

*L'architecte engagé:*  
Education, Morality and Politics in Vitruvius'  
*De architectura*

Thorsten FÖGEN

“Sie müssen enorm viel wissen, um gute Architektur zu schaffen. (...) Geschichtskennntnisse sind notwendig. Man muß sich in den freien Künsten auskennen. Es geht ja nicht nur um technisches Wissen, um Statik und Strom und Wasserleitungen. Das ist alles sehr wichtig, aber darüber hinaus geht es um Poesie, um Astronomie, um Dramatik und um Mathematik und Geometrie. Architektur ist eine künstlerische Ausdrucksform des Menschen, und da muß man sich bemühen, einige Kenntnisse zu sammeln.”

(Daniel Libeskind in an interview with Elske Brault, broadcast on *RBB Kulturradio* under the title “Der Stararchitekt und seine Kreativität”, 21 July 2010)

“The more we learn about him, the more Vitruvius stands out as an author who fully deserves his *auctoritas*.” (ROWLAND 2005: 37)

## 1. Introduction

**A**lthough this article is mainly concerned with Vitruvius, it seems appropriate to begin with two sixteenth-century etchings taken from Philibert de l’Orme’s major work *Premier Tome de l’Architecture*, which appeared in 1567.<sup>1</sup> Philibert de l’Orme (c. 1514–1570) worked as the architect of Henri II of France. From 1547 until 1552, he built the Château d’Anet for Henri’s mistress Diane de Poitiers, and from 1556 onwards, he was entrusted with the ambitious construction of the Château Neuf in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Later on, he was employed to design

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<sup>1</sup> The most recent publications on Philibert de l’Orme are LEMERLE & PAUWELS (2015) and NAEHRIG (2016), each with further references.

the Palais des Tuileries, a project initiated by Catherine de' Medici in 1564. In addition to these and other impressive building projects, Philibert de l'Orme was also a prolific author who put down his extensive knowledge in writing. As the two etchings demonstrate, he was very much concerned with the question of what constitutes the principles of his discipline and what makes a good architect.

The illustrations show allegories of the good and the bad architect, which deserve some attention.<sup>2</sup> On the left-hand side, the bad architect is running about aimlessly. He may wear the typical outfit of a wise and learned man, yet it is quite clear that he lacks certain crucial body parts: he does not have any eyes, which would help him to see the truth; he does not have any hands, with which he could execute his tasks; he does not have any ears, which would enable him to listen to other people's advice; he does not even have a nose and thus has no



Etchings from Philibert de l'Orme's *Premier tome de l'Architecture*, published in 1567<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> On the allegories of the good and the bad architect, see NAEHRIG (2016: 147–160).

<sup>3</sup> Reproductions of these illustrations from Philibert de l'Orme's *Premier Tome de l'Architecture* (Paris 1567) can be found in RICKEN (1990: 8–9), LEMERLE & PAUWELS (2015: 22–23, 34) and in NAEHRIG (2016: 149, 151).

sense of smell. However, he does have a mouth, which enables him to chatter and spread rumours about others. This sketch of the bad architect chimes with the picture of the medieval castle in the background, understood by Philibert de l'Orme as the symbol of an antiquated appreciation of architecture. On the right-hand side, the good architect is depicted as having a conversation with a pupil, to whom he presents a scroll (presumably of sketches). He is endowed with three eyes to take into consideration past, present and future. He has four ears, which indicates that he listens rather than speaks. Four hands stand for his energetic "hands-on" approach to his task. His feet have wings so that he can hurry from one building site to another. The rest of the scene is also revealing: at the bottom right, directly beside the architect and his pupil, we see the fountain of wisdom, and in the background there are buildings in the new, progressive Renaissance style.

It seems evident that Philibert de l'Orme uses these two etchings to contrast not only two very distinct architectural styles, namely the ideals of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,<sup>4</sup> but also two different types of architects: the superficial and shallow charlatan on the one hand, and the conscientious and knowledgeable expert on the other. As NAEHRIG (2016: 14–15) has stated, "(...) die persönlichen Attribute *sage*, *docte* und *expert* (weise, gelehrt und erfahren) bestimmen Delormes Auseinandersetzung mit der Disziplin. Sie bezeichnen das Idealbild eines Architekten, der praktischen und intellektuellen, besonders aber ethischen Ansprüchen genügt."<sup>5</sup>

Philibert de l'Orme is by no means the first architect to discuss the principles of what constitutes a good and serious specialist in his field. More than 1,500 years before him, Vitruvius devoted considerable attention to this question. His *De architectura* contains a great deal of reflexions on the importance of architectural knowledge and the multi-faceted background that a good architect would have been expected to have. The work is the only comprehensive treatise on architecture that is extant from antiquity. It is an important source for the reconstruction of Graeco-Roman theoretical thinking about architectural forms,

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<sup>4</sup> It should be added that the recent study by NAEHRIG (2016: 153–158) challenges this established interpretation of the buildings in the two etchings and reads the fortress depicted in the first etching and the palace shown in the second as "Zeichen für schlechte und gute Herrschaftspraxis" (2016: 154). For him, the fortress, which is unwelcoming and difficult to access, represents the abode of a tyrant and is thus the symbol of bad governance. Ultimately, the allegories are to be understood as personifications of virtues which are not restricted to architects or emperors: "Es sind politische Tugenden, die zum Wohlergehen des Staates auf jeden beliebigen Bürger übertragen werden können" (NAEHRIG 2016: 158).

<sup>5</sup> See further the separate chapter on Philibert de l'Orme's concept of the ideal architect in NAEHRIG (2016: 196–299).

styles and aesthetics, and has therefore been used by classicists, and in particular by archaeologists, as a treasure trove of information. Vitruvius' text has, however, rarely been analysed from a literary perspective.<sup>6</sup> The reason for this neglect may be due to many scholars' negative estimation of his style and his use of technical terminology that did not correspond to the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century high-flown stylistic ideals of criticism, which were oriented almost exclusively towards refined poetry and artistic prose ("Kunstprosa"). A quotation from Eduard NORDEN's book *Die Antike Kunstprosa*, first published in 1898 and reprinted multiple times, may serve as an example of a rather condescending approach to Vitruvius:

"Vitruv (...) schreibt auch wie Varro, roh, unbeeinflusst von der modernen Technik. (...) In den langen Vorreden (...) nimmt er gelegentlich einen etwas höheren Schwung (...), aber er wird dann meist entweder abgeschmackt (...) oder er hat die betreffende Partie abgeschrieben (...)."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See also GROS (1982: 660 [= 2006b: 174]): "Nombreux sont, d'une part, ses utilisateurs: archéologues, historiens de l'art, des techniques ou de l'architecture, ils s'y réfèrent sans cesse pour en tirer des indications ponctuelles. Plus clairesemée apparaît en regard la cohorte des exégètes, qui aborde le 'De architectura' comme un texte à établir et à analyser." Although the situation has improved since 1982, GROS' diagnosis is not outdated. Vitruvius has still not found exactly the same vibrant interest among classicists (i.e. *literary* scholars) as some other ancient technical writers, e.g. Pliny the Elder, on whom see FÖGEN (2009: 201–264) and FÖGEN (2013), each with further references.

<sup>7</sup> NORDEN (<sup>5</sup>1958: 301; my translation): "Vitruvius (...) writes like Varro, rough, uninfluenced by the modern (stylistic) technique. (...) In his long prefaces he sometimes livens things up a bit (...), but then he either gets fatuous (...) or has copied the passage in question from elsewhere (...)." Similar judgements can be found even in present times; see e.g. VON HESBERG (2005: 23). In his work *De re aedificatoria* the Renaissance architect Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) already criticised Vitruvius' language for being neither Latin nor Greek (*De re aed.* 6.1: *accedebat quod ista tradidisset non culta: sic enim loquebatur, ut Latini Graecum videri voluisse, Graeci locutum Latine vaticinentur; res autem ipsa in sese porrigenda neque Latinum neque Graecum fuisse testetur, ut par sit non scripsisse hunc nobis, qui ita scripserit, ut non intelligamus*); on Alberti and Vitruvius, see KOCH (1951: 21–30), GERMANN (1980: 49–64), KRUF (1985: 44–54), WULFRAM (2001) and ROWLAND (2005: 29–31, 35–36). Walther Hermann Ryff (Rivius), who produced the first German translation of Vitruvius in 1514, found his terminology "etwas dunckel und schwer und nit allenthalben verstandlich" (siehe KRUF 1985: 78). On the language and style of Vitruvius, see MORGAN (1906), SONTHEIMER (1908: 6–18), WISTRAND (1933: 39–130), WISTRAND (1936), FENSTERBUSCH (1964: 8–10), CALLEBAT (1982), CALLEBAT (1995) and ROMANO (1997); see also BALDWIN (1989: 10–11) and VON ALBRECHT (<sup>2</sup>1994: 696–697). Specifically on the role of Greek in *De architectura*, see RUFFEL (1964), LENDLE (1992), FRÉZOULS (1994: 161–169) and SCHIEFSKY (2005: 265–268); see also ROWLAND (2005: 25–27).

