

Constructing the Architect of the Italian Renaissance

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Many Renaissance treatises on architecture included an allegorical frontispiece that portrayed both the discipline and the purveyor of architecture as having attributes that were social, ethical and moral in purpose. While Alberti in his *De re aedificatoria* reinforced the importance of *virtus* for citizenry, these illustrations join the concept of *virtus* with that of *disegno* in the architect's attributes.¹ Allegorical frontispieces took an understanding of the architect beyond the role of designer of buildings. As a model citizen with responsibility for the visual representations of a governed society, he was represented as capable of forming architectural space and imagery, designed and organised by a programme of *invenzione* that inscribed political intent able to be read in the context of the court.² Biographical texts, written in the same period, emulated the representation of the architect in the allegorical illustrations and presented, through the adoption of key terms, an explanation of individual genius. This paper examines the participation of architectural treatises in establishing the ethical and moral values that were instrumental in figuring the architect as a professional ideal, an ideal, which in turn informed understandings of genius, or in the Latin, *ingenium*, in individuals.

The re-emergence, during the Italian Renaissance, of the term 'architect' from antiquity (Latin *architector* or Italian *architetto*) influenced interpretations of the architect's function.³ These interpretations were also influenced by the increasingly popular illustrated printed books that, in their frontispieces, gave a visible explanation of the architect's role in social governance. Such visualisations depended on the development of meaning through the narrative structure of allegory. Allegorical meanings developed both independently, in each component of the illustration, and in the combination of signifiers and compositional clues, to contribute to its narrative of meaning (cf. Martin, 1994: 320-365). To examine characteristics of sixteenth century concepts of the architect, this paper focuses on two frontispieces. The first is from Cosimo Bartoli's translation of Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* (1550 and 1989),⁴ and the second is from Daniele Barbaro's commentary and translation of Vitruvius' *De architectura* (1556, 1567 and 1997).⁵

What brings these two texts together is that both translators, rather than being architects, were part of the structures of political governance in their cities. Of particular interest in this context are the social virtues attributed to *disegno* in the figure of the architect which, significantly, cross from notions of ideal type to reflections of individual worth. Hence, they announce an interconnection between architecture and the social that is located in the origin of modern formations of the architectural.

To examine characteristics of individual worth or *ingenium*, two of the lives from Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (first printed

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¹ See Glossary (Alberti 1988).

² *Invenzione* were narratives explaining how specific allegorical figures and symbols developed political meaning and could be judged as relevant to their locale and purpose.

³ For a history of the re-emergence of the term "architect", see Pevsner (1942: 549-562), Hollingsworth (1984), Vagnetti (1980).

⁴ This edition held the title *L'architettura di Leonbattista Alberti, tradotta in lingua fiorentina da Cosimo Bartoli, Gentilhuomo, & Academico Fiorentino*.

⁵ This edition was titled *I deci libri dell'architettura di M. Vitruvio tradutti et commentati da monsignor Barbaro eletto Patriarca d'Aquilegia*, printed in the volgare during 1556.

6 By social I do not mean society as an aggregate of people. Rather the concept includes all forms of social interchange and the boundaries that distinguish the organization of these interchanges.

7 Vasari's original drawing is found at the Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (V, 47a).

8 Charles Davis has recognised that Bartoli wrote an explanation of the *invenzione* of the frontispiece in *Ragionamenti accademici* Davis (1980: 127-99). Although, the dating of the *Ragionamenti* is 1567, Bryce suggests that it was during the early 1550s that Bartoli recast the Dante lectures he had given during the 1540s and which were later printed as the *Ragionamenti* Bryce (1983: 71).

