

## STATUS, PAY, AND PLEASURE IN THE *DE ARCHITECTURA* OF VITRUVIUS

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*Abstract.* This article seeks to show the effect that Vitruvius' probable social status had on the contents of the *De Architectura*. The education proposed for the architect, the receipt of a wage, and pleasure all shape the treatise in significant ways. The article supplements these discussions with a close reading of a section of the *De Architectura* hitherto neglected in the secondary literature: the cameo appearance of Aristippus in the preface to Book 6. Vitruvius arguably uses the figure of Aristippus, the pleasure-loving philosopher whom Vitruvius offers to the reader as a stand-in for the architect, to focus and negotiate further the issues of status, pay, and pleasure.

### INTRODUCTION

IT HAS BEEN RECENTLY ARGUED that there was an ever-widening gap between social and expert authority in the late Roman Republic (Wallace-Hadrill 1998). Control of many branches of knowledge that were formerly the province of the *patres familiarum* (e.g., law, the calendar, language, and architecture) had by the time of Augustus passed from the elite fathers to experts who were systematizing these fields. This change, which occasioned elite anxiety (see, e.g., Cicero, *Off.* 2.65), created an opportunity of which Augustus took advantage. Augustus associated himself with the experts and in the process fortified his basis for power through the addition of expert authority to his already considerable political and social authority (Wallace-Hadrill 1998, 16).

Vitruvius can with profit be seen as one of Augustus' experts. In the preface to the first book of his ten-book treatise, the *De Architectura* (henceforth *DA*),<sup>1</sup> Vitruvius in essence announces that he has systematized the discipline (*aperui omnes disciplinae rationes* [1.praef.3]). He also opens the *DA* with an intensely admiring address to Augustus

<sup>1</sup> The text is Fensterbusch (1976). Unless otherwise noted, all references are to the *De Architectura*. All translations, except where designated, are my own.

(1.praef.1), and he presents both himself and his treatise as playing an integral part in Augustus' realization of grandeur through building projects (1.praef.3). But a description of Vitruvius as one of Augustus' experts does not exhaust description of him. As the recipient of a wage and most probably an *apparitor* (to be discussed below), Vitruvius labored. Work, in the opinion of the elite, was staining and servile.<sup>2</sup> We must evaluate this demerit, however, in relation to the particular status architecture (along with medicine) evidently enjoyed. Both architecture and medicine were ways of earning a wage that possessed relatively better reputations than other paid employments, as Cicero's famous exemption from opprobrium suggests:

Opificesque omnes in sordida arte versantur; nec enim quicquam ingenuum habere potest officina. Minimeque artes eae probandae, quae ministrae sunt voluptatum:

Cetarii, lanii, coqui, fartores, piscatores,

ut ait Terentius. Adde huc, si placet, unguentarios, saltatores, totumque ludum talarium. [151] Quibus autem artibus aut prudentia maior inest aut non mediocris utilitas quaeritur ut medicina, ut architectura, ut doctrina rerum honestarum, eae sunt iis, quorum ordini conveniunt, honestae.

(Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.150–51)

All artisans are involved in disreputable employment, for the workshop cannot contain anything freeborn. Least of all are those arts to be praised which are pleasures' enablers, "fishmongers, butchers, cooks, poulterers, fishermen," as Terence says. Add to these, please, perfumers, dancers, and the whole gang of gamblers. Those arts, however, that contain a greater amount of knowledge or in which a considerable amount of benefit is found, such arts as medicine, as architecture—the knowledge of respectable things—these respectable arts are for those whose social class they fit.

<sup>2</sup> Sandra Joshel attributes this low evaluation of work to a conception of work as servile: "The tradesman may achieve financial success, but his work is sordid or vulgar. The terms in which the tradesman is evaluated refer to the imagined experience of the domestic slave. The successful were depicted as adept at flattery, a form of pleasing that required a willingness to do what others wanted one to do or to be what others wanted one to be; the pleaser covered his 'true' desires and sentiments. For the freeborn author, such behavior evoked the image of the slave, who had no choice but to please. The lack of real volition in turn produced what was viewed as duplicity" (1992, 64). In general, the elite saw a continuum between tradesman and slave: both were compelled to do work and both, because of this need, could not be genuine in their dealings with others. Indeed, the perceived inability to be genuine became, with ease, a perceived predisposition to duplicity.

Cicero employs two criteria for his evaluation of professions that suit and do not suit the worthy freeborn.<sup>3</sup> One criterion concerns social class. Here we find Cicero using the adjectives *sordidus* ("disreputable"), *honestus* ("respectable"), *ingenuus* ("freeborn"), and the noun *ordo* ("social class"). The second criterion contrasts *voluptas* ("pleasure") with *utilitas* ("benefit"), *prudentia* ("knowledge"), and *doctrina* ("learning"). This contrast stigmatizes the activities of the lowborn as tending toward the mindless delivery of pleasure, while it praises medicine and architecture as models of usefulness and mental engagement. Accordingly, then, a convincing account of a holder of expert authority in general (and a certain architect in particular) will entail consideration of the issues that adhered to work and status in the Roman imagination.

In order to come to a focused understanding of the position from which Vitruvius is writing, I will specify the ways in which social status has inflected the contents of the *DA*.<sup>4</sup> The education of the architect, his wage, and pleasure (*voluptas*) will constitute major points of investigation. The education Vitruvius mandates for the architect assimilates him to his elite employer.<sup>5</sup> Pay, on the other hand, is that which marks the architect as an employee and constitutes a scandal he has to overcome. Pleasure attracts my attention because it is one of the means whereby Cicero distinguishes among professions that possess or lack dignity. It is of some interest, accordingly, that Vitruvius' attitude toward pleasure diverges from Cicero's. I will suggest that this divergence in the matter of pleasure indicates a change between the late Republic and the Principate. I will also supplement these discussions with a close reading of a section of the *DA* that has been hitherto neglected in the secondary literature: the cameo appearance of Aristippus in the preface to Book 6. Vitruvius arguably uses the figure of Aristippus, the pleasure-loving philosopher whom Vitruvius offers to the reader as a stand-in for the architect, to

<sup>3</sup> Given Cicero's important pronouncement on the place of architecture here and his general importance to understanding intellectual life in the late Republic, I will have occasion to return to him throughout the paper. Vitruvius, of course, is aware of Cicero, mentioning him (along with other contemporary authors, Varro and Lucretius) at 9.praef.17.

<sup>4</sup> I view the *DA* as having a strong autobiographical thrust. Vitruvius presents reasons why he personally deserves attention and honor throughout the *DA*. Hence it is difficult to keep the authorial voice separate from the developing portrait of the ideal architect. Vitruvius in fact wants the reader to confuse the two.

