particular character of the British countryside" without imitating slavishly the designs of former architects, such as Le Nôtre and Jones (Olwig, 2002, p. 120). While Pope inculcates Burlington's taste, which epitomises British identity distinguished with simplicity and elegance, he criticises the bad, flashy taste of Timon, a landowner who lacks a genuine, good taste:

> 'TIS strange, the Miser should his Cares imploy
> To gain those Riches he can ne'er enjoy:
> Is it less strange, the Prodigal should waste
> His Wealth to purchase what he ne'er can taste?

> Not for himself he sees, or hears, or eats;
> Artists must chuse his Pictures, Music, Meats: (Pope, 2003, lines 1-6)

Pope denounces the false taste of Timon, who does not have any virtuosic knowledge and skills, which are necessary to develop a good taste. He argues that Timon uses his wealth to showcase his socio-economic power, so his attempts to nominate himself as a patron of arts, who collects and displays such artistic artefacts as pictures, drawings, and statues, are futile. Pope claims that Timon does not have the taste to choose the right artistic works to exhibit in his pretentious house:

> For what has Virro painted, built, and planted?
> Only to show how many tastes he wanted.
> What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?
> Some demon whispered, 'Visto! have a taste.' (Pope, 2003, lines 13-16)

The rich but uneducated Timon commodifies artistic objects by ignoring their artistic value and exhibiting them as mere decorative works that show his superior socio-economic position. Hence, he is criticised for his false taste and lavish expenditure on his villa. His house has an ornamental study room which is full of books, which he is "[not] curious" about (Pope, 2003, line 134). As Timon is intellectually illiterate and apathetic about studying books, his "shelves admit not any modern book" written by such authors as Locke and Milton. He also pays attention to the covers of books rather than their content, thus he collects the ones which are elegantly printed or have elegant bindings. On the other hand, the "broken and uneven" music heard in his chapel reveals his bad taste in music. Moreover, his chapel has "[a] silver bell," which embodies his vanity, or "pride" (Pope, 2003, lines 141, 142). Modesty, decency and piety were among the virtues of ancient Rome and Greece (Granziera, 2004, p. 155). Deviating from the ideals and moral norms set by the ancients, Timon is not depicted as a true British virtuoso. In Pope's poem, the rich landowner who uses arts as a means to emphasise his privileged position represents the mocked virtuosos who pursued arts to show off their social status. As such, Timon's villa stands for bad artistic taste, which conflicts with the British artistic style distinguished with elegance and simplicity. It is designed by "imitating fools" scattering false taste throughout the land where "[t]rees cut to statues, statues thick as trees" (Pope, 2003, lines 26, 120). Unlike Burlington, Timon uses his villa and gardens, which connote pretention, opulence and extravagance, to display his wealth rather than showing his sophisticated taste: "[H]is building is a town / His pond an ocean, his parterre a down" (Pope, 2003, lines 105-106). Pope thinks that the gorgeous and ostentatious style used in Timon's house is not sensible or practical, so he "curse[s] such lavish cost, and little skill" employed to show off the wealth of its possessor (Pope, 2003, line 167). Accordingly, Pope favours Palladian villa form, which is reminiscent of a good, refined taste, against prodigy houses which typify false taste through their architecture and landscape that are devoid of the order, proportion and splendour found in nature.

