Establishing Norms for a New Architecture:
The Project of the *Accademia della Virtù*, Its Aims and Results

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In 1547, when Claudio Tolomei published his famous letter written 5 years earlier to Agostino de'Landi [Tolomei 1547] there was no general system of norms for architecture providing guidance to architects or patrons. Obviously, ancient Roman architecture had been established as some kind of an archetype, but only as a vague one: While architects like Bramante and his followers had used ancient models and tried to base a coherent architecture on them, it was still impossible to decide what could be called correct or beautiful architecture. Serlio's books were trying to provide such a guidance, but even their success could not establish a norm that would not have been criticised or contested by practitioners as well as theoretitians. In his letter, Tolomei describes the aim to revive the classical Roman architecture by reviving the »noble study« of architecture (»svegliare nuovamente questo nobile studio« [Tolomei 1547: fol. 81r]). He proposed a program to achieve a reliable, usable and up-to-date set of norms, formulated in a multivolume »handbook« for architects and their patrons. Modern research has read this program not only as nothing more than a phantastic list of ideas for a megalomaniac research project, but also doubted that it generated any results — except Guillaume Philandrier's Annotationes to Vitruvius [Philandrier 1544].

In this paper, a different interpretation of the letter is proposed and extended into the hypothesis that it resulted in a lot of manuscript sources and some important printed books produced by members of an international and interdisciplinary circle active in Rome between ca. 1537 and 1555, usually identified as the Accademia della Virtù. It should be added that this identification is a later conjecture because the Accademia is not mentioned explicitly in Tolomei's letter. But because of the many personal interrelations between Tolomei's circle and the Accademia, we may assume this as correct. It should to be kept in mind, that this Accademia was not an established, stable institution — as this designation may suggest to modern readers — but rather an informal circle with a large, fluctuating number of members.

First of all, Tolomei does not speak of a research project comprising several topics to investigate but of books to be printed: Every item in his unnumbered list he explicitly calls a »book« (libro) that was to be printed. This list is remarkably well ordered and shows an approach that can be called scientific in a very modern sense. My guess it that it is based on the model of the then contemporary philology. The list contains 23 items, i.e. not, as can be read in almost every modern publication, just 20 (e.g. [Daly Davis 1994]), or even less: If one would have to establish a definitive and normative multivolume handbook about any topic regarding Roman architecture that could help to develop or serve as a normative system, the result would be very similar to Tolomei's list and could hardly be complemented by other topics:

1. A Latin commentary on difficult passages in Vitruvius' *De architectura* compared to other sources.

2. A critical philological list of all known versions and editions of Vitruvius.

3. A new edition of Vitruvius correcting the errors in former editions and reconstructing all lost illustrations, adding new ones where necessary. [Here Tolomei's text is not exactly clear if this should be one or two separate volumes: 2 volumes would have made a comparison between text and images easier. Therefore, the list could could be read as containing 24 instead of 23 items.]

4. A Latin vocabulary of all Latin terms used by Vitruvius.

5. A Latin vocabulary of all Greek terms used by Vitruvius.

6. A critical commentary on Vitruvius' Latin in comparison to other classical authors.

7. A new edition of Vitruvius' Ten Books in a better, more correct or classical Latin.

8. A new translation of Vitruvius into modern, i.e. Tuscan, Italian.

9. A Tuscan vocabulary of all architectonical terms used by Vitruvius.

10. A Tuscan vocabulary of all tools and architectonical parts mentioned by Vitruvius.

11. An overview of the architectural rules given by Vitruvius comparing them with built examples.

12. A commented chronology of Rome's urban development since the Roma quadrata with maps.

13. A commented representation of all ancient buildings in Rome and of some from outside Rome with plan, elevation and section. [All comments would consist of a historical or mythological and an architectural or describing section.]

14. A commented representation of all ancient tombstones and sarcophagi as sources for Roman mythology, politics and history usable as helpful tools for the identification of buildings.

15. A commented representation of all statues.

16. A commented representation of all friezes, reliefs, architraves etc.

17. A representation of surviving architectural elements like cornices, doors, bases, capitals etc. that can not be identified as parts of known buildings.

18. A representation of all vases and similar, rather ornamental objects.

19. A commented representation of all ancient tools and instruments.

20. A commented collection of all known inscriptions.

21. A descriptive list of all known or surviving paintings.

22. A commented representation of all known medals and coins.

23. A reconstruction of ancient building and hydraulic machines according to Vitruvius and other authors.

It should be noted that only half of the books listed (1–11 + 23) is dedicated to Vitruvius, therefore the Accademia should not be called »vitruvian academy« as it is almost ever done by reducing its aims.

