Frank Lloyd Wright and World Architecture
Author(s): Dimitri Tselos
Source: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Mar., 1969), pp. 58-72

Published by: University of California Press on behalf of the Society of Architectural Historians
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/988527
Accessed: 30-12-2015 10:46 UTC

Frank Lloyd Wright and World Architecture

DIMITRI TSELOS University of Minnesota

SIXTEEN YEARS AGO I demonstrated in a special article some influences of Japanese and pre-Columbian art on Wright's architecture built before and after the First World War.[1] Wright sent immediately a statement to the magazine but it was not published until now for reasons given elsewhere in this article.

In that statement Wright refers to his admiration of pre-Columbian architecture and the involvement of all living architecture, including his own, with the growth of man, society at large, and democracy, within whose fabric such involvements are best realized.

As further substantiation of his admiration of pre-Columbian art and architecture, and as an epilogue to my previous article, I am adducing a few more parallels between his work and Central American precedents. I shall also consider his rather precocious awareness of the beginnings of European abstract sculpture and painting which he and his assistants were able to amalgamate with pre-Columbian elements or develop independently. Lastly, Wright's wider involvement with world architecture both as recipient and as giver, will be summarized with various types of citations but without illustrations in order to suggest the extent of that involvement but leave the more definitive comparative visual demonstrations of those relationships to younger hands in view of my imminent retirement and pending commitments to other publications of larger scope.

In my first article on Wright I pointed out the probable connection between the exterior of his projected studio and some Mayan details and speculated as to when the pre-Columbian influence first appeared in his career.[2] An unmistakable confirmation of my original conclusion appears clearly in the capitals of the slender columns of the arcuated "screen" in the hall of the Winslow house of 1893–1894.[3] Each of the faces of the capitals is made up of the free repro-

This study was assisted by the Graduate School Research Fund of the University of Minnesota.

1. "Exotic Influences on Frank Lloyd Wright," *Magazine of Art* (1953), 47:4, 160–169, 184. The material in that article was summarized and expanded in 1954 to include his other sources and world influence at the request of the United States Information Agency for its various international activities. It was used for instructional window displays in the American Public Libraries in Greece and elsewhere, and published in two separate articles in Rome as "Wright e sue origini," *Mondo Occidentale* (Oct. 1955), pp. 31–39; "Wright e sua lezione," *op. cit.* (Nov. 1955) pp. 27–35; and in Germany as "F. L. Wright: Klassiker der Modernen Weltarchitektur," *Universitas* (1959), 14:4, pp. 335–362. In view of the virtual inaccessibility of these magazines in the United States, the material on his sources, other than Mayan and Japanese, is being summarized and expanded in the present article. My earlier revelations on the importance of pre-Columbian architecture for Wright's career seem to have become so diffused that special publications on Wright fail to cite my article even in their bibliography. I am citing this not because of injured pride but out of regret for what passes for "research." My earliest impressions of the Wright-Mayan similarities were made in 1932 when my superior, Dean Bossange of the School of Architecture of New York University, asked me to supplement our common survey of the history of architecture with two special lectures on Central and South American contributions. But the courage to assert and demonstrate the exotic influences on Wright did not materialize until 1948, when as a summer visiting professor at the University of Minnesota I was asked to take part in a symposium on American-Foreign Cultural-Historical Relations organized by the Program of American Studies.

2. Vincent Scully, Jr. (*Frank Lloyd Wright* [1960], n. 35), speculates about the possibility of some Mayan influence upon the early work of Wright through the work of Bruce Price whose client Pierre Lorillard of Tuxedo Park, N. Y., had financed Désiré Charnay's expeditions to the Mayan area (1857–1882) and the large publications of his observations with many plates. The French edition, *Les Anciennes Villes du Nouveau Monde* (Paris, 1885), was succeeded by one in English in 1887, published in New York. I find nothing demonstrably Mayan in Wright's work deriving from Price's designs or buildings, but it is not unlikely that he used the American edition of Charnay's work after his own more spectacular acquaintance with the enormous amount of pre-Columbian material at the Chicago Fair in plaster casts and photographs.

3. I am indebted to Mrs. Kathryn Johnson for the discovery of the Mayan source of these capitals and for the large photograph from which the illustrated detail was extracted.

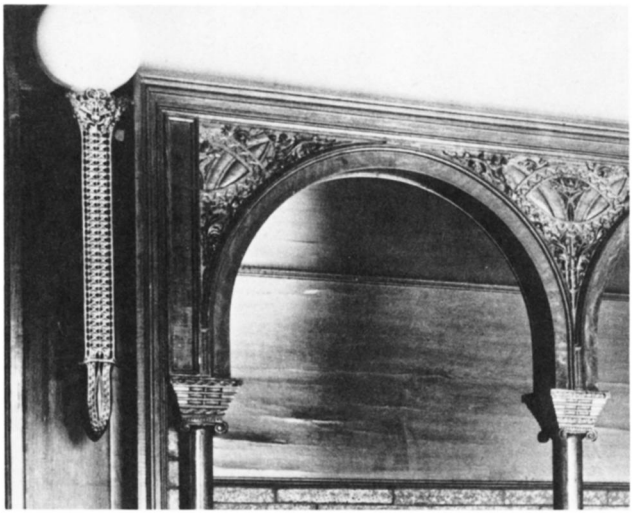

Fig. 1. Detail, vestibule, Winslow House, River Forest, Ill., 1894, Wright (photo: Chicago Architectural Photograph Co.).

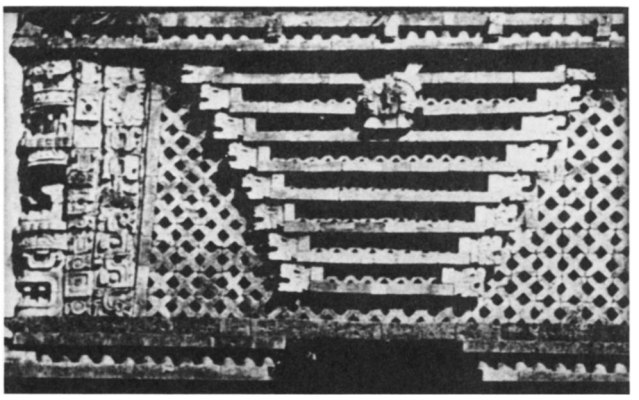

Fig. 2. Detail, frieze, Nunnery, Uxmal (from Maudslay, *Biologia*).

duction of the skeletal "metope" (without the mask) from the frieze of the Nunnery at Uxmal, of which two sections were exhibited, at the Chicago Fair together with other monuments of that site, in the form of plaster casts (Figs. 1, 2). The ingenious adaptation of the motif resulted in an inverted and truncated pyramid which recalls at once early Byzantine capitals and, upon their inversion, typical stepped pyramids of the pre-Columbian period.

The similarities between the exterior of Wright's studio and reception room with the Nunnery at Chichen Itza was pointed out in my previous article. But in retrospect they seem less important than other contemporary examples in Wright's domicile and studio complex, especially in the lunette mural of 1895 in the playroom of his children which had been used earlier as a living room.[4] The composition represents a scene from the Arabian Nights, set in Egypt. The elements of the apparition and its basic form are very similar to an analogous decorative composition used again about a decade later on the exterior of the Midway Gardens in Chicago and on the cast frieze of the Bogk house in Milwaukee (Figs. 3, 4). As indicated in my earlier article on Wright, the various parts of the composition are closely related to the frieze of the Nunnery at Uxmal, the arch of Labna, the breechclouts represented on Mayan sculptured stelae, and the headdress of the free-standing sculpture of the Aztec Goddess of Agriculture.[5]

The influence of pre-Columbian sculpture is also evident in a large relief mounted at the end of one of the top dining balconies in the indoor restaurant of the Midway Gardens —but shown here in some temporary setting. Its partial inspiration by a relief from the Temple of the Sun at Palenque becomes clear upon comparative inspection (Figs. 5, 6).[6] The centralization of both reliefs by a head or a mask, the flanking of their central division by two figures, and the overall coverage of their side sections by many small plaques or panels are more than can be accounted for by coincidence, even though the small plaques in the Midway relief have been made to overlap cubistically in various degrees of projection and recession. Its similarity to other Mayan motifs used by Wright before and after the Midway Gardens—but after the Chicago Fair—is also significant for the origin of this relief. The bracket-like head at the top of the central and dominant section of the Wright relief is clearly related to the cubistically abstracted Mayanesque head used in the Bogk House frieze (Figs. 4, 5, 6). But the bracketed figures which flank the middle unit of the relief seem to have a mixed ancestry. Their cubified heads and the long decorative ceremonial beards are very similar to the heads of the Bogk house frieze and its ancient Mexican ancestors noted above. But in their general articulation and poses as symbolic supporting brackets they are iconographically related to the Greco-Roman tradition of male Carya-

4. Wright, *Autobiography* (New York, 1934), p. 112; H. R. Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials; the Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York, 1942), p. 107, Fig. 16. Although I had seen the lunette mural before, I did not suspect the pre-Columbian origin of its elements until a large contact print was obtained from the Chicago Architectural Photograph Company by Mrs. Johnson for my seminar on Wright.

5. For those pre-Columbian components see my earlier article, *op. cit.* Kaufmann's impression that the Bogk relief was Cubist and asymmetrical was erroneously produced by the oblique photograph and printed orientation of the model in H. T. Wijdeveld, *The Life Work of the American Architect, Frank Lloyd Wright* (Santpoort, 1925), p. 97. Kaufmann, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Fine Arts," *Perspecta* (1963), pp. 40–42.

6. A similar relief is found in the Temple of the Foliated Cross, another smaller one in the National Museum of Mexico City from the Temple of the Cross. Photo of relief reproduced here, after A. P. Maudslay, *Biologia Centrali-Americana . . . Archaeology* (London, 1889–1902), Vol. IV, pl. 88.

