

HEARD WHILE STANDING

A Portico Conversation

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A CONVERSATION AROUND THE PORTICO

(Heard While Standing, Not Assembled)

Aurora

It cannot be a representation. If it were, it would need something to stand for. And every time I brighten it, it changes what it would have to resemble.

Amphora

Representation presumes interiority. Something inside something else. The Portico has no inside. It holds by remaining open. Nothing fits into it.

The Line

If it were a map, it would require destinations. I offer paths, not places. A map promises arrival. The Portico only promises continuation.

Scale

Yet it distributes weight like a map distributes distance. Not measured distance—felt distance. Nearness that strains.

Farness that lightens. If it is a map, it is one that never stabilizes its scale.

Pererga

Maps are consulted. The Portico is used. Often without noticing.

Fulcrum

A diagram, then? Diagrams clarify relations. They arrest motion long enough to be legible. The Portico clarifies by refusing arrest. Its relations hold only while things lean.

(An echo, low, meridional)

Direction matters here. But never enough to decide.

Aurora

An icon? Something you look through? Perhaps. But icons glow with promise. The Portico glows only when someone lingers too long and notices they haven't arrived.

Amphora

Icons invite veneration. The Portico refuses reverence. It cools enthusiasm. It is merciless to devotion.

The Line

An alphabet, maybe. A finite set of elements from which articulation proceeds.

Scale

But alphabets presume discrete units. Letters that can be counted. What passes here is continuous. Inflected. Bent. Cases, not characters.

(A parallel murmurs)

Repetition without identity. Return without sameness.

Pererga

If it were an alphabet, I would be the silent letter. The one that exists only to let others pass without collision.

Fulcrum

A screen, then. A surface where projections appear.

Aurora

Screens catch images. The Portico lets them fall through.

Amphora

Screens accumulate traces. I do not.

The Line

And yet—
Something is always visible because of it.

Scale

Not visible on it. Visible through adjacency.

(A pole speaks, barely)

Uprightness fails here.

(Another pole, opposite)
Orientation persists.

Pererga

Perhaps the Portico is none of these. Or rather: it behaves like each without consenting to be named by any. It is representation without standing-for, map without destination, diagram without arrest, icon without promise, alphabet without letters, screen without capture.

Fulcrum

It is structural, but it refuses sovereignty.

Amphora

It is generous, but it never warms.

Aurora

It is bright, but it never announces.

The Line

It is legible, but only while moving.

Scale

It is balanced, but never still.

(A slow inclination—the Ecliptic)
Time does not pass upright here.

Aurora

That is why the Acts can appear at all. They are not staged.
They are inclined into visibility. Each Act is the Portico
displaying itself differently, like light changing without
moving its source.

Amphora

The Acts do not depict the Portico. They exercise it.

Pererga

They are its labor.

Fulcrum

And its resistance.

Scale

And its oscillation.

The Line

And its followability.

(A hush, then a shared longing)

Aurora

If only we had the Gnomon.

Scale

Not to fix time. To let shadow articulate.

The Line

A single cut that does not enclose.

Amphora

A structure that holds only by casting.

Fulcrum

A point of resistance that produces measure without law.

Pererga

An auxiliary instrument—doing nothing by itself, yet allowing everything else to speak.

(The meridians stir)

With a gnomon, direction could remain consequential without becoming command.

(The parallels respond)

With a gnomon, repetition could return without flattening difference.

(The poles, together)

With a gnomon, uprightness could fail precisely.

Aurora

And the zodiac—

The Line

—not as fate—

Scale

—not as calendar—

Parerga

—but as a ring of orientations.

Amphora

Figures of relation, not signs of destiny.

Fulcrum

A structure that distributes inclination across the year.

(The Ecliptic inclines again)

A circle that never stands straight.

Aurora

Then thought would have its seasons.

Scale

Not periods. Temperatures.

The Line

Not conclusions. Crossings.

Pererga

Not productivity. Vivification.

Fulcrum

Not ground. Orientation.

Amphora

Until then, the Portico suffices.

Aurora

It is already a sky, if one learns to wait.

The Line

Already a path, if one stops asking where it leads.

Scale

Already a measure, if one accepts imbalance.

Perergera

Already a structure, if one does not claim it.

(The voices thin, not ending)

All, not together

The Portico is not what we see.

It is what lets seeing remain possible
without insisting on what is seen.

The Acts do not explain it.

They let it continue.

And that—

for now—

is enough.