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Sphere and Cross: Vitruvian Reflections on the Pantheon Type

The following reflections were occasioned by an aspect of the Vitruvian account of the origin of architecture that deserves more attention: when Vitruvius likens his first builders to wild beasts, he also insists on what makes them different. This, to be sure, can hardly surprise us, but I do find it surprising that what he mentions in the first place is not their extraordinary ability to use their hands and fingers, or their capacity to imitate, learn from, and improve on what they observe, but their "not being obliged to walk with faces to the ground, but upright and gazing upon the splendour of the starry firmament."[1] How are we to understand this remark, which links human verticality to the firmament? It brings to mind the often told tale of Thales who, looking up at the stars, fell into a well, to be ridiculed by that pretty Thracian servant girl for whom he did not have any eyes. What did the stars matter to Thales? What do they matter to us earthlings? What does the sight of a splendor that the ancients thought essentially inaccessible, a permanent order open only to eye and spirit, beyond human reach, what does this vision of cosmic permanence have to do with the origin of building?

I want to underscore the verticality of humans in Vitruvius's account. To be sure, in sleep and death, we return to earth-bound horizontality. Such horizontality, however, does not circumscribe our being. Unlike the other animals, we are not obliged by our bodies "to walk with faces to the ground." But if the human animal is thus free to look up to the firmament, such freedom is more than a gift of the upright body: "Nature had not only endowed the human race with senses like the rest of the animals, but had also equipped their minds with the powers of thought and understanding, thus putting all other animals under their sway."[2] The human body's verticality signifies spirit.

Such verticality also possesses a temporal significance. When Vitruvius links humans with the upward gaze, he understands them as beings able to rise and look up out of the

horizontal temporal condition that circumscribes the lives of the other animals to the seemingly ageless order of the firmament. He thus understands human beings as subjected to time and death by their earth-bound bodies, yet led by their ability to look up to the firmament to dream of immortality, understands the human body in the image of the cross, as the intersection of time and eternity.

Did the sublime spectacle of the starry sky, which the ancients thought to be a perfect sphere, awaken the spirit sleeping in Vitruvius's proto-humans, somewhat as the snake's promise, "You will be like God," opened the eyes of Adam and Eve? Did it awaken them at the same time to their own subjection to time, to their mortality, even as it allowed them to glimpse in the heaven's unchanging order possibilities of a more perfect, more spiritual dwelling? Is human building to carry something of this promise into this death-shadowed world? Or did Vitruvius also associate "the splendour of the starry firmament" with the light- and life-granting sun, the hearth of the cosmos, being represented by the warmth-giving hearth of his primitive home? This much at any rate seems clear: by linking the origin of the first house to the awe-inspiring sight of the inaccessible unchanging order of the sky, Vitruvius places human building between animal shelter and the divinely ordered cosmos, even as he invites us to understand human dwelling as an intersection of animal horizontality and divine verticality.

In the introduction to Book II, Vitruvius disclaims originality for his account of the origin of building, acknowledging, without naming, his debt to "those writers who have devoted treatises to the origins of civilization and the investigation of inventions."[3] The most important of these would appear to have been Cicero's teacher, the Stoic Posidonius.[4] Vitruvius's description of the human being as the being who looks up to the firmament is quite in keeping with the Greek understanding of the human being as *zoon logon echon,* which becomes the Latin *animal rationale.* Possessing reason, the *erecti homines* are not bound to their particular places, as are the *prona animalia.* Standing up and gazing at the firmament, admiring its order, they rise above their natural subjection to the power of place. In the *Phaedrus* Plato thus attributes wings to the soul, which are to carry it to its true home where the gods dwell. Related is the biblical understanding of humans as beings who, created in the image of God, look up to God. Calvin thus suggests that reason, intelligence, prudence, and judgment are given to us not just so that we might govern our lives on earth, but that we might transcend these lives even unto God and eternal blessedness, while Zwingli links our humanity to our ability to look up to God and his divine, timeless word.[5] The human animal transcends and measures himself by a timeless logos. Every attempt to speak the truth is witness to such self-transcendence, for when I claim truth for what I have to say, I claim more than that this is how I now happen to see some matter: the truth I claim

is in principle open to all. And even if the truth should ever elude us human knowers, even if Simonides should prove right and truth belong to God alone, the mere attempt to speak the truth is sufficient to show that we are not bound by the body and the accident of its spatial and temporal location, that we do indeed look up to and measure ourselves by a timeless logos, figured by the firmament. Building too should be informed by such a logos, and so we find Vitruvius insisting on symmetry and harmony, prefigured by both the divinely ordered cosmos and the similarly ordered body of the well-shaped human being.

