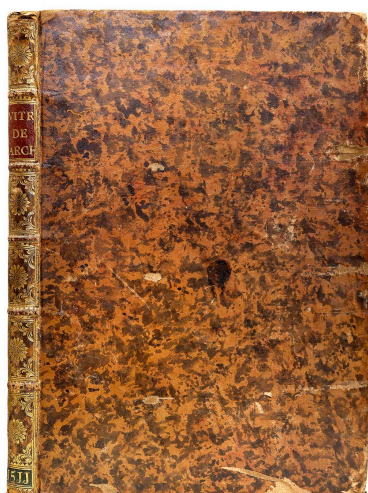


## First architectural book with illustrations



MARCUS VITRUVIUS POLLIO (late 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.)

Fra Giovanni Giocondo da Verona (1433-1515)

*[De Architectura libri decem].*

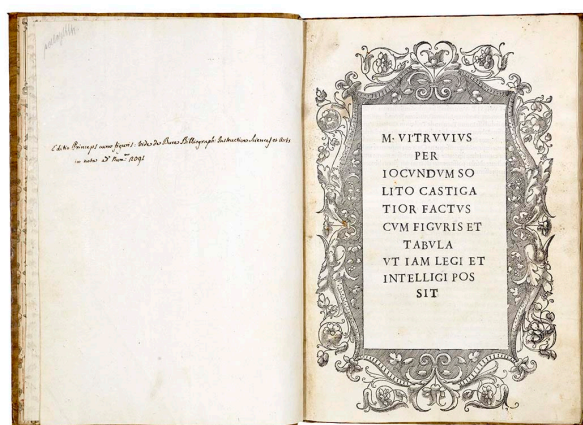
*M. Vitruvius per Iocundum solito castigatior factus cum figuris et tabula ut iam legi et intelligi possit.*

(Venezia: Giovanni Tacuino, 22 May 1511.)

Folio (299x292mm). [4], 110, [9] ll. (without the last blank). Title within a large woodcut border, 136 woodcuts in the text, initials and printer's device.

18<sup>th</sup> century mottled calf, back with bands, compartments gilt with fleurons, red resp. green morocco labels for the title resp. imprint year.

Extremities slightly chafed, lower corners somewhat worn. A small stain in the inner margin of the first 22 leaves, closed tear in the lower margin of leaf 22. – Front endpaper with a bibliographical note of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



Fra Giovanni Giocondo of Verona was a Dominican friar, humanist and architecture theoretician. As a prolific architect and engineer, he worked in Verona, Venice, Naples, Paris and Rome where he took part with Raphael and Giuliano da Sangallo in the erection of the new St. Peter's Basilica. While building the Notre-Dame bridge in Paris, he used hydraulic machines inspired by Vitruvius and a dioptra or theodolite of his own invention.

The first printed edition of Vitruvius edited by Giovanni Sulpicio of Veroli (c. 1483-1490) followed by three other editions (Venice, 1495; Florence, 1496; Venice, 1497) were seen as being unacceptably corrupt.

“In 1511, however, there appeared a lavish edition by Fra Giocondo which provided a reliable text, contained an alphabetic index, and above all contributed to the understanding of the work by the inclusion of one hundred and forty woodcuts. In his dedication to Pope Julius II, Giocondo not only indicates the textual criteria for his edition; he also plays upon the preamble to Vitruvius's first book by drawing a parallel between Julius II and Augustus as great builders: ‘You have surpassed not only the leaders of our time, but also those of the past in the number and magnificence [of your buildings]’.

Fra Giocondo's illustrations had a decisive influence on the majority of later editions of Vitruvius. For example Giocondo illustrates the stories of the Caryatids and conquered Persians, whose effigies were introduced into architecture as supports of entablatures as a visible reminder of their punishment, although Vitruvius (I.1) relates these stories merely as an example of the necessity of



historical knowledge in the formation of an architect. There is probably not one later edition of Vitruvius that forgoes the opportunity of illustrating this essentially peripheral passage. Were it not for the interest in this passage and the illustrations of it, the introduction of caryatids into Renaissance architecture would scarcely be explicable, since the Caryatids of the Erechtheion in Athens only became known (other than through Roman copies) through eighteenth-century publications on Greece.

The methods of architectural representation described by Vitruvius (I.2) as *ichnographia*, *orthographia* and *scaenographia* are illustrated by Giocondo as plan, elevation and perspective view. Vitruvian man (III. 1) is reproduced by Giocondo in two illustrations which provide the starting-point for almost all later illustrations of the passage. Giocondo is the first to illustrate the basilica at Fano described by Vitruvius (V. 1), though he provides only a plan. This remote building of Vitruvius, to which he refers in his text, plays an important role in all illustrations of Vitruvius” (Kruft, p. 66-67).

Provenance: Bibliothèque du Château d’Oberhofen, with library label of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Wegmann 5674). In 1844 Oberhofen castle on Lake Thun was bought and refurbished by the diplomat Albert Alexander de Pourtalès (1812-1861).

References: BAL IV, 3491; Millard, Italian, 156; Adams V-902; Fowler 393; Edit 16 (Online Kat.) CNCE 48320; Mortimer 543; Cicognara 696; Essling 1702; Sander 7694; PMM 26 (note); Ciapponi, *Fra Giocondo da Verona and his edition of Vitruvius*, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XLVII (1984), 72f.; Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory* (1994), pp. 66-67.

