

Inside Landscape:

an iconography of delusion

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Abstract

Inside Landscape explores spatial abstractions that underlie programming in Renaissance iconography. The culmination is an exploration of how inherent ideas survived social upheaval to be used for dialogue in two Mannerist Landscapes. Bomarzo, misunderstood and under-rated, falling into decay, is the core. Lante is cherished but perhaps also misunderstood in its programming.

Chapter 1 discusses Renaissance literary Landscapes. Origins of spatial themes in these are subsequently discussed from antiquity, with sources in the Ancient Near East. Roman Antiquity produced a European villa society. Its values were expressed in many forms, murals being prominent. Paintings from Agrippa's villa, the work of an Alexandrian court painter, provide a rich source to explore Landscape iconography, linked to literary parallels.

Certain compositional elements are of key importance to Abstract Space. Of these tholos is scrutinised as a guide to Landscapes of "there" embedded in Hellenistic Greek architecture. Chapter four questions ideas of spatial compression and, with the two following, seeks answers, often questions.

Background

The research was broad. Aesthetic, mystical, allegorical, and political manipulation of the concept Landscape is fundamental. It leads to rich complex meaning within compressed forms. This richness reflects their emotive power within early cultures and consequent potential for collective manipulation. Landscape marks out inner space on the earth's surface, the image of that space from the collective mind.

The contribution of the work is probably mostly in drawing attention to the complexities of inner working within imaginative forms applied to Renaissance Landscapes. The work on tholoi goes beyond most published material. The detail of analysis and the slant are unique for Bomarzo and probably also Lante. Practical uses might be in understanding better the survival of fragile monuments.

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Additional Colour Plates

facing page

Frontispiece: "Oracle" fresco from Boscotrecase, a landscape painting of a heron
(see Chapter Two)

Oracle fresco in its setting of "panels"

III

Terrace of Pluto: reveals in greater detail the density of events in this important terrace which confronts the watery underworld

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Preface

Orsini and Bomarzo; Orsini and Lante

Count Vicino Orsini, dynastic lord of Bomarzo in the XVc, inherited a castle that occupies a crag as impressive as an ancient Greek acropolis. Orsini's father started modernisation of the castle and Vicino was charged with completing it, which he did in the idiom of Alberti, acting as his own architect. The estate would have supported a wealthy Greek city state. Like most fortresses of its type, it had a "kingly" garden that supplied fresh produce in an age when self-sufficiency was more important. At the extremity of this garden, remote from the castle, was a ravine cut from the plateau edge by two rivers, where the garden stopped and wilderness began. Here Orsini made his Sacro-bosco, the name of which gives clues to the intentions.

He took great pleasure in the gardens, and soon after his accession he began work on the boschetto that occupied him for almost the rest of his life. He planned it carefully into the land forms where the land lifted and could simulate a mountain, looking out over his orchards and plots, providing parts that could be seen from the castle windows and parts that were hidden and secret. The original gardens are now submerged under cultivation. The boschetto survived, and was uncovered with some bemused amazement in the late XIXc. Since then it has proved more enigmatic than the Leonardo smile. To many it is a ruinous collection of oddments or sometimes gruesome fun-objects; others find in it a strange pervasive atmosphere, in part engendered by the beauty of its position; it intrigues scholars and artists, who respond to its apparent dream imagery or obscure allusions. One such was Dali.

Probably Orsini would have relished both bafflement and surreality. Riddling inscriptions referring to history and literature litter the bosco's edifices, often the only key to their context. He would not have enjoyed the coach loads of tourists. In this demesne where only friends and close companions were admitted, he asserted his rights to privacy. Bitter experience as a military commander reinforced aristocratic suspicion of the ignorant and commonplace. Once in the sacro-bosco though, all were equals, whatever their elevated state in Vatican or other political circles. Typical of his time, he believed that knowledge was for sharing, but only between clerics and the aristocratic and initiated, not for general dispensation. He had no time for the idly curious either, and hid meanings to exclude them and tease the scholarly. So adept was he - scholar, wit, poet, architect, artist and man of questing intellect - his allegories so densely woven that the garden, now bereft of much iconography and any sense of original structural planting, defies reconstruction. It demands scholarship to enter its puzzles, though one is free to wander and enjoy its pleasures as a sad ruin. This study seeks to provide some routes into its labyrinth.

More consistently famous, now partly reconstructed, is the garden at neighbouring Bagnaia, Villa Lante, a papal estate granted at that time to Cardinal Gambara, Bishop of Viterbo, a Farnese. Its privacy was less personal, as expressed by the ceremonial nature of its terraces and its re-organisation of urban space in the town. Even so, it was a pastoral retreat, programmed accordingly by the cardinal and friends. It seems more comprehensible, but is it really? Does the ingenuity of Vicino's kinsman, Fulvio Orsini, Bishop of Spoleto, who was a known iconographer and worked on Lante, outwit his own?¹ Did Villa Lante's "simplicity" really conceal more elaborate humanist allegories? Was this collaboration of Renaissance humanists also a battle of witty erudite repartee? The author believes this probable, but readers are free to make up their own minds.

Most Italian Mannerist Landscapes of the late Renaissance were structured around thematic programmes. The tradition continued through baroque France, and arises in symbolic form as late as the Masonic and Whig Neo-classical Landscapes of northern Europe. Programmes are sequences of related ideas that suggest a story or theme and encourage constructions around those themes. They were rarely direct, except on the immediately accessible surface. This period was a high point in the evolution of allegory, whose function it had been, since Classical Antiquity, to reveal inner ideas to initiates and hide them from others. It had long been manipulated for religious, political, ideological, and social ends. Its most illustrious opponent in antique literature, from a Judeo-Christian standpoint, is probably Ezekiel.² Allegory was central to Italian Renaissance literature, painting, architecture - indeed all the arts and even political writing, all using the device to cram as many layers of meaning as possible into one image.

The secret of allegory is allusory images. A picture is presented, words or icons, like the frescos of Chapter Two or the Landscapes of Homer and Longus. Known stereotypes compose this picture, each acting as a conductor leading from the surface to an implied image or idea. This in turn might lead to further layers, each layer representing a degree of initiation. Only the first is stated, and this had meaning acceptable to ordinary people. All the other layers had either implied or "obtuse" meaning(s). They referred to some special knowledge possessed by a certain tribal or ideological group. What these groups see is "attributes" that lead them beyond the surface; imagine diving into the sea. Thus there exists "space" beyond the surface, abstract space, a certain cosmos, generated in the mind of "one who

¹ Coffin, D.R.: *The villa in the life of Rome*. 1979. Princeton. pp 346

² Ezekiel opposed Hellenisation of Israelites. He saw the use of allegory, endemic to the Greek Hellenistic system, as the vehicle of their religious and cultural propaganda, and set about debunking it. The technique he used was to insert passages in his writings that mimicked process allegory, but so overload their imagery that it broke down completely. His target was the young intelligentsia. E.g.: "Thou hast been in Eden the Garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold" Ezekiel 28 v 13.

knows".³ Part of this is the concern of Chapter Four, to which the process explanation of Divine Geometry in Chapter Three leads.

The system from which their themes were drawn was that of reconstructed Classical Antiquity. The Roman church had manipulated surviving meanings into codified acceptable channels. The gradual emergence of the original works and their dissemination outside the libraries of cloistered institutions via scholarly publishing, often "underground", caused departures from these legalised renderings which the Inquisitors sought to suppress. They also caused an ebullient joy in discovery of civilised antecedents who had lived outside these restrictive codes, and came to signify "freedom". The word dominated in this. Even the plastic arts embedded literary ideas, for which the systems of myth and allegory were ideally adapted. Bomarzo's weaves cross themes with astonishing skill. Personal matters, learning, beliefs, literature and science blend almost seamlessly into a labyrinthine "storia". The spatial ideas from this labyrinth of knowledge form the basis of this thesis, especially in their contrasts with Lante. For this the reader has to wait until the final chapters.

The frescos

Survival of a group of Landscape style frescos from the Imperial villa of Agrippa at Boscotrecase, Herculaneum, fragmentary as they are is a miracle of chance.⁴ Volcanic eruption demolished the excavations before they were complete. Sadly, archaeological practice of the time, the turn of the century separated the murals from one another by the Atlantic Ocean. They can neither be seen together, except in photographs, nor be assembled. They are rare survivors of a particular style.⁵

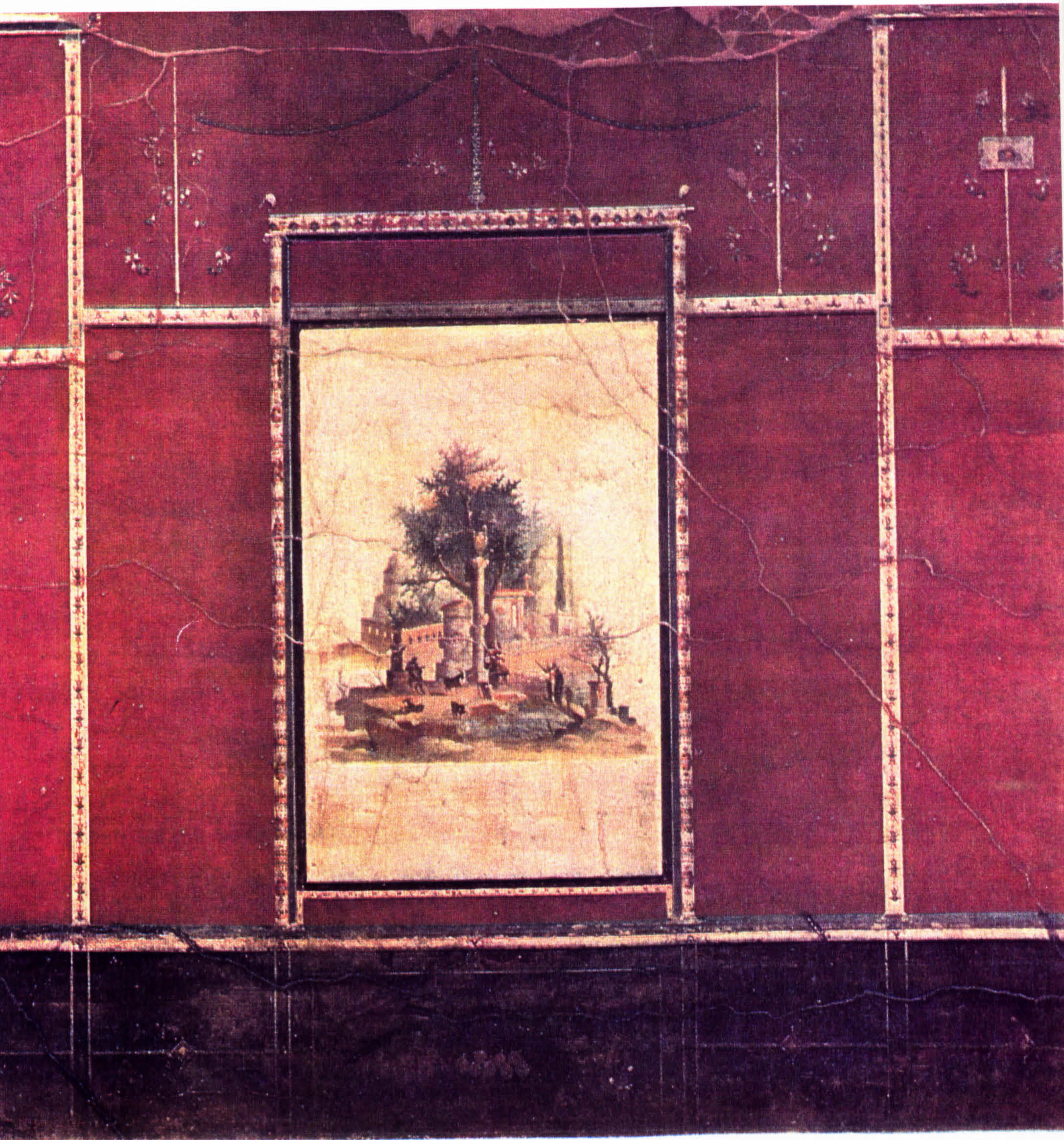
These masterpieces are composed of stereotype images, a key to allegory. Each image connected with land or territory occupies its own distinct space in the composition. The combination is capable of revealing quite astonishing insights into late Hellenistic concepts for which they do not appear to have found a name but we call Landscape. Discussion of meanings in Chapter Two reveals how space is framed, the image groups set in a hierarchical structure. Within this, each group reflects on the other and this creates a vivid allegorical synthesis. The result is labyrinthine, with implied and obtuse layers of reference leading into a rich mandala of space. All is culled from the exuberant Alexandrian culture with which Augustan society had become infatuated. D'Arms provides us with an engaging account of this in villa society, whilst Zanker casts a shrewd eye over its manipulative content.⁶

³. See Chapter Four, Pl 62, & pp 95-96.

