# Structures and Sequences of Spaces ${ }^{1}$ 

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An architecture is read by means of the diverse aspects of its figure, that is, in the terms in which it is expressed: chiaroscuro, constructive fabric, plasticity, structure of the internal spaces, density and quality of the materials, geometrical relations of the surfaces and others more remote, such as color, which may from time to time be asserted according to the ineffable laws of resonance. Every one of these terms has such a conjunction with the others that one cannot easily remain satisfied with it alone and only in its terms traverse the building, in that vivid, unstable and oscillating but always identical act, which is the vision of an architecture.

All the facts, and, I would say, all the metaphysical entities which compose it, intervene in our colloquies with an architecture, each one chanting in its own tongue, whether of light or of weight or of scale or of matter, or of empty space, now calling the others, now repeating them and now contrasting with them, with an ever changeable expressive concatenation like light and men, but with a final congruence, an immutable destiny which is then the created order of their relations, the structure of the work. Naturally, if in an architecture each expressive aspect, every aspect of its figure is coordinately bound to the others, for instance, the tissue of the chiaroscuro to the plastic organism or to the apparent organism of the construction, it would seem permissible as a basis for the critical analysis of a work to take one of these aspects in abstraction from the others, and consequently conduct on that basis reasonings valid for the entire architectural reality. It may seem allowable, but in fact the results of such a critical process are occasionally excellent as they are often disastrous. It suffices to think of the exact points and also the gross errors criticism has perpetrated, in disserting on pictorial or plastic language, or on the constructive organism of a work. Certainly, the one or the other result depends on the fineness of analysis with which the chosen aspect is evaluated, but above all on one's being aware or not that one is working with the symbol of a terribly much more complex reality. However, even these unilateral critical soundings do sometimes finish by flourishing that famous integral reading of the work, whatever may have been their starting point.

There is, however, one expressive aspect which resumes the architectural fact with such notable latitude that it seems it
could be taken with greater tranquility than the others, even in isolation: I mean the internal and empty space of an architecture. Indeed, it is enough to observe that the other expressive terms-chiaroscuro, plasticity, density of material, construction-are each formal or intellectual aspects of the material in its physical concreteness that is put into play in an architecture, and they thus form a "group" of a certain homogeneity, and in their complex are strongly representative. Now it is known that the empty space within an architecture is exactly counterposed to this "group" as its mirror, symmetrical and negative value, like a true negative matrix, and as such is capable of resuming both itself and its opposite terms. Especially where the internal space is the principal or even the direct reason for the birth of the fabric, as it is for most, it can be defined as the richest seed, mirror, and symbol of the entire architectural reality.

This was very clear to the ancients; for centuries, from the Roman to the Romanesque, from the Gothic to Brunelleschi, from Bramante to Guarini, the conquest and resolution of internal spaces coincide with the conquests and with the very history of architecture itself. Modern criticism has many times pointed to internal spatiality as the determinative, resumptive and uniquely directive (and in this it is in error) aspect of architecture. It is sufficient here to think of Friedrich Ostendorf, Schmarsow and the limpid Brinkmann; more recently, it has been Bruno Zevi's merit to declare the question neatly, in spite of the nebulosity of much recent architectural criticism, navigating most uncertainly between opposite points of view. It is also true that critical enunciations on internal stereometry have never been deepened into a true analytical research, neither as pure theory nor as philological analysis of determined works of architecture.

The bonds between the internal space and the other elements of an architecture are infinite and very rigid; it is enough here to recall that an internal space has, as surface limits, that integument on which are condensed and legible the facts and energies which consent to it, and whose existence the space in its turn generates. But the internal volumes have a concrete presence on their own account, independently of the figure and corposity of the material embracing them, as though they were formed of a rarified substance lacking in
energy but most sensitive to its reception. They have, I repeat, qualities of their own, of which four are defined: the dimension, understood as quantity of absolute volume; the density, depending on the quantity and distribution of permeating light; and the pressure, or energetic charge, according to the more or less incumbent proximity at every point of the space of the bounding constructive masses, and of the ideal energies they set free: a quality, this, comparable to the pressure in a moving fluid, varying in function of the obstacles and restrictions it encounters, or even comparable to the field potential in a space, in virtue of the electric charges influencing it.

