Visualizing *asperitas*: Vitruvius (3.3.9) and the ‘asperity’ of Hermogenes’ pseudodipteral temple

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Asperitas, a key term of Hellenistic-Roman art criticism for the assessment of columnar architecture, is anchored in two passages in Vitruvius, which both point to ‘asperity’ as the decisive criterion for achieving an unparalleled, truly eye-catching visual effect. In the best known of the two passages (3.3.8-9), praise is piled on Hermogenes for having systematically established this effect in the design of temples. In fact, he is credited with the invention (*ratio*) of pseudodipteral temple colonnades. And this column arrangement, with ambulatories of greatly increased (double) depth around the *cella*, is supposed to have been invented to provide dignified grandeur (*auctoritatem*) in its appearance *propert asperitatatem intercolumniorum*: 3.3.9. This visual effect came with the practical advantage that those deep pseudodipteral colonnades also provided rain-protected space for crowds to circumambulate around the temple’s *cella* (*in aede circa cellam*). Vitruvius’ other reference to *asperitas*, in a visual sense, appears in the context of wall-painting (7.5.5), where a certain Apaturios of Alabanda is reported to have created a deceptively dazzling effect *propert asperitatatem* in his rendering of colonnades and temples, so much so that the visual effect of the painting outshone its deficiencies in logic (which, when pinpointed by the mathematician Likynos, the artist hastened to correct: 7.5.6-7).\(^1\) Here we will analyze a reconstructed 3D computer model of Hermogenes’ well-documented pseudodipteral temple at Magnesia.

Abbreviated works:

- **Krischen 1938** F. Krischen, *Die griechische Stadt*. Wiederherstellungen (Berlin) pl. 39 (view of Magnesia Temple of Artemis by H. Horn under Krischen’s direction).
- **Ferri 1960** S. Ferri, *Vitravio. Architettura, dai libri I-VII* (Rome), especially 108-11 and 272 (on *asperitas*).
- **Hermogenes 1990** W. Hoepfner and E.-L. Schwandner (edd.), *Hermogenes und die hochhellenistische Architektur* (Mainz).

\(^1\) References to Vitruvius are to the standard edition and commentary in the *Les Belles Lettres* series (Coll. Budé) with multiple authors: *Vitruve de l’architecture. Livres I-X* (Paris 1969-2009); for an updated English edition, with exceptional visual explanations, see I. Rowland and T. N. Howe, *Vitruvius. Ten books on architecture* (Cambridge 1999). Other than the two references to *asperitas* in a figurative sense considered above, the term appears in a literal sense at Vitr. 2.3.1 and 2.4.1, both referring to the ‘coarse’ granularity of sand.