

# Themes

## The Horizon

The horizon is a constant motif in Le Corbusier's architecture, painting, and drawings. It gives the ultimate conditions for dwelling, where earth and sky meet vertically. The Stadium seating is forms, an escarpment framing the action. The tiers of spectators embody a rhythm of horizons, as in a Greek Theatre, orientated to the points of the compass.

There is a second aspect to this motif, which appears in the Gymnasium at Baghdad. The Gymnasium is derived from a type of theatre that Le Corbusier developed, which he called the Boîtes à Miracles (The box of miracles). Indoor and outdoor theatres face each other across an end wall which could be slid sideways, like a door. The principle (without the sliding wall) was discovered in the early schemes for the outdoor chapel at Ronchamp, where the cave-like interior confronted a theatrical (agonic) space open to the sky, bounded by a fragmentary horizon of seating.

## The Athlete

Like many of his contemporaries, Le Corbusier regarded the fashion for athletics, and athletes, as a metaphor for the new requirements of modern life – fit, agile, and perfected through competition. A semi-symbolic figure, a running man, first appeared in his paintings in the late 20's. The terrace-gardens of his early housing schemes were often imagined to be theatres of athletic training (usually by the male of the family), occasionally for dance. The roof of the Unite d'Habitation at Marseilles, 1952, was a lyrical Appian landscape of theatres and pools, a school, a gymnasium, and bounding it all, a running-track which marked the horizon.

Athletics are set within the comprehensive urban symbolism of the proposal for Antwerp (1933). A large territory for physical training (at the Southeast) is placed perpendicular to a similar territory for intellectual training (at the Northeast), to make a frame along the river for the housing and offices. The existing cathedral marks the eastern corner of this frame. A great avenue stretches across his scheme between the cathedral and the tri-lobed airport, as if to bind traditional and modern urban culture.

## The River and the Turtle

These two motifs are combined in a sketch for the Baghdad Stadium preserved in the CCA and exhibited here. The turtle is one of his natural icons which bear architectural implications, in this case the animal which carries its domed, geometrically proportioned 'house' on its back (none of the several turtle myths, mostly from India and China, seem to appear in Le Corbusier's surviving writings). The Baghdad Stadium appears to recall the turtle.

Le Corbusier transformed the over-used modernist analogy joining human movement, purpose and progressive history into a form of natural myth. It first appears in 1929 and is given its own section in the *Poem of the Right Angle*. A river seeks the sea, encounters an obstacle (orange in the lithograph), languishes in meanders and ox-bow lakes (he uses imagery of death and corruption), and finally breaks through to re-assert a straight oath to the sea (whereupon the river is transformed into a luminous cream colour in the lithograph). For Le Corbusier, the sea is a fundamental symbol, comprising amorphous potentially like chaos or death, the tides (of new beginnings), and the precision of the horizon.

## Jantar Mantar

The Stadium's orientation to the sun is evidently for viewing reasons, although the shape of the veils closely corresponds to his sketch of the sighting-star at the observatory-garden, the Jantar Mantar, at Delhi in 1951. This relic of XVIIth-century Islamic science seems to pre-figure the Baghdad scheme in several respects, although Le Corbusier perceived its virtues to be not specifically Islamic, but universal, 'reconciling men with the cosmos'.

## The Oculus

Most of the perforations in the veils are either framed openings, part of the rhythmic spatiality beneath the seating, or gaps penetrated by rooms or passages. However, there are a few openings characterised by prominently rounded comers (combining rectangle and circle), which play a special role in his late architecture. On the piers supporting the bull-horn canopy of the portico to the Palace of the Assembly at Chandigarh, these openings make the eye (L. oculus) and mouth of the bull. These types of openings suggest an opening to – or, like the eye and mouth, communication with – another state of being or understanding. For example, the ladder which reaches from the actual sea to a blue cloud superimposed upon islands on the horizon in the image from *Poesie sur Alger* is re-enacted in his Villa Shodan of 1956. The foreground pool, itself an oculus-shape, is elevated to match the first landing of the ramp of the house, and the ascent continues through the suspended terrace, around the back of a water tank to a square-round oculus in the roof canopy. Although the outline is a circle, the plan of the Baghdad Stadium also alludes to the Corbusian oculus.