⁴. These are the so-called Sacral-Idyllic, or Pompeian Third Style.

⁵. Some are in Naples, one has been lost and exists only as an old colour photograph, some are in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

⁶. *D'Arms 1970; Zanker 1988.*



Chapter Two of this thesis enters into detailed discussion of the content and context of these frescos and some of the concepts of organisation, iconography and implied space they represent. Discussion of the last of these with landscape archaeologists working in the field revealed a gut feeling about the presence of sacred geometry, but no known critical work. Subsequent discovery of Kielland's analysis of the uses to which the geometry of this implied space had been put in vase painting and sculpture gave welcome support to this facet.⁷ The complete cycle of paintings, Oracle, Mythological (Aeneid), and Nocturnes, can be viewed in the light of Augustan claims to the right to rule, to cultural autochthony. This in no way detracts from the ravishingly atmospheric beauty of the paintings and their seductive colouration.

Almost all of the component imagery of Oracle could connect it with Mannerist iconography. After extensive exploration of each, Tholos was selected because it keyed in best to the chronology of the work. Its migrations, transformations, and sublimations constitute a major study linking Guidoni's ideas to Greek expressions of cultural heritage in architectural form and the evolution (or devolution) of these forms back into symbolic Landscapes which Mannerism re-created.⁸ Too neat? The idea grew from the research. Tholoi are common to the symbolism of Byzantine, Roman, and Islamic cultures and are the topic of Chapter Five.

Time, and many unimagined events and changes separate the frescos from Renaissance Italy. There was no dramatic cessation of culture, that we do now believe. There was slow transformation and regionalisation of imperial symbolisms, accompanied by sifting and re-cycling at the international level by the Vatican, which directed people away from original "subversive" contexts towards syntheses that supported Christian world orders. Imagery common to conflicting religions became part of ideological conflicts, coloured accordingly, and used in propaganda in the European crisis of the XIVc and XVc which very nearly saw Ottoman dominion.

Literary parallels and precedents

Because Bomarzo is primarily an allegorical presentation of intellectual and artistic exploration, the literary element takes a prominent place in this study. Imagery from Longus' *Pastoralias* has prominence. It dates from the middle period of the Empire, and was influential in Mediaeval literature. It has a key place in the logical development of themes and is therefore placed at the beginning. It there heads a survey of related ideas within Renaissance literature immediately preceding or contemporary with Bomarzo. Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* is a key Renaissance literary work, at least as well known and influential in its time as Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*

⁷. Kielland 1984.

⁸. Guidoni 1987.

which receives much attention in conventional Garden History studies. It stimulates one of the most absorbing themes of Renaissance literature via Ariosto and Tasso supporting resistance to the Ottomans. It is a massive work, catholic in its derivations, aristocratic, a serialised court entertainment for fragmentary narration. The images of Landscape it contains are, like those from Longus and earlier classical literature, meraviglie, process allegories, and come via De Meun's even more famous *Romance of the Rose*. It parallels imagery found in Alberti's literary works, which, it is claimed, also influenced Colonna.⁹ The classical iconography most frequently used was that reconstructed by Boccaccio. This is Chapter One's theme.

Sandwiching the frescos between two literary layers places them, it is hoped, in a pivotal context. The striking thing, apart from their "narrative" complexity, is their contrast with Lamon's grove and descriptions of Landscape in *Pastoralias*. Chapter Three, which ensues, delves as far as possible, within the constraints of this work, into literary contemporaries and precedents. The evolution of centralised Landscapes, contrasted with the images of the frescos, is followed through Homeric verse into ancient Mesopotamia, presenting contexts, reconstructions, and historical illustrations. They reveal the technology of centralised water and its transformation into iconography, together with Landscape sentiment. The position of The Garden in relation to cities is important in evolving the processions of kingship and deification, of arrivals and departures between one abstract space and another. This is further codified in Egyptian practices which are touched on all too briefly, Mesopotamian writings, and the iconography of Cretans and Mycenaean. This evolutionary sequence is what constitutes the iconographic power structure of the formal Landscape and contrasts the pastoral escapism of the informal which grows from Theocritus' *Idylls*. Longus refers to Lamon's grove as "kingly" precisely in this context, but, in total, like the frescos, seeks a synthesis. In his case it is Greek rather than Roman. Chapter Three presents a historical evolution and context for this.

Kingship, which arose out of priesthood in ancient Sumer, was associated with ritual voluntary euthanasia, a return to the garden of the dream. So embedded was this idea that it provided the concept of garden Landscape with a symbolic dynamo for several thousand years. It is the image within the villa frescos. Of Mesopotamian literature, possibly only *Gilgamesh* was known to the Renaissance; the Boscotrecase frescos were not, though their descendants in the Domus Aurea were. The components of these ideas survived fragmentation of the Western Empire and became encapsulated within imagery that continued to evolve, adopted by kings and princes who succeeded the emperors. Their rejuvenation by the Renaissance and modernisation by Mannerism emerges in the Landscapes of Bomarzo and

⁹. Kretzulesco-Quaranta, 1986

Lante more clearly than in most others, though ensuing Baroque Landscapes used more codified forms freely.

The structure

Though the work begins with literary stereotypes the majority of the study is visual. The combination is necessary because of the strong narrative and allegorical components and mythic structures involved. Chapter Four explores aspects of space manipulation apparent in the frescos and seeks to link these with literary images, evolving a conceptual tool called *Attributive Space*. This is a way of looking at physical space amplified by symbolic attenuations, as is found in allegory and myth, and in the codified iconography of civic space. Chapter Five is a key iconographic analysis, centred on the tholos. It examines its evolution, position and potential meanings, which seem to embody ancient Landscapes as well as forming a root of subsequent ones. The focus of attention is the great tholos at Epidauros, Thymele, unique among known examples for its statement of underground space. "Interlude" contains analysis of the idea of processional between life and death, between the other world and this one, between tholos and theatre. This encodes ideas already seen in the Sumerian garden of dreams, the Bit-Akitu,¹⁰ for both theatre and tholos appear to be Landscape sublimations. The work contains keys to Rome's Augustan *Porta triumphalis*, and thence, via S. Peter's and cathedral space, to Villa Lante, contrasting Bomarzo's use of the labyrinth. It can also be explored in Greek urban design. Miletos was linked to a sanctuary of Apollo, Didyma, by a processional way, Mylasa to Labranda. This is particularly relevant because it seems to have involved ancestor worship. Athenians similarly processed to the goddess sanctuary of Eleusis.

This layering and ordering sought to produce compactness and provide textual and textural variety in a compressed and detailed work. It is to be read slowly. There are no fast routes. The intention is to key in significant iconography from Classical Antiquity that entered the scrutiny of Mannerism.

"Iconography of delusion"? Who is deluding whom? Both Bomarzo and Lante have strong ideas about that!

¹⁰. Discussed in some detail in Chapter Three, and Pl 150, 152. It was The garden that symbolised gardens in Sumerian city states, outside the great East gate of the city, where priest-kings were initiated or welcomed, and through which they departed. It is represented by the orchard grove in *Gilgamesh*.

Chapter One:

Falerina and Alcina.

Contents:

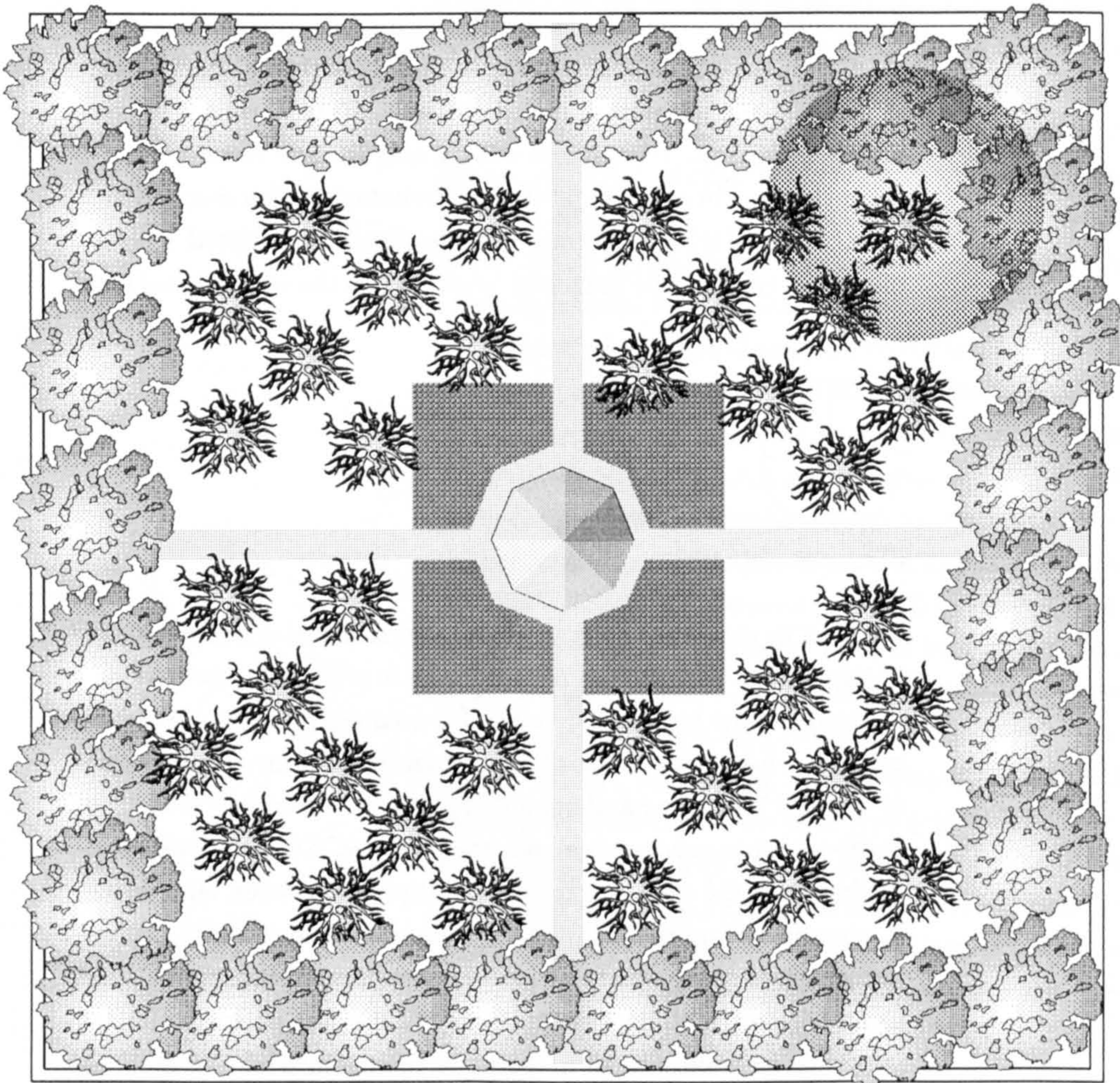
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And that garden indeed was a most beautiful and goodly (godly) thing, and such as might become a prince. For it lay extended in length a whole furlong. It was situate on high ground, and had to its breadth four acres. To a spacious field one would easily have likened it. Trees it had of all kinds, the apple, the pear, the myrtle, the pomegranate, the fig, and the olive; and to these on the one side there grew a rare and taller sort of vines, that bended over and reached their ripening bunches of grapes among the apples and pomegranates, as if they would vie and contend for beauty and worth of fruits with them. So many kinds there were of satives, or of such as one planted, grafted or set. To these were not wanting the cypress, the laurel, the platan, the pine. And towards them, instead of the vine, the ivy leaned, and with the errantry of her boughs and her scattered black berries did imitate the vines and shadowed beauty of the ripening grapes.