As if this list was not impressive enough — and many books would have to consist of multipel volumes — , Tolomei claims at the end of his letter that he and his circle of learned men would be able to publish them in less than three years: »Cosi partendosi tra tanti dotti huomini queste fatiche, non è dubbio che'n manco di tre anni si condurran tutte a fine.« [Tolomei 1547, fol. 84v] If we don't want to read this as a straight and impertinent lie by Tolomei to Landi — whom he wanted to win as a patron for the project — and to his readers, we may conclude that at least parts of the preparatory work for this publication were underway or even finished by 1542 or, at least, 1547. Because of the very systematic approach (among other reasons), it should be worth searching for these books or their respective preparations. At least Philandrier's Annotationes were already published by 1547 — and this could be the reason why a similar book is mentioned as item 1 of the list, even though Tolomei does not explicitly refer to it: Of course such a reference would not have been possible in the original letter of 1542.

In 1552, Philandrier's printer in Lyon, Jean de Tournes, published the Annotationes together with Vitruvius' full text [Philandrier 1552]: The subtitle of this book claims that it contained »omnibus omnium editionibus longè emendatiores, collatis veteribus exemplis«, i.e. an improved text created by comparing and emendating all »old examples«. One may guess that this refers to printed editions as well as manuscript sources. This comes close to Tolomei's description for book 3. As far as I know, it has never been tried to identify the sources used for this publication and — by comparing them with the printed text — if it fulfills this claim.

In 1986, the art historian Richard Harprath and the archaeologist Henning Wrede published a catalogue of the so-called Codex Coburgensis [Harprath/Wrede 1986], a collection of very precise anonymous drawings after tombstones and sarcophagi arranged carefully in an order representing the interrelation of ancient Roman mythological topics. Together with the parallel Codex Pighianus in Berlin this codex, preserved at the Veste Coburg in Germany, represents — as Harprath and Wrede saw it — the first systematic book in the history of archaeology. Because Stephanus Winandus Pighius, owner of the Berlin codex, stood in close relation to cardinal Marcello Cervini (later pope Marcellus II), leading member of the Accademia, it may be assumed that both codices could be counted as the preparatory material for book 14. Particularly remarkable in these drawings is the careful representation of the originals in their exact conditions: no corrections or completions were added to damaged figurative elements or inscriptions.

The same methodological approach can be found in a group of 6 manuscript volumes with Latin inscriptions in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana [Vat. lat. 6034, 6036–6040], collected by Jean Matal: Here, we find every inscription in its surviving form, often even copying the shape of the letters, annotated with clearly separated solutions for missing parts or errors and with an identification of the printed or manuscript sources, the location of the originals and the names of the persons who had contributed the inscription or checked its current state. Among Matal's collaborators named with their respective roles, are: Martin de Smet, Antoine Morillon (presumably responsable for the Codex Coburgensis), Stephanus Winandus Pighius, Guillaume Budè (son of the famous French Humanist), Aldus Manutius the Younger, Guillaume Philandrier, Pirro Ligorio, and, only once, Andrea Palladio. Theodor Mommsen made Matal's codices into the foundation of the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum started in 1853.

In addition, the Vaticana owns printed volumes of collected inscriptions with manual corrections by Matal and others, and lots of similar material written by different hands from the inheritance of Aldo Manuzio the

Younger and Onofrio Panvinio. It should be mentioned, that Panvinio himself attributed his introdution to antiquarian studies to Matal. The list of Matal's collaborators and their personal relations allows us to assume that his codices were made as preparations for book 20 in Tolomei's list.