But in these short essays, it is not my intention either to sound the bonds and the order between an internal space and the entire work of architecture, nor to analyze in a space considered in isolation the permutations of combinations possible among the four qualities mentioned; still less to seek from among these combinations those privileged for presumed expressive excellence. One would risk falling into that metaphysic of absolute values to which not much consistency can be attributed, just as it cannot be attributed to discussions concerning a surface more or less beautiful in itself according to its proportions. Although actually this assertion in respect of the internal volumes would seem to be contradicted by a long series of observations by writers of treatises from Vitruvius down to Alberti, Palladio, Serlio, Viola, Guarini and Milizia, who defined or clarified the geometrical relationships most appropriate to the beauty of a surrounding. It is however to be well noted that these observations did not leave the didactic ambit in which they were rightly formulated for the purpose of guiding architects of less foresight towards solutions balanced as structures and moderately secure in their formal order.

But leaving this field of researches, I want to limit the essay to the spatial unity formed by the internal volumes which compose it in a certain order, and which constitute in their succession with the changing perspective effects and in relation to the routes and times possible and necessary for viewing them, a true sequence in the actual meaning of the term. Of these volumes coordinated into unity, I mean to clarify the modality of their succession and thus the structure of their
composition; that is, their type and the reason for the differences among the volumes and their enchainment. This differential research has a fully justified logical basis, because it does not descend from absolute interpretations of the spaces, but from their comparison by means of parameters which once assumed always remain the same, exact or not as they may be. However, once having fixed the four qualities or parameters of the internal volumes, the analysis will turn solely on them. That is, we shall examine the sequences among the component volumes as they are revealed by geometric form, absolute quantity of volume, and "pressure" or energetic charge. We are alerted to the first two by intellectual routes, the second two we are aware of by their intellectual and psychological order.

If we think of the Thermae of Diocletian, of Brunelleschi's Santo Spirito, of St. Peter's, it will seem clear to us that the internal spaces of these fabrics in which the great act of architecture is summed up, an act destined for the widest number of men, should be by this their very premised universality cut into the quick of the human spirit, the more they have of the elementary and constituent. And so a study of the composition of these spaces, and the emotional trends their sequences excite in us, can perhaps bring to light certain points of that obscure law that universally guides the human spirit, thus driving great minds in the composition of such extraordinary architecture that it even moves the minds of the simplest beholder. From this, the sovereign morality of architecture comes to mind, its unique social and human example, which is that of communicating equally with all men, both humble and powerful.

Greece did not have in her architectures internal spaces of the scale and significance that the Romans promoted. The columns of the Greek temple enclosed rectangles with their blades of shadow, which seem to surround and form inviolable cells, born of the bowels of the earth. Greek architecture was an algorithm of light and also of the shade of unknown forms where the gods hid. The high plane and the luminous vault of the heavens are the marvellous extraverted spaces which the colonnade pylon of the temple supports. The Hellenic house, on the elementary framework of repose and shade for man, distributed in its domestic surroundings various densities of

light, from the obscure Oeci to the penumbra of the Peristyle and the brilliance of the Viridarium, scanned in that meter on which was to be extended for centuries the Roman and Renaissance verse of the house no less than that of the Baroque and the nineteenth century; that is, wherever a grey entrance opens onto a bright courtyard. In the penumbra of the Greek house, there flashed at every ray and reflection domestic objects or the crests of helmets, the Chlamydes and the bronzes of Alceus, like the glasses, the red hangings and the black and white pavements in Vermeer's Flemish houses.

The great spaces of architecture arise with Rome and are the magnificence of it. United with superhuman vaults, and with walls of incredible strength, instinctively breathing the indestructible military works that ruled them, they express the conscious power of a community. These sovereign spaces open up and are bound to proud theories in which the measured order seems to render sensible that clarity of mind and the consciousness of that clarity that is the majesty of the Roman people. The sequences of volumes in the basilica, and especially in the Thermae of Titus, Agrippa, Diocletian and Caracalla, must have reached unsurpassed effects by the variety of their components and the routes possible through them. On the ruins of the walls indicating these volumes, from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo, Renaissance and Baroque space was born, and with it the sense of the grandiose in the new polity of the west.