## The Symbol of the Right Angle

An oculus-form makes the boundary of Le Corbusier's most important architectural symbol, the right angle, published only once, at the end of *The Poem of the Right Angle*. Recalling the archaic cross-in-circle, this boundary is a broken horizon whose centre is marked by the right angle – an agon between the horizontal, 'reposing, sleeping – dying', and the vertical, 'upright (droit).ercct... ready for acts – drawn by a hand superimposed upon the profile of a bone whose marrow has been rendered as an (Orphic) egg. Below, the red and blue signs for "angle droit"

(right angle) also suggest male and female. It is represented against the darkness which is the emphasis of his late spaces because, according to the Poem, darkness is full of potential, creative, whereas light is full of struggles. The outline suggests the Poem's cranial womb in which architecture is created and it is broken to recall 'the portals of the pupils' as well as the dark and light halves of the solar cycle. The configuration is quite faithfully replicated in one of the studies for the Baghdad Stadium, with the right angle oriented to the four points of the compass.

## The Agon (Contest/Conflict)

A stadium is obviously for sporting contests, and this has been the basic meaning of agon since Greek times. However, the term also referred to any form of conflict – political, legal, philosophical – or to ritual sacrifice. Democracy was achieved when authority was taken from particular individuals or groups and placed in sites common-to-all. These were all agonic, institutionalising conflict to make up the heart of civic architecture: political debate, legal contests, the games, the theatre, the temple

Accordingly, the agon, or contest, lies at the heart of Le Corbusier's most important architectural settings (religious, political) as well as at the heart of his representational order generally. The honing of forms through conflict was one aspect of Purism. The conciliation of opposites (originally Pythagorean) recurs throughout the Poem of the Right Angle, also receiving its own section represented in its lithograph by the 'reconciliation of the left and right hands' laid across a doorway which opens in a black voile between the sun and moon. His famous diagram of the cycle of the sun, which 'brutally' divides the day into dark and light, begins the Poem and declares that our temporal order is a cycle of opposites. For Le Corbusier, the conflict of opposites always evokes the cosmic conditions, as for example, in the diagram of the reciprocity of engineer and architect. The three-dimensional form of this diagram is embodied in the profile of the Baghdad Stadium, as well as in the hyperbolic paraboloid at Chandigarh, which shelters the Parliament's political debate, or agon.

## Ascent to Light

It is a feature of even Le Corbusier's Purist buildings that one ascends from a dark ambiguous space to one luminous and clearly structured, most famously at the Villa Savoye. In the stadium of 1936-37, one ascends a hill and descends through tunnels to arrive in the canopied light of the interior of the stadium. A similar sequence was proposed for St. Beune ten years later, where one was intended to penetrate a mountain and via, three caves, to arrive at a view south upon the Mediterranean sea. At the Baghdad Stadium, one penetrated the rhythmic darkness under the seating to arrive at the luminous interior by way of four curved ramps.

## Clearing in the Earth

The 1937 stadium project was set into a vast hill, sculpted if not entirely artificial. Behind the central speaker's platform, projection-screen, and pylon for supporting the canopy (a feature borrowed from the Roman Coliseum) is a huge mastaba, or grave-mound of earth, with symmetrical stairs ascending the face. Le Corbusier had studied Boullée's Cenotaph in an Egyptian Style, which Boullée called 'buried architecture'. Described to Malraux as a 'truncated pyramid for spectacular festivals' the top of this mound marks the horizon of arrival into the hollow of the 1936-37 stadium. The Baghdad Stadium preserves the reference to earth in the dark undercroft beneath the seating, re-interpreted as the dense rhythm of voiles. The interior playing-surface is raised about a storey, and this height is carried through the facade in the presidential canopy, enhancing the perception of underground. His stadium at Firminy (1965), is cut into rock, and includes a species of Greek theatre. All of Le Corbusier's late agonic settings, political or religious, have a cave-like catholic quality, such as the interior of the chapel at Ronchamp, and the Baghdad stadium is an outdoor version of this principle.