<sup>5</sup> Herman Geertman argues that the education Vitruvius requires of the architect raises the status of architecture because it raises the intellectual profile of the discipline (1994, 9–10). I agree, and I here argue in addition that the discipline's stature is raised because the social status of the architect is raised by this education.

focus and negotiate further the issues of status, pay, and, of course, pleasure.<sup>6</sup>

### VITRUVIUS AND THE STATUS OF THE ARCHITECT

We do not know much about Vitruvius Pollio. What information we do have is contained in his one known work, the *DA*. He worked with Julius Caesar and later was associated with Augustus (1.praef.2). We know of one project Vitruvius supervised, a basilica at Fanum or Colonia Julia Fanestris (5.1.6–10). Vitruvius probably wrote the *DA* between 30 and 20 B.C.E. (Rowland and Howe 1999, 1). The *DA*, in ten books, is lengthy. The twenty-first-century reader will find in the *DA*'s contents expected and unexpected material. Expected are discussions of architecture's proper

<sup>6</sup> The scholar can approach the *DA* in at least two ways. The *DA* can be seen as evidence for actual Roman architectural practice or it can be placed in the context of the late first-century B.C.E. political, intellectual, and social milieus. The first way (exemplified in discussions in Jones [2000] or Rowland and Howe [1999]) need detain us no longer as the actual practice of architecture (angles, proportions, cement, etc.) is not germane to the topic at hand. Recent years have seen a fair amount of work done on the context of the *DA*. Jaś Elsner (1995) surveys the relationship between the *DA* and Augustus' moral agenda. He argues that the *DA* is a "highly partisan text-book" whose aesthetic and world-making investments in *veritas*, *ratio*, and *natura* are consonant with Augustus' moral program (1995, 56). The introduction to the translation and commentary (1999, 1–18) by Ingrid Rowland and Thomas Howe is a well-judged and detailed introduction to Vitruvius and his context. Their work has been invaluable to me in forming my own conclusions (especially their comments on Vitruvius' figuration of architecture as a "liberal art" [13]). Mark Jones' volume of essays (2000) also has an essay on Vitruvius' social milieu. In an important monograph, Elisa Romano (1987) surveys in great detail the relationship between the *DA* and both prior and contemporary intellectual contexts. Other studies of the last twenty years have tended toward viewing Vitruvius' context as an intellectual scene with stronger or weaker emphasis (depending on the scholar) on the Roman confrontation with Greeks and Greek learning. Some essays concerned with Vitruvius' context in the 1989 Geertman and de Jong collection, *Munus Non Ingratum*, focus on the late first-century B.C.E. intellectual scene and its relation to Greece. See, too, Gros 1982 (669–75), Schrijvers 1989a, and Callebat 1994 for the intellectual context of the *DA*.

Investigations into the context of the *DA* have also concerned themselves with the readership for the treatise. With the exception of general agreement that the essential criterion for taking the measure of Vitruvius' readership is level of expertise in things architectural, consensus about this readership is hard to find. Louis Callebat (1989, 36) maintains that Vitruvius is in the business of addressing other experts (architects and others). Antoinette Novara (1994) sees the *DA* as primarily directed to non-experts. Pierre Gros (1994) and Romano (1987, 173–83) see Vitruvius as addressing both experts and non-experts (I suspect Vitruvius is addressing both).

domains (1.2–3), the training and behavior of the architect (e.g., 1.1; 6.praef.), and the natures and proper qualities of public and private buildings (Books 5 and 6, respectively). The sections on building materials (Book 2) and proper sites for buildings (1.4–7), to take a few more examples, likewise occasion no surprise. Somewhat unexpected are the contents of the education that Vitruvius demands. The course of study is broader than would seem necessary (it includes, e.g., philosophy and medicine [1.1.3]). The discussions of astrology (9.6) and astronomy (1.1.10, 9.1–5) seem *de trop* too. But, as I will argue later in the paper, breadth of education was a strategy that made the architect an estimable man, someone to be taken seriously.

Vitruvius is clear in the treatise on a number of occasions that he receives pay, and in the process, he strongly suggests that he was of apparitorial status (about which there is scholarly consensus<sup>7</sup>). He was the recipient of payment (*commoda*) from Augustus that was continued, perhaps as a pension, through the advocacy of Augustus' sister, Octavia:

Itaque cum M. Aurelio et P. Minidio et Cn. Cornelio ad apparitionem ballistarum et scorpionum reliquorumque tormentorum <et eorum> refectioem fui praesto et cum eis commoda accepi, quae, cum primo mihi tribuisti recognitionem, per sororis commendationem servasti. (1.praef.2)

And so along with Marcus Aurelius, Publius Minidius, and Gnaeus Cornelius, I was in charge of both outfitting and repairing the ballistas, the scorpions, and the rest of the catapults. Also, with these men, I received recompense that you [i.e., Augustus] had continued through the advice of your sister (after you had granted it to me in the first place as a form of recognition).

As already noted, the use of the word *commoda* suggests that Vitruvius was an *apparitor*. Making reference to Agrippa's and Octavian's activities as *censores* in 29–28 B.C.E., Pierre Gros (1994, 80–83) sees in the word *recognitio* a further indication of apparitorial status. An *apparitor* was a member of the staff that remained on hand, year to year, to help magistrates and military officials whose terms were generally a year in duration. *Apparitores* were scribes (*scribae*), lictors, official couriers/deliverers of summons (*viatores*), or heralds (*praecones*).<sup>8</sup> The poet Horace is perhaps

<sup>7</sup> Gros (1994) notes Vitruvius' probable apparitorial status (cf. Jones 2000 [26], Schrijvers 1989a [14], and Purcell 1983 [156]). Elizabeth Rawson discusses Vitruvius' social status and reports the notion that Vitruvius may be an *apparitor* (1985, 86–88).

<sup>8</sup> For discussion of *apparitores* in the late Republic and early Empire and survey of the literary, legal, and inscriptural evidence, see Cohen (1984) or Purcell (1983).

the most famous *apparitor* of all time.<sup>9</sup> Men who were *apparitores* existed at some level below the senatorial and equestrian orders. Suggesting that there was an apparitorial *ordo*, Benjamin Cohen (1984, 49–51) notes that there appear to have been procedures and qualifications for appointment to a post, rights and duties, and organization into *decuriae*. But whether or not we should regard the *apparitores* as an *ordo*, the fact that they receive pay for work marks them as different from their employers—a senator does not receive pay, of course. Accordingly, if we grant that Vitruvius was an *apparitor*, then the body of expert knowledge Vitruvius is elaborating in the *DA* is marked by its apparitorial origin. Indeed, when Gros suggests that Vitruvius was a *scriba armamentarius* in the service of the Julius Caesar (1.praef.2) and that the *DA* itself is a culminating act of *officium* performed by an *apparitor* for his superior (1994, 84), he suggests a most intimate relationship between the *DA* and apparitorial status. In light of the preceding evidence, I maintain that both lower status and the receipt of pay condition Vitruvius' envisioning of the architect (and architecture) and that both are issues Vitruvius had to confront in the *DA*. One of the ways that Vitruvius negotiates the problems of pay and status is through the education he requires of the architect who would fit his specifications.

### THE EDUCATION OF THE ARCHITECT

Vitruvius requires that the architect acquire excellence in many areas: draughtsmanship (*graphis*), geometry, history, philosophy, music, medicine, law, and astrology (1.1.3). Given these requirements, it comes as no surprise when Vitruvius states that a long period of study is required to become an architect:

Cum ergo tanta haec disciplina sit, condecorata et abundans eruditionibus variis ac pluribus, non puto posse <se> iuste repente profiteri architectos, nisi qui ab aetate puerili his gradibus disciplinarum scandendo scientia plerarumque litterarum et artium nutriti pervenerint ad summum templum architecturae. (1.1.11)

Since this discipline is so great, suitably fitted out with and abounding in many varied knowledges, I don't think that men can all of a sudden rightfully proclaim themselves architects, unless, nourished by knowledge of

<sup>9</sup> Purcell 1983, 143.

many kinds of letters and arts through mounting the steps of the disciplines from boyhood, they have reached the top of architecture's temple.

Through the requirement of polymathy—termed *encyclios disciplina* at 1.1.12—Vitruvius places architecture within the centuries-old tradition of the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, aggressively (and somewhat paradoxically<sup>10</sup>) exemplified by Vitruvius' near contemporary Varro (Gros 1982, 669–70). Formulated by Vitruvius as an *encyclios disciplina*, architecture, accordingly, is both a manifestation of the comprehensive Greek life of the mind (as exemplified by Aristotle's wide-ranging investigations) and an example of the contemporary Roman desire to produce intellectual works that are encyclopedic in their reach (e.g., Varro, Pliny the Elder). Vitruvius' demand for broad learning also assimilates the architect to the *orator*. Elisa Romano demonstrates the similarity between Vitruvius' and Cicero's curricula (for architect and *orator*, respectively) in a discussion of the *DA* and the *De Oratore* (1987, 69–80). Furthermore, the preference for broad learning in elite men, which takes its start in the second century, over time spread downward, rendering such education *de rigueur* for men of lower status (Rowland and Howe 1999, 7). Through possession of the education whose authorizing power both makes him impressive intellectually and assimilates him to his social betters, the architect consolidates his claim to being an estimable personage.