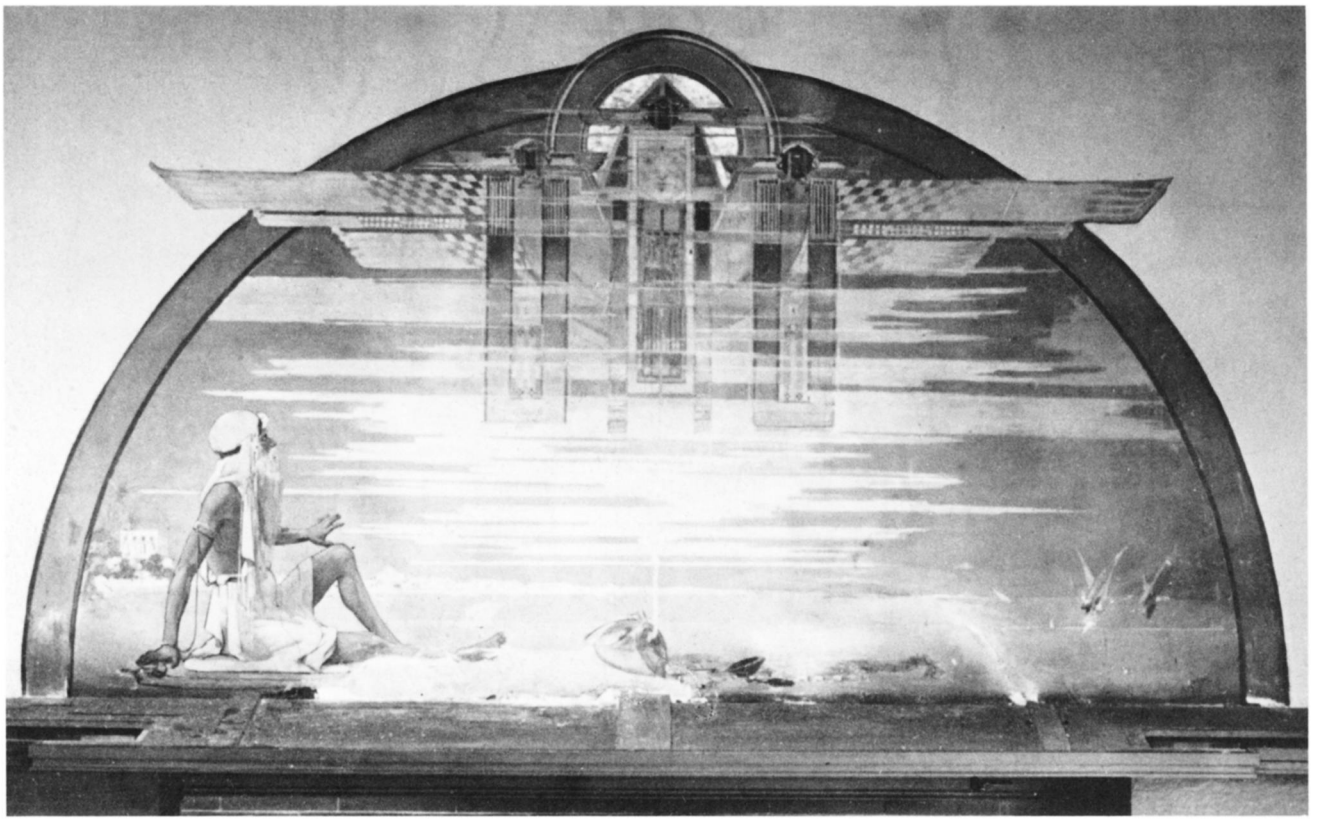

Fig. 3. Mural, playroom, Wright house, Oak Park, Ill., 1896 (photo: Chicago Architectural Photograph Co.).

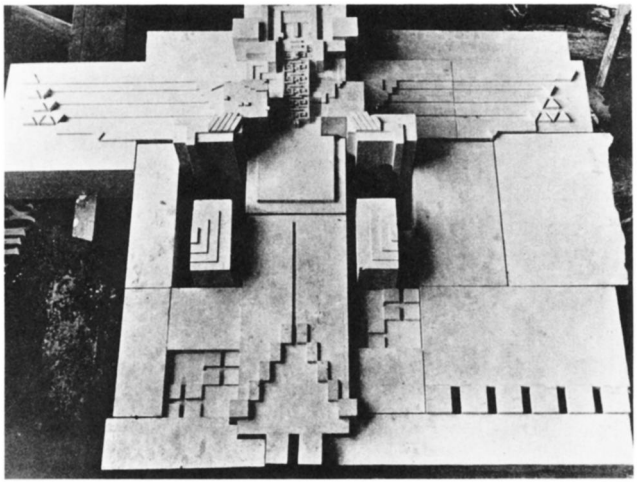

Fig. 4. Model of unit for frieze, Bogk house, Milwaukee, 1916, Wright ? (from Wijdeveld, *Wright*).

tid or Atlas types but actually acting as enframing Termes since there is nothing for them to support above their shoulders.[7]

In view of the eclectic character of the relief, analogies with specific Cubist works are out of the question. But the rather systematic, yet random, manner of overlapping small angular planes horizontally, vertically, or diagonally seems typically Cubist and has no antecedents in Wright's work. Cubist influence, therefore, is definitely implied by the style and affirmed by Wright in his *Autobiography*[8] in which he comments favorably about the replacement of the *Art Nouveau* by abstract art, whose geometric features were not entirely strangers to his own earlier and contemporary tendencies. The plates in *Cubism*[9] by Gleizes and Metzinger published in 1913, other publications of the time, the Armory Show, and what Wright saw with his own eyes when he was in Paris in 1910 could have provided useful suggestions for the Midway relief, the textile blocks, and other decoration. It is not surprising, therefore, that consistent with his interest in the vanguard of "abstract" art and the affinity of his own geometrizations, he delegated "the schemes for

7. Reinach, *Repertoire de la Statuaire Grecque et Romaine* (Paris, 1897–1930), under the names of Apollo, Atlas, Athlete, Bacchus, Dionysus, Heracles, Satyr, Silenus, and Zeus, in comparable poses and others in German and Austrian Baroque balcony or cornice bracket figures. W. Hager, *Die Bauten des Deutschen Barocks* (Jena, 1942), *passim*.

8. Wright, *Autobiography*, pp. 180–184. The Cubist, but not the Mayan, characteristics of the relief have been also noted by J. P. Oud in H. T. Wijdeveld, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

9. A. Gleizes and J. Metzinger, *Cubism*, English edition (London, 1913), *passim*.

sculpture to young Iannelli whom I brought east for the purpose," and Richard Bock, an older collaborator, whereas he "handed the general schemes for color-decoration to William Henderson and Jack Norton of the Art Institute, and Jerry Blum of the Orient."[10] It can be, therefore, assumed that these young men were or became sympathetic or familiar with some of the principles of abstract art. But how much of the conception of the sculpture (and painting) of the Gardens can be attributed to Wright and how much to his assistants is a moot question that requires further examination.

Hitchcock took no specific notice of the relief discussed above or its Mayan and Cubist characteristics. But he detected an independent Cubist direction in the geometrized free-standing figure sculptures of the Midway Gardens whose limitations implied that perhaps Iannelli "had not the talent necessary to execute satisfactorily Wright's projects for Cubist figure sculpture."[11] This summary evaluation of Iannelli's work was undoubtedly suggested to Hitchcock and others by Wright in his *Autobiography* and especially in his article "Organic Architecture" where he wrote that the sculptors, painters, musicians, etc., that he had found "were unable to rise at that time to any synthesis . . . so I made the designs for all to harmonize with the architecture; crude as any sketch is crude, incomplete, as to execution but in effect sufficiently complete to show the immense importance of any such attempt on any architect's part and show indeed that only so does architecture live."[12] But when the sculpture of the Gardens was published in 1915 as "designed by Wright and executed by Iannelli" and the latter complained to Wright in a letter about the division of credits, the master answered, "I think that Wright-Architect, Iannelli-Sculptor is the nearest to a solution. I should have put it so were it left to me."[13] But one wonders whether this settles the question completely.

Between the earlier claims of Wright and those of his modern supporters on one hand, and Wright's revision of his claims on the other, there remains a credibility or informational gap, presented by signed and unsigned sketches, the different styles of the preliminary sketches and of the three-dimensional realizations. Final answers, if and when needed, will necessarily depend on the collection and meticulous comparative analysis and correlation of sketches by Wright, Iannelli, and Bock, and further comparison of the works of the assistants with the character of their independent work before and after their association with Wright. In view of the geometrization of earlier decorative details in the work of Wright that had acquired a number of exotic characteristics, with which Iannelli and Bock had nothing to do, it is logical to assume that the choice of the basic motifs and general treatment was probably determined by Wright, whether by "crude sketch," by word of mouth, or by pointing to one or more book illustrations or photographs to assist his aides in the execution of his ideas and by

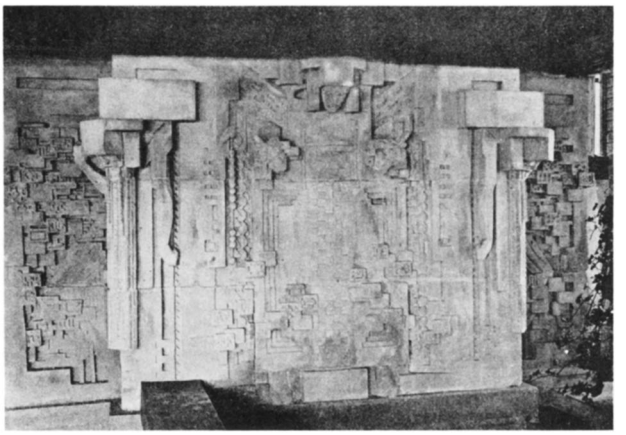

Fig. 5. Relief, Midway Gardens, Chicago, 1914, Wright ? (from Wijdeveld).