And yet the reference to the biblical understanding of human being as created in the image of God is accompanied by a warning: the snake's promise suggests that human verticality carries with it the danger that, by claiming a higher place, a permanence and plenitude denied to them, human beings, like the proud, spherical proto-humans of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium,* lose their proper perfection and place and instead of rising beyond their mortal condition become less than they were. Gazing at the stars, Thales thus fell into a well, while Icarus, lured by the splendor of the sun, flew high above the earth, only to fall and perish by that very splendor he pursued: *cadet impostor dum super astra vehit.*[6]

With such warnings in mind, let me return to Vitruvius. Were the souls of his first builders comforted by the firmament, as their bodies were comforted by the warmth of the fire that first frightened them? But what promise does such cosmic order, such deathless beauty, hold for us embodied and therefore ephemeral mortals? Will we not inevitably run out of time, even though sun, moon, and stars will continue to rise and set long after we are gone? Can we take comfort from such repetition, from the sun's daily and annual course, from the ever-repeating cycles of nature, from the return of the seasons, from sunrise and sunset, ebb and tide? Does such unending repetition not only serve to make conspicuous what separates our existence, stretched out between birth and death, from the endless circling of a world that seems indifferent to our desires? This difficult-to-bear gap that separates our lifetime from world time seems to condemn our dwelling on earth to insignificance?[7] Does gazing "upon the splendour of the starry firmament" help us to accept ourselves as we are: embodied, vulnerable, and mortal? Will it not rather make it more difficult for us to take pleasure in whatever reminds us of the passing of time? Pleasure in the gifts of the earth? In ourselves? Or does it call us, like Plato's *Phaedrus,* to a transfigured, winged dwelling and to a similarly transfigured spiritual architecture that, unburdened by gravity, answers to the vertical dimension of our being? A spherical architecture perhaps?

The Roman Pantheon, whose one great eye opens its body to the starry firmament, invites interpretation as an attempt to raise this Vitruvian insight into the verticality of human being to the level of great architecture. Not that the builders of the Pantheon neglected

the horizontal whose significance Vitruvius so clearly recognized. Present in the spine that joins the rotunda's entrance to its apse, such horizontality must have been far more assertive when the journey to and into the interior still led through a propylon, followed by a long colonnaded court, up five steps to the portico and into the domed cylinder, where its forward thrust was quieted by the calm verticality of the round interior: "The seamless circles around and above the great interior described both the cosmos and Roman rule. The role of giving the Pantheon life was assigned to the sun, the master planet. . . . Because of its form the Pantheon is an activated, light-drenched place, expanding and revolving, visibly connected with the heavens through its cyclopic eye."[8]

There is something reassuring about this sunlike eye, about the vertical axis thus established, a would-be *axis mundi* that seems to proclaim that our journey has ended, that we have arrived at the world's center. We want to rest in this space, in this ageless, domed ring, which promises security and peace.

It is part of the sublimity of this space that its center should be inaccessible to us. Hardly a space in which embodied mortals feel easily at home, this is a sacred space that does not seem to want to open itself to the human world beyond. Here verticality and geometric order triumph over horizontality and the often chaotic everyday in a way that fails to do justice to the requirements of human dwelling—not a criticism, to be sure, of a building meant first of all to celebrate the imperial power of Rome and its gods. The world in which we get born, work, love, and die is left behind, shut out by this space, animated by the light entering from above and transfigured by the time-defying power of the sphere inscribed into this space.

More than the building itself, it is precisely the Pantheon's spherical soul, so indifferent to our frail flesh, that offers itself as a sublime symbol to those wanting to celebrate the boundless freedom and immortality of the human spirit, capable of a self-elevation that leaves the body and thus the whole human being far behind. It is therefore only to be expected that spherical buildings in the image of the Pantheon should have become an object of special concern for the architects of the Enlightenment, in this age when faith in the incarnation and bodily resurrection was increasingly being called into question and an abstract immortality had to offer ersatz for the concrete immortality promised to the Christian. As Sergio Villari observes, Enlightenment "architects seemed almost obsessed by the sphere's solemn and cathartic form. Every one of them planned at least one building in such a form: during little more than a decade, from 1785 to the last years of the century, more than ten such spherical buildings may be counted. Neoclassical architects believed they saw in the sphere, an ancient symbol of eternity and perfection, the ineffable presence

of the sublime."[9] In such utopian designs, the Pantheon's spherical soul leaves behind its earth-bound body.