Such a view is surely responsible for the fact that Vitruvius' work has for a long time not been viewed as a literary product that deserves to be examined in its own right.<sup>8</sup>

It is the aim of this paper to analyse some of Vitruvius' literary strategies, in particular with regard to the ways in which he strives to present himself not only as a true expert on technical matters who combines theoretical and practical skills, but also as a morally responsible writer. It will be shown that Vitruvius is eager to display his high personal moral standards and that he subscribes to several fundamental elements of Augustan ideology as well as the *mos maiorum* in general. The textual basis of my analysis will be some of the prefaces as well as several other representative passages.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. The education of the architect

Immediately after the preface to Book 1, which is addressed to Augustus, Vitruvius discusses the knowledge that in his view an architect ought to have.<sup>10</sup> First, he differentiates between practical experience (*fabrica*), i.e. technical skills, and intellectual activity (*ratiocinatio*), which must, however, be intricately interwoven if architecture is to be done successfully. It is precisely this postulate of a reciprocity of theory and practice which makes knowledge of different skills desirable (see esp. CALLEBAT 2001). His extensive educational programme for the architect comprises the following fields: **Dexterity in writing** will enable him to set down his knowledge and thus make it accessible to others. The **ability to draw** will allow him to make sketches of the buildings

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<sup>8</sup> For other negative judgements beyond issues of language and style, see e.g. GROS (1982: 669 [= 2006b: 183]).

<sup>9</sup> On the prefaces, see SONTHEIMER (1908: 117–123), SCHRAMM (1932), GABBA (1980), NOVARA (1983, 2005), ANDRÉ (1985), ANDRÉ (1987), KNELL (<sup>2</sup>1991: 10–19) and FRÉZOULS (1994: 151–160). MORGAN (1909) offers an English translation of, and a commentary to, the preface of the first book. On the preface to Book 5, see KESSISOGLU (1993). See also the short remarks in JANSON (1964: 95–96, 99–100, 102–103, 105).

<sup>10</sup> The fact that Vitruvius discusses the education of the architect in the very first book of his work proves the importance of his programme. However, it is not the only place where he considers this topic. The preface to Book 6 of *De architectura* is also dedicated to the significance of a wide-ranging knowledge. It begins with an anecdote about the philosopher Aristippus of Cyrene who suffers shipwreck and lands in Rhodes where his activity as a philosopher brings him honours and supports him. He defines knowledge as a true possession for life which outlives even great misfortunes. Vitruvius goes on to mention other authorities such as Theophrastus or Epicurus who argued that a knowledgeable person (*doctus*) is a wise man (*sapiens*).

that he wants to have erected.<sup>11</sup> Familiarity with the principles of **geometry**, **optics** and **arithmetic** is supposed to contribute to similar purposes; the latter also serves to calculate the dimensions of a project, and in addition to provide a reliable estimation of the costs (*De arch.* 1.1.4; resumed in 10 praef.). Moreover, Vitruvius recommends an **acquaintance with historical events** which helps to explain the use of certain decorative elements and motifs (*De arch.* 1.1.5–6). **Philosophical education** is vital in two respects. On the one hand, with its focus on ethical issues, it endows the architect with the right way of thinking (ethos), which is characterised primarily by honesty and modesty (*De arch.* 1.1.7):<sup>12</sup>

*philosophia vero perficit architectum animo magno et uti non sit adrogans, sed potius facilis, aequus et fidelis, sine avaritia, quod est maximum; nullum enim opus vere sine fide et castitate fieri potest; ne sit cupidus neque in muneribus accipiendis habeat animum occupatum, sed cum gravitate suam tueatur dignitatem bonam famam habendo; et haec enim philosophia praescribit.*

“Philosophy completes the architect’s character by instilling **loftiness of spirit**, so that he will **not** be **arrogant**, but rather **flexible**, **fair** and **trustworthy**, and, most important of all, **free from greed**; for there is no work that can truly be done without **loyalty** or **integrity**. [Philosophy also guarantees] that he will **not** be **eager for money** nor fix his mind on receiving rewards, but that he will pay serious attention to protecting his **dignity** by maintaining a **good reputation**; for these are the things that philosophy recommends.”

This important passage reads like a detailed catalogue of virtues to which a decent architect ought to aspire. However, in accordance with ethical perceptions of the late Republic, these are qualities which should ultimately be pursued by *all* respectable Romans, especially those involved in politics. As the most obvious model that Vitruvius is likely to have in mind here, one may identify Cicero, whose work *De officiis* contains a section on the desirable attributes of statesmen (*De off.* 1.92) of which the above quotation from *De architectura* is rather reminiscent (see ROMANO 2016: 342–344). On the other hand, training in philosophy imparts a command of the “nature of things” (*principia rerum naturae*) which is equally indispensable for architecture (*De arch.* 1.1.7).<sup>13</sup> Even instruction in **music** is advantageous, as Vitruvius explains at greater length (*De*

<sup>11</sup> On Vitruvius’ postulate of a *graphidis scientiam* (*De arch.* 1.1.4) for the competent architect, see FRÉZOULS (1985).

<sup>12</sup> All translations are from ROWLAND, HOWE & DEWAR (1999), with some modifications.

<sup>13</sup> On the relationship between individual scholarly disciplines and philosophy in ancient literature, see DIHLE (1986), who also examines the attempts of various technical writers (including Cicero and Strabo) to relate their own fields to philosophy (DIHLE 1986: esp. 196–197). See also ROMANO (1993).

*arch.* 1.1.8–9): an understanding of harmonic theory facilitates the construction of theatre buildings, in which actors' voices need to be audible from every vantage point (see *De arch.* 5.3–7), but also of water organs (*De arch.* 10.8; see FLEURY 1993: 179–204) and similar instruments. Further, catapults and siege machines will not work properly unless their stringing is sufficiently well balanced by the determination of the correct tonal relationships (see *De arch.* 10.12). Also useful for the architect are three other disciplines: **medicine** (including climatology), **astronomy** and **law**. The first two provide the basis for choosing appropriate sites for building projects (*De arch.* 1.1.10); as Vitruvius repeatedly affirms, the health of the citizens of a town must be the most important criterion for an architect (see esp. *De arch.* 1.4, 1.6, 6.1, 8.6.10–11). Legal expertise is useful for avoiding any lawsuits or any other juridical quarrels. It also guarantees that the architect abides by building regulations and that clients and contractors draft written agreements (*De arch.* 1.1.10).