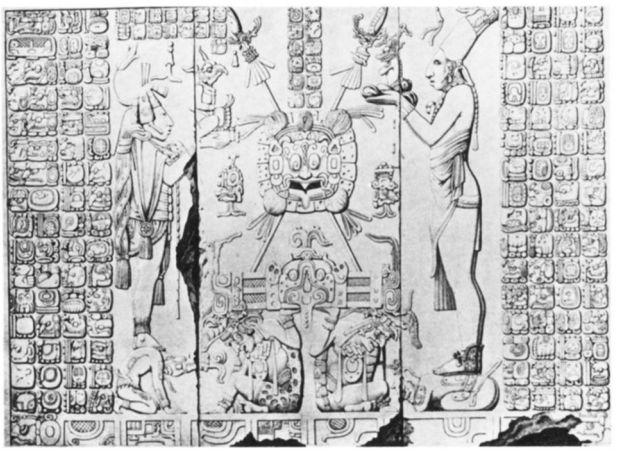

Fig. 6. Relief, Temple of the Sun, Palenque (from Maudslay).

10. Wright, *loc. cit.*

11. Hitchcock, *Wright*, p. 63. The theory of independent and parallel invention of the Cubist trend in Wright is shared or echoed also by E. Kaufmann, *op. cit.*; and F. Gutheim, "The Wright Legacy Evaluated," *Architectural Record*, 128 (Oct. 1960), pp. 148–186.

12. Quoted in F. Gutheim, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright on Architecture* (New York, 1941), p. 188: cf. also his "The Wright Legacy Evaluated."

13. Reported in a letter by Barry Byrne as correction to Gutheim's (*op. cit.*) and others' claims; published as "Wright and Iannelli," *Architectural Record*, 129 (Jan. 1961), p. 242. The article on the Gardens alluded to by Byrne was by H. B. Sell, "Interpretation not Imitation," *International Studio*, 55 (March 1915), pp. lxxix–lxxxiii. Only the sculptures of a girl playing with balloons and another with fans or triangles are captioned as "designed by Wright and executed by A. Iannelli." The girl in Japanese dress cubistically abstracted in a more confident manner is assigned to Wright not by caption but by implication in the text.

repeated supervision as the work progressed from a sequence of sketches to the plaster cast which was to serve as model for casting in concrete. Naturally part of the conception and the actual execution of the work would be Iannelli's or Bock's, but, under the conditions inferred, the assignment of proportionate credit to Wright or his assistants would remain debatable. Furthermore, in view of the proverbially dominating role of the master in his various projects and realizations, he would be given at least the traditional "edge" in such claims, especially in the more architectonic sculpture —if only it revealed a singular style. In reality the large indoor relief, and the cubistic, free-standing Japanese woman, reflect one style, the most competent and confident achievement; the female figure in the exterior rising against a ribbed trapezoidal screen and holding a cube overhead as well as the two prismatic male figures in the interior seem to belong to another and lesser style; while the "fan" girl and the rather naturalistic female figure holding a large balloon and floating others, also made for the interior, belong to still another style.[14] It seems therefore unlikely that Iannelli designed and executed all the foregoing works, despite Wright's attribution of them to him. Carrying the speculation further, it is possible that Iannelli was the sculptor in charge and designed all of it in consultation with Wright; that he executed the large relief and the free-standing Japanese woman; but the rest were probably carried out by Richard Bock, whose academic training may explain both the clumsy cubism and the insipid balloon girl.

Analogous fusion of traditional western motifs with cubistic and pre-Columbian elements appear intermittently throughout the mature career of Wright. The older western elements were part of his inevitable inheritance as a western artist. But his adaptation of pre-Columbian art around 1895 reveals a precocious romantic primitivism or an uncommon racial-cultural tolerance which antedate by a decade the "discovery" and assimilation of primitive African art by modern European artists. But Wright seems to have become aware also of the importance of the other "primitivism" and "fundamentality" underlying the beginnings and ramifications of planar abstract painting in France and neighboring countries before the First World War, as is suggested by his calculated effort to hire assistants who were familiar with such trends and could use them in the decoration of his Midway Gardens.

The results are evident I think in the two Midway murals composed of gaily colored constellations of discs of various sizes. One mural is seen in Fig. 7. When I first saw them in 1917, in the company of a fellow busboy, who was working at the Gardens, I thought they were abstractions of champagne bubbles. But the inferred sequence of the preliminary projects and the locale of the emanation and destination of the constellation suggest a more cosmic motif to my adult vision.

Like the sculptures, Hitchcock saw the murals as a "parallel invention . . . made not by the New York artists who in 1913 organized the Armory Show in which such European abstract work was first shown in America—none of them were yet so advanced—but by an architect who was merely developing abstract painting and semi-abstract sculpture as an essential component of a new architecture."[15] But he did not attempt to explain what might have been the contribution of Henderson, Norton, and Blum, nor how and why such parallel invention could have arisen at the same time as the European. It is worth noting that Wright, as indicated earlier, was in favor of abstract art in Europe, affirmed clearly the importance of the "straight line, itself an abstraction, and the flat plane for its own sake, which had characterized my buildings from the first," and how he saw his "trusty T-square and aspiring triangle as means to the Midway Gardens end I had in view."[16] Considering the nature of the murals it is surprising that he did not mention the use of the compass, but he does refer to his acquaintance, since his kindergarten days, with the elements of abstraction, including the circle, which had become "by now my habit" in dealing with the architecture, painting, and sculpture of the Midway Gardens. Actually he had used in his earlier works the results of the various drawing tools of his profession including the compass as seen in the arcs, semicircles, and circles in systematic and symmetrical combinations of quatrefoil, square, or lozenge shapes in the stained-glass skylights of the dining room and living room of his house at Oak Park, both before 1912. But he astounds one by an initialed note on one of the studies of what might be called a "working model" for one of the two Midway murals (Fig. 8). The partly faded note implies that such abstract forms occupied him since 1893. An examination, however, of his published works and drawings dating before 1912 does not bear out such a claim, and to assume that such free or random improvisations on constellations of abstracted spheres with cosmic connotations were conducted privately during the first twenty years of his career would place an inordinate strain on credibility. The only detail in the study that suggests a survival of his earlier "abstractions" is a bare semblance of the quatrefoil-square motif, already cited, whose use as an enchainment device in two vertical rows of small discs in groups of four near the cen-

14. Sculptures not illustrated here can be seen in Wijdeveld, *op. cit.*, and Sell, *op. cit.*

15. Hitchcock, *Wright*, p. 63.
16. Wright, *Autobiography*, p. 180.

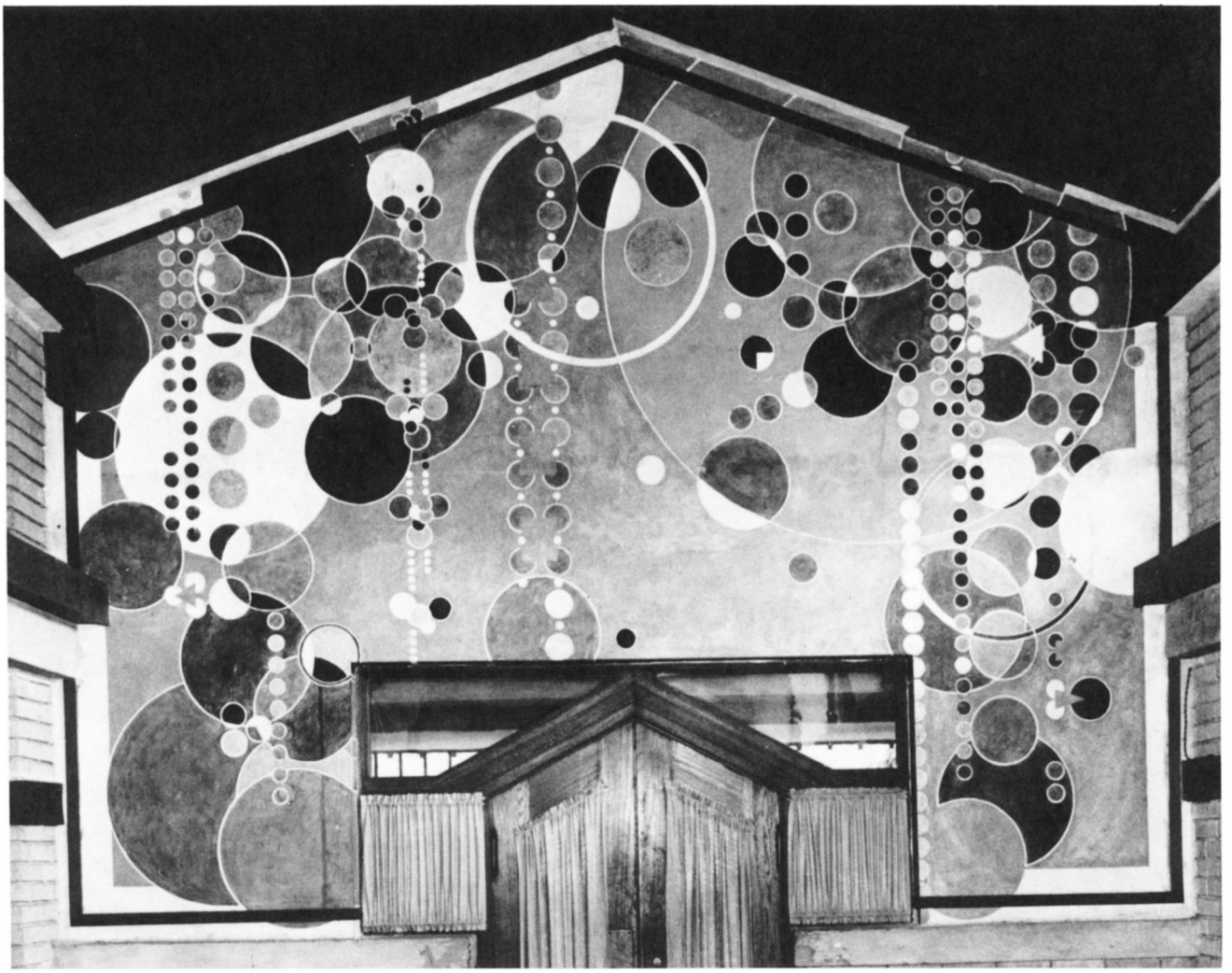

Fig. 7. Mural, Midway Gardens, Chicago, 1914, Wright ? (photo: Chicago Architectural Photograph Co.).