In order to evaluate in their complexity the sequences of volumes in the Thermae, it is opportune to begin observations on some more elementary sequences which can be met with in certain examples of the same Roman architecture, and in certain Renaissance constructions. Among the fabrics of the Villa Adriana, most silver mirror of all the inflections of an imperial eclecticism, interesting models can be picked out from the simplest to the most elaborate. The triple group of the Poekile entrance, square aula and circular natatorium, can be taken as an example of a sequence of volumes whose vividness and solemnity are exclusively based on differences of geometrical form between the elements of the group.

The three volumes follow one another in the natural order of traversing them: a rectangular prism with a dominant

zione taghi altri, come indice dellopera stessa e, in conseguenza al esso condurre ragionamenti validi per Tintera realta archiettonica. Sembra lecto ma il fatto i risultati di un falc processo critico sono alcune volte eccellent, come tante attre pecsimi. Basti pensare a quali punfi csatt c insicme a quali prosolami crrori e pervenuta la critica che discetta sul linguagzio pittorico o platico o anche sulforganismo costruttivo if unopera. Dipentont fi uni c pli altri risultati certamente dalla finezza di analisi con uii i- vapliato Taspetto prescelto, ma soprattutto dall'avere o non coscienza che st operat an un simbolo dit una reatia ferribimente piú complessa. Comungue anche questi approfondimenti eritici unilaterali, qualunque ne siano pli approdi, finiscono per piovare alla famosa lettura integrale delle opere
$V_{i}$ é préo un aspetto espressivo che riassume con una latitudine cosi notevole il fatto architettonico che sembra potersi assumec, anche isolatamente, con magzior tranquillitia tepli altri: inento accennare allo spazio interno e vuoto di una architetura Infati hasti osservare che alcuni fermini espressivi - curarocuro, plasticita, densia di materia, costruzione si pales fiven, na fica encrerza li moco -
 phesso fortemente rappresentativo. Ora si noti che lo spazio (1) nete a questo дruppo come valore speculare, simmetrico e neano, come mate bente ove lo apacio interno ì la ragione prineipale, olalitura
 i palesa cone il seme. lo specchio, il simbolo piú ricco dell'incra rcalta architeltoniea
Ciò fu per zli antichi chiarissimo e per scoli: dai romani ai nouanici, dai rotici al Brunelleschi, da Bramante al Gurini, la onquiva e rivoluzionc depli spazi interni coincise con le conqui te c la storia stessa lellarchitettura. Ia critica molerna ha piń volte puntato, direttamente o non, sulla spazialita interiore come appetto determinante, riasountivo, addirittura unico (e que-to is un errore) dellarehitetura: hasti qui ricordare Friedrich Ostendorf, lo Sclımaroow, il limpido Brinkmann. Piú recentemene. Bruno Zevi ha avuto il merito di dichiarare nitidamente la fuestione, pure nella nelulosita della critica architettonica di que. ti ultimi anni, navigante incertissima fra i piú oppositi caposaldi. E. anche vero però che le enunciazioni critiche sulle stercometric interne non furono mai approfondite in una vera ricerca analitica né come pura teoria né come analisi filologica su determinate opere di architettura.
I legamenti fra lo spazio interno e gli altri elementi di un'architettura sono infiniti e rigidissimi; hasti pensare che uno spazio interno ha come superficie limite quella scorza su cui si condensano e i legzono le energic e i fatti che lo consentono e lo formano e dei puali esso spazio a sua volta genera l'esistenza. Ma i volumi inerni hanno una concreta presenza di per se stessi, indipendentemente dalla fizura e corposita della materia che li rinserra, quasi he siano formati di una sostanza rarefatta priva di energie ma sensibilissima a riceverne. Hanno cioć delle qualità a loro proprie di eui, ritenzo, se ne palesano quattro: la forma geometrica, emplice e complessa the sia: la dimensione, intesa come quantità di volume assoluto: la densità, in dipendenza della quantità ctistribuzione tella luce che li permea: la "pressione " o " carica energetica $\overline{2}$, secondo la prossimita pia o meno incomhente, in ciascun punto dello spazio, delle masse costruttive liminari, elle energic ideali che da esse sprizionano. Qualita, questa, omparabile alla presione che in un fluido in movimento costante varia in dipentenza deghi ostacoli, opposizioni, rastremazioni che incontra: o anche al potenziale di uno spazio in funzione delle masse elettriche che lo influenzano.
Wa in questi brevi cenni non si intende ne approfondire i lepamenti e la loro ordinanza fra lo spazio interno e líntera opera di arehitettura né analizzare in uno spazio isolataraente considerato,

