

CAPUT II – VITRUVIAN MAN

...de deorum immortalium aedibus sacris dicam et, uti oporteat, perscriptas exponam
...I will speak of the temples of the Gods and will set them out in detail in a proper manner
Vitruvius. Liber Tertius. Preface

Classical civilization looks upon the human body as the *measure* of beauty

Vitruvius admires the Greek temple. The Grecian temple is designed and constructed in accordance with set mathematical proportions. The proportions are determined either by the lower diameter of the column or by the dimensions of the foundational level. Where required, optical refinements lightened the straight line of the set square. The Greek temple is the summit of the built presence. The aim harmonizes form of all architectural elements, aesthetic perfection and refinement. The Greek temple is also painted; bright reds and blues contrasted with white building stone or stucco. Temples are public statements, honouring a deity or commemorating an event. They are *jewels* of the ideal

Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agrestic Latio, *Conquered Greece took captive her savage conqueror and brought her arts into rustic Latium*, is courtesy of *Quintus Horatius Flaccus*, also known as *Horace*. But the Romans flip the quote, for the Greek temple is an opportunity

The Roman temple is the actual place of worship. For the Greeks, the temple is where the divinity's spirit may be present. And, as Rome expands; other gods are incorporated. Polytheism is political. The temple is usually freestanding, viewed from all sides. All measurements are set proportions. Across the Roman Empire, even the smallest town has its forum, complete with a prominent temple. Roman temples are always wealth and power, they are also Imperial commitment and control

Vitruvius, in his thesis, *de Architectura*, cites three prerequisites of architecture: *firmitas*, *firmitess*; *utilitas*, *commodity*; and *venustas*, *delight*, all of which require the architect to be skilled with learning and knowledge. To these prerequisites he identifies six principles of design: *ordinatio*, *order*; *dispositio*, *arrangement*; *symmetria*, *symmetry*; *decor*, *propriety*; *distributio*, *economy*; and *eurythmia*, *proportion*. Of the six principles, *eurythmia* interrelates and supports all the other factors in geometrical forms and arithmetical ratios

symmetria is cited in our era as *symmetry*. In antiquity, the noun's sense was closely related to the understanding of *mathematical harmony* or *measurable proportions*. Vitruvius in his thesis equated the human body to the *golden ratio*:

The *golden ratio*, also known as the *golden number*, the *golden proportion* or the *divine proportion*; being a ratio between two numbers that equals approximately 1.618. It is usually written in Greek as the letter *Phi*, Φ ϕ

Vitruvius describes and associates the *human body* to the *golden ratio*. The principles of measurement: the *digit*, *foot*, and *cubit* are from the dimensions of the Vitruvian Man. Specifically, Vitruvius cites the man's total height of 6 feet and each part of the body takes a different ratio therefrom, the *face* is about 1/10 of the total height, the *head* is 1/8 the total height, and so forth. Vitruvius cites these ratios to prove the composition of Classical orders of architecture mimic's the human body, therein he associates the *corpus hominis* with aesthetic harmony. Here below is the described Vitruvian Man

Similiter vero sacrarum aedium membra ad
universam totius magnitudinis summam ex partibus
singulis convenientissimum debent habere
commensus responsum. Item corporis centrum
medium naturaliter est umbilicus. Namque si homo
conlocatus fuerit supinus manibus et pedibus pansis
circinique conlocatum centrum in umbilico eius,
circumagendo rotundationem utrarumque manuum et
pedum digiti linea tangentur. Non mins quemadmodum
schema rotundationis in corpore efficitur, item quadra-

ta designatio in eo inveniatur. Nam si a pedibus imis ad
summum caput mensum erit eaque mensura relata
fuerit ad manus pansas, inveniatur eadem latitudo uti
altitudo, quemadmodum areae quae ad normam sunt
quadratae. Ergo si ita natura conposuit corpus hominis,
uti proportionibus membra ad summam figurationem
eius respondeant, cum causa constituisse videntur
antiqui, ut etiam in operum perfectionibus singulorum
membrorum ad universam figurae speciem habeant
commensus exactionem

We now travel from ancient Rome to the Italian Renaissance...

Leonardo da Vinci, circa 1490 CE, on reading the work *de Architectura* is inspired by the pen-portrait of man within the context of being in *mathematical harmony* or *measurable proportions* with the universe. Accordingly, da Vinci using the *golden ratio* draws a man in two superimposed positions within a circle and a square to symbolize the secular and the sacred

...proportionibus et symmetris separatae atque universae convenientes que efficerentur eorum distributions
...proportion and symmetry, their several and general distribution is rendered congruous

Vitruvian Man is in harmony with the universe