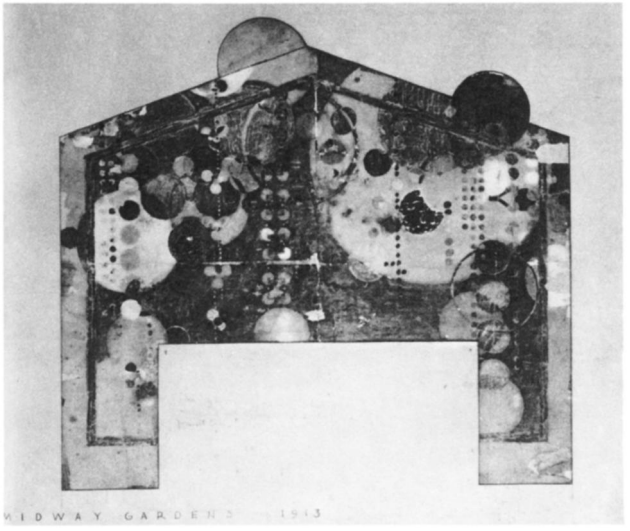

Fig. 8. Study for mural, Midway Gardens, 1913, Wright ? (from Wright, *Drawings*).

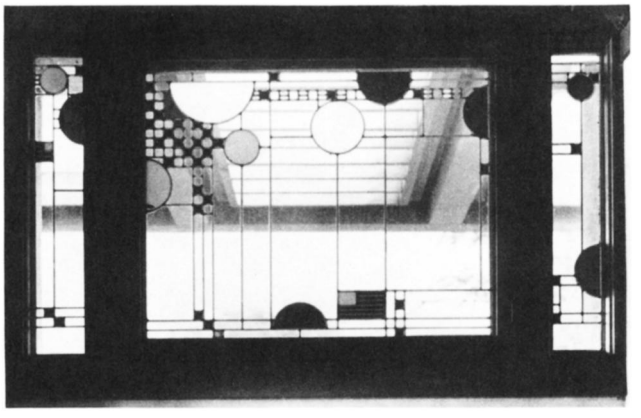

Fig. 9. Window, Coonley Playhouse, Riverside, Ill., 1912, Wright ? (photo: Chicago Architectural Photograph Co.).

ter, seems to be an incongruous intrusion in the freer movements of the cosmic constellations in the composition. Doubt on his claim is also cast by what appear to be his earliest compositions with discs, in the Coonley Playhouse of 1912 (Fig. 9). Here we have not a cosmic but what I

would call a descriptive or narrative abstraction in stained glass in one of the two windows which decorate the kitchen and workshop alcoves. It is made up of discs, squares, and rectangles of various sizes. Since all the fully shown discs appear over vertical lines that were intentionally made parts of the lead armature, they are meant to represent abstractions of captive balloons. Together with the diminutive American flag in the lower-hand corner they were intended to symbolize a gay patriotic event suitable to the purpose of the building as indicated also by the other similar windows on what might be called the façade of the Playhouse.[17]

Since this type of narrative abstraction and composition with discs shows a dramatic break from his previous work and coincides with or soon follows his return from Europe in 1911, I would infer that the basic inspiration was brought back from Paris where Wright was in 1910. His knowledgeable comments on the dying *Art Nouveau* and on its replacement by the vanguard of abstract art, and the freer use of "abstract" plane and mass compositions in his architecture from 1911 on, would confirm the foregoing conclusion. Furthermore, his admitted and practiced preference for the abstract and geometric would have prompted him to seek out the new direction rather than ignore it. With these considerations in mind the work of the men working in Paris at the time of his visit would appear a congenial confirmation of his own geometrizing propensities and an encouragement to develop them further along a freer, more subtle and sophisticated direction.

An examination of some of the works of these men antedating Wright's visit to Paris and his use of similar motifs in the Coonley Playhouse and the Midway Gardens is important. To the best of my knowledge the earliest representation of what might be called both a narrative and cosmic abstraction is a composition of flattened spheres in a celestial context painted by Franz Kupka, entitled *First Steps*, and dated 1909(Fig. 10). Comparable works with meteorologi-

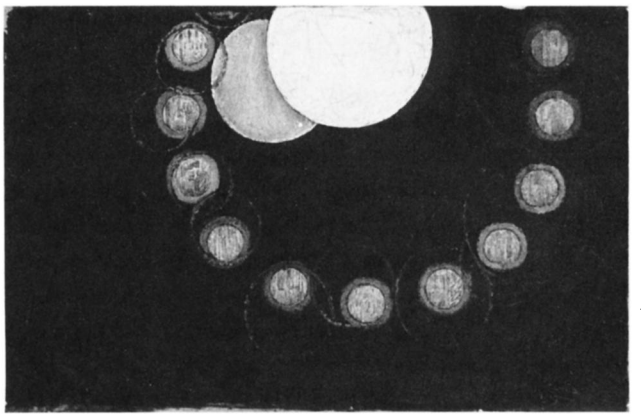

Fig. 10. *Premiers Pas*, 1909, F. Kupka, Museum of Modern Art (photo: MOMA).

cal or cosmic suggestions by Robert Delaunay and Roger de la Fresnaye, both members of the Orphism branch of the abstract movement in France and also antedating the work of Wright under discussion, are seen in Fig. 11 and various versions of the *Eiffel Tower* by Delaunay.

What seems to be a transitional stage from the narrative windows of the Coonley Playhouse to the cosmic murals of the Gardens is an arcuated composition obviously intended for an overdoor mural for the Gardens. Some of the geometric shapes of the window reappear here. But the mural

Fig. 11. *Conquest of the Air*, 1912, R. de la Fresnaye, Museum of Modern Art (from Seligman, *Fresnaye*).

17. The Chicago Architectural Photograph Company identifies the window illustrated here as one in Wright's house. But Hitchcock's observations that the tall windows of the Playhouse contain abstract balloon designs (as well as the recent testimony of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Michals, the present owners of the building) confirm my localization of the window in question at the Coonley Playhouse (Hitchcock, *Wright*, p. 61). Hitchcock's belief in the originality of Wright is echoed by Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, p. 40, with the observation that these are "exactly contemporary with the first documented European color-abstractions by Kupka, Larionov, and Delaunay," but fails to cite any works, or documents, or where they might be found. As noted by the illustrations in this article most of the analogous works by Kupka and Delaunay are definitely earlier than the glass and mural designs. A. Drexler, *The Drawings of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York, 1962) erroneously attributes his fig. 291 to the Coonley house (1908) rather than to the Coonley playhouse (1912). I am indebted to my colleague Prof. Sidney Simon for the photograph of Kupka's painting reproduced here.

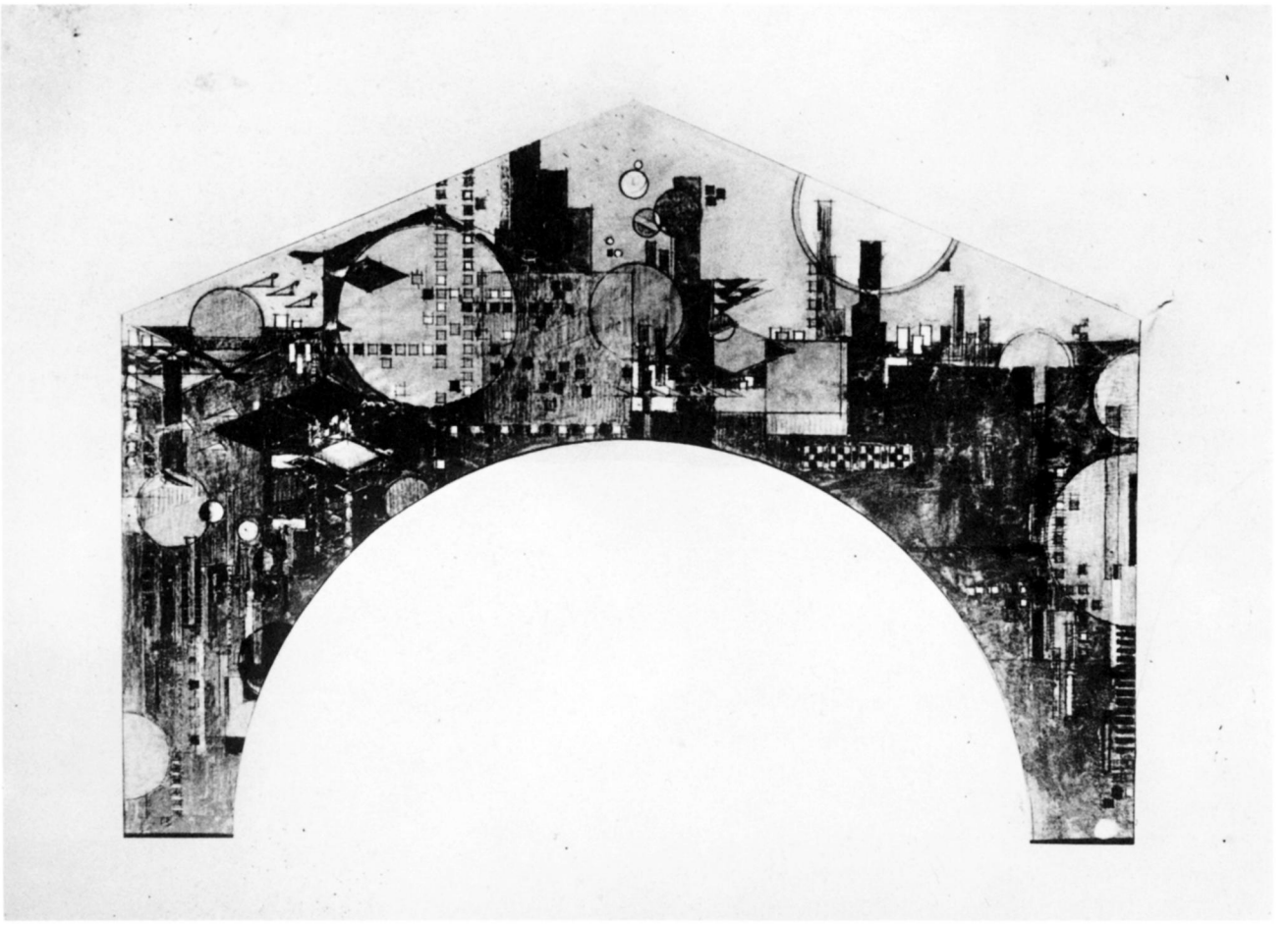

Fig. 12. Study for mural, *City by the Sea*, Midway Gardens, 1913, Wright ? (photo: Rosenthal).

composition has been enriched with outlines of various types of buildings overlapped and surrounded by multicolored discs, presumably of the sun, moon, and the stars—and their reflections—representing, according to the title a *City by the Sea* at night (Fig. 12).[18] Obviously the composition in Fig. 8 over a rectangular opening was probably the last of the series of studies, as noted earlier. The two murals which were actually carried out are devoid of any allusion to an earthly milieu whether a holiday or a cityscape. They are composed of various constellations of colored luminous or transparent discs in overlapping clusters or in formal processional alignments of two or more parallel rows of them which seem to rise from behind a parapet, float upward, and disappear behind the ceiling cornice, giving the impression of many simultaneous heavenward-bound processions of flattened stellar spheres (Fig. 7).