Within were kept, as in a garrison, trees of lower growth that bore fruit. Without stood the barren trees, enfolding all, much like a fort or some strong wall that had been built by the hand of art; and these were encompassed with a spruce thin hedge

By alleys and glades there was everywhere a just distermination of things from things, an orderly discretion of tree from tree; but on the tops the boughs met to interweave their limbs and leaves with one another's, and a man would have thought all this had not bin, as indeed it was, the wild of nature, but rather the work of curious art.

Nor were there wanting to these, borders and banks of various flowers, some the structure of the artist's hand. The roses, hyacinths, and lilies were set and planted by the hand; the violet, the daffodil, and amagall the earth gave up of her own good will.



low wall
or hedge

barren
greater
tree cordon

fruiting
trees

quartered
by path

central temple
surrounded by
flower beds

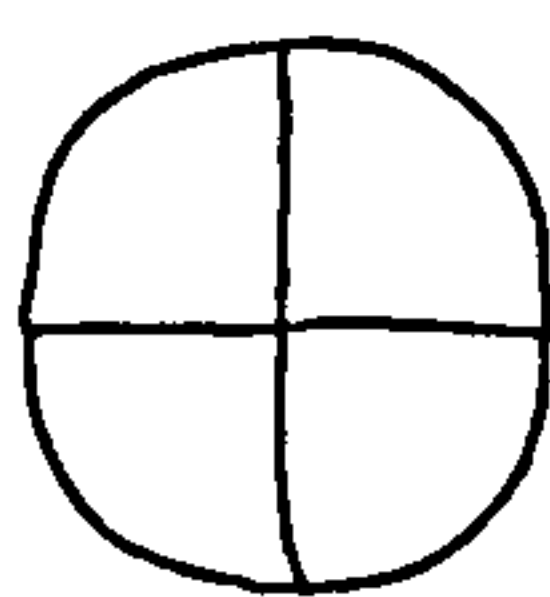
Plan

Superficial simplicity in Lamon's grove is veiled allegory. Like all subsequent - and some preceding - literary groves it is intended to be read in several different cultural layers. It is abstract space, founded in the same principles as tholos.

Lamon's Grove

Lamon's garden.

So readily does this seductive image from *Pastoralias* transpose into the stereotype pleasance of Medieval and Renaissance Europe that we experience some difficulty recognising that it might not have been a stereotype within its author's host culture [1].¹ Elaborate allegory denies it to Rome. This "form of speche which expresseth one thing in words, and another in sense" seems to have been a Greek literary invention which reached a zenith in late Hellenistic times.² Messages are encrypted whose meanings can only be breached according to the educational level



of hearer or reader.

We tend to view the centrifugal and symmetrical cruciform order of this garden as a Roman paradigm. It is after all enshrined in the *templum* the imperial state used to establish its new towns, the *colonia*. The device of *templum* also embraces inner complexities of cultural landscape and spatial symbolism older than Rome. Its encapsulations receive more attention below. Yet archaeological evidence for the existence of the quadripartite garden landscape in pleasances and parks attached to Roman villas is slight. When it does occur it appears to be insignificant, an afterthought. In the space where we might most expect to find it, the peristyle, its antithesis prevails almost to the point of absolutism. We meet the form again though, in the cloistered grove, a feature of late Roman Italian villas which survived collapse of the empire, as well as in the architectural cloisters of medieval monastic institutions.³ That was before the millenium.

¹. I propose to use the following subdivisions when necessary to label periods: Medieval merging with late antiquity in the south, representing northern dominance from ca. 800; Renaissance, merging with and emerging out of Medieval in Italy in the XVc; Mannerism as reaction placing emphases and restructuring classicism through the XVIc; Neo-Renaissance a process of recovering the systematic structure as reaction to Mannerism beginning in the mid XVIc; Baroque as a florid development of the Neo-Renaissance in late XVIc and XVIIc.

². Quote from *Peacham, H: The Garden of Eloquence*, London 1593, pp 3. At about the time Longus was writing, the Empire divided into distinct zones of cultural influence, by far the larger of which remained Alexandrian (Ptolemaic). Rome's direct influence was restricted to western Mediterranean coasts (including the remains of Carthage) and Celtic areas.

³. cf. *Littlewood, A.R: Ancient Literary Evidence for the Pleasure Gardens of Roman Country Villas, in Ancient Roman Villa Gardens*, ed Jashemski, W. Washington 1987. pp. 28 - 30.

In the dream landscapes of Boiardo's mind, emergent from Italy's dark years, it turns aggressive.⁴ Ariosto's sequel to *Orlando innamorato*, his *Orlando furioso*, has landscapes modelled, as advantageously as the narrative flattery, on those of his employer and patron's parks. Boiardo reputedly used literary archetypes from Homer, Vergil, and the classics for his landscapes.⁵ An aristocrat in his own right, he used the famous d'Este humanist lending library for his research.⁶ The contents though are frequently not dissimilar from those of the family's pleasancesses, given poetic licence. Some of the images match those of Ariosto fairly closely [2] [3]. One of Boiardo's more illustrious contemporaries, Alberti, was constantly in trouble for manipulating allegorical imagery to the detriment of his own family, as well as others.⁷ Outside their basic geometry similarities between Lamon's haven and Boiardo's meraviglie never really dissolve.⁸ Action engaged, these two literary pleasancesses (neither is dense enough for grove, both are too complex) become polarities, dark and light sides of the same image. Yet they are not even part of the same culture despite common origins. Perhaps we have to look to the Homeric groves of Circe and Calypso rather than the haven of Alkinoos for psychological models for Lamon's contentment in the pleasancess. Really though, they are all three combined in it, together with a Hellenistic landscape cosmos of which we now know tantalisingly little. For the others, Roman concepts overlaid with Byzantine and Gothic Romanticism prevail. None of these are real landscapes. That is the strange thing about "landscapes". They are all literary, and arise from literature and literacy's view of something more ancient.

Longus and Boiardo both use the oral device of allegory but use different structures for it. Despite the Renaissance retention of the Greek view of poetry as an oral device, cultural similarities are often tenuous. Between Longus and Boiardo is an epoch within which the centre of gravity of European culture shifted

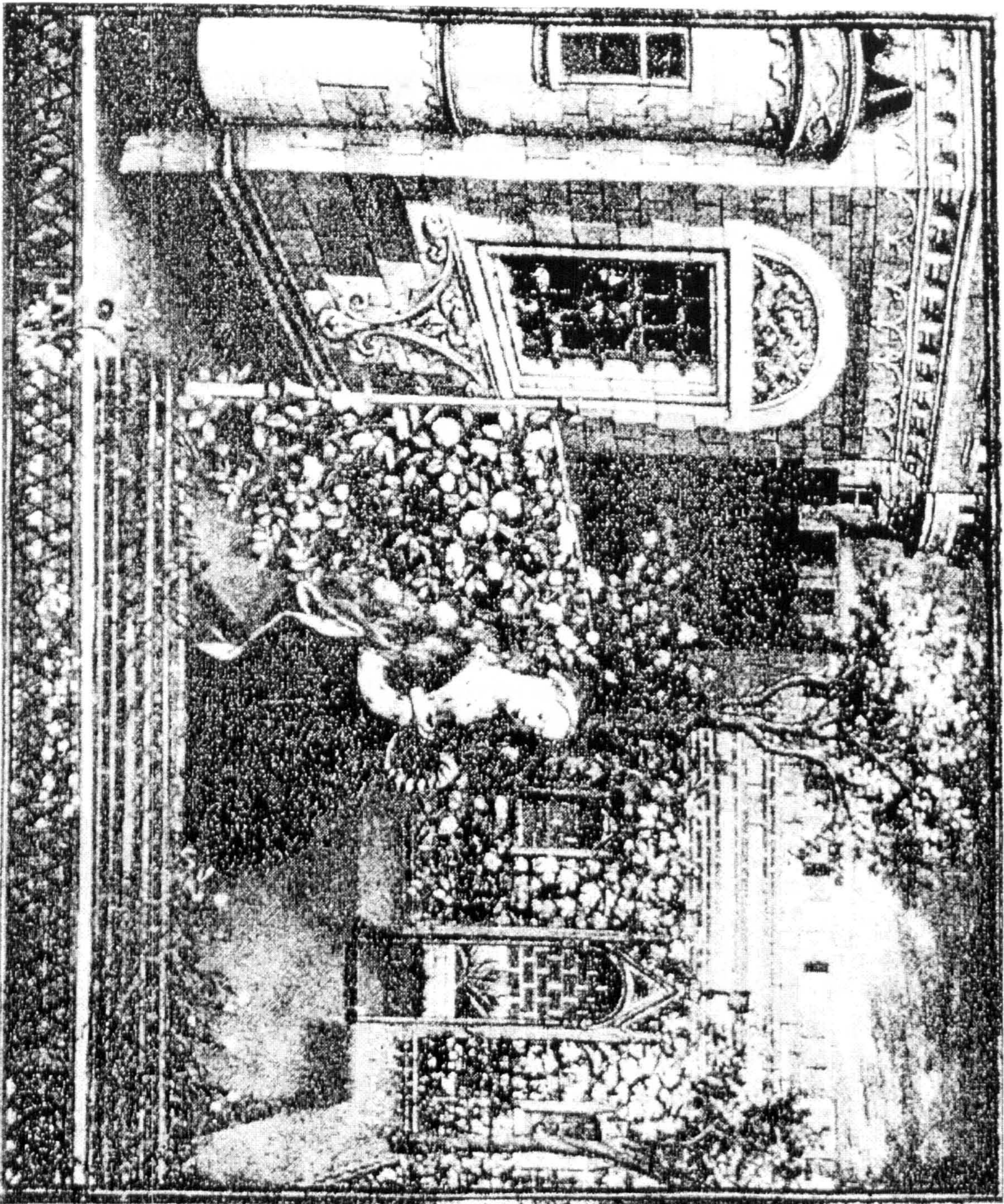
4. The political and military disasters which curtailed the Renaissance in the XVIc.

