

Vitruvius: revived Master of Architecture after fifteen centuries.

Architects of the 16th century looked to newly discovered Vitruvius as a guide for incorporating classical motifs, proportions, and construction techniques into their designs, thereby fueling a resurgence of classical architecture throughout Europe.

Marcus Vitruvius Pollio was a Roman architect and engineer who lived during the 1st century BC. He authored the "Ten Books on Architecture" (*De architectura*), which became a seminal work in the field of architecture. Vitruvius emphasized the importance of architecture being guided by three principles: *firmitas* (strength), *utilitas* (utility), and *venustas* (beauty).

During the Renaissance period in the 16th century, there was a resurgence of interest in classical art, literature, and architecture. Architects and scholars sought to rediscover and incorporate the principles of ancient Roman and Greek architecture into their own works. Vitruvius' writings became a primary source of inspiration for this movement, as they provided a comprehensive guide to classical architectural theory and practice.

However, the interpretation of Vitruvius' texts and the application of his principles led to debates among architects and theorists of the time. Different architects had varying interpretations of Vitruvius' writings, leading to diverse approaches to design and construction.

One of the central debates revolved around the **balance between the three principles** outlined by Vitruvius: strength, utility, and beauty. Some architects emphasized one principle over the others, while others sought to achieve a harmonious balance between all three. Additionally, there were debates about how to interpret specific passages in Vitruvius' writings, particularly regarding construction techniques, proportions, and architectural ornamentation.

Prominent architects of the 16th century, such as Andrea Palladio in Italy and Philibert Delorme in France, contributed to the discourse on Vitruvian principles through their architectural works and treatises. Their interpretations and adaptations of classical architecture played a significant role in shaping architectural styles during the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) extensively studied the works of Vitruvius, incorporating Vitruvian principles into his architectural designs. Palladio's renowned treatise "Four Books on Architecture" was deeply influenced by Vitruvius, serving as both an elaboration on Vitruvian principles and a practical guide on architectural design, proportion, and construction techniques. His interpretation of Vitruvius emphasized symmetry, proportion, and classical order, evident in iconic works like the Villa Rotonda, which became emblematic of Renaissance architecture.

Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554), another notable Italian architect and theorist, contributed significantly to the Renaissance discourse on Vitruvius and architecture. His "Seven Books of Architecture" drew heavily from Vitruvius' writings while introducing new ideas and interpretations. Serlio focused extensively on architectural ornamentation and decoration, exploring ways to adapt classical motifs to contemporary design. His work expanded the understanding of Vitruvian principles, particularly in relation to Renaissance architectural aesthetics and decorative arts.

Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) and **Leon Battista Alberti** (1404-1472), though predating the Renaissance, played crucial roles in shaping Renaissance architecture and contributed to early discussions on Vitruvius. Brunelleschi's architectural achievements, like the dome of the Florence Cathedral, demonstrated a revival of classical principles of geometry and proportion. Alberti, in his treatise "De re aedificatoria," synthesized Vitruvian principles with humanist ideals, advocating for architecture as a liberal art guided by reason, beauty, and social utility.

Philibert Delorme (c. 1514-1570), a French architect, contributed to the Renaissance discourse on Vitruvius and architecture by adapting and interpreting Vitruvian principles within the context of French architectural practice. Delorme integrated classical elements into French architecture, contributing to the development of the French Renaissance style known as "French Classicism." His architectural innovations, such as the Château d'Anet and the Tuileries Palace in Paris, showcased his mastery of classical forms and proportions. Through his architectural practice and treatise "Le premier tome de l'architecture," Delorme enriched the dialogue on Vitruvian principles in France and contributed to the evolution of French Renaissance architecture.

While these architects shared a reverence for classical antiquity, their individual interpretations and approaches contributed to the diverse landscape of Renaissance architecture. Through their works and writings, they shaped architectural theory and practice for centuries to come.