Together with Antonio Agustìn and Jakob Fugger (who later became Jacopo Strada's patron) Matal had studied law with Alciato. After having almost finished an edition of the Codex Pisanus in Florence, he followed his friend Agustìn to Rome where the latter became a member of the papal Rota and acquired fame as collector of medals and coins. After his return to Spain Agustìn published the famous Diálogos de medallas, inscripciones y otras antigüedades [Agustìn 1587], in its Italian translations — [Agustìn (1587)] and [Agustìn 1592] — for more than a century one of the most important numismatic books. Jacopo Strada had drawn about 1,000 items from Agustìn's collection and used them in his own publications. Having travelled in his function as antiquarian for Fugger and, later, the Emperor, and as trader of antiquities between Italy, Germany, Austria and France for many years, Strada settled in Rome from 1553 to 1555 where he was invited to participate in the meetings of an Accademia of learned men at the court of cardinal Alessandro Farnese. (On Strada's fascinating biography and immense collection of drawings, antiquities and books see the forthcoming book by Dirk Jacob Jansen, [Jansen (2015)].) Because of personal interrelations we may assume that this Accademia is more or less identical with the Accademia della Virtù. While Strada first used his access to Agustìn's and others' numismatic collections for his Epitome [Strada 1553], he later started — among many other projects — a collection of over 9,000 drawings after ancient coins and medals today preserved at Gotha, Germany. 3,000 pages with Strada's annotations to these drawings also survived — and both collections will now be studied in detail for the first time in a project started by Dirk Jansen and Volker Heenes in December 2015. — From the publications by Agustìn and Strada, and especially from their collection of coins and Strada's drawings, we may conclude that they could represent at least parts of or derive from the preparations for book 22 in Tolomei's list.

Another volume of drawings by Strada and his workshop mentioned in Jansen's book is volume 2 (of 3) of the Codex miniatus 21 in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna: It contains 172 drawings of ancient statues that may be related to preparations for Tolomei's book 15.

While Strada's drawings and prints do not follow the strict methodological approach to ancient sources observable in the aforementioned collections of drawings and inscriptions, another large group of drawings fulfills exactly these criteria:

The so-called Codex Destailleur D (= Hdz 4151) at the Berlin Kunstbibliothek was named by Hermann Egger [Egger 1903] after its last — and, in fact, also first — known owner, the French architect Hippolyte Destailleur (1822–1893). With its 120 sheets containing almost 1,000 single drawings this codex is the largest surviving part of a group of architectural drawings representing ancient and the some of the most important contemporary Roman architecture from the middle of the 16th century. Even though these drawings are characterised by an incredible amount of very precise information, showing the buildings or their ruins with more details and unrivalled completeness than any other drawings made until the 20th century, they have largely been ignored by archaeologist as well as architectural historians. The main reasons may be that the — mostly French — draughtsmen remained anonymous and that the drawings have not been used as models for prints or built architecture — at least: as far as I know. Besides the mentioned characteristics, the systematic approach to document every available element is simply astonishing: Even pipes for water and heating systems, structures of cellars and roofs, hidden staircases and rooms hardly accessible have been measured, as well as

many more details that often got lost since the 16th century. Thus, these drawings have to be regarded as invaluable sources for ancient Roman architecture and what was or could have been known about it in the Renaissance. The entire group presumably consists of more than 660 sheets in 12 collections with more than 3,000 single drawings, reaching from capitals and other architectural elements to entire, highly complex plans of, e.g., baths in several, carefully related sheets. This may be the largest surviving documentation of the most comprehensive archaeological survey before the 19th century, if not: ever.

The main problem with this group of drawings is, that until now only one draughtsman could be identified as a certain »Guielmo franciosio« mentioned in the documents of the Archivio storico in the Fabbrica di San Pietro in the Vatican, where he often appears together with other French craftsmen working one day less than their Italian colleagues [Kulawik 2002: vol. 1, pp. 262–266]. My interpretation of this fact is that »Guielmo« and his group, during the days they took off from the Fabrica, worked on these drawings for someone else, because it seems implausible that a group of craftsmen, many of them not even good draughtsmen, developed the plan to document all ancient and some modern buildings in and outside of Rome and that they carried it out during many months or rather: years. In addition, many annotations to the drawings clearly address other people who must have been in the position of orderers: For these persons, the draughtsmen often tried to write Italian, which they clearly did not master very well. Because some of the annotations are in French it seems also plausible to assume that the addressed persons were a group of French and Italian learned men with some considerable interest and knowledge in ancient Roman architecture to commission such a survey project. The only adequate group active in Rome between ca. 1535 and 1547, when the drawings were executed, is the Accademia della Virtù.