5. His indebtedness to *Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun* is really apparent in imagery and literary style. Even more startling is the direct literary borrowing from Longus apparent in all the Landscape objects, the Meraviglie, in *Romance of the Rose*. Some of the variants from the original are made in a way that assumes in the reader a knowledge of Longus sufficient to enable him to grasp fully the allegory of both source and variant. This is a recent discovery of the author's, deriving from a close re-reading of *Romance* towards the end of the research.

6. *Murrin, M.: The Allegorical Epic*. London 1980. Chapter 3. He was responsible for translations of Herodotus and Apuleius (*Bergin, I.D. ed: Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*. London 1987. "Boiardo").

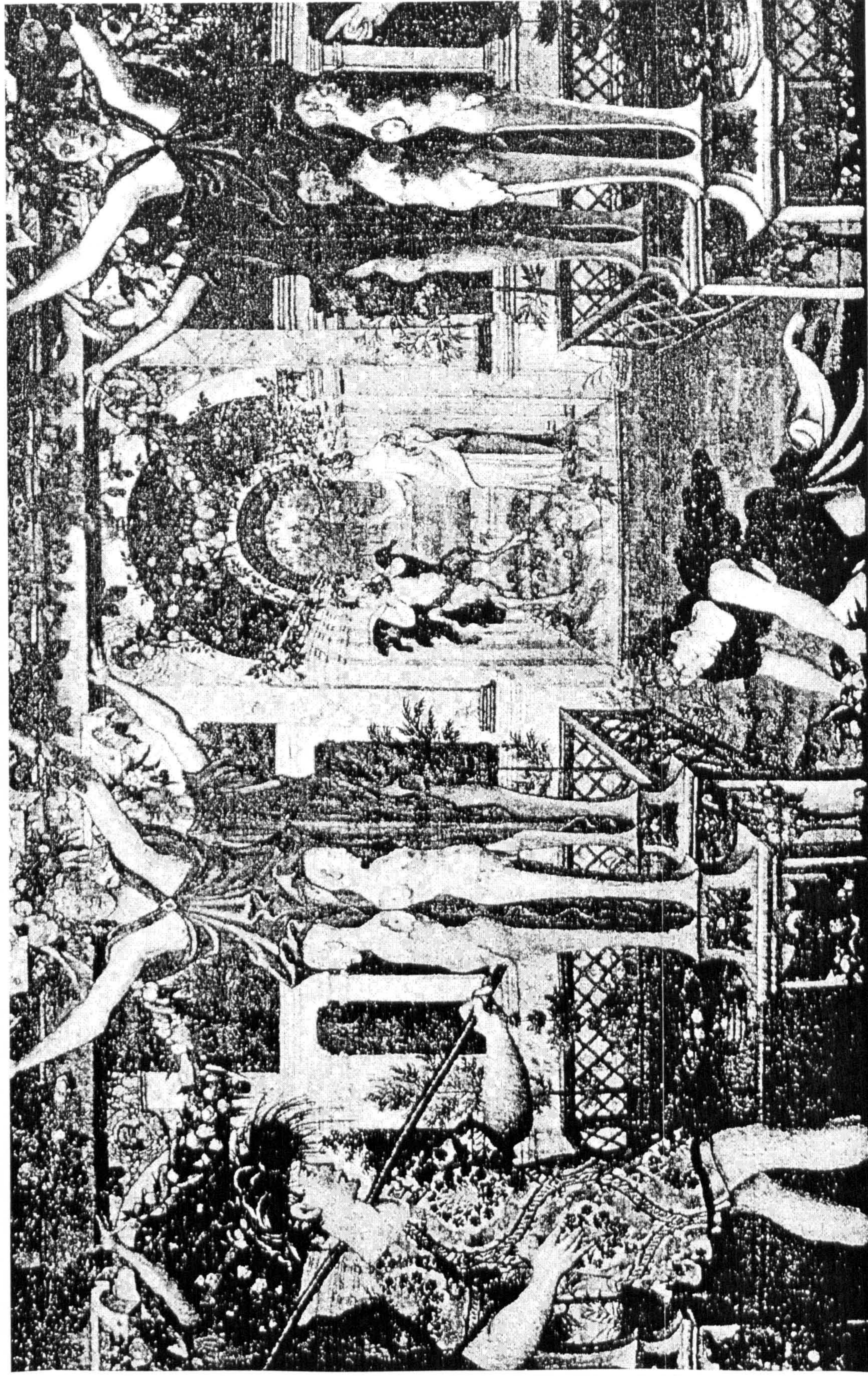
7. *Alberti, L.B.: Vita anonyma*. Milan 1723-1741, XXV, 295-304 via Alberti 1969, pp 2.

8. Meraviglie means technological gismo gardens, a feature of late Hellenism taken up by Arab cultures, particularly the Umayyad, and refined by Islam. It re-emerges in the Medieval European garden through transfusion from Spain and Norman successes in the crusades. In Boiardo's time it obviously retained a firm grip on the European imagination.



An illustration from a manuscript of Boccaccio's Decameron contemporary with Boiardo reveals an enclosed world of symbolic mirrored space, audience architecture reminiscent of the frameworks of frescos from Boscotrecase, but lively and observed plants.

Boiardo's landscapes



1470 garden tapestry Crisp fig 43

Boiardo's landscapes

from the Mediterranean to the North. Without the power of a Pax Romana, war, disease, poverty and destruction became the price of European freedom from stultifying if protective imperialism. Indeed, that very geographical symbolism is encapsulated in the landscape of Falerina's garden, for the north gate is the sanguine gate whose guardians war for the least cause. Orlando himself, foremost knight of Charlemagne's court, is a northerner from the Gothic tradition, an English knight, Apollonian rather than Cyprian. The monsters of the garden are those of his own Gothic temperament and background. Were Boiardo's epic cast in the mould of Vergil or Tasso, we might be looking for carefully hidden references to the duke via his ancestors in this portrayal. The only one really apparent is the device of referring to the d'Este ancestral women in the portrayal of the fays, of serpent women.

English Medieval wealth and power were seen to be based on prowess in warfare, not culture.⁹ Prester John is their national personification for Italians. He ".... could well field 400,000 horse."¹⁰ Boiardo obviously did not recognise the existence of those great northern European landscaped parks of Medieval France and England, whose scope extended well beyond that of the contemporary Italian barco.¹¹ They were not part of the compass of his literary resources.

Boiardo sends Orlando to certain death in his labyrinthine numerical garden quest. To perm any one of four is more hazardous than almost any battle odds when life is the stake. His chances of survival seem more slender than those of Odysseus' men at the hands of Circe. It is a game of space traversed by unseen lines. Were Orlando not modelled in the mode of Odysseus rather than the more common clay of his - or Dionysos' - sailors, being gallante, cavalier, count and baron, extinction would have been inevitable and sudden.¹² There would have been no story! His task, a mere interlude in his appointed profession of skilled warrior, is to undertake the impossible; it is to destroy Falerina, sorceress, queen, more powerful than Charles VI. Falerina is none other than an imperial and imperious high

⁹. It has been suggested though, that the canonisation of Thomas Aquinas was more a nationalistic ploy to overcome the dominance of "feared and subtle" British philosophers like Scotus and Ockham; *Larner, J: Italy In the age of Dante and Petrarch*. London 1980. pp242.

¹⁰. *Ser Marco Polo - his Booke*.

¹¹. *Harvey, J: Mediaeval gardens*. London 1981.

¹². Boiardo distributes these epithets in the text in the same way that they are distributed for Odysseus in Homeric texts. They are made to colour spatial qualities by contrasting those qualities of the persona which enable him to succeed against the natural/supernatural powers of the locus. We are thus made aware of attitudes towards certain environments and the ambivalence of natural forces inherent in them. The reference to Dionysos' sailors is to their metamorphosis into dolphins following a mutiny, which has similar connotations to those of Circe's grove.

priestess of some ancient grove religion. Her landscape has the compression and the vastness of mythic space encompassed in that concept.¹³ It is as savage as the grove of Nemi, a Venus Fly Trap, converting passivity to destructive aggression, devouring knights of the male empire outside who wander into its sanctuary, dissolving them in her fountain. This image is darker, more sinister, and contains far greater savagery than Tasso's delightfully tart lake, despite Tasso's reputation for gloom.¹⁴ When Boiardo wrote, the Italian language was in the melting pot, its forms varied. By the time of Tasso, it had all been decided. The forms, like those of the late landscapes, had become unified axial stereotypes within its metaphors.

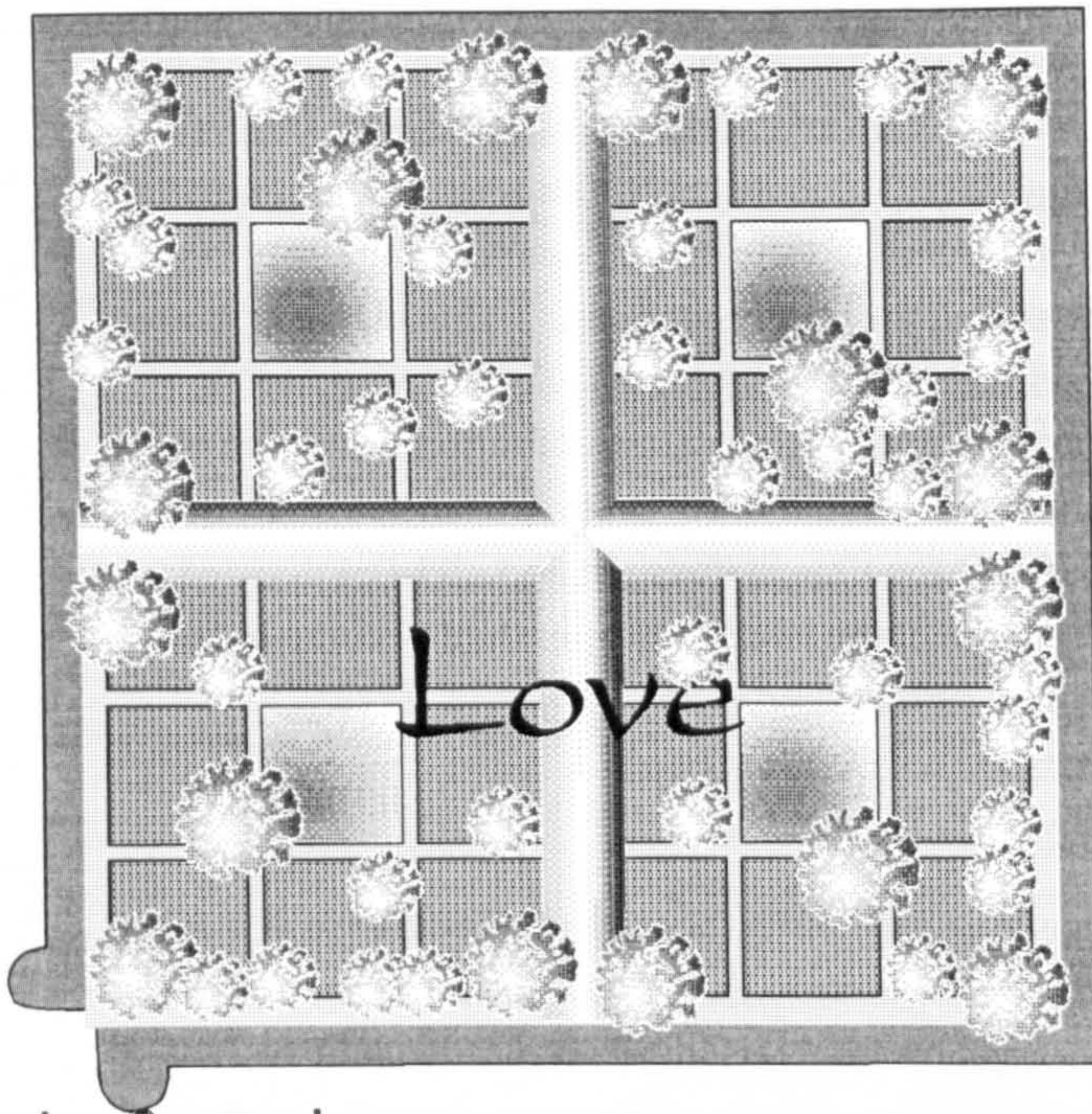
Lamon meets Falerina.

