Marden Fitzpatrick Nichols

Author and Audience in Vitruvius’
*De architectura*
Vitruvius’ *De architectura* is the only extant classical text on architecture, and its impact on Renaissance masters including Leonardo da Vinci is well known. But what was the text’s purpose in its own time (ca. 20s BCE)? In this book, Marden Fitzpatrick Nichols reveals how Vitruvius pitched the Greek discipline of architecture to his Roman readers, most of whom were undoubtedly laymen. The inaccuracy of Vitruvius’ architectural rules, when compared with surviving ancient buildings, has knocked Vitruvius off his pedestal. Nichols argues that the author never intended to provide an accurate view of contemporary buildings. Instead, Vitruvius crafted his authorial persona and remarks on architecture to appeal to elites (and would-be elites) eager to secure their positions within an expanding empire. In this major new analysis of *De architectura* from archaeological and literary perspectives, Vitruvius emerges as a knowing critic of a social landscape in which the house made the man.

MARDEN FITZPATRICK NICHOLS is Assistant Professor of Classics at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. She works primarily on the literature, art and culture of ancient Rome.
The Greek culture of the Roman Empire offers a rich field of study. Extraordinary insights can be gained into processes of multicultural contact and exchange, political and ideological conflict, and the creativity of a changing, polyglot empire. During this period, many fundamental elements of Western society were being set in place: from the rise of Christianity, to an influential system of education, to long-lived artistic canons. This series is the first to focus on the response of Greek culture to its Roman imperial setting as a significant phenomenon in its own right. To this end, it will publish original and innovative research in the art, archaeology, epigraphy, history, philosophy, religion and literature of the empire, with an emphasis on Greek material.

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0.1 Bronze bust of Vitruvius by Miklos Simon attached to a keystone on the addition to Bond Hall School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame, 1996. (photograph: Thomas Gordon Smith)
AUTHOR AND AUDIENCE IN VITRUVIUS’ *DE ARCHITECTURA*

MARDEN FITZPATRICK NICHOLS

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For Carey Blackshear Seal
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Preface

Vitruvius’ *De architectura* (ca. 20s BCE) is the only treatise on architecture that survives from classical antiquity. A source of inspiration to Michelangelo and Leonardo, and *Urtext* on construction and design for centuries of architects, these ten books of Latin prose have left an indelible mark on Western civilisation. Scholars of post-classical art and architecture are often surprised to hear that, for well over a century, *De architectura* has stood outside the canon of texts studied and taught by scholars of classical Latin literature. Vitruvius has been one of the most widely read and analysed Roman authors from the Renaissance to today, but even Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), who devoted much of his career to analysis of *De architectura*, said of Vitruvius that his ‘very text is evidence that he wrote neither Latin nor Greek, so that as far as we are concerned, he might just as well not have written at all, rather than write something we cannot understand’ (*De re aedificatoria* 6.1). While stylistic issues and deficits dissuade literary analysis, difficulties in reconciling Vitruvius’ conception of *architectura* with the material record have dampened archaeological enthusiasm for the text.

The starting point of this book lay in my confusion at the varying attitudes towards *De architectura* that I encountered in secondary literature on Roman art and archaeology. On some occasions, Vitruvius appeared to be a valuable informant, with much to tell us about construction techniques in antiquity; on others, he was an untrustworthy fabulist, whose testimony could be easily dismissed in a footnote. The conviction that has shaped this book is that comparative literary analysis with authors of Vitruvius’ own time, including Catullus, Cicero and Horace, writing across the spectrum of genres, can help to resolve some of the thorniest issues in the interpretation of this text in relation to Roman culture. I argue here that Vitruvius enlivened the discipline of architecture, a topic on which he was utterly reliant on Greek sources, for his imagined Roman audience through the inclusion of Roman characters, attitudes and ideas.
At the centre of this stands the author himself. Each of the series of analyses in this book examines a facet of Vitruvius’ authorial persona and his depictions of contemporary Romans. Through examination of these particular passages, I reveal some, though by no means all, of the ways that Vitruvius responds to the social and cultural environment of the late Republic and early Empire.

When I first began my work on Vitruvius as a graduate student at the University of Cambridge, in 2005, pursuing this literary and cultural study of *De architectura* raised eyebrows. In the years since, Vitruvius has greatly profited from two parallel surges of scholarly activity: interdisciplinary research on the culture of the Augustan age and literary investigations of ancient ‘technical’ texts. As a result, *De architectura* is now enthusiastically analysed within the context of both its Augustan dedication (in around 27–22 BCE) and the ordering and structuring approach of Roman authors on such topics as medicine and astronomy. What is more, within the current resurgence of interest in Latin authors such as Vitruvius, Galen, and Columella, the very idea of ‘technical literature’ has yielded to an appreciation for the various ways in which texts once so classified transgress the boundaries this label implies.

I would like to thank Mary Beard, who supervised the doctoral thesis at Trinity College, Cambridge, on which this book is based, with her trademark combination of insightful criticism and warm support. I am also indebted to Alessandro Barchiesi, Emily Gowers, Robin Osborne and Alessandro Schiesaro, who served as mentors at various stages of my graduate study, and to my examiners Catharine Edwards and Caroline Vout. Guidance and insight from Andrew Wallace-Hadrill and from the series editors, Susan Alcock, Jaś Elsner, Simon Goldhill and Michael Squire, have shaped the direction of this project from thesis to monograph. I am thankful for conversations about the project with Virginia Corless, Kate Elswit, Richard Fletcher, Johanna Hanink, Ian Goh, Myles Lavan, Tom Murgatroyd, Jeanne Pansard-Besson and Carlo Vessella during my time in Cambridge. For engagement with this text in the years since graduate school, I am grateful to Mika Natif, Hérica Valladares, Michelle C. Wang, and Katherine Wasdin. As we have navigated the transformation of dissertations into books together, I could not ask for better interlocutors.

I have benefited significantly from the good company of my colleagues in the Department of Classics at Georgetown University: Sandro La Barbera, Catherine Keesling, Charles McNelis, Josiah Osgood, Victoria Pedrick and Alexander Sens. Charlie and Alex very generously discussed
the book in its entirety with me during the final stages and provided numerous helpful suggestions. It is hard to imagine my first happy years at Georgetown without their mentorship.

This project has been supported by the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission; the Higher Education Funding Council for England; Trinity College, Cambridge; the School for Advanced Studies in Venice; the British School at Rome; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery; Georgetown University; and the Fondation Hardt. Audiences at these institutions and at Harvard University; University of Virginia; University of Cambridge; University College London; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; George Washington University; and Humboldt-Universität convinced me of the timeliness of this project and suggested ways to expand its scope. The expolitiones to this manuscript were completed while I was the Clark/Oakley Fellow at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute and Williams College. My sincere thanks to both institutions and to Michael Sharp, Sharon McCann and their colleagues at Cambridge University Press.

I am thankful for the love and support of my parents Andrew and Loxley, my brother Alexander, and most especially my sister Rachael, whose insights improved the book in many ways. My beloved husband Samuel Charap ensured that I never lost faith or interest in publishing this take on Vitruvius. I will be forever grateful for his enthusiasm and earnest engagement with these ideas.

This book is dedicated to its best reader, Carey Seal, whom I met just as we were learning to form words. Everything I know to be true, about the ancient world and otherwise, has been shaped by decades of conversation with this incomparable friend.

Unless otherwise noted, all Latin quotations are from Vitruvius’ *De architectura*. I follow the Budé editions. Translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. In general, I favour the more familiar Latin spellings of persons, places and works, though at times I defer to whatever appears in the Budé edition (e.g. Lykinos).

Domestic Decor and the Invective Tradition’ in Serafina Cuomo and Marco Formisano, eds., *Vitruvius in the Round, Arethusa* 49.2: 317–333. I am indebted to the editors of each of these collections and to Matthew Loar, Carolyn MacDonald and Dan-el Padilla Peralta (editors of the forthcoming *Rome, Empire of Plunder: The Dynamics of Cultural Appropriation*, which includes material adapted from Chapter 1) for their thoughtful responses to this material.
Abbreviations

The abbreviations used for the authors and titles of Latin and Greek works are those of *The Oxford Latin Dictionary* and Liddell, Scott and Jones’ *Greek-English Lexicon* respectively, with the following additions:

*De orat.* *De oratore* (Cicero)

Eutr. Eutropius

*Helv.* *Ad Helviam* (Seneca)

Mem. *Facta et dicta memorabilia* (Valerius Maximus)

Ot. *De otio* (Seneca)

Lexica and compendia are abbreviated in the text as follows:

*CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*


*OLD* *The Oxford Latin Dictionary*

Midway through De architectura’s eighth book, Vitruvius recalls a conversation he once had with a certain Gaius Julius, the son of Masinissa. Their chat (sermo) about the city of Zama, near Carthage, provides a font of information for Vitruvius’ discussion of the waters and peoples of North Africa (8.3.24–25). Rarely does the author make such an explicit reference to the moment and method in which he acquired material for De architectura. This anecdote not only puts the mechanics of Vitruvian authorship on display, but also paints a picture of friendship. Vitruvius explains that he often extended hospitality (hospitium) to this Numidian; on such occasions, they delved into intellectual matters (de philologia disputare, 8.3.25). Such an image evokes the Roman elite fusion of social and intellectual worlds underlying Trimalchio’s pompous admonishment to his own guests, nearly a hundred years hence, that ‘one must, even while dining, pay attention to philologia’ (Petr. 39).

The vignette also provides the sole allusion within De architectura to Vitruvius’ social life or to any personal relationship beyond his vaunted connections to his parents, teachers and the imperial family. This Gaius

---

1 *Is hospitio meo est usus. Iua cotidiano convictu necesse fuerat de philologia disputare* (‘He sometimes stayed with me. In our daily intercourse, it was often necessary to discuss learned matters’, 8.3.25). We do not know what relation, if any, this Gaius Julius, otherwise unknown from the historical record, bore to the famous Massinissae, although his Roman name suggests he was granted citizenship.

2 See Gros, Corso and Romano 1997: 1102–1103 on the possibility that the writings of Juba II may have provided the source material for this section of the treatise. Roller 2003: 195 attributes similarity between Vitr. 8.2.6–7 and Str. 17.3.4 to this common source. Cf. the appearance of *fontes* as a metaphor for literary source material in the seventh preface and at 3.3.9. See discussion in Chapter 1.

3 Vitruvius specifies that ‘[Zama] has, however, another more wondrous quality, which [he] has heard about in the following way’ (*alia mirabiliora virtutem ea habet terra, quam ego sic accipi*, 8.3.24).

4 *Philologia* is a marked term within Vitruvius’ conception of his authorial practice; elsewhere in the treatise, he uses it when commenting on his literary strategies and implicitly equating his own enterprise with that of Aristophanes of Byzantium. On the development of the expansive concepts of the *φιλολογός* and *φιλολογία* in the Hellenistic period, cf. Pfeiffer 1968: 156–160. On *philologia* in De architectura, see König 2016: 170–171. See further discussion in Chapter 1.
Julius, so Vitruvius tells us, held sway over the North African city of Ismuc, and fought alongside Julius Caesar. With the latter piece of information, Vitruvius harks back to the dedication of the treatise; there, the first insight he shares into his own background is that he, too, assisted Caesar’s war effort, as a military engineer (1.praef.2).

This episode neatly captures the two major themes of this book: the development of Vitruvius’ authorial persona and his evocation of the contemporary Roman scene. It also illustrates some of the challenges inherent to my enterprise. Gaius Julius and his descriptions of the springs near Zama have left no other trace on the historical or literary record. Where and when should the reader (then or now) imagine this tête-à-tête to have taken place? In his gesture of hospitium towards the son of Masinissa, is Vitruvius affecting to cultivate his own African expert, just like Julius Caesar (and later Octavian) would rear Juba II at Rome to become one of the most learned men of his day? Or is some other dynamic in play? Lack of any secure biographical information about the author of De architectura compounds the issue. In the manuscript tradition, the name ‘Vitruvius’ consistently appears. But no ancient author before the first century CE alludes to either a Roman treatise on architecture or an author by this name. Compelling evidence that De architectura altered the course of contemporary architectural practice is likewise scant. His nomen alone, which survives without either praenomen or cognomen, indicates little about Vitruvius’ origins: the Vitruvii had a wide temporal and geographic range.

6 On Juba II’s early years in Rome, which he spent at the households of Caesar’s heirs, see Roller 2003: 59–75. I am grateful to Josiah Osgood for this suggestion.
7 The oldest manuscript of De architectura (Harleianus 2767), as well as the works of Pliny, Frontinus, Servius and Sidonius Apollinarius, name him simply ‘Vitruvius’. A possible cognomen, Pollio (appended by e.g. Rawson 1985: 87 n. 14; Masterson 2004: 390), derives from the opening of Cetius Faventinus’ epitome, De architectonicae: de artis architectonicae peritiae multa oratione Vitruvius Pollio alisque auctores scientissime scrisse, with dubious support from a fragmentary inscription from Baiae: VITRUVIO [POL] IONI ARCHITECTO [CIL 10.3393]. However, Choisy 1909: 239 n. 2 suggested almost a century ago that the introduction of a comma between the nomen and cognomen in Faventinus’ account would render Pollio ‘un personnage distinct’ (in other words, the author of a similar treatise). Granger 1999: xvii–xviii subsequently identified Faventinus’ Pollio as the Asinius Pollio (or Polio) mentioned in Suet. Aug. 29.5 and Plin. Nat. 35.10 as an Augustan administrator responsible for the erection of the first public library in Rome, the Atrium Libertatis. Baldwin 1990: 430 adds that ‘it might be thought more idiomatic Latin to precede alisque by two individuals rather than one’.
8 Ruffel and Soubiran 1962: 132 provides an extensive survey of the around forty Vitruvii attested in both the literary and epigraphical records, who are dotted across the social spectrum and a range of dates. Fleury 2011: 11 notes concentrations in Latium (8 inscriptions), Campania (10 inscriptions), and North Africa (19 inscriptions). Cf. also Thielscher 1961 and Tabarroni 1971–1972.
have been researching his material and drafting the treatise as early as the 40s or 30s BCE, but references within the text suggest that the circulation and dedication to Augustus likely occurred between 27 and 22 BCE.\(^9\) Pliny the Elder and Frontinus, the earliest to mention Vitruvius, merely record his name among their bibliographical references.\(^10\) They reveal nothing of his life.

What we do know about Vitruvius is this: as the Roman Republic fell and a new Augustan regime arose in its place, he composed a ten-volume work that would change the course of Western architecture. Vitruvius’ *De architectura* is the only text dedicated to the subject that survives from classical antiquity, and its impact on Renaissance masters including Andrea Palladio and Leonardo da Vinci has spawned a field of enquiry in itself.\(^11\) But what was the purpose of *De architectura* in its own time (ca. 20s BCE)? The seeming inaccuracy of many of his architectural rules, when compared with surviving ancient buildings, has made Vitruvius a vexed source for archaeologists. This book argues, however, that Vitruvius never intended to provide an accurate and objective view of the contemporary built environment. Instead, Vitruvius crafted his authorial persona and his remarks on architecture to appeal to elites (and would-be elites) eager to secure their positions within an expanding empire. The pages that follow explore how Vitruvius pitched a treatise on architecture, hitherto primarily the literary domain of Greek authors, to his elite Roman readers, most of whom were undoubtedly laymen.

*De architectura* appeared at a watershed moment in the composition of Latin works that engaged deeply with Greek traditions. The formative influence of Greek scientific thought on Roman technical literature can be seen as early as the oldest surviving work of Latin prose, Cato the Elder’s

\(^9\) On the date of *De architectura*, see Baldwin 1990; Gros 1997: xxxvii–xxxii. Mention of *pronai aedis Augusti* in Fano, the same settlement on the Adriatic coast of Italy where Vitruvius claims to have built a basilica, confirms that Augustus had already adopted his honorific title (5.1.6–7). References to this temple and to other mid-first-century constructions, such as the Porticus of Pompey (5.9.1), provide additional *termini post quem*. Internal evidence for a *terminus ante quem* is less convincing. Cf., e.g., the allusion to Cottius’ kingdom in the Alps (8.3.17), which became a Roman province under Nero (Suet. *Nero* 18). On the circulation of the treatise, see discussion and references in Rowland 2014b: 416–417. Cf. also Novara 2005: 164, which argues that the prefaces were delivered to Augustus as a *recitatio* in 24 BCE.

\(^10\) Pliny the Elder names Vitruvius as one of his sources for Books 16, 35 and 36 in *Nat.* 1; Frontinus mentions him in *Aq.* 25.1 and 25.2. On Vitruvius’ influence on the later authors of building manuals Faventinus and Palladius, see Plommer 1973.

\(^11\) On Vitruvius in the Renaissance, see Ciapponi 1960; Wittkower 1971; Pagliara 1986; Onians 1988; Callebat 1994a; Payne 1999; Wulfram 2001; Ciotta 2003; McEwen 2011; D’Evelyn 2012; Rowland 2014b; Sanvito 2015, among others.
De agri cultura. Yet, late Republican and early imperial authors brought new urgency to the project of creating a Latin body of technical and scientific writing to stand beside the Greek. This burgeoning literary production was tied to pedagogical shifts. Vitruvius had grown up in a Roman world in which some elements of Greek paideia, including rhetoric and dialectic, lay at the centre of elite education, while others, such as geometry and music, were excluded. The curriculum, however, was far from fixed. De architectura represents a foray into an intense debate over the definition of certain disciplines as artes, subjects worthy of a gentleman, and others as merely trades.

Vitruvius makes a strong case for the intellectual merit of architectura by documenting Greek authors’ centuries-long engagement with architectural topics and by adopting conventions of Hellenistic technical and scientific prose. Yet what is most fascinating about the text from the perspective of cultural history is the way in which De architectura threads together Greek knowledge and Roman mores. In this book, I examine Vitruvius’ representation of the Roman culture of display. By this I mean the unwritten rules of social performance governing those with enough wealth and power to worry about how best to inhabit (and exhibit) their positions. One of Vitruvius’ central claims is that De architectura will be useful to any reader – otherwise harried by the frantic pace of Rome’s private and public affairs – who might pick up the ten scrolls (5.praef.3). Depicting characteristic features of Roman elite culture, such as the behaviours of patrons and clients or the vibrant decoration of domestic walls, is one way in which Vitruvius makes good on this assertion.

Classical scholarship on De architectura has long consisted of two parallel traditions, one literary and the other scientific and archaeological in focus. This division echoes the incongruence within Vitruvius’ prose. Considerable differences of content and style set the florid and explicitly self-referential prefaces apart from much of the drier technical instruction in the architectural commentary within each book. As a consequence,

12 De agri cultura is indebted to Greek agricultural science and makes use of Greek words. Cf. Boscherini 1979; Diederich 2007: 15–22.
13 The Latin translation of the medical texts in Mithridates’ library commissioned by Pompey the Great may have been the first of a Greek scientific or medical work. Cf. Feeney 2016: 42–43.
16 This is hardly unique to Vitruvius. On prefaces in technical and other prose literature, see Janson 1964; Santini and Scivoletto 1990. See Bodel 2012 for recent discussion of how such discrepancies between the preface and the ensuing prose shape our interpretation of Cato the Elder’s De agrí
studies of Vitruvian self-representation often focus on the prefaces and seldom address the role of practical, architectural instruction in developing the portrait of the author. The social, moral and aesthetic concerns that define the Vitruvius glimpsed in the pages of his book, however, also shape his representation of building. Likewise, Vitruvius’ statements on architecture are integral to the formulation of his authorial persona. In the pages that follow, I analyse passages across the ten books that reflect the ways in which Vitruvius crafts his material as a Roman author addressing a Roman audience. More specifically, I examine Vitruvius’ claims about his own background within Roman literary and cultural contexts, demonstrating how he infuses a book of Hellenistic learning with material that reflects Roman traditions.

Throughout De architectura, outlines of this authorial figure emerge from passing references to relationships, events and circumstances. Vitruvius’ persona truly takes shape, however, through contrast with the character foils depicted in brief narratives throughout the text: in Book 10, Callias temporarily unseats the architectus Diognetus from his rightful position at Rhodes by showcasing a design for a (functionally unsound) war machine on a grand scale (10.16.3–8); in Book 7, the painter Apaturius of Alabanda beguiles the populace of Tralles with flashy, yet flawed, paintings, before a mathematician, Lykinos, intervenes (7.5.5–7); and, in the preface to Book 2, the architectus Dinocrates approaches Alexander the Great with the spectacular idea of transforming Mt. Athos into the statue of a man; the ruler rejects it as impractical (2.praef.1–4).

In some instances, Vitruvius compares himself to his flawed double; in others, he leaves the analogy implicit. Located in faraway places and buried in the past, these straw men allow Vitruvius to define himself and his professional activity in the abstract. Instead of directly confronting rivals within an immediate environment, he shadowboxes.

Studies of authorial self-representation, once couched in terms of ‘persona-theory’ and ‘masks’, and now more frequently discussed in terms of ‘self-fashioning’, have been a popular line of inquiry in Latin scholarship...
for decades. Interpretation of Vitruvius’ self-portrait in this vein, however, has been slow in coming.\textsuperscript{19} Awareness of the importance of persuasive authorial personae within ancient technical and scientific works, however, is on the rise.\textsuperscript{20} In order to appreciate how developments in Roman culture shaped De architectura, my analysis foregrounds the interrelationship of various facets that make up ‘Vitruvius’ and considers both how his self-fashioning corresponds to that of other Roman authors and what functions these authorial poses may serve. Once removed from the demands of literal interpretation and their isolation from other sources, the rhetoric Vitruvius uses and the aspirations he espouses begin to sound familiar.

Recognition of Vitruvius’ engagement with the discourse of his contemporaries reveals the cultural specificity of De architectura’s apparent contradictions, factual blunders and other peculiarities. Earlier Greek and Hellenistic civilisations provided Vitruvius with a range of building forms, as well as with his model of the high-status architect.\textsuperscript{21} Crucially, however, Vitruvius relies on Roman literary strategies to make both his persona as an architect and his designs for buildings palatable to his imagined readers.

**Roman Author**

*De architectura*, so its author tells us, was the first comprehensive treatment of architecture ever composed. Vitruvius explains that the awkwardness of its idiosyncratic (some might say convoluted)\textsuperscript{22} vocabulary and grammar results from the difficulty of relating technical matters to a lay audience – a plausible explanation, given his task of compiling, digesting (and, in many cases, translating from the Greek) a number of sources on topics notoriously difficult to put into words (5.praef.1–2).\textsuperscript{23} Regardless of the challenges he faced, however, Vitruvius maintained a verbal approach to his task, with very few illustrations to supplement.\textsuperscript{24}

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\textsuperscript{19} But see now, on Vitruvius’ authorial persona, Masterson 2004; Fögen 2009: 106–151; A. König 2009; Nichols 2009a; Cuomo 2011; Nichols 2016; Romano 2016.

\textsuperscript{20} See König 2011: 186–187 for an eloquent synopsis of characteristic features of authorial self-fashioning in scientific and technical writing.

\textsuperscript{21} Cf. Gros 1976; Gros 1983.

\textsuperscript{22} Mayer 2005; 196–198 explains the infelicities of Vitruvius’ language as a reflection of the limitations of Latin prose, rather than a mark of the architect’s particular ineptitude. On the language of *De architectura*, see Morgan 1906; Nylander 1992; Romano 1997; Oksanish forthcoming a.

\textsuperscript{23} Vitruvius invokes many of his sources in the course of a heated denunciation of plagiarism in the preface to Book 7. Others are named in the preface to Book 9.

Some of *De architectura*’s debts to earlier Greek works are readily identifiable, such as material from Philo’s third-century *Belopoeica*, which Vitruvius adapted for his account of *scorpiones* and *ballistae* in Book 10. For much of the text, however, it is impossible to reverse Vitruvius’ feat of aggregation: the disappearance of the vast majority of the technical treatises written by scholars of mathematics, astronomy and the arts in the library of Alexandria and elsewhere stymies *Quellenforschung*. Some of Vitruvius’ sources are not named, and although Vitruvius makes copious references to Greek sources across many disciplines, he chiefly does so in the prefaces, rather than in proximity to material drawn from them.

Vitruvius looked to the Greek scientific and technical tradition for elements of style and form, as well as for content. Each of the ten books begins with a preface, several of which name imperator Caesar [Augustus] as the dedicatee. This format evokes the introductory letters written by Hellenistic authors of works on engineering, astronomy and mathematics. Like many technical and scientific authors, and indeed prose authors of various genres, Vitruvius elaborates his persona more expansively in the prefaces than elsewhere in his text. The author that emerges is one eager to persuade his readers of his great learning, but also to distinguish himself and his definition of the subject from that of his predecessors and rivals.

Vitruvius integrates diffident assertions that he follows in the footsteps (ingressus, 8.3.27) of his authorial ancestors with braggadocio concerning the novelty of his enterprise and the *maxima auctoritas* he brings to the work (1.1.18). In this duality, too, he draws on conventions of ancient scientific writing. Within such works, the first person often serves as a mouthpiece for agonistic boasts of originality and innovation, as authors vie against the weight of tradition and the achievements of their peers. Yet ancient scientific authors also betray a conflicting impulse towards modest self-presentation, a self-conscious avoidance of displays of excessive and showy innovation. Vitruvius balances these diverging aims through a focus on the organisation of the ten books, a topic to which he returns

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28 See, as examples, those of Biton (addressing King Attalos), Philo (Aríston) and Apollonios of Perga (Ptolemy IV).
29 On authorial self-assertion in Thucydides’ prefaces, for example, see Ober 1998: 52–67; Goldhill 2002: 31–44.
frequently. He reminds the reader that his contribution lies not in the creation of new knowledge, but in the ordering and shaping of diverse material into a complete body of architecture.\textsuperscript{32} In this emphasis on accumulation, rearrangement and reactivation of tradition, he anticipates the imperial ‘habit of compilation’ so conspicuous in Pliny the Elder’s *Naturalis Historia* and Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae.*\textsuperscript{33}

The high degree of personalisation that Vitruvius and later authors, such as Galen and Frontinus, would bring to their technical topics was also an extension of Hellenistic traditions.\textsuperscript{34} Vitruvius’ first preface, for example, can be read productively with an introductory letter written by the second-century BCE mathematician Hypsicles.\textsuperscript{35} While Hypsicles credits his dedicatee Protarchus’ proficiency in mathematics and acquaintance with his (i.e., the author’s) father as the reasons for the topic and the form of *Elements* \textsuperscript{14}, Vitruvius credits his dedicatee Augustus’ interest in architecture and the author’s acquaintance with the dedicatee’s father as the reasons for his work. Both authors advance a similar conception of intellectual discourse, and the resultant literary production, as arising from a meeting of like minds and the enjoyment of hospitality. Just as in the Zama anecdote from Vitruvius’ Book 8, discussed at the opening of this book, the son of Masinissa is Vitruvius’ frequent houseguest, with whom he discusses *philologia*; Hypsicles recounts that Basilides of Tyre, when he came to Alexandria and met Hypsicles’ father, spent most of his stay with him, because of their shared interest (συγγένεια) in mathematics. Vitruvius, then, is echoing convention even in those areas of the treatise that seem most personal and dependent on first-hand knowledge.

Given Vitruvius’ participation in the late Republican intellectual project of presenting Greek knowledge to Roman readers, it is unsurprising that the Roman writers of the present and recent past whom he singles out for praise are Lucretius, Cicero and Varro (9.praef.17).\textsuperscript{37} Each of these authors also had a discernible influence on the text of *De architectura.* Parallels

\textsuperscript{32} See McEwen \textit{2003} for extensive treatment of corporeal metaphors and the perfect cohesion of the work.


\textsuperscript{34} On the self-fashioning of Galen, see Barton \textit{1994}: 49–52; J. König \textit{2009}; and of Frontinus, see König \textit{2007}.

\textsuperscript{35} Hypsicles is among the more personal of Hellenistic technical authors. Reviel Netz argues that our preconceptions of technical prose as impersonal are largely derived from Euclid’s *Elements.* Cf. Netz \textit{2009}: 78–79; 98; 102–103.

\textsuperscript{36} Cf. Netz \textit{2009}: 92–99; Netz \textit{2015}.

between Lucretius’ and Vitruvius’ accounts of the origins of civilisation suggest that Vitruvius was familiar with Book 5 of *De rerum natura*. Likewise, the conception of the well-educated architect in *De architectura*’s Book 1 echoes that of the orator in Cicero’s *De oratore*. By adapting this Ciceronian model, Vitruvius suggests that architecture should be esteemed as an intellectual discipline and a critical component of the Roman elite education. The fragmentary state or disappearance of the majority of Varro’s oeuvre makes it impossible to appreciate fully Vitruvius’ engagement with Varro’s outpouring on history, antiquarianism, language, geography and beyond. Vitruvius’ debt to *De lingua latina*, however, one of Varro’s partially extant works, is clear both in the diction and in the argumentation of many passages in *De architectura*.

This book does not retrace ground covered by other scholars, who have contextualised Vitruvius’ self-fashioning within the history of technical and scientific literature more fully. Instead, I consider *De architectura*’s engagement with a literary culture far beyond the treatises named as his source material. Many of *De architectura*’s techniques of persuasion – particularly in passages of personal narrative, advice and criticism – find close parallels in Roman texts across the generic spectrum, including Horace’s satires, Catullus’ invective and Varro’s agricultural writing. These parallels, moreover, are symptomatic of profound similarities of social and cultural milieu. I do not explore all the ways in which Vitruvius draws upon the literary strategies of contemporary and earlier authors, nor all of the ways in which he addresses his Roman audience. Such issues are as vast and wide-ranging as the treatise itself. Instead, I trace Vitruvius’ engagement with Roman notions of self-presentation in *De architectura*. I argue that Vitruvius targets both his subject matter and authorial persona to address the preoccupations and concerns of the upper echelons of Roman society.

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39 Romano 1987: 69–80, in an analysis of *De architectura* and *De oratore*, locates resemblances between Vitruvius’ curriculum for architects and Cicero’s for orators. Rawson 1983: 86–88, who reads *De architectura* as a contribution to Roman debates over the nature of *ars*, demonstrates the importance of Greek rationalism and dialectic to Vitruvius’ educational model. Cf. also Sallman 1984. (Note, however, that Vitruvius does not use the terms *ars* to distinguish art from trade. He refers to *sutrina* (shoe-making) and *fullonica* (fulling) as *artes* in 6.praef.7.) On the importance of Greek rationality to the development of Roman disciplines, see Wallace-Hadrill 1988a. Cf. also Wesenberg 1989.

40 Cf. Romano 2011: 190–193 on the two authors’ complementary approaches to etymology and etiology; on their shared interest in numerical quantities, see Skydsgaard 1968 and McEwen 2003: 20. March 1998 even suggests that Varro and Vitruvius are the same author.

41 Important recent contributions include Fögen 2009: 106–151; Cuomo 2011; Roby 2016.
Roman Audience

Vitruvius’ prose treatise appeared during a flourishing of didactic poetry at Rome, and it shares many of that genre’s strategies and aims: *De architectura* places its subject matter on display for admiration and wonderment, demonstrates Vitruvius’ ability to endow this material with literary pomp, and uses detailed technical knowledge as a means of conveying abstract concepts and values. Like Lucretius, Vitruvius crafts the image of an ideal reader who pursues the topic of the work at hand at his leisure. Vitruvius’ emphasis on the *ordo* of his treatise and his persistent signposting of what material has been (or is about to be) covered can be read as a means of keeping such casual readers engaged. *De architectura* is ‘not only for those who build, but for all those who are wise’ (*non modo aedificantibus, sed etiam omnibus sapientibus*, 1.1.18). Vitruvius addresses this audience again in Book 5: ‘None the less, perceiving the state to be overstrained by public and private business (*distentam occupationibus civitatem publicis et privatis negotiis*), I decided that I must write briefly, so that those reading these things might understand quickly in a narrow space of time’ (5.praef.3). It is to this imagined reader, albeit amorphously conceived, that the ‘Roman audience’ of my title refers. I leave aside the reception of the text (whatever it may have been) among historical Romans, as well as the strategies through which Vitruvius addresses both the *princeps* and professionals engaged in architectural design and construction.

The intended audience of *De architectura* was once a highly contested subject, as some scholars argued that the treatise was a handbook for architects and builders (*Fachbuch*), and others considered it more suitable for a lay audience (*Sachbuch*). Such debate is common within scholarship on ancient scientific and technical authors. Philip van der Eijk has called attention to the ‘fallacy of audience limitation’, whereby ancient audiences are deemed intelligent enough to derive meaning from Pindaric odes, and

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42 For this schema of didactic literature, see Effe 1977. See also discussion of didactic as a genre in Volk 2002: 34–43.
43 On signposting in ancient technical and scientific writing, see Fögen 2009: 166–168 and 290.
44 This is also a common claim among Latin prose authors; cf. Janson 1964: 96: 154–155. John Oksanish perceptively interprets this passage as part of a larger authorial strategy both to privilege comprehensiveness over comprehensibility and to increase the author’s own auctoritas by reserving architectural knowledge ‘for himself and himself alone’. Oksanish 2016: 279.
45 For discussion of the difficulties in ascertaining the readership of ancient technical prose, see Van der Eijk 1997: 86.
46 Cf. Sallmann 1984: 12 for these terms.
yet not up to the task of reading long or complex technical descriptions.\textsuperscript{47} Thus, the very implausibility that the Hippocratic work \textit{On Affections} could be of value to an ‘intelligent layman’ has cast suspicion that passages mentioning such an audience are interpolated.\textsuperscript{48} Even if, as is the case for Philo’s \textit{Belopoeica}, an author ostensibly courts a lay audience, scholars disagree on how thorough the comprehension of such non-specialists readers would have been.\textsuperscript{49} Pierre Gros, arguing that Vitruvius accommodates a diverse readership of laymen and specialists, was instrumental in breaking down the polarity between the \textit{Fachbuch} and \textit{Sachbuch} readings of \textit{De architectura}.\textsuperscript{50} It is now well accepted that the treatise should be neither read nor evaluated as a purely practical guide.\textsuperscript{51} \textit{De architectura}, like much of ancient didactic and scientific literature, aims to entertain and engage, rather than purely to instruct.\textsuperscript{52}

\textit{De architectura’s} range of subjects extends beyond our present-day definitions of architecture: while the first seven books move from the education of architects (1) and building materials (2), to temples (3 and 4), public buildings (5), domestic buildings (6), and architectural decoration (7), the last three address hydrology and hydraulics (8), clocks and dials (9), and machines of war (10). To us, the topics of Books 8, 9 and 10 seem far afield, and indeed, Vitruvius sums up the first seven as a complete treatment of building (7.14.3). Given the centrality of water management, timekeeping and military machinery to the responsibilities of magistrates, however, the inclusion of these topics may represent an appeal to his imagined audience.\textsuperscript{53}

This book argues that Vitruvius crafts an authorial persona and an elite reader that fit together, hand in glove. A clear way to convey the nature of this relationship is through an example: in the preface to Book 10, Vitruvius praises an Ephesian law that penalises any architect who over-spends by more than twenty-five per cent of the originally contracted price when constructing a public building; the architect himself (not the state) antes up the additional

\textsuperscript{47}Van der Eijk 1997: 86–89. How deeply readers were meant to engage with the information presented in technical and scientific works remains controversial.


\textsuperscript{51}Cf. Courrént a.\textsuperscript{52} Cf. Wallace-Hadrill 2005 on timekeeping and Roman Republican magistracies. See also De Angelis 2015: 72 on the relationship of the subjects of the ten books to the responsibilities of Roman architects (particularly as attested later in the empire).

\textsuperscript{53}Cf. Green 2014: 109–117 on the treatment of astrology in Book 9 as the ‘work of an intellectual dilettante writing for fellow enthusiasts’ (113), as evidenced by the omissions, simplifications, and contradictions in Vitruvius’ portrayal of the cosmos.
cost (10.praef.1). Since Vitruvius presents himself as an *architectus*, support for this law places a sword of Damocles over the author’s head. Vitruvius, ever offering Greek solutions to Roman problems, as we shall see, proposes that this law be enacted in Rome, but with a twist: in Rome, regulations should apply to private as well as public buildings, and also to the sponsoring of gladiatorial and theatrical munera (games, 10.praef.3).

This tripartite grouping addresses the concerns of Roman magistrates. All three activities (public building, private building and the sponsoring of games) played pivotal roles within competition for socio-political power during the late Republic. To be politically active was to dissipate one’s resources at a great rate. Thus, potential sources of advancement were also probable causes of debt. Architects’ mismanagement of statesmen’s resources, Vitruvius suggests, accelerates this downward spiral:

Nam qui quadringenta ad opus possunt parare, si adicient centum, habendo spem perfectionis delectationibus tenentur; qui autem adiectione dimidia aut ampliore sumptu onerantur, amissa spe et inspensa abiecut, fractis rebus et animis desistere coguntur.

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54 According to the Ephesian law, an architect must estimate beforehand the cost of any public work he undertakes. If he keeps to the estimate, the architect receives *honores*. If he overspends by up to a quarter, the state pays the difference, but if it is more than a quarter, the sum is taken *ex eius bonis* (10.praef.1).

55 Cf. Vitruvius’ claim to have constructed a basilica at Fano (5.1.6–7), as well as his juxtaposition of himself with *ceteri architecti* (6.praef.5).

56 See especially Chapter 1 in this book.

57 Vitruvius refers to the builders of houses as *patres familiarum* (10.praef.2), but specifically mentions *magistratus* (10.praef.3), later specified as *praetores et aediles* (10.praef.4), as the sponsors of munera. Some scholars, including Granger 1999: 272 and Rowland and Howe 1999: 4, consider the fact that Dio Cassius 54.2.3 claims that Augustus entrusted games to praetors alone in 22 BCE confirmation of a composition date prior to 22 for *De architectura*. Vitruvius, however, hardly shies away from archaism elsewhere.

58 Maintenance of public buildings was one of the principal duties of aediles. In a less official capacity, Roman public architecture during this period often served individual interests of political advancement. Triumphing generals consecrated public buildings in the name of the state, but in the service of their own glory. So-called manubial temples and other grand structures demonstrated these generals’ elevated socio-political and military status and advanced their candidacies to the highest offices. Orlin 2002: 117–139 has nuanced this conventional view of public building during the Republic by demonstrating that ‘the importance of *manubiae* in connection with temples lies in the decoration of the structure, and not in the construction itself’ (139).

59 See further discussion in the last section of this *Introduction*.

60 On the sponsorship of games by Roman politicians, see Futrell 2006: 11–21.

61 M. W. Frederiksen characterises this phenomenon as ‘the old familiar evil of the late Republic: the habit of borrowing in the course of your election campaign on the prospects of a province to come . . . Once in debt, it might be dangerous to show it, and you borrowed more.’ Cf. Frederiksen 1966: 128 and 130. Frederiksen 1966: 128 n. 2 comments that ‘this was almost regular in the Ciceronian age’, citing as earliest evidence the two Baebiae of 181 BCE. Frederiksen’s late Republican evidence includes Cic. *Ver.* 25 and 29 (for the Metelli); Cic. *Ver.* 40 (for Verres); Plut. *Caes.* 11 (for Julius Caesar in 61).
For those who are able to provide 400,000 for the work, if they must add 100,000, are kept in good humour by having hope of it being finished; while those who are burdened with the addition of a half or more of the expense, with their hopes dashed and fortunes dwindled, and declining further expenditure, are compelled to give up, with broken fortune and spirit. (10.praef.2)

Crucially, however, *De architectura* places the blame for the bankruptcy of Roman patrons on the wrongful conduct of underlings – not on the patrons’ own profligacy. Vitruvius recommends instantiation of this law at Rome, specifically, to help protect Roman statesmen from bankruptcy: ‘nor would heads of households be deluded into unlimited outpourings of expense, so that they are even dispossessed of their property’ (*neque patres familiarum inducerentur ad infinitas sumptuum profusiones, et ut e bonis eicerentur*, 10.praef.2). The solution, it seems, is to penalise architects instead.

This authorial posture appears particularly defensive when compared to Cato the Elder’s prefatory invocation of ancestral law in *De agri cultura*. When praising farming as a superior aristocratic pursuit, Cato contrasts it favourably with trade. 62 Mercantile business carries a moral stain: the laws (*leges*) of our ancestors (*maiores nostri*), Cato explains, punished usurers twice as harshly as thieves. 63 Further along in *De agri cultura*, Cato returns to the law as a source of moral authority: if damage is done to the property of the owner (*dominus*) during the gathering or milling of olives, the contractor (*redemptor*) should reimburse him; disputes are answerable in the law courts (*Agr. 144.3; 145.3*). 64 In each instance, the appeal to the law reinforces Cato’s portrayal of agriculture as an upright, worthwhile pursuit: it is the right choice for Roman elites seeking to navigate the financial demands of the present, who also wish to align themselves with the virtues of the past. 65

The view of *architectura* in Vitruvius’ tenth preface is not nearly so rosy. Building projects are beset with financial perils, because the architects who carry them out are not reliable in their estimates – or (under the current laws) financially responsible for their losses. The figure of the author

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62 This may have been the first sentence of the preface. Cf. Gratwick 2002.
63 Such notifications of liability recur. Compare the corollary statement concerning pasturage in *Agr.* 149.2.
64 Cf. Bodel 2012: 50–52 on Cato’s silence concerning the profitability of farming in the preface, as contrasted with his attention to increasing financial margins in the treatise that follows.
emerges as a mediator between separate spheres, a member of the community of architects who nevertheless looks out for the best interests of *patres familiarum*.

Vitruvius’ promotion of the Ephesian law, which demands of an architect that ‘his property is mortgaged to the magistrate, until the work is completed’ (*magistratui bona eius obligantur, donec opus sit perfectum*, 10. praef.1), demonstrates a robust willingness to surrender himself to magisterial control. Such a measure appears designed to combat concerns that *architecti* may be grasping, irresponsible and untrustworthy:

> Would that the gods had impelled the Roman people to make such a law not only for public, but also for private buildings! In that case, ignoramuses would not be stalking their prey with impunity (*non sine poena grassarentur inperiti*), but those who have a practical understanding of the science with a most refined sensibility would practice architecture without any uncertainty. (*sed qui summa doctrinarum subtilitate essent prudentes, sine dubitatione profiterentur architecturam*, 10.praef.2)

The architectural overspending of Roman know-nothings (*inperiti*) results not from innocent naivete, but wilful scamming. The complaint that *architecti* are often too free with expenses that are not ultimately their own resurfaces in the preface to Book 6, in which Vitruvius voices concern for the *patrimonium* of the patrons of domestic architecture, lest it be depleted through unwise investments – in other words, mismanaged by swindling architects unlike himself. He reasons that any architect actively seeking commissions must be doing so out of immoderate self-interest:

> Quid enim putemus suspicari qui rogetur de patrimonio sumptus faciendos committere gratiae petentis, nisi praedae compendiique eius causa iudicet faciundum?

> For what do we think will be inferred by someone who is asked to entrust the making of expenditures from his patrimony to the consideration of a person seeking him out? Will he not form the opinion that it is to be done for the profit and acquisition of that other man? (6.praef.5)

It is not only that ‘those who endow favours, not those receiving them, are the ones sought out’ (*nam beneficium dantes, non accipientes ambiuntur*, 6. praef.5), but also that violations of this norm betoken foul play.

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66 *Inperitus* is not always such a slur in *De architectura*. For example, it modifies members of Vitruvius’ readership in 1.1.12.

67 I discuss this passage further in Chapter 2 of this book.
Passages such as these, when read literally, have varying usefulness to historians and archaeologists seeking to understand ancient laws or customs. They offer powerful insight, however, into Vitruvius’ elaboration of an authorial persona intent upon securing a mutually sympathetic relationship with his readers. Vitruvius composed his text at a moment when architectural construction – whether through public building projects or private homes – was central to the articulation and maintenance of social status. *De architectura* functions as, among other things, a primer for those seeking to navigate Rome’s competitive culture of display. Skills, ideas, traditions and manners coded as ‘Greek’ played amorphous and shifting roles with this culture. *De architectura* is not an account of best practice, it is a disquisition on culture in flux. It demonstrates how a culture balancing its thirst for expansion with its devotion to ancestor cult might adopt new, foreign progenitors as a means of strengthening the bonds between the City and the Roman world.

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In the chapters that follow, I pursue five interrelated approaches to the representation of author and audience in *De architectura*. The first two chapters establish the constructed and culturally conversant nature of Vitruvius’ authorial persona. In Chapter 1, I broach the question of what Romanness means within *De architectura*, and the related issue of how the treatise defines Greekness. Vitruvius locates his audience in the city of Rome. This spatial bias is apparent throughout *De architectura*: from his observation that malachite is imported (adportatur) – presumably to Rome – from Macedonia, to his exploration of hot springs around the known world so pleasing to drink from that Rome’s ‘fountain of the Camenae and the flowing Marcia’ will not be missed (7.9.6; 8.3.1). Vitruvius, however, also envisions himself as the descendant of a long line of Greek literary ancestors (maiores, 7.praef.1) and Rome as ruler of the

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68 Gros, Corso and Romano 1997: 1364 n. 4 suggest that a similar law safeguarded public building projects in Rome as early as 105 BCE.

69 In this, Vitruvius is no different from the majority of Latin authors whose works survive from ancient Rome. Although in reality their audiences hailed from across the empire, these authors frequently address them as residents of the City. See Hutchinson 2013: 166 on the contrast with Hellenistic literature, which does not share this interest in locating the reader in Alexandria or elsewhere.

70 König 2016: 169 traces connections between 8.3.1 and the ‘scholarly spring simile’ in the preface to Book 7: Vitruvius ‘presents the world of learned writing and the practice of water channelling as parallel symbols of civilisation’. Cf. also Livius Andronicus’ address to his Muse as ‘Camena’ in his translation of the Odyssey into Latin.
globe (*orbis terrarum*, 1.praef.1). In Book 3, for example, Vitruvius credits one of these ancestors, Hermogenes (a Greek author of the late second century BCE), with leaving ‘sources (*fontes*) from which posterity could draw the principles of the arts’ (3.3.9). As Vitruvius maps Hermogenes’ temple typology onto a miscellany of sites dotted around the City, he arrives at a hiccup: Rome does not host a temple in the pseudodipteral style. One must look to Magnesia (3.2.6). While such recourse to extramural examples may seem to demonstrate the City’s inadequacy, it also provides a reminder of the empire’s reach. In order to untangle these dynamics, in Chapter 1 of this book, I explore Vitruvius’ negotiation of the Roman cultural and territorial appropriation of the Greek world through his delineation of three personae: the architect, the author and the general. Each of these roles provides a unique lens through which the author comments on the relationship between centre and periphery, the artistic and cultural process through which the ‘other’ becomes a part of the self.

While Vitruvius relied on Hellenistic precedents when crafting his authorial persona, the most important models for his social and political self-fashioning can be found in contemporary Roman texts. No details of Vitruvius’ life survive to prove or disprove the author’s claims to have been unknown, resourceless, and disdainful of self-promotion. Close attention to *De architectura*’s style and diction (including words such as *ingenuus*, which can mean ‘freeborn’, but also ‘frank’ or ‘generous’) in Chapter 2, however, reveals that these statements are more than plainspoken confessions. Vitruvius also alludes to the fact that he was an *apparitor* (public servant assisting Roman magistrates). Reading Horace alongside Vitruvius enhances scholarly perception of the relationship between Vitruvius the first-century author and ‘Vitruvius’ the literary construction. Horace’s poetry, like Vitruvius’ treatise, revels in personal anecdotes. Both authors, while steeped in Greek traditions, provide extended commentary on social, economic and political aspects of first-century Rome, including the pressures and privileges of imperial service. Vitruvius’ self-fashioning, like Horace’s, consists not of a single persona, but of various poses. Comparisons between the two authors’ works reveal a range of possible contemporary cultural influences upon *De architectura*, which help make sense of strange and seemingly irreconcilable details of the author’s ‘life’. Analysing Vitruvius’ authorial persona beside literary representations of *apparitores* in

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71 Gross 1978b.
72 The Temple of Fortuna exemplifies *in antis* (3.2.2), the Temple of Jupiter and Faunus, prostyle (3.2.3), and the Temple of Jupiter Stator and the Temple of Honos and Virtus, peripteral (3.2.5).
the works of Cornelius Nepos, Horace, Cicero and others, I argue that public servants assisting magistrates appear in Roman literature as particularly vulnerable to criticisms of ambition and self-promotion, and that Vitruvius’ authorial persona is crafted, in part, to respond to this strain of invective.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 turn to De architectura’s descriptions of richly ornamented houses. Within the treatise, house and man are inextricably intertwined. After a preface, and before embarking on the primary subject of Book 6 (domestic construction), Vitruvius includes an excursus on the influence of climate on architecture, arguing that building types should necessarily vary based on location – whether that be Egypt, Spain, Pontus or Rome (6.1). Vitruvius supports his argument, conceived in the tradition of Posidonius and Hippocrates, through analysis of how differences in climate correspond to differences in complexion, hair, voice and body type among native peoples. Rome’s world domination is a natural extension of her central geographical location in an illustrious, temperate region (egregia temperataque regione), the birthplace of the preeminent race (6.1.11). Vitruvius uses a word (aedes) that can refer to buildings of various kinds to argue that structures, like bodies, should correspond to environment. Through the placement of this ethnography lesson in Book 6, however, Vitruvius suggests that it has special resonance for domestic architecture. Likewise, in Book 2, when Vitruvius describes the origins of human civilisation, he lays special emphasis (particularly when compared with Lucretius’ account in De rerum natura 5) on the primitive hut, man’s first attempt at domestic construction (casa, 2.1.2).

It is in keeping with Roman cultural values and social mores that the architectural descriptions most conspicuously related to Vitruvian self-fashioning concern the construction and decoration of grand private residences. The design of an elite Roman house reflected not just an intimate or ‘private’ self, shared among friends and family members, but also the image a pater familias wished to project to persons known to him through economic, social, cultural and political interests. A significant number of a Roman homeowner’s daily encounters took place against the

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On Vitruvius’ debt to Greek philosophical and medical texts in this passage, see Mangani 1983; Calame 1986; Barton 1994: 118; Courrént 2011a: 148; Courrént 2016: 255. Fögen 2009: 141 stresses the relationship to the portrayals of the favourable clime of Greece in Aristotle’s Politics and of Attica in Xenophon’s Poroi.

In the elite Roman house, visitors included friends, acquaintances and strangers; activities could span political campaigning, theatrical performances, legal trials and mercantile business. Cf. Wallace-Hadrill 1994.
backdrop of his walls; even when he was away, his domestic interior bore the scrutiny of a vast array of eyes and ears. On account of this, houses played a significant role in homeowners’ public self-presentation and were crucial to the development of Roman political ideology, status hierarchies and social relationships. Since late Republican men increasingly cultivated political interests at home, interior decorating and competing for political office often amounted to the same thing: a fancy house was both a chest-thumping statement of one’s place in the hierarchy and ‘campaign headquarters’. Cicero claims, for example, that Octavius’ house drew crowds just to see it – and that it had a direct effect upon the vote (Off. 1.139). By the mid-first century BCE, private building projects had unambiguously joined public ones as springboards to the highest rungs of the political ladder. An empty house bespoke a homeowner’s decline in power just as clearly as a bustling one signified his ascent.

It is impossible to imagine the contours of recent debates among archaeologists and cultural historians on the topic of the Roman domus (urban townhouse) without Vitruvius’ testimony. De architectura’s Book 6 provides the most detailed surviving ancient account of Roman domestic room types and layout. A blueprint for Renaissance palaces fashioned after the antique, it has served as a guide to excavated houses, especially on the Bay of Naples, for centuries.

Vitruvius has been a valued informant on the social dynamics of the Roman house as well. In Chapter 3, I address the closely held belief that Vitruvius proposes a socially stratified approach to grandeur in Roman housing. Vitruvius’ recommendation that the level of grandeur affected by a homeowner should reflect his position in the Roman social hierarchy (1.2.9 and 6.5) seems to oversimplify the issues and quell debate. On the contrary, I demonstrate that the correlation

75 Zanker 1988: 31 even proposes that domestic aesthetics in the late Republic contributed to political change: ‘There is no doubt that the private life of luxury and aesthetic pleasures in country villas enabled an already enfeebled aristocracy to accept more easily the transition to one-man rule.’

76 During the Augustan era, the opportunity to undertake large-scale public building projects in the city of Rome was all but extinguished by imperial monopoly. What remained, some scholars suggest, was to borrow the language of public architecture and incorporate it into increasingly extravagant private homes. However, Asconius’ (first-century CE) commentary on Cicero’s defence of Scaurus of 54 BCE attests to a previously established fluidity of forms across the public/private divide: ‘in the atrium of [Scaurus’] house there used to be four massive marble columns... when he was aedile he used them, as we know from him, to decorate the enormous theatre which he built then’ (In huius domus atrio fuerunt quattuor columnae marmoreae insigni magnitudine... Usus erat iis aedilis – ut ipse quoque significat – in ornatu theatri quod ad tempus perquam amplea magnitudinis fecerat, Sc. 27).

77 Cicero’s De oratore offers memorable examples (1.255; 1.199–200).


Roman Audience

Vitruvius suggests between house and owner rests on subjective judgement rather than objective rules and is thereby in keeping with Roman ideas expressed across literary genres since the beginning of Latin literature. From its origins, this Roman discourse not only adapted and transformed Greek ideas about houses and their significance, but also was a locus for debate surrounding the Roman aristocratic embrace of Greek culture.

Roman moralists of the first century BCE, when reproaching the houses of their contemporaries, often evoke the modest simplicity of ages past. This backward glance to the bygone days of Cato the Elder (Hor. Carm. 2.15.10–12), so typical of Roman moralising in its wistful nostalgia, cannot provide an accurate view of Roman moral values in the second century BCE. Examination of Cato the Elder’s surviving fragments and Plautus’ Mostellaria reveals a high level of sophistication in the discourse of domestic architecture from an early date. Expansion in the grandeur and scale of private building projects in the first century BCE may have enflamed this culture of critique. It did not create it.

This excursus into the second century reveals that even a first-century lens may present too myopic a view of the Roman discursive tradition that gave rise to De architectura. The Roman discourse of domestic construction, though undeniably influenced by social, political and architectural changes, maintained some surprisingly consistent characteristics over a lengthy duration of time, extending into centuries beyond my discussion in Chapter 3 — and perhaps further into the past, as well. What is more, exaggeration of the coherence of orthodoxies at any one time or the differences between periods obscures the complexities and contradictions inherent within this discourse in all periods.

Vitruvius asserts that the layout of a home should be tailored to accommodate the activities of patronage; he comments on the relationship between public and private in domestic space; and he argues that a grand home is necessary for the fulfilment of a statesman’s political duties. His specifications for domestic design include details of nomenclature, orientation, measurement and function. Over time, however, archaeological frustration with the treatise has grown, as the rigidity of Vitruvius’ model of the Roman house contrasts with the variation visible

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6.5.1–2 (and 1.2.9). Cf. also Chapters 4 and 5.

Vitruvius’ account of domestic room names, dimensions and positions (6.3–4) has greatly influenced the interpretation of Roman domestic archaeology. Cf. Dwyer 1991. However, as Clarke 2014: 343 notes, ‘Vitruvius uses names for the rooms of the Roman house that appear quite rarely (fauces, oecus, ala); other names that appear frequently in the literature (camera, conclave) do not appear in Vitruvius at all.’
in the material record. Ancient authors often exploit the symbolic and metonymic potential of houses in order to convey aspects of human character, whether through a pointed personal attack or a more subtle societal critique. With this in mind, scholars have interpreted Vitruvius’ housing commentary as an effort to impose logic and order on both the design of the Roman house and its relationship to its owner’s status – and they have provided intellectual, as well as political, reasons why this might be the case. It is true that Vitruvius exhibits an intense interest in rationality and schematisation, which aligns his endeavour with contemporary movements across a number of technical disciplines. However, even while presenting architecture as, in many ways, rationally explicable, Vitruvius also engages in the less rational, persuasive discourses of his time.

Vitruvius’ remarks on painting and sculpture, for example, employ strategies of persuasion drawn from Roman rhetoric, and the discourse surrounding it. In Chapter 4, I construe Vitruvius’ famous denunciation of both monstra in wall painting and incoherent statue displays (7.5) as a disavowal of artifice and rhetorical deception, which allies the author with ancestral custom. Vitruvius’ critique of contemporary painting is not an unmediated response to his environment. His observations on painting and on sculpture are as much a product of literary tradition as they are a reaction to his physical surroundings. I make the case that 7.5 draws on numerous features of Roman rhetoric, including the persuasive strategy of analogy, the posture of moral fervour, and the polarisation of reason from artifice. Through these means, Vitruvius conveys the integrity of his own character and professional practices and warns potential patrons off his competitors.

Vitruvius advances this argument through the parable of an apparitor (and scriba) named Faberius, who paints all the walls of his house red with vermilion (7.9.2). In Chapter 5, I demonstrate the debt this passage owes to Roman political invective and discuss its implications for our understanding of the uses and connotations of vermilion pigment. Faberius, the antithesis of Vitruvius’ self-presentation, illustrates the value of the text for


its imagined audience. Although Faberius’ vermilion walls directly contradict one of De architectura’s moral prescriptions, Vitruvius nevertheless provides detailed recommendations for how such decor can be gracefully achieved (7.9.3). The aid of a knowledgeable architect can make the difference between successful interior design and social embarrassment.

The epilogue considers a once-vibrant theory within Vitruvian scholarship: that the true author of De architectura might have been a ‘Vitruvius Mamurra’, who was likewise the invective target of Catullus. Catullus famously lampoons an erstwhile prefect of Caesar, whom he refers to as Mamurra or ‘Mentula’. Since Vitruvius claims to have served Julius Caesar in a military capacity, readers once speculated that the two men were, in fact, one. This line of enquiry has long since been retired. I revive the parallel, however, to demonstrate that the very differences in literary representation which have been used to buttress the (already firm) argument against the unity of the two individuals are in fact a potent unifier: these two portraits of public servants assisting magistrates reflect the same cultural preoccupations and literary tropes. Juxtaposition of Vitruvius with Mamurra shows up the author of De architectura as, once again, elusive, tantalisingly unidentifiable within the fragmentary remains of ancient Rome. Yet, once again, comparative literary analysis with another Roman author reveals Vitruvius to have been thoroughly conversant and attune to the socio-political issues and literary currents of his own day.