In the course of complaining about the behavior of architects whose training is deficient and whose motives are mercenary, Vitruvius underlines the elevating quality of education. It is not at all surprising that some potential employers, distressed by the poor quality of these architects, endeavor to practice architecture on their own:

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. (6.praef.6)

When, moreover, I note that the unschooled, the unskilled, and those who have acquaintance of neither architecture nor even practical engineering boast of possessing the greatness of so estimable a discipline, I cannot but praise those *patres familiarum* who, rendered strong through reliance on

<sup>10</sup> Bloomer 1997.

book-learning and building for themselves, decide thus: if the job has to be entrusted to those who are inexperienced, they [i.e., the *patres*] are more worthy to spend the sum according to their own wishes than according to those of another.

The reliance of the *pater* on book-learning, his probable mastery of the *encyclios disciplina*, gives him the courage to practice architecture. This support to the architectural ambitions of the *pater* I regard as equivalent to the wide-ranging education Cicero recommends for his orator and that which Vitruvius requires of his architect. This correspondence between employer and employee is significant because it is mastery of letters that makes Vitruvius' architect better than a mere craftsman:

Itaque architecti, qui sine litteris contenderant, ut manibus essent exercitati, non potuerunt efficere, ut haberent pro laboribus auctoritatem; qui autem ratiocinationibus et litteris solis confisi fuerunt, umbram non rem persecuti videntur. At qui utrumque perdidicerunt, uti omnibus armis ornati citius cum auctoritate, quod fuit propositum, sunt adsecuti. (1.1.2)

And so architects who had set to work without expertise in letters, on the grounds that they had gained experience through work with their hands, failed to secure authority in proportion to their labors. Those, moreover, who have relied on thoughts and letters alone seem to have followed a dream and nothing real. But those who have learned both thoroughly, like those armed with all manner of weapons, more swiftly have obtained with authority that which has been identified as the goal.

The one who relies on practical engineering, or *fabrica* (1.1.1), without attending to the intellectual side of architecture (termed *ratiocinatio* at 1.1.1), is not worthy of the name of architect. His final product will lack authority (*auctoritas*). The skills of the craftsman are not to be ignored either, of course; the architect needs both. But what is of interest here is Vitruvius' assertion that what separates the craftsman from the ideal architect is expertise in letters. The point of commonality between the ideal architect and the elite man is what makes Vitruvius' ideal architect more than just a carpenter.

Furthermore, thorough study of various disciplines produces in the architect a synthesized excellence able to judge results in all the arts. Immediately after the preface to the first book, Vitruvius ambitiously states what this synthesized excellence, this *scientia architecti*, secures for the architect:



Architecti est scientia pluribus disciplinis et variis eruditionibus ornata, cuius iudicio probantur omnia quae ab ceteris artibus perficiuntur opera.  
(1.1.1)

The expertise of the architect is embellished by many disciplines and varied learning. All works brought to completion by other arts are subject to his approval.

The *templum architecturae* is a lofty one indeed. And its sublime grandeur, secured through wide-ranging education, assimilates the architect to an elite man. But the temple may not be as lofty as it first seems; the receipt of pay and the delivery of pleasure may ground ambitions for sublimity.

#### ANXIETY OVER STATUS AND PAY

As noted above, Romans stigmatized work as characteristic of slaves. Insinuations of servility threaten to compromise the sublimity of the *templum architecturae*. Anxiety over this threat shapes the contents of the *DA*.

In the first place, Vitruvius constructs a historical narrative designed to place the social status of architects in a good light. In the following passage, Vitruvius comments that employers historically have given contracts to men who were of good stock (*a genere probatis, ingenuo pudori*), brought up as free men ought to be (*honeste*), and that the profession has been reproducing itself as reputable through limiting entrants to blood relations and worthy others (*viri boni*):

Itaque maiores primum a genere probatis operam tradebant architectis, deinde quaerebant, si honeste essent educati, ingenuo pudori, non audaciae protervitatibus permittendum iudicantes. Ipsi autem artifices non erudiebant nisi suos liberos aut cognatos et eos viros bonos instituebant, quibus tantarum rerum fidei pecuniae sine dubitatione permitterentur. (6.praef.6)

And so our ancestors used to hand over work to architects who were worthy in lineage first of all. Next, they would customarily ask if the prospective architects had been brought up as a free person ought to have been, thinking that work ought to be entrusted to a freeborn decency and not to the audacity of cheek. Moreover, the artisans themselves did not educate anyone except their own children or relatives and they educated those good men to whom monies could be entrusted without hesitation for the guarantee of such great undertakings.

We surely are entitled to dispute the factuality of these claims. P. H. Schrijvers (1989a, 14; cf. Wallace-Hadrill 1998, 21, and Rowland and Howe 1999, 14) sensibly suggests that Vitruvius, when he seems to be narrating what always has been the case, is in fact making an argument for what should be in a situation where there is plausible opposition to his views (and, I would add, a deplorable situation scandalously at variance with his ideals). Vitruvius' comments about the historic nature of the architect as a *vir bonus* and *ingenuus* suggests that men who were neither *boni* nor *ingenui* were being contracted to design and execute architectural projects.<sup>11</sup> Vitruvius does not want to be associated with these others who lack what he regards as proper status and upbringing, and he suggests in his narrative that he (and all proper architects) will resemble these *virī boni*. Anxiety over status palpably conditions the contents of the *DA* here.

Elsewhere, another seemingly factual statement, this time concerning pay, shows anxiety again molding the contents of the *DA*. Vitruvius asserts that he has not been practicing architecture with remuneration as his goal:

Ego autem, Caesar, non ad pecuniam parandam ex arte dedi studium, sed potius tenuitatem cum bona fama quam abundantiam cum infamia sequendam putavi. (6.praef.5)

Moreover, Caesar, I have not given my earnest engagement in order to make money from my art but instead have thought that straitened circumstances in the company of a good name were to be pursued instead of an abundance of riches with a bad one.

Insisting that he is not concerned about pay, Vitruvius focuses on how he cares more for his reputation (*bona fama*), and he “proves” that reputation (and not money) is his *desiderandum* through his lack of material success. 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.

Vitruvius also refers to payment in relation to his demand that the architect must know philosophy. Among other undoubted benefits (hu-

<sup>11</sup> Cicero's identification of architecture as suitable for the freeborn (*Off.* 1. 150–51, discussed above) should also be read in this light. Indeed, he may be giving his son Marcus, the addressee in the *De Officiis*, advice about which architects to hire.

mility, fairness, faithfulness, etc.) that accrue to the architect from the study of philosophy, lack of greed is prominent:

Philosophia vero perficit architectum animo magno et uti non sit adrogans, sed potius facilis, aequus et fidelis, sine avaritia . . . ne sit cupidus neque in muneribus accipiendis habeat animum occupatum, sed cum gravitate suam tueatur dignitatem bonam famam habendo; et haec enim philosophia praescribit. (1.1.7)

Philosophy truly makes the architect noble-spirited and so that he is not arrogant, but instead is easy, fair, faithful, and without avarice . . . [the architect] shouldn't be grasping nor have a mind fixated on the payments he will be receiving, but with seriousness of purpose he should look to his dignity through the possession of a good reputation. It is these things, then, that philosophy prescribes.

