

### The Workshop "Building and Knowledge"

Recent studies in the historical vernacular knowledge of building practitioners have cast new light on various aspects of the History of Architecture. The structure of that expertise, its accumulation, its changes over time and the exchange with other fields such as natural sciences, astronomy or economy show in a larger perspective in which environment and how building culture evolved.

The workshop aims to bring together case studies for this approach. Fifteenth to eighteenth century Italy is one of the few subjects in the History of Architecture where knowledge and availability of the relevant sources have a more than solid base, and where for some time extensive cross-referencing and material synopses have permitted the study of the structure of practical building knowledge and its historic dimension.

The workshop represents the first major public event of the **Research Initiative "Epistemic History of Architecture"** ("Wissensgeschichte der Architektur") that was recently started by the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin and the Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max Planck Institute for Art History in Rome. Practical knowledge in building and architecture is currently undergoing massive changes due to computer graphics and construction management software. Under the direction of *Elisabeth Kieven* and *Jürgen Renn* the project partners investigate the historic dimension of such epistemic changes and aim to establish an Epistemic History of Architecture based on a series of exemplary case studies. Planning systematics, construction technology and logistics remained largely unwritten well into the nineteenth century and were passed on through learning by doing and oral transmission. The aim of the project is to recover this

knowledge and its structure by studying written, drawn and built sources, beginning with the early advanced civilizations through to the eighteenth century. So far, sources are often just seen in the context of the respective building: but drawings do not only describe the genesis of a design or a project but also explain how drawings were made and how and what kind of information was codified. Account books or building descriptions concerning contracts, technical or artistic issues show beyond the individual case how contracts and accounts were handled or how a specific terminology evolved, and to what extent architectural treatises played a role. Among the various interactions between different epistemic traditions, the confrontation of practical and theoretical knowledge will be of special interest.



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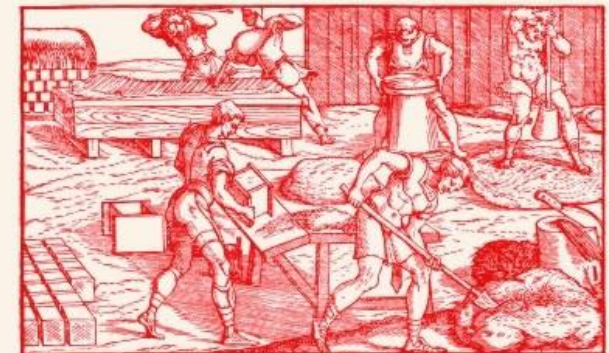
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## Building and Knowledge

Contributions to an epistemic history of early  
modern Italian architecture



from: Rusconi, Della Architettura, 1590

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