The notion that De architectura’s conflation of the real with the ideal is intentional – and culturally explicable as an expression of Augustanism⁸⁴ – has attracted cultural historical interest.⁸⁵ A twenty-first-century movement in Vitruvian scholarship emphasises not only the author’s reception and incorporation of Augustan culture, but also his contribution to creating it.⁸⁶ This study stands apart from these Augustan investigations, which

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⁸⁶ Cf. McEwen 2003, who argues that Vitruvius’ aim is to configure architectura as an instrument of Augustan world domination. Cf. her comparisons of Vitruvius’ statements with the Prima Porta Augustus (250–275; 290), coins (50–52; 69) and the Horologium Augusti (230; 244–250). Masterson 2004 suggests that Vitruvius’ understandings of status and patronage correspond to a characteristically imperial paradigm, and furthermore that the author tailored his remarks on architectural concepts such as auctoritas and venustas to echo the ideology of the princeps. Novara 2005 considers the significance of Augustan address to both the content and the form of the prefaces. Milnor 2005 emphasises the importance of the Augustan ‘invention’ of private life to Vitruvius’ description of the Roman house. See now Romano 2016 on Vitruvius and the culture of the transition from Republic to Augustan principate.
are often predicated on the idea of a comprehensive reinvention of Roman culture. I place greater weight on the treatise’s relationship with Republican textual precedents. Vitruvius’ treatise is as much a product of the intellectual climate of the 40s and 30s BCE, when portions of the text may have been composed, as it is a reflection of developments during the period of its dedication. In the pages that follow, I favour attention to long-standing traditions over restrictive synchronic periodisations. In this way, my work builds upon previous research into De architectura’s intellectual background, though my interest in social performance and my method of comparative literary analysis strike a new path.

As will become apparent from the discussions in this book, a fluid relationship to the monuments and events of Vitruvius’ own time is one of the essential features of De architectura. The contours of his construction of *totum corpus omnia architecturae membren* (‘the entire body of architecture with every limb’, 10.16.12) remain stubbornly resistant to continual efforts to interpret his literary program as an unproblematic outgrowth of any facile understanding of Augustan ideology. Vitruvius’ conception of life at Rome has much in common with views espoused by Cicero and Catullus, who died decades before Augustus’ rise to power, as well as with the outlook of Horace, who experienced the new regime. During the time when the architect wrote the ten books, the fate of the Republic and of Caesar’s ascendancy was as yet unknown. This is not the security in hindsight of a confident imperial writer, but rather an attempt by a transitional figure to assimilate a new political system within behavioural paradigms and ideas of power already familiar to him.

Vitruvius chose as his subject the single most influential contribution that Rome made to the history of the world: its architecture. Despite all critiques, his voice remains crucial to our understanding of the Roman built environment. What is more, this architecture, including monumental buildings of enormous scale, networks of roads and advanced systems for water, supported another of Rome’s most significant legacies: empire. Vitruvius, in other words, is the only major theorist of what building meant within a culture in which building was enormously meaningful. In this book, I suggest that Vitruvius’ theory of architecture is best understood as the cultural product of a literate society undergoing social and political change.

87 Sallman 1984; Rawson 1985; Romano 1987; Schrijvers 1989. Cf. also Boèthius 1939 for a classic discussion of the difficulty of placing Vitruvius in a cultural context, and the reasons why Republican culture may provide the best fit.
The preface to the first book of *De architectura* identifies Augustus’ building programme as the impetus for the treatise. The author dedicates his work to the emperor, ‘so that laying out both how these works were made before and how they will be [made] in the future, you might be able to inform yourself’ *(ut eas attendens et ante facta et futura qualia sint opera per te poses nota habere*, 1.praef. 3). The contents that follow, however, fall short of expectations: absent are many architectural features we now consider most distinctively Roman during the period of *De architectura*’s composition (ca. 20s BCE). Instead of describing native Roman conventions, Vitruvius catalogues monuments and forms around the Mediterranean. He interweaves technical descriptions with symbolic, and often fantastical, narratives set in the East. This panoramic gaze reflects the tensions inherent to adapting Hellenistic source material for a Roman audience. This chapter, however, argues that Vitruvius’ recurrent and varied engagement with Greek culture neither conflicts with, nor detracts from, the author’s presentation of a Roman world. In fact, such recourse to Greek *exempla* is essential to his literary project.

I propose that *De architectura*’s claim to relevance within its own time and architectural milieu relies on a definition of Romanness as self-consciously

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1 ‘I began to write these things for you; because I observed that you have built, and are now building, many things’ (*haec tibi scribere coepi; quod animadverti multa te aedificavi vis et nunc aedificare*, 1. praef. 3). On Vitruvius’ play on verbal similarity between the name Augustus and forms of *augere* and *auctoritas* in this preface, see Gros 1989; Thomas 2007: 22.

2 Vitruvius mentions major Roman innovations such as the amphitheatre fleetingly (1.7.1) and has little interest in the possibilities of vaults and domes. Cf. Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 144. Marvin 2008: 171 notes that ‘[w]hat he never presented as a coherent whole was the normative Roman temple of his own day’; in other words, a hybrid of characteristically Etruscan and characteristically Greek elements. She reasons that ‘Vitruvius was not interested in characterizing Roman architecture, but in explaining good architecture’ [original emphasis]. Likewise, in his description of the Roman house, Vitruvius fails to mention the axial alignment of the *fauces*, *atrium* and *tablinum* as a highly distinctive feature. Cf. Leach 1997: 55–57; Clarke 2014: 344.

3 Cf. Fögen 2009: 123.
composite, distinguished not only by its absorption of foreign elements, but also by enduring preservation of their disparate origins. The melding of Greek and Italic cultures in *De architectura* demonstrates the far reach of the strategy of ‘double acculturation’, already glimpsed in texts of the Republic, which gained new traction during the Augustan era. Vitruvius’ expansive approach to the topic of architecture reflects his participation in the late Republican intellectual and literary project – shared among Varro, Cicero, Lucretius and others – of reconceiving Greek knowledge in Roman terms.

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill has shown how in setting up dichotomies between ‘Greek’ and ‘Roman’ practice, Vitruvius builds Roman identity through and against the Greek. Yet the Greek world functions not only as a distant other, but also as a part of the recently expanded, heterogeneous whole of the Roman Empire. After all, *De architectura*’s first sentence pins the treatise’s *kairos* to the end, in some sense, of a non-Roman world: ‘When your mind and divine spirit, Imperator Caesar [i.e., Augustus], were taking hold of an empire of the entire world’ (*Cum divina tua mens et numen, Imperator Caesar, imperio potivetur orbis terrarum*, 1.praef.1), Vitruvius did not dare (*non audebam*) to present *De architectura* to its dedicatee. In this variation on the trope of hesitation to approach a ruler-reader, the moment for circulating a corpus of architecture composed of elements from across the known world is precisely the moment when Rome and the world occupy the same space.

Vitruvius refers not only to the buildings, topography and inventions of faraway lands, but also to the spoils of war and privileges of empire through which Rome fed its appetite for the treasures of the Eastern Mediterranean. Scholarship on the Roman re-contextualisation of such

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4 See Feeney 2016 on the uniqueness of Rome’s appropriative relationship to Greek literature and culture. Cf. also the complementary model of Roman religion in Feeney 1998.


6 See discussion and references in the Introduction.

7 Wallace-Hadrill 2008. In my use of the term ‘Greek’, I follow Vitruvius’ own application of the descriptor *Graecus*. In *De architectura*, this label characterises not only the language from which the author translates technical terms, but also the peoples in various parts of the Greek-speaking world (e.g. Corinth or Ephesus). We should be wary of imposing our own scholarly interest in cultural differences across the Mediterranean on an author who derives meaning from the concept of a homogeneous ‘Greek’ culture.

8 This anticipates Augustus’ *Res Gestae*, in which the empire was a world, almost a new world which had been discovered, explored, and mastered. ‘Nicolet 1991: 24. Given Vitruvius’ claim to have had a military role in this conquest (1.praef.2), we may also assume that the cessation of war was an appropriate moment for him, as well. This passage has resonance with Str. 6.4.2. Cf. Clarke 1999: 257; Oksanish 2016: 268–269.


10 On Vitruvius’ use of the word *corpus*, e.g. at 1.1.12, see McEwen 2003; Oksanish 2011; Oksanish forthcoming b.
aliena in houses, temples and public spaces has argued that their presence evoked varying reactions: statues, paintings and other precious materials displayed as a ‘hegemonic visual discourse throughout the city’, could also provide ‘embarrassing demonstrations of Roman artistic inferiority’.

Vitruvius makes an important contribution to our understanding of Rome’s aesthetic eclecticism in the first century BCE by configuring a world in which transplanted objects are not merely by-products of empire or triumphal showpieces. Rather, they represent attempts to preserve the memoria of the Greek East and to promote Rome as heir to the achievements of the Mediterranean world.

Vitruvius’ approach to conquest and plunder relates productively to his attitude towards literary models, elaborated most extensively in the preface to Book 7. This preface, often read as a denunciation of plagiarism, touts the author’s memorialisation – and repurposing – of Greek textual sources. Through a thinly veiled analogy, Vitruvius compares his authorial accomplishment to the intellectual feat of the Hellenistic librarian Aristophanes of Byzantium, who is able to recognise any volumen by a recited excerpt. In so doing, Vitruvius advocates that Rome import the model of the library of Alexandria and its associated literary activities. Knowledge of the canon is as important to Vitruvius as his creation of a novel and perfect work: De architectura is unabashedly derivative. Harsh words against literary furtum, however, argue for the importance of preserving and acknowledging the identities of past creators. Roman culture, for Vitruvius, is continuous with and retentive of the Greek past.

In many ways, Vitruvius’ conception of Rome as heir to the grandeur that was Greece aligns with that of his near-contemporary, the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In his Antiquitates Romanae, a history of Rome from its foundation, Dionysius, in a Vitruvius-like fashion, underscores the erudition, rigor and fairness with which he approaches his sources, as well as the veracity of his account. Dionysius goes so far as to portray the Romans as a nation of Greeks (ethnos hellenikon), who continue

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12 On the intersection of these issues in late antiquity, cf. Hansen 2003.
13 Tomlinson 1989: 71. Though in Vitruvius’ tale, as discussed below, this library is located at Pergamon.
14 Cf. de Jonge 2008: 191 for comparison between Dionysius’ preface to On the Ancient Orators and Vitruvius’ first preface, both of which allude to the Battle of Actium and suggest a new Roman world order.
15 Dionysius names approximately fifty sources, some of which are known from his text alone. Cf. Luce 1995: 225.
and advance the practices of their Greek ancestors. Whereas Dionysius’ aim is to reconcile Greeks to Roman rule, however, Vitruvius’ aim is to reconcile Romans to the idea of the Greeks as their *antiqui*.

This chapter explores three figures whom Vitruvius identifies as key actors within Rome’s culture of appropriation: the architect, the author and the general. I trace similarities across the approaches to plunder and knowledge that Vitruvius outlines for each. The architect, master of military machinery, constructs and destructs engines of war. Steeped in *historia*, he also creates monuments that configure Roman identity through reference to a larger Mediterranean past and ensures, through acts of explication, that these references are preserved. The author both imports a Greek canon, which becomes the font of Roman textual production, and retains the memory of authors within this canon through the act of inscribing their names within new compositions. The general, having conquered and plundered, transforms the city of Rome into a repository of transplanted knowledge by erecting monuments that highlight the brilliance and strangeness of Greek achievements.

Rome’s appropriation of Greek culture was far from inevitable. *De architectura* presents valuable evidence for how, why and wherefore the Romans continued to engage with Greek models in the way that they did, centuries after this appropriative relationship began. In his approach to texts as well as objects, Vitruvius suggests that Romanness is a dynamic concept, which involves both a continual pulling-in of divergent materials from across the empire and the persistent recognition of the origins of these materials. As Robert Nelson reminds us, however, acts of appropriation are subject to entropy. If transferred passages and objects lose their otherness, Roman culture loses its self-definition as variegated and appropriative. Vitruvius’ authorial personae and his text perform crucial roles in protecting a completed empire against cultural stagnation.

**The Architect**

*Architectura*, for Vitruvius, encompasses not only public and private building projects, but also the manufacture of war machines. In the opening

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16 Cf. Peirano 2010. Irene Peirano reveals that, in the final books of the *Antiquitates Romanae*, Dionysius undercuts this triumphalist narrative by laying seeds of a future decline that will echo the ‘barbarisation’ of Greece.

17 Cf. Feeney 2016 on the lack of precedent in the ancient Mediterranean for one society systematically translating and adapting the literature of another.

paragraphs of the treatise, he claims to have been responsible for the construction and repair of military engines and artillery under Julius Caesar (1.praef.2).19 This conspicuous reference to his own contribution to Roman expansion underscores the close relationship between the project of empire and Vitruvius’ literary programme. Moreover, in Book 10, dedicated to armaments, he relates the parable of Diognetus, an architectus at Rhodes with a similar remit (10.16.3–8). The people of Rhodes, easily impressed by a charlatan named Callias and his flashy presentation of grand designs, transfer Diognetus’ salary to Callias (10.16.3). The foolish Rhodians later regret such disloyalty, however, when it becomes apparent that the contraption that Callias has built to destroy the approaching siege engine (helepolis) of Demetrius Poliorcetes is ineffective.20 In a series of events unattested in other accounts of Demetrius’ siege of Rhodes, only Diognetus can save the city from destruction.21 Diognetus agrees to help the Rhodians, on the condition that the engine of war he captures be given to him. Diognetus stops the siege engine in its tracks by diverting an enormous amount of water, mud and refuse out of the city; the machine is caught in the mire.

With the parable of Callias, Vitruvius enters the debate among authors on mechanical and allied subjects about the adaptability of recorded precepts and rules to individual circumstances. The terms in which Vitruvius casts Callias as a villain directly contradict Biton’s advice to readers of his second-century (?) BCE work on the construction of war engines and artillery, Katakeuai:22

"Οσα μὲν οὐχ μᾶλλα ἐνομίζομεν σοι ἀρμόζειν, ἀνεγράψαμεν. πεπείσμεθα γάρ ὅτι σὺ διὰ τούτων τὰ ὑμοῖοι διδό ξευρήσεις, μὴ παραταραχθῆς δὲ, ὅτι ἵσταμένοις μέτροις κεχρῆμεθα, μποτε καὶ σὲ δεήσῃ τοῖς αὐτοῖς μέτροις κεχρῆσθαι. ἔαν τε γὰρ βουλὴ καὶ σὲ δεήσῃ τοῖς αὐτοῖς μέτροις κεχρῆσθαι, ἔαν τε γὰρ βούλη μείζονα κατασκευάζειν, ἐπιτέλει, ἔαν τε ἐλάσσονα· μὸνον πειρῶ τὴν ἀναλογίαν φυλάττειν. τὰ δὲ σχήματα καὶ τὰ μέτρα προγέγραπται.

20 The context for this anecdote must be Demetrius Poliorcetes’ siege of Rhodes in 304 BCE, described by Diodorus Siculus (20.82ff) and Plutarch (Dem. 21–22). Cf. Callebat and Fleury 1986: 280–282; Roby 2016: 107–108. Neither Diognetus nor Callias is attested elsewhere.
21 In De architectura, architects are not the only intellectuals who offer rulers invaluable insights. On Vitruvius’ characterisation of Archimedes’ discovery of the furtum of precious materials from Hieron’s crown (9.praef.9–12) as a ‘challenge to aristocratic values’, see Jaeger 2008: 18–31.
22 Cf. Roby 2016: 176 on this passage as typical of Biton’s ‘casual descriptive approach’. On the vexed issue of the date of Biton’s treatise, see Lewis 1999.
We have now described as many [machines] as we have considered especially suitable for you. We are convinced that you will be able to create things of a form similar to the one provided. Do not be concerned that because we have used the given measurements that it will be necessary for you also to have used these same measurements. If you wish to use the same measurements, finish it that way; or if you wish to make something larger or smaller, do so; just try to preserve the proportions. The designs and the measurements have been written out. (8.1–7)

While Biton reassures his readers that they can safely apply the lessons learned in his treatise to their own unique circumstances, Vitruvius continually argues the opposite case throughout his treatise. The exhaustive education he prescribes for architects in Book 1 and the admirable personal qualities he attributes to himself across the work are essential to full mastery and correct application of the field of knowledge outlined in the treatise. Indeed, while Biton encourages his readers in the second person, Vitruvius often cloaks instruction in impersonal passive constructions, making the practicability of the actions described ambiguous. Therefore, although Vitruvius may be eager to impart the lessons of *architectura*, he also retains control as the ultimate arbiter of their implementation.

In the first book, Vitruvius likens the mastery of theory and practice to the wearing of armour: ‘But those who have mastered both [manual skill as well as literature and theory], like men equipped in full armour, have achieved their goal more quickly, and with authority’ (*At qui utrumque perdidicerunt, uti omnibus armis ornati, citius cum auctoritate quod fuit propositum sunt adsecuti, 1.1.2*). In the tenth, he shows that intellectual prowess generates its own kind of *manubiae*: after Diognetus defeats the *helepolis*, the people heap *honores* and *ornamenta* upon him; he assumes the persona of a general. Diognetus returns the *helepolis* to the people, setting it up in public space with an inscription: ‘Diognetus gave this gift to the people from the general’s share of the plunder’ (*DIOGNETUS E MANUBIIS ID POPULO DEDIT MUNUS, 10.16.8*). Such dependence on

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23 Vitruvius uses the second person only in the prefaces; such avoidance would be echoed by Frontinus and Celsus (the latter of whom does not use any). Cf. Hine 2009: 28 and discussions in Meißner 1999: 178; Asper 2007: 44; Roby 2016: 228. I return to this point in the conclusion to Chapter 2. 4 On his use of different strategy in 6.praef.6–7, see the conclusion to Chapter 2. 25 The only other occasion on which Vitruvius refers to *arma* is 6.1.10, in which Northern peoples ‘are more prepared for the fervency of battle’ (*ad armorum vehementiam paratiores sunt*). 26 Vitruvius likewise dedicates his ninth preface to demonstrating that writers like himself are just as deserving of *honores* as athletes. Cf. Fögen 2009: 126.
the unequivocally Roman concepts of *munus* and *manubiae* confirms that this inscription is not merely a translation from the Greek. By couching the consequences of Greek victory in Roman terms, Vitruvius produces a Greek precedent for his portrayal of the high-status, powerful architect, who not only behaves like a general, but also is supplicated like a patron (10.16.7). The ending Vitruvius provides differs greatly from Pliny the Elder’s. Pliny claims that Demetrius left his war machinery behind, which the Rhodians then sold, using the profits towards their Colossus (Plin. *Nat.* 34.41). Demetrius supposedly received the name of Poliorcetes (’the Besieger’) because his inventiveness exceeded that of a master builder (D.S. 20.92). Vitruvius confronts and upends that tradition. In his retelling, the architect not only is general-like in his mastery of strategy, but also receives the credit and honours that are a general’s due.

Vitruvius elaborates on the role of the architect in creating and interpreting war monuments midway through his description of the architect’s education (1.1). *Architecti* must be familiar with *historiae*, in order to provide the *rationes* for architectural *ornamenta*:

> Historiae autem plures novisse oportet quod multa ornamenta saepe in operibus architecti designant de quibus argumentis rationem cur fecerint quarentibus reddere debent.

[The architect] must acquaint himself with a great amount of history, for architects often design many ornamental features within their works, of which they must be able to give a reasoned account to those who ask why they made them. (1.1.5)

Architects, in other words, read *historiae* not only to enrich the composition of their *commentarii*, but also serve as vessels and conduits of knowledge in a world beyond the text. The built environment is replete with encoded architectural messages, legible only to the educated

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27 Vitruvius self-aggrandises in a similar manner when he refers to his treatise as ‘a gift thankfully received by all peoples’ (*munus omnibus gentibus non ingratum*, 6.praef.7). Definitions of *manubiae* and *praeda* are a vexed issue, cf. Orlin 2002: 117–122. Gellius, for example, considers them a unity (Gel. 13.25).


29 On Vitruvius’ conception of *historia*, see Romano 2011; Oksanish 2016; Oksanish forthcoming b. *Ratio* is the second most common noun (after *pars*) in *De architectura*; its frequency (331 instances) speaks to the importance of ordering and reason to Vitruvius’ literary project.

30 See also Fleury 1990: 94–95; McEwen 2003: 17–31; Romano 2011; Oksanish 2016; Oksanish forthcoming b on Vitruvius’ engagement with the genre of *commentarii*. 

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*The Architect*
architect. Vitruvius proves his point using the example of sculptures of conquered people in postures of submission:

Quemadmodum si quis statuas marmoreas muliebres stolatas, quae caryatides dicuntur, pro columnis in opere statuerit et insuper mutulos et coronas conlocaverit, percontantibus ita reddet rationem.

For example, if anyone erects marble statues of robed women, which are called caryatids, instead of columns on his buildings, and places mutules and crowning members above them, this is how he will explain them to inquirers. (1.1.5)

The Peloponnesian city of Carya, Vitruvius explains, sided with Persia against Greece. The victorious Graeci took revenge on Carya. Not content merely to slaughter the Caryan men and enslave their women ‘so that they might not be led in only one triumph’ (uti non una triumpho ducerentur), the betrayed Greeks immortalised their degradation of the Caryan women in stone, as an eternal reminder of slavery (aeterno servitutis exemplo, 1.1.5).

By Vitruvius’ day, monuments incorporating this type of imagery, including Pompey’s theatre complex, with its personifications of the fourteen nations he had conquered, had become visible reminders of Roman conquest within the cityscape. ‘Powerful alien bodies ... frozen in perpetual submission’ were lasting reminders of Rome’s dominance.

According to Servius, Augustus also created a portico referred to as Ad Nationes, which included personifications of the conquered (Serv. A. 8.721). While this structure and its figures of the gentes have not survived, the tradition of such imagery is well attested in later Roman sculpture, particularly reliefs.

Burkhardt Wesenberg offers the tantalising suggestion that Vitruvius includes this story as a nod to Augustus’ construction of his Forum, with its rows of caryatids replicating those of the Erechtheion in Athens, and that Vitruvius situates the narrative in Periclean Athens in order to strengthen the connections Augustus was making between that golden age and his own.

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33 Cf. also Plin. Nat. 36.39. Coarelli suggests that the statue groups mentioned in association with Pompey’s theatre complex and Augustus’ porticus are one and the same. Cf. Coarelli LTUR 4.138–139.


35 Wesenberg 1984. Cf. also McEwen 2003: 30; Spawforth 2012: 6–8; Oksanish forthcoming b. Bibliography on Vitruvius’ caryatids is extensive, and I will not attempt to reproduce it here.
this specific reference, likewise underscores mention of the *stola* in Vitruvius’ description of these figures as *statuas marmoreas muliebres stolatas*, arguing that this diction helps create an iconographic link to Rome.\(^\text{37}\)

Such analyses of Vitruvius’ caryatids within a Roman frame, though valid and important, can obscure the significance of the author’s choice to present yet another triumphal narrative in which Greeks, not Romans, are the conquerors. The architect, Vitruvius suggests, not only draws upon an ornamental lexicon steeped in convention, but also ensures that older meanings are maintained, even as their political relevance dims. Furthermore, lest we see the Golden Age of Greece too neatly as a model for Rome, the caryatids, in Vitruvius’ formulation, memorialise a dark, if fictitious, chapter in Greek imperialism: the duplicity of one Greek city-state against another, and its subsequent subjugation. To many a passerby observing Greek columnar maidens in building projects at Rome, such images likely symbolised the Roman annexation of the Greek world. Vitruvius, who may well have known little about the origins of the form, retrojects this contemporary valence when he depicts victorious Greeks leading their captives in a Roman triumph. All the while, however, his overarching aim is to restore a native Greek significance to the caryatid. For Vitruvius, the Roman architect is a master of cultural appropriation, who creates a Rome in which the Greek past is preserved, not effaced.

Vitruvius’ version of events cannot easily be reconciled with what we know of fifth-century Greece.\(^\text{38}\) Similar complaints, of course, are often lodged against Vitruvius’ portrayal of Roman architecture, the nominal focus of the treatise. Just as Vitruvius’ stated aim of describing Roman architecture seems to chafe against the content of *De architectura*, so, too, his proclaimed interest in *historia* appears at odds with the historical inaccuracies apparent in each Greek anecdote discussed in this chapter. Admittedly, it may seem perverse for a Roman author to restore Greek significance to an architectural form by repeating, or even inventing, a

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\(^{37}\) Only Roman women wore the *stola*. Cf. Milnor 2005: 112–115. Vitruvius also refers to these garments in his description of the development of the Ionic column, in which he likens fluting to ‘the folds of *stolae*’ (*rugae stolarum*, 4.1.7).

\(^{38}\) Coincidence with historical fact culminates in a possible allusion to an underlying current of Peloponnesian medism. See Huxley 1967; Romano 2011. The early fifth-century Persian invasions, which are an important element in Vitruvius’ narrative, never extended to the Peloponnesian. The Laconian city of Carya was still flourishing in the fourth century BCE. There is no evidence that the ancient Greeks referred to these statues as caryatids. In Greek contexts, most notably the Erechtheion on the Athenian acropolis, caryatids do not necessarily carry connotations of subjugation. Cf. Ridgway 1999: 145–150 on the varying meanings of caryatids throughout Greek and Roman history.
Romanised fiction about its Greek origins. However, Vitruvius’ purpose is not to retell history, but rather to develop a vivid rhetorical argument about proper behaviour using carefully crafted parables.

Vitruvius couples his tale of the caryatid with another that enriches the intended lesson. The Spartans, having overcome the Persians at Plataea, ‘celebrated a glorious triumph with the spoils and the booty, and erected the Persian Stoa from the general’s share of the plunder’ (*acto cum gloria triumpho spoliorum et praedae, porticam persicam ex manubis*, 1.1.6). Here again, the image is of ‘likenesses of their prisoners, dressed in rich, barbaric clothes, holding up the roof’ (*captivorum simulacra barbarico vestis ornatu ... sustinentia tectum*, 1.1.6). This monument punishes the Spartans’ enemies for their haughty pride; it warns future enemies of the Spartans’ power; and it encourages contemporary and future Spartans to remain proud and ready to defend their homeland (1.1.6). A perhaps unintended consequence, however, is the lesson it provides to future architects: ‘and so from that time many builders placed in their works statues of Persians holding up architraves and their attendant ornaments’ (*itaque ex eo multi statuas persicas sustinentes epistylia et ornamenta eorum conlocaverunt*, 1.1.6). This trend changes a site-specific gesture of domination into an architectural trope, as is indicated by Vitruvius’ suggestion that ‘this theme enabled them [other architects] to increase notably the variety of their creations’ (*ex eo argumento varietates egregias auxerunt operibus*, 1.1.6). Vitruvius thereby reminds his reader of the diffusion of Greek architectural motifs, even as he argues for the importance of maintaining discrete narratives of origin.

The Author

In *De architectura*’s seventh and longest preface, Vitruvius reflects on his literary ancestors (*maiores*, 7.praef.1). The vast majority of these are Greek authors of the fifth (e.g. Agatharchus, Democritus and Anaxagoras) and fourth (e.g. Philon, Leonidas and Charias) centuries BCE. Some were practitioners as well as authors on their chosen subjects, which include architecture, engineering, the plastic arts and painting. 40 This *laudatio* of

39 Compare Ovid’s image of Persia born of Danae (*Danaea Persis*) amidst figures of countries in an imagined triumph of Gaius, Augustus’ grandson (*Ars* 1.2.25).

40 See Vitruvius’ expression of disappointment that, unlike the *Graeci*, Roman architects, such as Cossutius and Gaius Mucius, did not leave behind written accounts (*7.praef.17–18*). In this preface, he cites three Latin authors amidst dozens of Greeks: Fuficius (printed as Fufidius by Granger 1985, who identifies this author with the known figure of the first century BCE), Terentius Varro and P. Septimius. See Liou, Zuinghedau and Cam 2003: xv–xxv.
illustrious men and their spectacular achievements, both in ink and in stone, forms the prelude to a statement of purpose for the treatise: though Roman architects have been no less skilled than the Greeks, their forefathers (antiqui) failed to record their teachings (praecipa, 7.praef.18). De architectura fills the silence.

The seventh preface, despite its telos, is far more concerned with the means of composition than the ends. As elsewhere in the treatise, Vitruvius outlines the contours of his position through vehement disavowal of behaviours he avoids – in this case, literary theft (furtum):

qui eorum scripta furantes pro suis praedicant sunt vituperandi, quique non propriis cogitationibus scriptorum nituntur, sed invidis moribus alien aliorbantur, non modo sunt reprehendendi, sed etiam, quia impio more xerunt, poena condemnandi.

They ought to be scolded, those who as they steal the works [of earlier authors] proclaim them to be their own, those who are not supported by their own engagement with authors, but with an envious character pride themselves as they violate the property of others; not only should they be censured but even, since they lived in a wicked way, they should be sentenced to punishment. (7.praef.3)

By referring to these writers as furantes, Vitruvius equates a type of literary borrowing not only with petty thievery, but even with the looting of a province. Cicero, prosecuting the provincial governor Verres for his seizure of precious objects from Sicilian houses and sacred sites, uses the word furtum to emphasise the illegality and vulgarity of Verres’ crimes. For Cicero, the pillaging of foreign lands, an activity sanctioned by gods and men in wartime, violates the laws of peace (Ver. 4.123). Vitruvius’ diction in 7.praef.3 (aliena, violantes, gloriantur) also evokes foreign conquest and plunder in order to depict these literary brigands as unlawfully ransacking a Greek East that is now at peace with, and even contained within, the Roman world. Aliena, here denoting a stolen text, recurs across De architectura in contexts conveying foreignness, or simply otherness, including the preface to Book 6, where the unknown shores upon which the wise man will feel at home are described as alieni loci (6.praef.2). Vitruvius’ assertion in 7.praef.3 that wicked people gloriantur calls to mind his descriptions of the Greek triumphs over the Caryans and Persians (gloria [x2], 1.1.6; gloriose, 1.1.5). It also evokes the first sentence of the treatise,

41 Vitruvius also uses furtum to denote the theft of metal from a crown, which set in motion Archimedes’ fabled bathtub discovery (9.praef.10–12).
42 Frazel 2005. See also Frazel 2009.
in which ‘the citizens prided themselves in [Augustus’] triumph and victory’ (triumpho victoriae tuae cives gloriarentur, 1.praef.1). Recourse to the language of righteous conquest in the context of punishment-triggering activities associated with invidi mores configures plagiarism as a violation of the rules of engagement between conqueror and conquered.

Vitruvius elaborates his concept of literary furtum in two parables, in which he criticises poets who engage incorrectly with literary models (explicitly Homeric in one case, more broadly poetic in the other). In the first, Ptolemy sponsors a competition of poets, which Vitruvius inaccurately situates in the library of Pergamon rather than the Egyptian library of Alexandria (7.praef.4–7). Aristophanes of Byzantium identifies the poems that please his fellow judges most as having been lifted from library scrolls. Only one poet has recited his own verses. When Aristophanes produces proof to this effect, Ptolemy reluctantly agrees that the unpopular poet is the victor. Vitruvius narrates neither the punishments nor the prize; instead, he praises Aristophanes and mentions his resultant promotion to librarian. By making Aristophanes the hero of the episode, as well as a foil to his own authorial persona, Vitruvius advances his argument for a correlation between well-earned professional success and a thorough knowledge of Greek source material (1.1.5–6).

Based on their analyses of Aristophanes’ unmasking of the poetasters, scholars of plagiarism have styled Vitruvius ‘the earliest surviving Latin author . . . to apply the category [of plagiarism] to a scholarly text.’ For Scott McGill, the passage hinges on issues of creativity: ‘the problem is actually that the authors inertly follow their models rather than engage with them creatively to advance the study of the topic as Vitruvius does.’ While classical authors did not practice direct citation, the poets disparaged by Vitruvius ‘still should have been open to having their debts discovered’. Pamela Long, meanwhile, suggests that since texts were not considered marketplace commodities in the ancient

43 See Kuttner 1993b: 163–164 for analysis of the significance of the Pergamene location. She argues that, in the passage, the Attalids found their library ad communem delectationem, to give pleasure to the public: this is loaded Republican rhetoric, about how aristocratic display is laudable if it is for social benefit (164).

44 Aristophanes of Byzantium was both the first Alexandrian scholar to establish contacts with Pergamon (he was subsequently imprisoned to prevent him from emigrating there) and the first critic to write a book on plagiarism. See Fraser 1970: 119. Scholars agree that Varro was probably Vitruvius’ source for this tale. Like the caryatid story, it contains some historical inaccuracies. Cf. Fraser 1970: 18; Roscalla 2006: 71; Romano 2011; McGill 2012: 36.


46 McGill 2012: 40.

world, Vitruvius must here be decrying the theft of such immortal fame as attended authorship.\footnote{Long 1991: 856.}

According to my reading, however, criticism of plagiarism chiefly offers support for Vitruvius’ demonstration of his esteem for the literary canon: in other words, his ability to rehearse a litany of earlier authors and his eagerness to acknowledge and engage with them. The majority of the preface is devoted to just such an activity (7.praef.11–17). Vitruvius’ contention is not just that a failure to innovate would be uncreative, or that a slight to an earlier author’s reputation would be unjust. Rather, Vitruvius defines his enterprise as a Roman author by his appropriative relationship to Greek literature. For Vitruvius, indebtedness and critical engagement with his predecessors are prerequisites to securing his place within the tradition.

To advance his declaration of authorial blamelessness, Vitruvius adapts the literary commonplace of drawing water from a spring (7.praef.10).\footnote{See also 3.3.9, in which literary sources are fontes, discussed in the Introduction to this book. Cf. Brink 1972: 533–536; Jones 2003: 51–69 on aquatic imagery and literary inspiration. Book 8, dedicated to sources of water, reflects engagement with Hippocrates. The different characteristics of peoples result from the waters of their native lands. In the eighth preface, Vitruvius uses another metaphor for the literary tradition: he follows in the footsteps of earlier authors (quorum secutus ingressus, 8.3.27). See now König 2016 on Book 8 and its centrality to Vitruvius’ literary project.} He claims that he engages with the works of his literary predecessors ‘like those who draw water from springs and siphon it for their own purposes’ (uti fontibus haurientes aquam et ad propria proposita traducentes, 7.praef.10). His recourse to the imagery of the font offers a variant on the tradition: Vitruvius does not contrast muddy or unclean waters with pure ones (e.g. Call. Ap. 105–113; Hor. Sat. 1.10.50–51; Ov. Pont. 4.2.15–20). Nor does he follow the Alexandrian convention by drinking from Hippocrene on Mount Helicon (e.g. Call. Aet. 112.5–9; Pers. Prol. 1–3). Water is not inspiration to be imbibed, but a commodity to be repurposed. Unlike Manilius (2.53–59), who employs very similar imagery in defence of his originality, Vitruvius does not flinch at the idea of ‘channeling’ early authors.\footnote{On Manilius, see Volk 2010, especially 190–191 on the legal rubric of aquae ductus and water rights.}

It is logical, then, that Vitruvius associates failed authorship with want (inopia). In the second parable of the seventh preface, Zoilus the Home-romastix makes a career of disparaging Homer.\footnote{Fraser 1970: 119 considers the Zoilus anecdote ‘a fragment of a Pergamene literary history or similar work’.} Eventually, however, this
revenue stream runs dry: ‘Zoilus on the other hand, when he had lived for a long time in the kingdom, pressed by want sent word to the king demanding that something might be paid to him in tribute’ (Zoilus autem, cum diutius in regno fuisse, inopia pressus ad regem postulans ut alienum sibi tribueretur, 7.praef.8). Vitruvius’ statement that his ability to write De architectura is predicated on his freedom from fear of want (inopiae timor) conditions our reception of this anecdote (1.praef.3). In both cases, the type of inopia invoked is ostensibly financial. Ptolemy’s response nevertheless advances Vitruvius’ conception of literature as the font of literature:

Rex vero respondisse dicitur Homerum, qui ante annos mille decessisset, aevum perpetuum multa milia hominum pascere, item debere qui meliore ingenio se profiteretur non modo unum sed etiam plures alere posse.

The king is said to have replied that Homer, who had died a thousand years before, through an unbroken eternity nourished many thousands of men, and therefore someone who professed that he had greater talent ought to be able to feed not one but many others as well. (7.praef.9)

According to this model, an author provides unceasing sustenance (pascere, alere) to his thousands of successors. Here again, the tradition is a renewable resource, although the metaphor has shifted from the font to the field (or, perhaps, nursemaid). The Zoilus anecdote thus enriches Vitruvius’ characterisation of the relationship authors should have to the literary canon. Zoilus, like the plagiarising poets, feeds on the tradition like a parasite. Vitruvius introduces these negative exempla in order to disavow their method of consuming and either effacing or denigrating their predecessors. After he then names and extols a stream of authorial forefathers, his lesson on the proper relationship that Roman writers should have to Greek tradition is complete.

The General

Vitruvius, by and large, avoids direct references to the politics, architectural projects and events of his own time. Most individuals in the treatise have Greek names and historical origins east of Italy. Yet the general Mummius, and the aediles Varro and Murena, also appear – each in reference to an importation of Greek material into the city of Rome. These very brief accounts, when considered within their narrative context, offer a perspective on Rome’s absorption of Greek objects that coheres well with the anecdotes and parables that I have discussed thus far. Once in the hands of Roman auctores, in neither instance do repurposed goods lose
their Greekness. Rather, their incongruous fit within both building and cityscape allows them to serve as markers of geographical and cultural distance.

Across Roman literature, the figure of Lucius Mummius and his sack of Corinth (146 BCE) serve as a lightning rod for debate about Eastern expansion and the ownership and display of spoils. Vitruvius refers to this victory in the context of a disquisition on theatres in Book 5, the volume dedicated to public buildings. Vitruvius claims that Mummius seized bronze vessels (echea) designed to enhance theatrical acoustics from the theatre at Corinth, and that their dedication in the Temple of Luna was the first time vessels of this type entered Rome (5.5.8). He admits that there is no example within the city of echea used acoustically:

Sin autem quaeritur in quo theatro ea sint facta, Romae non possumus ostendere, sed in Italiae regione et in pluribus Graecorum civitatibus...

But if you ask in what theatre this is done, we cannot show any at Rome, but we must turn to the region of Italy, and to many Greek cities. (5.5.8)

Nevertheless, on account of the general’s importation of these objects, Vitruvius identifies Mummius as their Roman auctor:

etiamque auctorem habemus Lucium Mummium, qui, diruto theatro Corinthiorum, ea aenea Romam deportavit et de manubiis ad aedium Lunae deductavit.

We have as our author Lucius Mummius who, when the Corinthians’ theatre was destroyed, transported these bronze vessels to Rome and dedicated them, from the general’s share of the plunder, at the Temple of Luna. (5.5.8)

Vitruvius’ classification of a general dedicating manubiae as an auctor reinforces his portrayal of Roman authorship: a Roman auctor imports and re-contextualises Greek knowledge.

Allusions to the scale and quality of his plunder pervade extant literary references to Mummius (Cic. Ver. 1.55; Vell. 1.13.3–5; Plin. Nat. 33.149

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52. Vitruvius explains that when theatres are built of solid materials (solidae rei) that cannot resound, bronze vessels (echea) can enhance their acoustics (5.5.7). According to legend, Servius Tullius commissioned the Temple of Luna. Cf. Richardson 1992: 238.
53. Auctor appears four other times in De architectura, indicating theoretical origins (3.1.8), as well as literary authors. On auctoritas in De architectura, cf. Gros 1989; Callebat 2003.
54. Compare Mary Jaeger’s suggestion that the auctor often sits at a remove from a monument, as the author and guarantor of its representation, but that ‘that representation can convey a memory quite different from the one preserved by the original’. Jaeger 2002: 49. See Liv. 4.20, for varying uses of auctor in discussion of the spolia opima and the restoration of the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius. See also Heinze 1925; Béanger 1953: 114–131; Galinsky 1996: 10–41; Sailor 2006.
and 37.12; Eutr. 4.14). Yet here emphasis lands on the objects’ geographic and architectural contexts, and the auctor responsible for their transplantation, rather than on their quantity and cost. The echea in the Temple of Luna appear amidst a description of how vessels are used in theatrical acoustics in Italiae regione et in pluribus Graecorum civitibus (5.5.8), even though they cannot perform the same function in a temple context. The paradox is significant. De architectura presents these materials as vessels of knowledge, to be interpreted, ordered, reconfigured and re-contextualised at Rome. Vitruvius, in other words, approaches them with the interests of an antiquarian.  

The same literary strategy manifests itself in a passage on the aediles Varro and Murena. Vitruvius mentions the (now obscure) ‘Varro and Murena’ in Book 2, which is dedicated to the materials used in architectural construction. Varro and Murena distinguish themselves during their time in office by importing Spartan paintings to Rome, for display in the Comitium:

Item Lacedaemone e quibusdam parietibus etiam picturae excisae intersec-tis lateribus inclusae sunt in ligneis formis et in comitium ad ornatum aedilitatis Varronis et Murenae fuerunt adlatae.

Likewise in Sparta, pictures of inlaid brick, cut out of certain walls, in fact were enclosed in wooden frames and were brought to the Comitium to adorn the aedileship of Varro and Murena. (2.8.9)

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56 Elisa Romano encourages us to view Vitruvius as an author for whom ‘the cultural patrimony accumulated by the previous generations is at risk: much of it had already been lost and much was in danger of being lost; cults and rituals had disappeared, as had even the ancient street network and the city’s original topography. Antiquarian activity – what we would today call philology and archaeology – made it possible to “recognize” and so rediscover, the past.’ Cf. Romano 2016: 348–349. On the antiquarianism of the late Republic, see Rawson 1972. Cf. also Moatti 1997: 39ff; Romano 2011.

57 While the date of their aedileship cannot be established with certainty, there is reason to identify Vitruvius’ aediles as C. Visellius Varro and C. Licinius Murena (59 BCE). Cf. Plin. Nat. 35.173; Cic. Brut. 264. For Broughton 1952: 189, they are the curule aediles of 59 BCE, C. Licinius Murena and C. Visellius Varro (Cicero’s mother’s nephew). (See also Croisille 1985: 275 and Callebat and Gros 1999: 127, who argue that the aedileship of Varro and Murena occurred in 68 BCE). McDermott 1941: 258 and Croisille 1985: 275 also suggest that Vitruvius may have intended A. Terentius Varro Murena, who was consul in 23 BCE. Sauron 1994: 283, however, convincingly rejects this, partially on the grounds that both Pliny and Vitruvius clearly join the two names with et. In any case, Varro and Murena’s appropriation of the Spartan paintings occurred long after Sparta became part of the Roman Empire in the second century BCE.

58 The triumphal display of art and other spoils in the Comitium is well attested (Suet. Jul. 10; Liv. 2.10; Cic. Ver. 1.49). Cf. Miles 2008: 177. Cicero describes how C. Claudius borrowed, and subsequently returned, a statue of Cupid from Messana, in order to adorn the Forum while he was an aedile (Cic. Ver. 4.6). Such loans were not always returned; in the case of the excised paintings, it seems unlikely that they would be reintegrated into the Spartan walls. Cf. Rawson 1983: 194.
This anecdote appears amidst descriptions of brick-walled palaces at Tralles, Sardis and Halicarnassus, as a further example of the use of bricks (2.8.9–10). Such an anomalous Roman entry within the list might appear to indicate the author’s reliance on personal experience (firsthand knowledge).\textsuperscript{59} Vitruvius, however, has not diverged from his usual argumentative structure: directly before this cluster of palaces, we read of Athenian city walls, a temple at Patrae and a wall at Arezzo (2.8.9). Vitruvius thus nests this marker of Rome’s territorial expansion within his illustration of a Greek architectural practice. Re-located, neither the echea nor the picturae retain their original function: while the bronzes do not amplify sound, the paintings no longer decorate brick walls. Furthermore, both examples commemorate (in Vitruvius’ account as well as in their Roman dedication) the destruction – or at least debasement – of their original (Greek) architectural contexts. Vitruvius reminds his reader that, when an architect provides the ratio, Greek plunder becomes Roman knowledge.

This story recurs in Pliny the Elder’s disquisition on brickwork.\textsuperscript{60} Many details in Pliny’s recounting of the episode echo Vitruvius’, yet Pliny specifies that these paintings were chosen ‘because of their pre-eminence’ (\textit{propter excellentiam}) and comments that ‘although the work had been admired for its own sake, nevertheless they [the panels] were admired more for their transportation’ (\textit{cum opus per se mirum esset, tralatum tamen magis mirabantur, Nat. 35.173}). This jubilant gloss underscores Vitruvius’ comparative subtlety. While Vitruvius reveals only where the paintings came from and where and by whom they were displayed, Pliny remarks upon their quality and the wonder of their transportation. Pliny’s confident posture reflects an author for whom Rome’s appropriation of ‘foreign mirabilia’ has become intrinsically connected with a triumphalist narrative of empire.\textsuperscript{61}

Both of these Vitruvian examples, echea and \textit{picturae excisae}, fall neatly into the categories of legitimate removal and transfer of patrimony advocated by Cicero: generals collecting booty and aediles decorating the city with the gifts of foreign subjects act on behalf of the state, to serve a common good (\textit{Ver. 4.126}; cf. also \textit{De orat. 3.92}). Vitruvius’

\textsuperscript{59} Callebat and Gros \textit{1999: 127}.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{De architectura} is likely to have been Pliny’s source. (Pliny names Vitruvius as an informant on the material compiled in \textit{Nat. 35}.)

explanation of the moral justification and purpose of these behaviours is far more oblique: he introduces the importation of foreign objects as a way of integrating Rome within a larger Mediterranean context and calling attention to Rome’s synthesis of the Greek world within its urban fabric.

Conclusion

By amassing examples from across the known world and collecting them in one corpus, Vitruvius illustrates the abundance of Greek sources now available for the Romans to use for their own purposes (ad propria proposita). Vitruvius’ shape-shifting authorial persona assumes the features of an architect, author and general. Reflecting on each of these varied roles, Vitruvius draws together a coherent approach to incorporating and acknowledging the Greek past. Making his case through faraway parables as well as direct instructions, Vitruvius draws attention to the Greek knowledge embedded within Roman architecture and literature. Most persuasively, he inserts references to Corinthian and Spartan objects, relocated to Rome, within technical descriptions of Greek architectural practices. Roman auctores create a contemporary culture utterly reliant on the past, with full citations as well as revisions. Without the rationes Vitruvius – or one of his educated architects – supplies, the promise of a Roman world culture remains unfulfilled.

De architectura emerged at the dawn of the Roman Empire, a moment when Augustus and his image makers were labouring to present their era as a Golden Age and the city of Rome as the omphalos of the world. From our perspective, Rome’s centrality within its empire seems inevitable: as Greg Woolf remarks, ‘We slip, in our usage, easily from Rome the City to Rome the Empire and back again. Urbs obscures Orbis.’ Yet, as Rome conquered great cities with significant cultural, artistic and intellectual legacies of their own, the dynamics between centre and periphery were no foregone conclusion. There is a reason why Horace’s often-quoted line about Graecia capta has proven so ‘good to think with’ on the topic of the Roman empire’s cultures in flux: the paradoxical image of the captured capturer creates a circular argument, a contest for power never to be

resolved. De architectura offers a potent statement about the role of scholarly projects, epitomised by his composition of a comprehensive work on architecture, in configuring Rome as the rightful heir to the achievements of conquered lands.

Perhaps no other ancient author would take up this Vitruvian project so well as the aforementioned Pliny the Elder, who produced his Naturalis Historia, the most comprehensive ancient compendium of knowledge about the natural world, scarcely one hundred years after De architectura first appeared. Like Vitruvius, Pliny styles himself as a conveyor of (primarily Greek) knowledge, whose project is made possible by Rome’s conquest of the world. While exploring foreign lands and peoples, Pliny never loses sight of the City: Rome, in the Naturalis Historia, is the measure of all things. Yet the connection runs deeper. Pliny, the first Latin author on record to name Vitruvius, was also a thorough and adaptive reader of his text. Pliny echoes Vitruvius’ strategies of authorial self-representation, folding into his preface references to his deep knowledge of literary sources, claims to primacy in his enterprise and allusions to his ties, established during military service, to the imperial family. Also like Vitruvius, Pliny cites his sources copiously, anxious to avoid any suspicion of theft. De architectura, of course, is one of them. In Pliny’s hands, Vitruvius is himself the object of acknowledged appropriation. The drawer of water becomes the spring.

64 Cf. Alessandro Barchiesi’s comment that ‘Graecia capta is a particular tease because it resembles so closely triumphal labels that are chronologically specific (Achaia capta, Corintho capta)’, relayed in Feeney 2002: n. 66.
67 On Pliny’s self-fashioning, see Fögen 2009: 201–264. See also Fögen 2013 on Pliny’s self-presentation as a writer ‘whom the reader is supposed to perceive as a weighty authority ranging above other writers, who are categorised as less reliable or even untrustworthy’ (85).
Everything we know, or at least think we know, about Vitruvius derives from *De architectura*. The most developed sketches of *De architectura*’s author appear in the first, second and sixth prefaces, which comment on such diverse aspects as his literary motivations, his physical condition, his political connections and his upbringing. Employment as an *architectus* is one feature of the author’s life stated unequivocally,¹ but what does this mean? Slim evidence concerning the status and function of *architecti* in Rome of the first century BCE renders it difficult to propose a plausible biography for Vitruvius or to evaluate the veracity of *De architectura*’s characterisation of its author and his field.² Some studies, moreover, elevate Vitruvius’ observations on his life and upbringing to the status of a tell-all on the architectural profession in ancient Rome.³ This is a weight that scattered, and often vague, authorial remarks cannot bear.

Vitruvius’ comments frequently appear as a coherent profile, collated and collapsed into digest form: freeborn and well educated (6.praef.4–6), the architect never attained fame or fortune during his lifetime (1.praef.3; 6.praef.4–6), despite his construction of the basilica at Fano (5.1.6–7), as well as his service under Julius Caesar and, subsequently, Augustus (for whom he supervised the manufacture of engines of war) (1.praef.2). Since *De architectura* seems to have been completed in the late 20s BCE and ‘the Romans deemed “old age” to begin at 46 years’, Vitruvius’ self-characterisation as aged and decrepit, many are quick to observe, indicates a birth date of around 80–70 BCE (2.praef.4).⁴ Analysis of this kind,

¹ E.g. 6.praef.5, which contrasts the author with *ceteri* (other) *architecti*.
² On ancient architects, see Toynbee 1951; Gros 1983; Anderson 1997; Taylor 2003; Thomas 2007; Senseney 2011; Anderson 2014.
³ E.g. McKay 1978.
however, irons out the abstractions and contradictions of the text. As this chapter reveals, these inconsistencies and ambiguities are in fact crafted characteristics of the authorial voice.

Readers interested in establishing the author of *De architectura* as an historical figure have combed the epigraphical record for possible candidates and compared the lives recorded in inscriptions with Vitruvius’ self-reported profile. The name of a freedman architect, L. Vitruvius Cerdo, for instance, appears on the arch of the Gavii, constructed in Verona during the late Republic or early Empire. Ingrid Rowland and Thomas Noble Howe, however, counter that ‘our Vitruvius . . . is certainly not a freedman (libertus), therefore this Vitruvius Cerdo was very possibly a freedman of the family of Vitruvius who, like a son, was brought up and trained in architecture’. Presumably, they consider *De architectura*’s suggestion that architects should be ‘acceptable on account of their birth’ (a genere probatus) and ‘brought-up Respectably’ (honeste . . . educatus) with ‘noble shame’ (ingenuus pudor) to be proof that the author himself was freeborn (6.praef.6).

A second inscription refers to a Vitruvius who paid for the construction of arches in Thibilis (Annuna, in present-day Algeria) from his own funds: (arcus) Vitruvius Mamurra arcus s(ua) p(ecunia) f(ecit) (CIL 8.18913). This identification was particularly attractive, given the long-standing hypothesis that the author Vitruvius might have been of African descent. *De architectura*’s Vitruvius, however, some have claimed, could hardly afford such benefactions. After all, is not his remark in 1.praef.3, ‘Since, then, I was indebted to you for such benefits that until my last breath I had no fear of poverty, I began to write this work for you’ (Cum ergo eo beneficio essem obligatus, ut ad exitum vitae non haberem inopiae timorem, haec tibi scribere coepi), a sincere offer of thanks for lifting the author from destitution into humble financial solvency;

7 Rowland and Howe 1999: 2.
8 Ingrid Rowland, however, takes a less literal approach when interpreting Vitruvius’ claim to be in bad health in 2.praef.4: ‘It might be wise, however, to take this unassuming self-description with a grain of salt; Vitruvius, no fool, is adding as much poignancy as he can to the plea, “Read me!”’ Cf. Rowland 2014b: 415.
9 Thibilis was most likely founded during the triumviral period. For the suggestion that the arches are ‘triumphal’, which would have implications for the date, see Palmer 1983: 346.
11 I return to this inscription in the Epilogue to this book.
Scholars have rejected these potential historical identifications on the basis of the author’s self-presentation of his financial, social and political circumstances. But how trusting should we be of this authorial voice – and our own analysis of it? Ultimately, no author of De architectura can be securely identified within Roman literature or inscriptions. But regardless of who its author was, De architectura exhibits a persona or a pose that, returning again and again to issues of status and wealth, displays sensitivity to the socio-economic and political environment in Rome. Rehearsing the scholarly exercise of selecting and dismissing candidates for the ‘real Vitruvius’ well illustrates how vivid, decipherable and seemingly guileless the Vitruvian persona appears on the page. As Nicholas Horsfall has written of Cornelius Nepos, a prose writer whose works were long overlooked by Roman cultural historians and dismissed by Latinists, ‘graceless language augments our sense of his essential honesty’. Such intuitive convictions, however, lead to misinterpretation.

As outlined in the Introduction and Chapter 1, De architectura’s prominent authorial persona represents a continuation of long-established conventions of technical literature. Vitruvius’ use of the first person has far too frequently been dismissed as evidence of the author’s inclusion of firsthand knowledge. However, this editorialising posture can more profitably be interpreted within a literary tradition of self-assertion, which Geoffrey Lloyd traces back to early Greek scientific writing. Vitruvius presents himself as a conduit of Greek knowledge and his treatise as the manifesto of a new age in which the entire world, and the achievements of its Greek past, have become Roman. Out of this rich background, a question emerges: what should we make of the fact that Vitruvius, in tracing the outlines of his authorial persona, places so much emphasis on the propriety of his upbringing and the seemliness of his interpersonal interactions?

It is undeniable that elements of Vitruvius’ self-fashioning echo generic precedents. Authors of Greek technical and scientific texts are often eager to demonstrate thorough knowledge of their chosen subject matter, as well

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12 Horsfall 1989: 8. Even this assessment represents a softening. Horsfall’s earlier deprecation of Nepos as an ‘intellectual pygmy whom we find associating uneasily with the literary giants of his generation’ was not well received (Horsfall 1982: 290; see, for example, Dionisotti 1988: 36). As a once-belittled prose writer whose popularity is now on the rise (see, e.g., Stem 2012), Nepos has in common with Vitruvius a talent for attracting backhanded compliments. Moles 1992: 314, for example, considers Nepos ‘a man at once in tune with current intellectual tastes and an innovator, though one whose desire always outstrips his performance’.

13 Lloyd 1987: 56–70. See Chapter 1.

14 See my discussion in the Introduction.
as moral fitness for the task, manifested in a lack of unsightly ambition or an interest in the public good. However, the responsiveness of Vitruvius’ authorial persona to contemporary Roman pressures and trends reveals an author intermingling tradition with innovation. The extent to which Vitruvius tailors conventional arguments to suit the contours of his socio-cultural environment becomes clear through comparative literary analysis with other Roman authors across genres.

In this chapter, I juxtapose Vitruvius’ authorial persona with that of Horace. As the ancient poet who ‘says more about himself than any other’, Horace provides a focal point for analysis of self-representation in Roman texts. Yet, as is true for Vitruvius, this line of enquiry is made richer and more complicated by the fact that Horace lays claim to Greek literary traditions. Within each of the poetic genres in which Horace wrote, the first person demands to be read through the lens of generic convention. The relationship of Horace’s self-fashioning to various Greek precedents, as well as to the historical Q. Horatius Flaccus, has long been a subject of concentrated interest and heated debate. The prevalence of personal and intimate details in his verse continues to instil in some readers a feeling of familiarity with the poet himself, even in the face of being branded ‘simpletons’ by others.

16 See Fögen 2009: esp. 148 on Vitruvius; 189–196 on Columella; 262–263 on Pliny; 286 on Frontinus.
18 Analyses include Oliensis 1998; Habash 1999; Schlegel 2000; Bowditch 2001; Cucchiarelli 2001; McNell 2001; Keane 2002; Gowers 2003; Gowers 2009. These studies combat the tendency to characterise ‘autobiography and art’ as opposing concerns within Horatian poetics (cf., e.g., Anderson 1974, who does ultimately acknowledge their inseparability). Fraenkel 1957: 1–23 provides a synopsis of the life of Horace, as reconstructed largely from the poet’s own remarks (with a more sceptical eye to the Suetonian biography composed during the first decade of the second century CE). Though often pilloried for its credulity, Fraenkel’s study remains a standard reference point. (Lyne 1995 and Levi 1997 revive the biographical approach.) Horsfall 1998 and Harrison 2007 skirt the thornier theoretical issues by focussing on literary precedents for the Horatian ‘I’.
19 Cf. the comments and bibliography on this phenomenon in McNeill 2001: 1–3; Gowers 2003: 59. Rudd 2007, quoting Griffin 2007: 192; cf. also Rudd 1976: 177, ‘It is true that Horace appears mainly as a respectful client, a devoted son, and a civilized idler. But those were real aspects of his character.’ Between the New Critical approach of Freudenburg (1993) and Eduard Fraenkel’s Romantic assumption that ‘Horace never lies’, Oliensis finds a fruitful middle ground: ‘Horace is present in his personae . . . not because these personae are authentic and accurate impressions of his true self, but because they effectively construct that self – for Horace’s contemporary readers, for us, and also for Horace himself.’ See Fraenkel 1957: 456 for the famous index item, ‘Horace: never lies’. Quotation from Oliensis 1998: 2 (summarising a position also held by Martindale 1993). For further debate, see Edmunds 1994; Rudd 1994; Schlegel 2000; McNeill 2001 (see esp. 1–9); Gowers 2003.
A pivotal poem for the study of Horace’s use of personal narrative is S. 1.6. The poem recounts episodes from throughout the poet’s life and credits his father with instilling praiseworthy qualities and values in him. Many analyses of literary precedents and social influences visible in this poem, appreciative of the intricacy of the Horatian poetic self, promote a sense of Horace’s distinctiveness. My argument here, however, considers points of contact between the satirist and his contemporaries.