The dissemination of Vitruvius' ideas was encouraged by circles of humanists active throughout Europe in the first half of the XVI century. **Daniele Barbaro** and **Guillaume Philandrier** both played pivotal roles in the study and dissemination of Vitruvius' works during the Renaissance. Their translations, commentaries, and efforts to make Vitruvius' texts accessible in Italian and French, respectively, contributed to the revival of classical architectural ideals and enriched architectural education.

Having the opportunity to leafing through XVI century originals of these masterpieces evokes a profound sense of connection to history, culture, and human achievement.

These books become in fact a tangible link to the past, carrying with it the imprint of centuries of human endeavor and genius. They have the capacity to transport us back to the Renaissance period, allowing a "true" connection with the intellectual and cultural achievements of that Golden Age. As well, the Renaissance's spirit reflects in the elegant typography, the beauty and precision of the printing, the quality of the engraved illustrations and the binding, reflecting the skill and care of Renaissance-era printers and artisans.

We become emotional, feeling a strong sense of reverence when handling such a rare and historically significant artifacts. Knowing that the book has been preserved through the ages and passed down through generations adds to its emotional resonance.

We feel like humble custodians of human knowledge and culture.

Marco Succi, Hermes Rare Books

Hereafter are a few copies in our collection, glad to share the pleasure with other collectors.

Vitruvius Pollio, Daniele Barbaro (1514-1570)

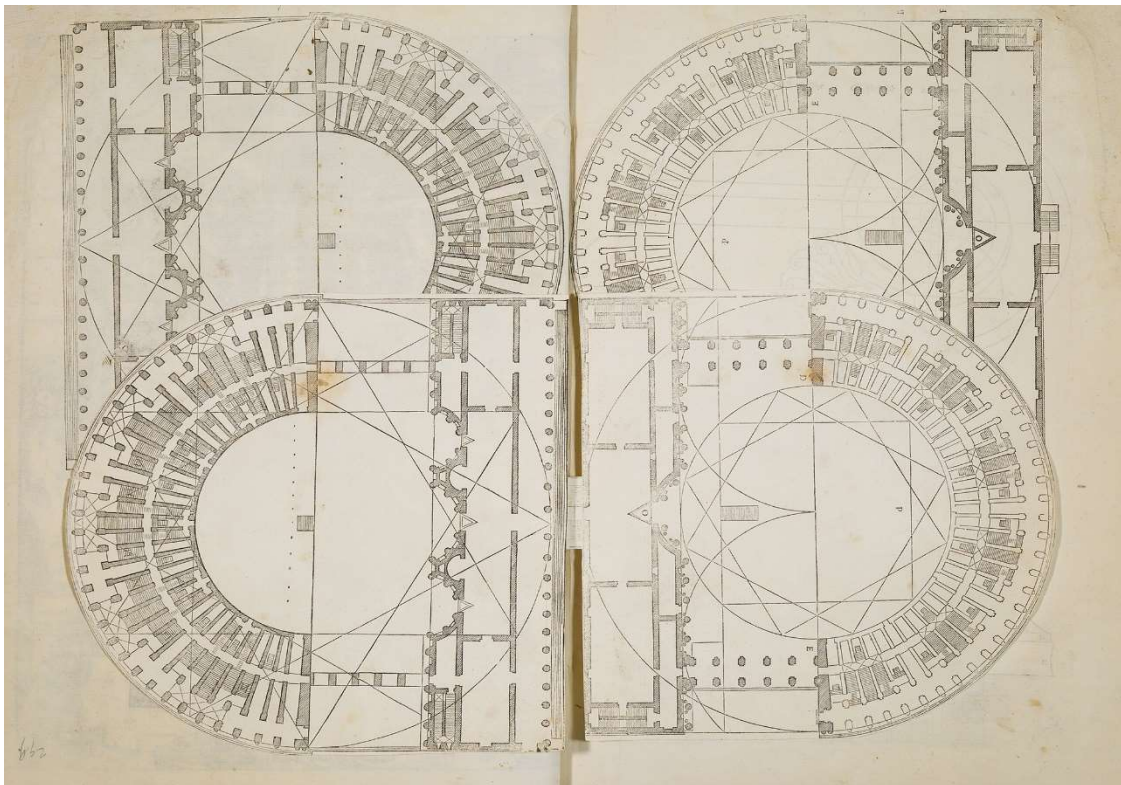
I DIECI LIBRI DELL'ARCHITETTURA. TRADOTTI E COMMENTATI DA
MONSIGNOR BARBARO...