## The Coliseum in Rome

The Baghdad Stadium of the 1958 scheme imitated the Roman Coliseum. The Coliseum appears three times in *Vers un Architecture*, his first book, 1926, both in the chapter entitled 'The Lessons of Rome'. The first appearance is a photographic reconstruction of the original. In the second appearance, it stands for the values of ancient Roman architecture that he prefers over the sentimental classicism of previous generations. Roman administration, primary geometrical orders, straightforward intentions, 'the spirit of order'. In the third appearance, he uses the Coliseum as a vehicle for understanding the precision and passion of Michelangelo's St Peter's. In both cases, he reads the Coliseum as an object from the exterior, where motifs of power and directness dominate, as opposed to the subtle 'spiritual mechanics' he finds in the interior of St Maria in Cosmedin. When he makes half the Coliseum the north transept of St Peter's, he suggests, beyond the similar dimensions, a latent sacrality to the Coliseum. He presents the Coliseum in his later book, *La Ville Radieuse* as 'vast in its unity, overwhelming in its simplicity. Inside it, the crowd as a whole, a living, thrilling group – at one'.

## The Stadium Project of 1936-37

In a letter to Andre Malraux of 1959, Le Corbusier mentions Baghdad in respect of his earlier stadium, of 1936-37, with Pierre Jeanneret (to whom in fact the design must be credited). This was an experimental design, not the result of a specific commission, and, like many of these experiments (e.g., the Museum of Infinite Growth), he intended it to be a receptacle of modern culture, a sort of architectural symbol. Acknowledging in his letter that the topic has an element of 'bread and circuses', the ambitions of the earlier project anticipate many of the themes

of the Baghdad Stadium.

Le Corbusier's drawing of the interior of the 1936-37 stadium shows an assembly of people ranked in squads – perhaps athletes at an opening ceremony or, more ominously, the sorts of political gatherings with which Europe had become familiar in Italy and Germany by 1937. The 1936-37 stadium is furnished with a dais, a speaker's platform, and a projection screen, intended for spectacular events of various kinds, including the political.

Stadia were regularly included in Corbusian urban plans. At the time he was working on Baghdad, there were two other stadia in the office: one at Chandigarh and one at Firminy, the only one to be constructed. For Le Corbusier, a stadium could be an important civic 'room', setting in which modern mass culture appeared to itself ('at one', in the words describing the Coliseum).

# THEMES

Fig. 1 (left) Le Corbusier, *Chimney*, 1929. *Architectural Record*, 1929. *Architectural Record*, 1929.

Fig. 2 (right) Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor*, 1927.

Fig. 3 (left) Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor*, 1927. *Chimney*, 1929. *Architectural Record*, 1929.

Fig. 4 (left) Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor*, 1927. *Chimney*, 1929. *Architectural Record*, 1929.

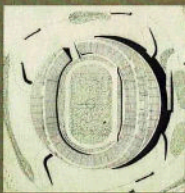
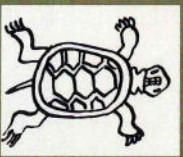
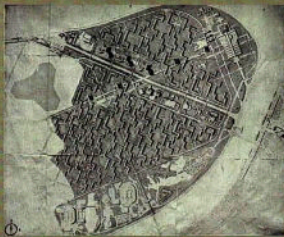
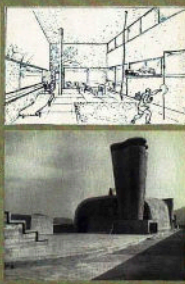
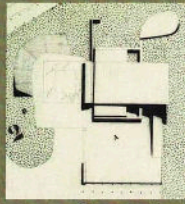
Fig. 5 (right) Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor*, 1927. *Chimney*, 1929. *Architectural Record*, 1929.