In fact, Giorgio Vasari informs us that the Accademia even had such a survey made for them: In his biography of Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola inserted into the Vita of Taddeo Zuccari, Vasari claims that the Accademia „used Vignola to measure all the antiquities in Rome":

»Ma dopo, essendo allhora in Roma un'Accademia di nobilissimi gentil'huomini, e signori, che attendevano alla letione di Vitruvio: fra quali era M. Marcello Cervini, che fu poi Papa, Monsig. Maffei, M. Alessandro Manzuoli, & altri, si diede il Vignuola per servitio loro a misurare interamente tutte l'anticaglie di Roma, & fare alcune cose, secondo i loro capricci, la qual cosa gli fu di grandissimo giovamento nell'imparare, & nell'utile pariemente.« [Vasari 1568: III,2, p. 700]

Almost exactly the same words are used by Egnatio Danti who published Vignola's Due regole della prospettiva pratica together with his biography [Danti 1583]:

»In quel mentre essendo stata istituita da molti nobili spiriti un'Accademia d'Architettura, della quale erano principali il Sig. Marcello Cervini, che poi fu Papa, Monsignor Maffei, & il Signor Alessandro Manzuoli; [Vignola – B.K.] lasciò di nuovo la Pittura, & ogn'altra cosa, & rivolgendosi in tutto quella nobile esercitatione, misurò, & ritrasse per servitio di quei Signori tutte l'antichità di Roma: d'onde si partì poi l'anno 1537.« [Danti 1583: without page numbers; here pages 1 and 2 of the Vita]

It may be a coincidence that Tolomei also used the words »tutte l'antichità di Roma« in his description of book 13 which should contain the architectural drawings of all buildings. Both Vasari and Danti, had personal contact with Vignola and therefore could be seen as trustworthy sources.

Unfortunately, there are no drawings by Vignola himself that can be identified as belonging to this work done for the Accademia. But at least, Vignola seems to confirm Vasari's and Danti's claims indirectly in his Regola

delli cinque ordini [Vignola (1562)]: In his short comments to the some of the orders he mentions that he took different ancient examples as models [Vignola (1562): tavv. IIII, XIII, XIIII, XXVI, XVIIII].

But maybe we should not even expect to find original drawings by Vignola's hand from his work for the Accademia: If we consider how architectural surveys were — and, still, are and have to be — made, it seems plausible that a rather experienced draughtsman with some architectural background was not making the measurements and drawings himself, but, instead, led a group of assistants doing the work under his supervision. In this case we would have to expect very precisely measured drawings showing all parts relevant for the understanding of the construction and function of a building — but made by different hands with some corrections or preparations. And this is exactly what can be observed in the drawings from the Codex Destailleur D group: Particularly remarkable are the preparatory drawings in chalk or graphite on these sheets. They often show a very experiences and trained hand, while the measured drawings in ink on top of them were made by rather unpracticed hands, i.e. those of the French craftsmen. — Therefore, I think we may see this group of drawings as the result of the work done by Vignola and others for the Accademia as preparation for book 13 in Tolomei's list.

If Vingola was an employee, if not a member of the Accademia, it may be possible to think of his Regola delli cinque ordini [Vignola (1562)] as a book similar to book 11 on the orders. Because of an experience that also Desgodetz made some 120 years later while measuring Roman antiquities: that none of the rules given by Vitruvius for the orders could be found in the surviving architecture, and having seen that his preparatory work did not result in any publication, Vignola may well have decided to bring out is own Regola as a set of applicable rules for the design of the classical orders in contemporary buildings.

But it is also possible to see Jean Bullant's Reigle generalle d'architecture [Bullant 1564] as such a book: In hiss book, Bullant gives commented representations of the orders according to Vitruvius and compares them with prominent ancient examples that can be found in and around Rome — making this book an even more literally equivalent of Tolomei's proposed book 11. Bullant must have been in Rome before 1564 because he claims he measured some of the buildings himself. Though the woodcuts in his Reigle look very close to some of the drawings in the Codex Destailleur D group, the measurements given in the book are not the same as those in the drawings. Also, it does not seem as if he recalculated or transformed all the measurements, because their proportions to each other are not exactly the same. But because we do not know much about Bullants biography, especially not about his time in Rome and his personal relations, I guess the question if he was in contact with the Accademia should be left open temporarily.

There is another large group of drawings showing some resemblances to the Codex Destailleur D group: the architectural drawings by Andrea Palladio and his workshop. Their similarities were already observed by Heinz Spielmann [Spielmann 1966], but — as far as I know — never probed carefully later. After comparison with Palladio's drawings in London a direct connection or even dependency to the Destailleur group can be excluded. But the reason for this may lie in Palladio's redrawing of almost all of his drawings in the 1560s, presumably in preparation for his Quattro Libri dell'Architettura [Palladio 1570]. Therefore, very few of his early drawings survived: But these show some remarkable similarities to the Berlin drawings like the presentation of the same buildings and views on one sheet or sketches for the construction of spiral that differ only by millimeters when laid upon each other. At least, Palladio's sources and his activities in Rome seem to deserve further investigation, especially when we consider the knowledge of ancient architecture acquired there — like in Vignola's case — was crucial for his later work.