Best known of these is Claude Nicolas Ledoux's experimental design of a spherical house for the agricultural guards of Maupertuis. It belongs with the enthusiasm that then greeted the first balloons, which promised a godlike freedom from the tyranny of place, being capable of flying across boundaries and whatever false walls divided human beings from one another.[10] Heralds of a freer, more genuinely humane world, "these balls of air are the first invention linked to the concept of world revolution. The balloon rises into the sky—as a sign that reason on earth is extending its sway. Such a revolution has this subjective aspect that human beings want to find themselves, want to give themselves a human countenance. This subjectivity is the divinity of religions. The attack on the latter is the greatest presumption and thus liberation. The airship is a practical presumption of that sort."[11]

Ledoux's spherical house is another such practical, or rather impractical, presumption, it too the sign of a spiritual revolution of which we moderns are the uneasy heirs, a revolution that would liberate the human subject from its subjection to the body—would liberate human beings from themselves?—just as it would liberate architecture from the body of building. Anthony Vidler calls attention to the way Ledoux's sphere,

> which rests lightly on the ground, supported by buttresses that serve as bridges to the main entrances, is triangulated between, on the left, a rude shed of branches and leaves—the traditional shelter of shepherds—and, on the far horizon, the rising sun, whose rays bathe the scene in bucolic splendor. The original "type" of the rural hut is here mediated through the "type" or origin of nature into a symbolic form of universal guardianship.[12]

But *mediation* is hardly the right word. This figure of solar plenitude refuses to engage the landscape. Quite the contrary, it is protected from it by its moat, which also prevents it from rolling. The house here becomes a ball that wants to roll, perhaps even a balloon that wants to rise into the air—a figure of an altogether new freedom.[13]

The reference to the Pantheon is more evident in Vaudoyer's appropriately named House of a Cosmopolite (1785), another spherical design marking the threshold of the modern age. This is a house for someone at home everywhere and therefore nowhere, a sphere that refuses even to touch the earth—a sublime house perhaps, home for some disembodied, eternal spirit, but hardly a home for mortals. Once again the Enlightenment's enthusiastic reception of what it experienced as the sublime invention of the balloon comes

to mind; Vaudoyer's design dates from 1785 and thus follows by just two years Montgolfier's first balloon flight, a widely celebrated symbol of the spirit's victory over humanity's gravity-burdened, earth-bound existence.

The sphere, this "image of perfection,"[14] presents itself as a natural symbol of such a victory. When Ledoux conceives his cemetery at Chaux in the image of the Pantheon but accentuates the power of the sphere, he provides an enlightened age with a striking image of immortality. Related is Boullée's project for a cenotaph for Newton. Boullée is right to invoke the sublime, which has long been linked to a movement of self-transcendence that leaves behind the body and its bonds: "Sublime mind! Prodigious and profound genius! Divine being! Newton! Deign to accept the homage of my feeble talents! Ah! If I dare to make it public, it is because I am persuaded that I have surpassed myself in the project which I shall discuss. . . . By using your divine system, Newton, to create the sepulchral lamp that lights thy tomb, it seems that I have made myself sublime."[15] It seems only fitting that this sublime creation should be a tomb.

Boullée begins by opposing his feeble talents to Newton's divine genius, where once again divinity means subjectivity that has left behind its imprisonment in base matter. Such a leave taking or self-elevation is presupposed by the new science and its ideal of objectivity: the scientific spirit and the turn to the sublime belong together. In a flight of spirit, Newton thus raises himself beyond the earth in order to "define," godlike, its shape. In the image of this scientifically defined earth, Boullée designs his cenotaph, enveloping, as he puts it, Newton within his discovery and thus within his own self, enveloping spirit within spirit, for "how can I find outside you anything worthy of you?"[16] It is thus Newton's own spirit, which is also the spirit of the new science—indeed of the Enlightenment, of the dawning modern world—that uses the architect to build Newton his proper home, or rather sepulchre.