Vitruvius is aware of the comprehensive nature of the educational programme that he is outlining for the architect and makes the requirement of knowledge in the areas mentioned plausible by referring to their interdependence. Intriguing in this context is his comparison of “encyclopaedic education” (see e.g. KÜHNERT 1961) with a body that consists of different parts which necessitate and supplement each other in their existence. In his view, architecture is a complex discipline with many prerequisites which one cannot practise in a serious way if one has not acquired the necessary expertise (*De arch.* 1.1.11–12).<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, Vitruvius emphasises that, realistically speaking, the architect cannot be an *absolute* specialist in all the disciplines of which he should have an understanding. Every single field that Vitruvius mentions is already so complex that the focus on a certain area is inevitable. This specialisation builds upon a wide-ranging knowledge of all kinds of relevant topics and does not preclude an interdisciplinary collaboration with representatives of other branches of learning. However, Vitruvius also points out that there is a difference between theoretical knowledge (*ratiocinatio*) which many educated people have, and its application through practical skills (*opus, operum ingressus*) which only

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<sup>14</sup> SALLMANN (1984: 15) states: “Für den heutigen Vitruvleser mutet befremdlich bis lächerlich das Postulat einer umfangreichen Allgemeinbildung für den künftigen Architekten an.” On the one hand, it is perhaps not very appropriate to apply modern notions in order to evaluate Vitruvius' programme because it ignores its socio-historical context. On the other hand, even modern architects will be well advised to acquire a wide-ranging knowledge beyond their discipline, especially when they are involved in the reconstruction of historical monuments or in the planning of public and thus politically meaningful buildings; one may refer to Daniel Libeskind's statement, quoted at the very beginning of this article.

a genuine, specially trained expert can claim for himself. In this respect architecture is no exception.<sup>15</sup> As he also argues, this general principle is not contradicted by the fact that there may be some experts who do have an impressive command of more than just one field related to architecture, but such cases tend to be quite rare (*De arch.* 1.1.17–18).<sup>16</sup>

What are the parallels to Vitruvius' educational programme? His remarks on the requirement of philosophical expertise particularly indicate that he conceives of the ideal architect in a way that is analogous to the model of the perfect rhetorician (*orator perfectus*) postulated by Cicero.<sup>17</sup> As Vitruvius does in the case of

<sup>15</sup> *De arch.* 1.1.13–16, esp. 1.1.13 fin.: *non enim in tantis rerum varietatibus elegantias singulares quisquam consequi potest, quod earum ratiocinationes cognoscere et percipere vix cadit in potestatem*. See also DIHLE (1986: 191–194).

<sup>16</sup> Vitruvius here also indicates for whom he has written his work: for those engaged in building projects (*aedificantibus*) as well as for the educated (*omnibus sapientibus*). Although his text contains numerous passages which develop a high degree of specialist knowledge going beyond the needs of the interested layperson, one needs to take his aspiration seriously. By addressing educated amateurs, he not only wants to underscore the relevance of his project and promote himself as an authority, but also to reach a broader circle of readers (see also CALLEBAT 2000: 210–211). The question of Vitruvius' target audience has repeatedly been investigated; the answer depends upon what kind of status one is prepared to ascribe to *De architectura*. SALLMANN's classification of the work as a "Sachbuch", but not as a "Fachbuch" (SALLMANN 1984: 14–15, 22), has rightly been contradicted, albeit not unanimously (see e.g. COURRÉNT 1998: 25; COURRÉNT 2002: 119); least convincing is his following statement: "auch die technischen Partien sind für den Laien verfaßt und bei aller Fachlichkeit doch nie zum fachsimpelnden Höhenflug entschwebend" (SALLMANN 1984: 15). By drawing attention to compelling evidence, KNELL (2001: 170) has aptly remarked that "die Alternative Fachbuch oder Sachbuch die Absichten Vitruvs unzulässig verengt"; with regard to *De arch.* 6.8.9–10 he points out (KNELL 2001: 160–161): "(...) Die Rede ist dort von dem Zusammenwirken von Bauherr, Handwerker und Architekt, deren gemeinsames Handeln das Gelingen von Architektur erst möglich macht (...). Mißt man solcher Aussage den ihr gebührenden Wert bei, so kann sie die Frage nach dem Adressatenkreis schlüssig beantworten: dann ist es sowohl der gebildete Laie als auch der Fachmann und Architekt, den Vitruv ansprechen möchte. Erst vor solchem Hintergrund kann sinnvoll verständlich werden, daß seine Bücher weitgestreute Passagen enthalten, die eher als allgemeine Bildungslektüre anmuten, zugleich aber auch solche, die sicher nur dem Fachmann zugänglich sind. Vitruv schreibt nicht nur ein Sachbuch oder ein Fachbuch, sondern will aus der Verschmelzung von beidem auf breiter Ebene wirksam werden" (see further MCKAY 1978: 16; cf. also GROS 1994: 75–76, 90 [= 2006b: 311–312, 326], MASTERSON 2004: 390 n. 6, CALLEBAT 2005 and NICHOLS 2017: 10–11). At any rate, there is substantial agreement among scholars that Vitruvius' readers were predominantly members of the educated upper class; see e.g. KNELL (2001: 145, 170) and ANDERSON (1997: 187–188).

<sup>17</sup> See esp. *De arch.* 1.1.7: *Philosophia vero perficit architectum animo magno et uti non sit adrogans* (...). On Cicero see in particular SCHULTE (1935), who also offers a comparison between Cicero and Vitruvius (1935: 80–91), further COURRÉNT (1998), COURRÉNT

architecture, Cicero strives to present rhetoric as a subject that should not be reduced to mere practical experience, but instead as a discipline that requires intricate familiarity with a variety of branches of knowledge (see esp. *De orat.* 1.72–73, 3.126–127 and 3.132–136). Just as the orator can only be truly competent in his profession if he really knows what he is talking about, so too the architect needs to have a comprehensive expertise which transcends the narrow boundaries of his own discipline. In particular the ethical component plays a decisive role here: Cicero's ideal of the rhetorician as a *vir bonus (dicendi peritus)*, which originates from the Elder Cato, has been adopted by Vitruvius for his exemplary architect, who ought to be a morally impeccable figure.<sup>18</sup> By subscribing to this concept, Vitruvius attempts to enhance the status of architecture in Roman society and to build up a solid reputation for its practitioners.<sup>19</sup>

This strategy is mirrored in the structure of his treatise. The knowledge with which an architect in Vitruvius' times should be acquainted has become so wide-ranging that it can no longer be summarised in a short account. What is required instead is a full-scale treatment of the discipline. This, again, necessitates a systematic and well-structured presentation of facts, which is useful to the reader (*utilitas*).<sup>20</sup> Hence it is crucial for Vitruvius to underscore that he has invested a considerable amount of effort in the suitable arrangement of his material. As is the case with other ancient technical writers, he relies upon an utmost degree of **clarity** in order to make his exposition as intelligible as possible (see esp. *De arch.* 5 praef.). Other criteria which he employs to achieve this goal are **brevity** (*brevitas*) and a **transparent disposition of his material**. As he maintains, he is the first writer to have expounded and systematised the full science of building in a comprehensive, all-encompassing work. In contrast to his predecessors, he has not just discussed select individual aspects of architecture which may amount to no more than a preliminary study or a thematically narrow treatise. Instead he describes his work as a *corpus*, i.e. a truly organic unit, and contrasts it with the “beginnings” or “preliminary efforts” (*incepta*) presented so far

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(2001) and ROMANO (2003); see also BROWN (1963), GOGUEY (1978), ROMANO (1987: 59–80), CALLEBAT (1997: esp. 172–173), FRÉZOULS (1989), CALLEBAT (2001), ROMANO (2013: esp. 216–218) and ROMANO (2016: 345–347).

<sup>18</sup> On the orator as a morally impeccable individual, see e.g. Cicero, *De inv.* 1.1–5, *De orat.* 1.68–69, 1.165–171 and *De leg.* 1.62–63. For this concept Cicero has not only Roman predecessors (on Cato, see e.g. *De inv.* 1.5), but also Greek ones; see esp. Isocrates, *Antid.* (*Orat.* 15) 278–280.

<sup>19</sup> As RICKEN (1990: 15) has correctly pointed out, Vitruvius “stellte (...) hohe Ansprüche an Wissen, Können und Moral des Architekten sicher nicht, weil dies dem Durchschnitt entsprach, sondern ihm erstrebenswertes Ziel war.”

