

Notes: The paper in the present form should not last longer than 15 minutes and, therefore, could be extended with 1-2 other examples of Strada's numismatic drawings in relation to classical Roman architecture and / or with more details about the *Accademia's* project(s).

The numbers of the paragraphs represent the number of the 'slides' in the presentation.

1. Titel

2. » *Onde con ogni diligenza si farà vna opera dele medaglie* [...]« — »Because of that, a work on medals will be made with all diligence [...]«.
- With these words Claudio Tolomei starts his explanations for a book on ancient medals and coins, which he introduces giving the reason why it would be useful with the preceding sentence:

» *Non è dubbio, che per le medaglie s'è conservata la memoria di molti huomini, e di molte usanze, e che in quelle vi sono varie cose di bella dottrina, cosi ne le Greche, come ne le Romane.*« — »There is no doubt, that through the medals the memory of many men and many usages is preserved, and that in these there are many things of beautiful erudition, in the Greeks as well in the Roman (coins).«

And going on, Tolomeis gives a description of what this book on medals should contain:

» [...] *distinguendole per li tempi, e per i luoghi, e per le qualità de gli huomini, dichiarando a pieno la persona e l'occasion di far la medaglia, e di più il rivercio con tutte le cose, ch'appartenessero a qualche bella, o riposta dottrina.*« — »They – the coins – will be distinguished according to the times and places and the quality of the men, explaining in detail the person and the occasion why this medal was made. In addition, the reverse with all things (shown there) belonging to this beautiful and hidden knowledge will be explained, too.«

This should sound quite familiar to anyone who attended Dirk Jansen's and Volker Heenes' presentations on Jacopo Strada's *Magnum ac Novum Opus*. In fact, together with Strada's 11 volumes of the *Diaskeuè* with descriptions of ancient coins he depicted, his work may appear as a somewhat 'overblown' realization of Tolomei's description.

3. It is part of a letter by Tolomei to count Agostino de' Landi written in 1542 and published 1547.
4. This letter is quite well known, because the description of the book on medals and coins is number 22 in a list of 23 volumes Tolomei describes as the results of an ongoing research and documentation project that he and » *molti belli ingegni*« where trying to realise in Rome since about 1537. Though Tolomei does not mention any names of his collaborators or their circle, it has been usually identified (including myself) with the so-called *Accademia della Virtù*. But this does not seem to be correct: While Tolomei and some of the people we know as participants of his network where members of the *Accademia della Virtù*, its interests focused on neo-latin poetry and the establishment of a 'purified' Italian to be used as a substitute for Latin in Poetry and what we would call today: Sciences and Humanities.
5. The entire program described by Tolomei was not developed to satisfy the curiosity of some over-reaching antiquarians — but was aiming at the re-establishment of the theoretical and practical study of architecture. — I would dare to call this a sort of 'planned Renaissance'.
6. This ambitious program is believed to not have been realised except for
7. Philandrier's *Annotationes* to Vitruvius, published in 1544 and – together with the full text of Vitruvius' *Ten books* in 1552,
8. and the three famous maps of ancient Rome
9. in the second edition of Marliano's *Topographia Urbis Romae*, also published in 1544.