3. PROMOTION OF BRITISH FEUDAL CULTURE AND MORAL ECONOMY IN *AN EPISTLE TO BURLINGTON*

Pope also praises the moral economy of Burlington's country estate as part of his policy to nominate Burlington as an ideal British landowner, who respects British feudal cultural mores. The term 'moral economy' was used by E. P. Thompson in "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in The Eighteenth Century" (1971) to study eighteenth-century corn riots in England (Faith, 2020, p. 2). Thompson argues that moral economy was employed by the government and local magistrates in the eighteenth century, which witnessed food riots caused by "soaring prices, by malpractices among dealers, or by hunger" (Thompson, 1971, p. 78). Governmental regulations were founded on the idea that "marketing should be, so far as possible, direct, from the farmer to the consumer," and it controlled and supervised the market by some rules: farmers should not withhold their corn "in the hope of rising prices," or dealers should not be involved in "forestalling, regrating and engrossing," which restricted the actions of middle-class men in theory (Thompson, 1971, p. 84). Accordingly, agrarian enterprises and economic policies were regulated by moral values, and land "was seen from a domestic and moral perspective, rather than in terms of profitability" (Götz, 2015, p. 148). In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Adam Smith, an eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher and economist, points to the moral dimension of the economic actions of *homo economicus* (economic man) and articulates that although individuals are economic beings, they have "selflessness" as moral beings (Hajnal, 2021, p. 75). Smith (1817) argues that "[h]ow selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it" (p. 1). This selflessness is called "rational selflessness" because affluent people consider the happiness of poor, labouring classes as they know "that using more resources would only lead to waste rather than increase well-being, so they would redistribute resources among community members" (Hajnal, 2021, p. 75). As moral economy reconciled morality with economy, it had "[c]onnotations of justice and balance" (Götz, 2015, p. 149). Moreover, in early modern Britain, country house discourse reinforced moral economy, drawing "on idealized feudal social and economic relationships, represented most conspicuously through the theory and practice of hospitality, invoking a utopia of mediaeval nostalgia" (McBride, 2001, p. 1). Country houses epitomised the hierarchical moral economic system of feudal age, where the landowner occupied a pivotal role as "a paternal figure," who was supposed to take care of his land and labourers (McRae, 1992, p. 35) . They also "served to empower rich families" since they operated as "working communities whose owners' wealth was derived from land and agriculture" (Düzgün, 2024, p. 22; Barton, 2021, p. 329).

A sense of nostalgia for conventional rural virtues based on British feudal culture is evident in *An Epistle to Burlington*, which "represents the good stewardship and social virtue of" Burlington (Pohl, 2008, p. 229). Pope introduces Burlington's country house as a symbol that epitomises the attempt of the landlord to construct a society grounded in virtue,

moderation and hierarchy, which were considered the relics of the British feudal patrimonial moral economy. Hospitality is also a part of moral economy, in which the weak enjoyed the bounty of the landowner, who used the surplus of his estate to feed his tenants and servants (Faith, 2020, p. 56). As an example of the master's hospitality, people from upper and lower classes came together to have "the meal in the great hall," where lower-class people rendered "goods and homage to the master," who was responsible for nourishing and maintaining the household (McClung, 1977, p. 105). Although hospitality can be seen as a form of "false consciousness," designed to legitimise the exploitation of poor labourers, it did retain some sort of dignity for the poor, while placing the advantage in the hands of wealthy landowners. (Faith, 2020, p. 56). In parallel with moral economic principles, Burlington, the master, and his labourers constitute a household whose inhabitants are bound together by a common responsibility to work for the common good of their society. Burlington's "cheerful tenants" "bless their yearly toil" to their master, and in turn enjoy peace and benefit from his fertile land (Pope, 2003, line 183). Accordingly, Pope draws an idealised picture of Burlington's rural, agrarian community, which is based on feudal principles of reciprocity and hospitality, concealing the socio-economic conflicts within moral economy. Ignoring the socio-economic inequalities and labour exploitation prevalent on Burlington's land, Pope portrays Burlington as a responsible landlord who cares for his workers, rather than as an exploiter, whose wealth is based on the manipulation of his workers' labour. In this idealised and nostalgic picture of Burlington's quasi-feudal community, the workers do the manual, agricultural work by reaping the soil and feeding animals, and the landlord, who is the leader and ruler of his quasi-family, shares the surplus of his land with his workers. However, Pope ignores the fact that Burlington's labourers are the actual producers of his possessions, and inculcates Burlington as an ideal landlord who makes sure that those who depend on his protection and benevolence are "glad" and do not suffer from hunger (Pope, 2003, line 182). As such, Burlington's house, where he dines "En Famille" (Pope as cited in Erskine-Hill, 1995, p. 220), becomes a model of British feudal heritage and moral economy.

According to Pope, Burlington's landscape also stands for utility, which is an important component of the moral economy of country houses. Utility "takes the form of hospitality," which is founded on a hierarchical social structure (McClung, 1977, p. 105). The Venetian villa, which inspired neo-Palladian British country houses, was not only a place of retirement from the urban community, but it had also a utilitarian purpose as it was "the center of the main financial interests of the household who lived there" (Granziera, 2004, p. 163). This utilitarian approach was adopted by the supporters of the English landscape garden, including Alexander Pope, who "believed in the use of the country estate not only for *otium* but also as a means to serve the community by improving the soil" (Granziera, 2004, p. 163). Complying with the classical principles of utility, Burlington designs his landscape and plants his grounds "not for pride or show," but his land, which has been improved by consulting "sense" and "the genius of the place," becomes an economic agent that is "not ashamed to feed / [t]he milky heifer and deserving steed" (Pope, 2003, lines 187, 180, 57). Burlington's land, which is cultivated for both utilitarian and ornamental