Falerina's little pleasntry shifts the emphasis of the garden at the centre of *Le Roman de la Rose* to its pessimistic and materialistic aspects. A literary labyrinth, it is linear, typically compressed like all Medieval gardens. It is linear because there is a correct order for doing things within a matrix of many erroneous ones. In turn, the Garden of the Rose [4] (the Song of the Rose was one of the greatest hits of all time, with innumerable settings) is also one of shifted emphases, modelled more directly on the one familiar from Longus, and on the cloistered pleasance beloved by the Sufi. A feature of many Medieval churches is the "paradise", a flattish pseudo-colonnade of interlaced arches.¹⁵ The same motif occurs in Akkadian, Persian, Sasanian and Umayyad iconography with similar meanings, and again in the rural retreats the Duc de Bery had illustrated in his hours. It is virtually indistinguishable from the perimeter walk in Lamon's

¹³. A parallel is to be found in Boccaccio's *Decameron* where it is used as a metaphor for unrequited love. It is probable that Bolardo used this, as did Colonna in his *Hypnerotomachia*. The psychology of all three is similar, representing conquest of personal weaknesses. The Boccaccio reads: *Now it happened on a Friday in the beginning of May, the season being extremely pleasant, that, thinking of his cruel mistress, he ordered all his household to retire, and leave him to his own thoughts, when he walked along, step by step, and lost in reflection, till he came to a forest of pines. It being then about an hour before noon, and he having advanced more than half a mile into the grove, without thinking either of his dinner or anything else but his love, on a sudden he seemed to hear a most grievous lamentation, with the loud shrieks of a woman. This put an end to his meditation, when, looking around him, he was surprised to find himself in the wood; and straightaway saw coming towards him, out of a thicket full of briars and thorns, and running towards the place where he was, a most beautiful lady, naked and dishevelled, her flesh all scratched and rent by the bushes, crying terribly, and begging for mercy. In close pursuit of her were two fierce mastiffs, biting and tearing wherever they could lay hold; and behind, on a black steed, rode a gloomy visaged knight, with a dagger in his hand, loading her with the bitterest imprecations and menaces of death..... The knight ... called out afar off, "Nastagio, do not concern thyself; but leave the dogs and me to do by this wicked woman as she has deserved". At these words the dogs laid hold of her, and he, coming up to them, dismounted from his horse.... Our sentences are- for her to flee before me; and for me who loved her so well, to pursue her as my mortal enemy Every Friday in the year, about this time, do I sacrifice her here, as you see, and on other days in other places, where she has ever thought or done anything against me; and thus from being a lover become her mortal enemy, I am to follow her as many years as she was cruel to me months*" V.8

¹⁴. *Tasso, I: Gerusalemme liberata*. Canto XV, 56-66.

¹⁵. Deriving probably from the portico or stoa attached to basilicas.



gate & porta
triumphalis

Hatred

Schematic plan

The Lover looks into the fountain and sees three things; a rose garden and two crystal balls. The balls are his own eyes, mirroring in inner space the light of outer space. Without moving or turning, he sees the rose garden. That too is part of other space to which the fountain gives psychological access. Romance of the Rose is a psychomachia.

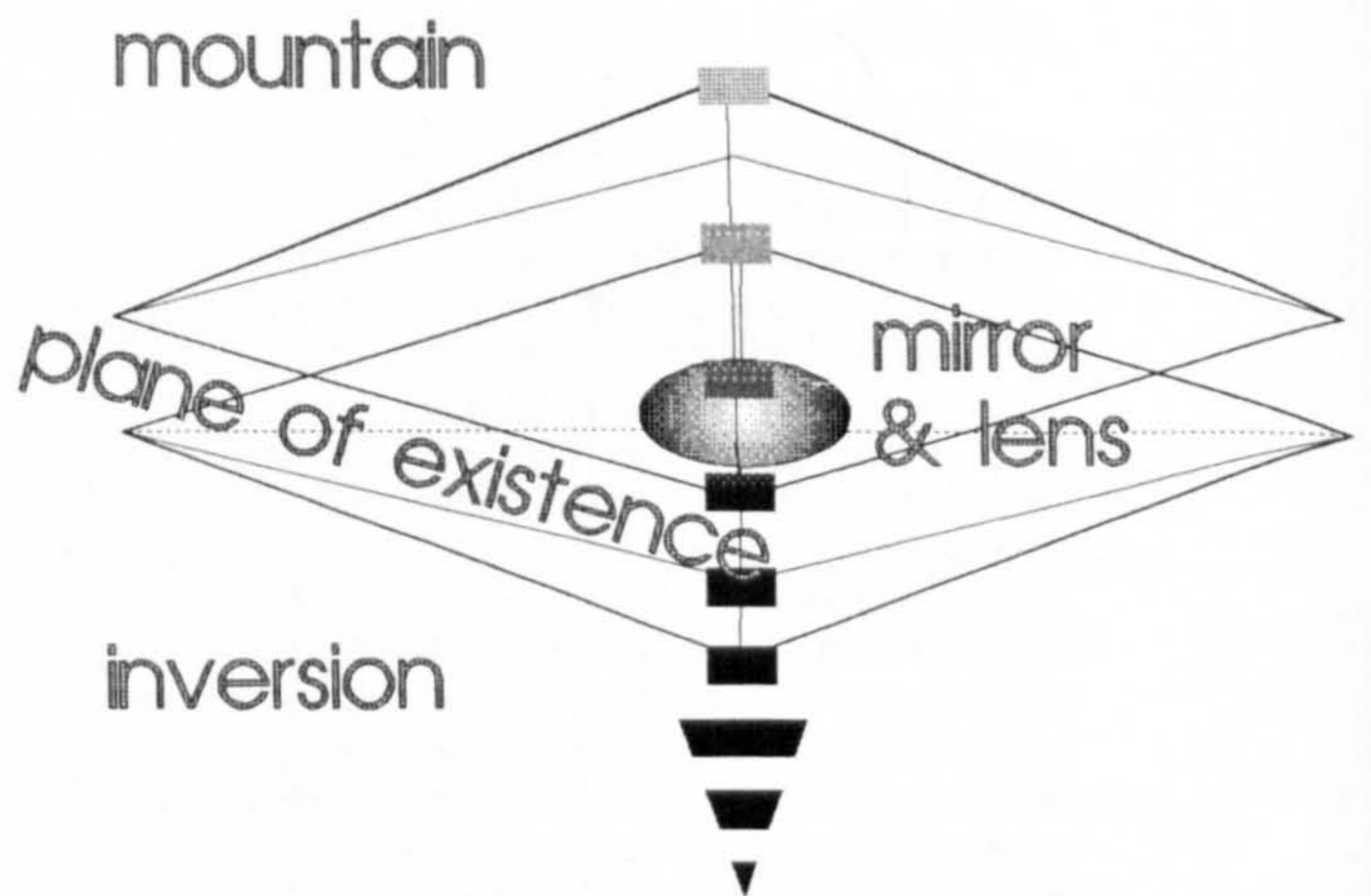
An underground stream (labyrinth), passes over its pebble base. Dreams are realised, it purifies, the eyes become crystal. Access is gained to "there". We are presented with the schema of Thymele where past, present, and future are simultaneously realised.

The garden from Romance of the Rose is mythic space. Normal dimensions are supplemented by abstract space. A cloistered world of privilege, external iconography is of Hatred and Decay, internal imagery is concerned with philosophical evaluation of Love. It updates Lamon's grove, from which it derives.

This sketch shows one of many possible variants on its verbal imagery based on contemporary illustrations. Its apotheosis is the XVIIc French garden of Liancourt.

Many Italian Renaissance landscapes raided it for programme and form, including Bomarzo and Lante. It is a major source of continuity between antiquity and the Renaissance (see Lambrogiana (Chapter eight).

Underlying spatial schema



The "Rose" Garden

pleasance, where " the boughs met to interweave their limbs and leaves with one another's".

All are various expressions of superficially similar ideological space. Where Falerina's garden has four gates (not the "four plough gates" of Homer's grove of Alkinoos?), Lamon's has, like the classical labyrinth, only one. His choice is simple; one enters or one does not. Once inside, concupiscence is balanced about its central Orphic symbol. Those boughs interweaving their limbs are the only living objects that do so in this pleasance. Elsewhere painted objects hint at this undercurrent which also drives the narrative. Either way, no harm results within its benign embrace, for one is free to leave this enclosure. To avoid nasty surprises, one leaves where one enters, having been well hosted, a concept enshrined in Arabic proverb. The quadripartite form of Falerina's monstrous grove is altogether more demanding; there is a choice of gate; four are available and with them comes the responsibility to choose a correct order or face savage demonic annihilation. Unpleasant surprises are in store at each one. For Orlando there is no opportunity to quit. It is not part of his acculturated code of behaviour. Interestingly, Longus is the only available author to make this quadripartite pleasance so directly and specifically Greek, but that, it appears, might have connotations as subtle as Ariosto's literary flattery.