The asserted lack of avarice allows Vitruvius to diminish the importance of pay to the architect. The connection to philosophy also argues that the ideal architect has his priorities straight, in much the same way that the tireless, virtuous, and philosophically informed man of affairs whose portrait Cicero draws in the *De Officiis* does (e.g., 1.153); a signal characteristic of Cicero's ideal man is his lack of concern with money:

Non est autem consentaneum, qui metu non frangatur, eum frangi cupiditate, nec qui invictum se a labore praestiterit, vinci a voluptate. Quam ob rem et haec videnda et pecuniae fugienda cupiditas; nihil enim est tam angustii animi tamque parvi quam amare divitias, nihil honestius magnificentiusque quam pecuniam contemnere . . . (Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.68; cf. 2.38)

It is, moreover, not consistent that one who would not be broken by fear be broken by desire nor that he who has shown himself unconquered by labor, be conquered by pleasure. Therefore, we must be vigilant [where desire and pleasure are concerned], and we must flee avarice. For nothing is so much the mark of a narrow and small mind as the love of riches; nothing is more suitable to the freeborn and more magnificent than despising money . . .

Indeed, Romano plausibly suggests that Cicero regards the ability to be unmoved by money as the most admirable aspect of his ideal man (1987, 154). Hence, such a quality in the architect again assimilates him to an elite man and to the best sort, at least according to Cicero in the *De Officiis* (the work in which Cicero designates architecture as suitable for the freeborn). Furthermore, to the extent that we might want to regard

Cicero's philosophical interests as the activity of a worthy man, such interests on the part of the ideal architect, and the resultant philosophical sheen suffusing his deportment, can only help his reputation.

In addition, the ideal architect is so far from a low-class carpenter that he at times seems to occupy the place of patron in relation to prospective employers, who correspondingly take the place of clients:

Neque est mirandum, quid ita pluribus sim ignotus. Ceteri architecti rogant et ambiunt, ut architectent; mihi autem a praeceptoribus est traditum: rogatum, non rogantem oportere suscipere curam, quod ingenuus color movetur pudore petendo rem suspiciosam. (6.praef.5)

Nor is it to be wondered why I am unknown to many. The other architects ask and petition to practice architecture. My teachers, however, told me that it is proper to undertake work having been requested to do so, not asking for it, because a freeborn blush comes to the cheek from the shame of seeking a thing that excites mistrust.

According to Vitruvius, the ideal architect performs work only when approached and asked. At some unspecified point, payment will change hands, but the primary dynamic depicted here is one of the expert being approached by those who need his help—not unlike a patron speaking for a client in court.<sup>12</sup> To the extent possible, pay has been covered up to bring the ideal architect as close as possible to the man who would employ him. At multiple points in the *DA*, then, anxiety over status and pay leads to a figuration of the architect that both assimilates him to an elite man and downplays the receipt of pay.

## PLEASURE

For all the work that Vitruvius puts into presenting architecture as a profession of high status whose relation to payment is relatively unim-

<sup>12</sup> I should note that a different reading of this passage is possible. The verbs *ambio* and *peto*, when they mean, respectively, “to canvass” and “to stand for office” (e.g., Cic. *Phil.* 11.8), describe the activity of a Roman man who is standing for office. Vitruvius’ refusal of them as verbs to describe the activity of his ideal architect marks him precisely as not an elite male. But rather than allow this second reading to displace my first one, we should allow the second, instead, to inflect the first. The second reading imports some humility into the figuration of the architect and designates (no doubt wisely) a limit to his social aspirations. Also, writing during the age when campaigning for office was a thing of the past, Vitruvius’ refusal of candidate-language puts his ideal architect nearer to the kind of elite male we would expect to find under Augustus.

portant, he seemingly does not exercise similar care in his handling of something very serious indeed: pleasure (*voluptas*). In light of Cicero's condemnation of the professions that are "pleasures' enablers" (*ministrae voluptatum*, *Off.* 1.150), Vitruvius' words here should be considered closely:

Venustates enim persequitur visus, cuius si non blandimur voluptati proportionem et modulorum adiectionibus, uti quod fallitur temperatione adaugeatur, vastus et invenustus conspicientibus remittetur aspectus. De adiectione, quae adicitur in mediis columnis, quae apud Graecos ἐντασις appellatur, in extremo libro erit forma et ratio eius, quemadmodum mollis et conveniens efficiatur, subscripta. (3.3.13)

For our vision always pursues loveliness, and, if we do not humor [our eyes'] pleasure by the proportioning of such additions to the units of measurement in order to compensate for what the eye has missed,<sup>13</sup> then a building presents the viewer with an ungainly, unlovely appearance. At the end of the present book, I shall record the illustration and method for the addition made to the middles of columns, which is called entasis (bowing) by the Greeks, and how to execute this refinement in a soft and harmonious way.<sup>14</sup>

The architect delivers loveliness to flatter vision's pleasure. The project's effect is soft and harmonious (*mollis, conveniens*). This characterization of the architect's product contradicts what Cicero implies architecture should do. In Cicero's formulation, architecture is not one of pleasure's enablers and is instead expected to provide "benefit" (*utilitas*). A brief survey of Cicero's comments on pleasure and loveliness suggests that the architect's contrivance of them instead of benefit could be counterproductive to Vitruvius' aspirations for his profession.

Cicero elsewhere almost always evaluates pleasure negatively. Pleasure is a danger to the possibility of community (*Ac.* 2.140). He finds in pleasure danger to man's control of himself; pleasures can become mistresses that turn men away from *virtus* (*voluptates, blandissimae dominae, maioris partis animos a virtute detorquent*, *Off.* 2.37). As health (*valetudo*) is an antonym to pleasure, so *voluptas* is a synonym of disease (*Off.* 2.88). Pleasure can even render a man no better than a beast (*Fin.*

<sup>13</sup> Vitruvius says here that that which is perfectly symmetrical will at times appear unsymmetrical. Hence adjustments are made so that the *appearance* of perfect symmetry is achieved. Needless to say, Vitruvius advocates lying to reveal the truth. Elsner perceptively discusses Vitruvius' contradictory procedures here in relation to both his investment in *veritas* and his concerns over fanciful styles of wall painting (1995, 82–87).

<sup>14</sup> Translation (altered slightly) is by Rowland and Howe (1999).

1.23). Too, the provided *venustates* could hardly serve the purposes of monumental architecture. Cicero's division of beauty (*pulchritudo*) into loveliness (*venustas*) and dignity (*dignitas*) suggests how inimical to dignity true loveliness could be:

Cum autem pulchritudinis duo genera sint, quorum in altero venustas sit, in altero dignitas, venustatem muliebrem ducere debemus, dignitatem virilem. Ergo et a forma removeatur omnis viro non dignus ornatus, et huic simile vitium in gestu motuque caveatur. (Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.130)

Since, moreover, there are two kinds of beauty, of which one is loveliness and the other dignity, we need to think of loveliness as feminine and dignity as masculine. Therefore, all ornamentation not worthy of a man should be removed from his form, and he must be careful of any fault similar to this in gesture or movement of his body.