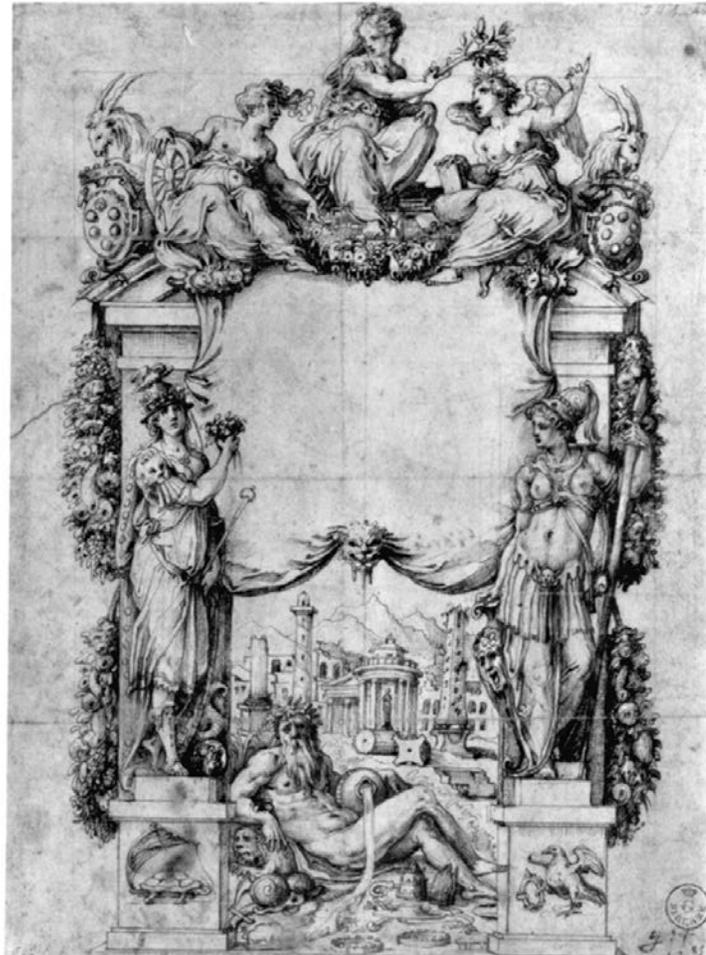
9 For a full analysis of the frontispiece see Luscombe (2004).

10 Gli antichi finsono che nascesse puramente dal cervello di Giove, senza essersi egli congiunto, ò con lunone ò con altro: & la intesono per la virtu intellettiva volendo mostrare, che dal Profondo segreto della sapienza di Dio, nascesse ogni sapienza, & ogni intelletto puro, & separato da ogni terrena feccia, ò spurcizia, dentro a gli animi de gli huomini.

in 1550 by the Florentine printer Lorenzo Torrentino, and then in 1568 by the Giunti printing house) will serve as points of reference. A study of the social virtues, developed in association with frontispieces, will show how these same virtues were considered in the individual. Such correlations would indicate that individual architects were represented as *exemplars* of citizenry – examples of the idealised or model citizen – within a notion of the social that was ordered and structured for political purposes.⁶

The attributes of disegno as having the virtues of Minerva and Flora for Cosimo Bartoli and Giorgio Vasari's "Architect".

The frontispiece of Bartoli's translation *L'architettura* was designed by Vasari to an *invenzione* by Bartoli.⁷ Bartoli and Vasari were members of the socio-politically distinctive Florentine court of Cosimo I de' Medici (1519-1574). Bartoli's *invenzione*, reinforced through Vasari's design for the frontispiece, brings together the components of an idealised understanding of the architect contextualised by the Florentine court life of Cosimo I de' Medici (Bartoli, 1567: fol. 22-26r).⁸ In order to delimit the argument, the focus will be on the figures of *Minerva* and *Flora*, the prominent allegorical figures of the frontispiece.⁹ The reasons why specific virtues were assigned to the architect, and why his capacity of *disegno* was emphasized, can be gleaned from the illustrations' narratives and their combination of particular elements.