10. This book bears the impressum of the Dorico brothers, rather famous for their innovative music prints, where these brothers call themselves *Accademia Romanæ Impreßorum*. And this general name seems to be the correct identification of Tolomei's circle or network, because some of its members already had been members of the *Accademia Romana* founded by Pomponie Leto in 1464 which ended in the *Sacco di Roma* in 1527.
11. In the meantime, we may add to the results of this *Accademia's* work also some manuscript sources: the so-called *Codices Coburgensis* (Veste Coburg, Germany) and *Pighianus* (Berlin) containing very precise drawings after ancient reliefs,
12. and the six (or even more) volumes with Latin inscriptions by Jean Matal in the Vatican Library.
13. But Tolomei's list still does not look very empty . . .
14. We may now add even a large group of anonymous architectural drawings centered around the so-called *Codex Destailleur D* in Berlin: These more than 700 sheets with more than 3'200 single drawings,
15. by the way, are the results of the most comprehensive and most detailed measurements of the largest campaign ever undertaken in Rome.
16. Just one example for the precision of this measurements: They draftsmen realised that the groundplan of the Colosseum is *not* a perfect oval or ellipse – a fact that did not find recorded in any publication before 1993.
17. While Tolomei's outline may be quite an impressive program, modern research saw no reason to assume that there might be other printed books or manuscript sources relatable to the *Accademia's publishing* project (which was not a research project) — even though Tolomei clearly says that the work load would be divided among many persons and, therefore, that there was *no doubt* that it could be finished in *less than three years!* — Was Tolomei lying to count de' Landi – whom he tried to win as a financial supporter – and to the readers of his printed letters? I don't think so.
18. In fact, a number of books, among them some of the most important of their respective modern disciplines, and large groups of manuscript sources and drawings were created by persons closely interrelated to each other and to the *Accademia* for some time between 1537 and 1555.
19. While it does not seem that the *Accademia's* project was realised *exactly* the way Tolomei described it in 1542, the close resemblance of many books and other manuscript sources to his description – books and sources that were created collaboratively by persons who belonged to the *Accademia's* network – may be more than just a coincidence.
20. The list of persons who did not only know each other but maintained close contacts and often worked collaboratively together, looks like a *Who-is-Who?* of Roman and European antiquarianism from the middle and second half of the 16th century. — So: How do Jacopo Strada and his numismatic works fit into this picture, and which traces would allow as to assume that they may have some connection to the *Accademia's* project?
21. Strada lived in Rome from the end of 1553 to 1555. On his way back to Germany he stopped in Mantova and Venice and brought to main works by Onofrio Panvinio, a self-declared student of Jean Matal, to print. In his introductions he mentions that he was invited to participate in the *Accademia* when arriving in Rome, and he lists representatives of 20 different disciplines – always in the plural form – who took part in the meetings of the *eruditissima Accademia*.

22. And he also gives some names of these members, among them Antonio Agostín who had to intervene when Panvinio became angry about the mistakes and errors in Strada's edition of his books.
23. So, may or should we even see Strada's *Magnum ac Novum Opus*, his *Diaskeuè* or even his printed *Epitomé* from 1553 as contributions to the *Accademia's* project? Well . . . no . . . or at least: with lots of caution: As you may have learned already from Dirk Jansen's and Volker Heenes' papers, the *Magnum ac Novum Opus* was started in the late 1540s or in 1550 under the commission of Hans Jakob Fugger. And when Strada went to Rome from Lyon immediately after he had printed his *Epitomé* there in 1553, he knew already about the ongoing project in Rome. Maybe he had been in Rome earlier, maybe because he had heard of it via Tolomei's *De le Lettere libri sette* of 1547 — or maybe because of the connections Fugger may have maintained with some of his fellow students when he studied law with Alciato, among them almost certainly cardinal Antonie Perrenot de Granvelle and maybe also Agostín and Matal. It is even possible that Strada also studied with Alciato and that he met Fugger already in Bologna.
24. To me, it seems, that the idea to collect representations of *all* ancient coins as a purpose in itself *and / or* as an invaluable means for historical studies was something that was 'in the air' around the 1540, especially among the students of Alciato. And Strada's *Epitomé*, though 'only' a *Bildnisvitenbuch* may have been intended also as an 'entrance billet' to the Roman circle.
25. So maybe Fugger and Strada started the *Magnum ac novum opus* as a somewhat independent project, but both must have seen – and used – their networks as a source of information and to gain access as many items as possible. And this cannot have been a one-way street but rather a fruitful exchange. In fact, the similarity of the title page of volume one of the *Magnum ac novum opus*, dated to 1550, with that of an independent volume made by Fugger in Rome in 1554, suggests that there was at least one important recipient of this second volume in Rome and / or in France – where the book is kept today in the *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal* of the *Bibliothèque nationale* in Paris, and names like those of the cardinals Ippolito d'Este, Jean du Bellay, Alessandro Farnese or Granvelle and even Goerge d'Armagnac come to mind easily.
26. Though the personal relations of Strada and Fugger and their common interest to collect and study ancient objects – especially coins and medals – may be sufficient to suppose a close relation between Strada's numismatic works and the *Accademia*, we may – and should – ask, if there is some trace of such a supposed connection or even collaboration. I would like to explain some hypotheses in this regard by comparing one of Strada's more than 10'000 drawings with architectural studies carried out for the *Accademia* in Rome in the 1540s and early 1550s:  
On the left you see the splendid cover of the first volume of the *Magnum ac Novum Opus* as it has been identically made for all the 29 volumes now in Gotha – and on the right Strada's depiction of a coin showing the *Curia Iulia* at the Forum Romanum, . . .
27. which today – after heavy 'restaurations' and dismanteling of all medieval and baroque changes, looks like this: You may notice that there are rows of holes in the façade that seem to have served as supports for the end of beams for a roof – though their irregularity does not suggest that this roof has been part of the original construction.
28. Based on these holes in the façade and depictions like the coin that Strada may have used and 'corrected', a typical modern reconstruction of the Curia's original appearance in the first centuries looks like the one on the right. You easily may recognise that the reconstructed roof does not fit with the rows of holes – look at the end where the roof meets the façade. . .