There are two kinds of beauty. One (loveliness, *venustas*) is feminized and will presumably attract desire. The other, dignity (*dignitas*), an approving Cicero regards as masculine. On Cicero's interpretation, then, the loveliness that flatters vision's pleasure recommended by Vitruvius (*venustates*; 3.3.13) could hardly lead to projects that would properly convey Augustus' majesty and greatness, as promised in the preface to the first book; what Vitruvius puts on display would conceivably inspire lust before respect.<sup>15</sup> If we measure Vitruvius' words against Cicero's definition of architecture and his thoughts about pleasure and loveliness, Vitruvius is giving the *princeps* what he should not have and what will enable an effeminizing display.<sup>16</sup>

But Vitruvius had no choice. As an architect working in the material world, he was always liable to the charge that he was part of an

<sup>15</sup> Brian Krostenko notes that for Vitruvius *venustus* and *venustas* "commonly [refer] to the beauty of proportionality" and that they can mean merely "well-arranged" in a desexualized sense (2001, 47; also see 40–51 and 99–111). He is correct to define *venustus* and *venustas* this way at times (e.g., at 2.8.1 where brickwork in a regular pattern is more pleasing [*venustius*] than brickwork that lacks it). But the presence of *voluptas* (which Cicero, while discussing Aristippus, associates with orgasm at *Fin.* 2.39–41) and the importance of the goddess Venus to Augustus counsel the reader to remain open to the emergence of a sexualized meaning, which Krostenko grants is always a possibility with these words anyway (2001, 43; see also 238–39).

<sup>16</sup> Vitruvius does not see himself as offering forbidden fruit, and Augustus' projects are not effeminate, of course. The lack of correspondence between Cicero and Vitruvius in the matter of *voluptas* is, I argue, an indicator of difference between the late Republic and the Principate. I take up this topic in the last section of the paper.

economy servicing clients who were overinvested in the pleasures to be had from material things. Furthermore, he had to reject a position like Cicero's with its suspicion of life outside the elite man's struggle for *dignitas*. Repeatedly in the *De Officiis*, Cicero asserts that the ideal man must hold the material world in contempt.<sup>17</sup> And, while Cicero was not a radical who could see no value in the material world (he speaks, for example, of the proper sort of house a man ought to have at *Off.* 1.138–39), his valorization of disdain for the material world represented a strain of thought Vitruvius had to reject in his figuration of the architect. He could not follow this model of the ascetic elite man all the way, as it were, because he made things, i.e., offered up buildings. The existence of value in the material world was non-negotiable. Vitruvius accordingly had to find a way to reconfigure the moralistic stance we find exemplified in Cicero, and a key moment in this reconfiguration was a reinvestment in the material world through measured enjoyment of pleasure. Only then would the philosophical architect secure his position at the side of the *princeps*. If measured enjoyment of *voluptas* is allowed and if the material world carries indubitable value, the architect has a stronger anticipation of security.

#### ARISTIPPAN ARCHITECT

At this point in the paper I would like to consider Vitruvius' revealing portrait of the philosopher Aristippus that is contained in the preface to Book 6. This portion of the *DA* has received no substantive commentary in the past. Through the cameo of Aristippus, with whom the reader is encouraged to identify the architect, Vitruvius further examines issues arising from status, pay, and pleasure. He also proposes an economy wherein pleasure has a place and thereby suggests that both the architect who supplies buildings suffused with loveliness and the *princeps* who receives them are reputable.

Although at first glance Vitruvius' Aristippus narrative must appear to be merely a brief and minor part of the *DA*,<sup>18</sup> prefaces in the *DA* are sites of important programmatic statements. In nearly all the prefaces (the prefaces to Books 4 and 8 are exceptions), Vitruvius not only tells the reader about the content of the book to come, but he also offers

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., *De Officiis* 1.13, 61, 66, 67; 2.37; 3.24.

<sup>18</sup> The passage containing the story of Aristippus, at something over one hundred words long, is about a sixth of the preface's length.

up tendentious visions of his text and of himself. As mentioned earlier, the preface to Book 1 addresses Augustus and gives the *princeps* guidance on how to view both architect and treatise. The preface to Book 5, to take another example, contains explicit reflections on how writing about architecture is different from poetry and history (5.praef.1). Vitruvius admits that architectural writing cannot hold the reader's interest in the way a history or poem can. But the reader of *DA* will note that this specimen of architectural writing is worthy of being read on equal terms with these loftier genres; Vitruvius here endeavors to control the reception of the *DA*. In the preface to Book 2, to take still another example, Vitruvius narrates the story of Alexander the Great's handsome and accomplished architect, Dinocrates (Dinocrates designed Alexandria). At the end of the story of Dinocrates' accomplishments, Vitruvius asserts that, while he may not have Dinocrates' good looks, he does possess his illustrious predecessor's expertise (2.praef.4). Appropriating the glamor of Dinocrates for himself, Vitruvius again guides the reader into thinking about him in certain ways. Accordingly, Aristippus' appearance, which may strike the modern reader as a trite play for philosophical authenticity, is more than that; the story's placement in a preface and Vitruvius' subsequent personal association with its contents call for particular attention.

Aristippus (435–366 B.C.E.), philosopher and associate of Socrates, regarded pleasure as a good, and his beliefs presumably foreshadow those of Epicurus. No detailed statements about Aristippus' philosophical system are possible because none of his writings survive. What does survive, however, is his reputation in references scattered over the whole of the corpus of ancient Latin and Greek. And, his reputation is mixed among the Romans. Horace is well disposed to Aristippus at times (e.g., *Epistulae* 1.17). Lucretius, whom we would assume to be similarly inclined, does not mention him. Cicero did not much care for him:

Confirmat (sc. Epicurus) autem illud vel maxime, quod ipsa natura, ut ait ille, sciscat et probet, id est voluptatem et dolorem. Ad haec et quae sequamur et quae fugiamus refert omnia. Quod quamquam Aristippi est a Cyrenaicisque melius liberiusque defenditur, tamen eius modi esse iudico, ut nihil homine videatur indignius. Ad maiora enim quaedam nos natura genuit et conformavit, ut mihi quidem videtur. (Cicero, *De Finibus* 1.23)

Epicurus moreover prizes this most of all, the thing that nature itself (as he says it) searches out and approves—put differently, pleasure and pain. Epicurus understands everything in relation to the things we would follow and the things we would avoid. And, although this is Aristippus' position



and it is defended better and more freely by the Cyrenaic School, all the same my verdict on this sort of thing is that nothing seemingly is more unworthy of a human. For certain greater things did nature create and shape us, as indeed it seems to me.<sup>19</sup>

This negative evaluation of Aristippus is not the whole story, however. Details in Vitruvius' portrait of Aristippus and knowledge plausibly in the possession of an educated Roman reader of the *DA* further secure the ideal architect's status and go some distance toward both deemphasizing pay and outlining a place for pleasure.

#### ARISTIPPUS IN THE *DE ARCHITECTURA*

At the beginning of Book 6, Vitruvius shows the shipwrecked Aristippus and some of his companions washing up on shore in Rhodes. After a moment of uncertainty as to the nature of the place, Aristippus notes some geometric drawings inscribed (6.praef.1: *geometrica schemata descripta*) in the sand or on the rocks. At this point, Aristippus exclaims to his companions that they should take heart because he sees evidence of human habitation (6.praef.1: *hominum . . . vestigia*). Aristippus and companions proceed to the town. Once there, Aristippus discourses on philosophy in the gymnasium, and the people shower him with gifts (6.praef.1: *ibique de philosophia disputans muneribus est donatus*) that enable him to outfit his companions for a trip back to the *patria* (presumably Athens). Unwilling to return, Aristippus asks his companions to tell all those back home that free men need only those things that can swim away from a shipwreck with them:

. . . ita mandavit dicere: eiusmodi possessiones et viatica liberis oportere parari, quae etiam e naufragio una possent enatare. [2] Namque ea vera praesidia sunt vitae, quibus neque fortunae tempestas iniqua neque publicarum rerum mutatio neque belli vastatio potest nocere. (6.praef.1–2)

. . . he commanded his companions to speak thus: "for free men it is necessary that possessions and provisions for a journey be of such a sort that they too be able to swim together with their master away from a shipwreck." For these are the true preservers of life, things that cannot be

<sup>19</sup> At *De Officiis* 1.148, however, Cicero grants great divine goodness (*bona magna et divina*) to Aristippus (and Socrates), but this gift is, significantly, in the context of a warning that mere mortals should not attempt to do the same things they did.

harmd by the unjust storm of fortune, by revolutions, or by the devastation of war.