After this sublime rhetorical flight, we, like Icarus, are brought down to earth, and not to that earth transfigured by reason into a sphere Boullée wanted to represent, but to soil and dirt. We are forced to descend by the architect's decision to surround his "sepulchre in the shape of the earth . . . with flowers and cypress trees." Flowers and trees have to sink their roots into the dark, moist earth, and this is now no longer that earth spirit is able to define and comprehend, but a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* that resists understanding.

Small wonder that Boullée himself "experienced a certain dissatisfaction that made me want to include inside the tomb ideas that I thought it would be impossible to include, because I could scarcely glimpse how it could be possible."[17] Did Newton's vast genius not embrace the entire universe? If the only fitting monument to Newton would have to envelop him within his own discovery, would such a monument not have to represent that universe

whose laws Newton discovered rather than just the earth: "I wanted to give Newton that immortal resting place, the Heavens."[18] Boullée thus chose to transform the interior of his sphere into a "perfect reproduction" of the starry sky, leaving the spectator alone with its immensity and the tomb as the only material object. But did Newton and, inspired by his achievement, Boullée not prove that the human spirit can take the measure of such immensity? Here lies the key to the Enlightenment's understanding of the healing power of the sublime: the embodied self will end in some grave; but what it experiences as a threatening abyss, the terror of endless time and infinite space that threatens to reduce to insignificance the limited life span given to each human being, becomes a source of delight once human beings learn to recognize the spirit's power of flight, learn to recognize themselves as beings of reason. Like the Tower of Babel, Boullée's monument too would found a community, one presided over by a new divinity, personified by Newton. This then is the worldwide community of all human beings who recognize that they are joined by reason, a reason that knows that the universal is higher than the particular and raises us above the body-centered selfishness that normally divides us.

But once more Boullée's design brings us down to earth. Immense as Boullée meant his creation to be, the magic of the starry sky within the sphere is unmasked as no more than a remarkable piece of theater by the ingenious architecture meant to make it possible, by the earth on which this cenotaph stands, by the sky above—and by the silent paper that supports all this. Representation of a representation of an appearance of the cosmos and thus three times removed from reality, Boullée's starry sky is in fact much more a representation of the firmament of ancient cosmology, of the closed world of the ancients, than of the infinite universe of the moderns. His sphere encloses only an inevitably finite artistic representation of the boundless cosmos and thus invites thoughts that Newton too might have replaced nature with an artifact, might have taken the measure only of a human representation of nature—thoughts that return us to the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* of the infinite other, the earth, the mystery of death, the terror of time, which is the other side of the absorbing mystery of our individuality. Boullée's sublime design leaves us alone with ourselves, even as we recognize ourselves to be members of the human community. But this community remains altogether abstract, offering no shelter to mortals.

The simple geometry of the spherical buildings designed by the architects of the Enlightenment seems to deny gravity. The flight of spirit here leaves the body behind. In a design like Ledoux's House for the Agricultural Guards, the architect's vision is thus allowed to outstrip the capabilities of the builder, which did not prevent the establishment of an influential paradigm: born of modernist self-assertion, the ideal of a spiritual, earth- and body-defying architecture was to inspire much subsequent architecture. How many

modern buildings look as if they could be stood on their heads, ready to roll, to move, even to fly?

The Enlightenment's enthusiastic reception of the first balloons, Le Corbusier's love affair with the airplane, and Tatlin's preoccupation with his flying machine, the Letatlin, belong together. They all dreamed of an Icarian, birdlike dwelling, of an architecture for an ideally disembodied, ghostly humanity. Modernism is ushered in by a return of the old Gnostic dream of escaping the all-too-material prison that is our body, of flying into that boundless openness demanded by our godlike freedom.