29. ... and the same is true for the coin and Strada's drawing: Both do not show a roof but only a sort of *pergola* or a row of columns in front that *do not* bear a roof. From an architectural point of view one may even doubt that this row of columns and the Curia are part of the same building: It is at least possible that they only appear behind together because that is how they looked like from a point of view directly in front of the façade. As we know, the old *Comitium* was still visible, at least in parts, in front of the *Curia*: It was an open, rounded place that, for instance, may have had a row of columns dividing it from the surrounding public space.
30. If we compare Strada's drawing with the measured drawing made by a group of French craftsmen as part of the aforementioned documentation of ancient Roman architecture before or around the time Strada was in Rome, it is obvious that the holes are not there or have not been regarded as worth noting by the draftsmen and their supervisor – who, by the way, may have been Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola. But if we look at the very carefully documented details on the top right of the drawing it seems impossible that the draftsmen simply forgot to record the holes.  
And where are the columns? Obviously not attached to the Curia's façade itself. This may have been one of the reasons for Jean du Bellay, then cardinal of his titular church of Sant'Adriano, i. e. the transformed Curia, to dig for columns, marble and other valuable materials in front of his church. His successful attempts to export some of the material to France and similar spoliations caused some furious opposition from other antiquarians, mostly Italians, who founded the *Accademia delle sdegno* or *degli sdegnati*, i. e. the 'academy of the anger' or 'of the angry'. Among them were many of the persons I listed before as members of the *Accademia*, like Pirro Ligorio. This may show that the whole undertaking was not a smooth operation of peaceful collaboration but that there were dissensions, friendships breaking up or even animosities – like we would expect them to appear in any large collaborative research project over a time-span of almost 20 years ... especially when there are obviously very different interests and social ranks involved.
31. So, even if Strada's numismatic drawings do not record the original coins in the same, incredibly precise way that other documentations done for the *Accademia* followed strictly – like in the case of the reliefs and inscriptions or the architectural drawings, ...
32. but rather seem to embellish the original coins too much for later and contemporary numismatists,
33. I hope to have shown that at least some of his drawings obviously deserve a careful look and interpretation especially with regards to their methodological background, their purpose – which only for a rather short time may have coincided with the aims of the *Accademia* – and the circumstances under which they had to be made.  
Therefore I would strongly suggest and encourage to study these drawings more carefully in an interdisciplinary approach with historians of architecture, portraiture, archaeology or humanities to regain as much information as possible about the study of Roman antiquity in the Renaissance and – maybe or even surely – antiquity itself. I am sure that this may result in lots of ...
34. *News from ancient Rome*. – Thank you.