Vasari's original sketch

In Bartoli's *invenzione*, *Minerva*, the personification on the left of the aedicule, is described as the *Wisdom* of pure intellect. Bartoli explains:

the Ancients supposed that she was born purely from the brain of Jove, without having copulated, either with Juno or with another; and they intended her for intellectual virtue wanting to demonstrate that from the deep secret of God's wisdom, is born all wisdom, and each pure intellect, and separated from every earthly dreg, or filth, in the souls of men (Bartoli, 1567: fol. 23^v).¹⁰

However, Bartoli also had the figure portraying the characteristics of *Prudenza*, the practical intellect of *disegno*, through her military attire and her attributes of physical valour. The concept of *disegno* encapsulated the capacity to represent the city, in all its forms, as a corporeal representation of governance corresponding to a metaphysical ideal. For Bartoli, the notion that art and architecture coexisted in two worlds, the divine and the corporeal, paralleled the notion that architectural creativity, although reflecting Divine creativity, derived from the architect's power to transform the *idea*, through *disegno*, into the social space of architecture. The architect's productivity was a physical enactment of the transference of beauty from an abstract principle to matter. For Bartoli, *Minerva's* attributes were essential in defining architecture as a higher order of intellectual activity related to civic governance.



Giorgio Vasari and Cosimo Bartoli, *Fontispiece*

11 Wind's interpretation of Botticelli's image suggests that in the painting *Primavera* is in the act of transforming from one state of being to another. In Botticelli's painting, she is depicted fleeing *Chastity* (*Chloris*) and changing into *Beauty* (*Flora*) by the impact of *Passion* in the character of Zephyr, Wind (1958: 105).

12 For his explanation of idea see Panofsky (c1968). See also Summers analysis of *disegno* in sixteenth-century Florence which calls attention to the attitudes of Federico Zuccaro who formulated the importance of this concept for architecture (1987: 298ff).

Bartoli continues his *invenzione* to describe and explain the personification of *Flora*, placed opposite *Minerva*. It is through *Flora* that the physical making of architecture is placed in dialogue with the virtues of intellectual capacity. Like *Minerva*, Bartoli imbues *Flora* with attributes of physical valour and action. But he also brings her into play to symbolise the city of Florence (Bartoli, 1567: fol. 24)^v and to invoke her metaphysical *persona Primavera*. This is consistent with more traditional interpretations of *Flora*, where *Primavera* combines the physical attributes of spring's regeneration and the blossoming of flowers, as in the famous Sandro Botticelli painting *Primavera* (c. 1482). Even though painted approximately seventy years prior to the frontispiece, the painting's symbolism would have been well known to Bartoli and Vasari as it was housed in the Medici collection in Florence.¹¹

In the frontispiece, *Flora* has all the sensual attributes of worldly experience in the craft of making, whereas *Minerva* represents the Wisdom of the intellect that is distinct from, but still guided by, phenomenal experiences. Sensual and intellectual attributes are articulated in the image of the aedicule framing the personifications. In combination, *Flora* and *Minerva* describe the architect's capacity for *disegno*, bringing together concepts defining architecture as real form and as *idea*, and rendering his art invaluable to political governance of the city.¹² *Disegno*, through drawing organised by geometry and proportion, transposed an image of ideal things into the real world – as architectural shapes. In a similar manner, through the combination of *Minerva* and *Flora*, Bartoli recognised the necessity for the intellect to be able to understand the sensible for what it is, in its state of transformation of an *idea*, while being located in the political structures of the city. Bartoli's vision is that these concepts are made useful to their specific social setting through the architect's understanding of purpose: his civic role.

Piero de'Medici's (1416-1469) *impresa* of the falcon and ring is placed below *Minerva*. Piero was the last direct heir of Cosimo de'Medici (1389-1464), the *Pater Patriae* of the lineage who was politically without blemish. Cosimo I de'Medici was related to Piero through his mother, and Piero's *impresa* provided a legitimacy that Cosimo needed to assert in claiming the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany. Cosimo I's own *impresa* of the tortoise and sail is placed below *Flora* in a position reinforcing his importance. These two arms of the Medici lineage culminate in the figure of *Immortalità* sitting in the pediment of the aedicule, holding the double-forked laurel, *impresa* of Cosimo I de'Medici, signifying the bringing together of the two strands of the family's genealogy. Furthermore, *Immortalità* forms an axis with the image of the river-god Arno below, surrounded by the many achievements in Florentine arts, framed symbolically by the aedicule signifying its architectural achievements. By depicting *Minerva* and *Flora* in this context, illustrating the power of the architect to enact politically relevant *disegno* for the Medici court, the frontispiece locates the architect as central to the requirement to form tangible representations of social governance in the city. The frontispiece to this 1550 edition of Alberti's text locates an affirmation of the role of the architect to represent, specifically for Florentine society, the important aspects of court culture and its hierarchy of power.