<sup>20</sup> On the function of *utilitas* in Vitruvius, see NOVARA (1994) and CALLEBAT (1997: 173–174).

by other authors, which he compares rather unflatteringly to “wandering particles” (*De arch.* 4 praef. 1: *uti particulas errabundas*).<sup>21</sup>

### 3. Vitruvius’ use of sources

Another part of his strategy of presenting himself as a writer with high scholarly (technical) and ethical standards is his discussion of the appropriate use of sources. Particularly intriguing in this respect are his considerations in the preface to Book 7.<sup>22</sup> In this text, Vitruvius deals with the problem of plagiarism and the proper form of criticism. He begins his exposition by emphasising the importance of presenting elements of knowledge in written form in order to hand them down to future generations and thus provide the basis for scientific progress (*De arch.* 7 praef. 1).<sup>23</sup> Starting from this premise, he expresses his thanks to earlier generations, summarised as *maiores*,<sup>24</sup> for the fact that they have unstintingly transmitted their observations and their learning to posterity (*De arch.* 7 praef. 1–2). The hiding of knowledge, on the other hand, is interpreted as a deliberate attempt to impede the development of a society. According to him, only those experts who pass on their erudition to others deserve recognition. As he also asserts in various other passages, the ideal specialist need

<sup>21</sup> See also *De arch.* 5 praef. 5: *eorumque ordinationes institui, uti non sint quaerentibus separatim colligenda, sed e corpore uno et in singulis voluminibus generum haberent explicationes*. Further *De arch.* 7 praef. 14–18, 9.8.15 (*ut corpus emendatum architecturae perficiatur*) and 10.16.12 (final part of the work): *quas potui de machinis expedire rationes pacis bellique temporibus et utilissimas putavi, in hoc volumine perfecit. in prioribus vero novem de singulis generibus et partibus comparavi, uti totum corpus omnia architecturae membra in decem voluminibus haberet explicata*. On the term *corpus* in Vitruvius, see e.g. McEWEN (2003: 8–11), further CALLEBAT (1989); see also REITZ-JOOSSE (2016: 186–188).

<sup>22</sup> The prefaces to Book 7 and 9 both comprise eighteen paragraphs and thus constitute the longest *praefationes* in the entire work. On the sources treated in the preface to Book 7, see e.g. ROMANO (2002: 69–72); KNELL (1991: 17) speaks of the “umfangreichste Liste antiker Architekten, von der wir Kenntnis haben.” On Vitruvius’ sources more generally, see e.g. FÖGEN (2009: 128–136), GROS (2006a: 415–417, 427–432), SCHRIJVERS (1989: 16–18), WESENBERG (1984), BOËTHIUS (1939: 117–121), SONTHEIMER (1908: 33–67), ROWLAND (2005: 23–26), COURRÉNT (2011: 43–50), HARRIS-MCCOY (2017: 114–119) and NICHOLS (2017: 6–9); in particular on Book 10, see FLEURY (1993: passim).

<sup>23</sup> There seems to be no more than one instance of Vitruvius referring back to an *oral* report. In the chapter on the characteristics of waters (*De arch.* 8.3.24–25) he mentions that he used to talk to Gaius Iulius, who had served as a soldier under Caesar, about technical issues and that he learned in this context about spring water whose consumption was supposed to be beneficial for the singing voice.

<sup>24</sup> On the role of the *maiores* in Vitruvius, see NOVARA (1983: 294–297) and CALLEBAT (2003: esp. 117–118).

not only be an intellectual authority, but also ought to have high moral standards and social awareness.

In this light, one must view Vitruvius' evaluation of plagiarism, which is directly connected with a censure of those who mercilessly criticise others without offering any original approach themselves (*De arch.* 7 praef. 3):

*itaque quemadmodum his gratiae sunt agenda, contra, qui eorum scripta furantes pro suis praedicant, sunt vituperandi, quique non propriis cogitationibus scriptorum nituntur, sed invidis moribus aliena violantes gloriantur, non modo sunt reprehendendi, sed etiam, quia impio more vixerunt, poena condemnandi.*

“And just as thanks are due to these authors, those who, by contrast, steal the writings of these others and pass them off as their own should be censured, and those who do not rely on their own ideas in their writings, but rather, with envious character, do violence to other men's work and glory in it, these people are not only to be criticised, but, because they have lived impiously, should even be prosecuted as criminals.”

The scorn that Vitruvius pours on such writers is underscored with great rhetorical power. Within a single sentence he uses three verbs which express vituperation and punishment, and connects these with numerous negative phrases that describe the stigmatised forms of behaviour. That his arguments are derived from personal engagement and that they are presented very persuasively can also be seen from his various examples of punishment for plagiarism that occurred in the past. Apart from the longer anecdote about Ptolemy and Aristophanes of Byzantium who, as a judge in a poetic competition, convicted six contestants of plagiarism (*De arch.* 7 praef. 4–7),<sup>25</sup> Vitruvius refers to Zoilus and his harsh criticism of Homer, which led others to apply the epithet “scourge of Homer” (*Homeromastix*) to Zoilus (7 praef. 8–9).<sup>26</sup> While Aristophanes of Byzantium appears not only as the ideal type of a literary scholar but also as an incorruptible defender of true originality (in this case, of poetic originality), Zoilus serves as a negative example of a critic who dares to dethrone established authorities without having anything to offer of his own.

<sup>25</sup> Aristophanes of Byzantium apparently devoted himself to the identification of literary plagiarism, as can be gathered from a note in Porphyry (see Eusebius, *Praep. evang.* 10.3.12): (...) Μέανδρος (...), ὃν ἡρέμα μὲν ἤλεγξε διὰ τὸ ἄγαν αὐτὸν φιλεῖν Ἀριστοφάνης ὁ γραμματικὸς ἐν ταῖς Παραλλήλοις αὐτοῦ τε καὶ ἀφ' ὧν ἔκλεψεν ἐκλογαῖς. For details, see STEPLINGER (1912: 7–8).

<sup>26</sup> On these two anecdotes, see FRASER (1970), who analyses their historical background, as well as ROMANO (1987: 103–108), LONG (1991: 855–856), COURRÉNT (2002: 119–120), COURRÉNT (2011: 221–223) and NICHOLS (2017: 32–36).

It is interesting to note that both Aristophanes of Byzantium and Zoilus are mentioned in connection with the Alexandrian ruler Ptolemy. In both cases it is the king who punishes the plagiarists identified by Aristophanes as well as Zoilus for his unfair criticism of Homer. It is also the king who rewards Aristophanes for his expertise with honours and appoints him as director of the Alexandrian library. Why Vitruvius has chosen to include these two anecdotes becomes clear in the following paragraph of the preface. Turning directly to Augustus, he explains his own method which is as far away from plagiarism as it is from the severe criticism of others, just serving to highlight his own achievements. Instead he expresses his gratitude to, and respect for, the predecessors whose works he used for his own treatise (*De arch.* 7 praef. 10). By addressing Augustus right after the Aristophanes and Zoilus narratives, the Roman emperor is associated closely with Ptolemy who, as a well-educated sovereign, acknowledges the judgement of an expert. By making Aristophanes' general principles his own, Vitruvius portrays himself as a similarly shining example of scholarly honesty, which, as he seems to suggest, also deserves the full respect of the emperor. His narrative strategy proves that he has not included the two anecdotes in this preface merely for the sake of the reader's entertainment; rather, they serve to add a special dimension to his self-presentation. The reference to Ptolemy implies an appeal to Augustus to appreciate an expert's work in a similar fashion as the Alexandrian king did in the case of Aristophanes; consequently, Vitruvius urges Augustus to value his own treatise as a substantial as well as respectable scholarly accomplishment.

However, Vitruvius' self-advertisement in this preface goes even further. While he does signal a high amount of respect for his predecessors in the field of architecture, he nonetheless claims to have advanced his discipline quite considerably. He explicitly calls his work a "new handbook" (*institutiones novas*). For him, this is no contradiction, since scientific progress is only possible if one relies upon established elements of knowledge and creatively uses them for one's own purposes. Without earlier scholars' achievements Vitruvius would not have been able to compose his treatise in its current shape.<sup>27</sup> That he takes his reverence for his predecessors quite seriously is demonstrated by his list of experts whose writings he used; he also mentions the various topics of their works

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<sup>27</sup> *De arch.* 7 praef. 10–11: *ego vero, Caesar, neque alienis indicibus mutatis interposito nomine meo id profero corpus neque ullius cogitata vituperans institui ex eo me adprobare, sed omnibus scriptoribus infinitas ago gratias, quod egregiis ingeniorum sollertiis ex aevo conlatis abundantes alius alio genere copias praeparaverunt, unde nos uti fontibus haurientes aquam et ad propria proposita traducentes **facundiores et expeditiores** habemus ad scribendum facultates talibusque confidentes auctoribus audemus **institutiones novas** comparare. Igitur tales ingressus eorum quia ad propositi mei rationes animadverti praeparatos, inde sumendo **progredi** coepi.*

(*De arch.* 7 praef. 11–17). By doing so, he evokes the impression that he not only postulates transparency in his use of sources, but that he actually practises it.