purposes, is economically productive, and it contributes to the prosperity of his tenants and labourers. As such, Burlington is admired for contributing to the peace and welfare of his community by using his land wisely. Pope also praises Burlington's country house for being humble and simple, contrasting it with seventeenth-century prodigy houses, which were sumptuous and pretentious. In his accounts of Burlington's estate, the poet's attempt to separate the neo-Palladian country house from the contemporary world characterised by economic and moral crisis is evident: "Something there is more needful than expense, / And something previous even to taste—'tis sense: / Good sense, which only is the gift of Heaven" (Pope, 2003, lines 41-43). Burlington's house, unlike prodigy houses, is designed with sense and good taste, based on simplicity and elegance, but it is not intended to exalt the prestige and wealth of its owner through an ostentatious façade. Grounded in the principles of moral economy, his estate is associated with the austere, conventional country estates of paternalistic British feudal society. As a paternal figure responsible for the welfare of his people, Burlington uses the income from his estate to secure a comfortable life for not only his family, but also his workers and tenants. Therefore, he does not pay too much for the construction of one of the splendid prodigy houses, which are "huge heaps of littleness" (Pope, 2003, line 109). As such, his estate is not just ornamental, but it is built for practical socio-economic purposes. The lavish façade and insensible design of Timon's villa, on the other hand, appear as a foil for the moral economy of Burlington's house:

> At Timon's villa let us pass a day,
> Where all cry out, 'What sums are thrown away!'
> So proud, so grand: of that stupendous air,
> Soft and agreeable come never there.
> Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught
> As brings all Brobdignag before your thought. (Pope, 2003, lines 99-104)

Timon's house epitomises pomposity, vain glory and extravagant false taste rather than moderation, grandeur and temperance. Timon is also mocked for wasting his wealth on a lavish dinner hall and pompous dinner tables. The false taste and insensibility prevailing in the dining hall are emphasised by the display of the images connoting extravagance and ostentation:

> A hundred footsteps scrape the marble hall:
> The rich buffet well-coloured serpents grace,
> And gaping Tritons spew to wash your face.
> Is this a dinner? this a genial room?
> No, 'tis a temple, and a hecatomb. (Pope, 2003, lines 152-156)

Timon employs several servants in his splendid hall made of marble, which has tritons whose mouths splash water and a lavishly decorated dinner table. The ornate and sumptuous style of the hall contrasts with the style of Burlington's house, whose modest, elegant and practical design is in accordance with its moral economy. Pope cannot feel comfortable in Timon's stately hall, which has not been designed for practical use:

> You drink by measure, and to minutes eat.
> So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
> Sancho's dread doctor and his wand were there.
> Between each act the trembling salvers ring,
> From soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the king.
> In plenty starving, tantalized in state,
> And complaisantly helped to all I hate,
> Treated, caressed, and tired, I take my leave, (Pope, 2003, lines 158-165)

Pope feels awkward in Timon's stately hall where unnecessary formalities merged with extravagance spoil the pleasure of the meal. He complains about the fact that the guests cannot easily and freely enjoy their meals as Timon, who appears like a "king" in his sumptuous hall (Pope, 2003, line 162), is more concerned with showcasing his fortune and extravagant lifestyle through the opulence of his residence rather than showing a genuine, paternal hospitality, which is enjoyed by Burlington's subjects. Pope resents and gets "tired" of the fraudulent civility of Timon (Pope, 2003, line 165), who is too vain to be a good host considering the needs and comfort of his guests. Timon is also criticised for failing to manage his estate according to the rules of moral economy since he cannot spend his wealth modestly and wisely, considering the well-being of poor people:

> Sick of his civil pride from morn to eve;
> I curse such lavish cost, and little skill,
> And swear no day was ever passed so ill.
> Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed;
> Health to himself, and to his infants bread,
> The labourer bears: what his hard heart denies,
> His charitable vanity supplies. (Pope, 2003, lines 166-172)