Ostensibly confessional and self-referential, but, upon examination, artful and shape shifting, Roman satirists have offered fertile ground for persona studies. Profound engagement with their own literary lineage is a mainstay of the genre: Horace’s authorial voice in his satires both echoes and responds to that of his predecessor, Lucilius, the father of the genre. Furthermore, Quintilian’s declaration that verse satire was a genre wholly Roman in conception (tota nostra, Inst. 10.1.93) should not blind us to the extent to which Roman satirists expanded upon Greek literary topoi and personae. In the case of S. 1.6, one of the ‘diatribe satires’ (so called for their reliance on Greek moralising diatribes), Horace adopts and adapts the literary persona of the Greek popular philosopher Bion of Borysthenes.

Comparison with Vitruvius confirms that Horace’s satiric persona is much more than an amalgam of elements borrowed from Lucilius and Bion, updated with ‘true-life’ details. Considerable overlap in Vitruvius’ and Horace’s characterisations of their educations, wealth and political ambitions in S. 1.6 and Vitr. 6.praef.3–6, which are also traceable elsewhere in the authors’ oeuvres, suggests that strategies of authorial self-fashioning operated across generic lines in first-century Rome. Such correspondences may reflect the underlying presence of a cultural convention or prototype.

21 Scholarship on Sermones 1, in particular, was once a heated battleground between ‘rhetorical’ and ‘biographical’ readings of Horace’s authorial persona. See the summary and references in Gowers 2003: esp. 56–60; Gowers 2012: esp. 1–19. Harrison 2013 offers a new take on Horace’s self-fashioning through other characters (functioning as doubles for the author) in Sermones 2.
24 For a complementary analysis, see Josiah Osgood’s examination of S. 1.6 within the culture of ‘triumviral upstarts’. Osgood 2006: 283–288.
However, in this chapter I will hazard a bolder claim: that a professional appointment Vitruvius and Horace both held – that of scribe (scriba) – had a discernible influence on the crafting of their literary selves.

**Horace and Vitruvius**

Horace and Vitruvius make strange bedfellows: one ranks as a consummate Latin stylist and poet, and the other can claim authorship only of a prose treatise deemed ‘repulsive and crotchety, and disfigured by debased Latin’. 26 Few readers of Horace devote much thought to De architectura’s ten books; the neglect of Horace on the part of Vitruvian scholars is hardly less. 27 Yet, although separated by genre, Vitruvius and Horace have much in common. To begin with, they were almost certainly contemporaries. Like Horace, Vitruvius alludes to his own participation in the civil wars. 28 Unlike Horace, however, Vitruvius can boast of having backed the right horse from the start: in the preface to Book 1, the architect reminds imperator Caesar that he himself was known to the deified father and endorsed by the imperial sister (Vitr. 1.praef.2).

Three points of contact between the two authors raise the question of whether or not Horace and Vitruvius were acquainted with one another’s works. Most widely known of these has been the resemblance between Horace’s Ars 1–8 and Vitr. 7.5.3–4, which characterise the depiction of hybrid creatures in wall painting as bizarre and inappropriate. 29 But a closer verbal parallel exists between Horace’s ‘such a monster neither warlike Apulia nourishes in its wide oak forests nor the land of Juba begets, the dry wet-nurse of lions’ (quale portentum neque militaris | Daunias latis alit aesculetis | nec Iubae tellus generat, leonum | arida nutrix, Carm. 1.22.13–16), and Vitruvius’ description of Africa as ‘the mother and

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27 Cf. Tomei 1943 on Horace’s and Vitruvius’ shared aesthetics. See also Nichols 2009a; Wulfram 2013; Romano 2016.

28 Readers have recognised allusions to Horace’s service to Brutus at Philippi in, for example, S. 1.6.48; S. 1.7; Carm. 2.7; Carm. 3.14.27–28; Ep. 2.2.46–48. The Suetonian Vita is explicit: ‘he served as tribune of soldiers in the war of Philippi, having been marshalled by Marcus Brutus as leader’ (bello Philippiensi excitus a Marco Bruto imperatore, tribunus militiae meruit, 1). Cf. Horsfall 1998: 46 n. 38; Citroni 2000; Osgood 2006: 101–103. Vitruvius claims to have enjoyed a long-standing relationship with Julius Caesar, which encouraged Augustus to entrust him with the construction and repair of engines of war (Vitr. 1.praef.2). For other indications, cf. Baldwin 1990: 431–433; Rowland and Howe 1999: 6, esp. n. 42 and 43.

29 Both authors use these (monitory) examples to illustrate the importance of compositional coherence. See Chapter 4.
wet-nurse of wild beasts (Africa parens et nutrix ferarum bestiarum, Vitr. 8.3.24). Though only one word (nutrix, ‘wet-nurse’) is the same, the images of Africa nourishing wild animals are similar. The relative dates of Carmina 1 and De architectura make Vitruvian allusion to Horace plausible, but the direction of influence, if any, cannot be resolved. Dedications to Augustus offer a third set of complementary passages. Horace begins his epistle to the prince,

Cum tot sustineas et tanta negotia solus,
res Italas armis tueris, moribus ornes,
legibus emendes, in publica commoda peccem,
si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Caesar.

Since you alone shoulder so many great enterprises, you protect the Italian state by arms, adorn it with morals and correct it with laws, I would err against the public good if I were to delay your time, Caesar, with a long speech. (Ep. 2.1.1–4)

Introducing De architectura 1, Vitruvius likewise displays deference to the princeps’ busy schedule:

Cum divina tua mens et numen, Imperator Caesar, imperio potiretur orbis terrarum … non audebam, tantis occupationibus, de architectura scripta et magnis cogitationibus explicata edere, metuens ne, non apto tempore interpellans subirem tui animi offensionem.

When your mind and divine presence, Imperator Caesar, was taking possession of the whole world … I did not dare, during such preoccupations, to bring forth writings on architecture laid out in extended meditations, fearing lest, interrupting at a bad time, I might bring upon myself the displeasure of your mind. (Vitr. 1.praef.1)


Cf. Nisbet and Hubbard 1970: 271 on Carm. 1.22: ‘It is a curious coincidence that the passage of Vitruvius . . . occurs in a context which explicitly mentions Juba’s father and his capital of Zama. It is even possible that both Horace and Vitruvius are imitating some expression of Juba’s own.’ But Juba II’s Libyca seems to have been issued well after the date of the ode. See Roller 2003. This does not negate the possibility that Horace and Vitruvius were drawing on a shared cultural reference, now lost. The Vitruvian passage is not frequently mentioned in analyses of Carm. 1.22.15–16 (e.g. Cowan 2006).

Cf. Baldwin 1990: 51 notes that the word numen is often used of emperors in inscriptions, including Augustus.
A concern for self, rather than the state, (conveyed by the use of subire) distinguishes Vitruvius’ rhetoric from Horace’s in Ep. 2.1.34 Horace’s Ep. 1.13, however, both emphasises the importance of choosing the right time and expresses a fear of incurring Augustus’ wrath.\(^3\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Augusto reddes signata volumina, Vini,} \\
\text{si validus, si laetus erit, si denique poscet;} \\
\text{ne studio nostri pecces odiumque libellis} \\
\text{sedulus importes opera vehemente minister.}
\end{align*}
\]

You will deliver, Vinius, these inscribed volumes to Augustus, if he is thriving, if he is in good spirits, if, lastly, he asks for them; lest you err out of devotion to me, and, behaving too assiduously as an aide, bestow ill favour on my poor little works. (Ep. 1.13.2–5)

Similarity between the epistles and Vitr. 1.praef.1 (as in the descriptions of wall painting and Africa) lies not in diction, but in sense. Both authors emphasise the temerity and deference with which they approach Augustus. Had one author been reading the other?\(^3\) As was true for the other two points of contact I have discussed, a common cultural milieu provides a more likely explanation than conscious allusion by one author to another. Yet recognition of such a milieu is the beginning, not the end, of investigation. Vitruvius’ and Horace’s authorial personae advance strikingly similar views on education, wealth and political ambition. Historical information about both authors is scanty and insecure; undoubtedly many features of these Romans’ lives were very different. Nonetheless, this chapter’s analysis of the Horatian persona face to face with the Vitruvian makes it entirely plausible that Vitruvius’ modes of self-representation, like Horace’s, respond to the first-century Roman socio-political climate and, in particular, to anxieties aroused by liminal or ambiguous status within that society.

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34 Granger 2002: 3 neglects the element of Augustan anger and its repercussions by rendering Vitruvius’ sentiment: ‘I should be found a hindrance to your thoughts.’ Rowland and Howe 1999: 21 translate this phrase as ‘I might incur the disdain of your keen spirit.’ Fleury 1990: 2 is most strident: ‘je craignais de m’exposer à ton mécontentement.’

35 See Janson 1964: 102 n. 6. Thielischer 1961 assumes that De architectura had to have been written after Ep. 2.

36 To Teuffel and Schwabe, the fact that the Vitruvian address ‘looks like a paraphrase’ of Ep. 2.1.1–4 provides support for dating De architectura to the teens. Cf. Teuffel and Schwabe 1891: 548. Although the idea of the poet harvesting erudite references from a technical treatise in ‘debased Latin’ may seem far-fetched, Louis Callebat in turn recommends that we at least consider the possibility that it was Horace who had De architectura in mind. See Callebat 1973: 126–127. Compare Rowland and Howe 1999: 4: ‘the devices . . . have a specific meaning in Vitruvius’s writings in the 20s, whereas they were literary topoi for Horace in the 10s.' Baldwin 1990: 426 and Nylander 1992: 12 declare both usages commonplace.
Horace’s and Vitruvius’ shared techniques of self-fashioning are conspicuous from the earliest moments in the lives they craft. Both authors eulogise their parents and the educations they provided. S. 1.6 chronicles Horace’s early years, and suggests that lessons learned from his father (and the superior schooling this selfless parent sponsored) influenced Horace’s preference for a carefree, quiet existence. His early experience of poverty and his education support Horace’s characterisation of his present self:

\[
\text{purus et insons} \\
\text{(ut me collaudem) si et vivo carus amicis;} \\
\text{causa fuit pater his, qui macro pauper agello} \\
\ldots \\
\text{sed puerum est ausus Romam portare, docendum} \\
\text{artis quas doceat quivis eques atque senator} \\
\text{semet prognatos.}
\]

If (to sing my own praises) I live upright and harmless and loved by friends, my father was the source of these qualities. Though he was poor, with only a lean little plot... he dared to convey his boy to Rome, to be taught the arts which any equestrian or senator himself teaches his offspring. (S. 1.6.69–71; 76–78)

Such a correlation between the past and present makes Horace’s induction into Maecenas’ circle seem natural and rebuts suspicions that friendship with Maecenas is a means to any end: Horace has always been a socio-political and economic inferior among his peers and is comfortable with – even proud of – playing this role. He recognises that he is ignotus (without pedigree or of unaccountable origin, S. 1.6.6), as opposed to nobilis.\(^{37}\) Not only does his genealogical background and upbringing make Horace ineligible (in his view) for elected office, but also it secures his aversion to political life.\(^{38}\) Horace would not trade his family for noble birth

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\(^{37}\) Alongside more abstract definitions, such as ‘familiar’, ‘well-born’ and ‘famous’, nobilis sometimes evoked specific political meanings in the late Republic, including the definition preferred by Wiseman 1971, ‘descended from a curule office-holder’ (either patrician or plebeian) and the narrower ‘descended from a consul’. (The antonym of nobilis in political contexts was often novus, though ignobilis and ignotus also appear.) Within the parlance of even single Latin authors, however, the genealogical implications of nobilitas, novitas, etc. are often inconsistent, which indicates the flexibility of such terms to express a range of attitudes towards ancestral precedence and political office. See, for example, Paananen 1972 on Sallust’s varying uses of nobilis and nobilitas (44–48) and novus homo (90–109). See also Brunt 1982.

\(^{38}\) S. 1.6 raises the issue of whether or not ignoti like Horace are suitable candidates for political office (e.g. tribune (25) and praetor (108)). Campaigning for office was a right available to all freeborn citizens, but electoral reforms, as well as wider political changes, in the late second and first century
(93–99). Specifically, he spurns the obligatory wealth and clients: ‘for at once it would be necessary for me to seek greater wealth and to call upon or be called upon by more people’ (nam mihi continuo maior quaerenda fortet res, atque salutandi plures, 100–101). To illustrate his freedom from ambition, Horace describes his freedom from wealth: his is a lifestyle of modest transport, of modest meals (104–106), limited staff (116), and unpretentious meals (112; 116–119).

Horace’s airy disavowal of electoral politics ultimately conveys his lack of interest in performing a political role closer to home: the responsibility of poets to celebrate the politically powerful (and these statesmen’s noble ancestors) through encomium. The first two lines of S. 1.6 sound like the opening strains of encomium (‘Maecenas, though no one whatsoever of the Lydians who inhabits the Etruscan lands is of nobler birth than you’, Non quia, Maecenas, Lydorum quidquid Etruscos incoluit finis nemo generosior est te, S. 1.6.1–2), but this expectation is quickly deflated: Horace will not write such a poem for Maecenas, not only because Maecenas does not consider noble ancestry of utmost importance (S. 1.6.3–6), but also because friendship with Maecenas is nothing like political office (‘this is dissimilar to that’, dissimile hoc illi est, S. 1.6.49) and therefore allows Horace to absent himself from the political scene altogether. Ep. 2.1 also pairs political office and encomiastic composition as related, and equally disagreeable, pursuits; Horace refuses to eulogise the nobilitas or to be himself immortalised in imagines or verse: ‘I do not want to be exhibited anywhere in wax, with my features poorly rendered, nor to be praised in shoddy verses, lest I have to blush at the foolish gift (ac neque ficto in peius vultu proponi cereus usquam, nec prave factis).

B.C.E. caused the numbers of first-generation office holders to undulate (cf. Wiseman 1971: 3–9). With a comparable unsteadiness, Horace’s satire careens towards an unpredictable telos. The first eighteen lines present arguments for genealogy’s irrelevance. But at line nineteen, the authorial voice abruptly switches sides: the people and censors justly begrudge the awarding of honores to novi (19–21). This change of heart corresponds to Horace’s self-reported political autobiography as well: early in life, he served as a tribune in Brutus’ army (48). Cf. Rudd 1966. On Horace’s eligibility see Wiseman 1971: 71 and references (‘Horace too could have been a senator, like his butt Tillius, whose birth was no better than his own; but that was in the free and easy days of the Triumvirate, when even slaves usurped senatorial office.’).

Cf. also S. 1.6.68, for Horace’s denial of avaritia.

Horace’s grand appearance in his school days (which belies his poverty) provides further evidence of his father’s self-sacrifice (S. 1.6.78–80).

On Roman poetic patronage (including political requests and pressure), see White 1993.

Likewise at Carm. 4.12.15, Virgil’s status as a ‘client of young nobles’ (juvenum nobilium cliens) distinguishes him from Horace. See Ep. 2.2 for a statement of regret for the poet’s some-time participation (102–105). These overtones may also be present in Ep. 1.19.39, in which Horace refuses to dote upon the ‘noble writers’ (nobiles scriptores), even at the price of popular success.
The Self-Fashioning of Scribes

decorari versibus opto, | ne rubeam pingui donatus munere, Ep. 2.1.264–267).

The account of Horace and Maecenas’ meeting in S. 1.6 specifies that Horace’s character, rather than his poetry (or pedigree), attracted Maecenas’ friendship (S. 1.6.55; 62–64). Intellectual pursuits remain quiet activities for his own enjoyment: ‘reading or writing something that might please me in silence’ (lecto | aut scripto quod me tacitum iuvet, S. 1.6.122–123). Horace’s playful presence on the serious expedition of S. 1.5 exemplifies the independent, apolitical role the poet wishes to perform.

The preface to De architectura 6 constructs an authorial persona that resembles that of S. 1.6, without being identical. In this preface, Vitruvius thanks his parents, the providers of a superlative education:

Itaque ego maximas infinitasque parentibus ago atque habeo gratias quod, Atheniensium legem probantes, me arte erudiendum curaverunt et ea quae non potest esse probata sine litteratura encyclopio doctrinarum omnium disciplina.

Therefore, I possess and return the highest, endless gratitude to my parents, because approving of the Athenian law, they took care to have me trained in an art, and one which cannot be mastered without knowledge of letters and of comprehensive learning in every field. (Vitr. 6.praef.4)

Vitruvius’ account of his schooling and its results parallels the chain of causality in S. 1.6. Description of the architect’s educational background provides the preamble to a renunciation of interest in accumulating

43 See Bowditch 2001: 31–33 (and references) on the various implications of this image within Horatian recusatio.
44 Horace only mentions his poetry once in the satire, and then as a form of private enjoyment (123).
45 Cf. S. 1.4.138–139: ‘when I have a bit of leisure, I play around with papers’ (ubi quid datur oti | illudo chartis). Description of Horace engaged in these ‘hobbies’ as silent (tacitus) suggests they are the antithesis of political ambition, which generates noise (e.g. S. 1.6.22: ‘since I would not have been quiet in my own skin’, quoniam in propria non pelle quiessem).
47 He earlier specifies the nature of this law, citing Alexis, a playwright of Middle Comedy, ‘who says that the Athenians deserve to be praised because the laws of all the [other] Greeks compel children to provide for their parents, whereas the laws of Athens only applied to those parents who had educated their children’ (qui Athenienses ait oportere ideo laudari quod omnium Graecorum leges cogant parentes ali a liberis, Atheniensium non omnes nisi eos qui liberis artibus erudissent, 6.praef.3). Cf. Curren 2000: 13, ‘The only provision of Athenian law that induced parents to provide their sons with any form of education before the age of their compulsory military training was a law attributed to Solon that held that parents who had not prepared a son in the skills necessary for a livelihood could not claim support from that son in their old age.’ See also Marrou 1956: 382; Schmitter 1975; Callebat 2004: 59. Care for the education of one’s children had long been a fatherly virtue among the Romans, as well. On Cato the Elder’s active role in his son’s education, for example, cf. Plu. Cat. Ma. 20.3–5; Gruen 1992: 53–54: 67.
wealth.\textsuperscript{48} Instead of a shame-faced confession of poverty, this is an assertive denial of avarice:\textsuperscript{49}

Cum ergo et parentium cura et praeceptorum doctrinis auctas haberem copias disciplinarum, philologis et philotechnis rebus commentariorumque scripturis me delectans, eas possessiones animo paravi e quibus haec est fructuum summa: nullas plus habendi esse necessitates eamque esse proprietatem divitiarum maxime nihil desiderare.

When therefore by care of my parents and the instruction of my teachers I possessed increased stores of knowledge, and delighting myself with literary and technical matters and in the works written upon them, I stored up possessions of the spirit from which this is the total profit: that there is no necessity of possessing more, and that the greatest possession is to desire no riches at all. (Vitr. 6.praef.4)

Vitruvius, like Horace, delights in learning for his own personal pleasure, with no other incentive in mind. \textit{De architectura}'s sixth preface eschews political rewards along with financial ones.\textsuperscript{50} Suspicion of the political realm first emerges when Vitruvius claims that one of the most significant advantages of intellectual riches is their imperviousness to political turmoil:\textsuperscript{51}

Namque ea vera praesidia sunt vitae quibus neque fortunae tempestas iniqua neque publicarum rerum mutatio neque belli vastatio\textsuperscript{52} potest nocere.

\textsuperscript{48} See Schrijvers 1989 and Masterson 2004: 392–395 on Vitruvius' characterisation of his education, which, they argue, forms part of his self-fashioning as a member of the elite.

\textsuperscript{49} Avarice is a recurrent theme throughout Horace's poetry and the topic of the first poem of his first circulated book (S. 1.1). Cf. Dyson 1980; Gowers 2012: 13; 60–62, and elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{50} One may compare the view presented in Nepos' \textit{Atticus}. Like \textit{De architectura} and the early poetry of Horace, this work was composed 'at the cusp between republic and monarchy and thus, purely as a historical document, reflects the manifold ambiguities of that uneasy era'. See Moles 1992: 314. Nepos suggests that rich, well-bred equestrians (in stark contrast to Horace's and Vitruvius' authorial personae) would have felt under obligation to seek office. The biography begins with allusions to Atticus' wealth and gens (Att. 1) and thereafter provides excuses in order to dignify Atticus' non-participation: \ldots \textit{ex quo indicari poterat non inertia, sed iudicio fugisse rei publicae procreationem} (\ldots from this one can deduce that he avoided government administration not on account of apathy but by choice', Att. 15; cf. also Att. 6). Atticus' reasons for shunning politics, like Horace's and Vitruvius', include enjoyment of the quiet intellectual life (\textit{Cf.}, e.g., \textit{Att.} 4). Nepos' account also implies, however, that Atticus had an eye to his own safety – during this turbulent period, political abstinence could be a survival strategy: Moles 1992: 315 characterises Nepos' \textit{Atticus} as 'a study of how a man who had close relations with many of the leading politicians and generals of the late republic managed to survive the ever increasing violence, the ever greater swings of fortune'. \textit{Cf.} also Millar 1988.

\textsuperscript{51} In the wake of decades of confiscations and proscriptions, \textit{De architectura}'s first readers probably needed little convincing of the capriciousness of financial and political fortune.
For those are the real mainstays of life, which are immune from the unjust tempest of fortune, the vicissitudes of politics and the ravages of war. (6.praef.2)

Vitruvius’ choice of ambire and petere (which mean ‘to canvass for votes’ and ‘to stand for office’, respectively, in political contexts) to describe the practices of other, objectionable architects further on in the preface may imply that the architect shuns the behaviours of political candidates (6.praef.5).53 If so, Vitruvius, like the Horace of S. 1.6, uses the denial of political campaigning figuratively, to allude to his disinclination to exploit his craft for political patronage (and the ensuing financial profit).

The role of political patronage in shaping the life, works and memoria of the architect is a recurrent topic within De architectura.54 Vitruvius couches his remarks on the topic in terms of nobilitas. Within the wider category of excellent persons and buildings,55 Vitruvius’ nobiles are a subset who achieve the highest and most enduring fame.56 Political clout, not technical or intellectual superiority, determines nobilitas (or, synonymously in De architectura, notitia).57 The nobiles pictores, artifices, architecti, etc. have attached themselves to statesmen (nobiles cives).58

Vitruvius defines the nobiles (when used as a substantive) as those ‘who hold office and magistracies and whose duty it is to serve the state’ (qui honores magistratusque gerundo praestare debent officia civibus, 6.5.2).

54 Nobilitas is the initial word of both Book 9 and Book 10.
55 Public buildings deemed nobiles include temples (1.1.12; 2.9.13; 7.praef.13) and the Mausoleum (2.8.11). The city of Ephesus is also nobiles on account of its laws (10.praef.1). For discussion of the tenth preface, see the Introduction.
56 Laus is a crucial element; e.g. the nobiles among painters and sculptors are those who have attained magnae et infinitae laudes (3.1.2). Vitruvius notes that the works of many of his Greek sources receive nobilissimae laudes (7.praef.13).
57 There are only two possible counter-examples. The role of politics in making persons nobiles remains unspecified in 1.1.14, which argues that since few individual artifices have achieved nobilitas through mastery of individual artes, an architect should feel accomplished if he does not have a deficiency across the wide variety of subjects he knows. In addition, 3.praef.1 implies that it is possible for artifices to attain notitia through seniority in their workshops, even if they lack wealth, but their notitia is still less than that of wealthier artisans with powerful patrons. This passage is difficult to follow; Gros 1990: 45–49 is essential reading. (Notitia in the sense of general knowledge or familiarity also appears in 1.1.6 and 1.1.10.)
58 E.g., ‘Myron, Polycletus, Phidias, Lysippus, and others, who from their art have attained acclaim. For they got it by working for great states or kings or famous citizens’ (Myron, Polycletus, Phidias, Lysippus, ceterisque qui nobilitatem ex arte sunt consecuti. Namque ut civitatus magnis aut regibus aut civibus nobiles opera fecerunt, ita id sunt adepti, 3.praef.2). (Cf. 10.16.4: Referring to King Demetrius’ architect Epimachus, Vitruvius explains, ‘he brought with him Epimachus, a famous architect of Athens’ (Epimachum Atheniensem nobilem architectum secum adduxit). In 2.8.11, Leochares makes sculpture for the Mausoleum with an ‘exalted hand’ (nobilis manus). Those who construct works for those of ‘humble fortune’ (humilis fortuna) do not achieve nobilitas (3.praef.2).
The ‘Vitruvius’ of the sixth preface, on the other hand, is *ignotus* (unknown, 6. praef. 5) – characterised by the very same adjective Horace (as mentioned previously) uses to describe himself as lacking *nobilitas* in S. 1.6 (6; 24; 36). Though Vitruvius does not explicitly link his *ignotitia* to his pedigree, both the context of this claim (within an account of his origins) and the varied connotations of concepts such as *notitia* and *nobilitas* throughout the treatise suggest that Vitruvius, like Horace, views self-definition as *ignotus* as a useful way to characterise both his origins and his absence from the political scene.

Vitruvius and Horace were not alone in claiming to lack *nobilitas*—or in treating this deficiency as evidence of their strength of character. While *novi homines* faced criticism for being *infimus, humilis* and *obscurs* (terms both descriptive and evaluative), they also used their lack of pedigree to assert a monopoly on virtue. *Ignotus* does not seem to be a particularly common term in this debate, yet it does appear, for instance, in the *novus* Cicero’s attack on the *nobilis* Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus: Piso’s familiar face, resembling the *imagines* of his ancestors, is, according to Cicero, a false advertisement: ‘it was this that deceived, misled and beguiled those to whom he was unknown’ (*hic eos quibus erat ignotus decepit, feellit, induxit*, Pis. 1). Cicero’s disparagement of Piso relies on the essential irony that while Piso’s family is ‘known’, his nefarious deeds and character are, as yet, unknown. New men urged supporters to focus on their own deeds, not those of their ancestors.

Opinions may differ on whether the self-defence of the new man constitutes a competing paradigm of virtue, or only ‘different emphases and variations within the framework of the same widely shared basic system of values’. But, whatever the case, Horace’s and Vitruvius’ claims to be *ignotus* provide evidence for a new kind of Roman self-fashioning, which stands apart from that of nobles and new men alike. The assertion

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59 The word *ignotus* appears five other times in *De architectura*, without overt political connotations: in 2.10.3, 6.6.7 and 6.7.7, it refers to architectural information that the author does not wish to remain unknown; in 8.3.21, to a city ‘not unknown’ (*non ignota*); in 9.5.4, to a constellation of stars ‘which is unknown in these regions’ (*quae his regionibus est ignota*).

60 As early as Cato the Elder, praise of commoners and non-Romans proposes the formulation of a non-genealogical derivation of virtue: *ORF* 8.17–18; 55; 58; 128.


64 The material evidence *Cuomo 2007*: 77–102 surveys suggests that such defiance of the elite paradigm of virtue may have been common among Romans in technical fields. See *Cuomo 2007*: 101–102 ‘at least some technicians . . . upheld values which, while superficially similar,
sum ignotus furnishes both authors with evidence for why they remain free agents, with modest and moral existences. Vitruvius and Horace, in stark contrast to novi and nobiles, use their pedigree to argue for their lack of political interest – rather than their suitability to achieve office.

Horace’s and Vitruvius’ shared attitude towards education is also distinctive among their Roman contemporaries. Contemplation of the value of the intellect in comparison to financial or political good fortune admittedly pervades Latin literature. Features common to Vitruvius’ and Horace’s appraisal of education and its results, however, do not appear to be paralleled in Roman self-fashioning. Cicero, for instance, describes the influence of his education in forming his character in Brut. 305–316, but he neither mentions his parents as sponsors nor claims that this education encouraged him to spurn politics or wealth. Sallust’s prefaces exhibit an author ‘now at a distance from public affairs’ (a re publica procul, Cat. 4.1), who extols the worth of intellectual pursuits (Cat. 1–4; Iug. 1–4), believing that ‘the renown that riches or the body confer is fleeting and frail’ (divitiarum et formae gloria fluxa atque fragilis est, Cat. 1.4; cf. also Iug. 2). Unlike Horace and Vitruvius, however, Sallust does not allude to the role of his education or parents in instilling this view; it is achieved through the political experiences of his youth (Cat. 3.3).

The Horatian-Vitruvian educational narrative does not appear in Horace’s recognised Greek model, either. S. 1.6 draws on the tradition of diatribe, and in particular the self-fashioning of Bion of Borysthenes, a Greek philosopher of the fourth to third centuries BCE. Many features of Bion’s address to Antigonus Gonatas (F1A) appear in S. 1.6: Bion addresses King Antigonus, a man whose very name implies the quality of impeccable birth that S. 1.6 overtly ascribes to its addressee Maecenas (2);

were at odds with those of the upper classes ... they celebrated a form of knowledge which was alternative to other forms of knowledge, and a social role, that of the expert, the skilled maker of things and producer of results, which again, perhaps deliberately, posed itself as an alternative to other social and public roles, such as those determined by birth, connections, or a literary education.

65 Bek dismisses Vitruvius’ celebration of the constant value of education, as opposed to earthly rewards of fame and fortune, as ‘a theme not uncommon in moral orations’. Bek 1976: 157.

66 Biographers of Cicero once stated that Cicero’s father bought a house in Rome so that his son could be educated there (e.g. Plasberg 1962: 34; Haskell 1964: 40), but Clarke 1968: 18 rejoins that there is no ancient support for such a claim: Plutarch (Cic. 8.3) suggests his father had a house there, but gives no reasons why.

67 Bion’s eclectic philosophical training defies categorisation by school, but his caustic diatribes promote Cynicism. The fragments of Bion (as well as an introduction to what is known of his life) are collected in Kindstrand 1976. See the extensive discussion of Horace’s use of Bion in Freudenburg 1993.
Bion’s father’s freedman status has provoked the scorn of Bion’s rivals (4–8); Bion proclaims his pride in his parentage (12). Other preserved fragments suggest that Bion, like Horace and Vitruvius, renounced both ambition for wealth and the aggressive pursuit of political favour. But unlike Horace and Vitruvius, Bion considers his intellectual life as a separate stage from his upbringing, not an offshoot of it (F1A 1–2). Brought up by a rhetor, Bion showed his appreciation by burning his teacher’s books, before escaping to Athens to begin an altogether different life as a philosopher (F1A 9–11). Horace’s celebration of education as a form of patrimony and the wellspring of his attitudes and character therefore represents a significant departure from Bion’s prototype, and a distinct commonality with Vitruvius.

**Philosophical Precedents**

Moral philosophy is prominent among the intellectual riches that result from Horace’s and Vitruvius’ educations. Both Vitruvius and Horace exploit a rich array of philosophical stereotypes, which serve as both negative and positive exempla for their authorial selves. Their casts of characters are much the same: at one pole, enthusiasts of a corrupted Stoicism and, at the other, devotees of Epicureanism and the Cyrenaic philosopher Aristippus. By delving into philosophy in his prefaces, Vitruvius provides a Roman spin on a practice seen in the prefatory letter to Heron’s Belopoeica, in which the author relates the military engineering discussed within his book to philosophical studies of ataraxia (tranquility). In the preface to Book 6, citing primarily Aristippus, but also Theophrastus, Epicurus and a number of Greek poets, Vitruvius presents a learned pedigree for the idea that education should be valued above wealth (6.praef.1–3).

The sixth preface also specifies that ‘some people, taking these considerations lightly, think that those who are wealthy are thereby wise’ (nonnulli haec levia iudicantes putant eos esse sapientes qui pecunia sunt copiosi,

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Who, exactly, are these *nonnulli*? The Stoics are left out of the catalogue of philosophers in Vitr. 6.praef.1–3, perhaps because he is mocking an absurd, but widespread, distortion of their beliefs. Stoic philosophy held that the true philosopher or wise man (*sapiens*) was perfect: physically beautiful, politically powerful and also rich. Could wealth, therefore, be a sign of (or route to) wisdom? Not according to those truly in the know: the Stoics deemed the wise man ‘rich’, ‘beautiful’ and ‘politically powerful’ in the context of arguments that redefined all of these terms as properly referring to the possession of wisdom and nothing else. (The wise man could therefore be rich even if lacking in material possessions because wisdom was the only true wealth.) There was enough confusion surrounding the Stoic stance on this issue, however, to make it a source of ridicule in Horace’s poetry, as well: in S. 2.3, for example, a perversion of Stoic dogma results in the errant belief that wealth can generate wisdom: ‘he who has made a bundle will be famous, brave and just. “And wise too?” Yes, wise, and a king and anything else he wants’ (quas qui construxerit ille | clarus erit, fortis, iustus. ‘sapiensne?’ etiam; et rex, | et quidquid volet, 96–98).

Horace’s critique of this spurious Stoicism thus forms part of his self-presentation in S. 1.6 as a philosophically elevated, yet economically humble and socially and politically retiring, figure.

It would be overly simplistic to characterise either author’s position as a renunciation of money, power or fame. Vitruvius and Horace do not set out to criticise the man who ‘has it all’. They simply reject the actions and attitudes required to attain such goals. They condemn those who seek to justify avarice or hunger for power on philosophical grounds. Horace’s and Vitruvius’ use of philosophy is pointed and partial, as in the *Pro Murena*, which, despite Cicero’s own sympathies with Stoic thought, uses Cato the Younger’s Stoicism as evidence of his political corruption.

While Horace and Vitruvius are sympathetic to Stoicism elsewhere in

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74 Cf. comments on wisdom and wealth in Cicero’s sixth Stoic paradox, an extended meditation on the idea that ‘only the wise man is rich’ (*solum sapientem esse divitem, Parad. 6*).
73 E.g. *Ep*. 1.1.106–108: ‘In short: the wise man is less than Jove alone. He is rich, free, distinguished, handsome, and even the king of kings; above all, sound – except when he comes down with the flu!’ (*ad summam, sapiens uno minor est Ioue, diues, | liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum; | praeceps sanus, nisi cum pituita molesta est*); S. 1.3.124–126: ‘If the person is rich, who is wise, and a good cobbler and uniquely attractive and a king, why desire what you already have?’ (*si dives, qui sapiens est | et sutor bonus et solus formosus et est rex | cur optas quod habes*).
73 The Stoic Stertinus introduces this point of view merely to mock it himself. Moles 2007: 168 n. 12 notes the following examples of Horace ‘jibing at pretentious Stoics’ in S. 1: 1.1.20; 1.2.134; 1.3.96 ff.
74 See Craig 1986.
their works, allegiance to Epicureanism rather than Stoicism in S. 1.6 and Vitr. 6.praef. confirms their choice of political abstinence: while the Stoics believed that one should enter politics unless impeded, Epicureans took the opposite view: one should not seek office unless it is strictly necessary.75

Aristippus, a pupil of Socrates and founder of the Cyrenaic school of philosophy, appears in both Vitruvius’ and Horace’s writings as a paradigm of approved attitudes and behaviours.76 Horace’s S. 2.3 presents Aristippus as the polar opposite of the misguided Stoic who believes that wealth can bring wisdom. The poem asks: ‘What is the likeness between such a man [the corrupt Stoic] and the Greek Aristippus, who in the middle of Libya ordered his slaves to throw away his gold, because, on account of the weight, they journeyed too slowly’ (quid simile isti | Graecus Aristippus? qui servos proicere aurum | in media iussit Libya, quia tardius irent | proper onus segnes, S. 2.3.99–102).77 The parable demonstrates Aristippus’ lack of attachment to material goods, not his lack of ownership: after all, Aristippus is no stranger to wealth (in the form of slaves and gold). Elsewhere Horace explicitly names Aristippus as his role model. Ep. 1.17, in the course of giving advice on how to avoid sycophancy while cultivating powerful friendships, praises Aristippus, explaining that the philosopher accumulated status and wealth without corruption: ‘Any lifestyle, status and amount of property suited Aristippus, who, while attempting greater things, was content with his circumstances’ (omnis Aristippum decuit color et status et res, | temptantem maiora, fere praesentibus aequum, Ep. 1.17.23–24).78 Though the verb temptare suggests initiative on Aristippus’ part, the end of the line cleverly exculpates the philosopher from any suspicion of unseemly ambition.

75 The classic statement of this difference in philosophy is Seneca’s De otio 3.2: ‘The two sects, Epicureans and Stoics, disagree greatly in this matter, but both of them, though by different paths, lead towards otium. Epicurus says “the wise man does not go into politics, unless in an emergency.” Zeno says “[the wise man] will engage in politics unless something prevents him.”’ (Duae maxime et in hac re dissident sectae, Epicureorum et Stoicorum, sed utraque ad otium diversa via mittit. Epicurus ait: ‘Non accedet ad rem publicam sapiens, nisi si quid intervenerit.’ Zeno ait: ‘Accedet ad rem publicam, nisi si quid impedierit’).
76 The figure of Aristippus occurs frequently and variously in Greek and Roman writings considering the value of wealth. See the survey in Masterson 2004: 405–409.
77 Though the speaker of S. 2.3, the Stoic Damasippus (here quoting the Stoic Stertinius), intends Aristippus to embody madness, the poem’s extensive parody of Stoic airs suggests that Damasippus and Stertinius, rather than Aristippus, are the true laughing stock of the poem. See Bond 1998 on how Horace attempts to undercut the Stoics and their moralising in 2.3.
78 On the definition of color as lifestyle, see Mayer 1994: 235. Vitruvius’ use of the term will be discussed further in this chapter’s section on ingenuitas, as well as in Chapters 4 and 5.
De architectura introduces Aristippus in an anecdote evocative of Horace’s desert story. The philosopher loses everything in a shipwreck. Washed up on the shore near Rhodes, Aristippus heads for the city and there collects ample munera (rewards) for his philosophising (6.praef.1). That he was, supposedly, the first philosopher ever to accept payment was one of Aristippus’ foremost claims to fame in the classical world. Though De architectura’s Aristippus accepts financial compensation, he remains critical of the value of wealth. The philosopher advises his companions that patrimony passed from parents to children should consist of nonmaterial items, intellectual gifts that ‘can swim to shore with their owners after a catastrophe’ (6.praef.1). Since the Romans sometimes condemned salaried posts as staining and servile, this preface has been read as an attempt to demonstrate that receipt of payment does not necessarily entail a loss of virtue or status. This may be one factor, but for both Horace and Vitruvius, the implications are wider: Aristippus’ example encourages readers to focus upon the authors’ attitudes towards worldly achievements, rather than the particulars of their status or wealth.

Celebrity and Self-Promotion

How do timeless aphorisms become a pointed and integral feature of self-fashioning? Horace and Vitruvius apply conventional moralising and philosophical platitudes to practical, contemporary examples, on view as character sketches of themselves and others. Setting up a contrast between the author’s own values or practices and those of his contemporaries, second nature to the satirist, is a strategy Vitruvius also employs. Vitruvius’ lack of unseemly ambition, for instance, appears particularly praiseworthy when set against the common practice of his architectural peers:

Neque est mirandum quid ita pluribus sim ignotus. Ceteri architecti rogant et ambiunt ut architectentur; mihi autem a praecipitibus est traditum rogatum, non rogantem, oportere suscipere curam ... Nam beneficium dantes, non accipientes ambiuntur.

79 The story of the shipwreck appears elsewhere in classical literature, e.g., Cic. Rep. 1.29, but Vitruvius is unique in naming Aristippus as the protagonist.
80 ‘Debating there on philosophical topics he was given rewards, so that he not only was able to smarten himself up, but also to provide those who were with him with clothes and other necessities of life’ (ibique de philosophia disputans munera est donatus, ut non tantum se ornaret, sed etiam eis qui una fuerunt et vestitum et cetera quae opus essent ad victum praestaret, Vitr. 6.praef.1).
Nor is there reason to wonder why I am unknown to so many. Other architects make propositions and solicit that they might practice architecture; but it was handed down to me by my teachers that it is proper to take on a task only when asked, rather than through asking. For those giving a favour are solicited, not the recipients. (Vitr. 6. praef. 5)

Such obstinate passivity is to blame, it is often assumed, for Vitruvius’ pitiable poverty, as well as the absence of De architectura or the names of any of Vitruvius’ own architectural works from first-century sources. Vitruvius’ claim to be ignotus has been read as simply a statement of fact: the (lack of) extant source material confirms that Vitruvius was ‘unknown’ in his own time; why look any further (6. praef. 5)? However, this view neither takes into account the very specific Vitruvian meaning of nobilitas/notitia as prestige and lasting fame predicated on political patronage (traced in the section of this chapter on ‘education and its results’) against which Vitruvius’ ignotitia takes shape, nor does it consider why Vitruvius might regard this trait as advantageous. Horace, as previously noted, repeatedly calls himself ignotus in S. 1.6. Vitruvius’ self-identification as pluribus . . . ignotus (‘unknown to the many’) may imply a lack of political backing, but it more clearly emphasises the ensuing lack of fame. Obscurity is a stylised and effective pose, held by Horace, as well: ‘no one reads my writings’ (nemo | scripta legat, S. 1.4.22–23). By all accounts, Vitruvius had far more cause to feel ignotus in first-century Roman society than Horace. That the two authors incorporate popular recognition into their self-fashioning in remarkably similar ways suggests that 6. praef. 5 is not a bald confession. Vitruvius’ inconsistency on the subject of his fame also discourages reading sim ignotus as an admission of failure to attain recognition at Rome. Though pluribus . . . ignotus in his own time, Vitruvius

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83 E.g. Baldwin 1990: 426 n. 12, ‘Vitruvius may also or alternatively have owed his lack of funds to his silly principle of not seeking out commissions but waiting for clients to come to him – no wonder notities parum est adeucta’ Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 10, however, recognises that ‘the architect feels the need to avoid being put in the position of a social inferior’.

84 Cf., e.g., Callebat 2004: 61, ‘une basilique à Fano . . . une telle construction n’impliquant pas nécessairement l’acquis de la notoriété’.

85 Ignotitia is a very rare noun in classical Latin, only appearing in Vitr. 3. praef. 3 and Gel. 16.13.9.

86 The quality could easily provoke snobbery and scorn (S. 1.6.6), but Horace turns it to his advantage. The poet’s low birth attests to Maccenas’ lack of prejudice (S. 1.6.7–17) and Horace’s possession of a vita et pectus parum that endeared him to his powerful friend (S. 1.6.6.4). Lack of nobilitas also provides support for an elaborate recusatio of political ambition: Horace believes only nobiles should seek office; well aware of his lower birth, he humbly abstains from campaigning. Horace also uses ignotus of others at 1.6.24; 1.6.36. Horace refers to the low birth of Tullius, the sixth king of Rome, by calling him ignobilis at S. 1.6.9.

87 Horace’s claim is not simply that no one reads his writings because he is not ambitious; he anticipates disapproving audiences (S. 1.4.24–25).
boasts not long after that he will be ‘known to posterity’ *(posteris . . . notus*, 6.praef.5). To have been *notus* to Julius Caesar is, of course, a mark of pride *(1.praef.2).* Self-identification as *pluribus . . . ignotus*, however, cannot be chalked up to a rejection of the vulgar crowd: in 6.praef.7, Vitruvius explains that *De architectura* was conceived as ‘a gift thankfully received by all peoples’ *(munus omnibus gentibus non ingratum)*, rather than to any select few.*

Horace is equally equivocal. A notorious name dropper, he continually refers to the powerful friends who know him well and, like Vitruvius, he conjectures that his writings will ensure his lasting fame *(1.praef.2).* Unlike Vitruvius, Horace does not claim ‘all peoples’ *(omnes gentes)* as his target audience. But his statement that no one reads his writings *(1.4.41–42)* is deliberately provocative in a book for public circulation – and not just any book, either: *Satires* 1 includes 1.4 and 1.10, which respond to perceived criticisms from readers, as well as an entire poem *(1.9.3)* devoted to an encounter predicated on the well-known facts of Horace’s literary bent and friendship with Maecenas.*

This quick sketch suggests that Vitruvius and Horace take haughty self-satisfaction in inconspicuousness, but of a highly particular, and variable, kind. What interests me are not the changing faces of the audiences they sometimes welcome and other times shun, but rather what the profession to be unknown implies for their own characters. Pristine anonymity, in each case, diverts any suspicion of self-promotion. No one knows

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88 Baldwin 1990: 431 argues that the formulation *notus* is too weak to suggest that Vitruvius had much contact with Caesar, but self-deprecating understatement would accord well with the tone of the preface.

89 This conception of literature as a gift to all humanity recurs frequently in the treatise, e.g., 9. praef.1–2.

90 Though sometimes confidently dismissive of the *profanum vulgus* *(Carm. 3.1.1)*, at other times the poet expresses concern that his protestations of shyness before crowds leave him open to suspicions of snobbery *(‘I am ashamed to recite my undeserving writings in crowded theatres and give undue weight to trifles,’ *spisis indigna theatris | scripta pudet recitare et nugis addere pondus*, Ep. 1.19.41–42). As a consequence, Horace is loath to be scornful: ‘I am afraid to put my nose to use’ *(ad haec ego naribus uti | formido, Ep. 1.19.45–46)*.

91 Gowers 2003: 59–60 highlights the tension between the fragmentary nature of the autobiography presented in *Satires* 1 and the repeated use of *notus* within descriptions of acquaintances and friendships, e.g., 2003: 60, ‘by this time he was a “somebody”, sifted out from the crowd by Maecenas. Yet he wants to keep the option of being a “nobody” too, being able to merge back into the crowd’.

92 Gowers 2003: 59 remarks that ‘the best joke of *Satires* 1 is to call the unnamed pest “someone known to me only by name”’. 
Vitruvius the architect because he does not solicit business (Vitr. 6. praef. 5). No one reads Horace’s works because the author has not provided them to any vendor (S. 1.4.71). The claim to obscurity is an instrument of societal critique, defining the author in opposition to specific rivals: the promiscuous, inferior and, above all, self-promoting poets or architects of his own time. When Vitruvius calls himself ignotus, it is in stark contrast to ceteri architecti, who seek wealth and celebrity in an aggressive manner (Vitr. 6. praef. 5). When Horace professes that no one reads his writings, he opposes himself to the aspiring poet Fannius, with his unsolicited offer of a box of books (S. 1.4.21–22). It is not the state of being known that Horace and Vitruvius disclaim, but rather the means by which others achieve it.

The inconspicuousness of the Vitruvian persona of the sixth preface stands out against De architectura’s characterisation of Alexander’s architect Dinocrates. The encounter between Alexander and Dinocrates in the preface to Book 2 offers oblique commentary on Vitruvius’ relationship with his own ruler, as well as further elaboration of the author’s attitudes towards self-advancement. Desirous of imperial commendation (regiae cupidus commendationis), Dinocrates brings letters of recommendation from his relatives (2. praef. 1). Vitruvius, on the other hand, achieves such commendatio seamlessly; the imperial sister is his referee (1. praef. 2). While Vitruvius offers Augustus his book gingerly, fearing lest he interrupt the ruler at an inconvenient time (1. praef. 1), Dinocrates aggressively lobbies for Alexander’s attention, refusing to wait for a suitable time (idoneum tempus): ‘he asked to be introduced as soon as possible to Alexander’ (petit uti quamprimum ad Alexandrum perduceretur, 2. praef. 1). Vitruvius’ and Horace’s shared hesitation to foist their compositions upon a busy Augustus (Ep. 2.1.1–4; Ep. 1.13.2–5; and Vitr. 1. praef. 1), presented in the second section of this chapter, expresses politically-savvy self-effacement. But it also forms part of a larger effort to present themselves as unobtrusive and uninterested in their own gain.

93 The direction in which these gifts are offered (to or from Fannius) is ambiguous. See Brown 2007: 129.
94 Cf. Wulfram 2013 on Alexander’s status as an ambivalent figure in Vitruvius’ Dinocrates parable and Horace’s Ep. 2.1.
96 ‘Although they promised, they were being rather sluggish, waiting for the right time’ (Cum polliciti essent, tardiores fuerunt idoneum tempus expectantes, 2. praef. 1).
Dinocrates finally catches Alexander’s eye – and consequently, his ear – by costuming and exhibiting his own body: trading his clothing for a lion skin, a crown of poplar leaves and a club, he walks by the tribunal (2.praef.1–2). This image contrasts sharply with that of the shipwrecked Aristippus, engaging in philosophical debate to earn his rewards (munera) of clothing and so forth (vestitum et cetera, 6.praef.1). The mention of clothing suggests that Aristippus, like Odysseus on Scheria, is truly γυμνός, only properly attired for the gymnasium where the disputes take place. Perhaps to heighten this impression, Vitruvius asserts that the munera Aristippus receives are not frivolous, but only ‘things necessary for life’ (quae opus essent ad victum, 6.praef.1). While Dinocrates, in aggressive pursuit of commendation, strips off his essential garments in favour of an ostentatious costume, Aristippus, accidentally unclad, clothes himself modestly by means of his intellect. Dinocrates stands apart not only from Vitruvius and Aristippus, but also Aristophanes, the librarian hero of the preface to Book 7, who, without actively seeking fortune or fame, achieves professional success through the just recognition of his encyclopaedic knowledge and its service to the state.98

As his daily schedule demonstrates, Horace devotes no time to self-advertisement or soliciting (S. 1.6.111–128). Likewise, in S. 1.4, his poetic recitations are not offered, they are coerced: ‘Nor do I perform recitations for anyone except friends, and even that compelled, not everywhere you like and openly for whomever you please’ (nec recito cuiquam nisi amicis, idque coactus, | non ubivis coramve quibuslibet, S. 1.4.73–74). His social advancement has been effortless. Virgil and Varius brought Horace before Maecenas (S. 1.6.54–55). If he were at all angling or aggressive in his approach, Maecenas would not have received him: ‘you take care to take up worthy people, far away from corrupt ambition’ (praesertim cautum dignos adsumere, prava | ambitione procul, S. 1.6.51–52).

The Ambitious Client, or Canvassing Politician?

In denying self-promotion, Horace and Vitruvius renounce activities associated with ambitious clients.99 Vitruvius’ claim that he does not

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98 Vitr. 7.praef.4–7. On his rewards, see 7.praef.7: ‘[the king] indeed furnished Aristophanes with the greatest gifts and placed him in charge of the library’ (Aristophanen vero amplissimis muneribus ornavit et supra bibliothecam constituit). I discuss this preface in Chapter 1.
99 On the pervasiveness of patronage relationships and behaviours in Roman society, which extended far beyond those identified in Latin texts using the vocabulary of patronus and cliens, or even amicitia, see Rouland 1979; Saller 1982; Wallace-Hadrill 1989; Deniaux 1993; Damon 1997; Deniaux 2011. Saller 1982: 1 characterises Roman patronage as a personal, social relationship
seek out commissions (like those who rogare et ambire) distinguishes him from a class of people he will describe later in Book 6 as those who ‘fulfil their duties by soliciting others, and are not solicited by others’ (in alis officia praestant ambiundo neque ab aliis ambiuntur, 6.5.1). Ambire, notably, appears in both 6.praef.5 and 6.5.1 (and nowhere else in the treatise). Vitruvius’ ideal architect, rogatus, non rogans, acts as a patron endowing beneficia upon wealthy patres familiarum who seek him out (6.praef.5). Horace’s education in S. 1.6, in contrast to Vitruvius’ in the sixth preface, spurs him to reject the role of patron as well as client. Unlike the patron of S. 1.1.10, no rousing client’s knock summons Horace at cockcrow; he stays in bed all morning (S. 1.6.122–123). Elsewhere, however, while maintaining his humble persona, Horace enjoys the role of the patron: ‘the rich man seeks out me, a poor man’ (pauperemque dives | me petit, Carm. 2.18.10–11). Interest in the practices of clientela is a markedly Roman feature of the self-fashioning of both authors. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing in the same period, celebrates patronage as a uniquely Roman institution with strong ties to the Empire’s success. While the Athenians and Thessalians provided the model for such hierarchical relationships of obligation, Dionysius explains, their bonds with those they called ‘hirelings’ and ‘toilers’ were not directly comparable.

The authors’ character foils, Dinocrates and the pest of S. 1.9, embody the stereotype of the ambitious client well. Several of the behaviours of...
Horace’s pest mirror Dinocrates’ actions. While Dinocrates harasses Alexander’s top-ranking aides ‘so that he might obtain audience more easily’ (aditus haberet faciliores, 2.praef.1), the pest attaches himself to Horace as a means of securing audience with Maecenas. Both view aditus as a difficult prize, but well worth the effort; the pest explains ‘[Maecenas] is a man who can be won, and that is why he makes the first audience so difficult’ (est qui vinci possit, eoque | difficilis aditus primos habet, S. 1.9).

Gauging Horace’s reaction (and having witnessed the poet’s own easy access in S. 1.6), the reader knows that persistence of such a kind will by no means make for aditus faciliores. Neither Horace nor Vitruvius, however, would deny that aggressive behaviour often achieves results. The pest’s projected failure in S. 1.9 is, as Horace admits (S. 1.9.48–49), a compliment to Maecenas’ singular character as a patron.105 Dinocrates attracts Alexander’s attention and ultimately obtains imperial commendatio. But if Dinocrates’ flashy display is the norm, all the more commendable is Vitruvius’ alternative strategy of reliance on ‘the help of knowledge and writings’ (auxilia scientiae scriptaque, 2.praef.4). All the more distinguished is his imperial recognition, achieved through a strong reputation in the imperial house rather than through his own persistence.

As mentioned previously, the use of ambire and petere in 6.praef.5 may seem to imply that Vitruvius’ architectural rivals are behaving like political candidates.106 Elsewhere in the treatise, however, these verbs betray no clear connotation of political campaigning. The overtones are of patronage. Ambire and petere may mean ‘to canvass’ and ‘to stand for office’ (respectively) in a political context, but when used of clients, they can mean ‘to call round’ and ‘to make a request’. Ambire appears outside of 6.praef.5 to describe the soliciting of favours by those ‘who are of common fortune’ (qui communi sunt fortuna, 6.5.1). It is they who, as mentioned, fulfil their duties by calling on others (ambiundo), not by being called on (ambiuntur, 6.5.1). The verb petere figures twice in the description of Dinocrates, the architect whose manner clashes completely

parasite has legal business of his own to attend to . . . In fact, in this Satire the figure of the parasite has been adapted to serve as a caricature of the ambitious cliens in first-century B.C. Rome.’ See Ferriss-Hill 2011 for a reading of the pest as Lucilius.

105 Damon 1997: 123 reasons, ‘what the pest was asking for was not ipso facto untoward, as can be seen in two poems not too distant in date from Horace’s Satires [the Panegyricus Messallae and Laus Pisonis] in which a poet unabashedly requests regular hospitality from a patron and presents the credentials that he thinks will make his plea persuasive.’

with Vitruvian authorial self-fashioning (2.praef.1). Neither time does it have the technical meaning of ‘to stand for office’. Dinocrates, acting like an overzealous client, seeks (petit) a remedy (praesidium), and ‘that he might be brought before Alexander as soon as possible’ (uti quamprimum ad Alexandrum perduceretur, 2.praef.1).

Nevertheless, to deny electoral connotations in Vitruvius’ vocabulary of patronage, or even to seek sharp distinctions whatsoever between patronage and political campaigning, would be to distort the significance of such amorphous terms in Roman culture. Horace may frame S. 1.6 as a rejection of political activities, but, as we have seen, his behaviours pointedly eschew the roles of client and patron, as well. Campaigning for and holding political office involved playing both parts (the solicitor and the one solicited) of the patronage relationship. The role of the politician as patron seems more obvious – retention of clients, like election to office, bespeaks power. Translators therefore render Horace’s allusion to the politician’s obligatory involvement in the salutatio (mihi ... foret ... | ... salutandi plures, S. 1.6.100–101), as ‘I would have to receive more callers’. The verb salutare, however, can refer to either (or both) sides of the interaction. This elasticity of meaning reflects the complexity of interpersonal relationships and activities in ancient Rome, which the image of the all-powerful pater familias, ensconced in his sella curulis while his humble callers file forward, can oversimplify. On the contrary, the interdependence of even the most powerful ensured that one man’s patron might be the next man’s client.

The electoral process might also make politicians appear to be the clients, in a sense, of their voters. Horace describes his renunciation of poetic self-promotion as a refusal grammaticas ambire tribus (‘to canvass the “tribe” of grammarians for votes’, Ep. 1.19.40). He also uses ambit of a peasant entreating favours from Fortuna (Carm. 1.35.5). Elsewhere in his poetry, repudiation of political campaigning forms an integral part of Horace’s self-fashioning as a poet who does not self-promote or pander to the crowd. He complains in Ep. 1.19, for instance:

107 Nor does the electoral meaning surface elsewhere in the treatise. Petere appears at 1.4.12, in which the citizens of Salpia Vetus petition M. Hostilius to change the location of their walls; at 10.2.15, he uses petere to mean ‘to seek’ or ‘to search for’ (the object is marble).

108 Vitruvius does not always hold this manner of approaching a ruler in contempt: the author uses petere to entreat his ruler and readers in 1.1.18 to forgive the infelicities of his prose.


110 Cf., e.g., OLD entry 2 on salutare, of which ‘a.’ refers to calling and ‘b.’ to receiving callers. Both take an accusative object.
Would you know why the ungrateful reader praises and loves my works at home and unjustly decries them once past the threshold? I am not one to hunt for the votes of the fickle public at the cost of dinners and gifts of threadbare clothing. (Ep. 1.19.35–38)  

Horace’s professed independence from patronage relationships doubly confirms his abstention from political life. Conversely, the denial that Maecenas’ friendship is anything like political office, ‘this is dissimilar to that, because someone could not by right look askance at me that way on account of having you as a friend, as perhaps would be the case for an office’ (dissimile hoc ille est; quia non, ut forsit honorem | iure mihi invideat quisivis, ita te quoque amicum, S. 1.6.49–50), helps clear Horace of suspicions of ambitio as a client as well – Maecenas only chooses friends ‘at a distance from base self-seeking’ (prava | ambitione procul, S. 1.6.51–52). The negative connotations attached to the nouns ambitio and ambitus in Roman culture, which refer to vain and ostentatious display generally, as well as more specific activities relating to courting favours and seeking candidature, demonstrate that the stigma against aggressive self-advancement in Roman society was by no means limited to the less powerful.  