18. The study for the "City by the Sea" seems to have been first reproduced by Julius Rosenthal from a photograph in the Wright archives. The later study with the note is part of the archives at Taliesin East and was first published in Wright, *Drawings for a Living Architecture* (New York, 1959), p. 153.

In the light of the evidence presented above it seems unlikely that Wright with or without his aides conceived and developed independently the series of disc compositions described above. Their appearance after his return from Europe, the new planar and prismatic elements in the structure and decoration of the Midway Gardens clearly suggest a comparable influence upon the murals. The work of Kupka, Delaunay, de la Fresnaye, and others published by Gleizes and Metzinger, the suggestions in the Armory Show, and whatever Wright saw in Paris in 1910 were likely to have provided more than just a confirmation of his earlier practice.

Yet one must accept Hitchcock's observation that the murals are more "advanced" than their European counterparts—in their complexity, appropriate gaiety, diversity of overlappings, superpositions, and interpenetrations with reciprocal transformations. Indeed, the sudden appearance of comparably rich constellations with cosmic connotations in the work of Kandinsky and Bauer after 1925 may well be due to the publication of the Midway murals in Wijdeveld's book on Wright the previous year in Holland and its prob-

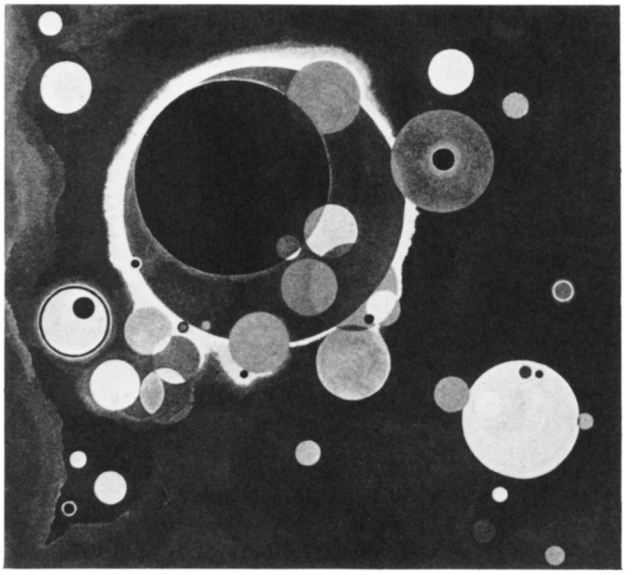

Fig. 13. *Some Circles*, 1926, W. Kandinsky (from Einstein, *Kunst des 20 Jahrhunderts*).

able immediate acquisition by the Bauhaus (cf. Figs. 7, 13).[19]

It was, however, the pre-Columbian primitivism that seems to have had the longest and greatest effect upon Wright's work during and after the First World War. The over-all relief or "mosaic" effects produced by the ancient Americans by deep carving, studding, or inserting cut stones into the walls of their palaces and temples in the form of broad or high friezes over a virtually bare lower zone have been adapted by Wright, first to some extent at the Midway Gardens and more extensively at most of his California houses built of pre-cast concrete or "textile" blocks (Figs. 14, 15).[20]

19. Wijdeveld, . . . *Wright* (Santpoort, 1925). Kandinsky painting after C. Einstein, *Die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1931), p. 521. A few years before that time Kandinsky and Bauer seem to have abandoned their freer, allusive, outdoor, organic improvisations for more sharply geometric compositions. The circle or disk appears occasionally in their works but never in constellations despite their presence in the earlier work of Kupka, Delaunay, and Fresnaye. Still the question of how much of Fig. 7 was conceived and rendered by Wright and how much by his assistants remains open. The problem is further confused by the caption under the first publication of the mural in question in Sell, *op. cit.*, which says "Polychromatic Decoration, Designed and Executed by John Lloyd Wright." No mention is made by Sell of Henderson, Norton, and Blum to whom, according to Wright, as indicated above, were assigned "the general schemes for color-decoration," whereas "My son John helped superintend." It is, therefore, unlikely that John had anything to do with it.

20. In addition to the many photographs and plaster casts of Mayan buildings and sculptures available at the Chicago Fair, Wright could have had access to the monumental and richly illustrated publications of Stephens and Catherwood, of Désiré Charnay, and especially the multi-volume work of Maudslay, *Biologia Centrali-Americana . . . Archaeology*, Vols. I–IV (Plates).

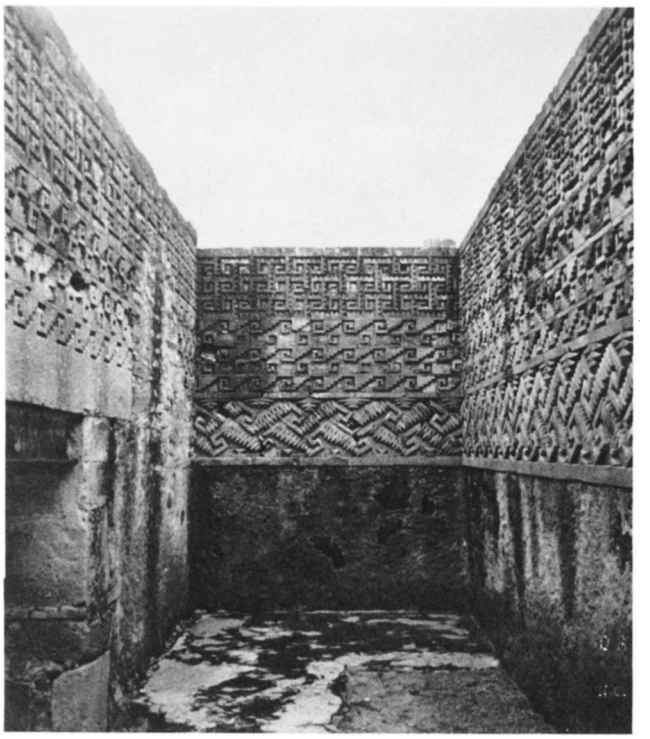

Fig. 14. Interior court, Zapotec Palace, Mitla (photo: V. L. Annis).

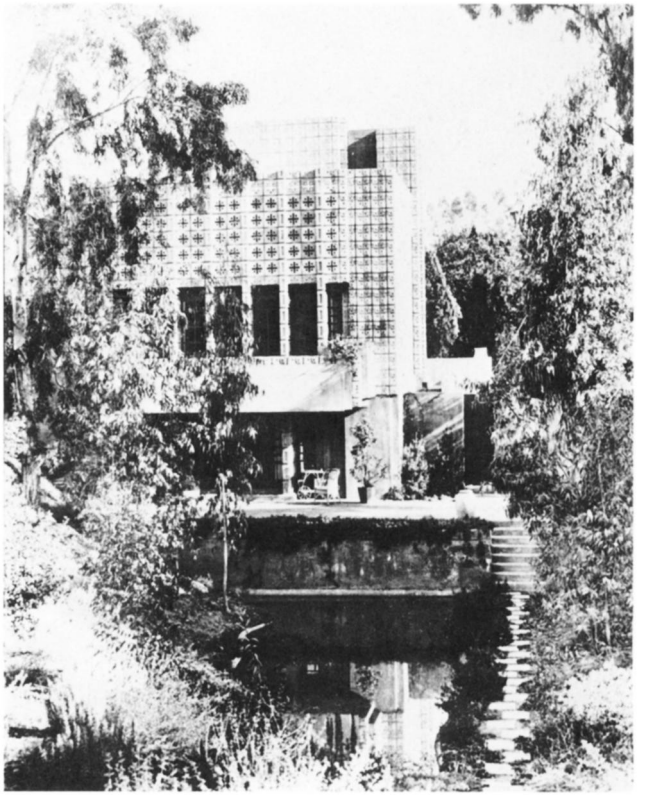

Fig. 15. Millard house, Pasadena, Cal., 1923, Wright (from Hitchcock, *Wright*).

That his interest extended even to pre-Columbian details was demonstrated in my previous article. Recently another and more intriguing motif came to my attention. It is the equal-armed cross with dots between its arms which was cast in the form of "incised" or perforated shape in the cement blocks of the Millard house. The pre-Columbian origin of the motif was first revealed to me through its clearly identical incision in a cylinder seal found in Tlatilco, Mexico, and now in the Milwaukee Museum (Figs. 15, 16). It appears frequently in sculptured or painted works of art including the various Mayan codices. It is commonly known as Lamat and is used as a Venus-sign or as the twenty-day period symbol or both. Dr. Stephan F. Borhegyi, Director of the Milwaukee Public Museum, who published the cylinder seal, reported that the motif is also known as the Kan-cross which in classic Mayan times (300–900) was a symbol of the four corners of the world, and in post-classical times (900–1500) among the Aztecs it was the symbol of turquoise, water, and fertility.[21] Whether Wright thought of this motif as peculiarly suitable to some Millard family tradition in terms of any one or more of the alluded associative symbolic meanings—Christian or pagan—may never be known.[22]

21. S. Borhegyi, "The First Printers of the New World," *Lore* (Winter 1956), 16:1, pp. 5–9 and in a letter to me, 22 June 1966.