1. Tiroli. Villa Adrimna. Pianta del complesoo: A portico doppio del «Pe
cile $n, \mathrm{~B}$ nula quadra detha dei filowof., probabilmente basilicr, C nutatoria cir-
 eristiva sequensa per differense di formo, 2. 3. G. R. Piranesi. Villa dotriana. Auln quadra e muro di spina del doppio portico, acque/orti. 4. Ithn Adriann. Sequenza desli spmzi interni; portico. nula quadra absidmta E nutatario
 Presumibilit volori reali des tre spasi della sequenza, medelli. Portico dallinsresso orest, unta quadra dat passazzio di congiunzione col partica, natatorio

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longitudinal axis, cube and cylinder. The volume of the portico, a true gallery with an inexorably long flight, is broken at its end by a lightly curved wall, and flows by the vein of a passage of limited dimensions into the very high square aula. The cubicity of this, after the subtle fracture with the portico and its very long and human flight is raised to an empyrean, abstract and most solemn scale. From the majesty and dignity of the aula, you proceed through two narrow passages excavated in the thickness of the wall (one of them, like a true unforeseen iris closure, long and dark) into a very vast aerial portico of limited height, which embraces a great piazza of sky and surrounds a basin of water within which, isolated, arises a fragile round island, enchanted with niches, columns and friezes.

The cylindrical space after the cubicity of the great room must have seemed vivid by reason of the succession of circles of peristyle and islets mirrored and refracted many times in the water in an incandescent gyration, which to us today does not seem remote from the vortex of the tempietto of San Pietro in Montorio, with the intended resonances of its portico about it.

The sequence of the three surroundings is played out on three forms as elementary as they are precise and sure in their effects: the long flight of the portico, the aulic pause, and the cylindrical rotation of the natatorium. The diversity of geometric forms is scanned by the double stretti of the passages, which are like sluices to the waves generated by one's traversal of the surroundings, a rhythmic pause, one of those terminal verse cadences of equivocal duration which the Greeks placed in order to shorten or lenthen the gap between two verses. The stretti arise as passages, forcibly limited in metric scale through being hewn out of the wall; but gradually one becomes aware of them also, even in their mysterious and suggestive dimensions, in their natural and exasperated counterpoint with the very vast spaces. There thus arise those adits of human dimension whose spatiality suffers a maximum of compression through being excavated in the nuclei of energy in buildings, lyrical caesuras between spaces: passages which the Gothic was to exhaust or forget in another direction, and which the High Renaissance would deny, but which, after Michelangelo, the sixteenth century


was to re-elaborate in all their drama, in the junctions between the chapels and the large spaces of the churches or in the vestibules of the palaces.

If the Poekile, the aula and the natatorium can be taken as an example of a sequence played out principally on differences of geometrical form, in the Renaissance one can pick out sequences sculpted with extreme subtlety by differences of dimension alone, among volumes which maintain similar or identical geometrical forms. Here I want to indicate two examples of this sort of sequence in the Ducal Palace at Urbino, precisely one which runs from the guest rooms to the throne room, and the other which takes in the four surroundings of the Jole apartment. The pure rectangular prisms of the rooms, rendered vivid in the vaults by the diamond shaped squinches of the lunettes, succeed one another in both the sequences of spaces by constant dilations of their volumes through always increasing in length and height. This continuous increase on a constant formal monotone scans the two most lovely crescendi of sequences which reach their triumphal maximum in the throne room and the Sala della Jole. It is interesting to note that the sequences are not by constant but by always greater differences, a sort of premature logarithmic scale, until the final and decisive movement of the two terminal volumes; and that in both sequences there is a room which arrests the rhythmic precipitation. It is unthinkable that this volumetric dilation should be accidental. It is fairer to consider the two sequences as a rare example of purely quantitative spatial modulation; perhaps even as the first instance in which space is considered as something real in its own right, formed of a substance as labile as it is sensitive and concrete. The volumes of the Ducal Palace in limpid perspective inversion-are they one more bivalent signature of Laurana and di Giorgio? - define a research into a growing emotivity up to the attainment of an acme, which is what it is by its very high tone and by its conclusive position in the discourse.