The attributes of disegno as the embodiment of practical intellectual habit in Daniele Barbaro and Andrea Palladio's "Architect"

Andrea Palladio's design for Daniele Barbaro's frontispiece to *I dieci libri dell'architettura di M. Vitruvio* used a triumphal arch to locate allegorical personifications and the title of the book. The *invenzione* for the design probably derives from Barbaro's *proemio* or foreword to the text. Building on the interpretation of the virtues associated with *disegno* in Bartoli and Vasari's 1550 frontispiece, my focus on Barbaro and Palladio's frontispiece will be on the two personifications in the niche of the triumphal arch.

When the figures are seen in relation to Barbaro's *proemio*, the qualities of *Scienza* described in the text become evident in the personification with attributes of *Temperanza*, in the left niche. The qualities of *Intelletto* can be seen in the figure on the right that includes attributes of *Prudenza*.¹³ This separation of virtues is distinctive when compared to those found in Bartoli's frontispiece, as the personifications articulate a more rigorously consistent division of attributes. Of the other five personifications of the Barbaro frontispiece, the four across the attic level of the arch represent the *quadrivium* of the arts: *Geometria*, *Musica*, *Astrologia* and *Aritmetica*. The central figure is a representation of the virtue of rational wisdom in the figure of *Sapienza*.¹⁴

³ In past interpretations of the frontispiece, the figure in the left niche has been attributed the name of either *Theory* or *Astrology*. The figure on the right has been interpreted as *Practice*, *Experientia* or *Prudenza*, Frascari (1988: 15-27), Angelini (1999), and Miotto (1999: 233-243).

¹⁴ I disagree with Miotto's interpretation of these as 'Rhetoric,' 'Music,' 'Arithmetic,' and 'Geometry.' See Luscombe (2004).



Frontispiece, Andrea Palladio and Daniele Barbaro, *I dieci libri dell' architettura di M. Vitruvio tradutti et commentati da monsignor Barbaro eletto Patriarca d'Aquileggia, Venezia: Marcolini, 1556, Montreal, Centre Canadien d'Architecture/ Canadian Centre for Architecture*

15 La prima e nominata Scienza, che habito è di conclusione per vera & necessaria prova.

In his *proemio* to the first book of Vitruvius, Barbaro introduced the term *habitus* to explain the workings of the intellect. The term *habitus* has an Aristotelian source and refers to the actions emanating “from an acquired perfect state or condition” (Calabi and Morachiello, 1987: 231). Barbaro followed Benedetto Varchi’s *Due lezioni* for his use of the term and separated habits stemming from “necessary truth ... composed of the proof of the thing proven”, from those emanating from “contingent truth” that are dependent on will. Both writers place art within the category of contingent truth (Barbaro, 1556: 6; 1567: 2-3). Varchi had correlated the human soul with a notion of Reason, which was then divided into distinctive categories of particular reason and universal reason. Within his understanding of universal reason, he separated inferior reason from superior reason – associating the habit of science with superior reason and the habit of art with inferior reason, because art culminated in making whereas science was culmination in knowledge. Art was thus the lowest habit of human reason (cf. Summers, 1987: 276ff; Mendelsohn, 1982: 6-9). Nevertheless, Barbaro suggested a link between *Architettura* and “necessary truth” related to higher categories of reason, due to its reliance on *Geometria*, *Aritmetica* and the other sciences of the *quadrivium*. Further, Barbaro argued that *Architettura* was synonymous with rhetoric, a higher habit of Reason (Barbaro in Vitruvius, 1567: 36).