Fig. 6 (right) Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor*, 1927. *Chimney*, 1929. *Architectural Record*, 1929.

Fig. 7 (left) Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor*, 1927. *Chimney*, 1929. *Architectural Record*, 1929.

Fig. 8 (left) Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor*, 1927. *Chimney*, 1929. *Architectural Record*, 1929.

Fig. 9 (right) Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor*, 1927. *Chimney*, 1929. *Architectural Record*, 1929.



**THE HORIZON**  
The horizon is a constant motif in Le Corbusier's architecture, painting and drawings. It poses the ultimate conditions of dwelling: where earth and sky meet vertically. The Stadium seating is formed, an escarpment framing the action. The faces of spectators embody a rhythm of horizons, as in a Greek Theatre, marked to the point of the coxswain.

There is a second aspect to this motif, which appears in the Gymnasium at Baghdad (Fig. 1). The Gymnasium is derived from a type of arena that Le Corbusier developed, which he called the *Boxe à Amorce* (the Box of Impetus) (Fig. 2). Indoor and outdoor theatres face each other across an oval which could be slid sideways, like a door. The principle (without the sliding wall) was associated in the early schemes for the outdoor chapel at Ronchamp, where the canopy-like interior confirmed a horizontal (genetic) space open to the sky, bounded by a fragmentary horizon of seating (Fig. 3).

**THE ATHLETE**  
Like many of his contemporaries, Le Corbusier regarded the fashion for athletics and athletes as a metaphor for the new requirements of modern life – fit, agile, and perfected through competition. A semi-symbolic figure, a running man, first appeared in his paintings in the late 20's (Fig. 4). The terraced gardens of his early housing schemes were often arranged in the theatre of athletic running, usually by the male of the family, occasionally for dance (Fig. 5). The roof of the Unité d'Habitation at Marseilles, 1952, was a lyrical Apollonian landscape of theatres and pools, a school, a gymnasium and, bounding it all, a running-track which marked the horizon (Fig. 6).

Athletics are set within the comprehensive urban solution of his proposal for Altona (1925, Fig. 7). A large territory for physical training (at the Serbelloni) is placed perpendicular to a similar territory for intellectual training (at the Nordhaus), to make a frame along the river for the housing and offices. The existing cathedral marks the eastern corner of this frame. A great avenue stretches across his scheme between the cathedral and the tri-lobed airport, as if to bind traditional and modern urban culture.

**THE RIVER AND THE TURTLE**  
These two motifs are combined in a sketch for the Baghdad Stadium preserved in the CCA and exhibited here (left, top). The turtle (Fig. 8) is one of his named icons which bear architectural significance, in this case the animal which carries its domed, geometrically-proportioned 'house' on its back (note the oval and turtle on the mosaic from India and China, seen to appear in Le Corbusier's surviving writings). The Baghdad stadium appears to recall the turtle (Fig. 9).

Le Corbusier transformed the over-used modernist analogy, joining human movement, purpose and progressive history into a form of natural myth. It first appears in 1929 and is given its own section in the *Plan of the River de la Seine* (left, bottom). A river seeks the sea, encounters an obstacle (orange, in the lithograph), languishes in meander and eyebrow lakes (the usual images of death and corruption), and finally breaks through to recover a straight path to the sea (whereupon the river is transformed into a luminous urban culture in the lithograph). For Le Corbusier, the sea is a fundamental symbol, competing ambiguous potentiality like birth or death, the rules (of new beginnings), and the procession of the horizon.