In Venegia, per Francesco Marcolini, 1556.

In folio (390 x 274 mm). Frontispiece with woodcut architectural border, 132 illustrations and diagrams carved in wood, 6 illustrations with extensions, 2 tables with theatres with movable sections, volvelles all present. Slightly later vellum over boards, title on spine.

First edition of the translation and commentary of *De Architectura* by Daniele Barbaro, prepared with the assistance of Andrea Palladio who, in addition to drawing the most important illustrations, helped Barbaro to understand the most difficult passages. The other engravings are by Giuseppe Porta Salviati (1520-1575) and Giovanni Antonio Rusconi (1520-1579).

The 1556 edition "is widely considered the most significant Italian edition of the Vitruvian treatise. The illustrations drawn by Palladio are the most convincing architectural illustrations associated with the text of Vitruvius" (Millard).





I tempi posti all'incontro servono alla faccia di questo Orologio, Quasi di sopra è immobile e l'altro gira sopra de l'artefatto. C. 114

Andrea Palladio (1508-1580)

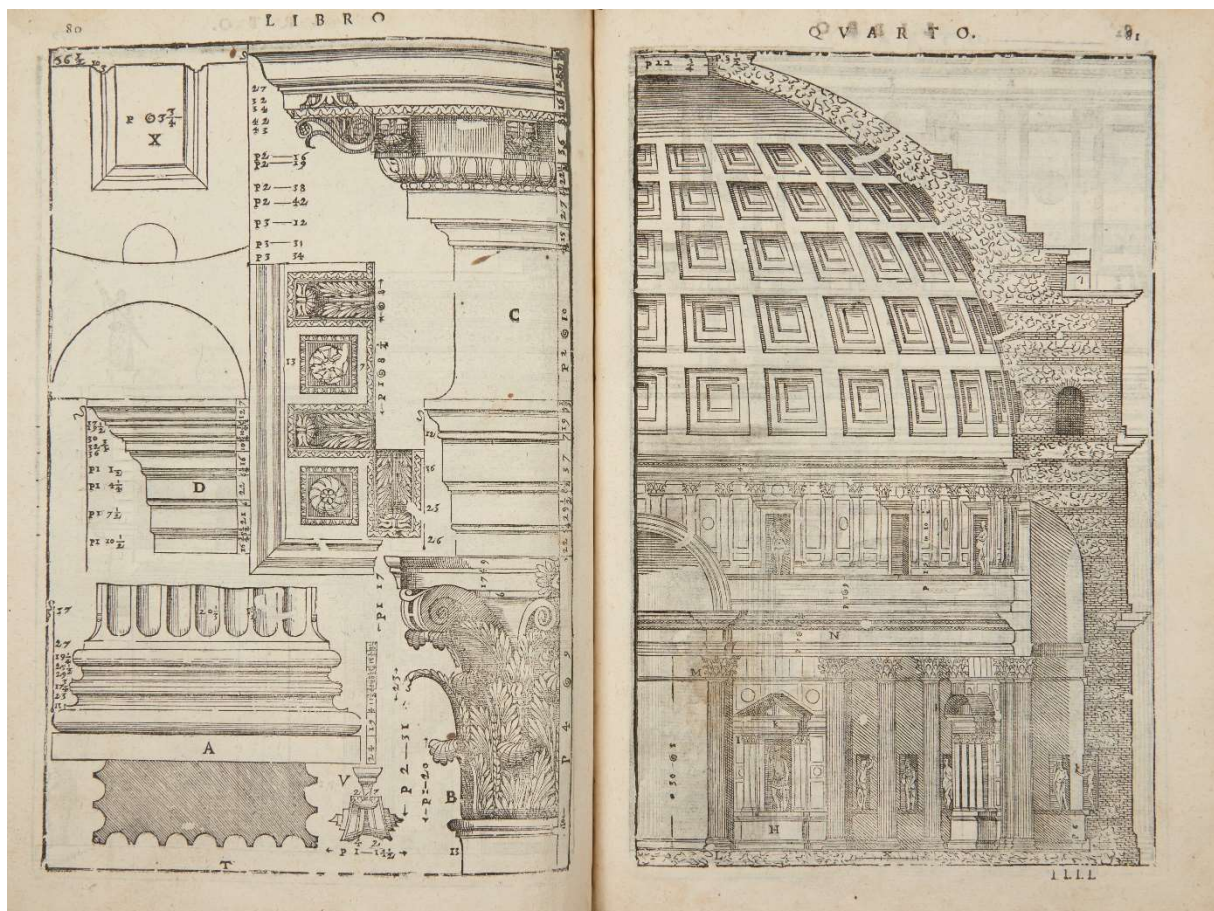
I QUATTRO LIBRI DELL'ARCHITETTURA

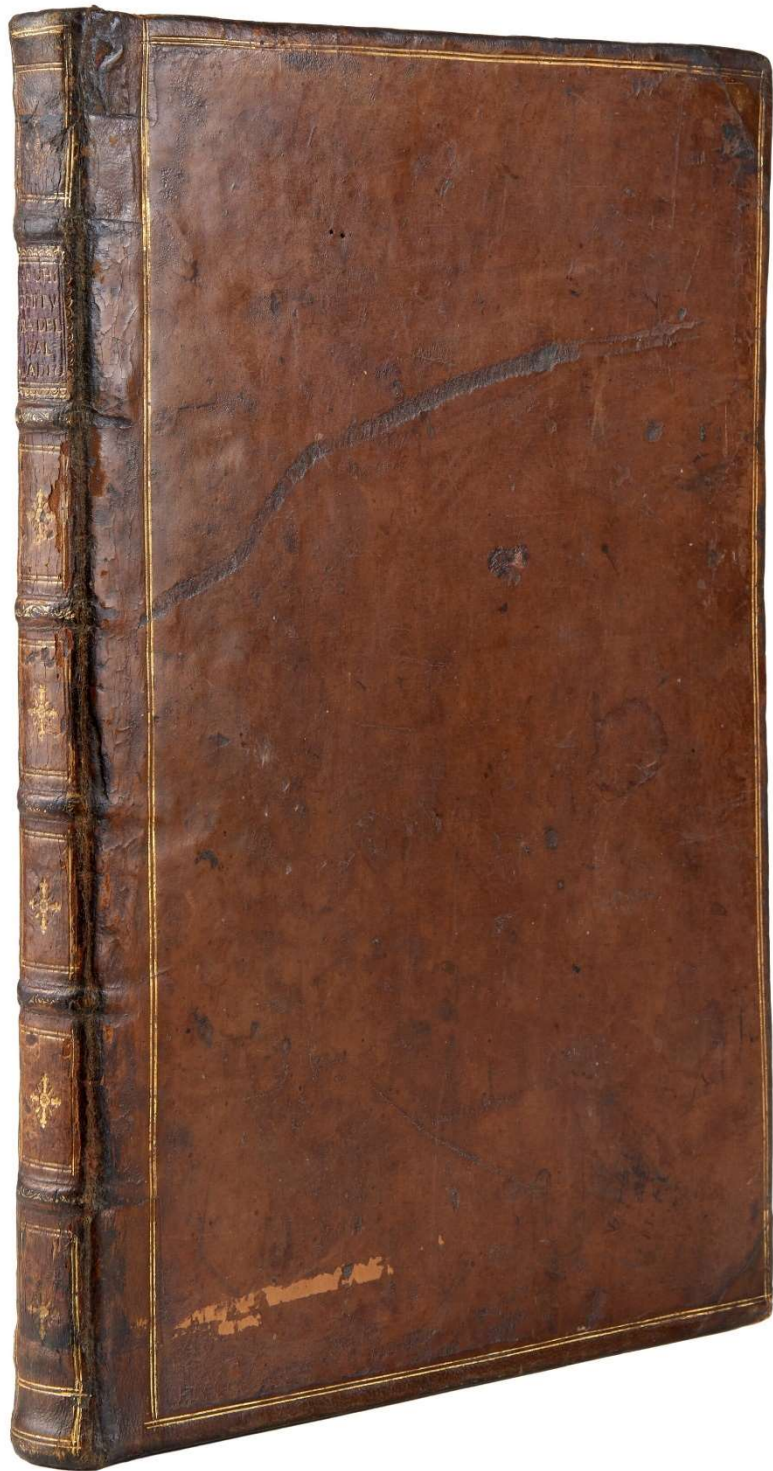
Venezia: Bartolomeo Carampello, 1616.