The personifications of *Scienza* and *Intelletto* were developed by Barbaro to make Vitruvius’ Roman first-century BCE text relevant to sixteenth-century Italian contexts and concerns with intellect and reason. *Scienza*, on the left, incorporates attributes of *Temperanza* and is represented as a gaunt old woman clothed in full robes with her head covered. *Scienza* is looking upward and raises opened compasses high in her left hand. This directional orientation suggests an association with the *quadrivium* on the attic level. Vincenzo Fontana claims that in an earlier manuscript, *Libro detto delle quattro porte*, Barbaro had suggested that *Aritmetica*, *Musica*, *Geometria* and *Astrologia* as the *quadrivium* constituted the four doorways to knowledge (Fontana, 1985: 39-72). The *quadrivium* was, indeed, fundamental to divisions of knowledge in *Architettura*. For Barbaro, as for Varchi, *Scienza* was associated with “necessary truth” and the rational logic of proof in its subject, as distinct from the contingencies of phenomena. Barbaro notes in his *proemio* that *Scienza* “is a conclusion acquired through true and necessary proof” (in Vitruvius, 1556: 6).¹⁵ *Scienza* provides Barbaro with a link between Architecture and “necessary truth” through her gaze toward *Geometria* and *Aritmetica*.

Temperanza’s association with the figure of *Scienza*, as a virtue of the architect, suggested a need to possess objective rationality in order to restrain acts of personal licence. The set of compasses *Scienza* is holding symbolise the architect’s comprehension, through their use, of the principles of geometry and mathematics, which enable him to form judgments about his art. In this context, *Temperanza* warns the architect that he should not presume that all of his discoveries will necessarily reflect philosophic principles related to the rational logic of proofs. Consistent with Alberti, Barbaro believed that the architect should lead an active political life and work for the benefit of the whole of society. For Barbaro, the architect’s *Temperanza* is an attribute that allows him to recognise principles. Through *disegno*, it leads to an appreciation that architecture reflects principle and *idea*. Rational wisdom, in this case, is associated with practical reasoning. Truth, for the architect, is about making distinct, through his combination of *Intelletto* with *Prudenza*, ideas of practical reasoning.

The figure in the right hand niche is *Intelletto*. In his *proemio* Barbaro noted that *Intelletto*, while also about principles and proofs, “retains the name of the power of the soul where it is found” (in Vitruvius, 1556: 6).¹⁶ *Intelletto* is portrayed as a fully clothed young woman looking downward, with the back of her head forming a second face, that of an old man.¹⁷ Her youthful face gazes into an armillary sphere she holds, whereas the face of the old man gazes toward the edge of the frontispiece. This Janus like configuration goes back to older representations of *Prudenza* whose youthful face, traditionally often portrayed as looking into a mirror, symbolised self-knowledge and virtue, while her old face represented the wisdom gained through historical distance. The mirror is replaced in Barbaro and Palladio’s representation of *Intelletto* by a *speculum nature* (mirror of nature) in an armillary sphere. This suggests that in Barbaro’s conceptualisation of the architect, *Intelletto* inferred the self-knowledge of *Natura* and principles of natural cause.¹⁸ Annarita Angelini suggests that the motif of the downward and upward gazes of *Intelletto*’s faces and its source in *Prudenza* give each figure the double meaning of universal theory and earth bound action (Angelini, 1999: 18ff; see also Miotto, 1999: 233-243). Characterised in this way, *Intelletto* reflects the two-fold ability of the architect to build buildings and to conceptualise natural philosophy through his practices.¹⁹ For Barbaro, *Intelletto* calls attention to the differences between, as well as interrelatedness of, causes or first principles in the context of their operational use, through the architect’s capacity for *disegno*, in the service of men.²⁰ Unlike in Bartoli’s frontispiece, where *Flora*’s attributes illustrate the transformation of the idea through the act of making and the architect’s *disegno*, Barbaro reinforces *disegno* by associating it with the self-knowledge and principles of *Natura*. Thus, by placing *Scienza* opposite *Intelletto* to emphasize the primary role of the concept of *disegno* for the architect, Barbaro combines the requirement of rational principles and those of social good in the practices of the architect.