These “possessions” that are the “true preservers of life” are, of course, none other than the properties of the intellect, given that Aristippus, bereft of all his material possessions, was able to earn a good living teaching at the gymnasium.

The reader will remember the importance Vitruvius assigns to the architect’s intellect and to his mastery of philosophy. The success of Aristippus in regard to these qualities, in a place where he had no status and in the programmatic space of the preface, argues that the ideal architect making his way in the world is not unlike Aristippus and that he should have a philosopher’s success. Indeed, following this portrait of Aristippus, Vitruvius presents in rapid succession Theophrastus, Epicurus, and Greek comedic poets, who tout the benefits of the intellect, thereby emphasizing the lesson to be taken from the story (6.praef.2–3). Following these additional authorities (and just before he proclaims his disinterest in pay), Vitruvius expresses his gratitude to his parents for the education they made sure he received; the development of his intellect has allowed him to make his way in the world (6.praef.4). Vitruvius distills an essential truth from the story of Aristippus: properties of the intellect are the “true preservers” of life, his own life included. But the placement of the story in a preface and the broad similarities just suggested are not the only inducements to reading the ideal architect into Aristippus.

When Aristippus sees the geometric *schemata*, calls them *hominum vestigia*, and draws the conclusion from them that Rhodes is inhabited (6.praef.1), the use of the word *schema* should put the reader in mind of the work that an architect does. Vitruvius uses the word *schema* elsewhere in the *DA* to designate a chart that will aid in the comprehension of an argument:

Quoniam haec a nobis sunt breviter exposita, ut facilius intellegatur, visum est mihi in extremo volumine formas sive, uti Graeci dicunt, *schemata* duo explicare . . . (1.6.12)

Since these matters have been set forth by us briefly, it seemed best to me, so that the matter might be more easily grasped, to provide at the end of the book two plans, or as the Greeks say, σχήματα . . .

Vitruvius uses *schema* as “plan” again at 9.praef.5. He also employs *schema* to designate shapes: a square (3.1.3), a part of a circle (5.1.8), the

sphere of the earth (8.5.3), and a triangle (9.praef.6). So the evidence of civilization (the *geometrica schemata*) is also an abstraction legible to the architect as part of his practice. Hence, this moment of viewing that enables the philosopher to divine the presence of humanity can be likened to the use of shapes to plan and provide buildings for humanity. The hints (*schemata*) that enable the display of Aristippus' superior insight are also the plans and shapes that enable the architect's building projects. The correspondence between philosopher and architect suggests that the power of the philosopher to name and understand the world and the honor that belongs to the philosopher is also the rightful possession of the architect. In sum, then, Vitruvius asserts in the preface to Book 6 that honor is due him through the proposed equivalence between the ideal architect and Aristippus.

#### ARISTIPPUS ELSEWHERE

We can imagine that the first-century B.C.E. Roman reader of the *DA* would have found additional impetus to read the ideal architect into Aristippus when we survey depictions of Aristippus in other texts. Indeed, status, pay, and pleasure in connection with Aristippus show up in interesting ways elsewhere. In addition to texts from the late first century B.C.E., I will cite later Greek sources: Diogenes Laertius (third century C.E.), Stobaeus (fifth century C.E.), the *Suda* (tenth century C.E.), and a collection of apophthegmata in a fourteenth-century C.E. codex, the *Gnomologium Vaticanum*. Given the practice of these later Greek texts to repeat prior narratives and the harmony of their evidence with the evidence to be adduced from Cicero and Horace, the points they make about Aristippus serve as plausible testimonia for the preconceptions of a first-century B.C.E. Roman reader of the *DA*.

A consideration of *Epistulae* 1.17 of Horace suggests that ideas of status were associated with Aristippus. In this epistle, which purports to be advice to a client on how to get ahead, Horace makes Aristippus an example<sup>20</sup>:

Omnis Aristippum decuit color et status et res,  
temptantem maiora, fere praesentibus aequum. (*Epistulae* 1.17.23–24)

<sup>20</sup> I say "purports" because the *Epistles* are a protean performance demanding caution on the part of the reader. See Oliensis 1998, 6–7 and 168–70, for further discussion of issues attending interpretation of *Epistulae* 1.17.

Any lifestyle, rank, and degree of wealth suited Aristippus,  
trying for greater things, as a rule satisfied with what he had.

Accordingly, we are to understand that a successful man of lower status will behave as Aristippus does here. He will fit in wherever he is, and, in the face of whatever comes, he will be philosophically content and/or ambitiously engaged. Horace's comment on Aristippus, however, has double force as regards status. While he shows that status can be negotiated, Horace forcefully underlines the existence and importance of status differences.

Aristippus' life in other texts intersects with another point of anxiety for Vitruvius: payment. In the case of the ideal architect, the fact of payment is covered up; his relationship with his employer is not to be seen as one of service rendered for payment received. Thus, the fact that Aristippus had the reputation of being the first philosopher to receive payment is significant (Diogenes Laertius 2.65: οὗτος [sc. Aristippus] σοφιστεύσας . . . πρῶτος τῶν Σωκρατικῶν μισθοὺς εἰσεπράξατο: "This one was the first of Socrates' successors to receive payment for giving lectures"). In fact, Aristippus' association with pay shines a possibly worrisome spotlight on precisely an issue that Vitruvius wants to hide. But there is a mitigating sequel to this story of philosophy for pay. With the mental dexterity that often characterizes the behavior of the ancient philosophers, Aristippus states his understanding of the place of payment in his relationship with his students:

Ὁ αὐτὸς παρὰ τῶν μαθητῶν λαμβάνειν ἔφασκε μισθόν, οὐχ ὅπως τὸν βίον ἐπανορθώσῃ, ἀλλ' ὅπως ἐκείνοι μάθωσιν εἰς τὰ καλὰ δαπανᾶν.  
(Gnom. Vat. 24 = cod. Vat. Gr. 742 f. 65 r.; Mannebach 8B)

Aristippus used to say that he took payment from students not so that he might secure his life at a higher level but so that they should learn to lavish expense on the right things.

Payment is not about money but instead presents an opportunity for a moral lesson. It functions as a demonstration/demarcation of moral priorities.

Elsewhere in the textual record, Aristippus is able to render money unrecognizable as money. In the following anecdote, Aristippus is traveling in the desert with slaves who were moving slowly because the gold they were carrying was heavy. To enable the slaves to move more quickly, Aristippus tells them to throw the gold away:

... quid simile isti  
 Graecus Aristippus? Qui servos proicere aurum  
 in media iussit Libya, quia tardius irent  
 propter onus segnes. (Horace, *Sermones* 2.3.99–102)

... what similar thing  
 did the Greek Aristippus do? He ordered slaves to throw away  
 gold in the middle of Libya because they were moving rather slowly,  
 sluggish on account of the weight.<sup>21</sup>

This story can be taken as an example of extreme behavior not to be imitated (in the satire Horace contrasts Aristippus' behavior to that of misers [*avari*, 81] who hoard their wealth—in both cases wealth is not available to its owners for their use [see, e.g., 98–99 or 108–10]). The point in this discussion of Aristippus and the ideal architect is the idea that money can at times be the opposite of a *desiderandum* and instead be an expendable weight—expendable as something to be discarded without a second thought or expendable as the enabling material conditions for delivery of an ethics lesson on the proper use of money. The person who can best determine money's significance turns out to be the one who has been receiving it. Aristippus' abilities to use money, sublimate it, or render it abject make him a good model for Vitruvius' architect; an equivalence between Aristippus and the ideal architect suggests that the architect will be able to rise philosophically above the scandal of receiving pay.

