

# VITRUVIUS POLLIO

## THE TEN BOOKS ON ARCHITECTURE

BOOK VI

### CHAPTER 1 ON CLIMATE AS DETERMINING THE STYLE OF THE HOUSE

1. IF OUR DESIGNS FOR PRIVATE HOUSES ARE TO BE CORRECT, WE MUST AT THE OUTSET TAKE NOTE OF THE COUNTRIES AND CLIMATES IN WHICH THEY ARE BUILT. ONE STYLE OF HOUSE SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO BUILD IN EGYPT, ANOTHER IN SPAIN, A DIFFERENT KIND IN PONTUS, ONE STILL DIFFERENT IN ROME, AND SO ON WITH LANDS AND COUNTRIES OF OTHER CHARACTERISTICS. THIS IS BECAUSE ONE PART OF THE EARTH IS DIRECTLY UNDER THE SUN'S COURSE, ANOTHER IS FARAWAY FROM IT, WHILE ANOTHER LIES MIDWAY BETWEEN THESE TWO. HENCE, AS THE POSITION OF THE HEAVEN WITH REGARD TO A GIVEN TRACT ON THE EARTH LEADS NATURALLY TO DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS, OWING TO THE INCLINATION OF THE CIRCLE OF THE ZODIAC AND THE COURSE OF THE SUN, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT DESIGNS FOR HOUSES OUGHT SIMILARLY TO CONFORM TO THE NATURE OF THE COUNTRY AND TO DIVERSITIES OF CLIMATE.

2. IN THE NORTH, HOUSES SHOULD BE ENTIRELY ROOFED OVER AND SHELTERED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, NOT IN THE OPEN, THOUGH HAVING A WARM EXPOSURE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, WHERE THE FORCE OF THE SUN IS GREAT IN THE SOUTHERN COUNTRIES THAT SUFFER FROM HEAT, HOUSES MUST BE BUILT MORE IN THE OPEN AND WITH A NORTHERN OR NORTH-EASTERN EXPOSURE. THUS WE MAY AMEND BY ART WHAT NATURE, IF LEFT TO HERSELF, WOULD MAR. IN OTHER SITUATIONS, ALSO, WE MUST MAKE MODIFICATIONS TO CORRESPOND TO THE POSITION OF THE HEAVEN AND ITS EFFECTS ON CLIMATE.

3. THESE EFFECTS ARE NOTICEABLE AND DISCERNIBLE NOT ONLY IN THINGS IN NATURE, BUT THEY ALSO ARE OBSERVABLE IN THE LIMBS AND BODIES OF ENTIRE RACES. IN PLACES ON WHICH THE SUN THROWS OUT ITS HEAT IN MODERATION, IT KEEPS HUMAN BODIES IN THEIR PROPER CONDITION, AND WHERE ITS PATH IS VERY CLOSE AT HAND, IT PARCHES THEM UP, AND BURNS OUT AND TAKES AWAY THE PROPORTION OF MOISTURE WHICH THEY OUGHT TO POSSESS. BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND, IN THE COLD REGIONS THAT ARE FAR AWAY FROM THE SOUTH, THE MOISTURE IS NOT DRAWN OUT BY HOT WEATHER, BUT THE ATMOSPHERE IS FULL OF DAMPNESS WHICH DIFFUSES MOISTURE INTO THE SYSTEM, AND MAKES THE FRAME LARGER AND THE PITCH OF THE VOICE DEEPER. THIS IS ALSO THE REASON WHY THE RACES THAT ARE BRED IN THE NORTH ARE OF VAST HEIGHT, AND HAVE FAIR COMPLEXIONS, STRAIGHT RED HAIR, GREY EYES, AND A GREAT DEAL OF BLOOD, OWING TO THE ABUNDANCE OF MOISTURE AND THE COOLNESS OF THE ATMOSPHERE.

4. ON THE CONTRARY, THOSE THAT ARE NEAREST TO THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE AXIS, AND THAT LIE DIRECTLY UNDER THE SUN'S COURSE, ARE OF LOWER STATURE, WITH A SWARTHY COMPLEXION, HAIR CURLING, BLACK EYES, STRONG LEGS, AND BUT LITTLE BLOOD ON ACCOUNT OF THE FORCE OF THE SUN. HENCE, TOO, THIS POVERTY OF BLOOD MAKES THEM OVERTIMID TO STAND UP AGAINST THE SWORD, BUT GREAT HEAT AND FEVERS THEY CAN ENDURE WITHOUT TIMIDITY, BECAUSE THEIR FRAMES ARE BRED UP IN THE RAGING HEAT. HENCE, MEN THAT ARE BORN IN THE NORTH ARE RENDERED OVERTIMID AND WEAK BY FEVER, BUT THEIR WEALTH OF BLOOD ENABLES THEM TO STAND UP AGAINST THE SWORD WITHOUT TIMIDITY.