The classical framing of the frontispiece to Barbaro’s translation and commentary with a triumphal arch setting is unmistakably based on an earlier sketch by Palladio for his competition entry for the Rialto Bridge project of 1554.²¹ The illustration’s technique, with its orthographic projection, reflects Barbaro’s conception of *Architettura* as the highest of the arts. It depicts the power of the architect’s capacity for *disegno* as it moves from *idea* to real form in its measurable precision and accurate portrayal of geometric proportion. Barbaro’s allusion to the importance of the orthographic projection to *disegno* is further reinforced by the figure of *Sapienza*, or rational wisdom. She holds a measuring rod, pointing at the appreciable accuracy of a drawing of the triumphal arch. The manifestation of *Sapienza* in *Architettura* conferred to the architect the virtue of judgment, informed by intellectual wisdom and knowledge, alongside the agility of *Scienza* and *Intelletto*.

In defining the architect’s attributes as a social figure in the context of sixteenth century thinking, Cosimo Bartoli and Daniele Barbaro elaborated the architect’s intellect as ideal action, in the formulation of propositions for real form. Both writers saw the ideal architect as actively engaged in political life, working for the good of society. Through a capacity for *disegno* and the ability to make – structuring building campaigns to create social space through architecture – the architect was idealised as a type. When we compare the characteristics of the ideal ‘architect’ emerging in these representations with those in biographical texts, it

16 La seconda è detta Intelletto, che è habito de i principij, & delle prove, & ritiene il nome della potenza dell’anima, della quale egli si truova ...

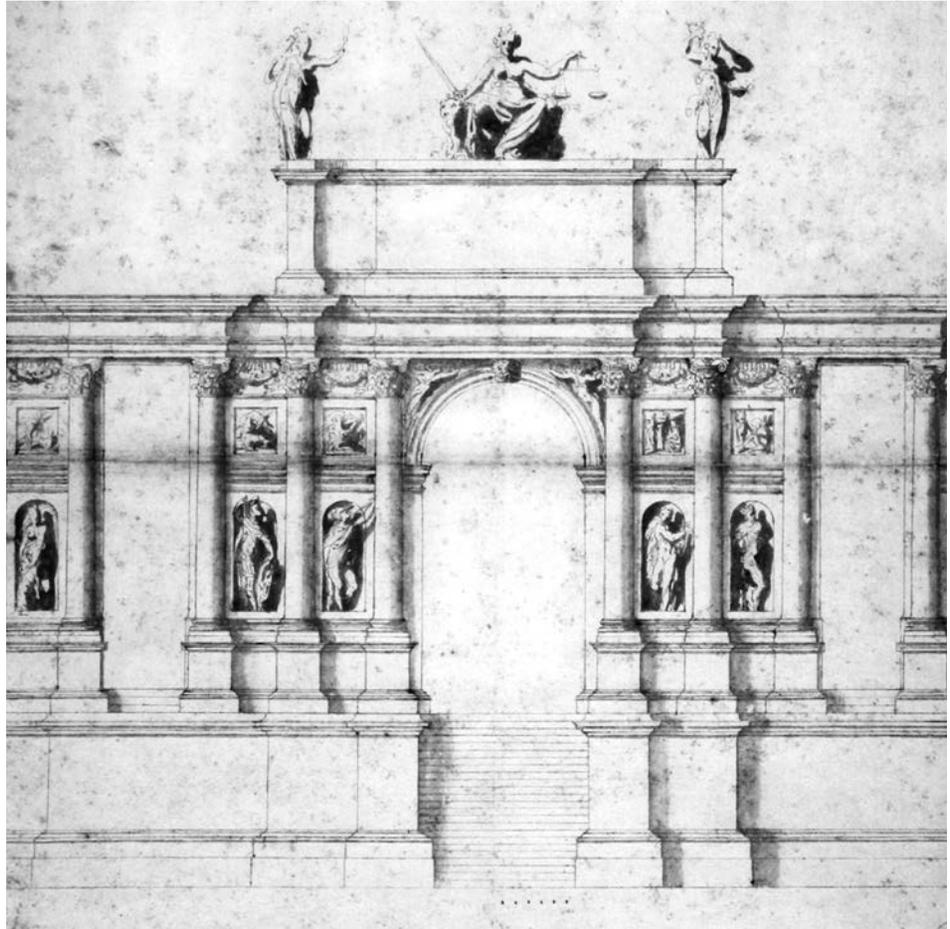
17 Both Frascari (1988) and Miotto (1999) have considered the figure as ‘Prudence’ because of her two faces.