Lamon's ordered conformity is arranged as an exemplar of perfect stasis about a serenely beautiful temple of Dionysos. It explicates and exemplifies a central Greek concept, that of *kalokagathia*, an indivisible fusion that makes goodness and beauty parts of one state. The same quality also characterises the orchard grove of Alkinoos.¹⁶ A garden of love, the pervasive consonance of Lamon's grove garden remains a persistent theme throughout Medieval Christian aesthetics.¹⁷ Similar inherent states of expressive perfection are attained in Renaissance music with its use of musical line proportioned on the *harmonia mundi*.¹⁸ This preserves for us something of the fervour with which the idea was pursued, perhaps with greater accessibility. It remains essential in that most proportional of arts at least up to Allegri, whose *Misere* is a Baroque apotheosis of the concept.¹⁹

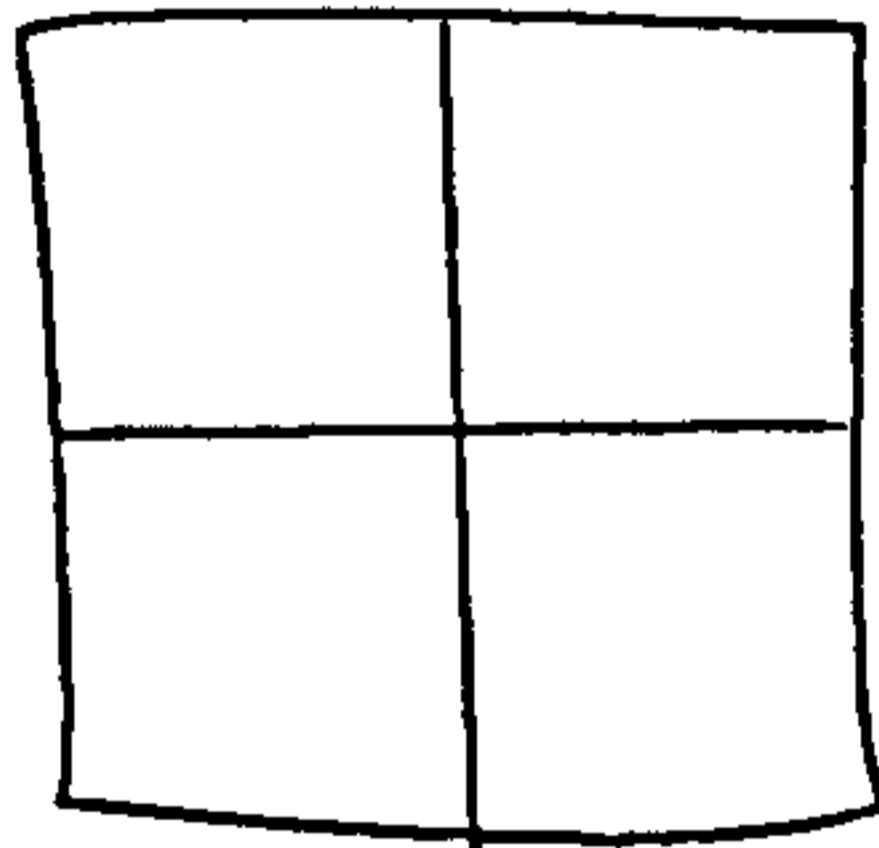
¹⁶. Concepts enshrined within single words in a language represent conscious concepts fundamental to the culture. Because of this, the word is used.

¹⁷. Eco remarks: "... where aesthetics and artistic production are concerned, the Classical world turned its gaze on nature but the Medievals turned their gaze on the Classical world; Medieval culture was based, not on a phenomenology of reality, but on a phenomenology of a cultural tradition." *Eco, U: Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*. tr. H. Bredin. London 1986. pp 4.

¹⁸. The Pythagorean and Platonic concepts of universal resonances which drive the ordered cosmos within the One.

¹⁹. Nor does it stop there; *Beethoven's C sharp minor string quartet* extends it into the Romantic idiom quite decisively.

Part of a system of thought so powerful that it survived centuries of combined devastation and reinterpretation, Lamon's garden focuses and encapsulates the myth of Greek Hellenism within a narrative of eloquent and elegantly contrived continuous allegory. Concealing-revealing, and revealing-concealing are of its essence in every part. Boiardo avoids such complexity, preferring to concentrate allegory in the symbolism of his *meraviglie* rather than his narrative. This means the grove and garden spaces. Allegory is always concerned with dynamic processes, never static conditions.²⁰ These groves, surely survivals of ancient sacred groves like that in Longus or those of Vergil, compress this to a density that marks their presence in the story emphatically. Their action is even more heightened than the battle sequences, for they are dreams, the product of Orlando's own mind. They have the dream's mythic projections from one space to another without logical transition.



Lamon's pleasance presents the purity of the *templum*; Boiardo's grove garden, using similar condensation, is quite something else. It portrays and symbolises the acquisition and abuse of the gift of female power and of apparently limitless wealth. Yet both are built on similar sources in landscape experience.²¹

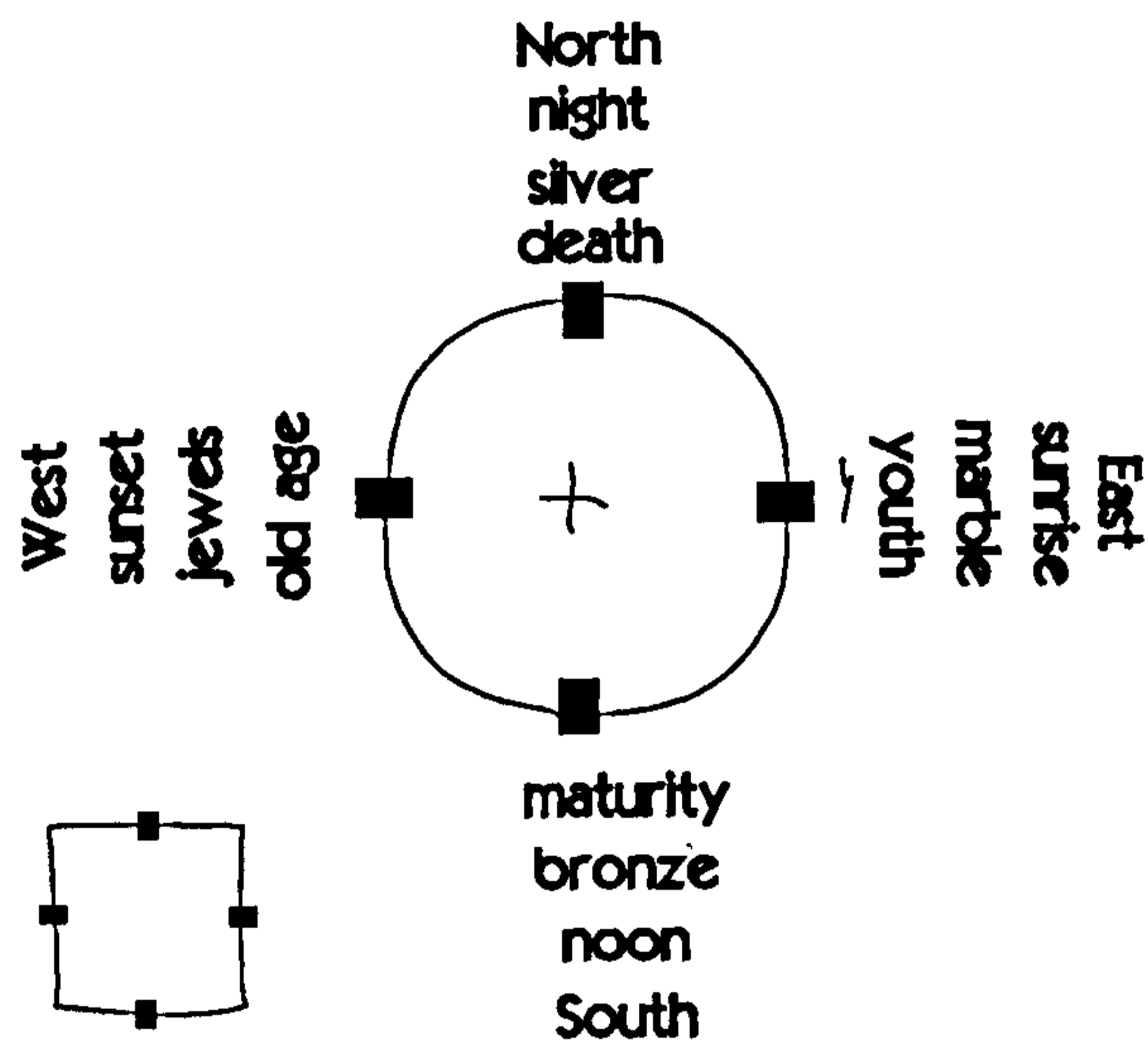
Iconographic richness in Hellenistic culture thoroughly taps the dream. On the surface both seem remote from those ancient orgiastic celebrants of primordial chaos in gardens on the edge of Sumerian and Akkadian cities on the verge of literacy.²² But are not these strange queens of Boiardo's landscape empires also oriental priestesses of primordia, their gardens, for all their form, containers of chaos? Theirs is not a Greek, but a Latin view. Their domains are destroyed through literacy, the "accurate" transmission of knowledge, the book in Orlando's firm grasp, law not *logos*. The whole dream sequence of Falerina's domain is construed from symbols of a particular sexuality which is

²⁰. See *Murrin, M: The allegorical epic: essays in its rise and decline*. Chicago 1980. Chapter 3.

²¹. Morgana's enclosure within her parkland landscape is precisely this form and serves as an aesthetic imprisonment for the captives of Love. It is Boiardo's equivalent of the landscape of Circe. Its inheritance from Longus and de Meun's love garden is obvious.

²². The *bit akitu*. Their character changes from Sumerian to Akkadian and Assyrian, but survives throughout the history of Rome with symbolism embodied in icons central to Christianity in Europe. They were originally garden temples whose functions lay at the transitions of life and death, the passing of old kings and the arrival of new, and therefore at the bi-annual new year festivals. This use of gardens is recorded for us at the very beginning of written language.

antithetic to literacy (but not literature). Like the memories of monsters haunting their groves, these priestesses and goddesses draw attention to humanity's perception of ordered patterning in nature's indifferent fractals by their presence, as gargoyles on a Gothic cathedral counterpoint the geometric perfection of its symbolic structure. The difference between Falerina's pleasance and Lamon's and the cathedral is that the monsters have gained ingress to the form. They are not excluded from it. For Lamon's precinct destruction came from outside, from a "gargoyle" in the guise of human imbalance that found its way in.²³ Therein lies part of Falerina's genesis. The gargoyle remained inside and in