22. The cross appears in a simpler form involved with other elements in an over-all pattern decoration on the exterior of the Coonley house and on the frieze of the Bogk house in incised form (Fig. 4). The temptation to read retrospectively symbolism into architecture without benefit of documented social usages or individual intentions, of the architect or client, is speculatively a fascinating game but an unreliable index to tangible information, especially when the same form or "symbol," which is fashionably propagated, serves generically different buildings. The reader is invited to compare J. Alford, "Modern Architecture and the Symbolism of the Creative Process," *College Art Journal*, XIV (Winter 1955), 102–123, and N. K. Smith, *Frank Lloyd Wright, a Study in Architectural Content* (New York, 1966).

23. The plans of the Arroyo group reproduced here are after W. H. Holmes, *Archaeological Studies Among the Ancient Cities of Mexico, Field Columbian Museum Publication, Anthropological Series I, No. 1* (Chicago, 1895–1897), pl. 39.

Fig. 16. Aztec cylinder seal, Milwaukee Public Museum (photo: MPM).

The last example showing a strong evidence of pre-Columbian influence, although earlier in chronological order, is Wright's ingenious adaptation in the Unity Temple of 1904 of the plans of two "sister" buildings in the Arroyo group found among the extensive ruins at Mitla (Figs. 17, 18).[23] The basic shapes, proportions, and juxtaposition of

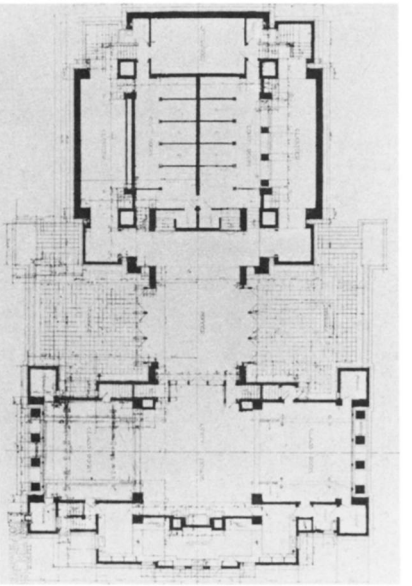

Fig. 17. Plan, Unity Temple, Oak Park, Ill., 1904, Wright (from Wijdeveld).

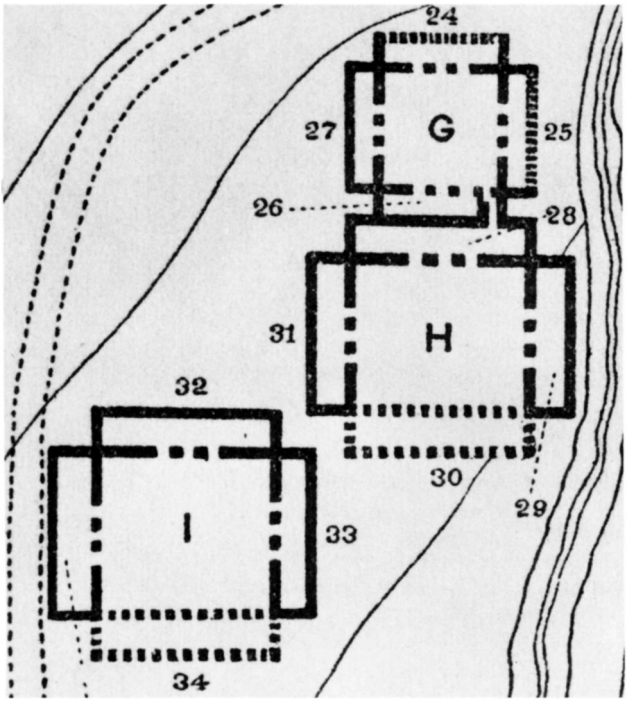

Fig. 18. Plan, temples in Arroyo group, Mitla (from Holmes, *Archaeological Studies*).

the plans of the buildings and their interrelations are more than can be accounted for by mere coincidence, and confirm previous indications of the creative adaptations of other pre-Columbian motifs by Wright. On the other hand the remarkably modern and efficient buildings in the Oak Park complex and their admirable functional interrelation more than offset any imputation of plagiarizing the relatively primitive structures and reveal once more Wright's remarkable creative capacity for infusing new life into ancient or primitive forms. This relationship brings us back to the broader objective of this paper, the provision of a comprehensive, though sketchy, glimpse of Wright in the dual role of recipient as well as giver of influences in a world context.

Some of the sources of his earlier architecture have been demonstrated or cited by Hitchcock, Scully, Gebhard, Lancaster, and this writer.[24] But much more can be done with Wright's interrelations in architecture, decoration or furniture with the Oriental and European styles from prehistoric to near-modern; more specifically the Scotch and Viennese Secession, the Arts and Crafts movement in England, and the major modern movements in the European and American continents.

His influence (which had been preceded by a number of monographic European publications of his work from 1910 to 1925 and thereafter by a multitude of articles, reviews, and exhibitions of his works) has become worldwide. They were belated confirmations of his importance and the continuing extensive interest in his works and ideas, as a number of European buildings testify.

The earliest impact of Wright's influence appeared in the office of the Deutz Gas Company complex by Gropius for the Werkbund Exposition at Cologne in 1914. But much more obvious and extensive is his influence during the twenties—as seen in the country houses of W. Kuhnert and K. Pfeiffer of which one was built in Berlin-Babelsberg in 1925. Its nearest counterpart is the Barton house of 1904, which had appeared in the first two German publications on Wright's work. The similarity of the cubiform masses in brick, the horizontal division by stringcourses, the overhanging eaves and the grouped windows accompanied by boxed hanging vines leave no doubt as to the direction of the influence. Very few other German buildings approximate as closely as this Wright's Prairie house style. But many of the characteristic details of his residential, religious, or commercial structures reappear in variable degrees of prominence during the Weimar Republic in the works of P. Behrens, Distel and Grubig, R. Doecker, A. Gelhorn, F. Herold, E. Mendelsohn, Mies Van der Rohe, W. Kreis, E. Meurin, H. Poelzig, W. Riphahn, K. Schneider, and F. Walter.[25]

The Dutch were hardly slower in their discovery of Wright than the Germans. H. P. Berlage recognized his importance when he visited the United States in 1910 and subsequently wrote and lectured about him. Visible evidence of Wright's influence, however, does not appear until after the First World War in a project for a factory at Purmerend by J. J. P. Oud. The next decade in Holland saw not only the publication of a large book on Wright but also numerous buildings clearly indicating his impact in various forms, found in some of the buildings of W. Dudok, P. J. C. Klaarhamer, H. F. Simons, H. Elte, J. B. Van Loghem, D. Roosenberg, R. Van T'Hoff, J. Wils, and the firm of Verschoor and Ruten.[26]

France, the stronghold of academic tradition and architectural education, was less receptive of Wright's innovations than either Germany or Holland. She was cool even to the aims and ideas of the early Le Corbusier who was destined, through his books and works, to push reluctant academic France to the forefront of International architecture. Nevertheless, one detects some details in some of the works of Tony Garnier and Robert Mallet-Stevens which bear the unmistakable touch of Wright.[27]

The Belgian architects, taking their cues more from France than from Holland or Germany were not easily af-

24. Hitchcock, *Wright*, *passim*; D. Tselos, "Exotic Influences," *Magazine of Art* (1953); "Wright e sue origini," *Mondo Occidentale* (1955); D. Gebhard, "Note on the Chicago Fair of 1893 and Frank Lloyd Wright," *JSAH*, XVIII (May 1959), pp. 63–65; C. Lancaster, *Japanese Influence in America* (New York, 1962), pp. 84–90; V. Scully, *Wright*, *passim*. It is good to know that Vincent Scully shares with others and me the most rational idea that the only meaningful process in artistic creation is through mutual exchange of forms and ideas, "Wright Vs. the International Style," *Art News*, 53 (March 1954), pp. 32–35, 64–66, and *ibid.* (Sept. 1954), pp. 48–49. But it requires a rich and analytical visual memory to detect the origins because they are often almost thoroughly assimilated in the evolution of a creative synthesis. In tracking down the origins of Wright one must not ignore even the testimony of a disgruntled assistant such as Marion Mahony Griffin (recorded in an unpublished manuscript found in different copies in the Libraries of Congress, the New York Historical Society, and the Chicago Art Institute) so long as such testimony is compared with written, illustrated or reconstructed documents.

25. J. J. P. Oud, in Wijdeveld, . . . *Wright* . . ., p. 86; Hitchcock, "Wright's Influence Abroad," *Parnassus*, XII (Dec. 1940), 11-20; J. C. Wattjes, *Moderne Architectuur* (Amsterdam, 1927), *passim*; G. Platz, *Die Baukunst der Neuesten Zeit* (Berlin, 1930), *passim*; A Sartoris, *Architettura Funzionale* (Milan, 1935), *passim*; *Architecture Vivante en Allemagne*, I–IV (Paris, 1928), *passim*; Tselos, "Wright e sue Lezione," *Mondo Occidentale* (Nov. 1955), pp. 27–35; N. Pevsner, "Frank Lloyd Wright's Peaceful Penetration of Europe," *Architect's Journal*, XXXIX (May 1939), pp. 731–734; Scully, *Modern Architecture* (1961), pp. 25–26.