The Renaissance had, as its ideal, spaces which by their form and density of light should give that sense of happy rapture, of contemplation, which only the world of closed structures, withdrawn from every contingent element, allows. The research was focussed on the famous central plans whose


symmetrical, undifferentiated and imperturbable spaces, like crystalline essential organisms, satisfied the dialectic of pure relations. But in the sequences at the Palace of Urbino, a second and unmentioned mode of spatial abstraction seems to be revealed, by exhaustion, after a growing rhythmic cadence, by a kind of exhausting of every residual visual desire. It is the quiet contemplation which supervenes when a crescendo attains a definite weighed level of power, a limited tension in miraculous suspended equilibrium.

Sequences obtained by growing volumetric dimensions can also be brought to light in, among others, a project of Palladio for a building at Verona. But one must (and would expect to) find the most complete examples of musical geometry of internal spaces in the genius of this architect, infallible measurer of abstract relationships; neither is it otherwise imaginable.

A sequence by differences of geometric form, and also by differences of volume, is delineated by the chain of volumes in the Palazzo Thiene at Vicenza; a chain which unknots with the splendor of a necklace of variously cut diamonds; a most pure chain, whose differences rebound mirrorwise in four nodes of symmetry as the cadences continually advance and invert.

In their pure dimensions, the sequences can be represented graphically as circles whose radii are proportional to the sphere corresponding in volume to each surrounding, and whose center coincides with the center of gravity of the volume itself, and is marked at the distance which in proportion this center has from the base plane of the spaces, that is, from the level of the plinth. Now it is really surprising to note that in the Thiene the sphere volumes corresponding to the central oblong and apsidal room, the intermediate room and the corner octagonal room, have a common tangent, that is, they are in a quantitative perspective as abstract as it is rigid. The three volumes dilate according to a precise geometrical law.

But in that mirror of architecture, the Rotonda, the lyrical concatenation of the internal spaces, as it is legible in the engravings of the I quattro libri dell'architettura which


reflect more closely Palladio's original idea, reaches a degree which the ancients would have had the courage to call sublime. Scamozzi profoundly upset the scheme of the internal volumes, lowering, as is well-known, the cupola, and what is equally serious but less noticed, enlarging and heightening the adits which lead from the four porticos into the central hall. Thus the quantitative differences between the round room and the vestibules became diminished in the act of execution, thereby eliding that resounding scansion which is audible in the Palladian project. I computed on the basis of the engravings the quantity of the three volumes-portico, vestibule and round room - which make up the basic sequence repeated in rotational symmetry, and by reducing these calculations to spheres for sensible comprehension, I discovered that their radii were in the ratio of $3: 2: 5$. The same order of ratios divides up the basement, excluding the plinth, the colonnade, the architraves and the fascia and attic. With Palladio there was naturally nothing calculated in such resonances; only a state of grace, an incredible presence of rhythm and harmony. Finally it is to be noticed that in density of light, the volumes go from portico to hall in the order of maximum to minimum, while in dimensions the order is medium, least, greatest.

So the key sequence of the Palladian Rotonda has been conducted by differences of shape, of absolute volume, density of light, and in the middle room, pressure. In it are present all those yeasty ferments of spatiality of the great fabrics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which have in the Basilica of Saint Peter, the mirror of every magnificence. The history of the walls of St. Peter's is the history of the conquest of its internal spaces; nor could it be otherwise, because it was raised in the hope of enclosing the largest space in the world, an empyrean of power and charity. No one architect, however great he might be, could possess in his reality all at once spaces which remain in absolute value, beyond the human scale. Spaces were consigned to Raffaello, Sangallo, Bramante, Michelangelo and Maderna, each one conquering a sphere of them, until finally the whole space was mastered and rendered integrally sensible and alive, a quality which all recognize and which constitutes the irradiating force of the basilica. The model of the internal volumes of St. Peter's is a mechanism of surprising clarity, a hydraulic system of