Pope hates the fact that Timon fails to have a true British taste, based on modesty, elegance, and sense. The bounty of Burlington, who is idealised as a true representative of British taste and heritage, was in reality imitated and followed by *nouveaux riches* to gain the social esteem derived from Burlington's generosity, thus "pale imitations of Burlington's bounty are to Pope embarrassing acts of wastefulness" (Gardner, 2004, p. 25). Therefore, Pope criticises Timon for not being a true British gentleman who is supposed to direct his people to humility and piety by managing his estate according to the rules of moral economy that considers the common well-being of the master and his people. It was usual for rich aristocrats to have splendid houses where "nothing pleasant is restrained; every servant in the house is made easy, and his life comfortable" (De Foe qtd. in Walford, 1984, p. 292). However, Pope does not approve the fact that the poor who are "clothed" and "fed" do not receive a real, genuine charity and hospitality from Timon, whose "charitable vanity" prevents him from using his wealth carefully and moderately (Pope, 2003, lines 169, 172).

4. POLITICISATION OF NEO-PALLADIAN COUNTRY HOUSE IN *AN EPISTLE TO BURLINGTON*

In contrast to Timon, who is criticised for his pretentious and lavish lifestyle, Burlington, whose British neo-Palladian house is related to simplicity, elegance, and grandeur, appears as a leading political and social figure that asserts his country's independence from modern 'decaying' civilisations, including Italy and France. According to Pope, the cultural and political characteristics sought in a good sovereign did not seem to be represented by the current monarch, thus he looked for "powerful protection and encouragement" from such important figures as Lord Burlington and Earl Bathurst (Erskine-Hill, 1995, p. 219). Those distinguished and powerful figures admired by Pope "were men of taste and sometimes learning," who were interested in landscape gardening and architecture (Erskine-Hill, 1995, p. 219). Therefore, Pope nominates Burlington and his friends Bathurst and Boyle as true protectors and representatives of British artistic heritage, merging sense with aesthetics:

> Who then shall grace, or who improve the soil?—
> Who plants like Bathurst, or who builds like Boyle.
> 'Tis use alone that sanctifies expense,
> And splendour borrows all her rays from sense. (Pope, 2003, lines 177-180)

Pope also claims that the monarchs are neglecting their imperial task to enhance their cultural heritage, thus he suggests that this task should be claimed by Burlington, who synthesises nature with art, elegance with simplicity, and utility with aesthetics. As such, he appreciates Burlington's attempts to fuse practical utility with artistic elegance in his land to challenge the influence of seventeenth-century formal gardens, which were modelled on *le jardin français* by André Le Nôtre (Schulz, 1985, p. 14). As a responsible steward, Burlington also contributes to his country's economy by raising forests whose timbers can be used for the construction of "future buildings" and "future navies" (Pope, 2003, line 188). Planting forests was fashionable during the interregnum and the Puritan period because of "its financial feasibility in future harvesting" and "the need for economy" (Schulz, 1985, p. 14). Therefore, Burlington's country house is distinguished from the ornamental civic buildings established by such landowners as Timon, who are more interested in displaying their magnificent and expensive buildings rather than considering the public good. Burlington's land is open to the public, and Pope argues that as a British gentleman and a responsible landowner, Burlington should further his project of building more public buildings that should be simple, aesthetic and profitable. In accordance with this scheme, Burlington should restore decaying artistic buildings and establish new ones, avoiding French architectural design, which favours formal, expensive and magnificent buildings:

> You too proceed! make falling arts your care,
> Erect new wonders, and the old repair;
> Jones and Palladio to themselves restore,

> And be whate'er Vitruvius was before:
> 'Till kings call forth the ideas of your mind,
> Proud to accomplish what such hands designed,
> Bid harbours open, public ways extend,
> Bid temples, worthier of the god, ascend;
> Bid the broad arch the dangerous flood contain, (Pope, 2003, lines 191-199)