It was a version of that dream that let van Doesburg demand of architecture "a floating aspect (insofar as this is possible from a constructional standpoint—this is the problem for the engineer!) which operates, as it were, in opposition to natural gravity."[19] The "as it were" is telling: such opposition can be no more than an appearance. "No matter how it is combined, matter is always subject to gravity. It makes no essential difference whether architecture employs load and support, tension and compression construction, or no construction at all."[20] The painter here has an advantage. In his counter-constructions, van Doesburg thus floats planar surfaces in an indefinite space, recalling Malevich's slightly earlier suprematist compositions, which similarly float geometric shapes on a white background that figures the infinite void. Van Doesburg, to be sure, was unwilling to pursue such dreams only as a painter; he wanted to see them realized in the world as architecture. And did not the new technology lead the way toward such realization? "Through modern technique material is transformed, *denaturalized.* The forms which thereby arise lack the rustic character of antique forms. Upon this denaturalization or, better, *transnaturalization,* the style of our age is largely based."[21] In structures like Rietveld's Schroeder House (1924), such hopes for a truly modern, denaturalized architecture that would answer to human beings that had finally learned to master the earth and in the process become themselves denaturalized begin to find their realization.

At first glance such designs may seem to have little to do with the spheres of such Enlightenment architects as Ledoux, Boullée, Vaudoyer, Lequeu, or Sobre. The sphere is a simple geometric solid, while van Doesburg will have nothing to do with such solidity: "The new architecture is *anti-cubic;* that is to say, it does not attempt to fit all the functional space cells together in a closed cube, but projects functional space cells (as well as overhanging surfaces, balconies, etc.) centrifugally from the center of the cube outwards. Thus height, breadth, and depth plus time gain an entirely new plastic expression."[22] More important is the way this architecture too emphasizes simple geometric forms, invites an inversion of up and down, and appears to deny gravity.

Of a piece with such attempts to elide the appearance of gravity are attempts to elide every appearance of the hand:

> the best handwork is that which betrays nothing of handwork. this perfection is dependent upon our environment: and absolute purity, a constant light, a clear atmosphere, etc. are the qualities of our environment which become qualities of the work. your studio must be like a glass bell-jar or hollow crystal. you yourself must be white. the palette must be of glass. your brush sharp, square and hard, always free from dust and pure as a surgical instrument. there certainly is more to learn from medical laboratories than from artists' studios: the latter are cages smelling of sick monkeys.
>
> your studio must have the cold atmosphere of the mountains at an altitude of ten thousand feet, the eternal snows must lie there. cold kills the microbes.[23]

In van Doesburg's sterile cold studio, we breathe the air of that sublime Platonism that found such provocative expression in these words spoken by Socrates in the *Philebus:*

> I do not mean by beauty of form such beauty as that of animals or pictures, which the many would suppose to be my meaning; but says the argument, understand me to mean straight lines and circles, and the plane or solid figures, which are formed by turning lathes and rulers and measures of angles—for these I affirm to be not only relatively beautiful, like other things, but they are eternally or absolutely beautiful, and they have peculiar pleasures, quite unlike the pleasures of scratching. And there are colors, which are of the same character, and have similar pleasures; now do you understand my meaning?[24]

Plato's Socrates already disliked the hand-made look: too present here were body, decay, death. The spirit demands a spiritual home. And what testifies better to the death-defying victory of spirit over matter than the sphere? Should architecture then not look to the sphere and carry something of its ageless promise into our imperfect, contaminated world? It is therefore not surprising that in the very beginning of his essay, Boullée should chide Vitruvius, who is accused of having been familiar only with "the technical side of architecture."[25] Indeed, had Vitruvius made more of that remark that has his primitive builders look up to the sphere of the firmament, he might have recognized the poetry that according to Boullée alone lifts building to the level of art and makes it architecture. Refusing to define architecture as the art of building, Boullée insists instead that it is first of all a product of the mind, and mind seeks order and perfection. In the sphere, he too finds

the natural image of perfection: "It combines strict symmetry with the most perfect regularity and the greatest possible variety; its form is developed to the fullest extent and is the simplest that exists; its shape is outlined by the most agreeable contour and, finally, the light effects that it produces are so beautifully graduated that they could not possibly be softer, more agreeable, or more varied. These unique advantages, which the sphere derives from nature, have an immeasurable hold over our senses."[26] "Nature" here has nothing to do with mud and excrement. This is a "denaturalized nature," the kind of nature figured by the firmament. It is this nature Boullée would have the architect study. In its image he would have him build.

The paradigm of such architecture, the Pantheon, often has been called sublime; the sublime again has long been linked to a sense of not feeling at home in the world. Sublimity in architecture and the requirements of dwelling do not easily go together. Inevitably sublime architecture turns a cold shoulder to the body and its requirements. A spherical home like Ledoux's House for the Agricultural Guards seems almost a contradiction in terms.