The pooling of activities around terms connected to petere and ambire suggests that Romans recognised similarities among diverse behaviours of self-advancement through postures of entreaty.

Birth and Character

De architectura’s sixth preface and S. 1.6 both have provoked scholarly commentary on the historical authors’ wealth, ancestry and status. Although such analyses are often beset by methodological problems, issues of self-representation are clearly crucial to both texts. Horace and Vitruvius

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111 Cf. also Ep. 2.2.99–103.
112 Deniaux 1987 studies the use of these terms in political discourse of the late Republic. On the leges de ambitus, see Wiseman 1971: 129–142.
113 Cf. the survey of scholarship on Vitruvius’ life in the Introduction to this chapter. The two ancient sources of information on Horace’s life are the poet himself and Suetonius’ Vita. Parts of the Vita paraphrase S. 1.6, but the detail that Horace was a scriba is unique to Suetonius’ account. See Williams 1995: 296. Studies focussed on the distinction between Horace’s poetic and historical selves include Armstrong 1986; Anderson 1995; Williams 1995; Oliensis 1998; Bowditch 2001; Gowers 2009. See also Taylor 1925; Fraenkel 1957: 14–15.
draw attention to these facets of their life histories, without revealing the particulars.\textsuperscript{114} Self-description as \textit{ignotus} may call attention to this intentional ambiguity: aspects of Horace’s and Vitruvius’ backgrounds are literally ‘unknown’ to the reader. One of the most controversial aspects of Horace’s ever-debated status and birth is his father’s slavery. S. 1.6 thrice refers to the poet as \textit{libertino patre natus} (S. 1.6.6; 45; 46).\textsuperscript{115} Bion’s F1A, as I have observed, characterises Bion’s father as a freedman, as well. Does this prototype furnish Horace with a means of addressing his own father’s status as a \textit{libertas}? Or, alternatively, does the parallel with Bion suggest that Horace, for literary reasons, assumes a generic persona at odds with his own experience? Horace’s playful use of the term \textit{ingenuus}, which appears eight times in his works (three of which are in S. 1.6), only adds to the ambiguity.\textsuperscript{116} Cognate with \textit{ingignere} (to instill by birth or nature), \textit{ingenuus} conveys ‘freeborn’ as well as more abstract meanings such as ‘frank’ or ‘generous’. The concept of \textit{ingenuitas} appears in Horace’s poetry in situations which draw attention to the fact that admirable character traits are not directly attributable to ancestry.\textsuperscript{117}

Vitruvius’ ancestry has been significantly less controversial than Horace’s, but his use of the word \textit{ingenuus} is as nuanced as the poet’s. Vitruvius praises the \textit{maiores} for enquiring of architects: ‘if they were well brought-up, considering that they should employ someone with noble shame, rather than an impudent rascal’ (\textit{si honeste essent educati, ingenuo pudori, non audaciae protervitatis permittendum iudicantes}, 6.praef.6). As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the occurrence of \textit{ingenuus} in \textit{De architectura}’s list of traits sought-after by architectural patrons convinced Rawson, among others, that Vitruvius was the son of free parents.\textsuperscript{118} Cicero’s comparable use of \textit{ingenuitas} as a quality which differentiates persons of varying occupations in \textit{De officiis} 1, however, suggests another

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\textsuperscript{114} Vitruvius’ and Horace’s earliest readers would perhaps have had greater access to information external to their works regarding their wealth and status.

\textsuperscript{115} Gordon Williams, who entitles his 1995 article ‘\textit{libertino patre natus} true or false?’, argues on the side of ‘true’, but suggests that the claim evokes a variety of meanings.

\textsuperscript{116} For example, \textit{Carm.} 3.24.55 describes a boy playing with a Greek hoop or dice (and thus exemplifying contemporary extravagance) as \textit{ingenuus}. In S. 2.3.186, \textit{ingenuus} is a character trait of a lion in comparison to an \textit{astuta vulpes} (crafty fox). (The fable-like analogy condemns unscrupulous actions on the part of the politically ambitious.) See also S. 1.6.8; S. 1.6.21; S. 1.6.91; \textit{Carm.} 1.27.16; \textit{Ep.} 1.19.34: \textit{Ars} 383.

\textsuperscript{117} Cf. Agnati 2000: 15–56, a chapter devoted to \textit{ingenuitas} in Horace. As Emily Gowers explains, ‘Horace challenges Maecenas’ boundaries by questioning the meaning of terms such as \textit{ingenuus, honestus} and \textit{nobilis} (all of which, thanks to Cicero and Sallust’s attempts to redefine them in favour of innate rather than inherited wealth were hotly contested terms)’. Cf. Gowers 2012: 215.

\textsuperscript{118} Rawson 1985: 86. Cf. also Rowland and Howe 1999: 2.
interpretation. In *Off. 1.103–104*, *ingenuus* (alongside *facetus* (clever)) describes urbane speech. Though Cicero at first portrays this type of conversation in qualitative terms (*Off. 1.103*), he ultimately situates it within the social hierarchy in a more pointed way, as characteristic of the *liber* and *dignus* (*Off. 1.104*). In each instance, *ingenuus* evokes a behavioural quality which is the correct expression of inborn traits, but which requires cultivation. Cicero’s characterisation of *ingenuus* speech influences our reading of his later declaration that ‘all who work with their hands are involved in a disreputable occupation; for the workshop cannot contain anything *ingenuus’* (*Opificesque onmes in sordida arte versantur; nec enim quicquam ingenuum habere potest officina, Off. 1.150*). It is not just slave birth that excludes workmen from *ingenuitas*; their employment within a workshop, an environment in which *ingenuitas* could not survive, reconfirms it. Vitruvius’ recourse to the concept of *ingenuitas* may, in a similar fashion, both call to mind free birth and evoke more specific aspects of behaviour beyond genealogy.

*Ingenuitas* only appears in proximity to *pudor* in *De architectura*’s sixth preface (6.praef.5; 6.praef.6). *Pudor* ‘primarily denotes a displeasure with oneself caused by vulnerability to just criticism of a socially diminishing sort,’ but its range of meanings is much wider. *Ingenuus pudor*, a frequently attested phrase in Roman texts, results in acts of deference, modesty or shame. Possession of *ingenuus pudor* forms a strong link

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119 *Off. 1.103*: ‘the type of joking ought not to be excessive or unrestrained, but *ingenuus* and clever’ (*genus iocandi non profusum nec immodestum, sed ingenuum et facetum esse debet*); 1.104: ‘Thus it is easy to tell the difference between an *ingenius* joke and a vulgar one: the one kind, if well-timed, for instance during a relaxed moment, is becoming to the most dignified person; the other surely is unfit for any free person, if the subject is base and the words obscene’ (*Facilis igitur est distinctio ingeni et inliberalis ioci. Alter est si tempore fit, ut si remisso animo, <gravissimo> homine dignus, alter ne libero quidem, si rerum turpitiudo adhibetur aut verborum obscenitas*).

120 For Cicero, the *ingenuitas* of *architecti* is not an issue: he approves of architecture, as well as medicine and the teaching of *rerum honestarum* (reputable things) as professions that are ‘reputable for those whose social position they suit’ (*quorum ordini conveniunt honestae, Off. 1.151*).

121 In *De architectura*, *pudor* is a quality sought by architectural patrons (6.praef.6) and an emotion registered on the face of a patron being approached inappropriately by an architect (6.praef.5).

122 Kaster 1997: 4. This description remains expedient, but see also his enhanced analysis of the term in Kaster 2005: 28–65. As his chapter’s title (*Fifty Ways to Feel Your Pudor*) and diagram (*Figure 2.1. Pudor-Scripts: A Partial Taxonomy*) make plain, this is a complex concept. Kaster 1997 cites Vitruvius’ use of *ingenuus pudor* within a footnote (n. 21); Kaster 2005 makes no mention of Vitruvius.

123 E.g. in the *Naturalis Historia*, *ingenuus pudor* means something like sportsmanship: Pliny the Elder claims that his practice of naming his authorities shows this quality, as does Zeuxis’ admission of Parrhasius’ superiority in their painting contest (*Nat. Praef.21; 35.65*). Valerius Maximus describes the ten lashings given as punishment to young boys as inflicting ‘a small wound to personal honour’ (*parvo irritamento ingenui pudoris, Mem. 9.10 ext. 2.9*).
between representations of the architect and his patron. Vitr. 6.praef.5 decries the activity of those soliciting commissions ‘since an *ingenuus* expression changes to shame when a request is made for something dodgy’ (*quod ingenuus color movetur pudore petendo rem suspiciosam*). This negative *exemplum* of poor behaviour on the part of an architect contrasts with the interaction between the architect Diognetus and his patrons in 10.16.7 (the only occurrence of the term *ingenuus* outside the sixth preface). Diognetus does not seek out commissions, but rather is himself approached by an embassy of young men (*ephebi*) and *ingenuae* virgins (10.16.7).

The patron of Vitr. 6.praef.5 reacts to overzealous architectural self-promoters by visibly registering the violation of propriety. This change of *color* is most likely the arousal of a blush, a customary expression of *pudor* across Latin texts. In Horace’s poetry, the blush signals a lapse of propriety in power relations. Horace’s potential blush at the ‘stupid gift’ of a portrait mask or encomiastic poem in *Ep. 2.1.264–267* (discussed previously) compares well with the changed *color* of Vitruvius’ pestered architectural patron. In addition, Horace, like Vitruvius, associates proper manners of approach and reception with the *ingenui*. The poet’s denial that he hunts for the votes of the fickle public at the cost of dinners and gifts of threadbare clothing (*Ep. 1.19.35–38*) is preceded by a protestation of his audience’s *ingenuitas*: ‘it delights me that I produce something new, and am read by the eyes and held in the hands of respectable types (*ingenuis*)’ (*Ep. 1.19.33–34*). We may also compare *Carm. 1.27.14–17*: ‘whichever earthly Venus rules (*domat*) over you, there’s no need to blush

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124 Vitruvius uses the noun *color* to refer to colour (as in a shade of pigment) or complexion. *Color* is also used of complexion in Vitr. 6.1.3 and 6.1.4. In Prop. 1.4.13, *ingenuus color* appears within a catalogue of features aside from mere physical beauty that set Propertius’ beloved apart: ‘This beauty is the least part of my frenzy; she has greater charms, Bassus, which I am glad to lose my head over: her well-bred complexion, her grace when she moves her limbs, and thrills I love to experience beneath the secrecy of the coverlet’ (*haec sed forma mei pars est extrema furoris; | sunt maiora, quibus, Base, perire iuvat: | ingenuus color et multis decus artibus, et quae | gaudia sub tacita duere veste libet*, Prop. 1.4.11–14). Baker 2000: 85 refers to the *ingenuus color* in Prop. 1.4 as a ‘gently-born lady’s glow’ and further comments: ‘In the sense of fair complexion, as belonging to someone of free birth, in contrast with the rougher, darker complexion of a slave girl. Cicero *In Pisonem* 1 shows that a swarthy complexion was associated with slaves.’

125 Kaster 2005; 32, Kaster 1997: 7–8 and Bradley 2004 discuss the blush as the natural response to *pudor*. Bradley 2004: 17–18 rightly points out that critics’ eagerness to see ambiguity in Virgil’s portrayal of Lavinia blushing (*A. 12.64–71*) ‘contradicts the Roman principle that one’s color should be an aid, rather than an obstacle to knowledge and understanding. Rather, Vergil’s reader was expected to draw upon an existing semiotic code of blushing; a poetic aesthetics of beauty, as well as the proper ethics of *pudor*.’ (Cf. also Hook 2000.) See also my discussion of the changing colours of Faberius’ walls in Chapter 5.
for the fire she kindles in you – you always fall for a respectable love-object (\textit{ingenuoque semper | amore peccas}).’ Even in this playful, romantic setting, \textit{ingenuitas} determines whether or not the power dynamic of a relationship should provoke a blush.

The presence of \textit{ingenuus pudor} in the list of traits sought after by ancestral patrons in 6.praef.6 implies something different from the simple fact of ‘free birth’. The \textit{ingenuus pudor} of Vitruvius’ ideal patron and architect, explicitly marked at 6.praef.5 and 6.praef.6, ensures their performance of appropriate behaviours – and therefore their maintenance of the correct balance of power. Such qualities, as we have seen throughout this chapter, are among the most prominent features of Vitruvius’ self-fashioning. In other Roman texts, it may be impossible to have \textit{ingenuus pudor} without free birth,\footnote{\textit{Status} connotations are, of course, inextricable. Kaster \textbf{1997: 17} comments that ‘slaves had no sense of \textit{pudor} at all, perhaps because they were not usually conceived as having an interior ethical life, and certainly because they could not suffer social diminution: in this respect the common phrase \textit{pudor ingenuus} – the \textit{pudor} characteristic of the freeborn – is a tautology.’ Quintilian exploits this aspect to create a double entendre: ‘if you had consumed your father’s goods, you would be justly disowned: you have consumed liberty and noble shame. Who is that higher being whom you serve?’ (\textit{Si bona paterna consumpsisses, iure abdicareris: libertatem et ingenuum pudorem consumpsti}. \textit{Quis <est> melior ille cui servis?}, Decl. 298.10).} but Vitruvius’ definition of the \textit{nobiles} as those who attain political patronage (rather than those who have noble birth or hold political office) demonstrates his interest in defining terms along relational, rather than situational, lines. This interest should make us wary of commenting on the historical Vitruvius’ genealogy. Ultimately, Vitruvius, like Horace, conceals the particulars of his birth in order to strengthen his contention that behaviour is a better indication of character than birth alone.\footnote{Horace’s and Vitruvius’ self-identification with \textit{ingenuitas} might also imply that an innate superiority allowed them to rise on their own merit. Such an interpretation cannot be treated at length here.}

One interpretation of the similarities presented thus far would stress the cultural pervasiveness of certain modes of self-fashioning in first-century Roman culture. If Horace and Vitruvius, despite many differences between their texts and, arguably, their personal circumstances, chose to define their authorial personae in such similar terms, it appears that the views they express are not specific to a particular echelon or set within Roman society. According to this line of argument, other authors from across the social spectrum, whose works are now lost, quite possibly represented themselves using the common template sketched here. The remainder of this chapter will argue, on the contrary, that
parallelism in Horace’s and Vitruvius’ authorial personae stem from characteristically apparitorial concerns.

Horace and Vitruvius: Apparitores

Horace and Vitruvius belonged to the class and station of *apparitores* (public servants attending magistrates). Among the *apparitores* were those serving as *scribae* (scribes), *lictores* (lictors), *viatores* (messengers) and *praecones* (heralds). Apparitorial titles are amply attested, but the duties associated with them often evade classification. Some *apparitores* took on bureaucratic and administrative roles; for others, the post was a sinecure. While the magistrates they served usually occupied yearlong positions, *apparitores* could hold office year after year: an *apparitor* owed his initial appointment to a particular patron, but after serving him would remain on-hand to assist other men of the same rank. Each was affiliated with an association, like a *collegium*, called a *decuria*, which facilitated and regulated his appointments.

The *apparitores* were a mixed bag of the rich and not so rich, freeborn and freedmen, equestrians and plebs. The occupation developed rapidly during the Augustan age and provided unprecedented opportunities for upward mobility to the well educated. Most of the *apparitores* known to us were freedmen, but no apparitorial grade was exclusively libertine: each *decuria* had freeborn men as well as former slaves within it. Though the social status of an *apparitor* was generally sub-equestrian, some attained equestrian status after resigning from office. Employment as an *apparitor* thus cannot confirm Horace’s claim to be the son of a freedman – or the counter-proposition that he was an equestrian before meeting

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128 For ampler discussion of *apparitores* in the late Republic and early Empire, see Purcell 1983 and Cohen 1984, who survey the legal, epigraphical and literary evidence. Cf. also Mommsen 1848.

129 Purcell 1983: 127; 138–142.


131 Some *scribae* attained equestrian status. Armstrong 1986 argues for Horace’s concurrent equestrian and scribal statuses. In the works of both Horace and Vitruvius, the intractable 400,000 sesterces required to attain equestrian status have a marked presence. Horace laments in his first epistle, ‘You have intellect, you have morals, eloquence and loyalty, but you are six or seven thousand short of the four hundred [thousand]; you will be in the crowd (*plebis eris*)’ (Ep. 1.1.57–59). Cf. Vitr. 10.praef.2: ‘For those who can provide 400,000 sesterces and have to add 100,000 are content to be so bound in the hope of completing the work.’


133 Cohen 1984: 49–51 suggests that *apparitores* may have been an *ordo* to themselves, in light of the evidence for procedures and qualifications for apparitorial appointment, as well as their enjoyment of rights and duties and their organisation into *decuriae*.
Maecenas. It cannot arbitrate the dispute between Horatian readers like C. O. Brink, to whom the poet of the satires appears ‘poor and unknown’, and David Armstrong, who notices plenty of indications of the poet’s ‘secure and gentlemanly status’ in S. 1.6. It offers little indication of the particulars of Vitruvius’ birth and elevation within society to supplement the author’s own cagey remarks. Aspects of Horace’s and Vitruvius’ authorial self-fashioning, however, may reflect the very ambiguity and inclusiveness of the apparitorial station.

Horace and Vitruvius probably held the title of scriba, the highest paid, socially superior apparitorial post. Vitruvius’ claim to have received commoda (a salary) as a result of military services suggests that he held an apparitorial office. The preface to the first book explains,

> Itaque cum M. Aurelio et P. Minidio et Gn. Cornelio ad apparationem ballistarum et scorpionum reliquorumque tormentorum refectionem fui praesto et cum eis commoda accepi ...

Therefore, with M. Aurelius and P. Minidius and Cn. Cornelius, I was put in charge of the construction and repair of ballistae and scorpiones and other engines of war and, along with these men, received a salary. (Vitr. 1.praef.2)

Reference to this group of four experts connects the author to the larger context of the decuriae and suggests, more specifically, that he was a scribe with expertise in military engineering, a decuralis scriba armamentarius.

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136 Apparitores could be found among the equestrians, the plebs and everywhere in between. Cf. Purcell 1983.
138 Purcell 1983: 156. One does not have to follow Novara 2005 and Gros 1994: 84, who propose that the treatise served as a culminating act of scribal officium, to see that, as Masterson 2004: 392 has recognised, ‘the body of expert knowledge Vitruvius is elaborating in De architectura is marked by its apparitorial origin’. In consideration of the role literary composition most likely played in their financial relationships with Augustus, however, the parallel protestations of not wanting to bother the princeps with their writings while he is busy (Ep. 2.1.1–4 and Vitr. 1.praef.1) seem to rely on a similar irony. However tongue-in-cheek their tone, these two passages suggest desire on the authors’ part to disguise the fact that these writings are imperial negotium, services contributing to the creation and celebration of empire and to the writers’ own personal gain, as well. While Feeney 2002: 173 has read verbs such as ornare and emendare as configuring the princeps as a textual critic, here we may also see Horace bringing Augustus down to his level by characterising the princeps as a professional, dirtying his hands in negotium and commoda. Purcell does not elaborate on his provocative statement that ‘the cultural overtones of the scribal profession suit Vitruvius’ literary manner well’ (1983: 156) or include Vitruvius in his extensive treatment of
Horace, on the other hand, is not so forthcoming about his office. Were it not for the explicit mention in the Suetonian Vita, ‘when his party was vanquished, he was pardoned and purchased the position of a quaestor’s scribe’ (victisque partibus venia impetrata scriptum quaestorium comparavit, 1), the trail of hints surrounding his scribal position, which many have traced through his poetry, might be completely indiscernible.¹³⁹ The combined weight of the Vita and his poetic allusions, however, has created scholarly consensus surrounding Horace’s position as a scribe, even if his period of office remains controversial.¹⁴⁰

At least a tenth of the scribes known to us received conspicuous benefits from senatorial patronage – for example, monetary gifts to help them achieve the equestrian census, posts in units stationed in the provinces or posts as praefecti fabrum.¹⁴¹ For these advantages, scribes were often ‘damned . . . as anomalous parvenus’.¹⁴² Might Horace’s and Vitruvius’ claims of diffidence, including the denial of political ambition and greed for wealth, respond to a strain of negative attitudes to specific kinds of upward mobility within Roman society that targeted apparitores as particularly prone to trying to rise above their rightful stations? Horatian and Vitruvian personae, according to this view, express gratitude for their schooling in S.¹⁴³ and De architectura’s sixth preface to assure their readers that they are among the ‘well-educated’ – not the ‘nouveaux riches’. Denials that they serve as clients in their artes advance a related claim: simply because they have held an apparitorial position, easily characterised as that of a client serving a magisterial patron, does not mean that they perform a similar role within their poetic or architectural practices.¹⁴³

Romans frequently condemned scribes as ambitious upstarts.¹⁴⁴ Both authors’ works confront potential criticisms of themselves by overtly

the cultural life of Roman scribes (Purcell 2001), but comparison with Horace proves just how apt he is in this conjecture.

¹³⁹ For instance, some consider the familiar address Quinte (the only use of Horace’s praenomen in his poetry) of some scribes to their supposed fellow in S. 2.6.37 a reference to his office (e.g. Brink 1982: 295; cf. also his n. 52).


¹⁴² Architectus does not appear in conjunction with scribe in extant Roman inscriptions. In the literary record, only Cicero writes of apparitor, scriba and architectus in proximity, stirring up the Romans’ perennial fear of kings by painting a picture of the decemviri availing themselves of such costly assistants, whose aid will enhance their unchecked power. See Agr. 2.32. Cf. Jonkers 1963: 73–75; Fleury 2011: 16 n. 25. Fleury also draws attention to Fron. Ag. 100, in which those overseeing the administration of public waters are equipped with assistants including scribes and architecti.

¹⁴³ On scribal status and social mobility, see Purcell 2001: 664–670; David 2007.
acknowledging the contested status of *scribae* – and joining in the mockery. Vitruvius and Horace ridicule *scribae* in order to dissociate themselves from others of their station charged with ambition and self-promotion. Vitruvius’ anecdote of Faberius *scriba*, discussed further in Chapter 5, for instance, serves as an incisive critique of the conspicuous consumption of wealthy *scribae* (7.9.2). *Scribae* behaving badly appear multiple times in Horace’s satires (S. 1.5.35 and 66; S. 2.5.56). In Horace’s S. 2.5.55–56, a *scriba* of low morals is described as warmed-over (*recoctus*) from a lower post. Social promotion, repeated too often, becomes overcooked and unsavoury. In S. 1.5, the social aspirations of *scribae* are twice the butt of the joke. Horace pokes fun at Sarmentus the lackey *scurrus* (S. 1.5.52), who, though now a scribe (S. 1.5.66), is unable to find a way to argue against charges that he ran away, rather than being manumitted. At Fundi, Horace and his friends get their kicks from laughing at the pretensions of the *insanus scriba* Aufidius Luscus (S. 1.5.35). His faux-aristocratic comportment includes ‘a bordered toga, broad stripe, and pan of charcoal’ (*praetexta et latus clavus prunaeque vatillum*, S. 1.5.36). While it would have been acceptable for Aufidius Luscus to wear a purple-bordered toga, the *latus clavus* was restricted to Roman senators.

Horace’s and Vitruvius’ rejections of political ambition take on sharper meaning in the context of their scribal offices. While *apparitores* were not eligible for magistracies during their posts, some subsequently campaigned and several, at least, were successful at attaining senatorial office. Wealth accumulated while in service to a magistrate might easily finance a future political career. Vitruvius’ and Horace’s conspicuous lack of political ambition could be seen as a sign of their humility or a conveniently disavowable type of ambition, brandished to detract attention from their

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145 *Scribae* are not the only apparitorial targets in Horace’s poetry. Cf., e.g., Horace’s allusions to the disrepute of *praecones* (criers) in S. 1.6.85–87 and S. 2.2.46–48. Both these targets are close to home: Horace associates *praecones* with *coactores*, his father’s profession, in S.1.6.85–87. Horace does mention *scribae* without overt ridicule (cf. Celsus Albinovanus in Ep. 1.8 and the assiduous throng in S. 2.6.36).

146 What purpose the charcoal served is unknown. It seems to have had ancestral connotations. Brown 2007: 144 mentions Commentator Cruquianus’ suggestion that it would have been used to offer incense in honour of guests’ arrival.

147 Cf. Liv. 34.7. In light of the caveat Vout 1996 provides concerning the infrequency of occasions on which the Romans wore togas, Aufidius Luscus’ absurdly ceremonial dress seems particularly laughable.

148 Cf. Purcell 1983: 157–161 on the political opportunities available to former scribes, which dwindled after the end of the Republic.
social ascendancy. However, instead of a red herring or distraction from the issues at hand, denial of political ambition – in other words, the claim not to be an Aufidius Luscus – seems essential to the articulation of an innocuous apparitorial persona.

Cicero’s second oration against Verres attests to the controversial nature of scribal status: foreseeing that his detractors will interject that the rank is honourable (ordo est honestus) in response to his criticisms of scribae, Cicero urges his listeners to discern between scribes ‘who are deserving of that rank’ (qui digni sunt illo ordine) and those ‘who have collected the paltry sum [necessary to pay the initial fee] by begging’ (qui nummulis corrogatis, Ver. 3.183–184). Cicero’s representation of scribal status associates soliciting (corrogare) with dishonour; this, of course, accords well with the Horatian and Vitruvian denunciations traced previously.

Cornelius Nepos’ Eumenes presents a different viewpoint on the reputation of first-century scribae. The Romans of Eumenes, dismissive and sweeping in their judgement, hold scribae in contempt. But, like Cicero, Nepos presents opinions of scribae as polarised. Nepos unfavourably compares the scribae found among his own countrymen with honorificentius (more honourable) Greek ones:

Namque apud nos, re vera sicut sunt, mercenarii scribae existimantur; at apud illos e contrario nemo ad id officium admittitur nisi honesto loco, et fide et industria cognita, quod necesse est omnium consiliorum eum esse participem.

Among us, scribes are considered mercenaries, as in fact they are; but [in Greece], on the contrary, no one is accepted for such a position unless he is of respectable birth and of proven loyalty and diligence, since he is necessarily privy to all his superior’s plans. (Eum. 1)

Sharp antithesis (at apud illos e contrario) between Greek and Roman transforms the matter-of-fact characterisation of Roman scribae as mercenarii into a dismissive slur. Thus, both Cicero and Nepos, anticipating

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149 For Masterson, abstinence from political activities defines Vitruvius’ authorial persona as emphatically not a member of the elite. But acknowledging that such a refusal would seem to contradict the preface’s aim of social advancement, he ultimately credits Vitruvius’ humility … a limit to his social aspirations’. Masterson 2004: 398 n. 12. Oliensis likewise claims that lack of interest in political office provides Horace with a ‘readily disavowable form of ambition to divert attention from the leap in status that he is in the process of taking’. Oliensis 1998: 31.

150 The old adage ‘it takes money to make money’ applies well to the apparitorial world: apparitores paid fees to take up their position, but were handsomely rewarded during service. Though the payment of fees is well attested, there is insufficient evidence to establish the recipient of these fees (the decuriae? the state?). See Purcell 1983: 139. On Cicero’s representation of scribae in the Verrines, see David 2007.
readers’ blanket assessments of the class, drive a wedge between two distinct subgroups. Vitruvius’ bifurcation of architecti in the preface to Book 6 has several similarities to these dual classifications of scribae, suggesting that the mode of judgement employed in his contemporaries’ assessments of apparitores shaped Vitruvius’ conception of the proper architect, as well.

In these descriptions, Cicero, Nepos and Vitruvius foreground the issue of uncertain and unsteady social status, without making definitive claims. Each uses the socially loaded, yet ambiguous, adjective honestus. The technical meaning of honestus as freeborn must be a connotation, if not denotation, implied in Cicero’s ordo est honestus and Nepos’ honestus locus, as well as in Vitruvius’ statement that architects should be honeste educatus. Ultimately, however, all three authors shy away from classifications based on birth. Behaviour is the true test. The standards by which Vitruvius distinguishes between unapproved and approved architects (those who rogare et ambire and those who are themselves rogatus) are very close to Nepos and Cicero’s differentiations of scribae. All three authors make the case that eager profit-seeking degrades members of a professional class.

Conclusion

Vitruvius infuses a compendium of age-old wisdom with a network of comments on himself and his readership that belongs squarely to the contemporary Roman world. De architectura, exhibiting its author’s education and old-fashioned values, may well be, as many have argued, an attempt to redefine the status of the architect.\textsuperscript{151} Vitruvius’ self-fashioning, however, reflects not just a narrow, architectural milieu, but rather concerns shared among a wider subset of upwardly mobile Romans in the first century B.C.E. The contours of his moral code, expressed through just performance of the roles of both patron and client, demonstrate that his authorial persona is no facile re-enactment of the Greek tradition. Comparison between Vitruvius and Horace weakens the apparent uniqueness of each author’s values and encourages scepticism of the frank, personal tone with which they are expressed.

Meaningful similarities between Horatian and Vitruvian self-fashioning include their celebration of education, their repudiation of both political

\textsuperscript{151} Conte 1994: 388, for example, explains that ‘in Vitruvius’ proems it is easy to perceive the need he felt to bestow upon the architect the social and cultural prestige that ancient society customarily denied to the technical disciplines’. 
ambition and *avaritia*, and their promotion of the idea that behaviour, not just birth, should serve as an indicator of character and status. Both authors define themselves in contrast to well-developed stereotypes of self-promoters greedy for financial gain and social advancement. Vitruvius’ and Horace’s testimony suggests that, for men of their status, actions and behaviours within the economy of favours played a crucial role in the formulation of identity. Recognition of Roman prejudices against *scribae* provoked a similar response in both authors: the disavowal of interest in the social, financial and political opportunities associated with apparitorial posts.

Considered alongside the agricultural works that are *De architectura*’s predecessors in (extant) Latin technical prose, Vitruvius’ studied attention to the quality and character of his professional profile, as well as to his intellectual activities (as detailed in Chapter 1), reads as special pleading. Neither Cato the Elder in his *De agri cultura* nor Varro in his *Res Rusticae* presents the author’s personal qualifications or the perfection of his text so baldly. Their authorial personae are more oblique. Thus, while Brendon Reay offers a productive reading of Cato’s *De agri cultura* as an exercise in Roman aristocratic self-fashioning,152 we should keep in mind that statements about Cato’s life and upbringing gleaned from rhetorical fragments are crucial to deriving this interpretation from a text that eschews the personal. Vitruvius, as we have seen, incorporates such details within *De architectura* itself. Varro’s *Res Rusticae*, meanwhile, takes the form of a dialogue, in which the character Varro, far from an unquestioned authority, is often gently mocked.153 Like Vitruvius, Varro enumerates his Greek and Roman sources. Unlike Vitruvius, he actively encourages his dedicatee to consult these volumes, in case he may have neglected a subject of importance (*R. 1.1.7–8*).

Another striking element of *De architectura*, in contrast to *De agri cultura* and *Res Rusticae*, is the extent to which Vitruvius deemphasises, or otherwise obscures, the practicability of his chosen subject matter by his readers. Vitruvius’ preference for impersonal passives in his technical instructions produces a sense of exclusion.154 By contrast, Cato addresses his audience in the second person frequently, often using imperatives. Varro, alluding to his impending death in the preface to *Res Rusticae* 1,

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153 On Varro’s authorial persona, see Green 1997; Bodel 2012; Green 2012.
154 See discussion of Vitruvius’ general avoidance of the second person (beyond the prefaces) in Chapter 1.
not only de-accentuates his own importance, but also empowers his young wife Fundania, the dedicatee: Fundania, embarking upon the management of her estate, will be able to function just fine in the absence of her husband. The proffered reading list and Res Rusticae, Varro’s version of assistance beyond the grave, will be sufficient guides (R. 1.1.7–8). These gestures of inclusion make tangible an intended purpose of Varro’s and Cato’s works: to facilitate the productive use of this assembled wisdom by others.

When, in the preface to Book 6, Vitruvius commends those patres familiarum who have been managing their own architectural projects, the tone is bitter and sarcastic. It is worth quoting the passage in full:

Cum autem animadverto ab indoctis et inperitis tantae disciplinae magnitudinem iactari et ab is qui non modo architecturae sed omnino ne fabricae quidem notitiam habent, non possum non laudare patres familiarum eos qui litteraturae fiducia confirmati per se aedificantes ita iudicant: si inperitis sit committendum, ipsos potius digniores esse ad suam voluntatem quam ad alienam pecuniae consumere summam. Itaque nemo artem ullam aliam conatur domi facere, uti sutrinam, fullonicam aut ex ceteris quae sunt faciliores, nisi architecturam, ideo quod qui profinentur, non arte vera, sed falsa nominantur architecti. Quas ob res corpus architecturae rationesque eius putavi diligentissime conscribendas, opinans id munus omnibus gentibus non ingratum futurum.

When, moreover, I observe that such a great discipline is being bragged about by the ignorant and unskilled, and by those who are lacking knowledge not only of architecture but indeed of construction, I cannot refrain from praising those heads of households who, emboldened by confidence in their own learning, decide to build for themselves: [considering that] if it should be placed in the hands of the unskilled, they themselves are worthy enough to spend the extent of their capital to their own inclination, rather than to that of someone else. This being the case, no one attempts to practise any other art at home, such as shoe-making, or fulling, or others that are easier, with the exception of architecture, for the reason that those who profess themselves to be architects are so called not by reason of a true art, but a false one. On account of this, I considered it necessary to record the body of architecture and its system of reckoning with the greatest diligence, believing it would be a contribution, that would not be thankless, to all peoples. (6.praef.6–7)

The praise bestowed on these patres familiarum rewards an act of discernment; namely, the recognition that the difference in emphasis that separates their own educations from the education of an ideal architect is far easier to negotiate than the intellectual chasm that divides indocti et inperiti
architects from true ones. Vitruvius, in other words, has much more in common with the Roman homeowner reading his treatise than either of them do with the common architect off the street.

While suggesting a kind of equality between himself and the *pater familias*, however, Vitruvius stops short of eliding the two. Across the treatise, this is a consistent strategy. After all, even as Vitruvius, in Book 1, develops his architectural curriculum on the model of the Ciceronian orator’s, he maintains distinctions between them: architects receive advanced training in the sciences and engineering – and skip rhetoric.\(^{155}\)

What is more, Vitruvius does not argue (directly, at least) for the inclusion of the academic subject of architecture in the elite curriculum.

It comes as a surprise, given how laboriously Vitruvius has promoted the status of *architectura* as a highly complex and learned art, that he would suggest any kind of commensurability between the art of architecture and the lowly trades of *fullonica* (laundry) and *sutrina* (shoe-making). To say that these activities are *faciores* than the art of *architectura*, as described in the treatise, is an understatement. Though intended as a dig at low-skilled architects, the likening of any architect whatsoever to a dry cleaner or a cobbler is potentially fraught, given the proximity of *architectura* to such occupations in some channels of ancient discourse. Cicero, after all, suggests that architecture, like medicine, is related to the pleasure-enabling employment of the dancer or cook, albeit more respectable (for those of a certain station) and more beneficial to society (*Off.* 1.151). By raising the subject of architecture’s relationship to lower-skilled trades, Vitruvius confronts the liminal status of his discipline head-on and dismisses it as a misunderstanding generated by the presence of impostors.

Vitruvius’ promotion of his treatise as *munus non ingratum* for *omnes gentes* is one of the most famous statements in *De architectura*.\(^{156}\) What is often overlooked, however, is that the world in which *De architectura* is such a *munus* is an imperfect world, where ignorant and untrained architects roam the land. If the problem of architectural charlatans could be solved, the need for laymen to manage building projects for themselves would disappear. Vitruvius’ approval of D.I.Y. in the sixth preface is soaked in flippancy directed at unfit architects who tarnish the reputation of the profession.

\(^{155}\) See further discussion in the *Introduction* and *Chapter 4*.

\(^{156}\) Cf. Gros 1994. On the concept of the *munus* and the dynamics of reciprocity between literary patron and author, particularly in the works of Catullus and Cicero, see Stroup 2010: 66–100.
In the way that he positions both author and audience, Vitruvius is an important model for Frontinus, writing in the first century CE. In his *De aquis*, a text detailing Rome’s system of aqueducts, Frontinus is loquacious on the subject of his own personal qualities (including *diligentia* and *fides*) and his official duties as water commissioner (1); on the actions of his readers, he is taciturn: the second person very rarely appears.\footnote{157 On Frontinus’ self-fashioning, see König 2007; Fögen 2009: 265–289. See also references in Chapter 1. Celsus does not use the second person. On Celsus’ authorial voice, see especially the work of Heinrich von Staden, e.g., von Staden 1994.} Lest we read Vitruvius’ egotism, relative to Varro and Cato, as a foregone conclusion of his lower status, we should recall that Frontinus, who shares the strategy, was one of the most successful senators of his era, and thus a member of the highest elite. In Vitruvius and Frontinus, we see the culmination of a model of Roman authorship in which the technical text is a kind of blunt instrument for defining and advancing authorial power.\footnote{158 On issues of subjectivity and objectivity in scientific and technical literature, including the use of *ego*, see Hine 2009. There is now vibrant conversation on egocentricism across the works of Galen. See Barton 1994: esp. 139; J. König 2009; Nutton 2009; Totelin 2012.} Despite references to their audiences, Frontinus’ and Vitruvius’ elaboration of their advanced qualifications make it clear that their literary programmes are far more about projecting the author’s superiority than they are about smoothing the path to expertise in the field for others.

The argument that Vitruvius and Frontinus expound upon their professions because they held official posts related to the topics of their books is ultimately circular. The important question is why such a model of authoritative authorship grounded in practice emerged at all, and how such authors simultaneously engaged with the competing model of authorship grounded in scholarship. In Chapters 1 and 2, I have demonstrated some of the ways in which Vitruvius sustains this balancing act. In Chapter 3, I argue that Vitruvius’ authorial self-fashioning extends far beyond the explicitly self-referential material discussed here and, in fact, leaves a notable imprint on his discussion of houses. I situate *De architectura* within a long literary tradition, imported to Rome as early as Plautus, in which the house serves as a potent symbol of its owner. In light of such precedents, it comes as no surprise that Vitruvius considered domestic architecture particularly fertile ground for the elaboration of ideas about social and political status – or moral worth.
The grandeur of a house should correlate to the status of its proprietor. This is the single most influential idea that Vitruvius has bequeathed to our understanding of elite Roman culture. Consider Vitruvius’ argument in Book 1 for correspondence between the character of a Roman house and its owner’s social, political and professional roles:

Namque aliter urbanas domos oportere constitui videtur, aliter quibus ex possessionibus rusticis influunt fructus; non item feneratoribus, aliter beatis et delicatis; potentibus vero quorum cogitationibus res publica gubernatur, ad usum conlocabuntur . . .

Surely urban houses should be built in one way; in another way those of people whose earnings come from rural estates; not the same for money-lenders; in another way for the rich and hoity-toity; as for the powerful, whose ideas control the state, certainly [houses] must be adjusted to their purposes. (1.2.9)

The houses of politicians perform special functions and therefore have special needs. Vitruvius continues in this vein in Book 6, which presents the classification of dwelling types as a crescendo of size and elegance (6.5.2). At the conclusion of this rehearsal, he suggests that the houses of the nobles should exhibit magnificentia in proportion to the maestas of their owners:

nobilibus vero, qui honores magistratusque gerundo praestare debent officia civibus, faciunda sunt vestibula regalia, alta atria et peristylia amplissima, silvae ambulationesque laxiores ad decorem maestatis perfectae; praeterea bybliothecas, pinacothecas, basilicas non dissimili modo quam publicorum operum magnificentia comparatas . . .

For the nobles who must hold offices and magistracies and whose duty it is to serve the state, there must be princely vestibules, lofty halls and very spacious peristyles, woods and broad walkways completed in a majestic manner; and furthermore, libraries, picture galleries and basilicas arranged in a similar style, with magnificentia comparable to public structures. (6.5.2)
One does not have to look far to find these passages excerpted in textbooks and cultural studies of the Roman house or of Augustan Rome as evidence that the Romans had a class-based sliding scale for evaluating the appropriateness of domestic construction. Vitruvius is the designated spokesman for normative statements of widespread Roman values.

Nevertheless, Vitruvius’ seeming endorsement of domestic magnificence can appear at odds with traditional Roman views on magnificentia, as well as moral injunctions found across the author’s own treatise. For example, in Book 7, he states:

Quod enim antiqui insumentes laborem et industriam probare contendebant artibus, id nunc coloribus et eorum eleganti specie consecuntur, et quam subtilitas artificis adieciat operibus auctoritatem, nunc dominicus sumptus efficit ne desideretur.

That which without question the earlier generation, expending labour and diligence, strove to demonstrate through artistry, now is achieved through colours and their elegant appearance, and that authority which buildings once gained by the fineness of their craftsmanship, now is not missed on account of what the patron’s lavish expenditure accomplishes. (7.5.7)

Vitruvius contrasts the restraint of the antiqui with the extravagance of the present in a declinist lament for crumbling architectural standards. How can Vitruvius, in Book 7, exploit the righteous fury of Roman moralising against expensive domestic construction and decoration when, in Book 6, he has advocated one of its cardinal sins: the incorporation of both the forms and the majesty of public buildings into private space?

Vitruvius’ contemporaries voiced suspicions of magnificent houses loudly and often. They contrasted the piety of buildings constructed for public purposes with the extravagance of houses serving the interests of private individuals. Since association with the political sphere justified grandeur, evidence of public functions could neutralise connotations of luxury. Vitruvius appears to adopt this Roman mind-set when he

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1 The conception of private architectural construction as an affront to public works is one of the most common elements of Roman domestic moralising. Examples include Hor. Carm. 2.15 (discussed presently) and Var. R. 3.2.3–4. See Zanker 1988: 135–136; Edwards 1993: 157–159.

2 This represents the convergence of two ideas: firstly, the elevation of public over private interests and, secondly, the useful as antithetical to the luxurious. (Edwards 1993: 157, however, points out the flaw in this Roman rationale: houses are, of course, always serving private interests, as well.) Nevertheless, few Roman authors present utilitas vel sim. as the sole purpose of a home. Cicero may suggest that usus (serviceableness) be the finis (goal) of household design, but he qualifies this dictum with a nod to the importance of ‘attention to aptness and dignity’ (commoditatis dignitatisque diligentia, Off. 1.138). This phrase, because he introduces it with et tamen, indicates provisions not necessarily implied – and more likely denied – by usus (Off. 1.138). Vitruvius also includes
encourages the *potentes* or *nobiles*, who govern the state, to emulate public buildings in their domestic design: after all, the treatise specifies that these houses fulfil state functions (1.2.9; 6.5.2), including private and public trials (6.5.2). Furthermore, Vitruvius specifies that those of middling station (qui communi sunt fortuna) have no need of enormous houses — they spend their days visiting other men’s houses, not entertaining company in their own (6.5.1). According to this reading, the author’s support for glamorous homes, when viewed as approval of grandeur for politicians alone, does not contradict his moralising; rather, it forms part of it.

But could the alignment of increasing splendour with increasing status ever justify, to Roman eyes, the level of grandeur that Vitruvius espouses? Or, on the contrary, does boundless private construction necessarily signify boundless ambition? After all, *De architectura*’s domestic descriptions include the modifiers *regalis* and *magnificus*, which other Roman authors level against so-called ambitious builders, men whose sprawling houses exhibit their limitless ambition and greed (6.5.2). In the mouths of other Romans, these words are slurs, but Vitruvius includes them within passages of an advisory and even hortatory character, as terms of approbation.

In an important article, Elisa Romano recognises the treatise’s varying approach to domestic luxury and construes it as the result of composition in two stages during a period of cultural change. She argues that *De architectura*, written during the transition from republic to principate, preserves valuable evidence for the evolution of the very notion of domestic luxury. She dates passages in support of *magnificus* dwellings to the late Republic, when the houses of political strongmen swelled to *dignitas* alongside *usu* as important aspects of domestic construction: ‘The other phase of allocation will be when buildings are suitably disposed for the use of owners or in accordance with their level of wealth or erected with a dignity that speaks to eloquence’ (*Alter gradus erit distributionis, cum ad usum patrum familiarum et ad pecuniae copiam aut ad eloquentiae dignitatem aedificia apte disponentur*, 1.2.9). Varro claims that *utilitas* and *elegantia* are the two *metae* (goals) to be sought in the design of clothing, housing, table-vessels, etc. (*L.* 8.16.31).

Roman trials were normally held outdoors, within a forum, basilica or other public space. See Vasaly 1993, esp. 153–159. Vitruvius may here be referring to the houses of the triumvirs. Coarelli 1989: 178 explains, ‘viene spontaneo pensare, inevitabilmente, a operazioni del tipo dei cosiddetti “patti di Lucca” che portarono alla lottizzazione del potere politico tra Cesare, Pompeo e Crasso (operazioni che si moltiplicarono in seguito e che, per la loro stessa natura, potevano trovar sede solo in ambito privato).’ Cicero defended King Deiotarus at a trial held in Caesar’s house.

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*Romano 1994.*
accommodate their political functions (1.2.6; 1.2.9; 6.5). Following Filippo Coarelli, she argues that Vitruvius’ potentes (1.2.9) are a very particular few, a group of men who amassed unheard-of power, headquartered within the walls of palatial homes. (De architectura, in other words, is an apology for the triumvirs.) Vitruvius, she explains, then added sections to De architectura decrying luxury in the early Augustan years in order to echo Augustus’ encouragement of the Roman people to follow his own princely example by inhabiting more modest abodes (7.5; 10.praef.1–2). Whether or not one accepts Romano’s model of dual-stage composition, her argument nicely captures the tensions and competing pressures inherent to authorship – as well as the contrasting models of propriety in domestic display – during the transition from Republic and Empire.

In this chapter, I argue that the Roman discourse of domestic luxury, although undeniably influenced by social, political and architectural changes, maintained some surprisingly consistent characteristics from the middle Republic to the early Empire. Vitruvius, as we shall see, was not alone in espousing contrasting views.

In Romano’s view, the treatise’s specifications for the homes of the nobles (1.2.9; 6.5,2), which repeatedly encourage magnificencia, completely contradict contemporary Roman norms and can be most easily compared with Cicero’s polemic against Clodius in Dom. 116. See Romano 1994: 70. On Cicero’s clever manipulation of the tropes of domestic moralising in De domo sua, see Berg 1997.

Both Romano’s pairing of Off. 1.138–140 with Vitr. 6.5 and her interpretation of Vitruvius’ and Horace’s statements on magnificentia as diametrically opposed – with Cicero urging restraint while Vitruvius encourages luxury – also feature in Gros 1978a and Coarelli 1989 (as well as Dwyer 1991). Neither Romano 1994: 68 (who refers to the similarities as ‘coincidenze’) nor Coarelli 1989: 179 (who calls the parallels ‘notevoli analogie’), however, posits borrowing or allusion on the part of Vitruvius. Romano 1994 argues that Vitruvius’ interest in preserving a correspondence between the grandeur of a house and the status of its owner is, like Cicero’s, a pre-Augustan attitude. Horace’s (later) denunciation of lavish mansions in Carm. 2.15, on the other hand, provides Romano with proof that Vitruvius adopted a moralising pose to please the prince. She contends that the architect’s wholehearted support of private architecture, inspired by his relationship with Julius Caesar, proves ‘l’isolamento delle opinioni di Vitruvio’ from Cicero, Horace and other first-century writers.


On Cicero’s waffle, see discussion to follow.

controversy, including large scale, adornment with precious materials, Hellenising architectural forms and art display. But the definition of excess was a subjective and variable product of persuasion, not an identifiable or enforceable standard.

Uncertainty and debate regarding domestic display is evident from the varied tones with which the Romans voiced these critiques. Moralising against domestic architecture could form part of a political smear campaign, as seen in Pompey’s disparagement of Lucullus’ building projects. Or, it could be more jocular: in De oratore, ‘I can see your villa from the Esquiline gate’ (a porta Esquilina video villam tuam) is a bit of light banter among friends.

Vitruvius has been considered insensible to the manipulable and contextually variable character of Roman domestic criticism. This chapter, however, reveals that Vitruvius was indeed appreciative of the nuances of domestic display as a social performance. De architectura thus can and should be read within the tradition of what John Henderson has called the ‘moral topos in which manors make manners make Man’.

My argument unfolds in two stages. First, by surveying the discourse of domestic luxury in early Roman texts, I demonstrate that Vitruvius belongs to a richer and longer discourse of domestic moralising than has previously been identified. Scholars have paid particular attention to engagement with the model of Greek diatribe and Stoic philosophy by Roman authors of the late Republic and early Empire—whether to highlight, deemphasise or deny it. Yet they have largely overlooked

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13 See further discussion of Pompey’s reference to Lucullus as Xerxes togatus in Chapter 4.

14 In other words, your home in the country is so large that I can see it from the city.


16 Edwards 1993: 137–172 focusses upon the first centuries BCE and CE, and therefore necessarily excludes discussion of the second century BCE beyond an acknowledgment that ‘complaints about luxurious building feature among the fragmentary writings of the elder Cato and continue to appear as a major preoccupation of moralising writing (poetry as well as prose) throughout the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E.’ Quotation is Edwards 1993: 139; see similar acknowledgment in Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 143–145 and 149. Whitehorne 1969: 29 presumed that Sallust was ‘the first Roman writer to pay attention to the ambitious builder.’ Cf. Cat. 12.3–4; 13.1; 20.11.

earlier Roman domestic moralising, leaving a crucial chapter in the history of the transformation of a Greek *topos* into a Roman cultural preoccupation unwritten.

Such an omission may reflect the outdated conception of middle-Republican Romans as anxious and ignorant philistines, which has long since given way to evidence that they were in fact discerning arbiters of taste, who were ambivalent in their attitudes towards potentially 'Hellenising' or 'sumptuous' cultural practices of all kinds. Or it may stem from the scholarly consensus that Roman domestic moralising arose as a response to the boom in luxury building visible on the archaeological record beginning in the first century BCE. After all, the plentiful remains of houses of the first centuries BCE and CE confirm the popularity of features decried by the moralists, including extensions built out into the sea, elaborate terracing and gardens. (It is far more difficult to generalise about the physical appearance of elite second-century Roman domestic construction, though examples have been discovered at Cosa, Fregellae and Pompeii, as well as in Rome itself.) Without denying the potential impact of changes over time in the physical appearance of costly and elaborate Roman urban houses and country villas on Roman conceptions of domestic luxury, I argue for aspects of continuity from the middle Republic to the early Empire in the moral issues raised by private architecture in literary texts.

Vitruvius consulted few (if any) Greek architectural *commentarii* on houses. There is little evidence that such texts were in

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20 Purcell 1987.

21 Boëthius 1960: 96–99; McKay 1975: 38–41; Welch 2006. On Rome, see Carandini 1990; on Pompeii, see Lauter 1975; Pesando 1997; on Fregellae, see Coarelli 1991; on Cosa, see Fentress 2004. Mario Torelli follows Fabrizio Pesando in supposing that by the late second century, at least, ‘the *privata luxuria* of the richest Italian cities was much more lavish than that displayed by the great aristocratic families in Rome, where social control and sumptuary legislation were still hampering factors for private expenditure’. Pesando 1997; Torelli 1999: 8–9. While Filippo Coarelli has demonstrated significant financial investment in public architecture by second-century Romans, the range and quantity of material pertaining to private architecture of the period is insufficient to support an equivalent survey. See Coarelli 1977. For arguments relying on a blend of literary and archaeological evidence to reconstruct the high-end domestic architecture of the second century BCE, see D’Arms 1970: 1–17 (on the first coastal villas in the second century BCE); Bodel 1997 (an investigation of the role of villas in identity formation and commemoration); Welch 2006 (an argument that the houses of Republican generals were decorated with fine art objects collected as booty). See also Torelli 1990; Terrenato 2001; Terrenato 2012; Torelli 2012; Zarmakoupi 2014a; Zarmakoupi 2014b on the early development of grand villas in the Italian countryside.

22 Vitruvius does not name authors on domestic architecture among his sources.
circulation. And yet this difference in literary source material does not manifest itself in an authorial neglect of Greek domestic mores, be they imagined or otherwise. Book 6 not only includes a discussion of how Greek houses differ from Roman ones, but also portrays the Roman domus as an aggregate of Greek, Egyptian and native Italic features. As Andrew Wallace-Hadrill has demonstrated, Vitruvius’ Roman house, building upon many elements of Greek origin, represents the transformation of ‘Greek ratio into Roman consuetudo’. For Vitruvius, as ever, there is no Rome without a Greece that is at once autonomous and subsumed. This chapter shows how Vitruvius draws upon entrenched ideas about the relationship of house and man in order present something new, imagined and hybrid as both ancestral and Roman.

My analysis begins with a survey of relevant fragments from the speeches of Cato the Elder, as well as his De agri cultura. It subsequently focusses almost exclusively on Plautus’ Mostellaria. First-century critics like Vitruvius, who condemned the ornamentation and size of Roman houses, looked to the past, oftentimes the second century BCE, as a time of modesty and restraint. The passages I discuss, however, contradict the image Vitruvius and other later Roman authors provide of middle Republicans as uninterested in costly or elaborate houses and uncorrupted by a desire for luxury. Early in the second century BCE, architectural extravagance had entered the canon of vices, and the idea that home and homeowner provided a moral mirror for one another was already widespread. As Rome became increasingly enriched through Eastern conquest, the house functioned as a potent symbol within debates surrounding the permeation of Greek culture into the Roman world.

In the second part of this chapter, I look at the diction Vitruvius employs to describe the homes of the powerful. I demonstrate that Vitruvius does not in fact provide carte blanche support for the elaborate residences of politicians. On the contrary, the words he uses to describe these houses indicate that they are open to censure. Readers of De architectura’s remarks on houses have argued that Vitruvius attempts to create order out of chaos by establishing a set of universalising rules for

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24 De Angelis 2015: 72 points to a possible exception in Hippodamus of Miletus, fifth-century planner of Piraeus who discussed domestic architecture in a treatise that was probably written from the perspective ‘of political theory more than of construction’. Cf. Aristotle, Pol. 1330b.
construction and setting strict limitations to grandeur. This chapter makes the opposite case. I call attention to elasticity and nuance throughout Vitruvius’ approach to domestic architecture that undermine the universal applicability of his rules and hierarchies. I argue that Vitruvius’ commentary on houses does not reflect uniformly accepted Roman values, but instead advances a tailored critique that enhances the representation of his authorial persona. Vitruvius’ contemporaries Horace and Cicero likewise develop features of their authorial personae through the image of the house.

Catonian Criticism of the Sumptuous House

The earliest extant examples of Roman domestic moralising coincide with the earliest extant Latin literature. This period, the late third to early second century BCE, was also the epoch extraordinaire of sumptuary legislation, a time of unparalleled frequency in the enactment and repeal of largely ineffective regulations moderating banquets, dress and entertainments. These include the lex Orchia of 181, which limited the number of guests able to attend entertainments (Macr. 3.17.2–3), and the lex Oppia, brought forward in the midst of the Punic War (215) and repealed in 195, which, according to Livy (34.1), restricted the amount of gold women could own to not more than an ounce and forbade them to wear multicoloured garments or to ride in an animal-drawn vehicle in the city or in any town within a mile (except in the case of public religious festivals).
Sumptuary regulation, however, never targeted houses as far as we know: Pliny the Elder (*Nat. 36.4*), writing in the first century C.E., expressed bewilderment and displeasure at the fact that sumptuary laws, such as those passed by Claudius Pulcher in 169 B.C.E. to forbid the consumption of dormice at banquets, had never regulated the importation of coloured marble.

Given the paucity of evidence from the archaeological record, one might assume that excessive private architecture had not yet become enough of an issue to warrant controversy or concern during the middle Republic. Some scholars conclude that houses were left out of sumptuary legislation because of their function as political and commercial offices for their owners – a projection onto an earlier period of the supposedly Vitruvian idea that political function justifies grandeur. This explanation raises questions: surely banqueting, a focus of the legislation, was just as entrenched in the public life of the *pater familias* as his home decor? Evidence from Cato the Elder suggests that whatever the reason for the absence of houses from sumptuary legislation, luxury building was a recognised vice in the early second century B.C.E.

Cato, who spoke out against the repeal of the *lex Orchia* (*ORF* 8.139–146 = Cugusi 128–132, 210, 235, 238), and probably the *lex Oppia*, as well, was a major figure in the sumptuary legislation disputes. Some have even speculated that without him this debate would not have been nearly so prominent. While it once was customary to interpret Cato as staunchly anti-Hellenic and mistrustful of anything refined, recent studies portray him as a more multivalent figure. Cato, we learn, had a strong interest in Greek culture and only faulted those who he thought used it poorly or wrongly.

Many of Cato’s most censorious comments can be ascribed either to later sources’ elaboration or to a single work, dedicated to his son. Cato’s speeches on the private ownership of art do not denounce Greek art unequivocally; instead, they stress that art captured in conquest by the state should not be displayed in the houses of private individuals. Various fragments of Cato’s speeches provide evidence of protest against private ownership of sculpture and paintings brought to Rome as booty (*ORF* 49.143–146).

privation and uncertainty, the aim was to discourage discordantly jubilant self-presentation (1990: 143–146).

32 Zanda 2013: 18.

33 Cato’s speech in *Ab urbe condita* (34.2–4) against the repeal of the *lex Oppia* is famous, although almost certainly of Livy’s own devising (Astin 1978: 25–27, esp. n. 36).


De signis et tabulis (‘On statues and paintings’), now lost, presumably censured the private ownership and display of such objects.\footnote{Scullard 1951: 260 attributes ORF\textsuperscript{4} 8.94 to De signis et tabulis. On the uncertainty of the text, see Gruen 1992: 112.}

Nevertheless, Cato certainly played the part of the moralist against extravagance well. Cato introduces the synonymous relationship between a man and his estate (‘Remember that a farm is like a man’, \textit{Scito idem agrum quod hominem}, 1.6) in his extant prose work, \textit{De agri cultura}, as the prelude to a warning against luxury: ‘however profitable it may be, if it is lavish, then little remains’ (\textit{quamvis quaestuosus siet, si sumptuosus erit, reliqui non multum}, 1.6).\footnote{Cf. also \textit{Agr.} 143.1, in which Cato cautions that the \textit{vilica} (housekeeper) should not be \textit{luxuriosa}.} He goes on to define the moral ideal with precision: \textit{100 ingera} in a good spot. The construction of a well-built \textit{villa rustica} (the productive building) enhances the owner’s wealth, manliness and reputation (\textit{et rei et virtuti et gloriae erit}, 3.2); a well-built \textit{villa urbana} (the dwelling house on the property) will encourage him to visit frequently (4.1). How well-appointed this \textit{villa urbana} should be is left unspecified.