Advocation of classical virtues of Ancient Greece and Rome, and Renaissance Venice was a part of Whig ideals. Vitruvian architecture was regarded as an expression of the classical virtues, and Palladio, who was inspired by the Roman architectural canon, came to be recognised as an architect who introduced these virtues to the modern world (Granziera, 2004, p. 156). Therefore, Pope thinks that Burlington, a Whig and a British gentleman, should turn his face to Jones, Palladio, and Vitruvius to erect public buildings which are both great and practical. Since Burlington's buildings should be both aesthetic and functional, his land and harbours should be open to public usage, and he should extend the public roads and erect an arch to contain the floods. Moreover, Burlington should restore "falling arts" (Pope, 2003, line 191), and in fact Burlington and Kent restored old, ruined artistic works, including Inigo Jone's two notable buildings, St. Paul's, Covent Garden, and the Barber-Surgeons' Hall (Dixon, 2022, p. 61). Burlington should also replace the old, ruined churches with new ones that are "worthier of the god" (Pope, 2003, line 198). When the poem published, some of the churches established by the Act of Queen Anne (1711), which was supported by Tories, were about to decay because they were built on swampy land, and many highways were nearly impassable (Carruthers, 1854, p. 90; Goodall, 201, p. 185). The churches, also known as Queen Anne's Churches, are used by Pope as emblems of the failure of the former monarch and Tories to carry out their mission to enrich and protect British arts and heritage. The decayed churches of the queen also show the monarch's failure to accomplish her "role as the defender of the English church from popery" and "her reputation as a true-blue Protestant," thus her ruined churches become a symbol suggesting the collapse of the monarch's mission to ensure an official pledge to safeguard the Protestant succession (Hone, 2017, p. 56). As "a real lover of his country" and proponent of "the power, and authority, and the dignity of the crown" (Bowles, 1822, p. 323), Pope thinks that Burlington should follow Protestant Whig ideals, which were essential to create "[a] sense of nation and national belonging" (Jones, 2020, p. 234) and which had confidence in "the liberty-preserving constitution of Britain" (Granziera, 2004, p. 150). Moreover, following the Whig principle advocating that governors should consider "the good of the whole community" (Talbot as cited in Granziera, 2004, p. 160), Burlington should be involved in the public project to build "new wonders," which are both aesthetic and profitable, and he should repair "the old" to preserve British cultural heritage (Pope, 2003, line 192). As such, Burlington's house, which epitomises British architectural taste, distinguished by a harmonious mixture of practicality, elegance, and simplicity, becomes an "imperial" work and a national shrine, bringing "Peace to happy Britain" (Pope, 2003,

line 203). It also symbolises Britain's liberty from the influences of modern declining civilisations, making its possessor a true defender of British culture and national identity.

5. CONCLUSION

In Alexander Pope's *An Epistle to Burlington*, Burlington's country house, designed according to the principles of British neo-Palladian fashion, is distinguished with its modesty and simplicity from Timon's villa, an ornamental prodigy house, which is built to showcase the wealth of its owner. In the poem, Burlington's house embodies British artistic taste and heritage, as well as Britain's freedom from the influences of the modern decaying civilisations, like Italy and France, by its simple yet elegant structure that is united with the cultivated natural world on which its wealth depends. Therefore, Burlington's house, unlike Timon's showy country house, is not ornamental but a practical means of gentle and moral agrarian economy of British feudal society. Although Pope praises the moral economy employed by Burlington, he ignores the fact that Burlington's moral economy conceals social tensions, which are perpetuated by class hierarchies and the manipulation of the labour of his workers. Burlington's labour exploitation is justified by the fact that he offsets his capitalist enterprise by epitomising the virtues of paternalistic British feudal society. Assuming the role of a responsible British landlord, Burlington shares his surplus with his workers and enables them to benefit from his paternal hospitality in order to create an orderly and prosperous community based on mutual responsibility. Therefore, he, unlike Timon, is hailed as a true emblem of British identity, which is characterised with modesty, honesty, and a sophisticated artistic taste.

In *An Epistle to Burlington*, Burlington is also greeted as a true British virtuoso whose estate becomes an emblem of Britishnes by combining modesty, utility, and elegance. Rather than using an ostentatious, flashy architectural style that lacks simplicity and elegance, Burlington imitates the beauty and harmony of nature in the design of his neo-Palladian country house. Furthermore, his house embodies British nationalism and the Protestant Whig ideals, promoting freedom, democracy and tolerance against hegemony and tyranny connected with French rule. Using neo-Palladian architectural style in alignment with the Protestant Whig principles, Burlington contributes to the promotion of British national identity. In addition, Pope shows that Burlington is involved in public projects, like the construction of practical and magnificent civic structures and restoration of decayed artistic buildings, to contribute to the public good and to preserve British culture. Accordingly, in *An Epistle to Burlington*, Burlington's neo-Palladian country house becomes an integral part of the construction and dissemination of British cultural values and a sense of British nationhood, complying with the virtues of classical heritage and feudal British society.

Statement of Research and Publication Ethics

In all processes of the article, the principles of research and publication ethics of *Manisa Celal Bayar University Journal of Social Sciences* were followed.

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