

This paper advances a new reading of the second preface of *de Architectura* (*DA*), in which Vitruvius (V.) relates the dramatic meeting of Alexander the Great and his architect Dinocrates (2.Pref.1-4). Although the episode clearly evokes V.'s relationship to his dedicatee Augustus (König 2009; Gros 1999), I argue that it illustrates anything but an ideal relationship between an architect and his ruling patron (*contra* McEwen 2003). By engaging recent studies that emphasize V.'s strategy to present himself as a deferential *scriba* (Nichols 2009, 2010; Masterson 2004), I suggest not only that the episode is far more problematic than has typically been realized, but that it illustrates, *e contrario*, the very model of architectural service that V. himself seeks to advocate.

In V.'s version of the tale, the unknown Dinocrates dresses up as Hercules in order to gain access to Alexander, and offers to carve Mount Athos into a city fashioned in the image of the king. Alexander rejects the idea for its lack of judgment, but invites Dinocrates to design Alexandria in Egypt instead. Some scholars regard this seeming success story as an illustration of the ideal relationship between architect and ruler, with occasional titters at Dinocrates' foolishness (McEwen 2003; Gros 1999). But, as recent readers have noted (Nichols 2009), Dinocrates' brash approach to Alexander is at odds with V.'s deferential attitude toward Augustus in the previous book (1.Pref.1-3), a passage long compared with the duteous opening of Horace's *Epistle* (2.1) to Augustus (Teuffel-Schwabe 1891; Nichols 2010).

The counterexemplary nature of Dinocrates' tale is confirmed by his lack of architectural judgment (*iudicium*, 2.Pref.3), an essential attribute of ideal and 'true' *architecti* as stipulated in the previous book of *DA* (1.1.1, cf. 1.1.16). Not only does this lapse expose Dinocrates as a false *architectus*, but he disrupts the ideal architect-ruler relationship by being distracting rather than dutiful: Alexander is thus forced to address details better suited to an *architectus* than a busy king (2.Pref.4, cf. 1.4.1 ff., 5.Pref.2-3). Competing versions of the tale illuminate additional problems hidden in V.'s Dinocrates parable. In Plutarch's *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute* (335c-f), e.g., Alexander recoils at the architect's insolence (ἐνυβρίσαντος) rather than his practical failures, and Lucian regards him as a bald-faced flatterer (*Quomodo Hist.* 12, cf. *Pro Imag.* 9). Such variation not only typifies the reception of Alexander as an image-conscious ruler whose behavior, especially toward artists, shaped his legacy (Spencer 2002), but further calls into question Dinocrates' character and motivations.

The key to the passage, however, is Dinocrates' alluring body (*corpus*), which, as the sole source of Dinocrates' fame, contrasts in all respects with V.'s own aged and unsightly exterior (2.Pref.4). Yet V. has the ethical upper hand: in *DA*, athletes merely cultivate their own physical bodies, whereas writers like V. offer endless advantages to all (9.Pref.1). Thus Dinocrates' body, like his behavior, reflects a problematic degree of self-interest, signaling an equally problematic attitude toward his ruler.