Vitruvius
De Architectura
(ca. 33-14 BC)

Book III: Chapter 1

1. The design of Temples depends on symmetry, the rules of which Architects should be most careful to observe. Symmetry arises from proportion, which the Greeks call *ajnalogiva*. Proportion is a due adjustment of the size of the different parts to each other and to the whole; on this proper adjustment symmetry depends. Hence no building can be said to be well designed which wants symmetry and proportion. In truth they are as necessary to the beauty of a building as to that of a well formed human figure, which nature has so fashioned, that in the face, from the chin to the top of the forehead, or to the roots of the hair, is a tenth part of the height of the whole body. From the chin to the crown of the head is an eighth part of the whole height, and from the nape of the neck to the crown of the head the same. From the upper part of the breast to the roots of the hair a sixth; to the crown of the head a fourth. A third part of the height of the face is equal to that from the chin to under side of the nostrils, and thence to the middle of the eyebrows the same; from the last to the roots of the hair, where the forehead ends, the remaining third part. The length of the foot is a sixth part of the height of the body. The fore-arm a fourth part. The width of the breast a fourth part. Similarly have other members their due proportions, by attention to which the ancient Painters and Sculptors obtained so much reputation.

4. If Nature, therefore, has made the human body so that the different members of it are measures of the whole, so the ancients have, with great propriety, determined that in all perfect works, each part should be some proportional part of the whole; and since they direct, that this be observed in all works, it must be most strictly attended to in temples of the gods, wherein the faults as well as the beauties remain to the end of time.

Book IV: Chapter 1

6. As [*the Dorian people*] wished to erect this temple with columns, and had not a knowledge of the proper proportions of them, nor knew the way in which they ought to be constructed, so as at the same time to be both fit to carry the superincumbent weight, and to produce a beautiful effect, they measured a man's foot, and finding its length the sixth part of his height, they gave the column a similar proportion, that is, they made its height, including the capital, six times the thickness of the shaft, measured at the base. Thus the Doric order obtained its proportion, its strength, and its beauty, from the human figure.

7. With a similar feeling they afterwards built the temple of Diana. But in that, seeking a new proportion, they used the female figure as the standard: and for the purpose of producing a more lofty effect, they first made it eight times its thickness in height. Under it they placed a base, after the manner of a shoe to the foot; they also added volutes to its capital, like graceful curling hair hanging on each side, and the front they ornamented with cymatia and festoons in the place of hair. On the shafts they sunk channels, which bear a resemblance to the folds of a matronly garment. Thus two orders were invented, one of a masculine character, without ornament, the other bearing a character which resembled the delicacy, ornament, and proportion of a female.

8. The successors of these people, improving in taste, and preferring a more slender proportion, assigned seven diameters to the height of the Doric column, and eight and a half to the Ionic. That species, of which the Ionians were the inventors, has received the appellation of Ionic. The third species, which is called Corinthian, resembles in its character, the graceful elegant appearance of a virgin, in whom, from her tender age, the limbs are of a more delicate form, and whose ornaments should be unobtrusive.

9. The invention of the capital of this order is said to be founded on the following occurrence. A Corinthian virgin, of marriageable age, fell victim to a violent disorder. After her interment, her nurse, collecting in a basket those articles to which she had shown a partiality when alive, carried them to her tomb, and placed a tile on the basket for the longer preservation of its contents. The basket was accidentally placed on the root of an acanthus plant, which, pressed by the weight, shot forth, towards spring, its stems and large foliage, and in the course of its growth reached the angles of the tile, and thus formed volutes at the extremities.

10. Callimachus, who, for is great ingenuity and taste was called by the Athenians Catatechnos, happening at this time to pass by the tomb, observed the basket, and the delicacy of the foliage which surrounded it. Pleased with the form and novelty of the combination, he constructed from the hint thus afforded, columns of this species in the country about Corinth, and arranged its proportions, determining their proper measures by perfect rules.