Too little of Cato’s speeches survives to allow a comprehensive account of his rhetorical posture vis-à-vis private architecture, but strongly worded fragments provide a flavour. One Catonian fragment, for instance, highlights the dangerous potential of over-zealous building to be indicative of, if not synonymous with, political corruption:

\begin{quote}
qui ventrem suum non pro hoste habet, qui pro re publica, non pro sua, obsonat, qui stulte spondet, qui cupide aedificat.

Who does not consider his stomach to be an enemy, who entertains at the state’s expense rather than his own, who makes promises fatuously, who builds greedily. (\textit{De suis virtutibus contra <L.> Thermum post censuram}, c.183 BCE ORF\textsuperscript{4} 8.133 = Cugusi 97)
\end{quote}

It is possible that this dishonourable politician, so far gone that he does not even try to do battle against his own gluttony (\textit{ventrem suum non pro hoste habet}), is sponsoring public rather than private building projects. \textit{Cupide}, however, confirms that the object is personal gain. Perhaps Cato exploits the ambiguity: someone who conflates personal and state wealth when entertaining might ensure that his private house is state financed.

On account of Cato’s rhetorical skill, the Romans nicknamed him ‘Demosthenes’ (Plu. \textit{Cat. Ma.} 4.1). In some of the fragments of his speeches that relate to private wealth and domestic luxury, Cato embodies
the moniker in more ways than one. Demosthenes, disparaging the wan-
tonness of Meidias, scoffs that Meidias’ house in Eleusis is ‘big enough to
overshadow his neighbours’ (21.158, 346 BCE). This fact alone is enough
to arouse Demosthenes’ suspicion. Yet his moral calculus is more
advanced. Demosthenes’ concern is the relationship between the wealth
displayed by this house and Meidias’ public service. Demosthenes likewise
urges his audience not to judge the house apart from the man:

ἐγὼ δ’ ὁσα μὲν τῆς ἱδίας τρυφῆς εἶνεκα Μειδίας καὶ περιουσίας κτάται, οὐκ
οἶδ’ ὤ τι τοὺς πολλοὺς ὑμῶν ὦφελεῖ· ἀ δ’ ἐπαιρόμενος τούτων ύβριζει, ἐπὶ
πολλοὺς καὶ τοὺς τυχόντας ἡμῶν ἀφικνούμεν’ ὀρῶ, οὐ δεὶ δὴ τὰ τοιαῦθ’
ἐκάστοτε τιμᾶν οὐδὲ θαυμάζειν ὑμᾶς, οὐδὲ τὴν ψυχομίαν ἐκ τούτων
κρίνειν, ἐὰν τὰ σῶματα ξυμπρός ἢ θεραπαίνας κέκτητα πολλὰς ἢ σκεύη
[καλὰ], ἄλλ’ ὃς ἐν ἐν τούτων λαμπρὸς καὶ φιλότιμος ἢ, ὤν ἀπαίσι μέτεστι
τοῖς πολλοῖς ὑμῶν· ὦν οὐδὲν εὐρήσετε τούτῳ προσόν.

However many things Meidias acquires for the sake of private luxuriousness
and over-abundance, I do not see how they benefit the majority of you; I do
see how the actions which he takes outrageously, having been incited by
these things, have an effect on many of us ordinary people. You ought not
honour and admire such things on every occasion, nor judge someone’s
public spirit by these standards – whether he builds splendidly or has come
into possession of many handmaids or good-looking belongings – but
instead whether his splendour and public spirit are displayed in those things
which the majority of you can share. There you will find Meidias utterly
lacking. (21.159)

James Davidson calls attention to the subdued nature of these luxuries:
‘Only three or four servants? Only one house? Not in Athens but in Eleusis?
With neighbours!’38 Classical Athenian authors moralise very rarely on the
theme of houses and their decoration; their sensitivities to vice focussed
upon food, drink and sex. And yet, for our purposes, the sophistication of
Demosthenes’ conception of domestic display warrants attention. The
orator pulls back from a prima facie denunciation of Meidias’ house: what
ultimately matters is how Meidias comports himself in the public sphere.
While Roman moralising is often conceived, in both ancient texts and
modern scholarship, in terms of a rejection of ‘Greek’ luxury, Greeks could
be the model for the moral posture, as well as for the vice.39

38 Davidson 1997: 231. For Davidson, this passage ‘shows how pathetic the Athenians were at
showing off even towards the end of the classical period.’ Cf. Perrochat 1946: 81; Whitehorne
1969: 30 on Sallust’s engagement with Demosthenes’ Olynthiac 3 within his moralising against
ambitious builders.

39 Cato the Elder certainly attained knowledge of Greek and read Demosthenes at some point in his
life, though it is unclear when. Cf. Astin 1978: 159–160. See Astin 1978: 149 on echoes of
In fragments of his speeches, Cato describes his own domestic architecture, like all his other personal effects, as modest:

neque mihi aedificatio neque vasum neque vestimentum ullam est manu-pretiosum neque pretiosus servus neque ancilla. Si quid est quod utar, utor; si non est, egeo. suum cuique per me uti atque frui licet.

I have no building, utensil or garment bought with a great price, no costly slave or maidservant. If I have anything to use, I use it, if not then I do without. So far as I am concerned, everyone can use and enjoy what he has.

(From an unknown speech, possibly De sumptu suo, after 164 BCE (ORF 8.174 = Cugusi 218a.)

Aulus Gellius, introducing these words as a quotation within his Noctes Atticae, suggests that elsewhere in his writings as well, Cato denied having opulent villae:

M. Cato, consularis et censorius, publicis iam privatisque opulentis rebus, villas suas inexcultas et rudes, ne tectorio quidem praelitas fuisse dicit ad annum usque aetatis suae septuagesimum.

Marcus Cato, the ex-consul and ex-censor, states that while both public and private wealth was abundant, his villas were plain and unadorned, and not even coated with plaster, until he was seventy years old. (Gel. 13.24.1)

Even if emphasis on the unembellished surface (ne tectorio quidem praelitas), implying that Cato did not decorate his house with painted plaster, is pure Gellian invention, Cato’s concern with the decoration of private architecture is well attested in another rhetorical fragment (ORF 8.185). In this speech, which argues against the practice of multiple consulships, on the grounds that statesmen desirous of this honour only


40 While in ORF this fragment is included with the one fragment securely assigned to De sumptu suo (8.173), Cugusi more judiciously lists it among the Reliquiae Incertae Sedis. It should be stressed that Gellius’ reference to Cato’s age is the only reason for dating De sumptu suo or any of the potential fragments to after 164 BCE.

41 The term villa does not carry unambiguous connotations of luxury, or its absence. Bodel 2012: 48 notes that Cato’s conception of the villa encompasses the more austere, profit-driven variety, as well as the type designed with a greater interest in enabling the pleasures of the countryside.

42 This suggestion of a loosening later in life is a persistent feature of Catonian biographies, which may have little factual basis. See Gruen 1992: 62.

43 Gellius goes on to say that ‘afterwards [Cato] adds “They find fault with me because I lack many things; but I with them because they cannot do without them”’ (Tum deinde addit: Vitio vertunt, quia multa egeo; at ego illis, quia nequement egere; 13.24.2). This does not necessarily imply that the two sentiments directly followed one another, thus Cugusi separates these fragments into 218a and 218b (ORF 8.174 combines both).

44 Cf. also Plu. Cat. Ma. 4.4, which similarly alleges that none of Cato’s houses had plastered walls.
use public office to enlarge private coffers, Cato lists the precious materials that adorn some private homes:

dicere possum, quibus villae atque aedes aedificatae atque expolitae maximo opere citro atque ebore atque pavimentis Poenici sient

I can state that, those who might have villas and houses built and embellished to the most impressive degree, with citrus wood and ivory and ‘Punic pavements’ . . . (Ne quis item consul fiat, c. 152 BCE ORF 8.185 = Cugusi 139)

Each of these materials has a foreign provenance: neither citrus trees nor ivory are native to the Italian peninsula. Cato probably refers here to their use in fine furniture, including tables with citrus tops and ivory legs. Later Romans, it appears, attached both citrus wood and ivory to ceilings and walls as revetments (Plin. Nat. 33.146; Suet. Nero 31). Poenica pavimenta may be said with a sneer by Carthage-hating Cato. However, the adjective appears throughout De agri cultura apparently without derogatory force (e.g. 7.3; 85.1).

Litanies of refinements would become a mainstay of the domestic moralising of later Roman authors, including Vitruvius. Denouncing his contemporaries for decorating with exorbitantly expensive pigments, Vitruvius holds up the ancestors as paragons of restraint:

Quis enim antiquorum non uti medicamento minio parce videtur usus esse? . . . Accedit huc chrysocolla, ostrum, armenium.

For who of the earlier generation does not seem to have used vermilion sparingly, like [they used] medicine? . . . Added to this [by patrons today] are malachite green, purple, and Armenian ultramarine. (7.5.8)

Vitruvius, furthermore, emphasises the high prices of these colours (7.5.8). Likewise, in a dialogue between two bickering Roman statesmen

49 While Festus (282L) posited that these Poenica pavimenta were the Numidian marble popular in his day, the significance of the phrase remains highly controversial. Bruneau 1982 suggests it identifies pavements as a characteristically Carthaginian luxury. Gaggiotti sees a reference to signina, floors made of mortar and aggregate, including crushed tile. Cf. Gaggiotti 1988: 215–221. These were sometimes decorated with large and irregular fragments of marble or other stone. Found in Sicily as early as the third century BCE, such pavements may have been derived from Punic Carthaginian models and brought to Rome by Carthaginian prisoners after the Second Punic War. See Dunbabin 1999: 102.
50 I return to this passage in Chapters 4 and 5.
in Varro’s *Res Rusticae*, the augur Appius Claudius scolds Varro with a list of precious materials that echoes Cato’s in its mention of citrus wood:


Isn’t this villa [he means the Villa Publica, a political building], built by our ancestors, more economical and better than your extremely ornate mansion at Reate? Can you see any citrus wood or gold here, any vermilion or Armenian ultramarine, any coloured or marble mosaic – all of which, on the contrary, your house possesses?’ (*R.* 3.2.3–4)

Note that it is *maiores nostri* who are credited with frugality. The senator Quintus Axius’ counter-critique in defence of Varro, however, firmly positions the ancestors at his own side (*R.* 3.2.5–6). Axius demands of his opponent, ‘in short, what does your villa have that is like the villas of your grandfather and great-grandfather?’ (*Denique quid tua habet simile villae illius, quam tuus avos ac proavos habebat?, R.* 3.2.6). To name expensive imports is to condemn their owner. Yet in recognising these materials, the speaker reveals a level of familiarity, if not connoisseurship, on his own part, as well. The Roman reader of *De architectura* or *Res Rusticae* may well have appreciated the irony that the *antiqui* or *maiores* these authors invoked could not have been so unknowing of luxury, since Cato the Elder railed against his own time.

Foreign wealth, lodestar of the Roman imperial project, was also lamented as its bane. The geographic derivation of words like *armenium* ensured that any conversation or text in which they were invoked was simultaneously about here (the centre) and there (the periphery), now (an era of trade and plunder) and then (a prelapsarian Roman past when foreign luxuries were unknown). Seneca’s letter 86 reveals just how difficult it was to maintain this narrative of foreign luxury as other. For Seneca, the rustic simplicity of Scipio Africanus’ villa is a rebuke to present

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51 Green 1997: 432–433 establishes that the Villa Publica (the setting, as well as a subject, of the debate) ‘is treated as both a real and a symbolic place . . . . Appius is comparing the actual Villa Publica to Varro’s estate at Reate; but Axius responds to the other, symbolic meaning, to the Villa Publica as Rome itself.’ See also Richardson (1992: s.v. ‘Villa Publica’).

52 Cf. also *R.* 1.13, in which the luxurious *villae* of Metellus and Lucullus are conceived of as damaging to the state.

53 Although Romans of Cato’s generation may have known citrus wood as a luxury good used in the construction of tables, it was not until the end of the second century BCE that the Romans imported it in any great quantities. Meiggs 1982: 286–291.
monstrosities, encrusted as they are with Alexandrian marble and Numidian mosaic (Alexandrina marmora Numidicis crustis, 6). Yet surely, if any single individual encapsulates Rome’s drive towards expansion, ‘Africanus’ (!) was he.

Turning back to Cato’s fragmentary remarks on houses and villas embellished with citrus wood and ivory, we should pause to consider an alternative interpretation. Although readers consistently interpret the depiction of villae...expolitae maximo opere as a condemnation of Cato’s thought, we do not know the full force of his evocation of these materials (ORF 8.185). Moreover, a rhetorical fragment of P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus Africanus Minor, from his fifth oration Contra Claudium Asellum, dating to c. 140 BCE, suggests that later in the century the rhetorical force of a decorated villa could be used to different ends. Scipio uses the adjective expolitus (in its superlative, no less) to evoke moral outrage against the home destroyer, on behalf of the proprietor. When Scipio was censor (142 BCE), he divested Ti. Claudius Asellus of eques-trian status (for unknown reasons). Later, after Mummius had reinstated Asellus, the two statesmen came into conflict again. Here, Scipio censures Asellus for his wanton actions as a general:

ubi agros optime cultos atque villas expolitissimas vidisset, in his regionibus excellsissimo loco grumam statuere aiebat; inde corrigere viam, alis per vineas medias, alis per roborarium atque piscinam, alis per villam.

When he had seen the highly cultivated fields and most refined villas, he ordered them to set up a measuring rod on the highest spot in that district; and from there to build a straight road, in some places through the midst of vineyards, in others through the oaken enclosures and the fish-pond, in still others through the villas. (ORF 21.20, preserved in Gel. 2.20.6)

Scipio’s villas expolitissimas appear in translations as ‘well-kept farmhouses’; however, I follow Nicholas Purcell, who considers the passage evidence that ‘there is no serious dichotomy between [agricultural] production and the elite lifestyle of luxury’. Pairing agros cultos with villae expolitissimae in this

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56 Smith 1849: 385; Scullard 1960: 69–70.
way, Scipio accepts as natural a relation later Romans render problematic: the compatibility of agricultural virtues with exquisite private architecture (Hor. Carm. 2.15; Var. R. 3.2 (mentioned previously)).59

These passages reveal antipathy to the greedy approach to construction (ORF4 8.133), costly architecture (ORF4 8.174), and perhaps imported adornments, as well (ORF4 8.185). However, if we consider the specific rhetorical contexts, the fragments suggest more than the simple fact that costly private architecture was useful fodder for an ad hominem attack. Two of the three quotations (ORF4 8.174; ORF4 8.133) come from defensive, rather than offensive, speeches. If even Cato the Elder was forced to defend himself against charges of excessive expenditure (ORF4 8.174 is likely from De sumptu suo), then it is clear that such allegations did not pit one group of conservative Romans against another luxuriating group. Those casting aspersions on others were receiving criticism in kind.

Luxury Building in Plautus’ Mostellaria

Vitruvius’ De architectura reflects a literary tradition in which elaborate domestic architecture could possess a positive moral valence, as well as a negative one. Precedent for praise and flattery of domestic architecture dates back to classical Greek authors including Aristophanes and Theophrastus60 and, in a Roman context, to Plautus’ Mostellaria, which presents architectural refinement as a wholesome pursuit.61 Set within the context of contemporary rhetorical discourse and sumptuary legislation, Plautus’ Mostellaria makes a particularly strong contribution to the study of Roman houses and their decoration by revealing both the

60 Brian Krostenko has suggested that Roman authors before Terence disapprove of Hellenising aesthetic practices and do not acknowledge their social benefits. Cf. Krostenko 2001b. Because the linguistic developments he traces are not evident in Plautus, Krostenko argues that there is no evidence that corresponding social changes, which fostered a lenient and even welcoming attitude towards aesthetic matters, had begun to take shape in Plautus’ day. The character and scope of his study prohibits him from admitting to more than that ‘it is possible that some of these semantic developments had happened during, or even before, Plautus’ lifetime and simply left no trace.’ See Krostenko 2001b: 75. Mostellaria, however, by playing with the idea that domestic building projects are, by society’s standards, a constructive way of self-indulging, can add nuance to Krostenko’s view of Plautine ‘social performance’.
character and the sophistication of domestic moralising in the second century BCE. While Plautus’ plays draw heavily on New Comedy, especially Menander, and stage characters with Greek names in locations far from Rome, they are tailored to appeal to a Roman audience. The result is far from a literal representation of Rome. Given the popularity of the comedies during his lifetime and afterwards, and the scarcity of texts surviving from his period, however, Plautus’ works are a valuable resource for understanding Roman tastes during the influx of Greek culture into Republican Rome.

Mostellaria (‘The Little Ghost Story’), written in the early 190s BCE, on the model of Philemon’s Phasma (288 BCE), is widely considered one of the most freely adapted of Plautus’ comedies and is, therefore, perhaps among the easiest to integrate into the study of Roman mores. The repeated use of pergraecari (to play the Greek (=to behave like a Greek)), a verb of moral excess almost unique to this particular work (Mos. 22; 64; 960), strengthens the case for reading Mostellaria this way. It does not make sense for Greek characters in Athens to employ this derogatory term, unless the playwright is addressing a Roman audience, using a Roman idiom of morality. Scholarship on Mostellaria has suggested numerous implications of this comedy for our understanding of the Roman family and house. Why the magnificent home depicted in Mostellaria remains exempt from the characters’ condemnation of luxuriating vices, however, remains to be explored. The reason for this anomaly may derive not only

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63 In each context pergraecari refers to immoral, profligate behaviour: ‘drink day and night, behave exactly like Greeks, buy girlfriends and set them free, feed parasites, indulge in feasting as if at a banquet’ (dies noctesque bibite, pergraecaminei, | amicas emite liberate: pascite | parasitos: obsonate pollucibiliter, 22–24 (discussed presently)); ‘drink, behave exactly like Greeks, eat, gorge yourselves, kill the fatted calf’ (bibite, pergraecamini, | este, ecfercite vos, saginam caedite, 64–65); ‘What are you saying? That there has not been three-days intermission in the eating and drinking, escorting prostitutes, behaving exactly like Greeks, escorting lute-girls and flute-girls?’ (quid ais? triduom unum est haud intermissum hic esse et bibi, | scorta duci, pergraecari, fidicinas, tibicinas | discere, 959–961). Pergraecari also occurs in Plautus’ Bacchides (813). The related congraecare appears in Bac. 743.

64 On Roman morality in Plautus, see especially Moore 1998: 67–90.

65 Leach 1969; Grimal 1976; Perutelli 2000; Milnor 2002.
from the politics of immorality surrounding private architecture during Plautus’ time, but also from the politics of virtue. In texts of the second century BCE, the costly house sometimes functions as the visible manifestation of intemperate greed or over-refinement, but it also appears as a financially and morally sound investment.

*Mostellaria* is the story of a young Athenian Philolaches, who, on the return of his wealthy merchant father from travels in Egypt, must account for his degeneracy into loose and wasteful living, the most expensive element of which has been the freeing and keeping of a courtesan Philematium. Rather than confront his father Theopropides, Philolaches, with the help of accomplices, including the mastermind, a ‘clever slave’ named Tranio,\(^67\) buys time with two extended ruses; in each, a house plays a significant role. The first fabrication is that Theopropides’ house is haunted, and therefore the returning father should not enter it (in so doing, he would see the evidence of Philolaches’ activities).\(^68\) The second is that Philolaches has bought a neighbouring house belonging to Simo. This second falsehood provides a shining alibi for Philolaches’ massive spending and encourages Theopropides to visit Simo’s house, thereby distracting Theopropides from encountering his son.\(^69\) Tranio and Philolaches’ schemes go awry when the honest slave Phaniscus reveals all to Theopropides. The ruined merchant is livid, until Philolaches’ *sodalis* Callidamates repays the debt. At the play’s end, Theopropides forgives all involved and is content.

Vice – both its character and its consequences – is a frequent topic of conversation in *Mostellaria*. Philolaches’ appetites for banquets and courtesans are stereotypically Greek ‘consuming passions’;\(^70\) the manner in which they are described resonates with the conventions of Roman moralising: disparagement of philhellenism, clustering of licentious activities, including banqueting, excessive drinking and whoring,\(^71\) and competitive contrast between previous and present generations. When it comes to castigating Hellenising practices other than luxury building, the characters of *Mostellaria* do not mince words. For example, the rustic slave Grumio, chastising Tranio for encouraging Philolaches’ behaviour, summarises the son’s lifestyle during his father’s absence by enumerating the vices:\(^72\)

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\(^{67}\) Anderson 1993.  
\(^{68}\) Felton 1999.  
\(^{70}\) Davidson 1997. See discussion in this chapter’s section, ‘Catonian criticism of the sumptuous house’.  
\(^{71}\) Edwards 1993: 5.  
\(^{72}\) Mariotti 1992 and Leigh 2004: 102–103 discuss the opposition between rusticity and urbanity personified by the two slaves in this scene.
nunc, dum tibi lubet licetque, pota, perde rem, corrumpe erilem adolescentem optumum; dies noctesque bibite, pergraecaminei, amicas emite, liberate: pascite parasitos: obsonate pollucibiliter.

Now, while you feel like it and can, drink up, waste the wealth, corrupt the master’s blue-eyed boy; drink day and night, behave exactly like Greeks, buy girlfriends and set them free, feed parasites, indulge in feasting as if at a banquet. (Mos. 20–24)

This pairing of the city slave (Tranio) and the country slave (Grumio), though unparalleled in extant Greek comedy, plays upon a duality with deep comic roots: the superficial debauchery of the city versus the sober righteousness of the country. On Plautus’ Roman stage, this contrast takes on new meaning. When to imbibe and cavort is to ‘play the Greek’, a question hangs in the air: in an era of intense engagement with Greek cultural models (as witnessed in this avowedly adapted play), how does one play the Roman?

This fundamental issue for Plautus’ ancient audience had no easy resolution: ‘An important part of the project of appropriating these texts’, as Denis Feeney has recently argued, ‘is not just finding the right degree of sameness, but finding the right degree of slippage, to accommodate and to represent the differences between the cultures and their languages.’ Plautus reveals the contradictions inherent to such ‘slippage’ in his formulation of a country slave who is at once a Greek character and a mouthpiece of anti-Greek sentiment. In such contradiction, there was great possibility. Mostellaria, staged somewhere between Greek text and Roman imagination, could be morally rich without being morally prescriptive.

Grumio’s list displays the variety of forms excessive Greek-like behaviour can take (Mos. 20–24). Building is not one of them. Standing in front of an elaborate domestic stage set, caught up in a series of events which revolve around these very houses, the characters repeatedly introduce issues and themes that would later become typical of Roman chastisement of luxurious building (for example, insinuations of profligacy and comparisons between public and private buildings). Yet the transgressive element of private architecture remains unstated. Domestic architecture, never named as a vice, consistently appears compatible with (and even conducive to) both moral rectitude and socio-political success.

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76 Milnor 2002: 5–6; 8; 11–12.
The lie that makes Theopropides believe that his money has actually been very well spent is the purchase of Simo’s house. Tranio convinces Simo that Theopropides wants to use Simo’s house as an exemplum (762). The level of detail communicated to the audience concerning this house is uncommonly high for Plautus. Domestic spaces mentioned in Plautus’ other comedies, such as impluvia (Mil. 173–175 and Am. 1108) and atria (Aul. 518), are emphatically Roman. Aspects of Simo’s house, on the other hand, such as the gynaecaeum and porticus, would have struck the Roman audience as conspicuously Hellenising and exotic. Though some features of Simo’s house may have parallels in the Greek archaeological record, the dimensions alone are enough to render the house a caricature.

When Theopropides first learns that Philolaches has bought Simo’s house, the father is overjoyed at his son’s wise investment: ‘well done, Philolaches! He resembles his father. Now the man is turning into a merchant!’ (eugai! Philolaches | patrissat: iam homo in mercatura vortitur, 638–639). On inspecting the house, Theopropides marvels at the size, the gynaecaeum, the wall paintings and the portico. As he is leading Theopropides through the house, Tranio sets in motion a phallic joke by asking the old man what he thinks of this portico:

Th. quid porticum?
Tr. insanum bonam. non equidem ullam in publico esse maiorem hac existumo.
Th. quid igitur?
Tr. longe omnium longissuma est.
Th. What about the portico? Th. Immensely nice. I for one do not think there is any larger than this in public ownership. Tr. In fact I myself and Philolaches measured all the public porticoes. Th. Well then? Tr. It is the longest – by a long way. (Mos. 908–911)

77 Milnor 2002: 17. 78 Westaway 1917: 40–41; Leach 1969: 324; Milnor 2002: 21
79 Over a century later, Vitruvius would discuss the construction of colonnaded peristyles in Roman houses without laying stress on the Greek origins of the form, while identifying women’s quarters (which he calls gynaeconitis) as a feature of the Greek house that set it apart from the Roman (6.7.2). See further discussion of porticoes in Chapter 5. Kristina Milnor addresses the gynaecaeum as a signifier of Greekness in Roman texts, as well as the controversy surrounding the actual presence of such spaces in Greek homes. Cf. Milnor 2002: 21–22; 2005: 132–139. See also Fontaine 2010: esp. 183–187; Goldberg 2011: 216–219 for recent debate concerning the Greek knowledge that can be presumed for Plautus’ Roman audience.
We may compare Theopropides’ enthusiasm to the moralising stance of Horace’s *Carm.* 2.15, in which a private portico offends by its large size, unnatural location (*opacam | porticus excipiebat Arcton, 16*), and private ownership, in addition to its Hellenising form:

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non ita Romuli praescriptum et intonsi Catonis
auspicis veterumque norma.
privatus illis census erat brevis,
commune magnum: nulla decempedes
metata privatis opacam
porticus excipiebat Arcton
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This is not how it was established by the authority of Romulus or shaggy Cato, or the practice of previous generations. Among those men, private wealth was slight, common property was vast: no portico measured out with private ten-foot rods caught the shady north. (*Carm.* 2.15.10–16)

In this poem, Horace transforms a luxury *topos* of Hellenistic invective into the Roman cultural idiom. In Phoenix of Colophon’s choliambns, for example, the greedy and rapacious, if they can, get houses ‘made of malachite’ (ἔγ λίθου σμαραγδίτου), which have porticoes with four pillars, costing many talents (στοὰς τετραστύλους | [πολλῶν] ταλάντων ἀξίας κατακτῶντας, 6.9–12). Horace couches his complaint within a Roman historical narrative: when houses rival public buildings, values maintained from the city’s founding, represented by Romulus, to the second century BCE, embodied in Cato the Elder, are on the decline (*Carm.* 2.15.10–11).

*Mostellaria* reveals just how nostalgic a portrait of the second century BCE Horace provides: in Tranio and Theopropides’ dialogue, we find a private portico longer than all of the public porticoes

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83 While these appear to be rustic values, and agricultural ones specifically (‘Soon princely mansions will leave behind just a few acres for the plough’, *iam pauca aratro iugera regiae | moles relinquunt, Carm.* 2.15.1–2), it is possible that Horace refers to Romulus and Cato in order to create the impression of a disparity between present profligacy and the relative moderation of previous generations (rather than their absolute asceticism). Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 248 explain, ‘Horace’s words suit the censor rather than the author of the *De Agricultura*, whose precepts show less respect for ancient norms than his preface would suggest; the champion of progressive and profitable agriculture would have been surprised to find his views coupled with those of Romulus.’
already imagined within 'shaggy' Cato’s own lifetime. Scholars who read Horace in dialogue with Phoenix have not taken account of Plautus’ place within the tradition. Yet in these three authors we see remarkable continuity over time in the representation of luxury building.

The father gaping at this architecture and the son gaping at his mistress (Mos. 157–292) are mirrored reflections. The use of such a large portico in a house (an image intensified by Theopropides’ eagerness that it be longer than all the public porticoes) turns the father into as much of a caricature as the lover Philolaches. Plautus provides no direct indication that Theopropides’ architectural predilections are immoral. Not once in the play does Hellenophobia or moral censure target domestic architecture – even though Simo’s house, alone of the houses in Plautus’ plays, has pointedly Greek features.

The joke, at the end of Mostellaria, is not that a senex is duped into approving of Hellenisning architecture, but rather that the mercator is overcome by his desire for property. His preoccupations are wholly financial, as can be seen in his lack of interest in punishing, or even seeing, his son once the debt is repaid. So much for Philolaches’ moral betterment. Theopropides even encourages his son’s activities, outside the context of their expense: ‘let him drink, love, do whatever he wants in front of me: if he is ashamed of this, of having made the excessive expenditure, I believe that is punishment enough’ (immo me praesente amato, bibito, facito quod lubet: | si hoc pudet, fecisse sumptum, supplici habeo satis, 1164–1165).

Simo’s unconcern for morality is similar. Like Theopropides, he has a practical, rather than moral, compass. Whenever he appears, Simo is in a

81 For Leach 1969: 328, this dialogue is cause to date Mostellaria to after the construction of the Portici Aemiliae, the first public porticoes in Rome, in 195 BCE. Milnor 2002: 21, however, is right that the presence of these structures would do little to change the absurdity of such ‘a huge one tacked onto a private dwelling’. The portico or peristyle would not become a characteristic feature of the Roman house until the end of the second century BCE. Maiuri 1946; Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 20–23; Dickmann 1997; Wallace-Hadrill 1997.

82 For a prior characterisation of the architectural flatterer, see Thphr. Char. 2.12. Cf. Thomas 2007: 21 and n. 82.

83 For both Pierre Grimal and Eleanor Winsor Leach, the over-sized Greek features of Simo’s house are absurd and immoral; Theopropides’ approval of the house is a vitium. Cf. Grimal 1976; Leach 1969. Leach concludes that ‘neither the son nor the father maintains a strong ethical stance . . . [T]he father is . . . susceptible to novelties whose implications he cannot fully understand’. See Leach 1969: 32. Milnor, however, rightly argues against a reading of Theopropides’ approval of Simo’s house as newfangled or luxurious. Cf. Milnor 2002: 21–22.

84 Leach 1969: 329–331 and Segal 1974 discuss Plautus’ use of financial language in the play. Segal 1974: 103 concludes that Plautus’ intention is to draw attention to the very absence of business during the festive occasion of performance.
hurry. He mentions that he has *negotia* to attend to, is en route to the forum, or dislikes eating a large meal that might make him nap during the day. While Simo does not lead such a life himself, he cheerfully expresses approval of Philolaches and Tranio’s decadent lifestyle (728–731). Simo readily agrees not to reveal Philolaches’ doings to Theoproprides (744–745), but when this encourages an exclamation from Tranio of, ‘Hello, patron!’ (*patrone, salve*), Simo responds, ‘I care nothing for this kind of client’ (*nil moror mi istiusmodi clientes*, 746). Tranio has misread Simo’s pledge of secrecy; it is a statement not of loyalty, but of utter detachment. By emphasising this business-like aspect of Simo’s character, Plautus pokes fun at the idea that delight in private architecture, unlike the revelry that has destroyed Philolaches’ finances and hindered his involvement in state activities (as discussed presently), is compatible with various political and social duties.

In many ways, the plot of *Mostellaria* is standard Plautine fare – love affairs with courtesans, the narrative impetus of one character’s trip abroad and surprise return, clever slaves outwitting their masters. Several aspects, however, are anomalous. Critics have found the simple premise of the plot and rather flat characterisation underwhelming. Furthermore, the love story of Philolaches and Philematium is slight and inconclusive, though convention suggests it was probably the core of *Phasma*, on which *Mostellaria* was based. Philematium, in fact, does not speak after line 347 of the 1181-line play. We do not see her or Philolaches after line 406. He does not even reappear in the last scene to reconcile with his father, but rather is forgiven in absentia through a staged financial transaction between his father and Philolaches’ drinking buddy (*sodalis*) – a strange resolution. Rather than the wedding that comic precedent might suggest for the play’s finale, we are left with a monetary exchange. In light of the central significance of Plautus’ equation of house and man, such a conclusion is both appropriate and satisfying.

**Domestic Cosmetics**

Throughout the play, Philolaches’ wanton ways are epitomised by the house he has overseen for three years during his father’s absence, not only because his drinking, feasting and lovemaking take place there, but also

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91 See Leach 1969: 331–332 and Milnor 2002: 21–22 for readings of this ending as deflating.
because the ruinous state of the family finances can be evoked by mentioning that ‘all has been destroyed, both the house and the farm’ (omnia | periēre, et aedīs et ager, 79–80). Philolaches’ canticum, however, makes the analogy explicit (Mos. 84–156). Evoking the long classical tradition of analogising human and architectural forms and the ‘idea that correct building corresponded to moral uprightness’, Philolaches compares proper manhood and civic responsibility to the well-appointed house: ‘now I have discovered this exemplum. I discern that a man is like a new house when he is born’ (id repperi iam exemplum | novarum aedīum esse arbitro similēm ego hominem | quando hic natus est, Mos. 90–92). The new house, Philolaches implies, is neutral, innocent. Subsequent influences either enhance or destroy it. Expenditure on the completion of a house is likened to character development:

aedes quom extemplo sunt paratae, expolitae,
factae probe examussim
laudant fabrum atque aedes probant, sibi quisque inde exemplum expetunt,
sibi quisque similis volt suas, sumptum, operam <parum> parcunt suam.

As soon as a house is ready, decked out, constructed to a T, they compliment the builder and they approve of the house. Next, they request that it might be an exemplum for their own, they want similar ones for themselves and they spare hardly any effort. (Mos. 101–104)

Among the admirers, no moralist intervenes. This soliloquy anticipates the tendency in later texts, including De architectura, to conflate home with homeowner, and even to treat the house as a monument to its proprietor. Philolaches likens careless living to the destruction of this house:

atque ubi illo immigrat nequam homo, indiligens
cum pigra familia, inmundus, instrenuos,
hic iam aedibus vitium additur, bona quom curantur male;

But when a useless fellow moves into that house, a freeloader with a sluggish household, a slovenly man, lacking in energy, then the house suffers for it, being a good house, but badly looked after. (Mos. 105–107)

93 Thomas 2007: 17–22. Fontaine 2014 reveals that the Greek model for Philolaches’ canticum likely included a pun on τέκτονες (builders) and τεκόντες (parents). In so doing, he overturns previous evaluations (beginning with Fraenkel 2007: 118–119) of the canticum as a Plautine invention.
94 Thomas 2007: 19.
Through the use of multiple adjectives describing the laziness and inaction of the new owner, Philolaches indicates that more is wrong with this man than failure to be ‘house-proud’. In the next lines, Philolaches explains that neglect leaves the house susceptible to the onslaught of storms (108–113). The end result is total ruin (117). Parents are the builders of their children (Parentes fabri liberum sunt, 120), but this is not the builder’s fault (fabri culpa, 114); it is the proprietor’s.

Seneca would later take up the trope of the crumbling house as a reflection of its owner in letter 12, in which the speaker likewise achieves self-knowledge through reflection on the diminished state of his home.96 Though Seneca at first blames the bailiff (vilicus) for the decline, he soon realises that its deterioration merely reflects a mirroring of villa and man.97 as Seneca and his villa enter their waning years together, the philosopher would be wise to accept and even relish the changes that accompany aging. Seneca’s suggestion that nature governs man and edifice alike chimes well with Vitruvius’ theory of architectura. Both authors’ conceptions of architecture are rooted in Stoic conceptions of nature. Thus, by the end of the letter, the dilapidated villa has become a positive symbol of the life cycle – a sharp distinction from the model of the house in Mostellaria, which, like the picture of Dorian Gray, provides hidden evidence of moral decay.

Philolaches emphasises that it is not just the fundamentum (foundation) that the builders/parents provide (121). Rather, Philolaches compares an exemplary upbringing to the refinement of the house.98 His turn of phrase prefigures the association of expolitiones with rhetorical training and polish developed by first-century BCE authors, including Vitruvius in his volume ‘on the finishing touches’ (de expolitionibus, Book 7).99 Philolaches explains:

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97 Cf. Bodel 2012: 47. The humour of the situation is enhanced by the presence of the *vilicus*, a comic character. Hunter 1985: 110 surmises that the figure of the *vilicus* in *Casina* and *Poenulus*, as well as at *Mer*. 277, may reflect the influence of Atellan farce on Roman comedy, since extant Greek comedy contains no equivalent figure. Note also, however, the presence of the *vilicus* in Cato’s roughly contemporary work *De agri cultura*.


99 Fitzgerald 1995: 38–42. See further discussion of expolitiones in Chapter 4.
Moreover, they spare nothing material, so that they [the children] might be upstanding in usefulness and appearance, for their own sake and society’s. They do not consider expenses of this kind lavish expenditure. They add refinements: they teach them literature, the principles of justice, law, they bring to bear their wealth and exertion, so that others may aspire that their own sons be similar.

(Mos. 123–128)

In 128 (ut alii sibi esse illorum similis expetant), popular approval and emulation is again the expected response to this cost-consuming house. The phrase nec sumptus ibi sumptui ducunt esse draws attention to the peculiarity of the absence of censure. This statement is nonsensical (sumptus is, of course, always sumptus) unless the dual resonance of sumptus is implied: Philolaches means that expenditure on domestic refinements is not considered sumptuousness, excess.

Use of expolire to describe the beautification of a courtesan elsewhere in Plautus (Poen. 220–221), as well as in a fragment of Lucilius commonly interpreted as a description of a courtesan at her toilette (Lucil. 296–297), makes it plausible that the cleansing and adornment of the human body would have been in the audience’s mind during Philolaches’ description of this aedes expolitae (101). Likewise, in Terence’s Heauton Timorumenos, a beautiful woman is ‘embellished on the cheek by no womanly device’ (nulla mala re esse expolitam muliebri, Haut. 289). In addition to the villa examples from Cato (ORF² 8.185) and Scipio (ORF² 21.20) mentioned earlier, the remaining second-century occurrences of expolire appear in Plautine descriptions of persons and schemes. A character in Plautus’ Truculentus, for example, ‘embellishes himself with improper skills’ (inprobis se artibus expoliat, 553). In each case, the speaker is probably punning on an architectural or cosmetic meaning. For example, consilium is the (implied) object of expolire in the midst of a series of architectural puns – and only thirty-three lines before Plautus will employ the term to describe the toilette of a courtesan (Poen. 188).

A dialogue between Philematium and Scapha that directly follows Philolaches’ canticum introduces the subject of cosmetic expolitiones into

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100 For all citations from Lucilius, Warmington 1938 is used.
Mostellaria more explicitly. In this scene, Plautus breaks with dramaturgical convention in order to stage a domestic activity (Philematium’s toilette) outside of the house, on the street; in so doing, he renders visible the exteriority of the courtesan to the Roman household and its values. Whether the lex Oppia had been repealed or was still in force at the time of Mostellaria’s debut, the play’s lingering attention to the details of Philematium’s toilette, and her nurse Scapha’s criticism of it as immoral, would have been highly charged.

There is a stark contrast between the positive presentation of the refinement of architecture in Philolaches’ canticum and the negative presentation of female adornment in Philematium’s toilette. Philematium’s self-adornment is directed at attracting Philolaches: ‘give me the mirror and the box with the ornaments right now, Scapha. I should be adorned when Philolaches, my darling, approaches’ (cedo mi speculum et cum ornamentis arculam actutum, Scapha, ibernata ut sim, quom huc adveniat Philolaches voluptas mea, 248–249). For Philolaches, however, to be charmed is to be corrupted: he calls Philematium a rainstorm (161–163), an image endowed with moral significance by his repeated assertion that it is water that destroys the house that represents him as a man (137–148).

We may note that Philematium emerges, perhaps even still wet, from her bath as she enters the stage. While Philolaches presents refining the male character with virtue and refining the house with costly finishing touches as compatible ideas, Scapha specifically says that Philematium should beautify herself with morals instead of with clothing and make-up. The nurse chides the courtesan, who has just been scoured (deficatam): ‘Why not just adorn yourself with charming mores, since you are so charming yourself?’ (quin tu te exornas moribus lepidis, quom lepida tute es?, 168). This question anticipates Seneca’s address to his mother Helvia (Helv. 16), in which he claims that she lacks all female flaws: instead of defiling her face with paints and cosmetics, and wearing jewellery or flimsy dresses (vices likened to sexual promiscuity and abortion), Helvia adorns herself with modesty.

101 Wyke 1994; Owens 2001; Milnor 2002.
102 Sedgwick 1949: 377, for instance, in discussing various reasons for assigning a date of c. 195 BCE to Plautus’ Epidicus, mentions that the reference to a ‘new look’ (ut nove) at Epid. 222 has been read as an allusion to the repeal of the lex Oppia.
103 While cosmetics are here associated with the feminine, see Hannah 2004 on the male cosmetic use of red ochre in ancient Greece.
104 Wyke 1994: 137.
Several features of Philematium’s toilette evoke architectural resonance. Kelly Olson explains that

the materials that women used to paint themselves were often the tints used by ancient artists. Soot or ash, used by women to line their eyes, was also collected and used by fresco painters; melinum and white lead were employed as paints . . . . This is intriguing in view of the fact that it is possible to view the Roman woman of love elegy as an artistic construction, something noted by several scholars. She literally constructed herself as an art object using even the same materials as artists.¹⁰⁵

Mostellaria provides evidence of how early this type of image entered Roman literature. Philematium demands to be given make-up of cerussa (white lead) and purpurissum (purple powder), two substances also used to decorate domestic walls (Mos. 264; 261).¹⁰⁶ Refusing to give Philematium these colours, Scapha responds, ‘you want to spruce up a most charming work with new paint?’ (nova pictura interpolare vis opus lepidissimum?, 262). Later, in the tour of Simo’s aedes, a pictum is mentioned as a feature of the domestic decoration (832).¹⁰⁷ Scapha seeks to dissuade Philematium from looking at a mirror; she explains that only women unsure of their looks and age should consult mirrors. Philematium will be the mirror’s mirror (251). The use of the mirror to verify good looks also appears in the adulation of the newly purchased house (642).

The dialogue during Philematium’s toilette exposes the special status accorded to domestic expolitiones, which are a long-term financial investment. Philematium’s beauty, Scapha repeatedly reminds her, will fade (196; 202). The old nurse warns the young courtesan to beware the inevitable change in Philolaches’ affections that will result: as soon as Scapha’s hair began to change colour, her own lover deserted her (201). Unlike the disintegration of the house in Philolaches’ canticum, set in motion by negligence, the decline in Philematium’s appearance is inevitable, no matter how much care she puts into it.

By juxtaposing the imagery of domestic and cosmetic ornamentation, Plautus portrays the house and the courtesan as competing objects of expenditure.¹⁰⁸ If Philematium’s toilette, which her maid sarcastically

¹⁰⁷ This picture has no physical presence; rather, Tranio invents it as a ruse and an allegory. Leach 1969: 327–328 argues that both the subject of the picture (a vulture and crows) and its form are uncharacteristic of domestic wall paintings of the second century BCE. Cf. also Knapp 1917: 143–148; Bettini 1999: 171–172; Germany 2016: 104.
¹⁰⁸ Perhaps in order to highlight the disparity between courtesans’ make-up and architectural adornment, Plautus avoids expolire when describing Philematium’s activities; exornare appears instead (168).
invites her to undertake as a wedding preparation (224–226), fails to accomplish its goal, it is because the senex and mercator Theopropides, the ultimate financial arbiter, while happy to spend on a house, does not see the same financial benefit in investing in a courtesan (970–980). In the study of the decoration of the body and house, Mostellaria cannot provide definitive testimony to a particular event or view. When read alongside the other second-century textual evidence, however, Mostellaria suggests intensity and sophistication in middle-Republican deliberation on domestic sumptuousness. Rather than advancing a uniform moral stance or solution to the issue of luxury building, Mostellaria draws our attention to the fact that spending large sums on a house, unlike the very Greek vices of wine, women and song, was at times considered both a sound investment and compatible with other Roman moral virtues.

Second-century sources reveal that the idea of the house as a potential site of sumptuary vice developed early. But the comedy of Mostellaria only strikes a chord within a culture where the nature of architectural ornament – and its relation to other forms of extravagance – is contested, not fixed. Indeed, the same audiences that nodded along with Cato the Elder’s moralising against luxury building may have also encouraged and participated in a counter-discourse that placed positive value on architectural refinement. In Plautus’ world, those who believe that exhausting resources on an embellished house is nothing like going into debt by beautifying your girlfriend are ridiculous; but no less so are those who rank interior decorating alongside whoring as a vice of excess, a way of ‘playing the Greek’. Various moral stances are tried on and discarded, but the main thrust of Plautus’ commentary is humorously ironic: Mostellaria pokes fun at the triumph of materialism over morality. By flirting with both sides, Mostellaria may beg a question that this rich debate over architectural decorum prompts in our minds, as well: why exactly were costly materials in home decor never a target of sumptuary legislation?

Houses and Elite Self-Presentation in the First Century BCE

The continuation of these centuries-long moral debates into the first century BCE and beyond is nowhere clearer than in the antitheses Roman

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109 Erich Gruen takes the right approach in stressing that ‘relevant allusions in the plays are plentiful, not so much disguised as indirect. Plautus did not reproduce current events, but called attention to their implications.’ Cf. Gruen 1990: 126.
authors establish between appropriate and inappropriate display. What is the limit at which finery becomes opulence? Cornelius Nepos, describing Atticus’ approach to domestic architecture, distinguishes between *elegantia* (a positive assessment) and *magnificentia* (a negative one):

Elegans, non magnificus; splendidus, non sumptuosus: omnisque diligentia munditiam, non afluentiam affectabat. Supellex modica, non multa, ut in neutram partem conspici posset.

He was of good taste, not pretentious; illustrious, not extravagant; and all exertion was in the pursuit of elegance, not opulence. His furniture was reasonable, not profuse, so that it could be cited for neither quality. (*Att. 13*)

Throughout this series of antitheses, Nepos uses abstract terms (rather than concrete descriptions of what Atticus has or has not) to portray Atticus’ propriety. The house is, naturally, a reflection of the man: ‘Although he was very rich, no man was less inclined to excess in buying and in building’ (*Nam cum esset pecuniosus, nemo illo minus fuit emax, minus aedificator, Att. 13*). This strategy of persuasion, which is somewhat circular in its logic, calls to mind the Romans’ frequent recourse to ideas of *decorum* in rhetorical and critical contexts. Cicero’s aforementioned comments on housing appear, in fact, within his discussion of *decorum*. The construction and embellishment of a house is, for Cicero, an aspect of elite Roman self-presentation, analogous to aspects of personal comportment such as speech and gait (which he discusses before houses). Cicero’s concern with overzealous building is not patrons’ overspending, but rather the instrumental use of domestic display to inflate (rather than simply mirror) the prestige of a homeowner: ‘*Dignitas* may be enhanced by the house, but not completely obtained from it; the proprietor should bestow honour upon his house, not the house upon its proprietor’ (*Oranda enim est dignitas domo, non ex domo tota quaerenda, nec domo dominus sed domino domus honestanda est, Off. 1.139*). Romans should not undertake home improvements as a substitute for necessary repairs and enhancements to their characters.

Cicero’s remarks in *Off. 1.138–140*, directed at the *homines honorati et principes* (138), *homines clari* (139) and *summi viri* (140), and exemplified by Cn. Octavius (138), Scaurus (138) and L. Lucullus (140), take pot

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110 Cf. Bek 1976 on antithesis in Roman moralising and rhetoric.
111 See further discussion of *decorum* in Chapter 4.
112 *Off. 1.138.*
113 *Off. 1.126–137.*
shots at those ‘very many who eagerly imitate the exploits of the great, particularly in this direction’ (Studiose enim plerique praesertim in hanc partem facta principum imitantur): Cicero asks, ‘who [emulates] the manliness of Lucius Lucullus, a first class man? But how many there are who emulate the magnificencia of his villas!’ (ut L. Luculli, summi viri, virtutem quis? at quam multi villarum magnificiam imitati!, Off. 1.140). It is not the immorality of luxury that arouses Cicero’s concern here, nor even the use of domestic display to further political careers. Instead, it is the failure of domestic opulence to compensate for other qualities befitting a politician. Therefore, while Octavius’ admirable career could be furthered by his stately dwelling, an even grander abode did nothing but draw attention to Scaurus’ political failures (Off. 1.138). Likewise, in Pro Sestio, Cicero laments the construction of a palace dwarfing the size of L. Lucullus’ Tuscan villa by Gabinius, who once invoked the size of this villa to stir up popular indignation (93).

Vitruvius portrays the house as an arena (and implement) of sociopolitical power and emphasises the importance of coherence between the form of a house and the kind of person who inhabits it. If De architectura has yet to interest scholars researching the complex negotiations of Roman elite identity formation and self-presentation, it is because the author’s specifications for domestic appropriateness appear to rely on inflexible formulas related to cultural distinctions and status, instead of variable, subjectively evaluated aspects of character. Vitruvius, like Cicero, evokes decor as a principle to guide domestic design. Vitruvius’ conception

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114 Cicero composed De officiis in the final year of his life (ca. September to December 44 BCE). While the addressee is his son Marcus and the style is more informal than many of his other writings, Cicero presumably intended a wide circulation for this moral/philosophical treatise on the attainment of the good life through citizenly conduct and the fulfilment of duties.

115 Romano 1994: 64 reads these statements as indications of awareness of the threat to social equilibrium that individual competitiveness creates in the long run.


117 Coarelli 1989: 179 argues moreover that Clodius, the subsequent owner of Scaurus’ house, is the ‘bersaglio ... non nominato, ma ben riconoscibile’ of Cicero’s polemic.


120 This extends beyond the status hierarchy: in 6.1, a Vitruvian ethnography explains differences in peoples’ characters by means of their climate. These ethnographical variations, he explains, should be reflected in houses. See further discussion in the Introduction.

121 Cf. 6.1 and the description of Greek houses as opposed to Roman ones in 6.7. Milnor 2005: 95–139 discusses Vitruvius’ division of Greek houses into male and female areas, as well. Another important distinction in De architectura’s descriptions of houses is rural versus urban.
of *decor*, like Cicero’s of *decorum*, relies on an idea of seemliness that has implications for personal ethics. In his discussion of *decor*, Vitruvius provides as an example the coherence of interiors that are *magnificus* with vestibules that are *elegans* (1.2.6). Then, in 6.5, when discussing the importance of coherence between owner and house, he not only recommends that his reader consult his description of *decor* in the first book (6.5.3), but also argues both that the homes of politicians should be constructed *ad decorem maiestatis* and that farm houses should cater to practical concerns rather than to the *decor elegantiae* (6.5.2). By introducing the concept of *decor*, Vitruvius advocates that houses should mirror their proprietors’ characters, rather than simply their professions.

Vitruvius’ jaundiced eye towards magnificent houses has escaped notice largely through misinterpretation of his conceptual terminology. Reconsideration of two pivotal concepts, *magnificentia* and *elegantia*, however, unveils the complexities of his position. During the late republic, *elegans* and *magnificus*, when referring to private possessions or personal characteristics, often expressed clear-cut judgement. Yet in *De architectura*, these words do not convey unmitigated praise or blame. Vitruvius’ frequent use of these terms in his discussion of private architecture likens him to other first-century authors (in his conceptual approach, if not in his particular understanding of vocabulary), because it demonstrates the architect’s unwillingness to evaluate the morality of a house except on a case-by-case basis.

**Magnificentia**

Throughout scholarship on the Roman house, Vitruvius and Cicero appear as proponents of concrete and enforceable housing principles, which are, for the most part, shared. However, Vitruvius’ approval of *magnificentia* in private homes seems anathema to Cicero’s remarks in *De officiis*:

> Vitruvius advocates incorporating the forms and grandeur of public building into domestic space; Cicero, on the other hand, admits that the house of a man of distinction should have requisite *commoditas* and *dignitas* (1.38), but makes it quite clear that the modesty

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122 See further discussion of *decor* and *decorum* in Chapter 4.

123 6.5.2: ‘But those who depend upon rural produce [have] stalls for cattle and shops in their entrance courts . . . and other buildings, which are for produce rather than for elegant effect’ (*Qui autem fructibus rusticis servient, in eorum vestibulis stabula, tabernae . . . ceteraque, quae ad fructus servandos magis quam ad elegantiae decorem possunt esse*).

of private buildings should stand apart from the splendour of public ones. Cicero states that

> Cavendum autem est, praesertim si ipse aedifices, ne extra modum sumptu et magnificentia prodeas, quo in genere multum mali etiam in exemplo est . . . Quarum quidem certe est adhibendus modus ad mediocritatemque revocandus.

One must be on guard, as well, especially if building for oneself, not to exceed the limit of expense and magnificentia, since through this much harm is done, especially in the example set . . . Some limit certainly should be set and recalled to moderation. (Off. 1.1.40)

What, precisely, is the limit of expense and magnificentia that Cicero recommends? It is often assumed that the orator condones opulence serving the public good, but condemns magnificentia when it is only for private display. A keystone in this argument is the Ciceronian declaration that ‘the Roman people hate private luxury; they love public magnificence’ (Odit populus Romanus privatam luxuriam, publicam magnificentiam diligit, Mur. 76). This statement, however, should not be interpreted as a universally valid maxim – it has a clear argumentative context. The orator’s principal aim is to condemn frugality in domestic decor, when a private home hosts a public funeral. Ciceronian publica magnificentia, in other words, can occur in a domestic setting.

Moreover, despite the negative connotations Cicero attributes to magnificentia in houses, he himself does not condemn private architectural grandeur across the board. Instead, Cicero’s attitude towards grand homes, like his outlook on art collecting, depends on the context of his remarks. In the passage of De officiis so often paired with Vitr. 1.2.9 and 6.5, for example, Cicero ardently condemns Scaurus’ house (Off. 1.1.48). Yet years earlier, as we read in a fragment of the Pro Scauro preserved in Asconius’ first-century CE commentary, Cicero defended the very same house ‘especially since the proximity and openness of the site eliminates suspicion of idleness or greed’ (praeertim cum propinquitas

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126 While it once was common to imagine Roman attitudes towards art as divided into two camps, whom Pollitt 1978 dubs ‘Catonians’ and ‘connoisseurs’, recent analyses stress the individual Roman’s flexibility to espouse a range of views. Whitmarsh 2009: 121 explains, ‘the distinction was not so much between pro- and anti-Hellenists . . . but between different strategies of imperial domination over Greece’. On Cicero’s varying attitudes to art, see Marvin 1989; Leen 1991; Frazel 2005; Marvin 2008: 235–237; Miles 2008: 105–217.
et celebritas loci suspicionem desidiae tollat aut cupiditatis, Sc. 26C\(^{128}\). Asconius, seemingly ignorant of Cicero’s loaded use of the term *magnificus* (or perhaps with a knowing jab at the orator’s inconsistency), describes this as the passage ‘where he defends the fact that Scaurus has such a *magnificus* house’ (*quo loco defendit, quod tam magnificam domum Scaurus habet, Sc. 26C*).

It is true that Vitruvius persistently equates private buildings with public. The treatise proposes similar laws to regulate their expense (10. praef.1–2) and even suggests that Augustus has a concern that private buildings, as well as public ones, will express the grandeur of the Roman state (1.praef.3). But it is not true that this creates some kind of critical immunity for private building. *De architectura* may never explicitly disparage *magnificentia* – indeed Vitruvius’ encouragement of a rather widespread use of it is apparent in his endorsement of *magnifica vestibula, tablina* and *atria* in the homes of patrons (6.5.1) – but the treatise often identifies limitations to its value. One indication of Vitruvius’ ambivalent attitude towards both *magnificentia* and *elegantia* in architecture (as discussed presently) is his failure to define either of these terms: these two frequently occurring concepts, unlike many, remain without gloss.\(^{129}\) On the basis of its role within the text, however, it is clear that *magnificentia*,\(^{130}\) for Vitruvius, refers to the impressive appearance that a building gains through the addition of costly materials.\(^{131}\) J. J. Pollitt contends that Vitruvius’ use of the terms *magnificus* and *magnificentia*, which ‘do not occur frequently in the criticism of the visual arts but are very common in the stylistic vocabulary of writers on rhetoric . . . has no connection with stylistic criticism and is probably not to be connected with *megaloprepeia*’, the Greek rhetorical term for a lofty manner, which became the Latin *magnificentia*.\(^{132}\) However, even if there is no direct correspondence between Vitruvian *magnificentia* and the rhetorical variety, the centrality of this and other rhetorically meaningful terms to *De architectura*’s

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\(^{128}\) This section numbering follows Lewis 2006.

\(^{129}\) In the first book, for instance, Vitruvius outlines the meanings of concepts such as *symmetria* (1.2.4), *eurythmia* (1.2.3) and *decor* (1.2.5–7).

\(^{130}\) The only occasions in the treatise when *magnificentia* does not explicitly relate to expensive ornamentation are 10.1.2, when it describes the performance of a traction machine, and 2.1.2, when it denotes the magnificence of the heavens. (N.B. the term does not appear in the astronomical and astrological descriptions in Book 9.)

\(^{131}\) Pollitt 1974: 401 concurs that ‘Vitruvius uses *magnificentia* . . . to refer to the magnificence which can be produced in a building by the use of costly materials.’

\(^{132}\) Pollitt 1974: 401. Quintilian presents *magnificentia* as a translation of the Greek *megaloprepeia* (Inst. 4.2.61). Cf. the Greek and Latin rhetorical sources listed in Pollitt 1974: 196–198 (entry on *megaloprepeia*) and 1974: 401 (entry on *magnificus*).
architectural vocabulary enhances the impression of architecture as analogous to other forms of knowledge pertinent to the Roman elite reader.\textsuperscript{133} 

Magnificientia, which contributes to a building’s (and thus an architect’s) popularity and lasting fame, is the outcome of a patron’s expenditure.\textsuperscript{134} Like his criticisms of the unfair advantages architects gain through political sponsorship, Vitruvius’ conflicted relationship with magnificentia can best be understood in the context of his statements about patronage, self-promotion and the nobilitas.\textsuperscript{135} Just as he provides the names of talented artists who, on account of their lack of a powerful patron, remain in unfair obscurity (3.praef.2), Vitruvius also recognises the work of Gaius Mucius, who finished off Marius’ Temple of Honour and Virtue,\textsuperscript{136} but, because he did not work in marble, missed out on the fame he deserved:

> Id vero si marmoreum fuisset, ut haberet, quemadmodum ab arte subtilitatem, sic ab magnificentia et impensis auctoritatem, in primis et summis operibus nominaretur.