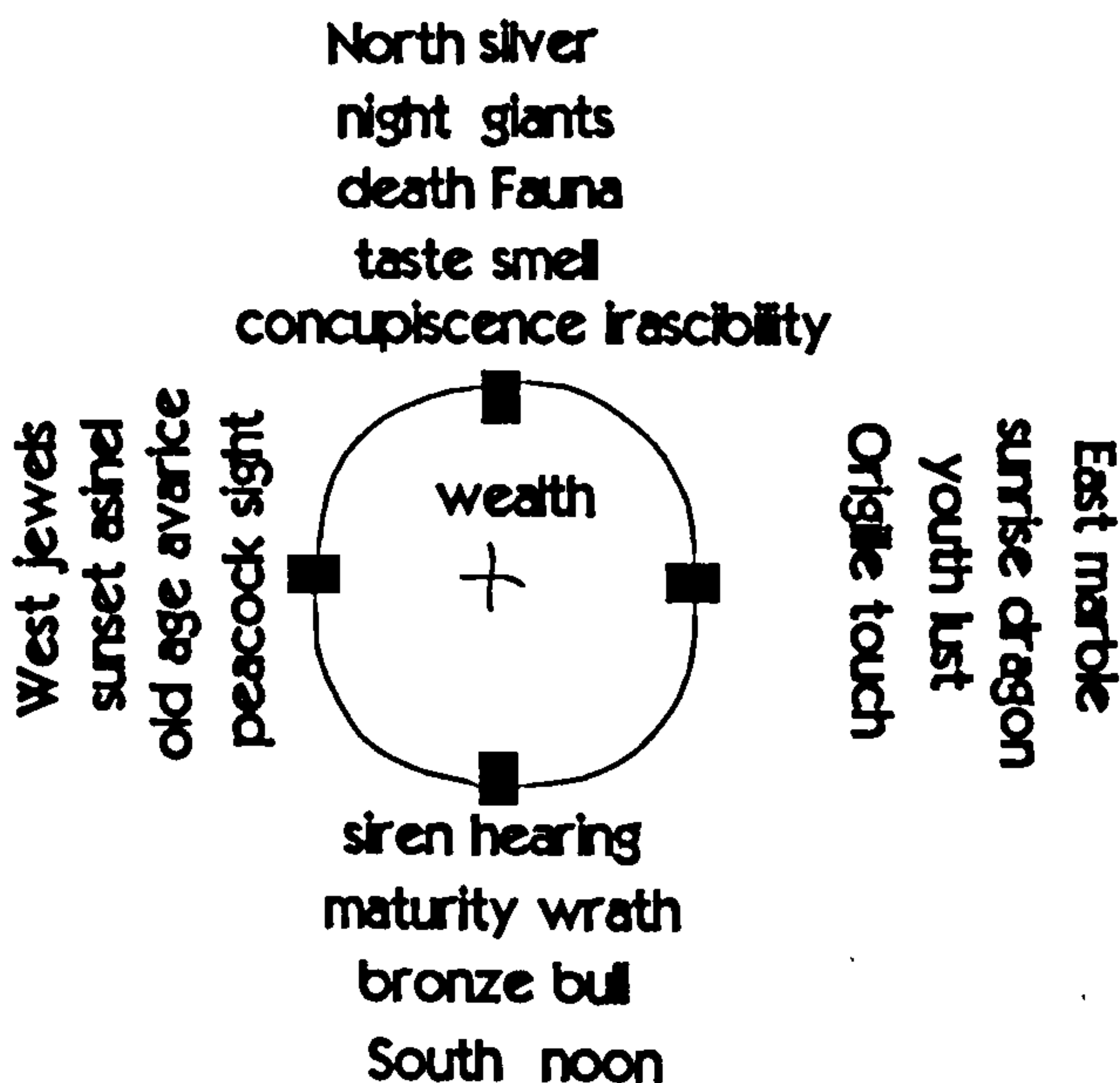


control until destroyed.

A typical allegoria scheme for the quadripartite garden of the Renaissance might look like the sketch. Symbolic elements built up over the Medieval period have been adapted to a newer logic, but the principle remains. This particular kind of complexity is not presented in Lamon's pleasance. Many of the attributes are there. They are not so directly construed within the inherent geometry as are these. Boiardo pursues this further. He produces spatial inversion. An historical norm would consider the garden to be an oasis of order within cosmic, natural, or human space. The idea is present in the precinct. It draws together a concentration of human activity on the surface, the domain of the goddesses. Boiardo puts the chaos inside. Falerina's garden is as trackless as any *apeiron* from Greek myth or epic. Like Odysseus on the sea, Orlando cannot make paths from his navigation, nor are any presented to him, even false

²³. As an allegoria of Greekness and Empire, this image has many layers of reading, none of which can be rejected. This pattern becomes prevalent for subsequent allegorical landscape gardens. Once given literary motivation in this manner, the object itself generates even more layers.

ones. He has to be able to perceive whatever order might exist through the same ancestral sense that guided Odysseus or Jason, the ever-active instinct of the warrior hero. But it was essential for him to avoid Jason's acquisitive instincts.



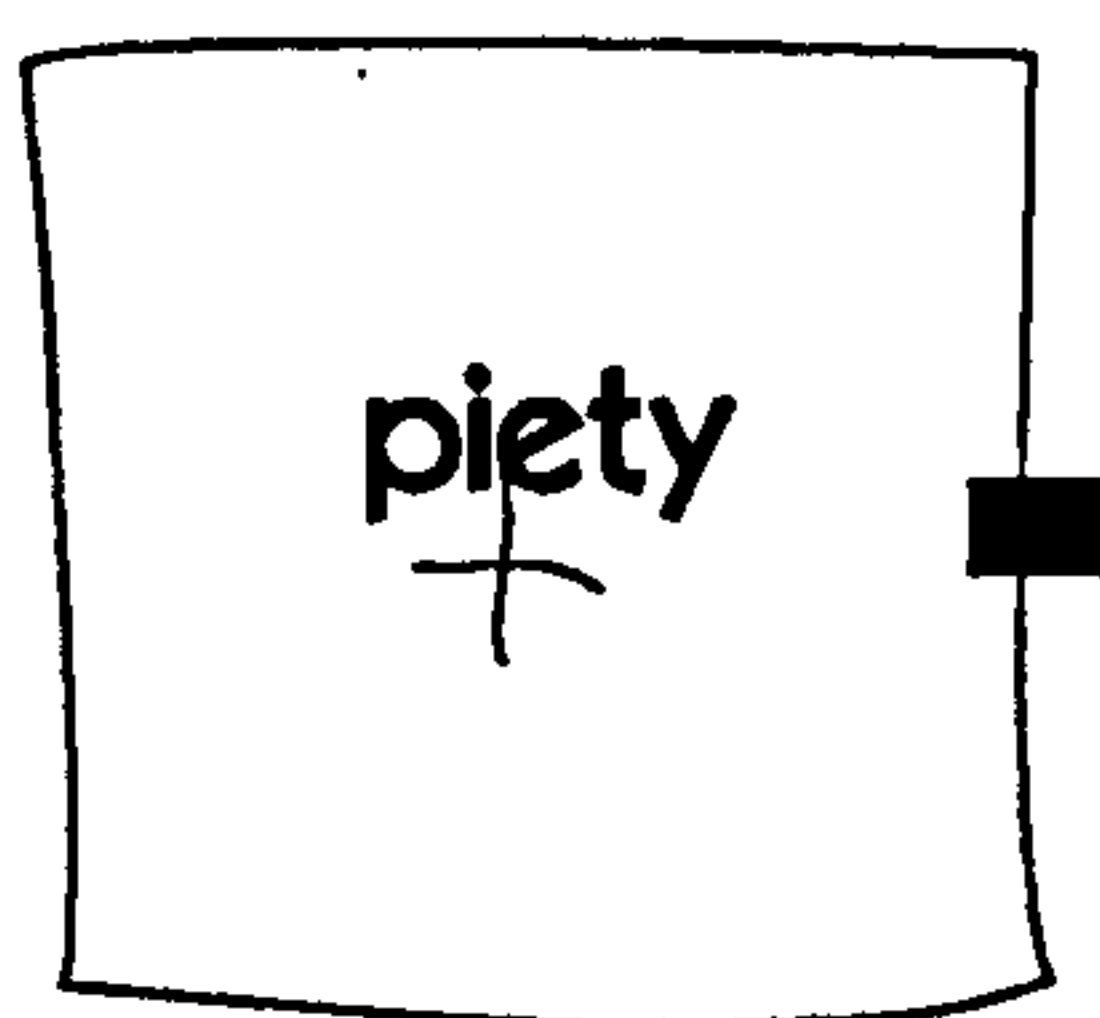
Boiardo thickens out this basic scheme using psychological undercurrents. All appear to be opposites of those Medieval and Renaissance gardens based on the paradise. Where we would expect to find the fountain or source, or tree representing the tree of life and knowledge, he places the source of Falerina's power, the tree with its inverted trunk and eternal crops, like Alkinoos, of Midas-like golden pears. A traditional centre of the cloister paradise with its complex associative symbolic meanings has here been turned on itself. Tyranny, says Boiardo, can be a garden, because the garden itself is space already subverted, and therefore open to abuse by power. Although it is not entirely clear, Falerina's garden seems to be circular and cosmic, unlike the cloister. The inference is strong as Orlando approaches the dragon gate.

*(The wall) was a stone of a living rock,
That completely surrounded the enclosure;
A thousand courses ascending to the sky,
And thirty thousand around the circle.²⁴*

²⁴. Canto 4. Stanza 16. translation author's.

*"Quello era un sasso di una pietra viva,
Che tutta integra attorno l'aggirava;*

The circle is the female principle, the square the male influence on it. The circle with the dot at the centre represents a multitude of aspects of the fusion of the male and female principles. The golden tree at the centre of Falerina's garden is an equivalent of these and inverts the meaning of the waterspout hung on the edge of an Arabic fountain pool. It is the male fertilising aspect of the liquid cosmos which produces the wealth and protects the male. But in Falerina's garden, this protection as well as access afforded by the mundus has gone into reverse, allowing the forces of a destructive underworld to emerge and tyrannise.²⁵ That it is a dream is immaterial; all gardens are dreams. Here is a lusty beginning for Mannerist landscapes.



Compare this with the scheme for Lamon's garden (left); differences are immediately obvious within the similarities. They are analysed in more detail later. Uncertainty attends the geometry of Lamon's garden; it could be nearly circular or nearly square. The strong possibility is that it fits the symbolic Pythagorean geometry of the vesica (see below).²⁶ What is revealed is absence of the massive accretion of symbolic codes given to the concept by late Roman and Medieval religious, social, and political manipulations.

Boiardo's garden is a cumulative and compressed Medieval world landscape, a point not lost on Vicino Orsini, creator of Bomarzo. All of its elements were present in ancient Oriental landscapes as recorded in mythic epic, starting with Sumer. In ancient times and antiquity the meaning of the geometry was understood as The Way, rather than spelt out. This is discussed more fully below, but an interesting comparison is the existence of a small enclosure in Wang Wei's estate from VIIc China, five hundred years later than Longus [5].²⁷ There is much "stands

*Da mille braccia verso il ciel saliva,
E trenta miglia a quel cerchio voltava.*

²⁵. The mundus is the hole in the earth's surface which permits human exchange with the world beneath, oracular, and symbol of male political oppression (more below).

²⁶. The vesica piscis was the generator of all Pythagorean geometry, is discussed in some detail later.