26. *Ibid.*; *Architecture Vivante en Hollande*, I, II (Paris, 1930), *passim;* F. R. Yerbury, *Modern Dutch Buildings* (London, 1931), *passim*; Tselos, *loc. cit.*; Pevsner, *loc. cit.*; Hitchcock, *loc. cit.*

27. *Architecture Vivante en France, II: Tony Garnier* (Paris, 1932), *passim*.

fected by Wright's spreading influence. Yet one finds a sufficient number of Wrightian motifs in the work of Victor Bourgeois and other lesser Belgian architects to suggest that, as in France, there was some sporadic emulation of Wright if only in the outer aspects of his style.[28]

Hints of Wright's indirect influence may also be detected in Switzerland, Italy, and even in the early modern architecture of Mexico and Brazil, but such hints seem virtually absorbed in the new International vocabulary and are detectable only to those who have been steeped deeply and long in the visual vocabulary of Wrightian architecture.

While the early leavening of European architecture was going on under the impact of his ideas and style, Wright was offered the opportunity to do likewise in Japan, where he was commissioned to design the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. The choice of Wright for that major undertaking was probably motivated partly by the recognition in his work of comparable Japanese or Oriental flavor. But it may have been also guided by the fact that Wright was the only important modern architect who had made the most satisfactory synthesis of the traditional and the new which could fit in early twentieth-century Japan. In a sense the event was a fateful opportunity for Wright to repay his debt to a culture which he had admired greatly and from which he had extracted some valuable lessons in the formulation of his own domestic architecture and decoration.[29]

Wright returned from Japan after the First World War to continue the fourth decade of his productive career. But his impact upon Japanese architecture was not to stop with his Imperial Hotel, Jiyu Gakuen School, and some residences.[30] Antonin Raymond, his Swiss-born American student, who had taken part in Wright's Japanese campaign, remained in Japan to carry on the Wrightian mission and to develop there a successful career of his own which he interrupted in 1938 when he returned to the United States. As might be expected the imprint of Wright's style is clearly seen in Raymond's Japanese work of the early twenties. But Raymond's practice in Japan, the various publications on Wright, both European and Japanese, and Wright's buildings in Tokyo left their mark definitely on Japanese architecture. Vestigial elements of that influence may be found even in the relatively recent works of contemporary architects such as S. Horiguchi, K. Kanayama, F. Murasama, I. and T. Yoshida, and J. Yoshimure.[31] Undoubtedly stylistic details are the more readily detectable but the least important of the influence of Wright. More important of course were his ideas concerned with analogous Japanese concepts of functional construction, organic relation to the site, free planning, and flowing space. But these were probably less obvious, for they were fused with traditional Japanese elements and with the European International style which may have already contained some important features of the Wrightian principles of architecture.

Yet one must not ignore those features that first meet the eye. How prevalent the use of the textured pre-cast concrete block became in Japan may be judged by its common use in the post-office and houses of Nigawa and elsewhere. My former student and informant, Mrs. Nina Howell Starr, who lived there a number of years in the recent post-war period, and who sent me some representative photographs, wrote that the Wrightian textile block is so common as to be considered a "real part of contemporary Japanese culture." This condition provides a symbolic link to an ancient and little known intercontinental relationship. Serious scholars and explorers have suggested the probable existence of a two-way transpacific communication between the old Indo-Chinese civilization and Central America. The outer resemblance of old Indo-Chinese architecture to the similarly stratified Mayan and Zapotec monuments has been supplemented by iconographic parallels by Dr. Robert Heine-Geldern and his collaborators, suggesting a cultural invasion of Central America by Indo-Chinese missions during the Greco-Roman and Early Christian eras.[32] If this theory

28. Platz, *op. cit.* The influence of Wright on American architecture, especially in the Middle West, is much more extensive than in any other part of the world, as a perusal of American professional magazines of this century would show.

29. Wright's claim that he never saw a Japanese house until he went to Japan in 1908, thus implying that his earlier houses could not have been influenced by Japanese domestic architecture, and that his love of the Japanese prints was merely expressed in the aesthetics of his architectural compositions found acceptance with some scholars. However, since the last war a more analytical and objective examination of his sources has shown that the claim was only partly true and that a variety of Japanese features were transferred to his work before and after he went to Japan. The Japanese prints that he saw or owned contained not only the special Japanese aesthetic he admired but also representations of domestic and other buildings. Furthermore, his admiration for the other tangible aspects of Japanese culture, would not have impeded purchase or consultation of the various illustrated publications on Japanese art and architecture which appeared since the Centennial Exposition. The analogies cited or illustrated by the following publications are a partial index of Wright's debt to Japanese art forms: Hitchcock, *Wright, passim*; Tselos, *Exotic Influences*, pp. 160–161; Manson, "Frank Lloyd Wright and the Fair of '93," *Art Quarterly*, XVI (Summer, 1953), 114–123; Scully, *Wright*, pp. 12–22; Lancaster, *loc. cit.*

30. E. Kaufmann, *Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings* (New York, 1960), p. 346; A. and N. Raymond, *Antonin Raymond, his Work in Japan*; 1920–1935 (Tokyo, 1936), pls. *passim*.

31. Iwao Yamawaki, et al., ed., *Japanese Houses Today* (Tokyo, 1958), pp. 1–100. Raymond returned to Japan after the last war to continue his practice there.

32. R. Heine-Geldern and G. F. Eckholm, "Significant Parallels in the Symbolic Arts of Southern Asia and Middle America," *The Civilizations of Ancient America*; Selected papers of the Twenty-ninth In-

were completely substantiated the introduction of Wright's Mayanesque architectural features in the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo would seem to complete another cycle of intercontinental exchange and stands as a symbol of the cultural interdependence which must have existed long before we have become conscious of the desirability of its cultivation for international understanding and peaceful coexistence.

As his influence was waning in Japan in the twenties and thirties, so was the influence of pre-Columbian architecture and decoration slowly disappearing in his work. Their place was being gradually taken by the new world-wide trends of modern architecture, the prismatic Expressionists and what I prefer to call the Modern-classic or Purist style in view of its development out of principles and features which grew within the puristic movements of France, Holland, and Germany.

Considering the expressionist trend first in relation to Wright's work, we are at once reminded of his use occasionally and very early in his career of the octagon or portions of it, the lozenge and the right-angle triangle diagonally oriented in his plans and superstructures. But it was not until 1922 that he embarked upon a general and prominent use of the hexagon and similar crystalline or prismatic forms in plan, mass, and surface, as noted in the projects for the cabins of a summer colony at Emerald Bay and Lake Tahoe, California.

About this time Gropius was also using boldly crystalline or prismatic forms in his memorial at Weimar and the Sommerfeld luxury "log cabin"—offshoots of prismatic Cubism; likewise Mies Van der Rohe in his glass-metal tower projects for a triangular site; Otto Bartning in his houses, churches, and other projects; and Rudolf Belling in his La Scala Restaurant in Berlin.[33] Assignment of priorities and determination of the direction of influence or interfluence must be determined by careful examination of exhibition records and publication dates of such projects and realizations. At present there seems to be no clear indication that Wright was influenced directly and specifically by his younger contemporaries in Germany in this form of expressionism. But the acceleration in his use of the more sharply angular or prismatic forms in so many different ways may well have been stimulated by the prismatic effects in the proto-cubist and cubist ramifications of French and German abstract painting and sculpture, which furnish one important source of geometric Expressionism. However, in Germany this phase was a passing phenomenon even for Bartning who was the most persistent exponent of that style between the two world wars. In Wright's work, it remained to become an important expressive and dynamic force throughout the remainder of his career. Yet this mode did not displace entirely the horizontality of his Prairie style or the pre-Columbian monumentality but rather became often fused with them in expressive orchestrations of different materials and shapes.

While the expressionist mode was being applied by Wright during the twenties, the International or Purist style with its characteristic cubiform volumes and ribbon windows was becoming the new architectural language of Europe. Its bare, flat surfaces, and thin walls, sometimes in the form of seemingly flimsy windbreaks, parapets, or similarly semi-detached planes, and the impression that some buildings were carried on temporary scaffolding, invited his derisive term for it—the "cardboard" style.[34] His further impression that the young upstarts knew nothing of the poetry of color and texture of natural and artificial materials would seem to put him temporarily on the side of the reactionary academics. He might have been more charitable had he looked more carefully and recognized in the ribbon windows and ribbon spandrels some echoes of the work of his "lieber Meister" Sullivan, and the flat surfaces of Japanese houses, and some of his own work of the first two decades of the century.[35] In due time he did see and became reconciled with his rather aseptic and challenging relatives. His projects of the late twenties and early thirties carry sufficient testimony of this change of heart. But the most striking demonstration of Wright's acceptance of the new European architectural manner is found in a comparison of the Garden View of the Villa Hefferlin (1932) in Paris, by André Lurçat, with the broad side-view across from the pool of the Kaufmann summer house *Falling Water* at Bear Run of

ternational Congress of Americanists (Chicago, 1951), pp. 299–309; R. Heine-Geldern, "Traces of Indian and Southeast Asiatic Hindu-Buddhist Influences in Mesoamerica," *Proceedings of the 35th International Congress of Americanists* (Mexico, 1964), pp. 47–54. Although Heine-Geldern's ideas are still questioned by some Americanists, the number of scholars and explorers who tend to confirm his theory of Asiatic influence on Mesoamerica is increasing, as seen by the number of papers presented at the congress just cited. The foregoing references I owe to Dr. Richard Adams, Anthropologist, University of Minnesota.

33. Stoedtner, photograph No. 135.525; Philip Johnson, *Mies van der Rohe* (New York, 1947), *passim*; H. Mayer, *Der Baumeister Otto Bartning* (Heidelberg, 1951), *passim*; *Architecture Vivante en Allemagne: Erich Mendelsohn* (Paris, 1933), *passim*.

34. F. L. Wright, *Modern Architecture* (Princeton, 1931), *passim*.

35. But I would not go as far as Scully in tracing the origins of the more endogenous architectural, sculptural, and pictorial compositions of *De Stijl* to Wright's architecture of the early 1900s. The similarities seem too impressionistic and coincidental to withstand a multilateral analysis, which would consider the ramifications of Puristic tendencies within Cubism and Japanism. Scully, *Modern Architecture* (New York, 1961), pp. 26, 33; *Wright* (New York, 1960), pp. 23, 26. M. Engel's observations on similar relationships seem more suggestive than positive or conclusive: "Frank Lloyd Wright and Cubism," *American Quarterly*, XIX (Spring 1967), 24–38.