i questi spazi e sugli andamenti emotivi che le loro sequenze ei sucitano, può forse far balenare alcuni capi delloscura legge che uida universalmente lo spirito umano, che cosi spinge i grandi nimi nel comporre tali straordinarie architetture come comnuove anche i piut semplici spiriti che le guardano. Viene in aente, da ciò, che la moralità sovrana dell architella di comuniua autentica istanza sociale, anzi umana,
a Grecia non ebbe nelle sue architetture spazi interni della miura e del significato che i romani promossero. Le colonne del empio greco chiudono nei loro rettangoli lame d'ombra che semrrano nascere dalle viscere della terra a involgere e formare gli nvalicabili sacelli. L'architettura greca fu algoritmo di strutture rattute dal sole, fu una logica della luce e insieme ombra di ignoe forme ove albergavano gli dei. Laltipiano, la luminosa volta el cielo sono lo spazio estroverso, mirabile, che il pilone colonato del tempio sorregge.
a casa ellenica, sulla trama elementare del riparo e dell'ombra er luomo, distribuendo nei domestici ambienti densità di luce iverse, dagli oscuri oeci alla penombra del peristilio, al brillio el viridario, scandí quel metro su cui si distese per secoli il verso omano e rinascimentale della casa non meno di quello barocco e ttocentesco, ovunque cioe un andito grigio si aprisse su una hiara corte. Nella penombra della casa greca, splendono a ogni iflesso o raggio, i domestici oggetti o le criniere degli elmi, le lamidi i bronzi di Alceo, come i cristalli i rossi parati gli scacchi ianchi e neri dei pavimenti nelle case fiamminghe di Vermeer. grandi spazi dellarchitettura nascono con Roma e ne sono la ragnificenza. In uno con le sovrumane volte e con le mura, d'inredari, che le rega, con un respiro istintivo di inabbattibili opere miitari, che le reggevano, sono Tespressione della cosciente potenza i una corlio. Ques il pazi si arono sovraie si legano in teoie orgogliose in cui il misurato ordine sembra far sensibile la hiarezza di mente e la coscienza di questa chiarezza, cioè la maea, del popolo romano. Le sequenze dei volumi nelle basiliche e oeciaimente nelle terme, di aracalla, dovevano raggiungere per la varieta degli elementi che ; componevano e dei percorsi possibili, effetti insuperati. Sulle Michelangelo, nacque lo spazio rinascimentale e barocco e il snso del grandioso nella nuova civilta d'occidente.
er valutare nella loro complessità le sequenze dei volumi nelle rme è opportuno iniziare le osservazioni su quelle sequenze piú lementari che possono riscontrarsi in alcuni esempi della stessa chitettura romana e in alcune costruzioni rinascimentali. Tra , fabbriche di Villa Adriana, specchio argentatissimo di tutte le fflessioni dell'ecelettismo imperiale, si possono individuare intesssanti modelli di sequenze dalle piú semplici alle piú elaboite. Il mruppo ternario del portico del Pecile, dell aula quadra etta dei Filosofi e del « natatorio n circolare, puó assumersi come tempio di una sequenza di volumi la cui vivezza e solennità è oggiata esclusivamente sulla differenza delle forme peometriche a gli elementi del gruppo.
tre volumi, nell'ordine naturale di percorso, portico - anla - natatorio, si seguono con le loro diverse figure geometriche: risma ad asse dominante longitudinale, cubo e cilindro. Il volute del portico, vera galleria con fuga lontana inderogabile, si ange al suo termine su una parete leggermente arcuata e rifluie per un vano di passaggio di limitate dimensioni nellaula quara e altissima, la cui cubicità al contrappunto della sottile freca del portico e del suo percorso lunghissimo e umano, si alza a na misura empirea, astratta, solennissima. Dalla maestà e dilità dell aula, per due stretti passaggi, scavati nello spessore delmura, uno dei quali oscuro e non breve, vera chiusura di iride aprovvisa, si prosegue in un aereo portico circolare di limitata tezza ma vastissimo, che abbraccia una grande piazza di cielo circonda un bacino di acqua entro cui, isolata, nasce una agile isola rotonda, incantata di nicchie di colonne di fregi.
 Pompei, Casa del poeta tragico (A B C D, fouces, atrium, andron, peristi-
(m). 3. Schema della seauenza vestibolo-cortile propria allarchitettura ${ }_{\text {ussica }}$ (fauci e atrio) e allarchitetura potrizia, dal Rinascimento alrot. sento. 4. 5. Fotogrammi dalla sequenza finale del film «Varietêos di A. Dupont: Liberazione e apertura della porta della prigione. 6. Spazio
turale, disegno di L. F. Cassas, inciso da Levé, 1802 (dalla Civica raccolta curale. disegno di L. F. Cassas, inciso da Levec, 1802 (dalla Civica raccoita
Ule stampe A. Bertarelli, Milanol) 7.2. Guarino Guarini. Progetto per la : «Architettura civile ,) e rappresentazione volumetrica degli spani interni