18 Cf. Frascari (1988: 22) suggestion of a possible source being the tarot card set by Andrea Mantegna where his representation of *Prudencia* holds a *speculum* showing her reflection.

19 For discussion of the Aristotelian interpretation of *Prudenza* and *Intelletto*, Summers (1987: 273ff).

20 Barbaro in Vitruvius (1556: 6). La seconda è detta Intelletto, che è habito de i principij, & delle prove, & ritiene il nome della potenza dell’anima, della quale egli si truova: la onde è nominato, Intelletto.

21 See Burns (1973), Gioseffi (1973) and Calabi (1987) for their discussion of the competition entry.



Andrea Palladio, Rialto Bridge Project, Ink drawing, Museo Civico, Vicenza

22 Vasari's involvement with the establishment of the *Academic del Disegno*, and his discussion of *disegno* in his technical preface provide a context for his advocacy of the central role of the architect. See discussion Rubin (1995: 234ff.).

will become apparent that attributes referring to social functions in the former are used in the latter to signify individual worth. As a result, some individual architects were conceived, distinct from their artistic practices, as model citizens, within a conception of a society ordered and structured for political purpose.

The attributes of genius (*ingenium*) in Vasari's *Vite*.

Vasari's *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* established the value of individual architects' works based on a correspondence with the virtues of the idealised architect.²² Rather than relying on the structure of allegorical divisions found in the frontispieces, Vasari explained through individual examples how virtuous acts, or the culmination of virtues in the individual, could determine beauty in art and achieve in real form what he called divine or natural perfection. In examining the attributes of *Minerva* as rational wisdom and *Scienza* informed by *Temperanza* for their similarity to descriptions in Vasari's writing, I will focus on his account of the lives of Michelangelo and Brunelleschi.

In a similar manner to Bartoli and Barbaro, an essential component of Vasari's concept of the architect's worth is his belief that architecture develops in the intellect as a mediated transference of *idea* to real form. Consistent with the concept of *disegno* in the frontispieces, Vasari distinguished architecture from the manual skills

gained through the experience of repetitive manual practices, to characterize it as a higher form of knowledge. Like Bartoli, Vasari saw the architect's intellect aligned with rational wisdom (*Minerva*) informed by *Prudenza*. Barbaro's more Aristotelian understanding of the architect had presented *Scienza* as an attribute distinct from practical intellect (*Intelletto* informed by *Prudenza*), whereas Bartoli and Vasari both suggested that it is the practical intellect of the architect that is his highest virtue. For Bartoli, Vasari, and Barbaro, *Prudenza* was an intellectual habit that emanated from a pre-disposed moral virtue in the good citizen, resulting in an individual architect's ability to realise "natural philosophy in practice" (Summers, 1987: 275). However, it was only Barbaro who valued *Scienza* as qualifying a distinct form of an architect's intellectual practice, his comprehension of the power of principle.

Vasari continuously made references to Michelangelo's honour and moral prudence. To establish consistency between the notions of individual and idealised Architect, he employed Michelangelo's appeal that the architect should have his compasses in his eyes, a metaphor for grasping Divine order through the intellect.²³ In a statement that resembles Cosimo Bartoli's *invenzione*, Vasari wrote about Michelangelo:

It is known that when he wanted to extract *Minerva* from the head of *Jove* it was necessary for him to use Vulcan's hammer ... he said that it was necessary to hold one's instruments in the eye and not in the hand because it is the hands that work but the eye that judges: and this is the method he used in architecture as well (Vasari, 1996: 773-774; 1568: 109).²⁴

This connection between the mind and the eye are the requirements of *disegno* in Bartoli's notion of the architect. Vasari constructs Michelangelo as the genius architect who is able to be the living incarnation of the *idea* of *Minerva*.