#### 4. The political dimension of *De architectura*

In the preceding discussion, it has become obvious that Vitruvius is eager to relate his work to the requirements of Roman society. With his emphasis on his high moral standards, he intends to gain the confidence of the private citizen and the statesman and thus to be perceived as an expert who pursues his activities in the interest of the public and not for the sake of personal financial gain. Part of his stylisation as an authority is his repeated address to Augustus. From this relationship between expert and emperor, the reader may draw the conclusion that Vitruvius' connection with the highest political power in Rome is a guarantee of the quality of his work. It is this connection that will be examined in this section of my paper, in particular the question of the possible ideological implications of *De architectura* that may be interpreted as elements supporting the Augustan programme and its value system.<sup>28</sup>

The above analysis of the preface to Book 7 has revealed that Vitruvius introduced the two anecdotes about king Ptolemy and his dealings with excellent and despicable scholars (Aristophanes of Byzantium and Zoilus, respectively) in order to bridge the gap between Augustus and himself (*De arch.* 7 praef. 10; see section 3, above). He uses a comparable strategy in the much shorter preface to the second book of *De architectura*. Here he also narrates an anecdote, this time about the Macedonian architect Dinocrates and Alexander the Great. At the very beginning of this story, Dinocrates is described as a man who made an impressive public appearance as a Heracles figure and thus raised Alexander's interest.<sup>29</sup> He used his physical attractiveness to recommend himself to the king and to put forward his architectural sketches of a city. Despite Alexander's generally rather positive reaction, the emperor observed that the proposal was unrealistic because Dinocrates did not bear in mind the problematic location of his building project.<sup>30</sup> Alexander therefore offered a significant corrective to Dinocrates'

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<sup>28</sup> On the Augustan value system, see e.g. GALINSKY (1996: 80–140, 288–312, esp. 83–90), who lists further secondary literature on the topic.

<sup>29</sup> *De arch.* 2 praef. 1 fin.: *fuerat enim amplissima statura, facie grata, forma dignitateque summa. his igitur naturae muneribus confisus vestimenta posuit in hospitio et oleo corpus perunxit caputque coronavit populea fronde, laevum umerum pelle leonina textit, dextraque clavam tenens incessit contra tribunal regis ius dicentis. novitas populum cum avertisset, conspexit eum Alexander.*

<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, the king subsequently makes use of Dinocrates' services, especially for the construction of the city of Alexandria. In *De arch.* 2 praef. 3 Vitruvius puts the following

high-flown plans and revealed their impracticability. Vitruvius concludes this anecdote with another reference to Dinocrates' bodily assets that earned him his reputation.<sup>31</sup> It is noteworthy that he does not mention Dinocrates' intellectual gifts at all. The transition from Dinocrates and Alexander to himself and Augustus stresses the contrast between superficial beauty and genuine technical competence (*De arch.* 2 praef. 4):

*Mihi autem, imperator, staturam non tribuit natura, faciem deformavit aetas, valetudo detraxit vires. Itaque quoniam ab his praesidiis sum desertus, **per auxilia scientiae scriptaque**, ut spero, perveniam ad commendationem.*

“But to me, Emperor, nature did not grant imposing stature, age has ruined my face, and bad health has carried off my strength. Therefore, because I am bereft of such defenses, it is through the help of my expertise and my writings that I shall – as I hope – attain your approval.”

With this passage, Vitruvius illustrates that he represents a different type of architect than Dinocrates, whom he does not characterise as an ignoramus or charlatan, but nonetheless as an example of self-presentation through outward appearance. It is this sort of superficial showmanship that Vitruvius endeavours to counter with true substance, namely with his compendium of architecture. What is also essential to him is the practicability of a project. Grandiose plans for a city, like the one that Dinocrates suggested, may be compelling in theory and fulfil certain aesthetic expectations, but they are not viable since they do not take into account basic architectural requirements such as geographic space or environment.<sup>32</sup>

As COURRÉNT (2014: 61–62) has shown, the Dinocrates episode may be contrasted with a brief story about the Carian king Mausolus (regn. 377–353 B.C.)

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remarks into Alexander's mouth: *itaque quemadmodum formationem puto probandam, sic iudico locum improbandum; teque volo esse mecum, quod tua opera sum usus.*

<sup>31</sup> *De arch.* 2 praef. 4: *ita Dinocrates a facie dignitateque corporis commendatus ad eam nobilitatem pervenit.*

<sup>32</sup> Vitruvius' Alexander points out that fertility and easy accessibility of a region are indispensable criteria for the establishment of an urban community because they guarantee the citizens' supply of food. See *De arch.* 2 praef. 3: ***delectatus Alexander ratione formae statim quaesit, si essent agri circa, qui possent frumentaria ratione eam civitatem tueri. cum invenisset non posse nisi transmarinis subvectionibus: 'Dinocrates', inquit, 'attendo egregiam formae compositionem et ea delector, sed animadverto, si qui deduxerit eo loco coloniam, fore ut iudicium eius vituperetur. ut enim natus infans sine nutricis lacte non potest ali neque ad vitae crescentis gradus perducere, sic civitas sine agris et eorum fructibus in moenibus affluentibus non potest crescere nec sine abundantia cibi frequentiam habere populumque sine copia tueri. (...)***

in which he is praised for his shrewdness (*acumen*) and skill (*sollertia*) in providing buildings, but also for recognising Halicarnassus, where he established his palace, as a naturally fortified place, a suitable marketplace and a useful harbour – in other words, as quite the opposite of the site selected by Dinocrates.<sup>33</sup> COURRÉNT (2014: 62) is therefore right to conclude:

“Mausole a examiné le lieu avec le regard d’un architecte et l’a choisi parce qu’il répondait aux trois critères dont Vitruve fait les références de toute activité de sa profession: utilité, solidité et beauté, critères que Dinocrate (...) est loin de mettre en pratique.”<sup>34</sup>

Consequently, the purpose of the Dinocrates anecdote seems to serve as a subtle warning to Augustus against being impressed by amazing but shallow and unfeasible projects when it comes technical matters where only genuine competence counts. At the same time, Vitruvius’ narrative amounts to a shrewd self-advertisement which fits well with the image of himself that he creates elsewhere in his work.<sup>35</sup>

Vitruvius had various reasons for directly addressing Augustus throughout his treatise, in particular his ambitious building programme,<sup>36</sup> which *De archi-*

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<sup>33</sup> *De arch.* 2.8.10–11: *item Halicarnasso potentissimi regis Mausoli domus, cum Proconensio marmore omnia haberet ornata, parietes habet latere structos, qui ad hoc tempus egregiam praestant firmitatem ita tectoriis operibus expoliti, uti vitri perluciditatem videntur habere. Neque is rex ab inopia id fecit; in infinitis enim vectigalibus erat fartus, quod imperabat Cariae toti. Acumen autem eius et sollertiam ad aedificia paranda sic licet considerare. Cum esset enim natus Mylasis et animadvertisset Halicarnasso locum naturaliter esse munitum, emporiumque idoneum portum utile, ibi sibi domum constituit.*

<sup>34</sup> Very similarly formulated already in COURRÉNT (2011: 236).

<sup>35</sup> On this anecdote, see OECHSLIN (1982: esp. 7–10), TRAINA (1988: bes. 308–320, 349), NOVARA (2005: 126–128), COURRÉNT (2011: 233–237) and WULFRAM (2013: 264–271); see also KÖRTE (1937) and NICHOLS (2017: 63–67, 161). When HARRIS-MCCOY (2017: 117) refers to Dinocrates as “Alexander the Great’s semi-comical architect” who “is presented as somewhat of a buffoon”, he slightly understates the issue at hand. MCEWEN (2003: 95–129) devotes much space to the discussion of this anecdote, but overlooks that Dinocrates is to be seen as a negative foil from which Vitruvius sets himself apart. FRITZ (1995: 14) is wrong to claim that Vitruvius is “[b]eeindruckt von der mutigen Selbstinszenierung des Deinokrates” or that he recommends to Augustus “das sehr enge Vertrauensverhältnis zwischen Alexander und seinem Architekten Deinokrates geradezu als modellgebendes, nachahmenswertes Beispiel” (FRITZ 1995: 157). Equally misguided is KÖNIG (2009: 43) who sees Dinocrates “as a role model, if not an alter ego, for Vitruvius himself”.