sluices, shells and basins which seems to cover an entire region; and nothing of the building's secret history escapes. For example, if one looks at the square bastion serried about the dome, it at once tells us more than any exegesis how terribly alive Bramante still is in Michelangelo's plan. Carlo Maderna, a very great architect, extended the basilica with those elements of more human scale, approximating the absolute and intellectual space of Bramante and Michelangelo to universal comprehension by way of a chain of passages. The model clearly shows it.

The principal sequence of volumes in the basilica unrolls in direction inverse to the actual sequence of birth of the spaces-a kind of immersion in the centuries, a plumbing in reverse from the time of Bernini to that of Bramante. Five doors open in the front of St. Peter's, in fortress bastions held among formidable columns, an ideal echo of the Michelangelean Pronaos, which by the thickness of the walls they are cut in, and the incumbency of the megalithic cylinders of the columns, constitute the stretti, the spaces of first pressure in the sequence of volumes of St. Peter's. By these doors one is liberated into a great atrium, open and luminous, which seems suddenly to give quiet and breath: but almost immediately its front wall cutting transversely opposes us like a decisive warning barrier. To the instinctive and alerted sense of longitudinal flight, the very long transverse wall carries a sense of release, augmenting the tension toward the liberation we know to await us beyond. Finally, three passages opening in the barrier give the final constriction and difficulty.

Then the rhombus of the immense nave suddenly erupts, unforeseen, its volume dilated already beyond the exceptional limit premised and ponderated by the counterpoint of atrium and passages. From now on the basilica is traversed in a continuous perspective crescendo until the empyrean of the cupola bursts. There the sense of human scale is released in the symmetry, dimension, the evanescent and glorious luminosity of the spaces. The sequence of volumes is conducted with a maximum of emotivity, concentrated between the accesses to the basilica and the atrium, to the contemplation of the abstract space of the central system.

The structural ladder of the sequence as to the value of the immediate and elementary emotional trends which it supports and so composes can be summarized as follows: pressure (access doors), limited liberation (atrium), opposition (atrium walls), very short pressure (basilica doors), total liberation (traversal of nave), final contemplation (space of central system). The differentials of the sequence up to the cupola are by way of form, quantity and incumbent energy. In a certain sense, the central zone does not have differentials; the natural route through the volumes is, as we have said, in reverse order to their birth, from the seventeenth century drama back to Bramantine crystals.

The universality of the basilica comes from the portentous elementarity of its sequences, from the chain of pendular effects of opposition and liberation on which they are principally woven. This pendularity has so dominant, exclusive and inexorable a rhythm that it seems to reveal the movement, the very breath necessary to the structure of the human mind. Of all the arts, architecture is the most universal, perhaps because it makes these oscillations immediate and sensible, unconsciously repeating the oppositions and liberations of spaces which, originally in the hostilities and hospitalities of nature, and so always, will constitute one of the formative aspects of the foundation of the human mind. Caves, stockades, and open country. The course of the second Faust comes to mind, the two symbolic flights which open and close the anxious journey of Melville's hero in the mythical island of Typee; or the liberation from prison, when the great door opens on to a plain beaten by a wild wind in a sequence from the film Variété.

All the same, the internal spaces of St. Peter's remain a composition of elementary volumes, individually separable and accorded with one another by elements of passage or by other spaces. One has to come down to Guarini by way of Michelangelo's last designs for San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, or better, the interior of San Carlino, to encounter the uttermost point in this whole process of modulating internal volumes and their sequences achieved in attempting to surmount the juxtaposition of spatial singularities in an all but continuous body.