4 parts in volume in folio (320 x 210mm). Frontispiece within elaborate woodcut frame, woodcut initials and illustrations. Contemporary leather, title on gilt spine, double gilt frame on the boards, spine and corners restored.

Provenance: Juvenel? (title note) - Bibliothèque F. Renard (exlibris on pastedown) - John de Zulueta (exlibris on pastedown).

Unsophisticated copy of the most studied architectural treatise in the Renaissance, in which systematic rules for construction and numerous examples of projects are indicated. The book was a great success and inspired the work of a large number of architects throughout the nineteenth century to be considered the most influential publication of architecture ever produced and determining much of the architectural image of Western civilization.





Vitruvius Pollio, Guillaume Philandrier (1505-1565)

DE ARCHITECTURA LIBRI DECEM... Accesserunt, Gulielmi Philandri... annotationes castigatiores, & plus tertia parte locupletiores...

Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1552

1 volume in-4to, 8 ff. 447 pp., 36 ff including the typographic device; numerous xylographic figures in the text and a folded table folded, 83 vignettes including Philandrier's portrait. The main illustrations, the four illustrations of the Circus, the Lateran and Modena marbles, are engraved by Bernard Solomon. Numerous old handwritten notes. Minimal restoration to the title page. The *Epitomes in omnes Georgii Agricolae* were carefully handwritten and perfectly calligraphed at the time of binding on 8 sheets bound at the end. 18th century red Moroccan binding with golden dentelles on the plates, decorated spine, gilt edges.

First edition of the whole *De Architectura* by Vitruvius printed in France and with the expanded commentary by Guillaume Philandrier accompanying the text of Vitruvius.

The edition published by Lyon editor Jean de Tournes has the characteristic of presenting the entire *De Architectura* in addition to the Philandrier's *Annotationes*. The addition of Vitruvius' text at the top of the comments in each chapter was probably an initiative of the publisher who wanted to offer the public the Vitruvian treatise with the French humanist's commentary, following the example of his colleague from Strasbourg, Georg Messerschmidt in 1550. The volume is complete with the *Epitome* to the treatise on weights and measures by Giorgio Agricola written by Philandrier himself (here in eighteenth-century manuscript, inserted at the time of re-binding).

This is a significantly enlarged and improved version of the *Annotationes* compared to the first edition published in Rome in 1544, with new illustrations engraved by Bernard Salomon. The humanist Philandrier benefited from his second stay in the Eternal City: new ancient and modern references, numerous

archaeological ruins of great interest linked to recent excavations and archaeological excursions carried out with his friend Ligorio in Rome and surroundings, in particular in Tivoli. The Lyon edition also contains a portrait of the humanist.

