

# Vitruvius.

Book 3. chap. 3.

101.

Lastly. The volutes recede, or fall back in themselves a twelfth part of their breadth, each circumvolution, the eye being the most prominent part thereof. These are the forms, and proportions of two sides of the capital, the front and back: the other two sides have the form of a balluster, bound in the middle with a rope, as a belt, proportioned thus. Set one leg of the compasses in the first quadrantal center of the volute, and extend the other to the nose of the cymatium, this shall touch the extremity of the belt. (k)

These shall be the proportions of capitals for columns not exceeding fifteen feet in height. Columns that are taller, must have larger capitals. They shall be proportioned in like manner by the abacus: but instead of an eighteenth, one ninth shall be added to the diameter of the lower part of the column, to form the square of the abacus; for, as the diminution of these columns is less, their capitals require to be larger in proportion. (l)

The capitals being finished, and all set exactly to an equal height by the module; great care must be had, such as was taken in setting the columns themselves upon their pedestals, that the architrave shall not overhang the upright of the shafts, as it commands all the upper members, and by which they are all proportioned. All the upper members derive their proportions, and support from the architrave.

The architrave then is proportioned thus. If the columns <sup>be</sup> small, that is, from twelve to fifteen

(k) This shall form a spiral curve circumscribing the thickest part of the balluster.  
(l) The diminution lessening as the columns increase in height; it will be found more convenient to proportion the capital by the upper part of the column rather than by the lower; not only as the capital joins this part; but, because, one rule will then serve for all columns. Namely. Divide the diameter of the upper part of the column into fifteen equal parts, and give nineteen to the square of the abacus. Vitruvius promises to give a draft or delineation of this capital in the last book, which leaves room to imagine there has been another book.