But certainly if it had been made of marble, so as to have auctoritas on account of its magnificentia and costliness, as much as [it has] subtilitas from craftsmanship, it would be named among the first-class buildings. (7.praef.17)

The idea that flashy display signifies charlatanism is so well established in De architectura that the author takes pains to mention when magnificentia is more than skin deep. The preface to Book 7 characterises a building bankrolled by King Antiochus and built by Cossutius as ‘a work renowned on account of its magnificence not only among the crowd but also among experts’ (opus non modo volgo, sed etiam in paucis a magnificentia nominatur, 7.praef.15). This overtly positive assessment may imply a more critical corollary: crowd-pleasing magnificentia sometimes fails to impress the more discerning. As in the preface to Book 6, fame or popularity alone (guaranteed by the architect’s political patronage) is not an indication of architectural acumen.

De architectura also positions magnificentia unambiguously outside of the sphere of architectural responsibility. Book 6 introduces a variety of rules for successful domestic architectural construction. Yet its conclusion

\textsuperscript{133} See further discussion of De architectura and rhetoric in Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{134} The treatise also suggests, however, that columns devoid of their customary and expensive ornament can provide the appearance of auctoritas and costly magnificentia to a building (5.1.10).
\textsuperscript{135} See Chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{136} Cf. 3.2.5 with Richardson 1992: 190 on the Aedes Mariana, Honos et Virtus, which is known only from textual sources.
renounces responsibility for the result: architects do not have final control over which materials are used, owing to the limitations of availability and the whim of the dominus (6.8.9).\(^{137}\) Judgement of houses therefore should distinguish between three different and discrete elements: refinement (through fine craftsmanship), magnificence and architectural composition (fabrili subtilitate et magnificentia et dispositione, 6.8.9). The first of these is the craftsman’s responsibility, the second the patron’s, and the third the architect’s. Therefore, ‘when a work looks magnificent, the outgoings under the patron’s control are commended’ (cum magnificenter opus perfectum aspicietur a domini potestate, inpensae laudabuntur, 6.8.9). The detachment of the architect from these decisions also expiates him from blame as a potential accomplice to extravagant construction. This disavowal establishes the architect as an informed but disinterested party, a critic able to engage in the equivocation and impracticable moralising characteristic of his time.

Since De architectura does not tout magnificentia as an altogether positive feature of architecture, it is misleading to use this term as the basis for an argument that Vitruvius, unlike Cicero, unreservedly condones architectural displays of private wealth. The case of magnificentia thus provides a caveat against comparative analyses that do not consider Vitruvius’ often idiosyncratic application of Latin vocabulary.\(^{138}\) The terms aedificatio and aedificator, for instance, which some other first-century authors employ as insults,\(^{139}\) do not have a negative tone in the treatise.\(^{140}\) In order to comprehend Cicero’s and Vitruvius’ views of private architectural luxury, however, we must consider them as part of a larger Roman conception of private architectural construction as an arena of social performance in which failure or success was often unpredictable.

Elegantia

As we have seen in the case of magnificentia, an individual word could accommodate a range of possible moral judgements. Thus, even when Vitruvius’ hierarchical schema of houses aligns levels of grandeur with

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\(^{137}\) Judging by Vitruvius’ use of dominus in the preceding sentence to denote the patron of the building, I assume that this dominus is the patron, as well, and not the architect.

\(^{138}\) Bek 1976: 156 reasons that ‘his heterogeneous terminology is evidence of heavy dependence on disparate models, and incidentally, of his rather low degree of linguistic competence.’


\(^{140}\) For example, Vitruvius specifies in 6.6.7 that he has explained methods of domestic construction so that they will be known to aedificatores.
positions in society, the author also implies that this grandeur may have serious failings. The connotations of Vitruvian elegantia, in fact, provide further confirmation of this. The concept of elegantia, which appears twice in relation to decor within Vitruvius’ discussion of houses, conveys the impression that the evaluation of domestic display is variable and subjective.\(^\text{141}\) Vitruvian elegantia denotes high refinement, whether of a literary work (5.praef.1; 7.praef.15) or the carving of sculpture (2.7.4; 4.1.10).\(^\text{142}\) Vitruvius, like Nepos, considers elegans a term in close proximity to magnificent. But instead of setting them in opposition, as Nepos does in Atticus, Vitruvius treats the two as complementary. Houses with magnificent interiors, for example, should have vestibules constructed with elegantia (1.2.6).

Across De architectura, the moral implications of elegantia and magnificentia are roughly similar.\(^\text{143}\) Vitruvius devotes the entirety of Book 7 to the expolitiones (finishing touches) of domestic architecture, but – unlike in any other volume – even before the book begins he mentions the vitia that often compromise this aspect of architecture (6.8.10). The conclusion to Book 6, foreshadowing the subsequent book, states, ‘I will now explain in the following book about the finishing touches (de expolitionibus), how they can be elegant without faults (elegantes et sine vitis) for a long time (ad vetustatem).’\(^\text{144}\) The position of the modifying phrase sine vitis alongside elegantia suggests the capacity of an elegant appearance to conceal, or perhaps even condition, flaws.

\(^{141}\) This could also be true of mætias, which, like regalis, mentioned previously, denotes a degree of power that Romans usually considered inappropriate for private citizens. Cf. Romano 1994: 64. In both of these cases, however, morally ambiguous connotations seem difficult to prove. Nowhere in the treatise does the possession of mætias or the quality of being regalis appear in an unmistakably negative evaluation.

\(^{142}\) Elegans, elegantia and eleganter appear a total of twenty-two times in the treatise, most frequently in Books 1 and 7. Elegantia can suggest a refined or advanced state in many contexts, e.g., 1.1.13 (advanced understanding of an academic subject); 1.1.16 (finely executed work, undertaken by the hand of an expert). Cf. also its use in the definitions of dispositio (1.2.2), decor (1.2.6), and venustas (1.3.2).

\(^{143}\) The town of Mytilene is constructed magnificenter ... et eleganter, but it is poorly located (1.6.1). Across De architectura, inattention to location is a common sign of architectural imprudence.

\(^{144}\) The preservation of ancestral decor could have moral significance. Compare Atticus’ care for his house in Nepos’ biography. As a homeowner, Atticus’ concern is to safeguard his patrimony: ‘for the structure itself was ancient and had more taste than luxury. In it he renovated nothing, unless compelled by its age’ (ipsum enim tectum antiquitus constitutum plus salis quam sumptus habebat. in quo nihil commutavit, nisi si quid vetustate coactus est, Att. 13).

\(^{145}\) In 7.praef.18, however, Vitruvius presents the expolitiones in less threatening terms: ‘in this book on the finishing touches, which has the seventh number, I will explain through which rules they might be able to have attractiveness and durability’ (in hoc, qui septimum tenet numerum, de expolitionibus, quibus rationibus et vetustatem et firmitatem habere possint, exponam).
Likewise, in Book 7, vitia accompany elegantia in Vitruvius’ parable of a painter Apaturius of Alabanda, who hoodwinks the Trallians (in present-day Turkey) with an elegans manus (7.5.5). At the conclusion of this tale, Vitruvius implies that enthusiasm for elegantia has brought disaster on the Romans and Trallians alike: Foolish Romans condone painting that is elegans without sufficient attention to its rationes, because they are bewitched by the elegans species of expensive colours (7.5.7). Later in this book, Faberius scriba’s attempt to achieve a domus eleganter expolita by painting with expensive vermilion similarly fails on account of his inattention to architectural principles. Elegantia, a quality of surface appearance, has social cachet, but unbridled enthusiasm for its effect courts disaster.

Recognition of elegantia’s dual resonance opens our eyes to yet more ambivalence within Vitruvius’ encouragement of domestic finery. In 6.5.2, for instance, Vitruvius allocates spaces that are elegantiora et spatiosiora to pleaders (forenses) and to those who are adept at speaking (diserti). This should be read in the context of Vitruvius’ suspicion of rhetorical skill, which he suggests can easily disguise intellectual and moral shortcomings. Elegance and eloquence are a well-matched pair. Given De architectura’s sympathy with agrarian values, Vitruvius’ reference to rooms in rural homes ‘that are able to be more for accommodating the harvest than for the appearance of elegantia’ (quaes ad fructus servandos magis quam ad elegantiae decorum possunt esse, 6.5.2) could have a positive moral slant.

Vitruvius was not alone in using morally ambiguous vocabulary. In the Roman Republic, as Brian Krostenko has revealed, ‘much of the weight of the perennial clash of style and substance, politics and performance, form and content, fell on a set of approbative terms.’ These words convey a great deal about how antitheses between the appropriate and inappropriate developed and transformed during the period. Terms such as lepidus and facetus, which initially carried connotations of over-refinement, underwent an intermediate stage (in the middle to late Republic) when they functioned either as compliments or slights, before finally losing all negative connotations by the end of the first century BCE. Elegantia, I would argue, conveys the same qualities for Vitruvius as it did for the other Latin

146 This episode forms the subject of Chapter 4.
147 See discussion in Chapter 5. N.B. a purpura made from whortleberries and milk is elegans without being expensive in 7.14.2.
148 See discussion in Chapter 4. 149 Krostenko 2001b: xi.
150 Socio-political connotations of Vitruvius’ approbative language are considered in an Augustan context in McEwen 2003 and Masterson 2004 (see especially the latter’s discussion of venustus).
authors of the middle and late Republic.\textsuperscript{151} Krostenko suggests that while early authors such as Plautus and Cato considered \textit{elegans} a slur (laying stress on the undesirability of being ‘choosy’), ‘by the late Republic, however, \textit{elegan(s)} is distinctly ameliorative . . . with aestheticism on the rise as a means of expressing social identity, the social construction of “careful aesthetic choice” changed.’\textsuperscript{152} Vitruvius’ \textit{De architectura} is not included in Krostenko’s study of \textit{elegantia}, but if it were, the treatise would demonstrate a longer endurance for the ambiguity of \textit{elegantia}.\textsuperscript{153} Vitruvian \textit{elegantia}, in other words, is steeped in Republican tradition.

Analysis of the concept of \textit{elegantia} reveals that Vitruvius conceives of domestic display in terms of socially and morally unstable acts. In the subsequent chapters of this book, I will demonstrate that \textit{De architectura} attempts to overhaul this system of complex negotiations by positioning architectural rectitude as the sole determinant of correctness. However, before that argument unfolds, the next section of this chapter establishes the role of authorial self-fashioning in Vitruvius’ housing commentary. The elaboration of Vitruvius’ persona in these passages appears all the more pronounced when compared with similar authorial strategies in both Cicero and Horace. These three authors, in order to advance conceptions of society that complement their authorial personae, exploit the malleability of the Roman ‘rules’ of domestic appropriateness and the range of character traits magnificent houses could convey.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Domestic Display and Authorial Self-Fashioning}
\end{center}

In his use of domestic moralising as a means of oblique authorial self-fashioning, Vitruvius expands upon Roman literary conventions. To see how this is so, let us return once again to Cicero’s \textit{De officiis}. Cicero, when presenting the relationship between \textit{decorum} and the Roman house, provides two contemporary case studies to clarify his remarks:

\textit{These studies argue that Vitruvius’ commentary draws on emerging cultural paradigms specific to the principate.\textsuperscript{154} Vitruvius’ ambiguous use of his own set of approbative terms is similar to that of Cicero, Catullus and the other authors of Krostenko’s intermediate stage. However, with the exception of \textit{elegantia}, we lack firm evidence that Vitruvius uses the buzz-words that Krostenko identifies in their works in a similarly double-edged way.\textsuperscript{155} Krostenko 2001b: 38. For his discussion of \textit{elegantia}, see Krostenko 2001b: esp. 35–38.\textsuperscript{156} Based on semantic analysis, Krostenko 2001b: 25 argues that \textit{elegans} ‘would not be far in sense from English “choosy”’; Krostenko’s survey of the term in its Latin literary contexts reveals that ‘for its whole life, and certainly in its earliest attestations, \textit{elegans} is especially connected to aesthetic choices, such as personal comportment or artwork.’ Cf. Pollitt 1974: 363–365 and Krostenko 2001b: 34 on the relationship to \textit{eligere} (to select (or extract)).}
Cn. Octavio, qui primus ex illa familia consul factus est, honori fuisse accepimus quod praeclaram aedificasset in Palatio et plenam dignitatis domum . . . Itaque ille in suam domum consulatum primus attulit, hic, summi et clarissimi viri filius, in domum multiplicantam non repulsam solum rettulit sed ignominiam etiam et calamitatem.

We have heard that Gnaeus Octavius, the first of that family to be made a consul, distinguished himself by building upon the Palatine a splendid and dignified house . . . [Octavius], then, was the first to bring the honour of a consulship to his house; but [Scaurus], though the son of a very great and illustrious man, brought upon the same house, when expanded, not only rejection, but disgrace and ruin. (Off. 1.138)

Filippo Coarelli provides political reasons for why these particular individuals appear as Cicero’s exempla and attributes similar motivations to Vitruvius: the homes of known historical figures of the late Republic, Coarelli argues, formed the models for De architectura’s (anonymous) archetypal housing plans.154 While Coarelli’s individual points are more speculative, their basis is sound: De architectura’s endowment of both palatial proportions (‘princely vestibules, lofty halls and very spacious peristyles, woods and broad walkways completed in a majestic manner’, vestibula regalia, alta atria et peristylia amplissima, silvae ambulationesque laxiores ad decorem maiestatis perfectae) and public functions (‘public assemblies, as well as private trials and arbitrations’, publica consilia et privata iudicia arbitriariaque) upon the Roman house likely represents a response to and justification of the use of domestic space by the ‘nuovi dinasti’ of the late Republic (6.5.2).155 Vitruvius’ self-fashioning also shapes these observations. Given Cicero’s own interests, it is unsurprising that he applauds the home of a novus homo of good character.156 Vitruvius’ criticism of domestic display is likewise refracted through his own prism.157

154 Coarelli 1989 argues that the domestic dimensions Vitruvius proffers in Book 6 are neither ideal nor arbitrary, but rather follow Scaurus’ house plan (181–182). He also suggests that Vitruvius’ reference to the staging of public functions in private space (6.5.2) is an allusion to Clodius’ funeral, which occurred within the atrium of Scaurus’ (former) house (184–185).

155 Coarelli 1989: 178 argues that Vitruvius, almost certainly aligned with the partes Caesarianae and therefore with the partes Clodianae, had a vested interest in confirming – and even advocating – the increasing grandeur and politicisation of the houses of strongmen during the triumviral period.

156 Coarelli 1989: 178; Dwyer 1991: 32. See Dugan 2005; van der Blom 2010 on how Cicero’s speeches draw upon and develop the potential of novitas to serve as a positive attribute in Roman political self-fashioning.

157 Dwyer 1991: 32–33 holds a contrary position: ‘It is significant that Cicero, an upwardly mobile novus homo in Rome’s socially stratified society, and Vitruvius, an “objective” architectural theorist, both based their justifications on the social function of the domus.’ I borrow the optical turn of phrase from Whitmarsh 2009: 115.
Vitruvius prefaces his book on domestic architecture with the lengthiest account of his background and personal characteristics in the treatise (6.praef.4–7). This pairing of self-fashioning with private architecture seems no coincidence. Vitruvius’ authorial concerns set the agenda for both the issues and the opinions that shape Book 6. The distinction between patrons and clients forms the central axis that bifurcates the homeowners of *De architectura*, as well as the architects (6.praef.5): vestibules, *tablinae* and atria that are *magnifici* are not necessary for those of middling station (*qui communi sunt fortuna*); the common man spends his hours in the lofty halls of his patron (6.5.1). Yet while the architect’s claim to be solicited, rather than to solicit clients, includes him among the patrons for whom a magnificent dwelling would be appropriate, many aspects of Vitruvius’ self-fashioning distance the author from domestic grandeur. Vitruvius, as we have seen, vehemently rejects wealth and eloquence, two attributes reflected by a heightened domestic display.

Moreover, both Vitruvius’ ambivalence towards *elegantia* and *magnificentia* and his modest, unostentatious self-representation derive from the same source: suspicions of wealth and artifice. We have already seen that the architect’s criticism of *magnificentia* forms part of his objection to the formula for architectural success, through which eye-catching charlatans triumph over those who have deeper knowledge. Vitruvius’ denial of artifice takes various forms: in the second preface, as we have seen, Vitruvius contrasts Dinocrates’ impressive physical appearance with his own; in Book 7, the author distinguishes his own sound reasoning from the superficial deceptions of rhetoric and painting. This self-fashioning as a man of substance, not style, forswears the presence of sophistry in Vitruvius’ book or person. Vitruvius’ apology for the coarseness of

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158 The theme of the preface is that education has greater value than monetary wealth. Vitruvius allies his persona with the patrons of domestic architecture both by demonstrating shared aspects of their backgrounds and values and by warning these patrons of the dangers of uneducated architects, charlatans easily identified by their aggressive pursuit of commissions. Cf. my discussion of this preface in Chapter 2 and in the Epilogue.


159 In Vitr. 1.2.9, buildings are disposed ‘in accordance with their level of wealth or lofty enough to suit the most dignified eloquence (*ad eloquentiae dignitatem*)’. *Dignitas* is a quality Vitruvius never avows. In fact, he claims that Dinocrates’ possession of *dignitas* advances his career in a way that the author can only attempt through composition of his treatise (2.praef.4). The anticipated success of *De architectura* provides solace for Vitruvius’ lack of Dinocratean *praesidia* (2.praef.4) and the *notities* of other architects (6.praef.5). Cf. also 3.praef.3. Book publication is never a source of income in *De architectura*. Books are the material incarnation of knowledge, associated with characters like Aristophanes the librarian (7.praef.5–7) who value only the accumulation of *scientia*. The composition of *De architectura* is a public service (6.praef.7).

Cf. also 3.praef.3.

160 See my discussion in Chapter 4.
De architectura’s language, which lacks elegantia, serves a related purpose (5.praef.1–2).

Authorial self-representation is similarly at issue in Horace’s Carm. 2.15, which condemns an ostensibly contemporary fashion for princely mansions (regiae\textsuperscript{163} moles, Carm. 2.15.1–2) that contradicts ancestral Roman values: ‘among these men, private property was slight, the public domain was vast’ (privatus illis census erat brevis, | commune magnum, Carm. 2.15.13–14).\textsuperscript{164} Though the Augustan agenda might well have encouraged Horace’s and Vitruvius’ statements,\textsuperscript{165} overemphasis of this specific political context discounts the prevalence of very similar statements well before the princeps’ rise to power.\textsuperscript{166} The means by which Horace ‘widens the issue from the destruction of agricultural land to private self-seeking in general\textsuperscript{167} in the latter half of the poem, for instance, provokes comparison with Mentula’s destruction of land and profit-seeking in Catullus’ poetry.\textsuperscript{168}

What is more, Carm. 2.15 is but one of many comments on domestic luxury within Horace’s poetry. The topos of the ‘ambitious builder’ occurs often in Horace’s oeuvre.\textsuperscript{169} Examples include Carm. 2.18.17–19: ‘at death’s edge you contract to cut marble and pile up houses, forgetting the grave’ (tu secunda marmora | locas sub ipsum funus et sepulcri | immemor struis domos) and Carm. 3.1.33–37: ‘the fishes feel the water squeezed by

\textsuperscript{163} As mentioned previously, the censorious use of regius vel sim. in contexts like this has raised questions about Vitruvius’ use of the term regalis in 6.5.2. While Coarelli 1989 and Romano 1994 suggest that such language was admissible for the triumvirs, Galinsky 1996: 186, who reads the passage in an Augustan context, can find no explanation: ‘the Roman animus against kings and their trappings did not apply here’. Two alternatives occur to me: either Vitruvius intends to convey some disapproval, or the treatise’s continual reference to the age of Hellenistic kingship renders the expression less politically pointed.

\textsuperscript{164} Carm. 2.15 has often been read as Augustan political ideology in verse. Milnor 2005: 121, for example, argues that ‘building privately, to the extent that it might signify a kind of spatial hoarding, was anathema to the new regime’s preferred forms of self-representation. We may note, for instance, texts such as Ode 2.15, whose profound connection with Augustan ideology have long been recognized.’ West 1998: 109 alleges that ‘it has no addressee, but everyone would have known it was about Augusus’. Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 243 explain, ‘by implication he favours Augustan ideology by denouncing the magnificence of independent noblemen and by recommending the public construction of fortifications and temples.’

\textsuperscript{165} Disparaging opulent houses, the authors would seem to promote the funding of public building projects in proportion to the maiestas imperii. Such statements certainly would have been on message: Pliny attributes to Marcus Agrippa an oration urging that all paintings and statues be put on public view, and Seneca credits him with erecting in the city such great structures that not only were they more magnificent than anything previously constructed, but also they were impossible to surpass subsequently (Plin. Nat. 35.26; Sen. Ben. 3.32.4).

\textsuperscript{166} Cf. Edwards 1993: 139–140, who recognises that Carm. 2.15’s ‘cluster of ideas characterises many attacks on luxurious buildings’ – not just the moralising of the Augustan age.

\textsuperscript{167} Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 243.

\textsuperscript{168} See my discussion in the Epilogue.

\textsuperscript{169} Whitehorne 1969; Peary 1977.
the piers tossed into the sea; down here they sink their rubble, the contractor, crowding with slaves, and the landowner who spurns the land’ (contracta pisces aequora sentiunt | iactis in altum molibus; huc frequens | caementa demittit redemptor | cum famulis dominusque terrae | fastidiosus). These poems argue for the futility of the pursuit of wealth and the equality of all men in the hands of the Fates. Horace’s contribution to the poetic tradition on such themes lies in his use of abstract *topoi* to advance his self-fashioning.

It is worth noting that before mentioning his own modest Sabine villa, Horace does not devote much space to condemnation of domestic architecture. The sumptuous house relies on the antithetical presence of the Sabine villa, and vice versa. Often, the two antithetical abodes appear together in the same poem. The extravagant house is associated with boundless ambition, the Sabine villa with moderation and contentment. Disparity between the two is clear at the end of *Carm. 3.1:*

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quodsi dolentem nec Phrygius lapis
   nec purpurarum sidere clarior
delenit usus nec Falerna
   vitis Achaemeniumque costum,
cur invidendis postibus et novo
   sublime ritu molar atrium?
cur valle permutem Sabina
   divitias operosiores?
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But if neither Phrygian marble nor the wearing of purple brighter than a star, nor the Falernian vine, nor Persian nard brings solace to the aggrieved, why should I erect a lofty hall in the new style with enviable columns? Why should I exchange my Sabine dale for more laborious riches? (41–48)

The house decorated with marble goes hand in hand with the wearing of purple, the political associations of which are magnified through the presence

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170 Ep. 1.1.83–87 also portrays architectural constructions impinging upon the sea.

171 Pearcy 1977: 778 (owing much to Whitehorne) summarises the prevailing reading of the poet’s repeated recourse to architectural imagery thus: ‘Horace treats two familiar and related themes: that all men are equal before Fate, and (this being the case) that wealth is no guarantee of happiness.’ Elsner 1993: 52 similarly focusses on universal, rather than personal, concerns: ‘In Horace’s verse, architecture emerged as a poetic metaphor, evoking the futility of opposing death and the unnatural extravagance of contemporary society.’ Elsner also argues that Horace, through his domestic imagery, argues for the greater worth of poetic over architectural composition. On Horace’s attitudes toward architectural display (and art collecting) cf. also Hardie 1993; Laird 1996; Leach 2004.

172 See discussion of Horace’s authorial persona in Chapter 2.

173 There are passing allusions to the socio-political aspect of the Roman *domus* in Horace’s first book of satires (such as the knocking of clients at the door of a lawyer in S. 1.1), but no descriptions of extreme houses.
of clarus. Another poem, S. 2.6, opens with a eulogy of Horace’s Sabine farm (S. 2.6.1–7) and ends with the parable of the country mouse and city mouse (S. 2.6.79–117). The rich city mouse, entertained at the poor burrow of the country mouse, disdains the humble surroundings and tempts his friend to sample the delights of the city. In Aesop’s fable, there is no description of the city mouse’s house. Horace endows his city mouse with a locuples domus, replete with ivory couches, covered in rich scarlet. This murine social call ends abruptly, however, at the sudden and violent entrance of dogs into the house, suggesting the city mouse’s vulnerability to his superiors and, more generally, the political turmoil of city life. The country mouse’s Epicurean exclamation, ‘I don’t need this kind of life’ encapsulates the Horatian response to magnificent domestic architecture and the financial and political ambitions it represents.

Analysis of Horace’s poetry enhances our appreciation of the self-congratulatory nature of Vitruvius’ domestic descriptions by drawing attention to the single set of values that, in each author’s work, provoke both the author’s disavowal of wealth and ambition and his criticism of magnificent houses. In the works of all three authors – Vitruvius, Cicero and Horace – criticism of domestic display and authorial self-fashioning have an interdependent relationship. In light of this fact, these authors appear to be proponents of partisan and particularised

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174 See West 1975, for discussion of differences between Horace’s version of the story and Aesop’s (domestic architecture goes unmentioned). Cf. also Oliensis 1998: 49–51 on the relationship of this parable to Horace’s Sabine farm; Sullivan 2016: 89–90 on Horace’s relationship with Aesop. Harrison 2013: 164–166 argues that, through the pairing of country mouse and city mouse, both of which exhibit behaviours characteristic of the poet, Horace’s gives voice to two discordant elements of his authorial persona.

175 Horace’s moralising against domestic sumptuousness contains an allusion to the author’s status as an ignotus, as well. Outside of S. 1.6 (discussed in Chapter 2), the only Horatian self-description as ignotus appears in Carm. 2.18, in which the poet, expounding on his humble lifestyle, makes the claim: ‘no ivory or gold panel gleams in my house, nor do beams of Hymettian marble rest on columns mined in farthest Africa, nor as the ignotus heir of Attalus do I inhabit a palace’ (Non ebur neque aureum | mea renidet in domo lacunar, | non trabes Hymettiae | premunt columnas ultima recitas | Africa, neque Attali | ignotus heres regiam occupavi, Carm. 2.18.1–6). While Bennett 1999: 157 reads the use of ignotus here as referring to the fact that Horace ‘unwittingly’ acquires this mansion, Garrison 1991: 286, following Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 295, argues that ‘Horace means he has not taken possession of a palatial mansion as if he were some long-lost heir (ignotus heri) in a comedy.’ Gransden 1994: 45 counters that ‘ignotus is surely predicative (“unexpectedly”). But the meaning of ignotus present in S. 1.6 may have echoes here, as well. If the poem refers to the benefaction of Pergamene King Attalus III, who made the Roman people heir to his estate in 133 BCE, Horace was in fact as much Attalus’ heir as the next Roman. His failure to live in quasi-regal splendour, like so many of his Roman contemporaries (cf. regiae moles, Carm. 2.15.1–2), however, is due to the fact that he is one of the ignoti heirs, as opposed to the nobiles. As elsewhere in his oeuvre, self-identification as ignotus conveys the author’s moral superiority. On Horace’s claim to be ignotus, see Chapter 2.
views, not spokesmen for values widely shared among Romans at a particular moment in time.

Embedded within Vitruvius’ support for a social stratification of housing is an awareness that grandeur, even when correlated to status, is not necessarily moral. Behind his endorsement of *magnificientia* lies palpable resentment of the pivotal role outgoings under the patron’s control (*a domini potestate*) play in determining the success of an architectural project and, thereby, the architect’s lasting fame (6.8.9). *Magnificientia* and *elegantia* convey positive attributes related to the quality of materials and refinement of detail, but also call to mind the treachery of artifice. Like Cicero, Vitruvius considers a complex set of factors, centred upon the identity of the proprietor, that determine the social and moral success of a house. Also like Cicero, Vitruvius tailors his architectural morality to enhance his self-fashioning. In Vitruvius’ treatise, and Horace’s poetry, as well, the image of the house drives home the essential characteristics of the authorial persona.

**Conclusion**

Vitruvius’ detailed specifications for the construction of Roman town houses and villas defy the archaeological record. In neither the dimensions that Vitruvius suggests nor the spatial configurations or functions he provides can we locate unproblematic testimony. Even Vitruvius’ names for rooms, such as *alae* or *cavum aedium*, are at odds with the nomenclature of other Roman authors. Such idiosyncrasy reflects the priorities of an author weaving together Greek, native Italian and Egyptian elements into a new Roman architecture that can serve his vision of empire and reinforce his model of a functioning society. Though the Hippocratican schema that stands at the head of the technical descriptions in Book 6 creates a hierarchy of races and, implicitly, architectures, with Rome at the top of the heap (6.1), this kind of Roman self-congratulation is largely absent from Vitruvius’ discussion of domestic forms and construction. Within back-to-back excurses on Greek and Roman houses, emphasis on difference is remarkably low. Indeed, at the close of a series of sections contrasting the rooms and features of Roman houses with Greek, Vitruvius explains the sustained juxtaposition thus:

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176 See the helpful summary of the issues and relevant scholarship in Nevett 2010: 89–118.
177 Cf. Leach 1997.
179 Cf. Williams 2016: 245, who argues that these words (in 6.7.7) ‘may well serve as a summary of this text’s self-presentation as an intellectual enterprise’.
Nec tamen ego, ut mutetur consuetudo nominationum aut sermonis, ideo haec proposui, sed ut ea non sint ignota philologis, exponenda iudicavi.

I have not drawn attention to these differences in usage in order to change either the formal or colloquial terms; rather, I decided that they should be elaborated so that they would not remain unknown to those interested in scholarly pursuits. (6.7.7)

The only other identification of persons as philologi, in the preface to Book 9, identifies them as key protagonists in the appropriation and transformation of Greek knowledge. It is they who ‘deliberating much with the Greek sages, will seem to have intimate conversations with them’ (cum Graecorum sapientibus multa deliberantes, secretos cum his videbuntur habere sermones, 9.praef.17). Philologia, as Alice König has argued, is both ‘the pastime of great kings’ and ‘a buzzword in the treatise for the highest form of learning’.180 Philologia is, as we have seen, a term of marked importance to the authorial persona, as well. It is one of twin branches of Vitruvius’ education (philologis et philotechnis rebus, 6.praef.4) and the passion that inspires his conversations with the son of Masinissa about African springs (8.3.25).181 Vitruvius’ promotion of his remarks on houses as potentially valuable to philologi, those interested in the written word and the network of intellectual and literary practices that rely on it, reinforces the significance of domestic architecture within his authorial project.

In hindsight, Vitruvius’ dedication of an entire book to the design of domus and villae, and another to their decoration, may seem unremarkable. Yet it was likely unexpected, and possibly even controversial, during his own time.182 Among the many attributes that Vitruvius chose to highlight – from his meticulous citation of sources to the treatise’s completeness – there is no mention of this crucial act:183 the elevation of private architecture to a position on par with public. In an era of political upheaval, as republic gave way to principate, an author intent upon defining Romanness made domestic construction central to his vision of architectura. No amount of ambivalence or caveats on the subject of domestic display can dampen the significance of this extraordinary gesture.

180 König 2016: 170. Cf. 7.praef.4, in which the charms (dulcedines) of philologia inspire the Attalid kings to construct a library and foster its intellectual activities.

181 See discussion of philologia in the Introduction and Chapter 1, and of this Gaius Julius anecdote in the Introduction.


183 See discussion in the Introduction to this book of the grounding of these claims in technical and scientific precedents.
Vitruvius has left behind the most influential discussion of ancient houses that survives. This chapter has demonstrated that *De architectura* does not impose a set of rigid rules, but rather argues for the mutual moral interdependence of house and man. It is undeniable that domestic construction and decoration had become costlier, and more central to the Roman culture of display, in the century leading up to *De architectura*. Yet the responses to this mansion mania preserved in Roma texts represent the continuation of long-standing debates, the permeation of old images with new meanings. The discourse of domestic luxury, forged in the Greek past, attained new prominence in Rome. Authors such as Horace, Vitruvius and Cicero, aware of the potency of the house as a metaphor for the man, make use of domestic imagery as an oblique means of developing their authorial selves.
Roman houses were consummately articulate, communicating volumes about the wealth, prestige and values of their owners. As in any dialogue, however, what the house meant to say was not always what its audience heard. Would-be manifestations of power could easily become seats of vulnerability. Nowhere does Vitruvius argue this point more incisively than in his account of iconographic change over time in Roman wall painting, *De architectura* 7.5. During the author’s lifetime, such change was rapid. Yet were it not for this passage, no sustained remarks on *picturae* would survive from the first century BCE. Since the Renaissance, *De architectura* has played a pivotal role in the reception and interpretation of classical art. It underpins the chronology of ‘Four Styles’ of wall painting first proposed by August Mau in the nineteenth century and still in use today. The visual imagery in the passage is undoubtedly rich. Vitruvius describes the walls of Roman houses as a riot of painted *picturae*; and so we find them, when visiting Herculaneum, Pompeii and other well-preserved sites. Centuries of readers have scrutinised the relationship of Vitruvius’ narrative to the archaeological remains of ancient painting. They have debated the reasons for the author’s seeming antipathy towards contemporary practice. In their eagerness to juxtapose

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3. In the 1880s, the German art historian and archaeologist August Mau, working at the sites uncovered on the Bay of Naples and relying on *De architectura* as a guide, developed a chronology of ‘Four Styles’ of ancient Roman wall painting, each distinguished by the relative realism of its architectural illusion. Though subsequent analysis and new archaeological findings have called various aspects of the schema into question, Mau’s taxonomy has been remarkably trenchant. Cf. Mau 1882. For a discussion of Mau’s dependence on Vitruvius and the first hundred years of responses to Mau, see Tybout 1987: 55–108.

4. Interpretation of the passage as a response to the wall paintings Vitruvius saw around him – an attempt both to describe and to moderate iconography – remains a rich area of art-historical debate.
image and text, however, they have often neglected to consider Vitruvius’ literary methods and aims.\(^5\)

Vitruvius conveys the pointedly Greek subject of painting to his imagined Roman readers through philosophical and rhetorical modes of persuasion. His most apparent model is rhetorical condemnations of the unnatural shaped by Stoic ideals: by criticising the depiction of hybrid creatures and aberrant forms, Vitruvius accentuates the importance of harmonising human action with nature’s laws.\(^6\) The form of his remarks, a string of extended comparisons, adapts the analogical argumentation of an orator.\(^7\) The analogies that pervade ancient rhetoric can, by other standards, appear strained or hyperbolic. Locating Vitruvius within the rhetorical tradition gives context to an otherwise bafflingly combative series of observations.

_De architectura_, steeped in rich and varied literary traditions, owes a special debt to Roman rhetoric. Vitruvius’ conceptual vocabulary displays a wealth of rhetorical diction (e.g., _ordinatio, dispositio_).\(^8\) Lines of reasoning in the treatise echo the structures of rhetorical argument and, in fact, the very project of ordering a body of knowledge into a coherent system parallels contemporary developments in the rhetorical realm.\(^9\) The preface to Book 9 praises Cicero’s oratory.\(^10\) References throughout the text to

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\(^5\) Cf., e.g., Clarke 2005: 267: ‘Vitruvius bristled at the changes in wall painting that he witnessed in the first ten years of Augustus’ reign’; this stance is repeated in Clarke 2014: 360. Cf. also Rowland 2014b: 420–422, who argues that ‘[Vitruvius’] outrites had no impact’ (422).

\(^6\) For a notable exception, see Elsner 1995: 49–87. Elsner argues that Vitruvius offers a ‘prescription and an ideology’ designed to neutralise the subversive threat to the Augustan regime raised by the political implications of domestic wall paintings. Though this claim has been vigorously challenged (Pollitt 1997: 266; Brilliant 1998), Elsner’s recognition of 7.5 as ‘not any kind of objective description of the visual evidence’ (55), along with his insightful analysis of Vitruvius’ engagement with ideas of _mimesis_ and the real, are crucial to what I present here. Cf. also Platt 2009, a subtle interpretation of Vitruvius’ debt to Augustan artistic and literary aesthetics.


\(^8\) Lise Bek, who demonstrates that the structure of 7.5 relies on the rhetorical technique of _antithesis_, distinguishes the architect’s aim from that of a rhetorician: Vitruvius exploits the techniques of rhetoric, she argues, as a kind of compositional crutch. Thus, for Bek, the presence of rhetorical language in 7.5 ultimately impedes our understanding of Vitruvius’ artistic views. Cf. Bek 1976.

\(^9\) Callebat 1994b argues that this expression of architecture in rhetorical terms suggests both that Vitruvius received a rhetorical education and that the author made a self-conscious effort to ingratiate his subject to his elite readers. Cf. de Jonge 2008: 191 on Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ similar recourse to rhetorical terminology. On Vitruvius’ engagement with rhetoric, see Brown 1963; Bek 1976; Gros 1979; André 1985; André 1987; Callebat 1994b; McEwen 2003: esp. 79–83; Fögen 2009: 113–114; Thomas 2014.

\(^{10}\) Rawson 1985: 140 considers Vitruvius’ ordering impulse a response to developments in dialectic. _Plures post nostram memoriam nascentes ... videbuntur ... disputare, de arte vero rhetorica cum Cicerone_ (‘Many born after we are gone will seem indeed to debate the art of the orator with Cicero’), 9.praef.17). We cannot assume a reference to _De oratore_ in particular.
eloquentia and rhetorica evoke the culture of trained argumentation that formed the backbone of elite education and lay at the centre of Roman statesmanship and public life. This rhetorical bent demonstrates Vitruvius’ entrenchment within the intellectual culture of his time: by the end of the Republic, the deliberative and forensic exercises that were a staple of Roman education had begun to exert a noticeable influence on other literary forms. By couching his discussion of pictorial art in rhetorical terms, Vitruvius addresses elite readers in language familiar to them.

Roman orators relied on evocations of the visual field, including verbal renderings of architecture, art and topography, as a primary means of memorising, explaining or illustrating arguments. Rhetoric is not only an essential model for the language and argumentation of De architectura, but also the key to interpreting the appearance of this sudden ‘emotional storm’ in Book 7. On the surface, De architectura 7.5 may appear to preserve the knee-jerk reactions of a conservative architect railing against paintings he disliked. Yet this is far from the case. It is crucial that we acknowledge the limitations of De architectura as a descriptive source on ancient painting and instead interpret it as the product of an intellectual environment in which rhetoric dominated education and permeated literature of every genre. Only then can we appreciate Vitruvius’ distortion of the realities of first-century Roman mural decoration to suit the contours of his larger argument. Through complex engagement with textual precursors, Vitruvius forges a connection between his Hellenocentric source material and the Roman discursive contexts of painting in his own time. He forcefully distinguishes his own rhetorical and architectural practices from deceitful and corrupt enticements portrayed as their antithesis. In De architectura 7.5, Vitruvius offers a potent statement of his authorial purpose – and of the imagined function of De architectura within the Roman world.

The Not-so-Simple Story of Painting

Let us first review the passage in question. Vitruvius, at the outset, explains that people in the past (antiqui) began painting walls in order to mimic other types of mural decoration, such as marble inlay (crustarum marmor-earum varietates et collocationes), garlands and the like (7.5.1). Later, the
subject matter expanded to include buildings (aedificiorum figurae), stage sets and landscapes (7.5.2). One of the most compelling aspects of this passage, seldom if ever discussed, is its dual resonance: the past Vitruvius here invokes is both the Rome of recent centuries and a hazy Greek world of uncertain date. To be sure, Vitruvius’ narrative tracks well with Roman archaeological evidence for the transition from a First or ‘Masonry’ Style, surfacing in the second century BCE, in which colourful pigments and textured stucco simulate simple architectural elements (Figure 4.1; Plate 4.1), to the Second or ‘Architectural’ Style, characterised by elaborate architectural and natural scenery, which arose in the early to mid-first century BCE (Figure 4.2; Figure 4.3; Plate 4.3). Yet no one familiar with the treatise as a whole should read these previous painters as unambiguously Roman. Across De architectura, the antiqui are not a bloodline. They are Vitruvius’ chosen intellectual ancestry, men like Plato or, as we shall see, the inventors of the Doric order. That is to say, they are Greeks of the mythohistorical past.

Vitruvius’ discussion of painting in Book 7 continually refers to a transfer, currently in process, of Greek knowledge to the city of Rome and the Italian peninsula. In discussing the origins of pigments, he traces the movement of the technique for making caeruleum (a blue pigment), first discovered, so he says, at Alexandria, to the factory of Vestorius, an affluent first-century banker and entrepreneur in Puteoli (7.1.1). Vitruvius not only documents this movement, he advances it. When naming textual sources on pigments, perspective and picturae, Vitruvius extols We cannot know whether or not the changes recounted in 7.5 evoke stylistic developments in Greek painting; surviving examples are too few.

Marvin 2008: 195 rightly notes that Vitruvius leaves ‘readers to figure out whether he meant ancient Greek painters or ancient Roman ones – and just how ancient they were’. Across the treatise, vagueness abounds in Vitruvius’ use of the term antiquus. Cf. 7.praef.18, where Vitruvius specifies antiqui nostri when talking about Roman authors. The most important discussion on Vitruvius’ recourse to Greek as well as Roman antiqui is Tybout 1989: esp. 61–70. This historical tidbit is certainly false. Use of caeruleum predates the founding of Alexandria. Cf. Liou, Zuinhedau and Cam 1995: 170–171.

Cf. Rowland and Howe 1999: 268; Jones 2006: 24 and 40; Davidovits 2007 and references. Like Faberius, the subject of Chapter 5 in this book, Vestorius appears frequently in Cicero’s letters to Atticus. E.g. Cic. Att. 14.9.1; 14.12.3. We cannot assume that Vitruvius read Cicero’s letters to Atticus. The circulation of these letters in the 30s and 20s BCE remains an open question. See Murphy 1998.

Throughout De architectura, the great authors and master practitioners of pictorial art are Greeks long dead. Among painters, Apelles, court artist of Alexander the Great, is the archetype (1.1.13). Vitruvius seeks to restore the rightful due to lesser-known virtuosi such as Aristomenes the Thasian and Theo the Magnesian (3.praef.1), but the corruption of the text and the difficulty in identifying these names with known painters render the gesture less than successful. Cf. DNO 3533; Gros 2003: 50–51.
Frescoed interior of a tablinum in the House of Sallust, Pompeii. For the colour version, please refer to the plate section.
4.2 Frescoed interior of a *cubiculum* (Room M) in the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor, Boscoreale.
fifth- and fourth-century figures, including Agatharchus of Samos, Democritus, Anaxagoras, Demophilus, Leonidas and Euphranor (7.praef.11; 7. prae.f.14). His will be the text that brings their insights to Roman readers.

The benefits to be gained from this Greek knowledge can be eminently practical. Vitruvius advises his audience, when designing winter rooms, to follow the Greek approach (Graecorum usum) to pavements (7.4.4). In his discussion of stucco, Vitruvius states that Greek plasterers (Graecorum

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18 Since the sources he proclaims are no longer extant, the nature of his debt is obscured. Cf. Liou, Zuinghamdau and Cam 2003: xv–xxv.
tectores) go beyond the basic method of application that he has just described; their enhanced image stabilisation techniques allow them to excise sections from old walls and use them like panel paintings (7.3.10).19 These Greeks, one might add, were a bit too clever for their good. In so doing, they enabled the removal and transfer of Spartan paintings to the Roman Comitium, an event Vitruvius mentions in Book 2 (2.8.9).20 Surveying Book 7 as a whole, a complex picture emerges: ‘Roman’ painting, for Vitruvius, is enmeshed in the cultural dynamic that pervades the treatise, a dynamic in which Rome has conquered the world and is working out how to make sense of an other that is now within itself.

More problematic than Vitruvius’ remarks on the picturae of the antiqui (for those who wish to read him as a Roman art critic) is his account of contemporary pictorial practice (7.5.3–4).21 Vitruvius contends that older styles currently are being displaced:

pro columnis enim statuuntur calami, pro fastigiis appagineculi striati cum crisps foliis et volutis, item candelabra aedicularum sustinentia figuras, supra fastigia eorum surgentes ex radicibus cum volutis teneri flores habentes in se sene ratione sedentia sigilla, non minus coliculi dimidiata habentes sigilla alia humanis, alia bestiarum capitis.

Instead of columns, reeds are set up; instead of gables, striped panels with curved leaves and volutes; likewise, candelabra support the forms of buildings, and above the gables of these, many slender flowers, rising from roots in the manner of volutes, have statuettes resting on them without any principle, some stalks even hold up the half-figures of people, and others the heads of animals. (7.5.3)

This passage is commonly read as a description of the late Second or Third Style – in other words, of paintings dating to the rise and early reign of Augustus.22 In the Augustan-era ‘Black Room’ at Boscotrecase, for

19 Vitr. 7.2 describes the preparation of stucco from raw materials; 7.3–4 provides specific instructions for its application. Vitruvius uses the term tectorium to describe all phases of coating the wall, including the final application of colores and picturae. Likewise, the tectores who apply initial layers of plaster are not differentiated from those who undertake the figurative painting.

20 See my discussion in Chapter 1 of this book.


22 Archaeologists and art historians have attempted to pinpoint a precise moment in the history of wall painting when the iconography described in Vitr. 7.5.3 appeared, although most acknowledge that no style provides a perfect fit. Cf. Elsner 1995: 84: ‘third and fourth styles’; Clarke 2005: 267: ’Second Style’; Yerkes 2005: 163–164: ’late second and third style’. Ehrhardt 1987: 152–162 is
example, attenuated, vegetal columns of a bright yellowish-gold issue forth curling, candelabra-like branches supporting swans dangling gold chains from their beaks (Figure 4.5; Plate 4.5). Likewise, winged female figures sit on spiralling plants in a room flanking the tablinum (on the NE side) of the Augustan ‘House of Livia’ (Figure 4.6; Plate 4.6 and Figure 4.7; Plate 4.7). These closely approximate Vitruvius’ ‘slender flowers, rising from roots in the manner of volutes with statuettes resting on them’ (surgentes ex radicibus cum volutis teneri flores habentes in se . . . sedentia sigilla, 7.5.3).

What complicates this juxtaposition of pictorial image and Vitruvian text, however, is that the author describes a selection of subjects and combinations of forms that entered the iconographical lexicon of Roman
wall painting gradually and incrementally as if they constituted a shocking, new and aberrant fashion.\footnote{Cf. Yerkes 2005.} His dynamic portrayal of popular reaction is unparalleled in the treatise: ‘People viewing these deceptions do not rebuke them,’ he alleges, ‘but rather are amused’ (haec falsa videntes homines non reprehendunt sed delectantur, 7.5.4). Furthermore, Vitruvius does not comment on the features of wall painting during the Augustan age that seem most revolutionary to our eyes. The most visually striking shift that occurred between the Second and Third Styles is the ‘closing of the wall’, the move towards a structuring of space.

4.5 Detail of the frescoed interior of the ‘Black Room’ (15) in the imperial villa at Boscotrecase. For the colour version, please refer to the plate section.
through vast monochrome modular panels. Such occlusion is well exemplified in Boscotrecase’s aforementioned, and aptly named, ‘Black Room’ (Figure 4.4; Plate 4.4).

Vitruvius skews (and skewers) first-century BCE pictorial norms with a purpose. The iconographical elements of 7.5.3–4 are defined by one, or
both, of two features: they are performing architecturally unsustainable acts or they are hybrids. As Vitruvius emphasises in 7.5.4, what irks him about these images is that they illustrate unsound construction:

Quemadmodum enim potest calamus vere sustinere tectum aut candelabrum ornamenta fastigii, seu coliculus tam tenuis et mollis sustinere sedens sigillum . . . ?

How indeed can a reed sustain a roof or a candelabrum the ornaments of a gable, or a slender and soft stalk a seated statuette? (7.5.4)

One of the overarching arguments of the treatise is that architecture should be a logical extension of nature. Columns on the upper stories of buildings, for example, should be thinner than those on the stories below, so as to imitate the tapering of a tree:

Ergo si natura nascentium ita postulat, recte est constitutum et altitudinibus et crassitudinibus superiore inferiorem inferiorem fieri contractiora.
Therefore, since the nature of new growth demands it, things are rightly ordered both in height and in thickness if the higher are narrower than the lower. (5.1.3)

Architectura is rooted in natura. It is quite fitting, then, that Vitruvius describes the new style of wall paintings as a melee of upended constructions and fused vegetal forms (7.5.3–4). Each objectionable element of pictorial iconography – from hybrids to unsound configurations of organisms and buildings – opposes nature’s laws. Vitruvius explains:

Haec autem nec sunt nec fieri possunt nec fuerunt. Ergo ita novi mores coegerunt uti inertiae mali iudices convincerent artium virtutes.

These things neither are, nor are able to be, nor have been. In this way, new tastes compel bad judges to condemn the virtues of skill as dullness. (7.5.4)

Contemporary painters’ substitution of architectural forms with vegetal ones reverses the chronology of the origins of civilisation traced in Book 2, in which men learn to make buildings by following natural examples (2.1.1–3).25

Vitruvius similarly argues against the ornamental depiction of implausible architectural feats in his account of Doric entablature. He disputes the positioning of a dentil, the repeating ornament in the bedmould of a cornice, underneath a mutule, the stone block projecting under a cornice.

24 On these vegetal forms, see Ehrhardt 1987; Yerkes 2000; Hallett 2001; Tybout 2001; Yerkes 2005; Platt 2009.

25 On 2.1, see discussion and references in the Introduction to this book.
4.1 Frescoed interior of a *tablinum* in the House of Sallust, Pompeii.
4.3 Detail of the frescoed interior of a *cubiculum* in the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor, Boscoreale.
4.4  Frescoed interior of the ‘Black Room’ (15) in the imperial villa at Boscotrecase.
4.5 Detail of the frescoed interior of the ‘Black Room’ (15) in the imperial villa at Boscotrecase.
4.6 Frescoed interior of room D in the House of Livia, Rome.
4.7  Albumen print of a detail of the frescoed interior of room D in the House of Livia, Rome.
5.1 Fresco of dancing satyr in the double-alcove cubiculum in the Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii.
Fresco with blackened vermilion on the east wall in oecus 15 of the Villa Oplontis A, Torre Annunziata.
The proper arrangement is the other way around (Figure 4.8). A dentil represents the common rafter supporting the building, and a mutule, the major rafter. Its creators employed sound judgement in ensuring that the Doric order did not defy the logic of wood construction:

Omnia enim certa proprietate et a veris naturae deducta moribus transduserunt in operum perfectiones et ea probaverunt quorum explicaciones in disputationibus rationem possunt habere veritatis.

For by a fixed notion of appropriateness deduced from the laws of nature, they extended everything into the completion of the work and they approved of representations that they were able to show had solid reasoning through argument. (4.2.6)

The composition of the elements of decoration, in other words, should adhere to the rules that govern the reality they mimic. In 4.2.5, as in 7.5, Vitruvius finds justification not only in nature’s laws, but also in ancestral practice: ‘[the antiqui] thought that what cannot happen in reality cannot have a solid justification in representations’ (quod non potest in veritate fieri, id non putaverunt in imaginibus factum posse certam rationem habere, 4.2.5). The author’s diction across the two passages is strikingly similar (certae rationes: 7.5.1; 7.5.4; veritas: 7.5.4; 7.5.6; 7.5.7 [x2]).

Those readers who have observed correspondences between De architectura 7.5 and the overarching themes and concerns of the treatise have, to my mind, misunderstood the implications of the correlation. In their view, Vitruvius is an architect taking himself a little too seriously, who condemns the wall paintings he sees in houses around Rome because they contradict his architectural principles, his ordered vision for the world. Critics have dubbed Vitruvius reactionary, and labelled the passage an outburst of violent abuse. While some readers dismiss him as simply backward and naïve, others situate Vitruvius’ ire within the mainstream socio-political climate of the first century BCE. Paul Zanker argues that Vitruvius’ testimony provides evidence that a subset of society rejected the designs that came into fashion during the early principate:

Conservatives like the architect Vitruvius (perhaps expressing the opinion of a large group of the upper class) rejected this diversion from time-honored aesthetic standards as nothing less than immoral. This in itself suggests a relatively sudden change in taste.

Another view holds that Vitruvius voices Augustus’ opinions of the styles emerging at the onset of his reign, yet this claim is difficult to reconcile

with the fact that the subjects Vitruvius defames are particularly prevalent in paintings commissioned by the princeps himself.\(^{28}\) On my reading, however, the author Vitruvius, in writing a book on the finishing touches of architecture, anticipates the knowledge and expectations that his elite, educated Roman audience brings to the text. He therefore discusses picturae in the philosophical and analogical ways familiar to his readers from the wider literary culture.

Appreciation of Vitruvius’ moral fervour as a discursive choice can put to rest the idea that the architect’s backwards glance renders him ‘out of step’\(^{29}\) with his contemporaries. Once removed from the immediate context of architecture, Vitruvius’ rhetoric and aspirations strike a more familiar note. Within the Roman moralising tradition, echoed throughout Vitruvius’ treatise, the honourable and good was often situated in the idealised past. The images that Vitruvius dubs monstra (unnatural things, 7.5.3) illustrate the twin hazards of decadence and decline, which accompany expenditure on costly architectural projects overseen by shallow, ignorant architects.

When conflating immodest domestic display with personal immorality, Roman authors often create antitheses between manmade architecture and divinely wrought nature: excessive homes corrupt the natural landscape just as perverse morals upend the established hierarchy of men.\(^{30}\) De architectura resonates with this strain of moral discourse by casting blame on the patron’s expenditure. According to Vitruvius, ‘that authority which buildings once gained by the fineness of the craftsmanship, now is not missed on account of what the patron’s lavish expenditure accomplishes’ (quam subtletias artificis adiciebat operibus auctoritatem, nunc dominicus

\(^{28}\) See Ling 1991: 38: ‘it is ironic that Vitruvius’ patrons were evidently in the vanguard of the movement away from architectural “realism.”’ Galinsky 1996: 192 addresses the potential contradiction: the ‘widespread Augustan fantasy style … echoes the language of Augustan morality, except that Augustus is among the innovators. It shows – and the point would not need to be made if the portrayal of Augustus as the godfather of the despots of the 1930s had not been so influential – that spirited disagreement with the princeps was not uncommon.’

\(^{29}\) Rawson 1985: 190.

\(^{30}\) Cf. Edwards 1993: 137–172. Pompey’s reference to Lucullus as Xerxes togatus (Vell. 2.33.4; Plu. Luc. 39.3; Plin. Nat. 9.170) points up Lucullus’ attempt to overcome nature through his extravagant private building projects, as well as his reversal of the roles of land and sea. Cf. Whitehorne 1969: 29. Tröster 2008: 62–63 repudiates claims that Lucullus’ alleged luxury in Roman texts corresponds to an actual disparity between Lucullus’ architectural projects and the common practice of his peers. Cf. also Sal. Cat. 13.1: ‘I need not mention those undertakings that are incredible except to those who have seen them themselves, how private citizens have more than once levelled mountains and paved seas’ (Nam quid ea memorem quae nisi iis qui videre nemini credibilia sunt, a privatis conpluribus subvorsos montis, maria constrata esse?). Cf. also references in Whitehorne 1969: 30.
sumptus efficit ne desideretur, 7.5.7). A deep-seated notion of De architectura as a literal, rather than figurative or allegorical, account of architecture has preserved faith in 7.5 as a window into ancient art reception – albeit a peculiar, or at least particular, one. Yet Vitruvius’ denunciation of extravagant wall paintings is a stylised pose conforming to the same conventions.

Widely recognised as a parallel to 7.5 is the famous analogy that opens the Ars Poetica, in which Horace characterises the depiction of hybrid creatures in wall painting as unsightly and bizarre:

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam iungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum desinat in piscem mulier formosâ superne, spectatum admisis risum teneatis, amici?

If a painter wished to join the neck of a horse to a human head, and to paint multicoloured feathers onto limbs brought together from everywhere, so that a beautiful woman unbecomingly might bottom out in a dark fish, having been admitted to observe this, friends, would you restrain your laughter? (Ars 1–5)

As an ancient Roman, if you laughed every time you saw a composite creature painted on the wall, your life would certainly be mirthful. Readers of the Ars Poetica argue that Horace, knowing full well that what he describes is not nearly as laughable as he claims, uses the description to stress the desirability of coherence and unity in a work of art. In the Ars Poetica, hybrid forms signal a decline into decadence with social and moral implications: the poet describes the descent of music into a cluster of vices,

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31 For example, J. J. Pollitt emphasises that while ‘literary analogists’ like Cicero and Quintilian often manipulated the principles of art to suit their own ends, ‘professional critics’ like Vitruvius are more trustworthy sources. These authors, Pollitt 1974: 11 explains, were intent upon ‘analysing and assessing the significance of the objectively demonstrable properties of form and design’. But see also his amendment of this view in Pollitt 2015: 289, in which he argues that 7.5 represents ‘a rationalist philosophical position’. Cf. also Tanner 2006: 236–247 and 261–264 on Pliny the Elder.

32 Glancing references to this textual parallel are common (e.g., Ehrhardt 1987: 162; Leach 1988: 5–6). More detailed analyses include Frischer 1991: 68–85; Elsner 1995: 57–58; Platt 2009.

33 See Laird 1996: 91: ‘[Ars Poetica] does not help us at all in our attempt to understand the comparison between the two media [painting and poetry]. There the image of a picture is merely used as a vehicle in a simile to serve a discussion about quality in poetry.’ Sharrock 1996: 125 suggests that Horace’s hybrids in the visual sphere stand for bold metaphors in literature. Cf. also Hardie 1993: 120. Frischer 1991: 74 argues that ‘the monstrous book decried by the speaker and the monstrous image used to represent it . . . are exemplified by the Ars Poetica itself.’ Frischer, moreover, suggests that the Ars Poetica, on account of its heightened moral tone, must be a parody of Roman aesthetic discourse. See discussion of Horace and Vitruvius in Chapter 2.
including luxury and floridness (Ars 202–219). Aesthetics cannot be separated from ethics.