The two models of internal spaces which we have taken from engravings of projects for churches at Casale and Lisbon clearly voice the most precise concatenation of the volumes, the minor scansion of the passages, the effulgence and attenuation of light as a distension and unfurling or unfolding of the spaces. In the designs for Casale and Lisbon, the volumes are modulated by emotive and intellectual differences, as we have already encountered in St. Peter's or other examples, but with less sensible caesuras; a species of condensed continuous poetry, metrically extended with strophe cuts. Spaces are conquered by way of a slow elaboration of purely geometrical worlds, governed by a surprising lyrical logic. The play of stereometrics in Guarini is always extraordinarily adherent to the great constructional play; the intersections of volumes coincide with the lines of force necessary to sustain them. One finally arrives at the metaphysical game, never attained even by the Gothic, of arches which explain their power of support, although being completely warped, with the keystones out of plumb with the piers. Guarini's spatial system is so unitary and absolute, every point is so bound to the others in a formal and constructive sense, that his fabrics seem incapable of suffering ruin; if one cupola were to collapse, the entire edifice would be wiped out. It seems that no ruin could remain of these regal veils or parasols, which extend and unfold, forming spaces of such rigor and fantasy as the petrified flower intended for the Casale church testifies.

It seems that we moderns have forgotten the laws of the sequences of internal volumes. We shall have to conquer space as a lively, sensible element, and that not by faithful extrapolation of graphic symbols. From now on, the errors modern architecture has committed through ignoring spaces in their concreteness can be judged in truth, naturally assuming that modern architecture will live on truth, and never henceforth be translated into its two-dimensional symbols, drawing and photography. There have been certain spatial sequences and modulations which in wholly modern tension take us back consciously or not to Guarini and the classicists. Observe in this connection Frank Lloyd Wright's McCord house: two flat cylinders are separated by a profound liberty, but equally by a profound and thoroughgoing intercalation. The fencing academy at Rome was one of the first attempts at
a strictly unitary spatial modulation which plays wholly on the entire scale of parameters of light, dimension and form. The experiences of Mies van der Rohe offer a particular interest, at least for didactic reasons, if we want to single out once again in this architect the dissociation of a unitary space by means of screens and diaphragms.

The ancients, in composing their sequences of spaces, took account of those elementary geometrical figures which permit possession of the form in its entirety, even when only a single tract of it was being dealt with, in such a way as to allow that intellectual simultaneity of vision, noticed by Adrian Stokes in its decisive importance. ${ }^{2}$ Mies van der Rohe, by starting instead from a constructive volume of irregular geometrical profile, dissociates space from it, preventing the integral and direct reading of it, the only one his form makes possible, by inserting in it free walls and diaphragms which thus come to support unforeseeable and uncertain boundary spatial sectors. It works, that is, in such a way that the space not directly visible remains elusive in intuition. It is easy to see, for example, that in the Tugendhat house the sequence of spaces that cut down the great room is on a double chain in a certain sense: one for the spaces in direct vision, the other constant and monotonous for the spaces which beyond this vision remain indefinite. Every volume of the room has an area well centered in focus and an unfocussed field: a species of fogged spatiality, of crude visual positivism indurated in a romantic formal mist. Even succussive traversals of the volumes always leave an equivocal margin, in which everyone inserts those accords and resonances which he imagines can be drawn from the principal forms. It is evidently one more proof of the elusive and romantic stage of modern, and in particular, of rational architecture a stage which, besides, seems the characteristic and proper one of our age even more than of the nineteenth century, and which even in music and the plastic arts is based on analogous structural equivocations, and is to be considered a weariness of the mind, if we still believe that we can once again reach the lyrical clarity of the classics, or which is henceforth our natural state, if this clarity be regarded as an unrepeatable fact.

1. This text and its accompanying illustrations introduced Moretti's use of three-dimensional negative figure-ground as an analytical tool. This tool seems to me to make distinctions of kind which in their own way are quite as valid as those introduced by the discussion of sensible and surmized transparency. - Trans.
2. The probable source for this reference to "intellectual simultaneity of vision" is an important essay on the Tempietto Malatesiano, which appears in a recently republished commemorative volume of Adrian Stokes's writings edited by Richard Wollheim, entitled The Image in Form. -Trans.