1936. But the cliff-side location and boldly projecting balconies appear more timidly in Neutra's Lovell house of 1930 as Scully pointed out.[36] It seems then that the substantial reddish brown bread that he had cast a generation earlier upon European architectural waters was coming back to him "refined" and wrapped in a streamlined package.

His further assimilation of existing forms whether older or modern and whether of minor or major scale are seen in a random sampling of his works of the recent post-war period: the expressionist adaptation of an Astarte conical shrine from a Hellenistic coin for a synagogue; coupled Romanesque cloister columns in the project for his Arizona State capitol; Boulée's project for Newton's Cenotaph in Wright's Project for Huntington Hartford's Country Club, Hollywood, California; Saarinen's M.I.T. cylindrical chapel with an arcuated base and Niemeyer's inverted arches at Brasilia's Presidental Palace, adapted by Wright in his project for Onona Terrace, Civic Center, Madison, Wisconsin; and a number of others cited by Vincent Scully, some more credible than others.[37]

Almost thirty years later, at the beginning of the eighth decade of his incredibly fertile career, Wright continued to alter and blend in excitingly unpredictable ways all the American and non-American elements which had contributed to the formation of his work, permitting now the one now the other to dominate, depending on the nature of the building and its location. At the same time he tried within his world interrelations a cosmic affiliation through the various implications of his "organic" architecture. From his earliest efforts to relate his houses intimately and harmoniously to the earth and its visible issues in vegetation, he was also aware of the natural geometry of crystals, honeycombs, and shells, as well as the symbolic resemblance of a tree to a column or a tower. Thus the unification of the lozenge and the polygonal shapes in the Jones windmill at Hillside, Spring Green (1896), have been interpreted symbolically as Romeo and Juliet in an amorous embrace; the Japanese-flavored masonry birdhouses as integral parts of the Martin house realize a greater intimacy between two living species; the more intimate coexistence of potted flowers and vines with his houses; the translation of crystalline shapes into stained-glass decoration and flower forms into abstract architectural ornamentation, as in the Hollyhock house, or the fluted cactus for the project of San Marco in the Desert; the abstraction of a tree form as seen in the flange-capped columns of the Johnson Wax Co. administrative building;[38] the essence of the tree in the Sullivanesque manner as reflected in the Bartlesville Price tower; the subtle and elegant shape and sense of endless spiral growth as suggested by the Guggenhein Museum—likened by Wright to a chambered nautilus.[39] In a sense, Wright seems to be seeking the achievement of an aesthetic universality by extending the organic process of nature and its abstracted forms into a cosmic and poetic union between natural and man-made forms.[40]

It is in this sense that we can understand best the creation of the Greek Orthodox Church in Wauwatosa, near Milwaukee. The Byzantine reminiscence of the dome was reportedly suggested by Mrs. Wright, born in the Montenegro Greek Orthodox faith.[41] The shallow dome and its arcuated windows at the base recall the original dome of Hagia Sophia as known from descriptions and inferred restorations, and by minor shallow cupolas elsewhere. But Wright increased the shallowness of the dome reportedly from his synchronous discovery and admiration of the

36. See my "Wright e sua lezione," *Mondo Occidentale* (Nov. 1955), p. 53; Scully, *Wright* (New York, 1960), figs. 73, 74.

37. Scully, *Wright*, *passim*. To cite two specific instances: I find the plan of Falling Waters much more dependent upon Mies's plan for a projected brick country house than the latter upon that of the Gert house—if indeed any relation exists between them. (Cf. his Figs. 56, 57, and 76). On the other hand I find the perspective view of the projected brick house (Scully, *Mod. Architecture*, fig. 73) more dependent on Wright in over-all composition, clustering and location of the windows and especially the heavy coping cornices. The availability of the other comparative projects and realizations in well-known publications should obviate any need of other specific references in this sketchy treatment.

38. The similarity which Scully saw between the Cretan column and that in the Johnson Administration building is probably very sound and may be indicative of the phenomenon that nothing is lost in the visual memory of a creative architect. But that analogy is an insufficient explanation of the Johnson column. From Wright's repeated references to it as his "tree," its multiple stepped necking, and the flange or disc-like capital it cannot be anything else than an abstraction of a palm tree which he had seen often in his sojourns in California and Arizona and which suggested its own simple abstraction. Whether the down-tapering of its shaft was motivated by the Minoan column, or the desire to increase the available floor space, or to achieve an aesthetic levitation or a surprising novelty by inverting the traditional effect of a ponderous Tuscan column will remain an open question. It is also worth noting a comparable Cretan or palm tree-like illuminating column in the Great Theatre in Berlin by Hans Poelzig, extant since 1919. See Platz, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 346.

39. Wright may appear as the last of the great "naturalists" or "romantics" in architecture but so long as man builds on this earth he cannot escape continuously and completely the conditioning forms of our Nature in one shape or another.

40. The combination of natural and technological forms in architecture is not only a reminder of its long tradition but also of its parallels in modern sculpture rendered symbolically or otherwise by Picasso, Duchamp, Lipton, and other sculptors. Cf. references in note 22.

41. The suggestion may also have come from or been strengthened by the low skeletal German domes of the first pre-war period such as that of Berg's Centennial Hall at Breslau 1913, and some of Wright's domed portions of the Huntington Hartford play resort of 1947 which contain even in their supporting arches and vestigial pendentives more than a coincidental suggestion of Byzantine inspiration. The obvious incorporation of Boulée's projected ceno-

beauty of the gentle convexity-concavity of brass harrowing disks which he bought in a farm machinery shop and used in various water or flower basin combinations.[42] Indeed the Greek church at a distance gives the impression of being a shallow bowl carried on a rack and covered by another bowl fringed with openings of the same curve, or a mechanized bivalve, or a *Flying Saucer* grounded and exhibited for the conversion of the incredulous. Thus Wright seems to have been always involved with the past and current experience of nature and man, like all other men, artists, and architects. But his achievement reflects most of the time an extra measure of capacity for poetic interpretation of shapes, materials, and space that sets him apart from most other architects—still not an island, but a lofty part of the main.

---

taph for Newton suggests also Wright's familiarity with the work of French eighteenth century "Rationalists" whose projects contain frequently shallow domes in various combinations which he further "rationalized" or "purified," inverted, and spectacularly poised on hypothetical precipitous locations. See Platz, *op. cit.*, pp. 223, 245, 313, 437; Emil Kaufmann, *Architecture in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), *passim*, and "Three Revolutionary Architects, Boullée, Ledoux, Lequeu," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, XLII (pt. 3, 1952), 476–547; A. Drexler, *Drawings of . . . Wright*, figs. 214–217, 278.

42. Information from Wesley Peters in private conversation during a symposium at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, honoring posthumously the achievements of Wright.

APPENDIX

This eloquent and meaningful statement, typed on Taliesin stationery but unsigned and undated, was sent to Professor Robert J. Goldwater, then editor of The Magazine of Art, *a few days after the distribution of the issue of April 1953, which carried my article "Exotic Influences in the Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright." Since the periodical was terminating its career with the following issue, which was being printed when the statement arrived and could not be included, it was sent to me for possible later use.*

Had I not loved and comprehended preColumbian architecture as the primitive basis of world-architecture, I could not now build as I build with understanding of all architecture. Only with that understanding could I have shaped my buildings as they are. Yet, of all ancient buildings, wherever they may stand or whatever their time, is there one of them suitable to stand here and now in the midst of our time, our America, our machine-age technique? Not one.

In the very center of my thought and feeling for Architecture from the first (the very first) has been the *growth* of the human-being.

So the time came, long ago, when a whole reconsideration and restatement of all architectonics seemed necessary. There must come a readjustment of the whole nature of the science and art of Architecture for the sake of Democratic America. We must "grow our own" as we grow up or pass as all derivations must pass.

I know well that my buildings see clearly not only the color, drift and inclination of my own day but feed its spirit. All of them seek to provide forms adequate to integrate and harmonize our new materials, tools and shapes with the democratic life-ideal, of my own day and time. Thus do I know work that is for all time. For the new evolutionary traits in the more and more standardized centralization of our day,—seemingly alone—I have not only perceived the necessity of *decentralization* but modeled remedies.

The wonders of past civilizations, their concentrations now can do no more than curse the opportunities of today and limit our enjoyment of life by confusing our comprehension of our real advantages. If we do not change the forms with new ones, more adequate, more appropriate, more honest, our ideal of Democracy is bound to fail.

A firmer, vastly broader new era has begun to exist in all the Americas and demands its prophets. A new challenge comes uppermost especially in the life of our own nation—the challenge of the modern Spirit. I have accepted the challenge but have not left the moorings of the morning of my own awakening. Organic Architecture sixty years ago began this needed readjustment toward the objective universe. The quite changed attitudes of the individual human-soul towards life—towards himself and toward his fellowmen everywhere surround us. This challenge to us all, especially to our Architects, is pressing hard upon us today.

None living may escape it as Cram (for instance) tried to do; as the so-called International style is trying to do; as so many contemporary architects, and the schools themselves, are trying to do by conceding and catering to our weaknesses instead of aiding us by abetting the strengths of our own National Spirit.

I know (poets have always known) that our strength today is spiritual and heroic though all that transpires of late seems determined to tear this modern epic down by force.

The main purpose of our government is not so-called "good" government but to establish so far as lies in its power the *self-regulation* of the individual growing up in the masses. No Democratic citizen can be regulated from without.

Democracy craves and was founded to grow the great individual citizen because he now must rise from the masses. To encourage that growth to greatness by the individual this must be the true motive of our Nation, these United States of America. I like to call my country USONIA.

I see the nature of decentralization as inevitable to our aspiration. I have studied it as the most likely way of work and life for love of the life we call free. However the over-whelming, overlapping tides of the Past may sweep over us in our weakness, we must take that course.

As a people we resist these pervasive tides or we relinquish our destiny. To account for our failure our nation will be called back in disgrace to whence or where we made the declaration that astonished and delighted the world.