**Roman Rhetorical Models**

*De architectura* 7.5 reflects ideas and concerns that pervade the treatise, yet nowhere else are building or decoration practices presented with such rhetorical flourish. Why does the subject of painting elicit such a vehement tone? The explanation lies in the interconnections between the finishing touches of architecture and those of rhetoric. Several of the terms Vitruvius uses to discuss painting have rhetorical, as well as artistic, meanings. The verb *expolire*, for example, can denote a reductive process that refines a surface or an additive process that embellishes it. Vitruvius uses *expolitiones* as a catch-all to summarise the range of additive, non-structural elements of architecture discussed in Book 7. Across the discourses of rhetoric, personal comportment and literary criticism, however, the word had wider use. *Expolitio* can refer to the rhetorical practice of dwelling on a point by presenting it in many different guises. *Color* likewise can denote the demeanour of the *rhotor* or the practice of producing details corroborating one’s case (often quite literally ‘embellished’). Ancient authors were attuned to these double meanings. Analogies between painting and rhetoric came easily to mind. So Cicero waxes that ‘when [Caesar] added oratorical ornaments to this elegance of Latin diction ... he seemed to place well-painted panels in good light’ (*cum ad hanc elegantiam verborum Latinorum ... adiungit illa oratoria ornamenta dicendi, tum videtur tamquam tabulas bene pictas collocare in bono lumine, Brut. 261*).

Roman orators valued artistic analogies more for their vivid visuality as illustrations than for the opportunity to draw attention to the

34 Cf. Brink 1971 on Horace’s importation of Aristotelian and Ciceronian rhetorical theories.
35 Vitruvius characterises Book 7 as *de expolitionibus* (*on the finishing touches*, 6.8.10). In *De architectura*, the word *expolitio* functions as a hypernym for a range of additive, non-structural elements of architecture. Across other first-century BCE Roman texts, *expolitus* was a quality of architecture, rhetoric, personal comportment and text. It could allude to a reductive process that refined a surface or an additive process that embellished a surface. Cf. Fitzgerald 1998: 38–42; Katz 2000; Krostenko 2001a: 253; Liou, Zuinshedau and Cam 2003: xxx–xxxii; Bradley 2009: 438 and n. 50–51; Nichols 2009b: 162–166; Nichols 2010. See also discussion in Chapter 3. After its preface and a first section on pavements (7.1), Book 7 is primarily concerned with various stages of finishing walls and ceilings with *tectorium* (stucco work, plastering and wall painting).
36 See the rhetorical definition in *Rhet. Her.* 4.42.54.
37 On rhetorical *colores*, see Roller 1997: 113–114. The meanings of *color* are further discussed in Chapter 5.
38 Cf. also the rhetorical *pigmenta* in Cic. *Att.* 2.1.1.
correspondence of principles between one type of endeavour, such as painting, and another, such as speech writing. After all, these analogies often provide contradictory ‘testimony’. Cicero and the anonymous author of the Rhetorica ad Herennium, for example, offer conflicting perspectives on ancient sculptors’ use of multiple models – one implies that they do use multiple models, the other that they do not. De architectura 7.5 can also be profitably read within the tradition of ecphrasis, the ancient rhetorical strategy for inducing a sense of being in the presence of the work itself (enargeia). Recent work on ecphrasis demonstrates how far removed ancient authors were from any compulsion to replicate things seen in the world. Instead, literary accounts of works of art (as well as mechanical objects, and people) were intended to augment, or even supplant, the experience of seeing. Through words stimulating vision in the mind’s eye, the sense of sight could be subverted, robbed of any claim to primacy. As Michael Squire has argued, in his discussion of the Elder Philostratus’ Imagines, ecphrasis not only draw attention to the audience’s visual subjectivity, they also ‘interrogate whether or not we can trust with our eyes’. In the course of persuading his audience of the righteous wisdom of his text, Vitruvius seizes the illustrative potential of pictorial iconography as a means of expressing his vision of architectura and its role in society, even while subtly undermining the capacity of pictures to teach the truth.

39 Just as talking about pictures was central to Roman rhetoric, so, too, rhetorical conceptions were taken up by ancient painters. Cf. especially Brilliant 1984: 71–72; Bergmann 1994; Valladares 2014: 177–178. The intersection of art and rhetoric in ancient Rome is a large and important area of inquiry. See Leach 1988; Onians 1990; Laird 1996; Perry 2002; Hölscher 2004; Perry 2005; and the essays collected in Elsner and Meyer 2014. On the persistence of this interrelationship in the postclassical West, see Baxandall 1986; Van Eck 2007.


41 For Vitruvius’ use of ecphrasis, particularly in his discussion of machines in Book 10, see Roby 2016.

42 Bibliography on this topic is expansive, and the term ecphrasis can be used, even within the field of classics, with various meanings. Cf. important discussions in Laird 1993; Elsner 1995: 24; Laird 1996: 98–99; Elsner 2002; Goldhill 2007; Squire 2009: 139–146; Webb 2009; Squire 2010; Squire 2013; Zeitlin 2013; Roby 2016. On architectural ecphrasis, particularly in Statius’ Silvae, see Newlands 2013.

43 Squire 2013: 115.
Before coming to his climax in a condemnation of luxury and costly expenditure on pigments, Vitruvius shares an anecdote, set in the Greek world, that reinforces his point (7.5.5–7). As so often in the treatise, this episode takes place in a faraway place at an undisclosed time. The relocation is abrupt. In the story, Apaturius of Alabanda paints an impressive stage set at Tralles with the very sort of designs Vitruvius has just pilloried (7.5.5). (Alabanda and Tralles are located in Caria, in present-day Turkey.) A mathematician named Lykinos ridicules Apaturius’ painting by calling attention to the instability of the buildings represented and scolds the people of Tralles for approving of it. It is significant that Lykinos is a mathematician – in Book 1, Vitruvius defines a mathematician as the highest form of architect (1.1.17). Lykinos, acting as a mouthpiece for the author of the treatise, demands of the citizens of Tralles:

Qui enim vestrum domos supra tegularum tecta potest habere aut columnas seu fastigiorum explicationes? Haec enim supra contignationes ponuntur, non supra tegularum tecta.

For who of you is able to have, above your roof-tiles, houses or roofs or columns or representations of gables? These are positioned above floors, not above roof tiles. (7.5.6)

Lykinos likens the citizens of Tralles to the citizens of Alabanda, who, on account of the statues decorating their public buildings, have a reputation for incoherence (indecentia, 7.5.6). Apaturius subsequently alters the scenery to Lykinos’ specifications. Lykinos should be here now [a time and place unspecified, though presumably the author’s contemporary Rome], Vitruvius opines, to rein in present painting practices (7.5.7). The ancients never used costly materials immoderately, but now vermillion, malachite, purple and azurite are spread everywhere. These pigments, whether or not they are applied artfully (ab arte), make wall paintings eye-catching (fulgentes oculorum reddunt visus, 7.5.8). Errors in iconography have become a social ill. Disparagement of the citizens of Tralles has, paradoxically, sharpened Vitruvius’ critique of his own society.

44 Classical art historians often extract individual observations from 7.5 piecemeal (for example, the critique of contemporary wall painting design in 7.5.3–4 or the description of statue display in 7.5.6, discussed presently), without attention to their context within this series of interrelated remarks.

45 Vitruvius also promotes the usefulness of mathematical knowledge to the enterprise of architecture in 1.1.4.
Almost certainly, this story is pure invention. Neither Apaturius nor Lykinos is securely attested outside of De architectura. Vitruvius crafts this string of analogies to strengthen his larger argument, rather than to transmit the kind of information about Carian theatrical scenery that we might consider historically accurate today. Analogy, functioning as a persuasive strategy, endows descriptions of art with more expansive meanings: Vitruvius likens the unacceptable domestic wall paintings (7.5.3–4) to the stage painting fiasco at Tralles (7.5.5), which Lykinos then, as will be discussed below, compares to an incongruous display of statues at Alabanda (7.5.6). Hybrid creatures and architectural fallacies, whether imagined on the walls of ekklesiasteria in Caria or houses in the Roman world, serve as exempla of compositional incoherence. Here as elsewhere, Vitruvius’ choice of a Greek example, possibly in the distant past, both softens the blow of his criticism by abstracting his adversary and enhances his own authority as a critic in command of a long tradition and wide world.

An important premise underlying this interpretation is that Vitruvius, adopting a widespread classical idea, considers painting to be, like rhetoric, an art of persuasion. As Pliny the Elder’s account of Zeuxis’ and Parrhasius’ competition to create the most convincing trompe l’œil implies, some ancient authors believed that painting’s most compelling strategy of persuasion was, in fact, the deception of the eye (Nat. 3.65–66). These two
Greek artists of the early fourth century, according to Pliny the Elder’s version of the story, engaged in a contest to see who could paint the greater trompe l’œil. Zeuxis’ painting of grapes was so realistic that birds approached the fruit as if it were real. Parrhasius’ depiction of a painted curtain, however, was even more convincing. Zeuxis asked Parrhasius to draw the curtain, thereby losing the contest. Virtuosity in the visual arts, the story insinuates, can be achieved through trickery. Vitruvius refers to this quality of painting when recounting how two-dimensional painted stage sets create the illusion of three-dimensional architectural forms (6.2). In this instance, painting serves as a positive example for architecture. Vitruvius urges architects to take optics into account when calculating buildings’ measurements. What the mind knows to be symmetrical does not always appear so to the eye.

In De architectura 7.5, however, Vitruvius portrays the illustrative power of painting as dangerous. Apaturius’ very name marks him as a ‘deceiver’ and speaks to a relationship between pictorial illusion and ἀπάτη that the Younger Philostratus would later develop in the Imagines. In the proem to this singularly ecphrastic work, a picture gallery in words, Philostratus addresses potential objectors:


These words defend the act of reading a work in which non-existent people stand before non-existent paintings. But that is not all. They also directly respond to the Platonic critique of art as illusion, the contention that what is accessible to the senses leads the soul astray. In the Imagines, this

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50 In each of the three examples of painting subjects in this passage, three-dimensionality is the key feature: proiecturae . . . ephorae . . . prominentes (6.2.2).
52 Vitr. 6.2 recommends that fixed measurements for the structure or decoration of a building be altered to create the appearance of symmetry.
53 See also Plutarch’s Moralia on the reliance of drama (particularly tragedy) on ἀπάτη (348c). Cf. Webb 2006; 2009: 167–192 on ἀπάτη and ecphrasis in the Imagines. I am grateful to Katherine Wasdin for suggesting this resonance with ἀπάτη to me. Elsewhere in the treatise, Vitruvius likewise may have chosen the name Faberius as a pun (7.9.2). See Chapter 5.
54 Webb 2006: 132–133.
position is embodied in the character of the nay-saying Sophist who, like Lykinos in *De architectura*, draws attention to the seductiveness of illusion. Philostratus maintains that these images are not harmful. They pose no danger to the ψυχή (ψυχαγωγῆσαι). Ruth Webb observes that the ridiculousness of the Sophist’s position, ‘a man speaking to a painted youth, telling him he is wasting his time on a mere image’, only strengthens Philostratus’ argument.\(^5\)

Vitruvius maintains a conflicted, even tortured, stance in regard to this longstanding philosophical debate. His concern is not the representation of things that are not, but the representation of things that cannot. He assimilates to his own project those paintings that mirror nature, and defines as perilously rhetorical those that do not. In this way, it seems, Vitruvius will have his cake and eat it, too: *De architectura* will be a text engaged in *ecphrasis*, without the attendant artifice and deception. The key to maintaining this position, Vitruvius suggests, is demonstrating the author’s abstention from rhetorical trickery.

Disavowal of eloquence, like rejection of wealth, forms an integral part of Vitruvius’ authorial persona. His conception of the ideal architect includes many elements of the oratorical education outlined in Cicero.\(^6\) Yet Vitruvius’s schema makes no mention of rhetorical training. In a gesture Serafina Cuomo wisely reads as a *captatio benevolentiae*, Vitruvius contrasts his own lack of sophistication with that of a *rhetor disertus* (1.1.18).\(^7\) The third preface laments that architects are disadvantaged if, like Vitruvius, they are not abounding in wealth (*non pecunia sint copiosi*) and advantaged if, unlike Vitruvius, they are equipped with the eloquence of a pleader (*gratia forensi et eloquentia cum fuerint parati*, 3.praef.1). Flashy rhetoric is an element of charlatanism, a phony means by which architects convince clients of their professional acumen. In making this claim, Vitruvius exploits the inherent persuasiveness of the claim not to be persuasive.

Classical authors had long recognised that disclaiming rhetorical talent and sophistication could be a means of heightening its effect. As any reader of Plato’s *Apology* knows, Socrates’ insistence that he is unskilled in speaking does not make it so. It would be a mischaracterisation, however, to suggest that Vitruvius’ disavowal of rhetoric is consistent. That

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\(^6\) Vitruvius’ educational model (1.1) also includes many technical subjects not included in Cicero’s.

Vitruvius at one moment places Cicero’s oratorical writing on a pedestal (9.praef.17) and, at the next, condemns eloquence as a kind of cheap trick suggests that, like many Roman authors engaged in debate over the nuances of rhetorical decorum, he deems rhetoric to include a range of behaviours of varying (and contextually variable) moral fibre. In De architectura 7.5, he reveals painting to be equally double-edged.

Plato, as mentioned, famously warned that the persuasive and deceptive powers of painting could – in a manner similar to both poetry and rhetoric – be corrupting. In Plato’s Gorgias, however, Socrates contrasts painters, architects and shipwrights with orators precisely for the sense of τὸ πρέπον (what Vitruvius will call decor) that they bring to their work:

οἷον εἰ βούλει ιδεῖν τοὺς ζωγράφους, τοὺς σκιττάρους, τοὺς ναυτικούς, τοὺς ἄλλους πάντας δημιουργούς, ὄντινα βούλει αὐτῶν, ὡς εἰς τάξιν τινὰ ἐκαστὸς ἐκαστὸν τίθησιν ὅ ἀν τιθή, καὶ προσαναγκάζει τὸ ἔτερον τῷ ἐτέρῳ πρέπον τε εἶναι καὶ ἁμόττειν, ἥν ἄν τὸ ἅπαν συστήσηται τεταγμένον τε καὶ κεκοσμημένον πράγμα.

For example, if you consider the painters or the architects or the shipwrights or all the other skilled workmen, you will see that each of them arranges into some order whatever it is that he arranges, and that he forces each element to be appropriate and fitting with one another, until he has put together everything into a whole work that has been ordered and arranged. (503e)

Vitruvius relies on readers’ awareness of ideas like this when he characterises rhetorical artifice as the complete antithesis of proper architectural practice. In the text, colores have a sinister capacity for visual persuasion:

Haec vero cum inducuntur etsi non ab arte sunt posita, fulgentes oculorum reddunt visus...

When these are spread, even if they are not arrayed with skill, they render a gleaming appearance. (7.5.8)

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58 Perry 2005: 36 explains, ‘whether the authority is Aristotle, Cicero or Quintilian, there was a consensus in antiquity that the writer or speaker who did not pay heed to the demands of decorum risked committing a variety of errors.’

59 For discussion of Roman debates on rhetorical propriety and self-presentation, cf. esp. Gleason 1993 (who focusses on the first two centuries CE) and Gunderson 2000. The elusiveness of Vitruvius’ criticisms of rhetoric, however, makes it difficult to pinpoint which rhetoricians or rhetorical practices Vitruvius intends to disparage.


61 See further discussion of Vitruvius’ conception of decor in Chapter 3 and below.
Vitruvius’ claim to shun empty artifice, especially visual displays, is a persistent one. The theme of *De architectura’s* third preface, for example, is that knowledge is invisible. Hidden within the breast, unlike both rhetorical skills and wealth, it often goes unnoticed (3.praf.1). Vitruvius’ likening of a painter’s persuasiveness to an orator’s evokes imagery from the luxury arts seen across ancient literary and rhetorical criticism. This figurative language emerged from a long-standing use of architecture, and particularly houses, as a standard metaphor for text. As Bettina Reitz-Joose has illustrated, Vitruvius was highly conversant in this discourse. Thus, Vitruvius’ contemporary, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, could call the author an ὀικοδόμος (builder or architect, *Comp.* 6) and Seneca compliment a text by calling it an upright house (*domus recta*, *Ep.* 100.6). The discourse of luxury building played an important role in giving such analogies a moral edge. In a fragment of Lucilius, Scaevola mocks Albucius’ oratory with its fancy Graecisms both by referring to his words as lexis and by comparing them to an ornamental mosaic:

Quam lepide lexis conpostae ut tesserulae omnes
arte pavimento atque emblemate vermiculato

How delightfully *ses mots* are arranged, like all the little stones in the design of a paved floor or in a vermiculate mosaic. (Lucil. 84–85)

A mosaic of words seems playful and appealing when compared with the gruesome transformation of the image in later satire. Persius imagines the tongue that produces the putrid literary product of the present as caked with painted plaster: ‘you [Cornutus] are on your guard to distinguish between what rings solid and thestucco of a painted tongue’ (*dinoscere cautus | quid solidum crepet et pictae tectoria linguae*, Pers. 5.24–25). When protesting against the judgement of philosophical writings by oratorical standards, Seneca harnesses the negative connotations of such rhetorical polish; the aforementioned ‘upright house’, he declares, should not be upbraided for lacking varieties of marble (*varietas marmorum*) and other luxuries (*luxuria*, *Ep.* 100.6).

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62 I discuss this preface in Chapter 2.


64 Cf. de Jonge 2008: 188–190.

65 Cf. Kiesel 1990: 600–601; Nichols 2013: 269. The same satirist conveys the over-stylisation and excessiveness of contemporary literature by likening it to an ornamental inscription on an extremely expensive type of furniture: ‘in short, really, is it not engraved on citron-wood couches?’ (*non quidquid denique lectis | scribitur in citreis*, Pers. 1.52–53).
Cicero’s *Orator* preserves a rhetorical comeback against such abuse. The orator predicts that his detractors will condemn his adoption of a refined speaking style. He imagines that they will liken it to a brightly coloured painting and that they will argue, much like Vitruvius in 7.5, that ‘this was not done by the ancients’ (*Non erat hoc apud antiquos, Orat. 168*). The orator replies that support from the *antiqui* alone should not be adequate to persuade:

Quid si antiquissima illa pictura paucorum colorum magis quam haec iam perfecta delectet, illa nobis sit credo repetenda, haec scilicet repudianda!

What if that very ancient kind of painting, using only a few colours, delights them more than what now has been achieved; those, I imagine, we must go back to and these, of course, reject! (Orat. 169)

For Cicero and Vitruvius alike, the *picturae* of the *antiqui* symbolise an aesthetic position. Yet the resonance between these two texts is stronger. At the end of *De architectura* 7.5, Vitruvius identifies why his contemporaries prefer improper wall paintings:

Sed qua re vincat veritatem ratio falsa non erit alienum exponere. Quod enim antiqui insumentes laborem et industriam probare contendebant artibus, id nunc coloribus et eorum eleganti specie consecuntur...

It will not be out of context to explain why a false principle overcomes reality. That which without question the earlier generation, expending labour and diligence, strove to demonstrate through artistry, now is achieved through colours and their elegant appearance. (7.5.7)

The author’s focus has shifted away from the subject matter. Vitruvius highlights the reliance of these wall paintings on superficial visual effects. The poor decision making that has caused all these failed designs results from enthusiasm for *elegantia* and *colores* (7.5.7–8). The strained logic of the transition echoes the cascading effect so commonly seen in Roman moralising, in which vice begets (seemingly unrelated) vice. Yet through this culmination in *colores*, Vitruvius introduces an element of rhetorical double entendre, as well.

**Statue Display at Alabanda**

Speaking against sophisticated strategies of persuasion in favour of plain truth, Lykinos nevertheless cannot resist proffering an analogy. The

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66 I discuss this passage further in Chapter 5.
mathematician has a tale of his own, which Vitruvius embeds within the story set at Tralles through a technique of *mise en abîme*. Seeking to convince them not to trust Apaturius of Alabanda and his incoherent wall designs, Lykinos warns the people of Tralles that:

> Alabandis satis acutos ad omnes res civiles haberi, sed propter non magnum vitium indecentiae insipientes eos esse iudicatos, quod in gymnasio eorum quae sunt statuae omnes sunt causas agentes, foro discos tenentes aut currentes seu pila ludentes. Ita indecens inter locorum proprietates status signorum publice civitium vitium adiecit. Videamus item nunc, ne a picturis scaena efficiat et nos Alabandis aut Abderitas... Si ergo quae non possunt in veritate rationem habere facti, in picturis probaverimus, accedimus et nos his civitatis quae propter haec vitia insipientes sunt iudicatae.

The citizens of Alabanda are held to be astute enough in political matters, but they are considered stupid because of one small shortcoming, incongruity; in their gymnasium all the statues are delivering speeches, and in the forum they are holding the discus or running or throwing javelins. The incongruous positioning of statues in regard to the character of places publicised the deficiency of the citizenry. Let us see to it that our painted scenery does not make us citizens of Alabanda or Abdera... If therefore we approve in painting that which is not able, in reality, to uphold the principle of what can be, we add ourselves to those cities, which on account of these shortcomings are considered stupid. (7.5.6)

Lykinos’ speech, which draws attention to patrons’ flawed decision-making processes, expands upon Vitruvius’ suggestion earlier in the passage that ‘minds muddled by unsound powers of discernment do not have the ability to approve, in accordance with authority and the principle of poise, what is able to exist’ (*Iudiciis... infirmis obscuratae mentes non valent probare quod potest esse cum auctoritate et ratione decoris, 7.5.4*).

The conspicuous presence of the concept of *decor* in 7.5 – in both the phrase *ratio decoris* and the related term *indecentia* (the vice of the citizens of Alabanda) – emphasises the correlation between the quality of an architectural work and the calibre of its patron’s character or reputation, as well. *Decor*, among the six elements of architecture (*ordinatio, dispositio,*

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67 Cf. Str. 14.2.26 on Alabanda as a proverbial city of luxury (just as Abdera was of fools).

68 *Indecentia* (incongruity) is a concept that only appears in this passage of Vitruvius. Though the adverb *indecenter* and adjective *indecens* appear in other authors, the noun form is unique to Vitruvius. *Indecentia* makes the citizens of Alabanda seem stupid or silly (*insipiens*). In 8.3.22, *insipientia* describes a condition in which the mind has been turn to stone (a resonant meaning for this context perhaps). Cf. the fear Socrates expresses at *Symposium* 198c of being turned into stone by Agathon’s words.
eurythmia, symmetria, decor, distributio) introduced in Book 1, is the only one for which Vitruvius fails to provide a Greek equivalent (1.2). The omission of such an obvious gloss (τὸ πρέπον) leaves the impression that decor is, for Vitruvius, a Roman concept, in need of no translation. While the five elements related to construction privilege architecture’s Greek origins, the sixth, reflecting upon issues of context, is adamantly native born.69

The concept of decorum, often introduced in rhetorical and literary contexts to describe ‘appropriateness’ in aesthetics and behaviour, epitomises the Romans’ attempt to impose order and rationality, as well as ideas of philosophical rectitude and morality, onto areas of life not easy to categorise or adjudicate. Decorum, Cicero explains, is made up of ideas ‘difficult to put into words, but it will be enough if they are understood’ (difficilibus ad eloquendum, sed satis erit intellegi, Off. 1.126). By continually evading objective definitions of decorous or indecorous behaviour, through which judgements of decorum could become universal, the Romans configured moral arbitration as a subset of the powers of persuasion. One might even argue that decorum was so pervasive within Roman thought precisely because of the flexibility of Roman social norms. The definition of excess was always in the eye of the beholder.

Vitruvian decor, which refers to the compositional coherence of a space or structure, is just as ethical as other Roman authors’ notions of decorum.70 What makes this concept particularly useful for Vitruvius’ purposes is the fact that ‘decorum is not simply poised between ethics and aesthetics, but draws its authority in the one sphere from its employment in the other.71 In his definition of decor in 1.2, Vitruvius explains

69 (For eurythmia and symmetria, Vitruvius provides only the naturalised Greek term.) Marvin 2008: 169 surmises that ‘Vitruvius chose not to mention [τὸ πρέπον] either, assuming that the meanings are synonymous enough that a Greek gloss would be redundant, or that he and his readers thought of decor as a Roman concept.’ Wilson Jones 2015: 55 suggests that Vitruvius refrains from supplying the Greek because the word was so familiar — in other words, more Roman than the rest. Cf. also Thomas 2014; Wilson Jones 2015: 46. See Marvin 2008: 169–170 on how Vitruvius relates decor to the architectural orders.

70 Cf. Perry 2005: 31 n. 8: ‘this distinction [between decor and decorum] should not be pressed too hard. Both terms can clearly be translated by the Greek τὸ πρέπον. More telling, perhaps, is the fact that Cicero’s discussion of what makes a house suitable for a particular owner falls within his treatment of decorum, whereas Vitruvius’ discussion of the same topic employs the term decor. Cicero also cites decorum as a goal of poetic representation under circumstances that imply aesthetic as well as moral overtones.’ See Perry 2005: 24–25; 48. Cf. also Bek 1976: 166 n.12, who argues the contrary. For Bek, the ethical and the aesthetic are separate concerns that Vitruvius artificially conjoins.

71 Dugan 2005: 150 [original emphasis].
that *decor* is expressed ‘when for magnificent interiors, vestibules are also made harmonious and elegant’ (*cum aedificiis interioribus magnificis item vestibula convenientia et elegantia erunt facta, 1.2.6*). We may note the similarity between this description and an artistic analogy in Cicero’s *De oratore*:

> ut aedibus ac templis vestibula et aditus, sic causis principia pro portione rerum praeponere. . .

Just as a forecourt or an entrance to the house or temple to which it belongs, so should the opening passage of a case be configured in due proportion to the facts. (2.320)

This pair of passages demonstrates the fluidity of what might be considered disparate genres and even suggests a reciprocal dependence: while Cicero exploits an architectural paradigm to strengthen a rhetorical point, Vitruvius avails himself of strategies of persuasion drawn from rhetoric in order to convey the importance of architecture.

The ethical implications of disregarding the *ratio decoris* extend beyond the individual. Vitruvius, implying that the art of a city reveals the character of its citizenry as a whole, provides a precise chain of events leading from the *indecentia* of statues in Alabanda to the consideration of her citizens as *insipientes* to the damaging of the state. The people of Tralles condone improper designs in an *ekklesiasterion*, a public building, which, as its name (derived from the Greek word for popular assembly) implies, could be used for political meetings as well as for dramatic performances. Indeed, *ekklesiasteria*, probably those of Greek Sicily, inspired the transformation of the Roman Comitium from a rectangular to a circular shape during the third century BCE. A reader of *De architectura* will remember that, as mentioned previously, the aediles Varro and Murena decorated the Roman Comitium with Greek paintings. Through such analogies with public display, Vitruvius heightens the impression of the importance of domestic decor: just as the statue display

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73 It is not clear whether the *vitium* of *indecentia* should be considered as completely apart from (as well as in opposition to) the *res civiles* of the Alabandians, or rather as its weakest element. However, from the final clause of this sentence it is clear that whatever the Alabandians’ other civic virtues, just this one small *vitium* is capable of convincing others that the people are unwise.

74 Perry 2005: 34–38 highlights the importance placed here on popular opinion and consensus in determining the visual aspect of the city.

75 Coarelli 1985: 12–21.

76 See discussion earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 1.
mars the reputation of the city and its populace,\textsuperscript{77} ungainly mural decoration reflects poorly on Rome.\textsuperscript{78}

The expression \textit{ratio decoris}, used by Vitruvius in reference to wall painting,\textsuperscript{79} appears in scholarship as a shorthand for a Roman concern that the subject matter of a statue complement the function of the building in which it is displayed.\textsuperscript{80} Cicero, who does not use the phrase, provides the most compelling evidence for this view of ancient sculpture display.\textsuperscript{81} Throughout his correspondence, Cicero lacks interest in the artist, place of origin, or formal qualities of the work he encourages Atticus to purchase from abroad. Rather, harmony between the subject of the sculpture and the use of the space in which it will be exhibited is paramount. In a letter to Atticus, who is purchasing sculpture in Greece for Cicero’s villa, Cicero counsels his friend, ‘anything you have . . . which may strike you as worthy of my “Academy”, do not hesitate to send.’\textsuperscript{82} In another letter, this time to Fadius Gallus, Cicero reacts with surprise and disgust at the very idea of

\textsuperscript{77} I have translated the phrase \textit{publice civitati vitium adiecit} in 7.5.6 as ‘publicised the deficiency of the citizenry’, using the word ‘publicise’ in order to draw out some of the ideas suggested by \textit{publice}. Vitruvius chooses this adverb to indicate a specific way in which we should understand the defect or deficiency of the citizenry. ‘In public’ or ‘in a public place’ may be implied. Public spaces, after all, form the arenas for these design \textit{vitia}: the forum and \textit{gymnasium}, in the case of the Alabandians, and the \textit{ekklesiasterion} in the case of the Trallians. This display of statues is a visible vice, available for all to see. It broadcasts the stupidity of the state. In addition, and also suggestively for my purposes, \textit{publice} here could mean ‘at the public expense’, ‘officially’, or ‘so as to affect the whole community’.

\textsuperscript{78} Similarly, in 1.\textit{praef.3}, the flourishing of Roman private architecture reflects well on the new Augustan regime.

\textsuperscript{79} The phrase \textit{ratio decoris} appears twice – both times in relation to the placement and design of wall painting. A \textit{ratio decoris} determines where and how wall painting should be applied (7.4.4), as well as the composition of its designs (7.4.4).

\textsuperscript{80} Cf. e.g. Gazda 1995: 131. The phrase \textit{ratio decoris} is only attested in \textit{De architectura} (see previous discussion). Although his interpretation is not nearly so narrow, Pollitt 2001: xvi provides the probable watershed for the transformation of \textit{ratio decoris} into an axiom and shorthand of Roman art history: ‘Of these theories [of art criticism] the one which seems to have stirred up the most controversy was that which Vitruvius called the \textit{ratio decoris} (VII, 5, 4), perhaps best translated the “rational theory of appropriateness.”’ Decor, “appropriateness” . . . is the principle whereby one judges whether the form of a building is appropriate to its site and function and whether the details of a building are appropriate to its total form.’ Cf. also Pollitt 1974: 343–344.

\textsuperscript{81} Cf. Gazda 1995; Perry 2005: 50–65; Marvin 2008: 234–241; Anguissola 2012: 133–135 for analyses of 7.5.6 within discussions of thematic congruence in Roman statue display.

\textsuperscript{82} Cicero asks Atticus to send him sculptures, ‘most of all those that seem to you [right] for a gymnasium and terrace’ (\textit{et maxime quae tibi gymnasi xystique videbuntur esse}, \textit{At.} 1.8.2); ‘I am eagerly awaiting the statues of Megarian marble and of Hermes, about which you wrote to me. In future, anything you have of the same kind, which seems to you suitable for my Academia, do not hesitate to send’ (\textit{Signa Megarica et Hermas, de quibus ad me scripsisti, vehementer especto. Quicquid eiusdem generis habebis, dignum Academia tibi quod videbitur, ne dubitaris mittere . . .}. \textit{At.} 1.9.2). For a reading of these letters in relation to the wider concerns of Cicero’s authorial self-fashioning, see Stroup 2013.
bacchantes positioned within a library.\textsuperscript{83} Coupling 7.5.6 with Cicero’s demands for sculpture ‘suitable to a gymnasium’, etc., we might be tempted to consider it common knowledge among the Romans that bacchantes in libraries or athletes in fora constituted a faux pas: *indecens status*, ‘unsightly arrangement’ or ‘unfitting positioning’.

Cicero and Vitruvius’ corroborative testimony, in other words, would seem to imply that the Romans selected statues for display by subject, to accord with architectural context.

Turning away from these two authors, however, it is difficult to know how often this kind of rigid correspondence would have been the dominant concern in Roman sculpture display. Comparable testimony from contemporary textual sources is scant. Indeed, Cicero’s communication to Atticus of the importance of context in determining subject matter might suggest the very opposite of what is usually surmised: namely, that a relationship between display environment and sculptural theme was not a given of Roman aesthetics. Relevant material evidence does not suggest that this principle was comprehensively or stringently applied. Archaeological evidence indicates that such congruity was more consistent in public contexts than in private,\textsuperscript{85} but that even in public contexts, Roman ideas of design were not nearly so simple as a cursory reading of the texts might lead us to believe.

Even the gymnasium is not a straightforward case. Vitr. 7.5.6 implies that gymnasium should be decorated with athletes; however, elsewhere in the treatise, a gymnasium is the setting for debates among philosophers.\textsuperscript{87} Was

\textsuperscript{83} Cicero tells Fadius Gallus that the display of statues of the Muses would be ‘fitting for a library and compatible with my interests. Bacchantes, though, really – where is the right place for them in my house?’ (aptum bibliothecae studiisque nostris congruens; Bacchis vero ubi est aptum me locus?, Fam. 7.23).

\textsuperscript{84} Marvin 1989: 33 suggests that the Roman archaeological record contains so many replicated statues because sculpture that was instantly recognisable – even to the uneducated and un-travelled – could serve as a visual cue, indicating the function of a space; she argues that this ‘theory of appropriateness’ was the basic Roman rule of thumb when selecting and displaying statues.

\textsuperscript{85} Bartman 1988; Bartman 1991; Bergmann 1995 offer classic formulations of the challenges.

\textsuperscript{86} Consider the Baths of Caracalla, where statue subjects include Asclepius, whom we might accept as thematic, but also Achilles and Troilus, the punishment of Dirce, a colossal heroic warrior and a Maenad – to name but a few. See Marvin 1983.

\textsuperscript{87} Within a treatise so heavily concerned with the absorption of Greek culture into the Roman world, the flip-flop from forum to gymnasium may be morally loaded, a metaphor for the decline of old Roman institutions and their replacement with Greek ones. But this can only be inferred. The term gymnasium only appears on two other occasions: in 6.praef.1, as the building in Rhodes where Aristippus engages in philosophical debates, and in 1.7.1, as an absent building type in cities with temples of Hercules. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill conceives of Vitruvius’ remarks on Greek palaestrae in 5.11 as a discussion of gymnasia. Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 169–190 underscores the extent to which gymnasia pervaded Roman public and private architecture during this period and argues that the
the idea of statues pleading cases in fact such an aberration? Cicero refers to the Academy and Lyceum in Athens as *gymnasia* and indicates that they are decorated with herms, Muses, and other images of deities. The selection Vitruvius proposes, ‘holding the discus or running or throwing javelins’, does not begin to cover the range of variation. *De architectura*, read literally, imposes extraneous rules on a culture of display that was by its very nature eclectic and variable.

Vitruvius’ recourse to this example is no different from his approach to other artistic analogies. Lykinos offers the yarn of the incongruous statue displays at Alabanda as a means of illustrating for the citizens of Tralles the extent and nature of their folly, as well as encouraging them to define themselves in opposition to the ignorant people of Alabanda. The foibles of the populace of Alabanda reflect upon the Trallians – and ultimately upon those Roman private wall-painting patrons whose *vitia* called to mind the parable of Tralles in the first place (which, in turn, evoked the parable of Alabanda). The similarity between the paintings and statue displays Vitruvius describes in 7.5 thus derives not only from their shared emphasis on compositional coherence, but also from the fact that all these exempla demonstrate the poor judgement of the patrons who sponsor them.

In each artistic example in 7.5, the awarding of public and private commissions to unskilled and treacherous practitioners poses a threat to the professional hierarchy based on intellectual merit that the treatise so persistently advocates. Vitruvius’ portrayal of certain designs as an affront to the natural order introduces his imagined readers to the dangers of architectural charlatans such as Apaturius of Alabanda, whose corrupt practices contribute to the ills of society. Setting himself up as a moraliser reason that Vitruvius denies them a place in Italic *consuetudo*, despite their long presence in Italy, is due to the association of the *gymnasion* with Greek vice. Cf. also Williams 2016: 245, who notes that Vitruvius does not comment on the association of the *gymnasion* with Greek-style pederasty. See also the debate at the opening of Cic. *De orat. 2* on the primary function of the *palaestra*: exercise or philosophy (discussed in Leach 2004: 37–38).

88 In Cic. *Att. 1.6.2*, 1.8.2 and 1.9.2, sculptures appropriate for a *gymnasion*, *palaestra* and Academy are treated as one category.
89 Cam 1995: 148. *Omnes* here may be a crucial word. Lykinos inveighs against a ludicrous situation in which all statues in the forum engage in sport and all statues in the *gymnasion* make speeches. To complain that completely uniform and transposed design schemes would be not fitting (*indeces*), however, is not necessarily to condemn a more eclectic mix of sculptural subjects.
90 The image of athletic statues in the forum at Alabanda may be a subtle nod to a social injustice that Vitruvius treats at length in the ninth preface: the advancement of athletes to *honores* that place them on par with politicians (9.praef.1). In that preface, Vitruvius laments that writers are not awarded the same ceremonies and financial rewards.
establishes a high ground from which Vitruvius can attack his opponents – and also provides his rhetorical persona with a discursive stance familiar to his readers.

*De architectura* 7.5, while uniquely heated in its tone, belongs to a sustained attack on charlatanism, superficiality and intellectual negligence, which extends throughout the treatise. The artistic blunders of 7.5 not only exhibit the character flaws of their patrons – they also expose the corruption of their practitioners. Apaturius and the wall painters at Rome have characteristics in common with other charlatans in *De architectura*, including Dinocrates. In the preface to Book 2, the architect Dinocrates’ proposal to Alexander of a mountain sculpted into the shape of a man, meant to accommodate a city, is an empty spectacle. Like the vilified wall paintings, it disregards aspects of the proper relationship between vegetal nature and architectural construction. Dinocrates’ city on Mt Athos is too far away from cropland to support a population. We may also recall the differences of physical appearance that separate Vitruvius from Dinocrates. In the second preface, Dinocrates’ *statura, facies* and *forma* embolden him to dress – or rather undress – himself in the guise of Hercules. He approaches Alexander with a spectacular architectural plan, which is itself an act of corporeal fashioning: the transformation of Mt Athos into a statue (*2.praef.1–4*). The Herculean architect and the literally mountainous statue, however, are pure artifice, dazzling façades that conceal defects. At the end of the Dinocratean narrative, Vitruvius proclaims that he himself is ugly, aged and sickly (*2.praef.4*).\(^{91}\)

**Conclusion**

Vitruvius’ engagement with the iconography of painting (and of statue display) is so highly mediated by philosophical and rhetorical precedents that the customary description of Vitruvius as ‘one Augustan Age writer [who] states his convictions unambiguously’\(^ {92}\) becomes difficult to support. *De architectura* 7.5 draws upon features of contemporary elite discourse, including rhetorical strategies of persuasion and tropes of domestic moralising, in order to demonstrate to socially elevated and socially aspirant readers the weighty implications of domestic decor for the articulation of their personal prestige. Vitruvius’ portrayal of the opportunities and

\(^{91}\) Cf. McEwen 2003: 102–103, who rightly exposes Vitruvius’ false modesty here as a claim to *auctoritas*. This explains his age, but not his soured appearance.

\(^{92}\) Leach 2004: 7.
dangers of conspicuous displays of wealth demonstrates an acute awareness of both the vulnerability of elaborate and expensive houses to moral censure and the volatile nature of social mobility in first-century society. It also betrays a desire to turn this popular uncertainty surrounding the rhetoric of display to his advantage. Vitruvius exploits his readers’ fears of social and moral disgrace in order to enhance the value of the architectural expertise he himself provides.

In *De architectura*, the history of wall painting, presented as a curated series of images, becomes a picture-gallery primer, illustrating the importance of coherence in architecture. Yet painting catches Vitruvius in a double-bind by being both an intrinsic part of his conception of *architectura* and the very thing that threatens to unravel it. Given that, in *De architectura*, the subjects of mural decoration are overwhelmingly architectural (6.2; 7.5), objectionable designs not only analogise bad architectural practice, they illustrate it. The painter Apaturius of Alabanda, who serves as a foil to the authorial persona, epitomises the treachery of other, less knowledgeable architects who beguile their patrons with flashy, but flawed, visual displays. In order to convince his readers that they must distinguish between false and true architecture, Vitruvius implies that these charlatans are analogous to deceptive and artificial orators, and therefore liable to damage their patrons’ reputations. To understand the persuasiveness, or attempted persuasiveness, of *De architectura* 7.5, one must appreciate Vitruvius as a practitioner within an intellectual and literary tradition, rather than, as many of the most influential readers have assumed, a conservative out of step with his own day or an Augustan mouthpiece; in either case, someone reacting to the wall painting in his midst.
The Vermilion Walls of Faberius Scriba

This book has argued for the importance of faraway rivals, living in the distant past, to the elaboration of Vitruvius’ authorial persona. Faberius, who surfaces amidst a disquisition on paint pigments (7.7–14), represents a different model (7.9.2). Faberius is a contemporary Roman homeowner and the only scribe mentioned in De architectura. The title affords him a special relationship, hitherto unexplored, to the authorial persona. Faberius’ ambitious and ill-conceived plan involves minium. This red pigment (mercuric sulfide) is known in English as vermilion or cinnabar. In the ancient Roman world, vermilion coloured wax tablets and defined letters on papyrus and stone; it decorated living bodies and statues; and it contributed to a vibrant effect in wall painting, commonly referred to as ‘Pompeian red’. Surviving examples include the modular panels (emulating precious stone) painted on the walls of a cubiculum from Boscoreale (Figure 4.3; Plate 4.3) and the striking red background seen across multiple rooms in Pompeii’s Villa of the Mysteries (Figure 5.1; Plate 5.1).1 Eager to have an elegantly decorated house, Faberius paints all the walls of his peristyle with vermilion. Scarcely a month later, calamity strikes:

Itaque cum est in expolitionibus conclave in tectis inductum, permanet sine vitis suo colore; apertis vero, id est peristylis aut exhedris aut ceteris eiusdem modi locis, quo sol et luna possit splendores et radios immittere, cum ab his locus tangitur, vitiatur et amissa virtute coloris denigratur. Itaque cum et alii multi tum etiam Faberius scriba, cum in Aventino voluisset habere domum eleganter expolitam, peristyliis parietes omnes induxit minio, qui post dies XXX facti sunt invenusto varioque colore.

1 See Meyer 2010 on vermilion in the paintings from Boscoreale at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Eastaugh et al. 2004: 105 on the most well-known Roman wall painting with conspicuous vermilion: the Frieze of the Mysteries (occe 5) in the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii. Roman house painters sometimes mixed vermilion with cheaper, local reds (such as red ochre). The presence of vermilion cannot be ascertained definitively by autopsy (i.e., pending analysis, identification of vermilion in any brilliant red Roman wall painting remains conjectural).
Itaque primo locavit inducendos alios colores. At si qui subtilior fuerit et voluerit expolitionem miniaceam suum colorem retinere . . .

When [vermilion] is used in the finishing of enclosed apartments, it maintains its own colour without defects; but in open places like peristyles
and exedrae and so forth, where the sun and the moon can send their brightness and their rays, the part so affected is damaged and becomes black when the colour loses its strength. So, when many others were also [covering their peristyle walls with vermilion], even the scriba Faberius, since he had wanted to own a home on the Aventine that was elegantly decorated, covered all the peristyle walls with vermilion, which after thirty days became distasteful and discoloured. And so he immediately contracted for other colours to be spread. But if someone is more painstaking and wants vermilion wash to retain its colour . . . (7.9.2–3)

In the text that follows, Vitruvius identifies and corrects Faberius’ mistake using the authorial voice, rather than the mouthpiece of a mythohistorical character. He recommends that this subtilior (more refined) someone use γάνωσις (literally, the action of rendering brilliant), a wax-based technique for finishing painted statues, to protect his or her walls (7.9.3). Nature corroborates this account: vermilion, when exposed to natural light, sometimes blackens. This is clearly visible in the two red rectangles below the peacocks in the paintings of oecus 15 in the Villa Oplontis A (Figure 5.2; Plate 5.2). The application of wax may have protected the pigment from exposure to chlorine, which catalyses the light-induced phase change. Whether or not the Romans used γάνωσις to protect walls, as both Vitruvius and Pliny the Elder (Nat. 33.122) attest, is unknown. The varying vulnerability of surviving vermilion walls indicates that while some were crafted in such a way as to be impervious to light, others were not.

This chapter proposes that Roman political invective is the model for Vitruvius’ narration of Faberius’ faux pas. The Faberius anecdote stands in stark contrast to the descriptions of pigments that precede and follow it. These accounts of origins and properties lack any narrative structure or reference to individuals. In fact, they echo the scientific language and style of the pseudo-Aristotelian De coloribus and Theophrastus’ De lapidibus. To date, the tale of Faberius has attracted attention solely as evidence of

2 In γάνωσις, painters use heated tools to apply a mixture of pigment and molten wax, which penetrates the outer, porous layers of the marble. Cf. Freccero 2002. For epigraphical sources, cf. Hellmann 1999: 35 and 89.
3 Cotte et al. 2006 analyses the discoloured walls at the Villa Sora in Torre del Greco. On the highly visible discolouration at Villa Oplontis A, see Eastaugh et al. 2004: 105. See also van Buren 1932; Feller 1967; Gettens, Feller and Chase 1972: 50; Ling 1991: 209.
4 McCormack 2000; Keune and Boon 2005. I am grateful to Glenn Gates for discussing this process with me.
5 Following 7.5 on picturae, Vitruvius dedicates the remainder of Book 7 to descriptions of various pigments. Goldman 2013: 33–36 contextualises Vitruvius’ account of pigments in relation to other Roman references to dyes.
6 Another notable exception is the pigment purveyor Vestorius (7.11.1).
7 Cf. Liou, Zuinghedau and Cam 2003: xxxix.
Vitruvius’ inclusion of first-hand knowledge within the content of his treatise. The story renders the surrounding material, adapted from Greek technical treatises, more meaningful for a Roman audience, appealing to these readers through both content and craft. Relative scholarly neglect of this evocation of invective, despite increased attention to Vitruvius’ dependence on rhetorical models and language, may stem from the fact that the moral implications of Faberius’ mistake are not elaborated, but rather implied. Wider contexts for the passage, both within the treatise and beyond, however, suggest that the description of Faberius’ blackening walls, ostensibly a victimless crime and innocent mistake, denigrates his character.

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5.2 Fresco with blackened vermilion on the east wall in oecus 15 of the Villa Oplontis A, Torre Annunziata. For the colour version, please refer to the plate section.

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9 On Vitruvius and rhetoric, see Chapter 4.
Roman sources paint Faberius scriba as a fitting political nemesis. Cicero mentions him on several occasions in his letters to Atticus from 45 BCE, both as his own debtor and as Julius Caesar’s scriba. *De architectura* emphasises Vitruvius’ lasting loyalty to Julius Caesar, a steady alliance spanning generations: ‘that same zeal of mine, remaining faithful to the memory of that man [Julius Caesar], devoted support to you [Augustus]’ (*idem studium* meum in eius memoria permanens in te contulit favorem, 1.praef.2). Augustus is *De architectura*’s dedicatee; his building programme is the stated impetus for the treatise (1.praef.1–3). Cicero and, later, Appian (*BC* 3.1.5) explain that after Julius Caesar’s assassination, Faberius helped Mark Antony make insertions into Caesar’s unpublished papers. Cicero also alleges that Faberius helped Dolabella to embezzle money from the treasury of Ops. If the Faberius mentioned in *De architectura* is this same scriba, this unflattering sketch (7.9.2) reaffirms Vitruvius’ Augustan political allegiance.

Within Roman invective, the image of the house could provide an analogue or illustration of its owner’s vices. Cicero, for example, claims that Piso’s ‘soul was covered by his face, his shameful deeds by the walls [of his house]’ (*animus eius vultu, flagitia parietibus tegebantur, Sest. 22*). The walls of Piso’s house offer a key to deciphering his inscrutable countenance: both conceal a sinister truth. Within this context, the changing colour of Faberius’ walls and its *invenustus* effect may evoke his duplicity

10 *Att. 12.21.2* (17 March); 12.25.1 (21 March); 12.29.2 (25 March); 12.31.2 (29 March); 12.40.4 (9 May); 12.47.1 (16 May); 12.51.3 (20 May); 13.27.2 (25 May); 13.28.1 (26 May); 13.29.1–2 (27 May); 12.22.1 (27 May [?]); 13.31.1 (28 May); 13.30.1 (28 May); 13.2b (29 May); 13.32.1 (29 May); 13.33.1–2 (2 June). On the last, see Elmore 1917a and Elmore 1917b. Dates follow Shackleton Bailey 1999.

11 *Att. 14.18.1* (9 May); 15.13.3 (25 October).

12 Cicero’s letters to Atticus in the spring of 45 express almost daily concern about Faberius’ outstanding debt to Cicero. Time and again, Cicero writes that he expects the matter to be cleared up on the day he writes the letter. Faberius’ debt stands in the way of Cicero’s purchase of gardens (*horti*).

13 *Studium* for Julius Caesar, if *permanens*, encourages alliance with his son. In fact, true loyalty to Caesar’s *memoria* may even depend upon it, since it is *idem studium*. Cf. Gros 1994 on the connotations of *studium* here.

14 See further discussion of the Augustan dedication in Chapter 1.

15 Such access was not uncommon (Purcell 2001; David 2007). As Armstrong 1986: 264 describes, *scribae* transacted and recorded business for the treasury, but since the *aerarium* was also a record office, they had other equally important duties to discharge. They recorded resolutions of the senate and kept records of them. If an interested party wanted access to official documents, the *scribae* had to produce them and make authentic copies.’

16 Cf. *Att. 14.18.1* (9 May). Cf. Benöhr 1986. Scholars assume that this activity must have occurred in March or April, with Antony’s blessing. Ramsey 1994: 142 explains this as a ‘general charge for which we have no specific corroborating evidence’.

17 Liou, Zuinghedau and Cam 2003: 164; Gros, Corso and Romano 1997: 1094.
towards Venus’ descendant Julius Caesar. The verb *inducere*, which can refer to deluding, obscuring or covering something up, here elicits a range of menacing connotations. Or perhaps Faberius’ rapid (*primo*, 7.9.2) replacement of the (ill-omened?) black colour emulates his agile movement from one alliance to the next?

Beginning in the late Republic, as Mark Bradley shows, Roman authors used *color* to refer to ‘facial expression, character, disposition, and behaviour’. Bradley emphasises that this ‘is not (just) a metaphor: these *colores* were somewhere on the line between real facial colour (embarrassed blush, frightened pallor, flush of anger, ill health, etc.) and expressions of the sort of person one was at a particular moment in time.’ Vitruvius draws on just such a semi-abstract meaning in Book 6, when he describes a homeowner’s changing *color*: ‘since an open countenance changes for shame when a request is made of a doubtful character’ (*quod ingenuus color movetur pudore petendo rem suspiciosam*, 6.praef.5). If, like Piso’s walls, Faberius’ walls are their owner’s countenance writ large, we may read the *varius color* of the *scriba*’s blackening vermilion not only as an indicator of his dark character, but also as a kind of architectural blush or flush (7.9.2).

My central argument, however, is that the parable of Faberius *scriba* draws on vermilion’s connections with luxury and on the Roman invective *topos* of the ‘ambitious builder’. The finer points of the incident’s political background, which go unmentioned in *De architectura*, are ultimately not essential to our appreciation of the passage’s invective force. As the previous two chapters of this book have revealed, within the Roman tradition of domestic moralising, judgements of house and owner are mutually dependent – each reflects the other. Just as the house makes the man, so, too, the character of the man determines the reception of the house. Vitruvius’ introduction of Faberius *scriba* and his ruined walls into *De architectura* betrays a desire to turn this widespread uncertainty surrounding the definition of immorality to his advantage. While the story provides Vitruvius with an opportunity to distance himself from negative

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18 Black appears as a colour of ill omen in Hor. *Sat.* 1.9.73 and in the famous name of the *lapis niger*. 
21 Pace Gros 2016: 359–360. For Pierre Gros, responding to the formulation of this argument in Nichols 2016, vermilion is not expensive enough to be considered luxury. ‘Ambitious builder’ is the phrasing of Whitehorne 1969.
qualities Faberius embodies, it also demonstrates that the author’s expertise regarding *expolitiones* extends to their moral impact. In his work on political invective, Anthony Corbeill argues that ‘Roman humorous abuse creates social norms by exposing the violators of those norms.’\(^{23}\) Crafted narratives of immoral behaviour, in other words, reveal an impulse to shape the contours of Roman society at large, not just to censure the behaviours of individuals.\(^{24}\) By staging Faberius’ blunder as invective, Vitruvius exploits his readers’ fears of social and moral disgrace in order to enhance the value of the architectural expertise he himself provides.

### Vermilion as Luxury

The overture to Book 7 hints at the vulnerability of its contents in an unparalleled pre-prefatory disclaimer: ‘I will now explain in the following book about the finishing touches, how they can be elegant without faults for a long time’ (*de expolitionibus autem eorum, uti sint elegantes et sine vitii ad vetustatem, sequenti volume exponam*, 6.8.10). The language recurs in 7.9.2, in which Faberius aspires to a *domus elegantri expolita*, but the effect is marred by *vitia*. Such morally resonant terms as *virtus* and *vitium* are present elsewhere in *De architectura*’s descriptions of practical and theoretical architectural flaws; and in 7.9.2, they most directly refer to a technical defect. Yet by characterising these finishing touches as particularly prone to moral imperfections, Vitruvius acknowledges their connotations within the critique of luxury building.\(^{25}\)

As we have seen, the pigments used in wall painting, especially imported and expensive ones, surfaced early in the Roman litany of vices. After all, Cato the Elder supposedly boasted that his villas were raw and unadorned, and not even smeared with paint (*Gel. 13.24.1*).\(^{26}\) Recall, too, that Appius Claudius Pulcher in Varro’s *Res Rusticae* mentions by name the *minium* and azurite (*armenium*) that decorate a villa ‘elegantly finished with stucco-work’ (*polita opere tectorio elegantri*, R. 3.2.9).\(^{27}\) Alongside citrus wood and gold, these pigments are tell-tale signs of a thoroughly *perpolita* (ornate)

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\(^{24}\) Liou, Zuinghedau and Cam 2003: 164 consider 7.9.2, alongside Cicero’s letters, as historical evidence that Faberius had a luxurious home on the Aventine, a testament to his wealth.

\(^{25}\) Controversies surrounding paint pigments extended far beyond their moral valence; the topic is richer than I can address here. See especially Rouveret 1989: 255–265; Bradley 2009: 94–101.

\(^{26}\) See discussion in Chapter 3.

villa, worthy of rebuke (R. 3.2.3–4). Vitruvius, who traces the movement of vermilion from mines in Ephesus and Spain to workshops on the Quirinal hill (7.9.4) and highlights the foreign sources of malachite, azurite and indigo (7.9.6), likewise denounces those colores he considers pretiosa (costly). In a modification of the moralists’ customary claim that luxuria subverts natura, Vitruvius here describes a departure from ancestral values in which luxuria subverts architectura:

Quod enim antiqui insumentes laborem et industriam probabere contendedant artibus, id nunc coloribus et eorum elegantissimi speciei consecuntur . . .

That which without question the earlier generation, expending labour and diligence, strove to demonstrate through artistry, now is achieved through colours and their elegant appearance. (7.5.7)

Vitruvius finds fault with those who purchase colores at great expense (7.5.7), but do not consider the importance of technique (ars) or refinement (subtilitas): exertion (labor) and assiduity (industria) are here directly contrasted with colores and elegant appearance (elegans species).

Among the pigments, vermilion had the strongest associations with luxury. Pliny the Elder is our best source, and his discussion ranges from the sacred connotations underpinning its use as the face paint of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Nat. 33.111) to its potency as a poison (Nat. 33.122; 33.124) to its brilliance as one of the colores floridi (Nat. 35.30). In Nat. 33.4, when denouncing man’s prodiga ingenia (wasteful temperament), Pliny introduces minium as a discovery made by avaritia itself. He discusses vermilion at length in the context of metals in Nat. 33, rather than in his history of painting and pigments in Nat. 35 (Nat. 33.111–124). Apropos of the exorbitant price, Pliny remarks that it was necessary to impose a ceiling of seventy sesterces per pound (nine times the cost of the best red ochre) by law, ‘lest it exceed proper measure’ (ne modum excederet, Nat. 33.118). Half a century later, Florus would

28 Color in De architectura can refer to both visual ‘colour’ and substantive ‘pigment’, among other meanings (see discussion in Chapters 2 and 4). Connotations of the colour red in Roman culture are outside the scope of this chapter.


30 Cf. also Bradley 2009: 94, who rightly emphasises the connection of 7.5 to ‘feelings voiced by Aristotle (Poetics 1450b) . . . that drawing was more fundamental than colour, and that brilliant colours are no substitute for craftsmanship’. See also my discussion of 7.5 in Chapter 4.


32 Twentieth-century scholars debated the precise meaning of Pliny’s division of pigments into colores floridi and colores austeri at length. Cf. Augusti 1967, who notes that cost is an important aspect uniting Pliny’s floridi, and Lepik-Kopaczynska 1958, who argues that colores floridi are glossy colours, whereas colores austeri are matte earth tones. Cf. also Rouveret 1989: 255–265.

likewise characterise the vermilion unearthed from Spanish soil as a precious commodity (*Epit. 2.33*).

Treatments of sumptuous extravagance across Roman imperial literature use *minium* almost metonymically. Propertius evokes the exoticism of vermilion as well as its hue when he likens a woman’s skin draped with silk to the contrast of Scythian snow and Spanish vermilion (Prop. 2.3.11). Suetonius’ Caligula decorates the entire Circus with vermilion and malachite for his lavish spectacles: ‘he gave many shows in the Circus . . . and some of exceptional quality in which the Circus was covered with vermilion and malachite’ (*edidit et circenses plurimos . . . et quosdam praecipuos, minio et chrysocolla constrato circo, Cal. 18*). The paradigm of tasteless opulence, Petronius’ Trimalchio, does not let his dinner party go by without introducing a fresh round of tables, dusted with vermilion: ‘the slaves took away all the tables, brought in others and scattered sawdust dyed with saffron and vermilion’ (*sustulerunt servi omnes mensas et alias attulerunt, scobemque croco et minio tintam sparserunt, Petr. 68*). The host’s response? With this tour de force, Trimalchio admits, he might finally be *contentus* – but not quite: ‘if you have anything nice’ (*si quid belli habes*), he demands, ‘put it on’ (*afer, Petr. 68*).