Moreover, contrary to Cicero's negative characterization of him as favoring pleasure/the body at the expense of the mind, Aristippus was known for being able to enjoy pleasure without being overwhelmed by it:

Ἀριστίππου· κρατεῖ ἡδονῆς οὐχ ὁ ἀπεχόμενος, ἀλλ' ὁ χρώμενος μὲν, μὴ παρεκφερόμενος δέ· ὥσπερ καὶ νεῶς καὶ ἵππου οὐχ ὁ μὴ χρώμενος, ἀλλ' ὁ μετὰ γων ὅποι βούλεται. (Stobaeus 3.17.17; Mannebach 55)

About Aristippus: not keeping himself aloof from pleasure, he conquers it; he uses it and is not carried off by it. Just as in the case of a ship or a horse: the one setting his course [goes] where he wants, while the one not making use does not.

<sup>21</sup> The story varies somewhat. Elsewhere a gentler Aristippus takes pity on a slave who is struggling under the money's weight (cf. Diogenes Laertius 2.77): λέγεται δὲ ὅτι καὶ τοῦ παιδὸς αὐτῷ φέροντος ἀργύριον καὶ ἀχθομένου τῷ βάρει, “τὸ βαροῦν ἀπόβαλε,” ἔφη (Suid. 1 355, 4s; Mannebach 68B). (It is said that when a slave was carrying money for him and he was pained by the weight of it, he [Aristippus] said, “throw away the weight.”)

Just as in the case of money, Aristippus makes use of pleasure (ἡδονή) and is not controlled by it. Pleasure, not much different from a ship or horse, gets him where he wants to go and that is all. Elsewhere in the textual record, Aristippus' careful enjoyment of pleasure is discussed in reference to the Corinthian *hetaira* Lais. None other than Cicero is aware of this side of Aristippus:

Sed tamen ne Aristippus quidem ille Socraticus erubuit, cum esset obiectum habere eum Laida. "Habeo," inquit, "non habeor a Laide"—Graece hoc melius; tu, si voles, interpretabere. (*Ad Fam.* 9.26.2)

However not even Aristippus, the Socratic, blushed when it was thrown in his teeth that he possessed Lais. He said, "I possess but am not possessed by Lais"; this works better in the Greek; if you're of a mind, you'll translate it.

Aristippus asserts that he is very much in control here. He refuses to see his enjoyment of pleasure as a yielding to temptation but interprets it as a controlled gratification that displays his strength and self-assertion. He turns an insult into a declaration of his agency. Aristippus' partial redefinition of pleasure into an opportunity for a (probably moral) victory recalls his use of payment as a demarcation of moral priorities: in both cases, Aristippus, in control of the meaning of a possibly degrading activity/substance/relation, turns a potential defeat into victory.

Accordingly, then, an association between Aristippus and the ideal architect on the topic of pleasure is helpful to Vitruvius in a number of ways. Since Aristippus is the philosopher who knows how to enjoy pleasure responsibly, the philosophically trained architect would be just the one to handle the ticklish subject of *voluptas* successfully. Likewise, Aristippus' power to redefine pleasure so it may have a place in a life lived responsibly would be another possession of the philosophically trained architect. And such is the case. Vitruvius' architect can transform pleasure; the pleasure a monument gives, to take a telling example, can metamorphose into *auctoritas* suitable for the *princeps*. Transmuted pleasure will get Augustus where he wants to go.

### PLEASURE'S TRANSMUTATION

In Book 5, Vitruvius describes a basilica he designed, the construction of which he superintended for Augustus at Colonia Julia Fanestris. This basilica also contained a shrine to Augustus (5.1.7: *aedis Augusti*). In the

discussion of his role in the project, Vitruvius pairs, significantly, *dignitas* and *venustas*:

Non minus summam dignitatem et venustatem possunt habere conparationes basilicarum, quo genere Coloniae Iuliae Fanestri conlocavi curavique faciendam, cuius proportiones et symmetriae sic sunt constitutae. (5.1.6)

No less are the layouts of basilicas capable of having the highest dignity and loveliness. I designed this kind of building at Colonia Julia Fanestris and was in charge of its construction—the proportions and symmetries of this building are constituted as follows . . .

Vitruvius associates *dignitas*, a word associated with honor and power, with *venustas* (“loveliness”), a word, as we have seen, connected with pleasure and desire.<sup>22</sup> Significant for our purposes here, he pairs these two qualities that Cicero was at pains to separate in his bipartite definition of *pulchritudo* (*Off.* 1.130, discussed above). Later in his description of the basilica, Vitruvius again runs together what gives pleasure (*species venusta*) with what signifies power (*magnificentia* and *auctoritas*):

Ita fastigiorum duplex tectinata dispositio extrinsecus tecti et interioris altae testudinis praestat speciem venustam. Item sublata epistyliorum ornamenta et pluteorum columnarumque superiorum distributio operosam detrahit molestiam sumptusque inminuit ex magna parte summam. Ipsae vero columnae in altitudine perpetua sub trabes testudinis perductae et magnificentiam impensae et auctoritatem operi adaugere videntur. (5.1.10)

The doubled-gable design of the pediments—the arrangement for the outside of the roof and the high vault of the interior—gives a lovely appearance. Likewise, the removal of the ornaments of the entablatures and the omission of expenditure on rain gutters and tops of the columns take away laborious bother and diminish in great part the sum total of the expenditure. But the very columns, extended in endless height up to the roof's beams, seem to augment the magnificence of the outlay and the authority of the project.

<sup>22</sup> A political dimension may also be present. *Venustas* anywhere near mention of Augustus should call to mind Venus, the purported divine progenetrix of the Julian gens. Hence, a reader may wish to connect love's pleasure and desire to the political aspirations and fulfilled ambitions of Augustus.

Vitruvius opts for omitting both ornaments on the entablatures and detailed work on the gutters and at the top of columns. This restraint provides a nice ascetic touch that permits unfettered enjoyment of the lovely appearance caused by the structure of the roof and rising of the columns. But the *voluptas* is, in any case, present only for a moment, and the subsequent impression leads to a lasting appreciation of the *magnificentia* and *auctoritas* of the building, which in turn is a tribute to Augustus. That which is beautiful, that which gives pleasure in the end is redefined with philosophical aplomb by Vitruvius as that which redoubles (*adaugere*) authority (*auctoritas*).<sup>23</sup> Vitruvius evidences control of ornamentation and expense here that recalls Aristippus' authoritative use of pleasure for self-assertion.

Vitruvius shows further mastery with his characterization of architecture (and the *DA* itself) as a body that requires his control:

... *corpus architecturae* rationesque eius putavi diligentissime conscribendas, opinans munus omnibus gentibus non ingratum futurum. (6.praef.7)

... I thought that the body of architecture and its specifications needed to be stringently codified, thinking as I did that such a service would be a thing not unpleasing to all nations.

The phrase *corpus architecturae* occurs a number of other times: 2.1.8, 9.8.15, and 10.16.12. The obviously related phrase, *corpus disciplinae*, occurs at 4.praef.1. Vitruvius terms the *DA* itself a *corpus* at 7.praef.10. Callebat (1989) has already noted that Vitruvius envisions both the discipline and the treatise as a *corpus*, but what should interest us here as we consider pleasure and the architect is that the making of architecture into a *corpus* encourages us to regard the architect/writer as the controlling intellect. The architect is the transcendent mind that will make sure the body does not become wayward—this body that has potential for both *venustas* and *dignitas*.