<sup>36</sup> On Augustus’ building programme, see e.g. GALINSKY (1996: 141–224), LONG (1999: 84), GABBA (1980), FRITZ (1995: passim) and ANDERSON (1997: 88–90), further SIMON (1986: esp. 19–51, 84–109, 182–194), ZANKER (1987: esp. 73–170) and HASELBERGER

*tectura* seems to buttress. As can be gathered from Suetonius' biography of Augustus, the emperor intended to turn Rome into an admirable centre of the Roman empire which would satisfy the highest aesthetic demands as well as the strictest criteria of safety.<sup>37</sup> He also paid considerable attention to public hygiene which would guarantee the safety and health of the citizens.<sup>38</sup> It is important to note that he not only undertook numerous building projects, but that he also successfully encouraged leading citizens of Rome (*ceteros principes viros*) to actively support his plans.<sup>39</sup> In his *Res gestae* (§ 19–21) Augustus described his accomplishments in this sector, in particular with regard to temples.<sup>40</sup> The fact

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(2007); see also FAVRO (1996: esp. 80–251). SCHEITHAUER (2000: 27–89) deals with the literary evidence of Augustus' building activities.

<sup>37</sup> Suetonius, *Aug.* 28.3: *urbem neque pro maiestate imperii ornatam et inundationibus incendiisque obnoxiam excoluit adeo, ut iure sit gloriatus marmoream se relinquere, quam latericiam accepisset. tutam vero, quantum provideri humana ratione potuit, etiam in posterum praestitit.* It is noteworthy that the phrase *maiestas imperii* also occurs in Vitruvius' preface to Book 1 (*De arch.* 1 praef. 2), which is addressed to Augustus and which promises to promote his building activities through the edition of *De architectura*. One may add that Strabo in his *Geography* (5.3.8) speaks of the κόσμος and κάλλος of the city of Rome which captivates the spectator; he points out that this beauty was achieved through the careful planning (πρόνοια) of the people involved in the development of Rome, among them Augustus and his family.

<sup>38</sup> Suetonius, *Aug.* 30.1: *adversus incendia excubias nocturnas vigilesque commentus est; ad coerendas inundationes alveum Tiberis laxavit ac repurgavit completum olim ruderibus et aedificiorum prolotionibus coartatum. quo autem facilius undique urbs adiretur, desumpta sibi Flaminia via Arimino tenus munienda reliquas triumphalibus viris ex manuali pecunia sternendas distribuit.* The principles of urban hygiene are extensively dealt with by Vitruvius: he is particularly concerned with the selection of healthy places for building projects (*De arch.* 1.4 and 6.1; see esp. 1.4.12 on the anecdote about the resettlement of the city of Salpia, motivated by the desire to avoid diseases for its inhabitants) and with the layout of streets (*De arch.* 1.6), but also with the right selection of waterpipes (8.6.10–11). See SÖLLNER (1913), GOGUEY (1978: 107–108) and STECKNER (1984), further WINKELMANN (1988: esp. 166–168).

<sup>39</sup> Suetonius, *Aug.* 29.4–5: *sed et ceteros principes viros saepe hortatus est, ut pro facultate quisque monumentis vel novis vel reffectis et excultis urbem adornarent. multaque a multis tunc extracta sunt, sicut a Marcio Philippo aedes Herculis Musarum, a L. Cornificio aedes Dianae, ab Asinio Pollione atrium Libertatis, a Munatio Planco aedes Saturni, a Cornelio Balbo theatrum, a Statilio Tauro amphitheatrum, a M. vero Agrippa complura et egregia.* Similarly Velleius Paterculus, *Hist.* 2.89.4: *principes viri triumphisque et amplissimis honoribus functi adhortatu principis ad ornandam urbem inlecti sunt.*

<sup>40</sup> See also Ovid, *Fasti* 2.57–66, esp. 2.59–61: *cetera ne simili caderent labefacta ruina, | cavit sacrati provida cura ducis, | sub quo delubris sentitur nulla senectus.* Hereafter Ovid addresses Augustus as *templorum positor*, *templorum sancte repostor* (*Fasti* 2.63); Livy (4.20.7) refers to him as *templorum omnium conditorem ac restitutorem*. Vitruvius himself puts a great deal of emphasis on the discussion of temple buildings which represented a crucial element of Augustan restoration politics.

that he dedicated no fewer than three paragraphs of his rather short catalogue of deeds and merits to the architectural restoration and extension of Rome signals the importance which he attributed to this topic.<sup>41</sup> Given such vigorous building activities in the city of Rome and elsewhere, it was almost guaranteed that an expert would compose a treatise which outlines a similar agenda and thus would supply an orientation for the transformation of the empire into a well-ordered space, a “cosmos”. It must be admitted that it is not known to what extent Vitruvius’ work was actually used in the Augustan period. However, his work can be regarded as a theoretical and practical framework which seeks to contribute to the cultural development of Rome. As Cicero did for philosophy and rhetoric, Vitruvius filled a gap within technical literature written in Latin.<sup>42</sup>

In the light of his “cosmos” idea, one also needs to interpret his praise of Italy, which he articulates in the first chapter of Book 6. Similar to Aristotle’s portrayal of Greece in his *Politics*,<sup>43</sup> Vitruvius defines Italy as a climatically favoured zone which is situated between the less privileged northern and southern areas. It is differences of weather and climate which are responsible for distinctive physical and psychological characteristics of the peoples who live in those regions (*De arch.* 6.1.3–11; see also 1.4.3–8).<sup>44</sup> Among people from the north moisture and cold generate bigger physiques and deeper voices as well as a fair complexion, reddish hair and fullness of blood (6.1.3). Fullness of blood, in turn, results in courage and belligerence but also proneness to fever (6.1.4, further 6.1.10). Further traits of people from the north are their sluggish minds (6.1.9) and their lack of slyness (6.1.10). In contrast, the southerners’ bodies are drained of their moisture by the sun (6.1.3) which makes them smaller and gives them a darker complexion, curly hair and thin blood (6.1.4). Thinness of blood

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<sup>41</sup> The *Res gestae* comprise no more than 35 paragraphs in modern editions. On this text and its background see e.g. SCHEID (2007) and COOLEY (2009), further SABLAYROLLES (1981) and ELSNER (1996: 42–49). See also SCHEITHAUER (2000: 31–35) and GALINSKY (1996: passim).

<sup>42</sup> This form of emancipation does not imply a break from Greek culture, but its productive use for the creation of something distinct and autonomous that is able to equal Greek science and scholarship. For Vitruvius this literary emancipation goes along with substantial architectural accomplishments among the Romans. As KNELL (1991: 170–171) rightly remarks, Vitruvius repeatedly praises examples of the Italian building tradition.

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle, *Pol.* VII 7 1327b20–1328a16, esp. 1327b29–33: τὸ δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων γένος, ὡσπερ μεσεύει κατὰ τοὺς τόπους, οὕτως ἀμφοῖν μετέχει. καὶ γὰρ ἐνθυμον καὶ διανοητικόν ἐστίν· διόπερ ἐλεύθερον τε διατελεῖ καὶ βέλτιστα πολιτευόμενον καὶ δυνάμενον ἄρχειν πάντων, μιᾶς τυγχάνον πολιτείας.

<sup>44</sup> On Posidonius as Vitruvius’ source in this passage, see REINHARDT (1921: 79–87). See also ROMANO (1987: 26–30) and ROMANO (2016: 349–351), further COURRÉNT (2011: 137–149) who rightly refers to the Hippocratic treatise *Περὶ ἀέρων τόπων ὑδάτων* as another important basis for this section.

creates fear of fights (6.1.4, further 6.1.10) but also resistance to heat and fever (6.1.4). Southern people tend to have a thin and high-pitched voice (6.1.6–7), acute minds and a certain resourcefulness (6.1.9). This description of the two extremes is followed by a definition of the qualities of the Italian people (*De arch.* 6.1.10–11):

*cum ergo haec ita sint ab natura rerum in mundo conlocata et omnes nationes inmoderatis mixtionibus disparatae, veros inter spatium totius orbis terrarum regionesque medio mundi populus Romanus possidet fines. namque temperatissimae ad utramque partem et corporum membris animorumque vigoribus pro fortitudine sunt in Italia gentes. quemadmodum enim Iovis stella inter Martis ferventissimam et Saturni frigidissimam media currens temperatur, eadem ratione Italia inter septentrionalem meridianamque ab utraque parte mixtionibus temperatas et invictas habet laudes. itaque consiliis refringit barbarorum virtutes, forti manu meridianorum cogitationes. ita divina mens civitatem populi Romani egregia temperataque regione conlocavit, uti orbis terrarum imperii potiretur.*

“Thus these things have been so positioned in the cosmos by nature, and all nations have been made different from one another by their unequal composition. Within the area of the entire earthly globe and all the regions at the centre of the cosmos, the Roman people has its territories. The populations of Italy partake in equal measure of the qualities of both north and south, both with regard to their physiques and to the vigour of their minds, to produce the greatest strength. Just as the planet Jupiter is tempered by running its course between seething Mars and chilly Saturn, so, for the same reason, Italy, in between north and south, partaking of each in her composition, has balanced and invincible qualities. With her prudent counsel she smites the barbarians’ strength, her strong hand does the same to the southerners’ scheming. Thus the divine intelligence established the state of the Roman people as an outstanding and balanced region, so that it could take command over the earthly orb.”