# THEMES

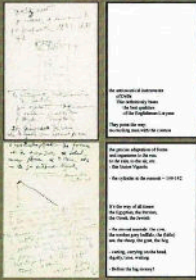


Fig. 1: Le Corbusier, *Sketchbook I*, pages 25-26, 1951 © FLC/DACS



Fig. 2: Le Corbusier, *Plan, silhouette* (scale 1:50), 1933, no. 1004 (1931)

Fig. 3: Le Corbusier, *Plan of Apartment, Chandigarh, France*, 1955 © FLC/DACS



Fig. 5: Le Corbusier, *Plan of Apartment, Chandigarh, France*, 1955 © FLC/DACS

Fig. 6: Le Corbusier, *Plan of Apartment, Chandigarh, France*, 1955 © FLC/DACS

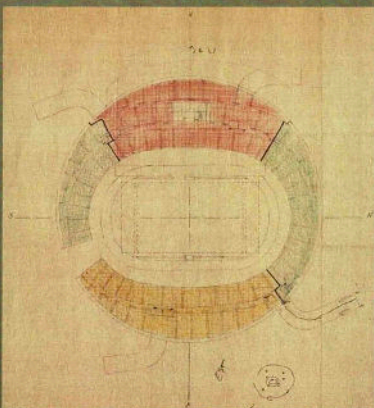


Fig. 7: Le Corbusier, *Plan of Stadium, Baghdad, Iraq*, 1955 © FLC/DACS

## JANTAR MANTAR, DELHI

The Stadium's orientation to the sun is evidently for timing reasons, although the shape of the Villa closely corresponds to his sketch of the gable-roofed at the observatory garden, the Jantar Mantar, at Delhi in 1951 (cf. 7). This use of XVIII-century Islamic science seems to pre-figure the Baghdad scheme in several respects, although Le Corbusier perceived the reasons to be not essentially Islamic, but universal: "reconciling man with the cosmos" (Fig. 1, 2).

## THE OCLUS

Most of the perforations in the Villa are either framed openings, part of the rhythmic spatiality beneath the ceiling, or gaps penetrated by rooms or passages. However, there are a few openings distinguished by prominently rounded corners (combining rectangle and circle), which play a special role in his late architecture (Fig. 7). On the pier supporting the ball-room canopy of the portico to the Palace of the Assembly at Chandigarh, these openings make the eye (i.e. "viewer") and mouth of the ball (Fig. 4). These types of openings suggest an opening to — or, the eye and mouth, communication with — another state of being or understanding. For example, the ladder which reaches from the actual seat to a blue cloud superimposed upon islands on the horizon in the image from *Room in a Day* (Fig. 9) is re-created in his Villa Shadon of 1958 (Fig. 6). The foreground pool, itself an oculus-shape, is elevated to match the first landing of the ramp of the house, and the ascent continues through the suspended terrace, around the lip of a water tank to a square-roofed oculus in the roof canopy. Although the outline is a circle, the plan of the Baghdad Stadium also alludes to the Corbusian oculus.

## THE SYMBOL OF THE RIGHT ANGLE

An oculus form makes the boundary of Le Corbusier's most important architectural symbol, the right angle, published only once, at the end of *The Power of the Right Angle* (1971). Recalling the archaic cosmocentric, this boundary is a broken horizon whose centre is marked by the right angle — in sign between the horizontal, "reposing, sleeping — dying", and the vertical, "upright (alive), erect... ready for acts — drawn by a hand superimposed upon the profile of a face whose marrow has been rendered as an (Oculus) eye. Below: the red and blue signs for 'angle above' (right angle) also suggest male and female. It is represented against the darkness which is the emphasis of his late spaces because, according to the *Plan*, darkness is full of potential energies, whereas light is full of strength. The outline suggests the *Power's* central words in which architecture is created and its broken to recall "the postals of the people" as well as the dark and light halves of the solar cycle. The configuration is quite faithfully replicated in one of the studies for the Baghdad Stadium, with the right angle centered in the four points of the compass (Fig. 7).

