

**Source: The Ten Books on Architecture
by Vitruvius
(Translated by Morris Hicky Morgan 1914)**

BOOK VII

BOOK VII

INTRODUCTION

1. It was a wise and useful provision of the ancients to transmit their thoughts to posterity by recording them in treatises, so that they should not be lost, but, being developed in succeeding generations through publication in books, should gradually attain in later times, to the highest refinement of learning. And so the ancients deserve no ordinary, but unending thanks, because they did not pass on in envious silence, but took care that their ideas of every kind should be transmitted to the future in their writings.

2. If they had not done so, we could not have known what deeds were done in Troy, nor what Thales, Democritus, Anaxagoras, Xenophanes, and the other physicists thought about nature, and what rules Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, and other philosophers laid down for the conduct of human life; nor would the deeds and motives of Croesus, Alexander, Darius, and other kings have been known, unless the ancients had compiled treatises, and published them in commentaries to be had in universal remembrance with posterity.

3. So, while they deserve our thanks, those, on the contrary, deserve our reproaches, who steal the writings of such men and publish them as their own; and those also, who depend in their writings, not on their own ideas, but who enviously do wrong to the works of others and boast of it, deserve not merely to be blamed, but to be sentenced to actual punishment for their wicked course of life. With the ancients, however, it is said that such things did not pass without pretty strict chastisement. What the results of their judgments were, it may not be out of place to set forth as they are transmitted to us.

4. The kings of the house of Attalus having established, under the influence of the great charms of literature, an excellent

library at Pergamus to give pleasure to the public, Ptolemy also was aroused with no end of enthusiasm and emulation into exertions to make a similar provision with no less diligence at Alexandria. Having done so with the greatest care, he felt that this was not enough without providing for its increase and development, for which he sowed the seed. He established public contests in honour of the Muses and Apollo, and appointed prizes and honours for victorious authors in general, as is done in the case of athletes.

5. These arrangements having been made, and the contests being at hand, it became necessary to select literary men as judges to decide them. The king soon selected six of the citizens, but could not so easily find a proper person to be the seventh. He therefore turned to those who presided over the library, and asked whether they knew anybody who was suitable for the purpose. Then they told him that there was one Aristophanes who was daily engaged in reading through all the books with the greatest enthusiasm and the greatest care. Hence, when the gathering for the contests took place, and separate seats were set apart for the judges, Aristophanes was summoned with the rest, and sat down in the place assigned to him.

6. A group of poets was first brought in to contend, and, as they recited their compositions, the whole audience by its applause showed the judges what it approved. So, when they were individually asked for their votes, the six agreed, and awarded the first prize to the poet who, as they observed, had most pleased the multitude, and the second to the one who came next. But Aristophanes, on being asked for his vote, urged that the poet who had least pleased the audience should be declared to be the first.

7. As the king and the entire assembly showed great indignation, he arose, and asked and received permission to speak. Silence being obtained, he stated that only one of them — his man — was a poet, and that the rest had recited things not their own; furthermore, that judges ought to give their approval, not to

thefts, but to original compositions. The people were amazed, and the king hesitated, but Aristophanes, trusting to his memory, had a vast number of volumes brought out from bookcases which he specified, and, by comparing them with what had been recited, obliged the thieves themselves to make confession. So, the king gave orders that they should be accused of theft, and after condemnation sent them off in disgrace; but he honoured Aristophanes with the most generous gifts, and put him in charge of the library.

8. Some years later, Zoilus, who took the surname of Homero-mastix, came from Macedonia to Alexandria and read to the king his writings directed against the Iliad and Odyssey. Ptolemy, seeing the father of poets and captain of all literature abused in his absence, and his works, to which all the world looked up in admiration, disparaged by this person, made no rejoinder, although he thought it an outrage. Zoilus, however, after remaining in the kingdom some time, sank into poverty, and sent a message to the king, requesting that something might be bestowed upon him.

9. But it is said that the king replied, that Homer, though dead a thousand years ago, had all that time been the means of livelihood for many thousands of men; similarly, a person who laid claim to higher genius ought to be able to support not one man only, but many others. And in short, various stories are told about his death, which was like that of one found guilty of parricide. Some writers have said that he was crucified by Philadelphus; others that he was stoned at Chios; others again that he was thrown alive upon a funeral pyre at Smyrna. Whichever of these forms of death befell him, it was a fitting punishment and his just due; for one who accuses men that cannot answer and show, face to face, what was the meaning of their writings, obviously deserves no other treatment.