Its geographical position makes Italy the centre of the world and, with its temperate climate, secures a well-balanced medium between the extremes for the bodily as well as mental constitution of its people. In the further course of his argument, Vitruvius uses these features of the Italian people as the justification for Rome’s power over the world, which is said to be based upon divine will. As ROMANO (2016: 351) has correctly observed, “[t]his imperial destiny is identified with the trajectory of Augustus’s own rise to power with the repetition of the terms that were applied to Augustus at the start of the *prae-fatio* (1 praef. 1: *cum divina tua mens et numen, imperator Caesar, imperio potiretur orbis terrarum*).” Vitruvius’ praise of Italy, which is developed from a rather whole-

sale comparison of the north and south, thus amounts to an explanation of Rome's pre-eminence, which forms a core element of Augustan ideology, as can be seen from other texts of the same period.<sup>45</sup> If one remembers Vitruvius' thematic starting-point in this chapter, namely the importance of the consideration of climatic conditions for the erection of private buildings (*De arch.* 6.1.1–2), one cannot but notice an enormous mental leap. The treatment of a factual question is expanded into emphatic panegyric which is stylistically very elaborate, as can be perceived from the repeated superlatives (*temperatissimae, ferventissimam, frigidissimam*), doubled expressions (*temperatas et invictas ... laudes*; further: *egregia temperataque regione*) and syntactic parallelisms (*et corporum membris animorumque vigoribus*; further: *itaque consiliis refringit barbarorum virtutes, forti manu meridianorum cogitationes*).<sup>46</sup> Yet at the end of this section, Vitruvius returns to his original topic when he states that the principles of building among the different peoples should be allotted according to their characteristics, which are influenced by location and climate.<sup>47</sup>

The conception of empire as “cosmos” also functions as a background for Vitruvius' account of the principles of defence techniques and ballistics in the second part of Book 10 (*De arch.* 10.10–16) because these secure the stability and continuity of the Roman empire and contribute to the advancement of its expansion. In this context he briefly returns to the previously discussed geographical differences and their consequences for the characteristics of people. He calls particular attention to the tenet that the construction and handling of war machinery depend on where the battles take place, or more precisely, on the temperament of the enemy.

<sup>45</sup> One may think in particular of the words of Anchises in the sixth book of Vergil's *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 6.851–853): *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento | (hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem, | parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*. On the panegyric tone of this passage, see NORDEN (1976: 337). The conquest of other nations as a means of guaranteeing peace and security is also highlighted by Augustus in his *Res gestae* (§ 25–30); in connection with the bestowal of his honorific title ‘Augustus’, he refers to *virtus, clementia, iustitia* and *pietas* as his most prominent character traits (§ 34).

<sup>46</sup> Further *laudes Italiae* in Roman literature can be found in Cato ap. Solinus 2.2; Varro, *De re rust.* 1.2.3–7 and *Ant. rer. hum.* 11 (cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* 3.16.12); Vergil, *Georg.* 2.136–176; Propertius, *Carm.* 3.22; and Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 3.39–42, 37.201–202, further 36.101. In Greek literature one may think of Polybius, *Hist.* 2.15.1–7, Strabo, *Geogr.* 6.4.1 and Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Ant. Rom.* 1.36–37. For a synopsis, see e.g. BAUCK (1919) and GÄRTNER (2002).

<sup>47</sup> *De arch.* 6.1.12: *quodsi ita est, uti dissimiles regiones ab inclinationibus caeli variis generibus sint comparatae, ut etiam naturae gentium disparibus animis et corporum figuris qualitativisque nascerentur, non dubitemus aedificiorum quoque rationes ad nationum gentiumque proprietates apte distribuere, cum habeamus ab ipsa rerum natura sollertem et expeditam monstrationem.*

However, “cosmos”, as thematised in *De architectura*, refers not only to the protection of the empire’s political integrity through a refined technical apparatus, but also to its inner structure. According to Vitruvius, the size and style of private houses need to correspond to the social status of their inhabitants (*De arch.* 6.5.1–2):

*(...) igitur is, qui communi sunt fortuna, non necessaria magna vestibula nec tabulina neque atria, quod aliis officia praestant ambiundo neque ab aliis ambiuntur. qui autem fructibus rusticis serviunt, in eorum vestibulis stabula, tabernae, in aedibus cryptae, horrea, apothecae ceteraque, quae ad fructus servandos magis quam ad elegantiae decorem possunt esse, ita sunt facienda. item feneratoribus et publicanis commodiora et speciosiora et ab insidiis tuta, forensibus autem et disertis elegantiora et spatiosiora ad conventus excipiundos, nobilibus vero, qui honores magistratusque gerundo praestare debent officia civibus, faciunda sunt vestibula regalia alta, atria et peristylia amplissima, silvae ambulationesque laxiores ad decorem maiestatis perfectae; praeterea bybliothecas, pinacothecas, basilicas non dissimili modo quam publicorum operum magnificentia comparatas, quod in domibus eorum saepius et publica consilia et privata iudicia arbitriaque conficiuntur.*

“(…) And so, for those of moderate income, magnificent vestibules, tablina, and atria are unnecessary, because they perform their duties by making the rounds visiting others, rather than having others make the rounds visiting them. Those who deal in farm products have stables and sheds in their entrance courts, and in their homes should have installed crypts, granaries, store-rooms and the other furnishings that have more to do with storing provisions than with maintaining an elegant correctness. Likewise, for money-lenders and tax collectors public rooms should be more commodious, better looking, and well secured, but for lawyers and orators they should be more elegant, and spacious enough to accommodate meetings. For the most prominent citizens, those who carry out their duties to the citizenry by holding honorific titles and magistracies, vestibules should be constructed that are lofty and lordly, the atria and peristyles at their most spacious, lush gardens and broad walkways refined as properly befits their dignity. In addition to these, there should be libraries, picture galleries, and basilicas, outfitted in a manner not dissimilar to the magnificence of public works, for in the homes of these people, often enough, both public deliberations and private judgments and arbitrations are carried out.”

As in *De arch.* 1.2.9, Vitruvius here delineates a concept of urban planning that is designed in accordance with the Roman system of social rank. The structure of Roman society, which is defined by pronounced boundaries, needs to be mirrored in the architectural arrangement of every environment, thereby incor-

porating the notion of the “appropriate” (*aptum*), which has a fundamental significance also for architecture.<sup>48</sup>

At the same time, in Vitruvius’ estimation, striving for a suitable structure of living and representational public space does not imply an unrestrained desire for exaggerated luxury in the planning of buildings. In his opinion, magnificent houses ought to be reserved for high dignitaries, as is indicated in the passage quoted above.<sup>49</sup> Yet even for such projects the expenses incurred must be reasonable. As Vitruvius specifies in the preface to Book 10, the reliable estimation of costs is absolutely vital for public as well as private buildings and can only be provided by an experienced and responsible architect. Dilettanti will often make mistakes when it comes to an assessment of economic issues (*De arch.* 10 praef.). In order to save money, Vitruvius recommends using building materials which can be supplied from local sources; this way, one avoids the expensive transportation of material to the building site.<sup>50</sup>

## 5. Conclusions

In his own view, Vitruvius has given architecture a new foundation by presenting for the first time a coherent account of the discipline and its branches. At the same time, he has attempted to enhance the status of science and scholarship as a whole, as can be seen from his endeavour to link architecture with various other fields of learning.<sup>51</sup> He recognises the complexity of his own discipline that results from these connections and subscribes to the stylistic principles of clarity and brevity in order to make his exposition as accessible as possible.