The Roman Pantheon, to be sure, while it may have a spherical soul, has a body that very much belongs to the earth. It does not want to roll or fly, but to hold its place, while opening itself to the sky. Its hemispherical dome rests firmly on a cylinder of the same radius, recalling a long tradition of round earth-bound grave monuments that includes the chambered Neolithic tomb in Newgrange, Ireland, and the so-called Tomb of Agamemnon in Mycenae. All of these are much less accomplished works of architecture. The Pantheon spiritualizes this tradition, transfigures it by virtue of the power of geometry even as it asserts more strongly the power of the vertical against that of the horizontal. But precisely this transfiguration threatens to make us strangers in this divine space: we would have to be able to fly to place ourselves at its center. The clarity of the geometrical idea, appropriate to a representation of cosmic order, here threatens to triumph over a fuller humanity. This is no criticism: this is, after all, not a house in which embodied mortals are to find shelter, but a temple for all the gods, and thus no god in particular, in keeping with the cosmopolitan and at bottom secular, proto-modern religiosity of Hadrian's Rome.

Still, the living body seems to have little place inside the Pantheon, and it is hardly surprising that its most immediate successors should have been houses for the dead, such as the mausoleums of Diocletian and Maxentius. The Pantheon's earth-bound geometry speaks not only of eternity but also of death. If its oculus represents the sun, it interprets it as a source of light rather than of life. It seems only fitting that the Pantheon should face north.

Vitruvius himself, however, despite my suggestion that the Pantheon raises his insight into the verticality of human being to the level of great architecture, had a rather different idea about how temples should be oriented:

> The quarter toward which temples of the immortal gods ought to face is to be determined on the principle that, if there is no reason to hinder and the choice is free, the temple and the statue placed in the cella should face the western quarter of the sky. This will enable those who approach the altar with offerings or sacrifices to face the direction of the sunrise in facing the statue in the temple, and thus those undertaking vows look toward the quarter from which the sun comes forth, and likewise the statues appear to be coming forth out of the east to look upon them as they pray and sacrifice.[27]

More important to us humans than the sun above is the rising sun, which presents itself as a symbol of the ever repeating victory of the life-giving power of light over the forces of darkness: *ex oriente lux*. Compare the function of sunlight in the Pantheon with its function in the chambered tomb at Newgrange, where "the entrance is so arranged that at the winter solstice the rising sun shines through a specially formed aperture, down to the entrance passage and into the burial chamber at the heart of the mound." Here "it is clear that we are looking at more than just a burial place."[28] This tomb is not just a place of death, but expresses a conviction that darkness will not have the last word, that life on earth will triumph over death. Important here is the way the light of the midwinter sun promises renewed warmth and life. Light is tied to the gift of life. It is the severance of this tie that makes the Pantheon a less than happy space. Its sublime, spiritualized light does have the power of transporting us, as our everyday cares and concerns are bracketed. In time we are given a fleeting deliverance from the burden of time, a semblance of redemption. And so understood, it figures the redemptive power of much great art, which provides relief from the burden of life. The price exacted for such relief is our engagement in the world: we cease to really live. Such sublime art is born of an inability to forgive ourselves and accept our essential temporality. And so understood, the Pantheon's cold beauty, this symbol of eternal plenitude and spiritual self-transcendence, also figures death.

As Vitruvius knew so well, architecture should be linked not to eternity and death but to life, should allow mortals to find shelter. In conclusion, I return to the upright posture of Vitruvius's first builders that raises them above the ground they share with the other animals. Contemplating the firmament, they must not only have been challenged by its unaging perfection, but also been put in their place. Unlike the immortal gods, these images of a transfigured, transnaturalized humanity, mortals can maintain their verticality only

with effort; their bodies belong to the earth, to which they return in sleep and in death. Full self-affirmation demands an affirmation of this twofold belonging that is never without tension. But the tension is difficult to bear and again and again tempts us with dreams of a more perfect dwelling, of buildings in the image of the sphere. Yet to affirm ourselves as the mortals we are, we have to affirm not only that vertical dimension of our being that links us to a timeless logos, but also that horizontal dimension that binds us to the earth and into time. To build houses fit for mortals, we must resist the temptations of the sublime, look up to the spherical firmament and what it figures, but also ahead and down; we must learn to make room for vertical and horizontal, for the cross.