Indeed, as though offering proof of a mind in charge, Vitruvius on occasion pointedly leaves pleasure out of the *corpus architecturae*. For example, after discussing a number of innovative machines designed by the Alexandrian engineer Ctesibius (fl. 270 B.C.E.), Vitruvius declines to

<sup>23</sup> Gros (1989, 126) persuasively suggests that we should see wordplay that surely must have pleased AUGustus: *AUctoritatem* . . . *adAUGere*. This wordplay, I add, is itself redoubled by the probable references to Venus, so important to Augustus' family, through the use of *venustas* and *venustus*.



describe any more of them because the remaining machines are only for pleasure:

Reliqua, quae non sunt ad necessitatem sed *ad deliciarum voluntatem*, qui cupidiores erunt eius subtilitatis, ex ipsius Ctesibii commentariis poterunt invenire. (10.7.5)

Those who are more desirous of his cleverness will be able to find in the treatises of Ctesibius himself the remaining items—things that don't pertain to necessity but to a wish for delights.

Vitruvius also expels pleasure from the *corpus architecturae* in his famous rebuke to contemporary conventions in wall painting:

Haec autem nec sunt nec fieri possunt nec fuerunt. Quemadmodum enim potest calamus vere sustinere tectum aut candelabrum ornamenta fastigii, seu coliculus tam tenuis et mollis sustinere sedens sigillum, aut de radicibus et coliculis ex parte flores dimidiataque sigilla procreari? At haec falsa videntes homines non reprehendunt sed delectantur, neque animadvertunt, si quid eorum fieri potest necne. Ergo ita novi mores coegerunt, uti inertiae mali iudices convincerent artium virtutes; iudiciis autem infirmis obscuratae mentes non valent probare, quod potest esse cum auctoritate et ratione decoris. Neque enim picturae probari debent, quae non sunt similes veritati, nec, si factae sunt elegantes ab arte, ideo de his statim debet “recte” iudicari, nisi argumentationes certas rationes habuerint sine offensionibus explicatas. (7.5.4)

Moreover these things do not exist now, nor will they, nor did they ever. How is it possible that a reed holds up a roof or a candelabrum the regalia of a pediment, or that an excessively slender and soft stalk holds up a seated figurine, or that sometimes flowers and other times half-figurines are begotten from roots and stems? But people seeing these false things do not find fault but experience delight, nor do they much ponder whether something is possible or not. Therefore, new *mores* forced the issue in such a way that no-account judges convicted the arts' virtues of a lack of vigor. Moreover, minds clouded over by weak judgments do not have the power to determine what is able to exist in accordance with the authority and specification of correctness. For pictures that are not similar to truth must not be approved, nor, if they are made elegant from skill, ought there be a need in these cases that they be judged straight off, “nicely done”—unless their composition has met certain specifications unimpeded by transgressions.

These pictures may delight their viewers but this pleasure must be repudiated. Vitruvius sees evidence of new *mores* that delight in depictions

with no possibility of existence and that are an insult to truth. Vitruvius' deployment of exacting moralistic language sharpens his observations into a demand on the reader to choose between truth and falsehood. This aggressive stance calls to mind Erik Gunderson's identification of the understanding (in Roman rhetorical theory<sup>24</sup>) of a proper masculine deportment: "truth's antonym is vice" (2000, 5). The man who acts in a properly masculine manner declares "truth"; he is a "true" man. The man who acts improperly declares his interest in "vice." Vitruvius of course does not speak of manhood here, but the coincidence of the evaluatory poles (truth versus vice) is intriguing. We might want to suggest that Vitruvius appropriates the glamor of a properly realized manhood to fortify his aesthetic position.

But even if such a suggestion seems overly subtle, it is undeniable that at this point in the *DA* Vitruvius' priorities are close to what Cicero imagines he sees in the architect. In fact, Vitruvius here sees the search for delectation as both damaging to *virtus* and *ratio* and, most importantly, incapable of bringing about the *auctoritas* that is the major goal for the architect (see, e.g., 1.1.2 or 5.1.10 [both discussed above]). Vitruvius shows here that there is pleasure not susceptible to being renamed *auctoritas*, and he thereby emphasizes his ability to determine the meaning of pleasure and gestures in the direction of the ideal architect's mastery of philosophy. Hence the disciplining of pleasure raises the discipline of architecture, and the moralistic position of a Cicero has been reconfigured.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have suggested the ways in which the social status of Vitruvius influenced the contents of *DA*. I made this demonstration both through consideration of the general contents of the treatise and through a close reading of the Aristippus narrative. Vitruvius' status as an *apparitor* who took a wage meant that both his lower status and his receipt of a

<sup>24</sup> Elsner also recalls rhetoric when considering architecture. In the context of a discussion of the *domus* as an aid to the orator's *memoria*, Elsner sees the built environment and the rhetorically molded subjectivities of Roman men as reflective of one another: "In effect, we cannot draw a sharp distinction between the architectural and visual world of the Roman educated elite on the one hand and their mental and rhetorical world on the other. Together they make up the *mentalité*, the particularity and identity of Roman civilization. Each was the precondition and determining impulse behind the other" (1995, 78).

wage would have to be negotiated. Vitruvius handles the former through his emphasis on the education of the architect and the occasionally visible dynamic that places the architect in the position of patron relative to his employer. In the case of the wage, both the insistence on a lack of interest in money and the evocation of Aristippus erase to some extent the embarrassment of the receipt of payment. In the matter of pleasure, there is the presumption that the one who delivers it is of lower status (according to Cicero). Vitruvius, however, runs counter to Cicero's notion and asserts his control over *voluptas* through his careful delineation of licit and illicit *voluptas* in the *corpus architecturae*. Vitruvius' actions as judge here give him moral authority that further raises his status. Indeed, by asserting that providing and enjoying pleasure in moderation are not shameful, Vitruvius in essence proposes a continent economy in which pleasure has a place and all players are moral. Such a context for the practice of architecture is valuable to the architect because it lifts shame from his shoulders and further adds to his status.

#### A FINAL SUGGESTION

When Vitruvius valorizes *voluptas* and *venustas*, this valorization may mark a moment of real difference between late Republic and Principate. As mentioned earlier in the paper, Vitruvius' buildings increase the *auctoritas* and *dignitas* of the *princeps* through their possession of these same qualities. And, underlying the *auctoritas/dignitas* of impressive buildings is *venustas*. But the underlying loveliness poses no problem since it is renamed and communicates the *maiestas* that the *princeps* requires. *Dignitas* in buildings for the *princeps*, however, seems a different thing from the *dignitas* Cicero sees in a house that suits its owner:

Ornanda enim est dignitas domo, non ex domo tota quaerenda, nec domo dominus, sed domino domus honestanda est . . . (Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.139)

Dignity is to be embellished by a house and dignity in its entirety must not be sought by means of a house; the master is not to be honored by his house but the house by its master . . .

Cicero sees a closed circuit here. *Dignitas* is a quality of the owner of the house. The most a *domus* can do is add to its master's dignity. Indeed, men must scale their building projects to themselves or incur embarrassment; a house can be too grand for its owner. In Cicero's formulation there is no solicitation of desire by *venustas*, no maneuver of renaming.

Vitruvius, in contrast, breaks the circuit between *dominus* and *dignitas* through his proposed equivalence between *venustas* and *dignitas*, and he discovers a legitimate place for pleasure and desire in the company of such masculine attributes as *dignitas* and *auctoritas*. Furthermore, since a precise physical correlate (a *vir*) is no longer needed to guarantee the building, abstractions, free of limits as abstractions are, oversee the manufacture of *maiestas* and *auctoritas* in buildings. Accordingly, then, can any building be too big, too authoritative, or too beautiful?<sup>25</sup>

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