10. But for my part, Caesar, I am not bringing forward the present treatise after changing the titles of other men's books and inserting my own name, nor has it been my plan to win approbation by finding fault with the ideas of another. On the con-

trary, I express unlimited thanks to all the authors that have in the past, by compiling from antiquity remarkable instances of the skill shown by genius, provided us with abundant materials of different kinds. Drawing from them as it were water from springs, and converting them to our own purposes, we find our powers of writing rendered more fluent and easy, and, relying upon such authorities, we venture to produce new systems of instruction.

11. Hence, as I saw that such beginnings on their part formed an introduction suited to the nature of my own purpose, I set out to draw from them, and to go somewhat further.

In the first place Agatharcus, in Athens, when Aeschylus was bringing out a tragedy, painted a scene, and left a commentary about it. This led Democritus and Anaxagoras to write on the same subject, showing how, given a centre in a definite place, the lines should naturally correspond with due regard to the point of sight and the divergence of the visual rays, so that by this deception a faithful representation of the appearance of buildings might be given in painted scenery, and so that, though all is drawn on a vertical flat façade, some parts may seem to be withdrawing into the background, and others to be standing out in front.

12. Afterwards Silenus published a book on the proportions of Doric structures; Theodorus, on the Doric temple of Juno which is in Samos; Chersiphron and Metagenes, on the Ionic temple at Ephesus which is Diana's; Pytheos, on the Ionic fane of Minerva which is at Priene; Ictinus and Carpion, on the Doric temple of Minerva which is on the acropolis of Athens; Theodorus the Phocian, on the Round Building which is at Delphi; Philo, on the proportions of temples, and on the naval arsenal which was ¹ at the port of Peiraeus; Hermogenes, on the Ionic temple of Diana which is at Magnesia, a pseudodipteral, and on that of Father Bacchus at Teos, a monopteral; Arcesius, on the Corinthian proportions, and on the Ionic temple of Aesculapius at Tralles, which it is said that he built with his own hands; on

¹ Codd. fuerat.

the Mausoleum, Satyrus and Pytheos who were favoured with the greatest and highest good fortune.

13. For men whose artistic talents are believed to have won them the highest renown for all time, and laurels forever green, devised and executed works of supreme excellence in this building. The decoration and perfection of the different façades were undertaken by different artists in emulation with each other: Leochares, Bryaxis, Scopas, Praxiteles, and, as some think, Timotheus; and the distinguished excellence of their art made that building famous among the seven wonders of the world.

14. Then, too, many less celebrated men have written treatises on the laws of symmetry, such as Nexaris, Theocydes, Demophilus, Pollis, Leonidas, Silanion, Melampus, Sarnacus, and Euphranor; others again on machinery, such as Diades, Archytas, Archimedes, Ctesibius, Nymphodorus, Philo of Byzantium, Diphilus, Democles, Charias, Polyidus, Pyrrus, and Agesistratus. From their commentaries I have gathered what I saw was useful for the present subject, and formed it into one complete treatise, and this principally, because I saw that many books in this field had been published by the Greeks, but very few indeed by our countrymen. Fuficius, in fact, was the first to undertake to publish a book on this subject. Terentius Varro, also, in his work "On the Nine Sciences" has one book on architecture, and Publius Septimius, two.

15. But to this day nobody else seems to have bent his energies to this branch of literature, although there have been, even among our fellow-citizens in old times, great architects who could also have written with elegance. For instance, in Athens, the architects Antistates, Callaeschus, Antimachides, and Pormus laid the foundations when Peisistratus began the temple of Olympian Jove, but after his death they abandoned the undertaking, on account of political troubles. Hence it was that when, about four hundred years later, King Antiochus promised to pay the expenses of that work, the huge cella, the surrounding columns in dipteral arrangement, and the architraves and other orna-

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



The Complete Text can be found on our CD:
Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature
which can be purchased on our Website :
www.Brainfly.net

or

by sending **\$64.95** in check or money order to :
Brainfly Inc.
5100 Garfield Ave. #46
Sacramento CA 95841-3839

TEACHER'S DISCOUNT:

If you are a **TEACHER** you can take advantage of our teacher's discount. Click on **Teachers Discount** on our website (www.Brainfly.net) or **Send us \$55.95** and we will send you a full copy of *Primary Literary Sources For Ancient Literature* **AND** our *5000 Classics CD (a collection of over 5000 classic works of literature in electronic format (.txt))* plus our *Wholesale price list*.

If you have any suggestions such as books you would like to see added to the collection or if you would like our wholesale prices list please send us an email to:

webcomments@brainfly.net