Fragments of the iambic poet Bibaculus, a contemporary of Catullus, lampooning the unfortunate Publius Valerius Cato, draw on the potency of the house as a symbol for the man, as well as the luxurious connotations of vermilion wall painting. Cato, Bibaculus explains, lost his estate during the lawless Sullan years and was unable to save his villa in Tusculum from the clutches of his creditors:

> Catonis modo, Galle, Tusculanum
tota creditor urbe venditabat.
mirati sumus unicum magistrum,
summum grammaticum, optimum poetam,
omnes solvere posse quaestiones,
unum deficere expedire nomen.
en cor Zenodoti, en iecur Cratetis!

Just recently, Gallus, a creditor, was hawking Cato’s Tusculan estate throughout the town. I was astonished that this singular teacher, this consummate grammarians, this excellent poet could solve all literary questions but failed in the accounting of a single *nomen*. Behold, the brains of Zenodotus! Behold, the heart of Crates! (Bib. poet. 2 = Suet. Gram. 11, trans. Kaster 1995 (adapted))

Like some former starlet wearing a tattered fur, Cato lives among ‘mere splinters painted with vermilion’ that analogue his change of fortune:

> si quis forte mei domum Catonis,
depictas minio assulas, et illos
custodis videt hortulos Priapi,
If anyone chances to see my friend Cato’s house – mere splinters painted with vermilion – and that little garden guarded by Priapus, he wonders: from what learned pursuits has he grown so wise that three cabbages, half a pound of groats and a couple of bunches of grapes can sustain him, sheltered by a single roof tile, to the verge of deep old age? (Bib. poet. 1 = Suet. Gram. 11, trans. Kaster 1995 (adapted))

The wreckage of Cato’s once-brilliant vermilion decor may reveal a subtle critique. The phrase *depictas minio*, as Robert Kaster observes, may ‘stand in contrast to, and implicitly undercut, the exaggerated portrait of C[ato]’s poverty presented in the poem’. A *menu du jour* of ‘three cabbages, half a pound of groats and a couple of bunches of grapes’ (cauliculi, selibra farris, racemi duo) presents a novel hardship for Cato (Bib. poet. 1.6–7). The vegetarian meals that signify Horace’s Epicurean existence (for instance, the supper of leeks, peas and pancakes in S. 1.6.115) in Horace’s S. 1.6, however, are hardly different. Does Bibaculus’ melodramatic staging of the grammarian’s plight (en cor Zenodoti, en iecur Cratetis!, Bib. poet. 2.7) imply that Cato’s claims to *sapientia* are being put to the test? Vitruvius’ sixth preface touts learning as the only wealth that can survive the ‘unjust tempest of fortune’ (fortunae tempestas iniqua, 6.praef.2). Bibaculus misappropriates this platitude to reveal a bitter irony: despite all his erudition, Cato could not outwit the elementary transactions that now define his existence (Bib. poet. 2.4–6).

**The Invective Force of 7.9.2**

Invective was a rhetorical tool used to damage individuals’ public personas by isolating them from shared values and social norms. Humour and inventiveness – the ingenious crafting of minutiae – were crucial to its success. Pliny the Elder, for example, includes in his history of marble an anecdote he claims to have read in Cornelius Nepos (presumably in the *Exempla* of c. 43 BCE). Like Vitruvius’ account of Faberius, this

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34 On the temporal sequence of these fragments (1 after 2), see Kaster 1995: 157.
36 Cf. Gowers 1993: 7, n. 22 and 23, who includes the humble repasts of Bib. poet. 1 and Hor. S. 1.6 among Roman literature’s ‘innocent meals where food is at its least gross’. 
passage specifies the hill on which the house is located and the title(s) held by its owner:37

Primum Romae parietes crusta marmoris operuisse totos domus suae in Caelio monte Cornelius Nepos tradit Mamurram, Formiis natum equitem Romanum, praefectum fabrum C. Caesaris in Gallia...

The first man to cover whole walls of his house, which was on the Caelian hill, with marble veneer was, according to Cornelius Nepos, Mamurra, a Roman knight and native of Formiae, who was Gaius [Julius] Caesar’s chief engineer in Gaul. (Nat. 36.48)

Walls blanketed in marble might seem immoral prima facie, yet allusion to Mamurra’s character invigorates the condemnation of this type of decor: ‘that such a man should have sponsored the invention is enough to make it utterly improper’ (ne quid indignati desit, tali auctore inventa re, Nat. 36.48). Like Faberius, Mamurra became infamous for enriching himself through paid posts and for his treachery, insubordination and financial insolvency.38

Roman invective is rife with name-based puns.39 Cicero evokes the etymology of Verres’ name, for example, when denouncing his ‘hog-like’ behaviour (Ver. 1.121; 4.95). Mamurra’s marmor is almost a homophone. Within the context of De architectura, Faberius’ name, too, may contain a pun. Vitruvius specifies that Faberius’ walls deteriorate on account of insufficient subtilitas (fineness of detail), a quality of fabrilis (craftsmanship).40 Faberius is the Roman gentilicum derived from the cognomen Faber (‘workman’ or ‘smith’).41 Though his name is, in essence, ‘Bob the Builder’, Vitruvius’ invective target has ignored an important aspect of fabrica.

Mamurra is best known as Catullus’ invective target (Catul. 29; 41; 43; 57; 94; 105; 114; 115), whom the poet also refers to by the derogatory nickname Mentula.42 Following his remarks on Mamurra’s marble, Pliny the Elder forges a link with the character known from poetry:

Hic namque est Mamurra Catulli Veroniensis carminibus proscissus, quem, ut res est, domus ipsius clarius quam Catullus dixit habere quidquid habuisset Comata Gallia.

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37 McDermott 1983: 294 explains: ‘Under the Julio-Claudian emperors a villa Mamurrana was imperial property. Despite the use of the word villa this may refer to the domus of Mamurra in Caelio monte.’ Cf. McDermott 1983: 294 n. 6 on inscriptions confirming the location of this house.
40 7.9.3: At si qui subtilior fuerit. In 6.8.9, subtilitas depends upon the competence of the officinato(r) (foreman), who supervises the fabri (workmen).
41 Chase 1897: 111, 129-130. 42 The Epilogue discusses Mamurra at greater length.
This same Mamurra was lashed by the poems of Veronian Catullus, [Mamurra] whose house, as a matter of fact, proclaims more clearly than Catullus himself that he ‘possesses everything that Shaggy Gaul possessed’. (Nat. 36.48)

Mamurra’s home is more harmful to its inhabitant than Catullus’ poetry. But, equally, Mamurra, on account of his personal notoriety, damages the reputation of marble veneer itself.

A similar cycle of self-defeat appears in Catullus’ portrayal of Mamurra’s extravagance as an affront to agrarian values in poems 44 and 45 (two of the poems that refer to Mamurra as Mentula). Mentula’s farm ‘has so many fine things in it’ (tot res in se habet egregias, 44.2), but its fructus cannot sustain a man of such extravagance: ‘he outruns the produce by his expenses’ (fructus sumptibus exsuperat, 44.4). Poem 45 asks, ‘how can he fail to surpass Croesus in wealth, who occupies so many good things in one estate?’, (cur non divitiis Croesum superare potis sit, uno qui in saltu tot bona possideat?, 45.3–4). Poem 44 suggests an answer: Mentula can hardly overcome (superare, 45.3) the wealth of Croesus if he overpowers himself (exsuperat, 44.4). A list of the farm’s assets (‘bird catching of all kinds, fish, meadows, arable fields and game’, aucupium omne genus, piscis, prata, arva ferasque, 45.3), therefore, is transformed from a standard litany of praise into a barrage of insults: what good can even an ample and diverse estate do a man who runs it into the ground?

Scholars have debated the extent of Mamurra’s wealth – is the estate of poems 44 and 45 a small or large farm? – without recognising Catullus’ efforts pointedly and playfully to deny this knowledge. Poem 44 ends in an equivocating compromise: the speaker appears to defer to another’s judgement (‘so I grant that he is rich’, quare concedo sit dives, 5), but then makes a series of contradicting statements which draw attention to the unreliability of opinions and reports (‘if you will allow that he lacks

On Catullus’ depiction of Mamurra as a bad farmer, see Harvey 1979.

In addition, Catullus may imply that Mamurra’s vices hold him back from such a feat: Croesus, of course, was surpassed as ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῶν ἄνθρωπων, according to Solon’s view, by those whose virtue accorded them lasting fame (Hdt. 1.29–32).

Cf. Fitzgerald 1995: 103–104. Poem 43’s catalogue of charms lacking in Mamurra’s amica (‘hello, girl with neither a small nose, nor a pretty foot, nor black eyes’, salve, nec minimo puella naso | nec bello pede nec nigris ocellis, 43.1–2) employs a similar technique.

Catullus also refers to Mamurra’s debt by calling him insolvent (decoctor, 44.4 and 43.5). In culinary contexts, decoquere means to boil or melt down. Cf. Horace’s use of a similar metaphor to describe a scriba of low morals as warmed-over (recoctus) from a lower post, discussed in Chapter 2 (S. 2.5.55–56). Fitzgerald 1995: 268 n. 47 notes the use of decoctus to refer to literary style in Cicero’s De oratore (meaning ‘overripe’, with a negative connotation (3.103)) and Persius’ poem 1 (a positive meaning, ‘mature’ or ‘condensed’ (125)).
everything. Let us praise his estate, so long as he himself has nothing’, dum omnia desint. | saltum laudemus, dum modo ipse egeat, 5–6). Through the inclusions of ‘truly’ and ‘he is said [to be]’ (non falso . . . fertur, 1–2), poem 114 draws attention to power of words to shape perceptions of Mamurra’s assets, which are made great or meagre, significant or insignificant by the force of speech. As is true of his marble-covered walls, Mamurra’s reputation creates his farm, and vice versa.47

In addition, like Mamurra’s marble (Nat. 36.48), Faberius’ vermilion errs in its quantity. Vitruvius advocates, for example, that strips (cunei) of vermilion be painted in winter rooms (7.4.4). After all, the virtuous antiqui did decorate with vermilion – they just used it sparingly:

Quis enim antiquorum non uti medicamento minio parce videtur usus esse? At nunc passim plerumque toti parietes inducuntur. Accedit huc chrysocolla, ostrum, armenium.

For who of the earlier generation does not seem to have used vermilion sparingly, like [they used] medicine? But now everywhere it is spread over entire walls. Added to this are malachite, purple and azurite. (7.5.8)

Faberius, on the other hand, applies vermilion not as an accent, but in monochrome: peristyliis parietes omnes induxit minio (7.9.2). Vitruvius specifically identifies the fashion for blanketing toti parietes (‘entire walls’) as a vice (7.5.8). Though this particular passage (7.9.2–3) leaves readers to draw independent conclusions about the copious quantity of vermilion on Faberius’ walls, the text has already suggested a framework for moral judgement.

Because they were grand and Hellenising spaces that often displayed works of art, peristyles were a natural focus of Roman domestic moralising in the first century B.C.E.48 De architectura characterises peristylium as a quintessential feature of Greek mansions (6.7) and a type of room sometimes adorned with picturae (7.5). Vitruvius’ invective against Faberius scriba exploits the peristyle’s dual resonance as luxuriating and patronal.49

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47 The alias Mentula (Cock) is also a pun. In poem 94, Mamurra adulterates because his name is Cock, ‘Cock screws wives. Screws wives? Cock? But of course! That’s what they say: the pot collects the greens’ (Mentula moechatur. Moechatur mentula? Certe. | Hoc est quod dicunt: ipsa olera olla legit, 94.1–2). Tom Murgatroyd has also suggested to me that Augustus’ supposed nicknaming of Horace purissimus penis (mentioned in the Suetonian Vita) may indicate a Roman tendency to ridicule public servants assisting magistrates by referring to them as phallic protrusions of their superiors. N.B. Horace’s cognomen Flaccus, often considered the source of Augustus’ pun, did not have sexual connotations in ancient Rome. Cf. Parker 2000.

48 See also my discussion of porticoes and peristyles in Chapter 3.

49 Enormous peristyles are also potentially political in character. Vitruvius names peristyliam amplissima (along with other large, grand spaces such as basilicas and libraries) as crucial features of the houses
Peristyles are also a central feature of the communia, the areas of the Vitruvian house that are necessary for the receiving of clients and are accessible even to the uninvited (6.5.1). The ruined peristyle thus has the potential to mar Faberius’ (aspirant?) patronal self-presentation before the visiting public. Vitruvius locates Faberius’ house on the Aventine, often characterised as an up-and-coming, rather than established, neighbourhood in the Republic (7.9.2). This setting for a scribe’s house perhaps enhances the joke.

Faberius is a revealing character foil because, through his negative example, he advances Vitruvius’ claims to shun the infamia associated with abounding wealth: ‘I have thought that modest means accompanied by good reputation should be pursued more than riches coupled with infamy’ (potius tenuitatem cum bona fama quam abundantiam cum infamia sequendam putavi, 6.praef.5). Vitruvius’ invective against Faberius not only places the author within a moral community, but also allows Vitruvius to demonstrate superior knowledge and intelligence. Location, or rather mislocation, provides the punch line for other parables, including Apaturius’ painting of houses above roof-tiles (7.5.6) and Dinocrates’ city without access to cropland (2.praef.3). Faberius is ignorant of the fact that he cannot use vermilion to decorate a peristyle without a special wax treatment. Inattention to location results in a moment of reckoning, which demonstrates the value of De architectura.

As a contemporary Roman scribe, Faberius is more peer-like than the other Vitruvian foils. Yet his sphere of expertise may set him apart from both the authorial persona and these characters. Scribae, after all, performed a variety of functions, and Faberius shows no signs (either within De architectura or elsewhere) of having been a scriba armamentarius. Nor does Vitruvius present him as an architectus, like Dinocrates or Diognetus. Rather, the Faberius of the text is a wealthy homeowner, the type of person who could benefit from basic architectural instruction. He is, in this sense, a foil to the imagined lay readers of the treatise (5.praef.3), rather than to

of the nobiles (6.5.2). Cf. 6.3.7 on the dimensions and proportions of peristyles and their columns. For a concise summary of the origins, functions and connotations of domestic peristyles, see O’Sullivan 2007: 516–518.


See Chapter 4 on Apaturius; see Chapters 2 and 4 on Dinocrates.

See Purcell 1983; Purcell 2001.
its author, and his story contains a message for them: the amount of vermilion purchased may be fully under the patron’s control: ‘because they [vermilion and other such pigments] are expensive, they are exempted from the contracts, so that they are paid for in cash by the homeowner not by the contractor’ (*ideo quod pretiosa sunt, legibus excipiuntur ut a domino, non a redemptore repraesententur*, 7.5.8). Yet Faberius’ failure to achieve a domus eleganter expolita (7.9.2) through the addition of vermilion reinforces Vitruvius’ frequent reminders that *magnificentia* alone cannot guarantee a building’s success. \(^{53}\)

### Vitruvius the Moralist

For many readers, Vitruvius epitomises the conservative, backwards-facing Roman, unable to stomach new fashions and fearful of increasing levels of conspicuous consumption. \(^{54}\) Both the author’s recommendation that the level of grandeur affected by a homeowner should reflect his position in the Roman social hierarchy (1.2.9 and 6.5) and his ardent denunciation of specific wall painting styles as immoral (7.5) seem to oversimplify the issues and quell debate.

We have seen that Vitruvius condemns the overuse of *colores*, and particularly vermilion, in strong words (7.5.7–8). Yet this denunciation prefaced a substantial discussion of paint pigments, including instructions for how to attain vermilion walls, the very effect twice singled out for censure elsewhere in the text. Vitruvius does not suggest that there should have been restrictions on Faberius’ design. Nor does he recommend the substitution of one of an array of artificial colours (7.14), which achieve the visual effects of expensive *colores* (not, however, including vermilion) by cheaper means. Instead, Vitruvius provides detailed guidance on how to apply and protect vermilion wall painting (7.9.3–4), including directions to the local vermilion workshops: ‘the workshops [for the preparation of the pigment] are between the temples of Flora and Quirinus’ (*Eae autem officinae sunt inter aedem Florae et Quirini*, 7.9.4). Condemnations and endorsements of domestic refinement, in other words, exist side-by-side.

\(^{53}\) In 6.8.9, Vitruvius asserts that houses should be judged by three criteria: *magnificentia*, *subtilitas* and *dispositio* (composition). Patrons alone should incur praise or blame for the *magnificentia* of a house – the choice of materials is completely dependent on patrons’ expenditure. Cf. Pollitt 1974: 401.

\(^{54}\) Wallace-Hadrill 1990b: 46 classifies Vitruvius as an ‘orthodox Catonian’.
Contradictions within Vitruvius’ approach to domestic luxury, as is true in the case of Cicero, reflect his participation in a Roman discourse of morality in which single individuals often espoused contrasting views. In light of this, the differing approaches to domestic luxury in Book 7 can be considered programmatic. Elasticity and nuance throughout Vitruvius’ remarks on houses undermine the universal applicability of his rules and hierarchies. The author himself acknowledges that adherence to the moral guidelines and social codes presented in the treatise cannot assure the rectitude of a house; instead, the behaviours of the individual architects, craftsmen and owners who build and occupy it have a role to play.

Conclusion

Criticising a foil to his authorial persona who stands at close range, Vitruvius employs a prevailing Roman rhetorical strategy: invective against ambitious builders and their decadent decor. In light of his self-presentation as an assistant, and likely a scriba armamentarius, to Julius Caesar (1.praef.2), Vitruvius’ denigration of Mark Antony’s lackey Faberius may highlight his own enduring devotion to the imperial family. Or perhaps Faberius scriba merely provides a face for scribal stereotypes Vitruvius wishes to acknowledge and disavow. In either case, the presence of an ignorant Roman homeowner within the treatise sharpens the outlines of Vitruvius’ self-presentation as an architectural expert.

Among archaeologists, De architectura has been an important source for investigating the presence of vermilion in Roman wall painting. Yet the text can also deepen our understanding of the connotations of minium within Roman domestic moralising and invective of the first century BCE. Vitruvius’ place within this tradition merits review. In his use of the house as a means of conveying something more abstract, Vitruvius has much in common with the Roman moralists steeped in Stoicism, including Pliny the Elder, who criticised luxury building as contrary to natura. Vitruvius’ remarks on vermilion reveal that he was not oblivious to the complexities and contradictions of Roman moral discourse. Rather, he endorses divergent views and approaches, so long as, in the context in which they are presented, they reinforce his argument for the primacy of architectural knowledge.

Participation in society demanded familiarity not only with the fashions of domestic display, but also with their social efficacy – the way they functioned within rhetorical and wider discourse. De architectura 7 offers information about expolitiones in such a way that the reader may be
conversant in their uses and connotations; thus, 7.5 provides an example of how *expolitiones* figure in passionate sermons against the widespread decadence of the present, and the description of vermilion in 7.9 reveals how they can contribute to particularised invective against a specific foe.

Book 7 offers potted histories and descriptions of decorative elements such as pigments, but the instructions for their use are better suited to discussion among patrons than practical application. A simple premise underlies this crafted collection of information: knowledge of domestic design and the ability to carry it out competently are crucial to elite self-presentation in Rome. By portraying the public images or reputations of proprietors as dependent upon their access to architectural knowledge, Vitruvius garners power around his treatise as an instrument of identity formation among the Roman elite. After all, this recent local case history implicates not just Faberius, but the many others (*alii multi*, 7.9.2) whom Vitruvius insists are just like him.
Any study of authorship and the contemporary scene in *De architectura* must inevitably return to Vitruvius’ alleged connection to the imperial family and the military origins of this relationship. Vitruvius’ representation of his association with Augustus, particularly his rhetorical alignment of *De architectura* with the larger aims of Augustus’ building programme, richly informs our understanding of a new kind of patronal relationship wrought by one-man rule: the *princeps’* retention of a personal posse of experts.  

The author of *De architectura*, whose posture towards his ruler comes across at times as sycophancy, at others as haughtiness, embodies the contradictions at play in the performance of expertise within this new paradigm.

For many readers, Vitruvius’ protestation of his own piety offers evidence of the emperor’s desire that his assistants serve as surrogates, disseminating his beliefs through both their actions and their very persons.  

Missing from the current narrative, however, are many of the ways in which Vitruvius’ conception of his new relationship with Augustus draws upon older ideas of patronage relevant to his prior service to Julius Caesar.

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2 A. König 2009: 37 draws our attention to the ‘dramatic, even sycophantic’ manner of the first preface, in which Vitruvius ‘explain[s] ingratiatingly why he hesitated to publish’. See Most 2011: 174–175 on the relationship between *De architectura’s* systematic organisation and its imperial address.

3 McEwen 2003: 92–101 and 124–129 argues that *De architectura* is an attempt to demonstrate that Vitruvius, as imperial architect, will be a perfect reflection of his emperor and that, in a metaphorical sense, the treatise will serve as Augustus’ body.
After all, many of the titles and roles developed under Augustus – including that of *scriba* – were merely adapted from earlier usage.

This closing chapter argues that Vitruvius’ respectful deference to authority and disinterested approach to monetary gain are attempts to persuade his readers that he approaches professional relationships synonymous with corruption without the attendant vice. In so doing, Vitruvius dissociates himself from the profiles of public servants appearing across both contemporary and earlier Roman texts, men who destroy not only their own reputations but also those of the magistrates they serve. This valedictory vignette, then, offers one final contextualisation of *De architectura* within the wider discourses of its own time.

To advance this line of enquiry, it is worthwhile to return once more to the inscription from Thibilis crediting a Vitruvius with the construction of arches (*CIL* 8.18913). Scholars once held that the author of *De architectura* himself commissioned this dedicatory inscription. What is more, such evidence for a ‘Vitruvius Mamurra’, whose Italic surname is unusual, encouraged Thielscher to identify this arch-building author of *De architectura* as none other than Caesar’s Formian henchman Mamurra. Thielscher’s suggestion caught on and inspired creative, and often ingenious, interpretations of Vitruvius’ authorial self. The Italian city of Formia (site of the ancient Formiae) still claims its rights as the author’s birthplace; the name of a main thoroughfare (via Vitruvio) celebrates this famous native son.

Thielscher’s hypothesis sprung from the premise that Vitruvius, like Mamurra, held the post of *praefectus fabrum* under Julius Caesar. (Pliny the Elder explains that Mamurra was a *praefectus fabrum* in *Nat. 36.48.*) The once-common assumption that a *praefectus fabrum* was a chief military engineer encouraged the identification of Mamurra as the author of *De architectura*. After all, Vitruvius claims to have received a salary (*commoda*) for ‘the construction and repair of *ballistae* and *scorpiones* and other engines of war’ (*apparatio ballistarum et scorpionum reliquorumque*

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4 See the previous discussion in Chapter 2.

5 Mamurra’s hometown of Formiae appears in Catul. 41; 43; 57; Plin. *Nat. 36.48.* Cf. also Hor. *S. 1.5.37.

6 This Mamurra is the same marble lover discussed in Chapter 5. See Thielscher *1961*: cols. 427–489, esp. cols. 441–446. His proposal intensifies Muenzer’s earlier hypothesis (*1928*: cols. 966–967) that Mamurra and Vitruvius may have been related. Scholarship on Mamurra has, for the most part, overlooked the implications of his office. Important studies of the office of *praefectus fabrum* include Welch *1995* (for the late Republic) and Dobson *1966* (for the early Empire), both of which provide useful surveys of previous scholarship. The title is first attested in the late Republic.

7 Cf. Palmer *1983*, an attempt to establish a familial relationship or acquaintance.
tormentorum refectio, 1.praef.2). However, scholarship of the second half of the twentieth century consistently affirmed that the duties of the praefectus fabrum were not intimately concerned with engineering of this kind. Furthermore, it seems highly unlikely that praefectus fabrum and architectus were closely related expressions, despite the suggestiveness of the title (in light of the fact that architecti supervised fabri). As far as we can tell, praefectus fabrum was something of an umbrella term, but often denoted a senior officer on the staff of an imperial governor or commander in the field.

Lack of specificity or uniformity in extant descriptions of the duties of praefecti fabrum may stem from the simple fact that the needs of magistrates, as well as the dynamics of the relationship between magistrate and prefect, determined which particular tasks might be associated with any given prefecture. Service to a consul, praetor or proconsul is, at least, one consistent feature of the office as we know it.

In the late Republic, praefecti fabrum under the supervision of Brutus, Cicero, Mark Antony, Octavian, Pompey, and many others are attested; and indeed, ‘under the Republic to talk of a praefectus fabrum without naming his patron would be meaningless.’ The affiliation of each prefect with a magistrate is conspicuous not only in the terse language of inscriptions, but also in surviving literary references: praefecti fabrum most often come into view within descriptions of the exploits of those they serve.

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9 Brunt 1980: 83 n.10 explains, ‘there were no military engineer officers in the Roman army, certainly not the praefectus fabrum . . . as some still suppose.’ See also Dobson 1966: 61–64; Purcell 1983: 156; Welch 1995.
10 Vegetius 2.11 refers to a link between praefecti fabrum and fabri. See Dobson 1966: 62–63. An inscription of 65–35 BCE, L(ucius) CORNELIUS L(uci) F(ilius) VOT(uria) Q(uinti) CATULI CO(n)s(uls) praef(ectus) FABR(um) CENSORIS ARCHITECTUS, confirms the possibility that an architectus could also be a praefectus fabrum (cf. Molisani 1971). While some claim this inscription as proof of the unity of the occupation, Nylander 1992: 13 rightly observes that ‘it could be said to prove the contrary: that it was not obvious that a praefectus fabrum was also an architect’.
11 At some point, the post may have become honorary. An undated funerary inscription from Uria (near Taranto) refers to Lucius Clodius (aged eight at his death) as a praefectus fabrum (CIL 9.223). Cf. Nylander 1992: 13 n. 26.
12 Proconsular supervisors of praefecti fabrum were of consular or praetorian rank. Pflaum 1950: 196–197; 218 argues that this prefecture was an important distinction for young equestrians with career ambitions. See also Frei-Stolba 2005 on an inscription found on a sarcophagus at Philippi in 1994 (‘praef(ectus) FABR(um) A CO(n)s(ule)’), the specificity of which suggests that the office of a prefect’s magistrate may have been a matter of pride. Dobson 1966: 65 also notes that it was possible to be the prefect of more than one magistrate.
Once Vitruvius was no longer identified as a praefectus fabrum – and instead was hailed as a scriba armamentarius – scholars began to take notice of other divergences between the two men. Most notably, Mamurra’s affluence and extravagance, typified by the marble revetment he uses as domestic decoration, distinguishes him from the poor and parsimonious Vitruvius. A second, related divergence is their seemingly dissimilar relationships with Julius Caesar: the ancient sources take pains to emphasize Mamurra’s intimacy with Caesar; Vitruvius, on the other hand, only claims to have been notus to him (1.praef.2). Testimony from Cicero, Catullus, Cornelius Nepos (via Pliny the Elder), Suetonius and Martial suggests that the prefect’s notoriety was both widespread during his life and proverbial after his death. W. C. McDermott has argued that Mamurra’s ‘prodigality and wealth, his unscrupulous actions and immoral character cannot be seriously questioned’. I am equally convinced that they can and should. Like the ‘Vitruvius’ fashioned by De architectura, the ‘Mamurra’ encountered in Latin literature is not a transparently factual biographical portrait; instead, it is a highly constructed image, responding, at least in part, to apprehension surrounding the proliferation of magisterial assistantships during the first century BCE and their perceived subversion of power relations and the distribution of wealth in Rome. Politically, as well as financially, ‘Mamurra’ and ‘Vitruvius’, though polar opposites, reflect similar cultural concerns.

Despite the failure of attempts to identify Mamurra as the author of De architectura, Mamurra offers unique opportunities for the study of Vitruvius’ authorial persona. Like that of scriba, the office of praefectus fabrum provided the ambitious with a stepping-stone. The uncertain and turbulent first-century political environment shaped the representations of Vitruvius’ and Mamurra’s magisterial relationships. Catullus’ relentless specificity in identifying his victim’s peccadilloes provides an additional key for deciphering Vitruvius’ veiled protestations against largely unnamed

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16 Baldwin 1990: 431 muses, ‘it is strange that Vitruvius himself would not mention high position and favour with Caesar.’
17 Mamurra appears in Plin. Nat. 36.48 (citing an unspecified work of Cornelius Nepos); Suet. Jul. 73; Mart. 9.59 and 10.4. References in Cicero have been listed previously. The family of the Mamurrae also appears in Hor. S. 1.5.37.
19 As Purcell 1983: 156 explains, ‘it was a coveted and respected position . . . . In many ways it resembled the apparitorial posts: it often went to the same sort of man, though never to freedmen, it brought similar opportunities, even if praefecti fabrum often went further, and conveyed a similar status.’ See also Pflaum 1950: 218.
vices: Mamurra’s flaws are, in many cases, Vitruvius’ virtues in reverse. Examination of Vitruvius and Mamurra side by side suggests once more that Roman political invective, and in particular criticism of magistrates’ assistants, is a valuable source for appreciating the context of De architectura.

**Vitruvius and Mamurra**

*De architectura*, as has been observed throughout this book, provides few details of its author’s professional duties or achievements. Instead, Vitruvius outlines the history of his association with the imperial family (1.praef.1–3). Textual evidence for Mamurra’s career maintains a similar focus. Sources of the first century BCE, omitting mention of any practical service Mamurra provided as *praefectus fabrum*, chronicle the prefect’s relationship with Julius Caesar. While Vitruvius appears to have been a constant but obscure follower whose service to Caesar left no trace on the record, Mamurra’s turbulent and overly intimate relationship with Caesar inflicted ‘lasting marks’ (*perpetua stigmata*) on the dictator’s reputation (Suet. *Jul*. 73). Mamurra, puppeteer of Julius Caesar, enriches himself from the revenues of provincial expansion. Vitruvius, in contrast, not only shuns profiteering, but even endorses laws to decrease the power and autonomy of architects by increasing magisterial authority over them. These differences of political persona, however, may have more to do with the survival of particular texts than with disparities between the two officers’ characters and careers. Vitruvius and Mamurra’s contemporaries feared that public servants assisting magistrates were usurping unwarranted political powers.

Catullus’ poems portray the full spectrum of Mamurra’s vices – excesses sexual (29; 57; 94; 115) and gastronomic (29), as well as financial (29; 41; 43; 114; 115) – as public offences, damaging to the order and well-being of the Roman state. It must be said, however, that slander along very similar lines pervades Roman political invective. Resemblances between Cicero’s Gabinius, glutton and likewise ‘consumer of the fatherland’ (*helluo patriae*,

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20 Vitruvius’ failure to provide a detailed description of his professional responsibilities, particularly his architectural constructions (with the exception of the basilica he built at Fano (Vitr. 5.1.6–7)), has struck some readers as merely odd, others as indicative of a lack of estimable achievements. Wilson Jones 2000: 36 explains, ‘Grand public works transformed Rome under his very eyes, yet to all of this he was an outsider.’

21 Catullus’ two most elaborate poems on the subject of Mamurra (29 and 57) focus on his relationship with Caesar.

22 I discuss the preface to Book 10 in the Introduction.

23 See the previous discussions of Mamurra and of Roman political invective in Chapter 5.
Vitruvius and Mamurra

Sest. 26), and Catullus’ Mamurra, who has wasted on gluttony (elluatus est, 29.16) both his own patrimony and the fortunes of Roman provincial conquest, dispel any notion that officers serving magistrates were wholly unique targets: Gabinius attracts these insults for his conduct as consul.\(^{24}\) Catullus, however, as I will suggest, sharpens commonplace political insults through pointed allusions to Mamurra’s prefecture. The position of *praefectus fabrum*, Catullus’ poetry implies, renders Mamurra particularly prone to corruption and vice.

By the time he appears in Martial’s epigrams, a century or more after his death, Mamurra has become a timeless symbol of extravagant taste, a caricature of the kind of man who swans around the stalls of the Saepta, but cannot afford what he sees (Mart. 9.59).\(^{25}\) For his acute decadence, Martial prescribes remedial reading (10.4). Sources closer to Mamurra’s own time, of whom Catullus is the most prolific on the subject, focus on the specific political situation in which Mamurra acquired his wealth – his service as Caesar’s *praefectus fabrum*.\(^{26}\) One of Cicero’s letters, for example, cites the riches of Mamurra (*divitiae Mamurrae*) as evidence for Caesar’s abuse of power (*Att. 7.7.6*).\(^{27}\) Catullus’ Mamurra is a political angler and war profiteer: ‘rich in the possession of the grant of land at Firmum’ (*Firmano saltu . . . dives, 114.1*), he has ‘all the fat that long-haired Gaul and farthest Britain once had’ (*quod Comata Gallia habebat uncti et ultima Britannia, 29.3–4*). Catullus criticises Mamurra not only for the financial

\(^{24}\) Corbeill 1996: 133 explains, ‘like Gabinius, Mamurra recapitulates in a corrupt political career his incapacity in private affairs.’

\(^{25}\) The textual sources lead us to believe that Mamurra may have been an associate of Pompey in the 60s BCE, who went to Spain with Caesar in 61 and served as Caesar’s *praefectus fabrum* in Gaul from around 58 BCE. For Caesar’s (Mamurra-free) accounts of these enriching campaigns, see Gal. 5.1; 7.68–74; 4.17–19. See Konstan 2007: 73–81 on the political context of the Mamurra poems. I follow the conventional interpretation of the poems deriding ‘Mentula’ (and Mentula’s girlfriend ‘Ameana’) as attacks on Mamurra. The further argument of Thielscher 1961: cols. 441–442 that ‘Mentula und Firmum sind Decknamen für Mamurra und Formiae’ has little bearing on the remarks made here. See discussion of Mamurra in McDermott 1983.

\(^{26}\) See discussion in Chapter 5. Analyses of Catullus’ Mamurra poems include Skinner 1978; Harvey 1979; Broughner 1983; Fitzgerald 1995: 84–86 and 103–104; Deuling 1999; Konstan 2007: 73–81 (which relates the Mamurra poems to the politics of the triumviral period); Tatum 2007: 339–341. Tatum 2007: 339, discussing their generic background and influence, emphasises the poems’ influence on later Roman invective: ‘Catullus’ attacks on Caesar – one of which (poem 29) is imitated in Horace’s *Epodes* (poem 29.7; cf. *Epod. 4.5, 17, . . . 5.69*) and quoted both by the author of *Catalepton* 6.5 and by Quintillian (9.4.141) as an illustration of iambic malediction – made a deep and lasting impression . . . . This bit of Catullan aggression, however Archilochean in sentiment or style, took aim at undisguised contemporaries in the hardy fashion of Roman oratory.’

\(^{27}\) Cicero, our earliest informant on the figure of Mamurra, mentions him in his letters to Atticus of 19 December, 50 (= *Att. 7.7*) and 19 December, 45 BCE (= *Att. 13.52*).
advantages he has received through office, but also for his disgraceful depletion of these resources: ‘he devours twenty or thirty millions’ (*ducen-ties comesset aut trecenties, 29.14*), and ‘he outruns the produce [of his estate] by his expenses’ (*fructus sumptibus exsuperat, 114.4*).

The text of *De architectura* also reflects an atmosphere of dissent and debate concerning the opportunities for moral corruption inherent to professions advancing the expansion of empire. Vitruvius, delineating the ideal architect, extols the importance of *bona fama*. A good reputation is essential to professionalism. Vitruvius recommends that an *architectus* be

\begin{align*}
\text{sine avaritia, quod est maximum; nullum enim opus vere sine fide et castitate fieri potest; ne sit cupidus neque in muneri habitus occupatum, sed cum gravitate suam tueatur dignitatem bonam famam habendo...}
\end{align*}

without avarice, that is most important; for no project can really be carried out without good faith and disinterestedness. Let him not be covetous nor have his attention preoccupied with receiving favours; but let him safeguard his dignity with a substantive character by having a good reputation. (1.1.7)

This emphasis on maintaining *bona fama* has been dismissed as merely a gesture of avoidance – a way of sidestepping the social stigma inherent in an open discussion of payment.\(^{29}\) The same concern with *fama* (reputation), however, recurs in the preface to Book 6, in which Vitruvius explains that while financial complacency assures *bona fama*, greed for gain courts the disaster of *infamia*:\(^{10}\):

\begin{align*}
\text{potius tenuitatem cum bona fama quam abundantiam cum infamia sequen-dam probavi. Ideo notities parum est adsecuta.}
\end{align*}

I have thought that modest means accompanied by good reputation should be pursued more than riches coupled with infamy. Thus little celebrity has come my way. (6.praef.5)

\(^{28}\) See also my discussion in Chapter 5 of this book.

\(^{29}\) Cf. Masterson 2004: 396: ‘Vitruvius’ reconfiguration of the question of pay into one of reputation betrays anxiety through the mere fact that the question is reconfigured; there would be no need to insist on the desirability of reputation over payment if payment did not cause shame at some level.’

\(^{30}\) Across the treatise, *fama* refers to the reputation of both people and buildings. (Vitr. 2.8.12: the sexual *fama* of people who are *inpubicus*; 7.praef.13: the *fama* of the Mausoleum causes it to be included in the seven wonders of the world; 7.praef.16: being finished with fine marble contributes to the *clarissima fama* of certain temples.) Outside of 1.1.7 and 6.praef.5, there are no other occurrences of the phrase *bona fama*. Since Vitruvius possesses *bona fama* and lacks notities simultaneously in 6.praef.5, the translation ‘good name’ or ‘reputation’ seems more apt than ‘fame’ or ‘renown’.
Vitruvius is willing to miss out on certain earthly rewards, if *infamia* would be their price. We do well to look beyond *infamia’s* association with low, servile professions here: after all, *infamia pecuniae* sullied the reputation of Lucius Licinius Lucullus, late Republican paragon of affluence and nobility. Vitruvius lays emphasis on two central claims: that self-promoting, and therefore degrading, activities are required to achieve *notities*; and that a bad reputation would be the expected result of such activities.

Vitruvius’ and Mamurra’s opposing treatments of family property prefigure their disparate attitudes towards amassing wealth through professional appointments. For Vitruvius, a strong foundation ensures his future ability to prioritise concerns other than financial gain. He quickly follows an assertion that he enjoys a non-monetary inheritance with the assurance that he is not doing his work for the sake of monetary gain ( *ad pecuniam parandam*, 6.praef.5). Mamurra’s history, on the other hand, is a downward spiral: ‘his ancestral property was first torn to shreds, then came his plunder from Pontus, then the third place, that from Spain’ (*paterna prima lacininata sunt bona, | secunda praeda Pontica, inde tertia | Hibera, 29.17–19*). As a result, the two men’s approaches to their earnings could not be more different: Mamurra seizes upon the *praeda* to be gained from his prefecture (29.18). Vitruvius, meanwhile, content with a small fortune (*tenuitas*), disparages those who seek commissions for profit and gain.

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31 On *infamia*, often translated as ‘lack of public honour’, see Edwards 1997. Conviction of a crime or participation in a profession catering to bodily pleasure were the most common avenues to being declared *infamis* by the state, a charge that entailed ‘special disqualifications based on moral grounds from certain public or quasi-public functions’ (Greenidge 1894: 8). Cic. *Leg.* 1.50–51, in a discussion of the *infamia* accompanying criminal conviction, draws a distinction between *infamia* that arises from condemnation for an offence and *ipsa infamia*, which arises from committing the offence, whether or not legal stigma is imposed. Cf. Edwards 1997: 69. The implications of *infamia* in Vitr. 6.praef.5 (the only occurrence of this word in the treatise) can best be judged through its opposition to *bona fama*.

32 Velleius Paterculus describes the struggle for power between Lucullus and Pompey as a contest of incrimination: when Lucullus charged Pompey with unbounded desire for military power, Pompey retorted with an account of Lucullus’ *infamia pecuniae* (Vell. 2.33.2). Lucullus, Velleius explains, ‘was overcome by desire for money’ (*pecuniae pellebatur cupidine*, Vell. 2.33.1).

33 Catullus’ geographical specificity reflects the notoriety of activities related to provincial government as sources of dubious earnings for prefects. Nepos writes of Atticus, ‘he accepted the prefectures conferred upon him by many consuls and praetors on the condition that he should accompany no one to his province, since he was content with the honour and he looked down upon increasing his family’s wealth’ (*Multorum consulum praetorumque praefecturas delatas sic accipit, ut neminem in provinciam sit secutus, honore fuerit contentus, rei familiaris desesperit fructum, Att. 6*). Atticus’ concern here is to avoid not only any *suspiciones . . . crinimum* that foreign financial gains might incite, but also the slight to his *dignitas* that serving a *praetor* (when he could have been one himself) would entail (Att. 6). Cf. also Cicero’s warning to his brother Quintus, governor of Asia, about the profit seeking of provincial residents in *Q. fr.* 1.15. See Corbeil 1996: 133.
In each case, *praeda* refers to the exploitation of their privileged professional position for personal reward. Profit seeking bespeaks not only avarice, but also thievishness, when one man’s *patrimonium* becomes another man’s *praeda*. Mamurra, squanderer of his own inheritance, becomes unable to do anything but consume the patrimonies of others: *quid hic potest | nisi uncta devorare patrimonia?* (‘what is he good for except devouring rich patrimonies?’ 29.21–22).\(^{35}\) Vitruvius, by contrast, insists he is not in the business of dissipating other men’s inheritances (6.praef.5).

The movement of these roving architects (*grassare*, ‘to move about’, 10.praef.2) adds to the plausibility of the variant *ambigere* (to wander about) instead of *ambire* (to solicit) at 6.praef.5. (*Ambigere* appears in Harleianus 2767, the earliest manuscript of *De architectura*.)\(^{36}\) While *ambire* may refer more specifically to an activity of patronage, *ambigere* and *grassare* evoke the performance of peregrine visitations. As my translation suggests, *grassare* can also be a verb of predation. Catullus uses a similar verb, *perambulare* (to walk or strut about), to describe Mamurra’s usurpation of money and power as an act of sexual predation: ‘and shall that domineering and overweening man strut about everyone’s marriage beds, like some white dove-cock or Adonis?’ (*et ille nunc superbus et superfluens | perambulabit omnium cubilia | ut albulus columbus aut Adoneus?*, 29.6–8). In poem 29, Mamurra not only performs a kind of indiscriminate, peregrine adultery and sexually humiliates Romulus (*cinaedus Romulus*, 29.5; 29.9), he also violates everyone else who does nothing to stop him (*videre et pati*, 29.1). Mamurra’s sexual depravity, like his financial rapacity, wrongs the patria and its people.\(^{37}\)

The infamy of subordinates marred the reputations of the magistrates they served. Thus, a prefect or *apparitor*, like any follower, was a liability as well as an asset. As the tool of Caesar and Pompey (‘that spent cock of

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\(^{34}\) Vitruvius’ use of the term *praeda*, which can refer to the booty of conquest, might represent a conscious attempt to allude to his presence on military expeditions.

\(^{35}\) Catullus leaves the rightful owners of these patrimonies anonymous. They may include the inhabitants of the provinces, other Roman statesmen who have been denied their shares of the profits (including Caesar and Pompey, alluded to in 29.25), or the noble ancestors, evoked through references to Romulus (29.5 and 29.9). See Konstan 2007: 74 on Catullus’ possible ‘resentment that he and his circle are not getting their share of the loot’.

\(^{36}\) Cf. Rowland and Howe 1999: 249. See also the description of the contemporary practices of wall painters as *errantia instituta* in 7.5.7, discussed in Chapter 4.

yours’, *ista vestra diffututa mentula*, 29.13), Mamurra performs their dirty deeds, but he screws them over, as well. The sexual dynamic between Mamurra and Caesar in poem 57 likewise suggests that the ‘assistance’ of the *praefectus fabrum* does Caesar great harm:

> Pulcre convenit improbis cinaedis,  
> Mamurrae pathicoque\(^{35}\) Caesariique.  
> nec mirum: maculae pares utrisque,  
> urbana altera et illa Formiana,  
> impressae resident nec eluentur:  
> morbosi pariter, gemelli utrique,  
> uno in lecticulo erudituli ambo,  
> non hic quam ille magis vorax adulter,  
> rivales socii puellularum.  
> pulcre convenit improbis cinaedis.

Well-matched are the shameless catamites, Mamurra the penetrated and Caesar. No wonder: Their equal stains, one from the city and one from Formiae, imprinted, remain in place and will not be washed out. Diseased alike, a couple of twins, two little writers on one little sofa, nor is one a more insatiable adulterer than the other, they are allied rivals for the young girls. Well-matched are the shameless catamites.

While submissive Vitruvius looks up towards Julius Caesar on high, *in sedibus immortalitatis* (‘in the mansion of the immortals’, 1.praef.2), insubordinate Mamurra faces him as an equal, joining him on a little couch (*uno in lecticulo . . . ambo*, 57.7).\(^{39}\) Their pairing is entirely equal: both stain and are stained, penetrate and are penetrated, infect and are infected: ‘the sexual reversibility of this duo indicates that the proper chain of command has broken down.’\(^{40}\) Far from being *studiosus* of Caesar’s *virtus*, as Vitruvius claims to be (1.praef.2), Mamurra encourages his leader’s debauchery.

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38 The position of the word *pathicus* associates it with Caesar as well as Mamurra. See Skinner 1979: 143.

39 Cf. Ovid’s description of Julius Caesar’s deification: ‘transported to the sky he saw the halls of Jupiter, and in the great forum he owns a temple dedicated to him’ (*ille quidem caelo positus lovis atria vidit | et tenet in magno templo dicata foro, Fast. 3.703–704*). While in *De architectura* Julius Caesar is firmly positioned in the abode of the immortals, in the *Fasti* Caesar is physically located in architectural limbo in the sky and merely looks upon (*videre*) this architecture. The structure given to him is on earth.

40 Fitzgerald 1995: 263 n. 77. See also Fitzgerald 1995: 263 n. 78 on the pervasiveness of pairs in Catullus’ poetry. Deuling 1999: 189 interprets Mamurra as himself ‘a foil for Catullus’ poetic persona’. Cf. also Wiseman 1985: 103–107 for comparison of Catullus’ parsimony with Mamurra’s prodigality. Wiseman 1985: 103 writes of Catullus’ financial mores, ‘the poems offer a consistent portrait of a man concerned more with economy than extravagance – not easy to borrow from, irritated by petty theft, alleging cobwebs in his purse; contemptuous of those who have run through their funds; explicitly assessing his provincial experience in terms of profit and loss.’
The contagiousness of vice (morbosi pariter, 57.6), a well-recognised premise of Roman moral discourse, allowed ancient critics to suggest moral congruency between a statesman and his followers.\textsuperscript{41} W. Jeffrey Tatum explains:

The technique of abusing a leading political figure by means of insults aimed at a lesser associate was a regular oratorical strategy . . . Mamurra’s wastefulness makes him an embarrassing connection, of course, but it also recollects Caesar’s own notoriety for display and indebtedness, thereby forming an oblique slur on Caesar’s prodigality.\textsuperscript{42}

As Caesar would have it, however, it was Catullus himself – rather than Mamurra – who stained him (or so Suetonius tells us)\textsuperscript{43}: ‘Valerius Catullus, as Caesar himself did not deny, inflicted a lasting stain on his name by the verses about Mamurra’ (Valerium Catullum, a quo sibi versiculis de Mamurra perpetua stigmata imposita non dissimulaverat, Jul. 73). Fama, after all, was not dependent on deed.\textsuperscript{44}

It comes as little surprise, given the overall character of their works, that Catullus draws on sexual imagery far more overtly than Vitruvius does. Vitruvius’ most sexualised language consists of claims to value castitas and ingenuus pudor, and to maintain a distance from infamia. All three of these concepts appear within his discussions of financial mores and evoke patterns of behaviour expressed through sexual and non-sexual acts alike.\textsuperscript{45}

Architecti, the author explains, should approach the possibility of enrichment with a purity of action and intention (castitas, 1.1.7), and thus disinterestedness, in order that they may escape the infamia that often accompanies abundantia (6.praef.5). Vitruvius likewise invokes ingenuus pudor in order to demarcate the boundaries of appropriate interaction

\textsuperscript{41} Cf. Sallust’s account of the defilement of men’s characters through their interactions with Catiline: ‘and if any innocent man did chance to become his friend, daily intercourse and enticement easily made him as bad or almost as bad as the rest’ (Quod si quis etiam a culpa vacuos in amicitiam eius inciderat, cotidiano usu atque illecebris facile par similisque ceteris efficiebatur, Catil. 14.4).

\textsuperscript{42} Tatum 2007: 340–341.

\textsuperscript{43} Suetonius also reports that ‘yet when he apologised, Caesar invited the poet to dinner that very same day, and continued his usual friendly relations with Catullus’ father’ (satis facientem eadem die adhibuit cenae hospitioque patris eius, sicut consuerat, uti perseverauerit, Jul. 73). See Wray 2001: 59.

\textsuperscript{44} E.g. Sallust writes in his account of Catiline, ‘I am aware that some have believed that the young men who frequented Catiline’s house set but little store by their chastity; but that report became current for other reasons than because anyone had evidence of its truth’ (Scio fuisse nonnullus qui ita existumarent, iuventutem quae domum Catilinae frequentabant parum honeste pudicitiam babuisset; sed ex aliis rebus magis quam quod quoiquam id conpertum foret haec fama valebat, Cat. 14.7).

\textsuperscript{45} Mark Masterson’s analysis of De architectura’s attempt to divorce architecture from degrading trades which Cicero deems ‘pleasure’s enablers’ (ministrae voluptatum, Off. 1.150) suggests the possibility, at least, that Vitr. 6.praef.5 draws on the sexual connotations of infamia (2004: 398–399). On ingenuus pudor, see Chapter 2.
between an architect and the homeowner who remunerates him. Architects without *ingenuus pudor*, Vitruvius implies, prostitute themselves to patrons – an encounter that shames and violates both parties and brings *infamia* upon the architect (6.praef.5).

In *De architectura*, the sexual valence of the term *ingenuus* is most discernible when Vitruvius recounts the story of the *architectus* Diognetus. Diognetus will only consent to help Rhodes, under siege by the *helepolis*, after repeated overtures. Once dishonoured and beaten by the Rhodians, the *architectus* becomes, in the city’s hour of need, a powerful patron solicited for the favour of his expertise. He refuses to grant any such favour until an embassy of the most morally stainless and socially withdrawn Rhodians of all, *ingenuae virgines et ephēbi*, approach him (10.16.7). By his choice of clients, Diognetus advances Vitruvius’ claim that those seeking favours reflect moral virtue (and shortcomings) onto those who grant them, and vice versa. By consistently adopting a diffident and modest manner of approaching his ruler, Vitruvius not only demonstrates deference, but also suggests his innocuousness as a follower who will neither abuse the system for his own benefit nor allow the *fāma* of his leader to be tarnished by his own depravity.

Similarities between the conceptions of financial and sexual discretion at issue in the portrayals of ‘Vitruvius’ and ‘Mamurra’ reveal the importance of contemporary modes of abuse to *De architectura*’s formulation of the reputable architect. The positions of *apparitor* and prefect provided first-century Romans with opportunities to form powerful friendships and amass wealth. Yet these privileges also rendered office holders vulnerable to suspicions of unseemly ambition, usurpation of power and ill-gotten fortune. Seen in this light, Catullus’ sustained attack on Mamurra reflects first-century prejudices against magisterial assistants – not just the poet’s antipathy towards Caesar. The values and behaviours ascribed to both

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46 Across Latin literature, in descriptions of sexual conduct or demeanour, the phrase *ingenuus pudor* can refer to resistance, modesty, inaction and chastity. Cf. Catullus’ epithalamic poem 61: ‘the bride is coming. Do you see how the torches shake their shining locks ... noble shame delays. Yet listening rather to this, she weeps that she must go.’ (*virgo adest. viden ut faces | splendidas quatiunt comai? ... tardet ingenuus pudor. | quem tamen magis audiens, | flöt quod ire necesse est, 77–81*). Cf. also Juvenal 11.154: ‘a boy of ingenuous countenance and ingenuous modesty’ (*ingenui voltus puer ingenuique pudoris*), who in the following lines is described as not exposing his *testiculi* in the baths 11.156–157. See Kaster 1997: 17 on *ingenuus pudor* as a tautology.
47 See discussion in Chapter 1.
48 Compare the sexual connotations of *inpubicus*: Vitruvius describes those ‘with an aphrodisiac disease’ (*venerio morbo*) as ‘effeminate and lewd’ (*molles et inpubicos, 2.8.12*). Kaster 2005, however, judges *pudicus* and *pudicitia* as distinct from *pudor*, on account of their exclusively sexual connotations. Cf. Langlands 2006 on these terms.
Vitruvius and Mamurra derive from ancient Roman norms and prejudices surrounding professional conduct. The two men’s attitudes to patrimony, Roman agricultural values, profit seeking, sexual purity and magisterial authority position them on opposite sides of the moral divide.

Resonance between Catullus’ caricature and Vitruvius’ authorial persona has wider implications. Indeed, it adds a new dimension to our understanding of how De architectura responds to the politics of its era. Vitruvius circulated his text at a pivotal moment in Rome’s territorial expansion. No leader before Augustus had ever conquered as much land as the princeps did. De architectura offers its readers an analysis, on an unprecedented scale, of the very skills and practices that made empire possible: architectural design and construction, urban infrastructure, military engineering and hydraulics. Yet in Vitruvius’ telling, the Romans do not achieve world dominance by mastery of architectura alone. Instead, the decisive factor is the arrival of the divina mens et numen, the rise of Augustus himself (1.praef.1). Across the treatise, Vitruvius equates the supremacy of his corpus (text) with both the boundlessness of the Roman empire and perfection of its ruler. The author bolsters his argument for Augustus’ perfection by portraying his own relationship with the princeps as beyond reproach. In the political discourse of the first century BCE, a leader’s relationship to his staff epitomised his facility with power, and thus his fitness to lead.

* * *

In light of ancient technical and scientific authors’ vibrant and enduring tradition of personalisation, Vitruvius’ highly developed self-fashioning comes as no surprise. Across ten volumes covering a range of topics from astronomy to temple architraves, Vitruvius advances an argument for his own indispensability by styling himself as an all-knowing expert who pairs book smarts, acquired through a comprehensive survey of Greek sources, with street smarts relevant to the Roman social and political scene. In our eagerness to bend De architectura to the yoke of Roman cultural history, we must not forget that the latter element equally reflects the author’s engagement with literary models, his response to expectations raised both within his genre and outside of it.

In this study, I have argued that Vitruvius’ self-fashioning is concerned, to an unprecedented degree, with the propriety of his professional conduct.

49 See McEwen 2003; Oksanish 2011; Oksanish forthcoming b.
and the moral integrity of his social interactions. I have revealed how protestations of this very Roman form of piety assimilate the author’s values to those of his lay audience – and establish the relevance of the treatise within contemporary society. Through *De architectura*, we learn a powerful lesson about the culture of the late Republic and early Empire: that even the least-sophisticated literary talents who engaged in the intellectual endeavour of defining Roman disciplines shared strategies of persuasion with authors writing in more elevated genres of poetry and prose.

This book began with a discussion of Vitruvius’ relationship to his sources and his place within the larger Roman project of appropriating and adapting Greek knowledge. That frame, in turn, allowed us to see how Vitruvius blends together techniques of authorial self-fashioning grounded in Greek traditions with aspects unique to Rome. In subsequent chapters, through a juxtaposition of *De architectura* with the poetry of Horace, a contemporary author likewise enthralled in the literary dynamics between Greece and Rome, we explored how the socio-political concerns of upwardly-mobile Romans in the first century BCE shaped Vitruvius’ presentation of his authorial self. This reading of his persona’s response to the social pressures of the first-century BCE allows for a new appreciation of Vitruvius’ comments on domestic luxury, particularly the correlation between social status and the appropriate level of domestic grandeur. Vitruvius’ remarks on houses not only form an extension of his self-fashioning as an advisor attuned to the complexities of Roman status hierarchies and social relationships; they also demonstrate his fluency in a longstanding Roman discourse, rooted in the Greek world, that equated house and man.

One of the most influential passages in *De architectura*, commonly read as a splenetic rant against new fads in domestic wall painting, was shown in Chapter 4 to be the closing argument of a case Vitruvius builds across the treatise that the charlatanism and empty artifice his reader may expect to find within such a volume is in fact the very antithesis of what defines his character and work. Exposition of the rhetorical and philosophical currents that inform Vitruvius’ commentary on pictorial iconography revealed how this passage advances the presentation of *De architectura* as a conduit through which Greek knowledge, brought to Rome, paradoxically furthers the ongoing promotion of ancestral Roman values.

I then connected the individual strands of Vitruvius’ appeal to his Roman audience in my analysis of how Vitruvius, drawing on techniques of political invective, makes the homeowner Faberius *scriba* the poster child for gauche displays of wealth, a cautionary tale revealing the
significance of architectural expertise. Faberius embodies everything that
the Vitruvian author, and his imagined readers, would seek to avoid. What
is more, Catullan invective against Mamurra, as we have seen, shares
features in common with Vitruvius’ scapegoating of Faberius. Returning
to the discarded theory that Vitruvius and Mamurra were in fact the same
man, I have suggested that *De architectura* offers a powerful statement of
its author’s merits as an imperial servant and follower. In so doing,
I demonstrated that Vitruvius strives to present not only *De architectura*,
but even the very figure of the author himself, as useful to the Augustan
regime.

Unlike Vitruvius, I make no grandiose claim for my book’s comprehen-
siveness. Passages across *De architectura* enrich our understanding of the
Roman culture of display, and this study does not pretend to have
exhausted that avenue of research. 50 In these pages, I have tarried little
with Vitruvius on the siting of cities, the construction of temples and
public buildings, dials and clocks, machines of war and many other topics.
The focus on domestic architecture and decoration in this study reflects
the unique interplay between these subjects and the author’s self-
fashioning. To put this another way, I have traced the extension of themes
crucial to the elaboration of Vitruvius’ authorial persona, such as wealth
and patronal relationships, into his account of houses and their decoration,
because it is within Vitruvius’ observations on these topics that his self-
professed concerns most distinctly colour the architectural narrative.

My objective in this book has been to present a series of productive
readings of *De architectura*. However, I also hope that my approach will
encourage more frequent recourse to Vitruvius within the broader field of
Latin literary studies. There is much that separates Vitruvius from Horace,
Plautus, Petronius and other authors across genre and period that have
appeared within these pages. Yet there is also much that beckons him to
their throng.

50 For examples of recent analyses in this vein, see Green 2014: 109–117 on Vitruvius’ strategies for
making astrology palatable to his Roman elite readers and Rimell 2015: 214–223 on Vitruvius’
positioning of the bathhouse as a moral centre.
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