# THEMES

## THE AGON (CONTEXT/CONFLICT)

A stadium is obviously for sporting contests, and this has been the basic meaning of *agon* since Greek times. However, the term also referred to any form of conflict—political, legal, philosophical—or to ritual sacrifice. Deontology was achieved when authority was taken from particular individuals or groups and placed in this commonwealth. These were all *agon*, institutionalizing conflict to take up the heart of civic architecture: political debate, legal contests, the games, the theatre, the temple.

Accordingly, the *agon*, or contest, lies at the heart of Le Corbusier's most important architectural settings (religious, political) as well as at the heart of his representational ones generally. The housing of firms through conflict was one aspect of Paris. The configuration of opposites (originally Polyaqueon rooms) throughout the *Plan of the Right Angle*, also receiving its own section, represented in its lithograph (far left) by the "reconciliation of the left and right hand" and across a doorway which opens in a black void between the sun and moon. His famous diagram of the cycle of the sun, which "brilliantly" divides the day into dark and light, begins for Paris (near left) and declares that our temporal order is a cycle of opposites. For Le Corbusier, the conflict of opposites always evokes the cosmic conditions, as, for example, in the diagram of the reciprocity of embrace and distance (Figs. 1-2). The three-dimensional form of this diagram (Fig. 3) is embodied in the profile of the Baghdad Stadium, as well as in the hypocycle parabola at Chaudhary, which distorts the Parliament's political debate, or even (Fig. 4).

## ASCENT TO LIGHT

It is a theme of Le Corbusier's Paris buildings that one ascends from a dark, ambiguous space to one luminous and clearly structured, most famously at the Villa Savoye (Fig. 5). In the stadium of 1936-37, one ascends a hill and then descends through tunnels to arrive in the canonical light of the interior of the stadium (Fig. 6). A similar sequence was proposed for St. Beatus (not yet built), where one was intended to penetrate a mountain and, via three caves, to arrive at a view south upon the Mediterranean sea (Fig. 7). At the Baghdad Stadium, one penetrated the rhythmic darkness under the seating to arrive at the luminous interior by way of four curved ramps (left).

## CLEARING IN THE EARTH

The 1937 stadium project was set into a raw hill, scripted if not entirely artificial (Fig. 8). Behind the central speaker's platform, perspective scenes and pylon for supporting the canopy (a form borrowed from the Roman Coliseum) is a huge stadium, or group-around-of earth, with conventional mass ascending the face. Le Corbusier had studied Boullée's "Cronache" in an *Esquisse de la Ville de Saint-Basile*, called "buried architecture." Described to Mies van der Rohe as a "terraced pyramid for spectacular festivals" the top of this mound marks the horizon of arrival into the bottom of the 1936-37 stadium (see above, Fig. 6). The Baghdad Stadium project on the telephone to earth in the dark interior beneath the seating, re-integrated in the dense rhythm of vaults (Fig. 10). The interior playing-surface is raised about 30m, and this height is carried through the facade on the post-tensioned canopy, enhancing the perception of underground. His stadium at Farnham, 1965, is cut into rock, and includes a series of Greek theatres (Fig. 11). All of Le Corbusier's late *agon* settings, political or religious, have a dramatic, climatic quality, such as the interior of the stage at Rosschamp (Fig. 12), and the Baghdad stadium is an outdoor version of this principle.

Fig. 1 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.

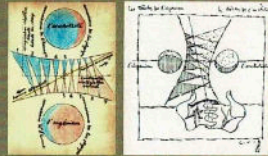


Fig. 2 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.

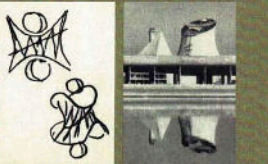


Fig. 3 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.

Fig. 4 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.

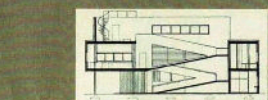


Fig. 5 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.

Fig. 6 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.