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<sup>48</sup> On details, see ROMANO (1987: 30–38), COARELLI (1989), FRITZ (1995: 88–101), GALINSKY (1996: 186–187) and NICHOLS (2017: 83–129).

<sup>49</sup> This is also emphasised in *De arch.* 1.2.9: *potentibus vero, quorum cogitationibus respublica gubernatur, ad usum conlocabuntur*. The reference to Augustus is difficult to overlook; this passage, however, does not explicitly speak of splendour, but of buildings of a suitable functionality (*ad usum*).

<sup>50</sup> *De arch.* 1.2.8: *Distributio autem est copiarum locique commoda dispensatio parcaque in operibus sumptus ratione temperatio. haec ita observabitur, si primum architectus ea non quaeret, quae non poterunt inveniri aut parari nisi magno. namque non omnibus locis harenae fossiciae nec caementorum nec abietis nec sappinorum nec marmoris copia est, sed aliud alio loco nascitur, quorum comportationes difficiles sunt et sumptuosae. utendum autem est, ubi non est harena fossicia, fluviatrica aut marina lota; inopiae quoque abietis aut sappinorum vitabuntur utendo cupresso, populo, ulmo, pinu; reliquaue his similiter erunt explicanda.*

<sup>51</sup> See also COURRÉNT (2001: 124): “(...) il faut une volonté particulièrement audacieuse pour vouloir transformer un métier qui n’était alors qu’une simple technique en ars liberalis, activité qui repose sur l’intellect, la théorie, l’abstraction, d’autant plus que, telle qu’elle est présentée dans le traité, cette relation repose déjà sur un statut d’égalité et est présentée comme une confrontation d’idées entre l’architecture et les autres sciences.”

Transparency serves as his guideline also on another level: he explicitly reveals the names of his predecessors whose writings he has used for his own work and thus puts himself in the line of a long tradition. In contrast to other ancient technical writers he does not claim any originality for those areas in which other experts have excelled by their pioneering work. Moreover, he treats his forerunners with a high degree of fairness by refraining from any excessive criticism, since he himself would have found this unsuitable. Rather, he is eager to demonstrate an appropriate amount of respect for the cultural heritage which originates from the past (*mos maiorum*) and stimulates the present intellectually as well as ethically. On the other hand, this attitude does not imply that he does not feel entitled to correct certain earlier views. On the contrary, he finds such amendments desirable and even necessary if technical progress is to be achieved.

Hence, in Vitruvius' perspective, the ideal architect is a man who combines profound technical knowledge in a variety of areas with firm moral convictions. He is thus envisaged as a personality who devotes his life to active public service (*vita activa*). For Vitruvius, who was able to merge the study of theoretical surveys written by other authors with his own practical experience, this means that he does not keep his knowledge to himself, but instead generously shares it with others to the benefit of society and thus provides a basis for future research. In his *De architectura*, he not only intends to impart knowledge in a systematic fashion, but also an ethical consciousness that guides the architect in his professional pursuits. Given the points emphasised in his own manual, he stands for precisely this conviction that knowledge alone is not sufficient to advance society. For him, a forward-looking perspective, as it manifests itself in his emphasis on the idea of progress, needs to be associated with an orientation back towards Rome's past and the ethical ideals represented by the *mos maiorum*.

One may argue that Vitruvius' concept coincides to a large extent with Augustus' political programme which, through its accent on the *mos maiorum*, is determined to establish a continuity between tradition and innovation.<sup>52</sup> By his frequent address to the emperor, Vitruvius not only exhibits an ideological "steadfastness"; he also presents his scholarly accomplishments as an active form of service to the Roman empire and thus as an engagement for the public's benefit. He wants his technical discourse to be perceived as a project which is transparently structured and closely related to the interests of Roman society. How seriously he takes his agenda is underscored by his pronounced disinterest in material gain. His reward will be a "good reputation" (*bona fama*) which will

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<sup>52</sup> On the dialectic relationship between tradition and innovation as a characteristic feature of the Augustan period, see e.g. GALINSKY (1996: esp. 363–370).

arise from his effort as an author (*De arch.* 6 praef. 5).<sup>53</sup> He trusts that his readers will recognise his competence without being improperly flattered by him (*De arch.* 3 praef. 3).

In conclusion, it needs to be pointed out that Vitruvius' intimation that the Augustan period constituted a "golden age" (*aurea aetas*) is not to be interpreted as a worldview that is characterised by idleness and an easy life. Truly professional activities, in particular technical writing, never come to full completion but require a constant and energetic commitment. Comparable in certain respects to the situation of the farmer in Vergil's *Georgics*,<sup>54</sup> the tasks of the architect are to be understood, pointedly speaking, as a *labor* which can only be performed with the right ethos. *De architectura* is not least an appeal to those who are involved in building projects to adopt high standards for themselves and to expect these same high standards from others in the interest of Roman society. Vitruvius' self-presentation in his treatise suggests his belief that he is the one who may function as a model for others to imitate, both in scholarly and moral respects.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> See also *De arch.* 1.1.7 (quoted above, section 2). NICHOLS (2017: 186 n. 30) notes that "[o]utside of 1.1.7 and 6.praef. 5, there are no other occurrences of the phrase *bona fama* [sc. in *De architectura*]."

<sup>54</sup> See e.g. GALINSKY (1996: 93–96, 121–123).

<sup>55</sup> For a more detailed approach to the questions pursued here, see the chapter on Vitruvius in FÖGEN (2009: 106–151), by which this article is to some extent inspired. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Universities of Leipzig, St. Andrews, Leeds, Newcastle, Humboldt University of Berlin and Warsaw. I would like to thank the members of the various audiences, but also Erik G. Huneke and Keiran Carson for their valuable comments and suggestions.

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Thorsten Fögen  
Durham University  
Department of Classics & Ancient History  
38 North Bailey  
Durham DH1 3EU  
GREAT BRITAIN  
thorsten.foegen@durham.ac.uk

## Résumé

*L'architecte engagé:*Education, Morality and Politics in Vitruvius' *De architectura*

Thorsten FÖGEN

Vitruvius' *De architectura* is the only comprehensive treatise on architecture that is extant from antiquity. It is an important source for the reconstruction of Graeco-Roman theoretical thinking about forms of building, styles and aesthetics. At the same time, it contains a great deal of reflections on the importance of architectural knowledge and the multi-faceted background that a good architect would have been expected to have. Vitruvius' extensive educational programme for the future architect shows parallels to Cicero's concept of the perfect rhetorician (*orator perfectus*). This article analyses some of Vitruvius' literary strategies, in particular with regard to the ways in which he strives to present himself not only as a true expert on technical matters who combines theoretical and practical skills, but also as a morally responsible writer. It is shown that Vitruvius is eager to display his high personal ethical standards and that he subscribes to several fundamental elements of Augustan ideology as well as the *mos maiorum* more generally.

*L'architecte engagé:*morálka a politika vo Vitruviovom diele *De architectura*

Thorsten FÖGEN

Vitruviovo dielo *De architectura* je jediným komplexným traktátom o architektúre, ktorý sa nám z antiky zachoval. Predstavuje dôležitý zdroj pre rekonštrukciu grécko-rímskeho myslenia o tvaroch budov, štýloch a estetike. Zároveň obsahuje veľké množstvo úvah o dôležitosti vedomostí z oblasti architektúry a o mnohostrannom vzdelaní, ktoré by sa očakávali od dobrého architekta. Vitruviov rozsiahly vzdelávací program pre budúcich architektov vykazuje paralely s Ciceronovým konceptom dokonalého rečníka (*orator perfectus*). Táto štúdia analyzuje niektoré Vitruviove literárne stratégie, predovšetkým s ohľadom na spôsoby, ktorými sa snaží prezentovať seba nielen ako skutočného odborníka, ale aj ako morálne zodpovedného spisovateľa. Ukazuje sa, že Vitruvius horlivo pripomína svoje vysoké etické štandardy a hlási sa k množstvu základných prvkov augustovskej ideológie, ako aj k *mos maiorum* vo všeobecnosti.