The only time that Palladio stayed long enough in Rome to measure many ancient monuments was between 1543 and 1546 when his patron Giangiorgio Trissino had taken him there. Palladio was just a young stonemason becoming an architect, so one may assume that he did not have the financial recourses to pay a group of assistants for the surveys: Even the smallest buildings could not be measured by one person alone. Trissino, who gave Andrea the name Palladio, also stood in contact in with Claudio Tolomei and took part in the sessions of the Accademia. So, it seems possible that the idea to print a comprehensive book starting with the best examples from antiquity and giving a solid foundation for modern architecture — as the Quattro Libri can be described — may be the result of Palladio's contact with the Roman circle of the Accademia. It should be noted that the allegoric figure at the top of Palladio's 4 title pages is the Regina Virtus holding a book, while architectural allegories only fill the lower register.

Comparing the Quattro libri as a compendium on architecture with Tolomei's list, one may miss the editions of Vitruvius: They may be identified in Daniele Barbaro's commented editions of Vitruvius ([Barbaro 1557] and [Barbaro 1567]) for which Palladio provided the illustrations and some architectural advice. It may be another coincidence that Barbaro, who also stood in contact with Trissino, published these volumes comparable to books 3 and 8 n Tolomei's list only after 1555, the year of Cervini's death when the Accademia seems to have resolved.

In this context, one may also assume that the Latin and Tuscan vocabularies mentioned by Tolomei to support the philological work must have existed, at least as manuscripts: It seems impossible that no such vocabularies were created before and in use when the work on Philandrier's Annotationese or maybe even Barbaro's editions was done. Recently, it has been suggested by Rikke L. Christensen [Christensen 2014: pp. 7–9] — who counts only 8 items (»assignments«) in Tolomei's list... — that the Barbaro's word indeces could be regarded as these vocabularies, but it is obvious that simple indices pointing to the pages were the words appear can not resemble the vocabularies Tolomei is talking about: These must have rather looked like lexica with translations and explanations of the words as well as hints to other contexts where they could be found — one may think, e.g., of something like Perotti's Cornucopia [Perotti 1489] with longer entries.

Searching for printed books closely resembling items in Tolomei's list, one may also think of the second Italian edition of Marliani's Topographia [Marliani 1544], an extended edition of the first from 1534 [Marliani 1534]. In it Marliani thanks 3 men connected to the Accademia for their assistance and, for the first time, includes simple maps illustrating Rome's urban development. Interestingly, the impressum reads: „Romae in aedibus Valerij, dorici, et Aloisij fratris, Academiae Romane impreßorum". It does not necessarily mean that these were the official publishers of the Accademia della Virtù, but it can also be excluded that the Accademia mentioned here is the older Roman Academy founded by Leto, because that academy ended with the Sacco di Roma in 1527. Marliani's book may not fulfill the Accademia's intentions but it may be possible to see it as an extensible first step for book 12.

Conclusion There seems to be good reasons and many indications to assume that the publishing project formulated in Tolomei's letter from 1542 was not just a fanciful but overextending research project that never could have been executed in »less than three years«. Instead, the large amount of printed as well as manuscript sources that can be related closely to the Accademia circle should make it reasonable to think of them as parts of the large interdisciplinary project executed by an international team sharing the enormous workload among each other. This material may be related to books 1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20 and 22 out of the 23 listed by Tolomei — i.e., the surviving material may represent 13 out of the 23 books

planned. And one may even add the presumably lost vocabularies listed as books 4, 5, 9 and 10.

Some of these materials (especially the drawings of monuments and coins) seem to represent the largest surviving coherent corpora of documentation about ancient Roman remains at all going back to a single effort, while others, like the books by Vignola and Palladio, can not be overvalued in their influence on European architecture during the following centuries. That makes the Accademia's project even more worth investigating — a work, that again could only be done by an interdisciplinary group.

The main reason why these materials have never been seen together as stemming from a common context may lie in the same disciplinary fragmentation of the humanities that started with the work of the Accademia. It should be remembered, that the purpose of its project was not to fulfill the curiousity of some ambitious antiquarians, but to establish the best system of norms for a new architecture.

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