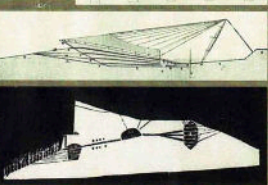


Fig. 7 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.

Fig. 8 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.



Fig. 9 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.

Fig. 10 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.



Fig. 11 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.



Fig. 12 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.



Fig. 13 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.

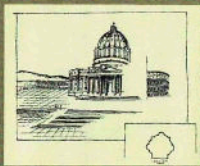
Fig. 14 Le Corbusier, *Diagram of the agon* and *Diagram of the agon*, 1928-29. The use of the agon is central to the agon.



Fig. 1 Le Corbusier, drawing of an urban scheme with elements of Antoni Gaudí's architecture, published in the presence of the project in the journal *Le Corbusier*, 1922, page 102 (orig. 101).



Fig. 2 Le Corbusier, drawing of the facade of the Basilica of St. Peter's, published in *Le Corbusier*, 1922, page 102 (orig. 101).



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## THEMES

### THE COLISEUM IN ROME

The Baghdad Stadium of the 1958 scheme imitated the Roman Colosseum, with a different instead of the four ramps of the latter scheme. The Colosseum appears three times in *Form and Architecture*, his first book, 1926, both in the chapter entitled "The Lessons of Rome". The first appearance is a photographic reconstruction of the original. In the second appearance, it stands for the values of ancient Roman architecture that he professes over the sentimental classicism of previous generations. Roman administration, primary geometrical orders, straightforward intentions, "the spirit of order" (Fig. 1). In the third appearance, he uses the Colosseum as a vehicle for understanding the precision and passion of Michelangelo's St. Peter's (Fig. 2), in both cases he reads the Colosseum as an object from the colonnade whose motifs of power and directness dominate, as opposed to the subtle "spiritual mechanisms" he finds in the interior of St. Maria at Eminence. When he makes half the Colosseum the north wing of St. Peter's, he suggests, beyond the similar dimensions, a latent sacrality to the Colosseum. He presents the Colosseum in his later book, *La Ville Architecturale*, "as a unit, overwhelming in its simplicity, inside it, the crowd as a whole, a living, swirling group... as one

### THE STADIUM PROJECT OF 1936-37

In a letter to André Malraux of 1934, Le Corbusier mentions Baghdad in respect of his earlier stadium of 1926-27, with Pierre Jeanneret to whom in fact the design must be credited. This was an experimental design, not the result of a specific commission, and, like many of these experiments (e.g., the Museum of Jeanine Grovitz), he intended it to be a receptacle of modern culture: a sort of architectural symbol. Acknowledging in his letter that the type has an element of "blind and serious", the architect of the earlier project anticipates many of the themes of the Baghdad Stadium.

Le Corbusier's depiction of the interior of the 1936-37 stadium (Fig. 3) shows an assembly of people seated in squads - perhaps athletes at an opening ceremony or, more ominously, the seats of political gatherings with which Europe had become familiar in Italy and Germany by 1937. The 1936-37 stadium is furnished with a date, a speaker's platform and a projection screen, intended for spectacular events of various kinds, including the political (Fig. 4).

Stadia were regularly included in Corbusian urban plans. At the time he was working on Baghdad, there were two other stadia in the office: one at Chamliqah (number 4, in Fig. 5) and one at Firmya; the only one to be constructed. For Le Corbusier, a stadium could be an important civic "room", a setting in which modern mass culture appeared to itself ("as one", in the words describing the Colosseum, above).



Fig. 4 Le Corbusier, drawing of the interior of the stadium of 1936-37.

Fig. 5 Le Corbusier, drawing of the interior of the stadium of 1936-37, published in *Le Corbusier*, 1937, page 102 (orig. 101).

Fig. 6 Le Corbusier, drawing of the interior of the stadium of 1936-37, published in *Le Corbusier*, 1937, page 102 (orig. 101).

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