Continuing, Vasari reinforces a notion in Bartoli and Barbaro's concept of the architect, namely, that genius cannot simply reside in an act of contemplation and study but that, for the architect, it requires an active and informed engagement with the decorum expected of public figures, through *Prudenza* and *Temperanza*. Reinforcing Barbaro's association between *Scienza* and *Temperanza*, Vasari writes about Michelangelo's individual mannerisms, "He greatly loved human beauty for the sake of imitation in art ... for without this imitation no perfect work can be done; but not with lascivious and disgraceful thoughts as he proved by his way of life, which was very frugal" (Vasari, 1996: 739; 1568: 112).²⁵ Here, Vasari associates notions of "necessary truth", a quality of *Scienza* found in the idealised architect through "imitation", with *Temperanza* in individual architects.

Vasari conflated, as did Bartoli, the distinct notions of rational intellect (*Scienza*) and practical intellect (*Intelletto*). Separating them from the notion of making, he was able to argue that specific experiences in practice and life had led to the development of *ingegno* in the architect. Mirroring the concept of *disegno* in art, this transformation of character through experience for Vasari turned into a measure of recognising worth in architecture, as well as in an individual architect's character; an emblem in the architect's life as well as in his work.

23 Clements (1961: 31) has discovered four texts testifying that Michelangelo's saying had a meaning commonly understood in Florence.

24 Vasari (1996: 773-774; 1568: 109)...si conosce, che quando e' voleva cavar Minerva dalla testa di Giove, ci bisognava il Martello di Vulcano: imperò egli usò le sue figure e farle di 9 & di 10 & di 12 teste, non cercando altro che col metterle tutte insieme ci fussi una certa concordanza di gratia nel tutto, che non lo fa naturale, dicendo che bisognava avere le seste negli occhi, & non in mano, perche le mani operano, et l'occhio giudica: che tale modo tenne ancora nell'architettura.

25 Vasari (1996: 739; 1568: 112) Amò grandemente le bellezze umane per la imitazione dell'arte, per potere scierre il bello dal bello, ché senza questa imitazione non si può far cosa perfetta: ma non in pensieri lascivi e disonesti, che l'ha mostro nel modo del viver suo, che è stato parchissimo.

26 Vasari (1996: 354; 1568: 187)
In tanto artificioso, che non si può
imaginar piu bella, ne piu magnifica
Architettura.

In his account of the life of Brunelleschi, for example, Vasari argued that, even though Brunelleschi was not a man of letters, he was able to achieve greatness because of his ability for mathematics, together with a great deal of practice and experience. However, Vasari then continued that it was only after Brunelleschi became a man of letters that he was able to create a building which, “in its very artifice, you cannot imagine more beautiful, nor more magnificent Architecture” (1996: 354; 1568: 187).²⁶ Vasari’s use of a transformation in Brunelleschi’s development as an architect to promote recognition of the value of his work parallels Bartoli’s understanding of *Flora’s* attributes.

These virtues were not only used to define the architect as a model citizen with responsibility for the visual representations of a governed society. They were also used to assert an understanding of individual genius, which indicates a desire to consolidate diverging perceptions of social order within the city’s representation as a governed society. Each occasion used to display the good citizenry of individual architects, through recognition of moral and ethical virtues in their practices, served to reinforce the formation of a collective abstract and ideal type that could transform into the notion of a profession.

Later transformations of this idealised type of social figure into the notion of a profession could be easily achieved. Thus, the moral and ethical virtues used to idealise the figure of the architect, distinctively understood in Italy as a profession, came to be synonymous with descriptions of the individuals taking part in this profession’s practices. In this context, Vasari’s claims for determining genius and worth amongst specific architects not only set them apart from the mass of citizens but raised their status as *exempla* for good citizenry.

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