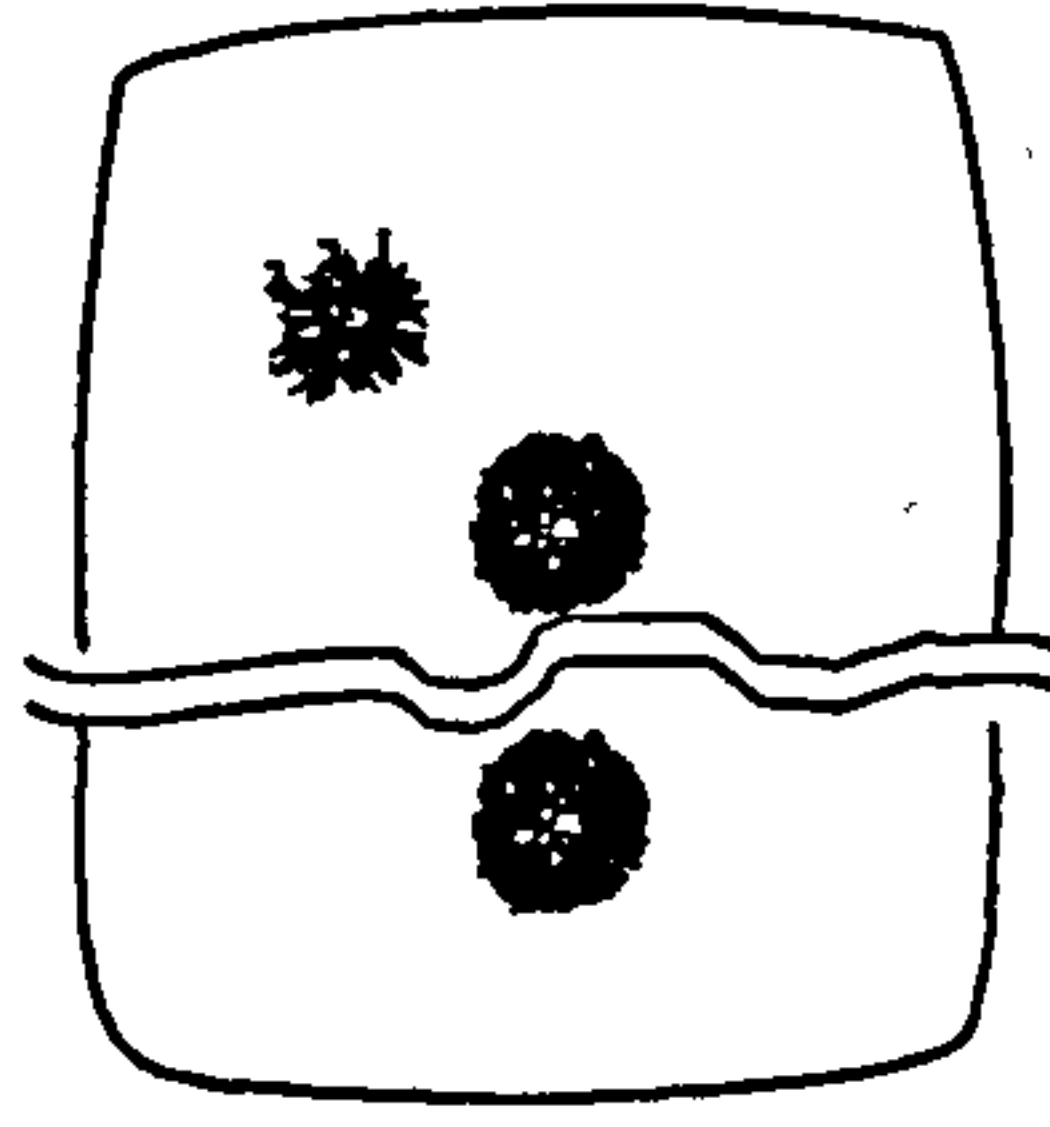
²⁷. *Sullivan, M.: Symbols of Eternity: the art of landscape painting in China.* Oxford 1979. ff. 26.



Sullivan 1989 pl 28

Wang Wei's enclosure, China ca 700AD

for" in this typically Chinese spatial simplification which is not found in other oriental or western landscapes.



Renaissance and Mannerism.

"Mannerism" and "Renaissance" are external labels and to some extent artificial and divisive. Renaissance, that period when classical humanism gained ascendancy, was overlapped by Mannerism followed, and gradually subsumed, by a Neo-Renaissance.²⁸ The intentions within each are not clearly distinguishable and divergent. Renaissance thinkers and artists sought to reconstruct discoveries of antiquity within what they believed to be a classical system. Mannerism sought to evolve this, actively encouraging dispersal of images without the system. No polemic was ranged against the earlier classicism, but the "subversions" of Mannerism, aimed towards evolving the Renaissance into a modern style, laid foundations for later Romanticism.²⁹ This they did by choosing to ignore much of the philosophical context of Renaissance classicism, replacing it with more idiosyncratic use.

The name, gained from the movement's historian Vasari, denies systematic intellectual classicism. *La maniera moderna* was a professional initiates' "way". It was an accepted method of doing things that was different, without historical systematic regulations but having a distinct style, recognisable and valid among its practitioners. Chinese Landscapes, whose vocabulary, unlike Japanese Zen, was not laid down, provide a parallel in their avoidance of the state's official Confucianism.³⁰ Theirs was a gentlemen's reaction against the system, a common way for a certain social class which, although it did not hold the reigns of power was committed to making that power function. Briganti

²⁸. In this Eric Cochrane's scenario is followed as being scholarly and rational if one has to label "periods". cf. *Cochrane, Italy 1530 - 1630*. London 1988. Introduction.

²⁹. However, this viewpoint is not fully tenable either, as will be seen below in the work of Sannazaro, a poet classified as "High Renaissance".

³⁰. This is due to transference from one culture to another, with an attendant need to explain, like the linguistic breakdown of Latin into words instead of sentences for the benefit of the new empire.

points out that the Mannerists never overtly denied the Renaissance system. But in Briganti's words, *la maniera moderna* means "a faithful interpretation of the principles of the 'maniera' as opposed to the simple imitation of nature."³¹ It is a style, much as the Viennese Secession and Art Nouveau. In this it concentrates on aspects of perception located in the dream, the individual mind's resolution of collective imagery. Complications in sorting Mannerist from Classicist arise in that arch classicists like Leon Battista Alberti plunge convincingly into the Mannerist world of psychosomatic dream.³² Some might refer to the following landscape as Gothic, but such themes constitute a frequent portion of Renaissance imagery. In its own way it is as savagely nihilist as any Boiardo pleasure.

*" ... wide meadows in which manes and beards of old men grow instead of stalks and leaves of grass, women's tresses, horses hair, and even lions' manes, so that there was not a corner of this space that did not appear covered by such a hair coat. And how many gods from heaven I saw there lost in dreams, digging for I don't know what roots which allow whomever eats them to seem wise and learned, though they are not so at all. I also took to doing it; but a swarm of lice flew over the meadow and almost ate me up; flight offered the only escape. I therefore took to my heels "*³³

Nothing, surely, could be bleaker in this supposed age of enlightened classicism than that image of gods digging for roots, whatever construction one places upon it. This is certainly not a Boccaccio meadow, is it?. For Tafuri, and perhaps this is the dividing point between Alberti and Mannerism in some way, Alberti uses his systematic investigative techniques to reconstruct "classical" order from such dynamic chaos. Alberti saw this as restoration. That seems to have been his intention. Certainly the last lines of the quote can be construed as personal allegory concealing autobiographical commentary.³⁴ Quite apart from anything else, Alberti presents himself, with some philosophical detachment, not as an archaic hero, but as a realist taking to his heels. Obtuse meaning in the dream personalises it. This colours his work to some extent, setting in motion certain sympathetic

³¹. *Briganti, G: Italian Mannerism*. Leipzig 1968. (tr. M.Kunzle). pp ???. One might be tempted to bridle against the use of the word "simple" in the context of Renaissance philosophy.

³². L.B.Alberti 1404 - 1472; M.M.Boiardo 1441 - 1494; G.Vasari 1511 - 1574.

³³. *Alberti, L.B: Intercenall. via M. Tafuri, Discordant Harmony from Alberti to Zuccari*. In *Architectural Design* Vol 49. pp. 36. The passage is full of obtuse references in a way that seems to glance sidelong at the darker aspects of Classicism.

³⁴. *Clark, K: The Art of Humanism*. London 1983. pp 3 points out that he was illegitimate and exiled by abuse of power in the persecution of the Albizzi under the repressions.

resonances with later developments, including Orsini's 'Sacrobosco' at Bomarzo.

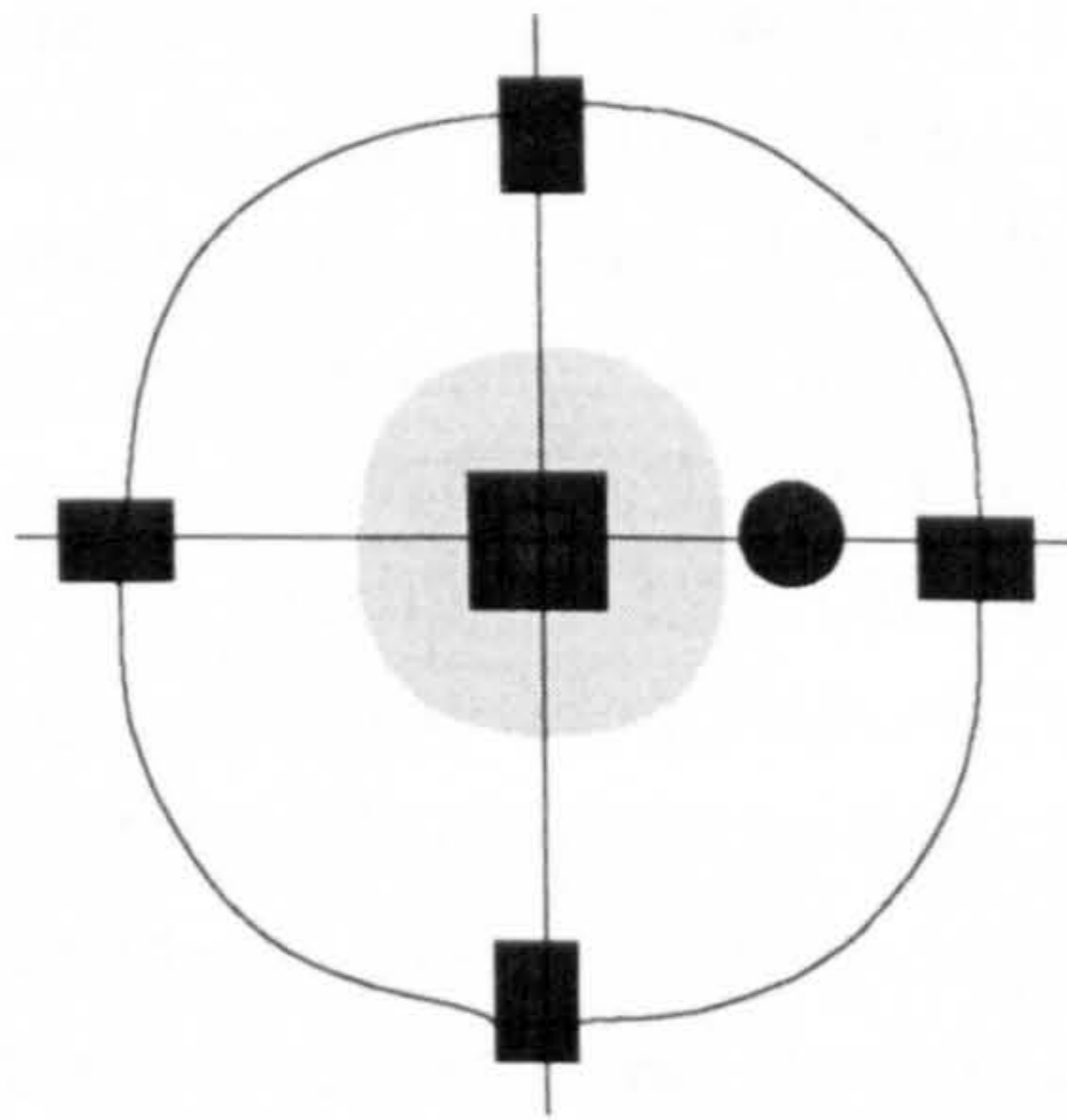
Boiardo's pleasancess do not permit Alberti's option of flight for Orlando. Action has already been engaged before they are encountered. There is no turning back at the gates. Odysseus' ready-to-hand wit, the skill of the intelligent warrior prince, is his and Orlando's principle weapon. The meraviglia, nature turned antagonistic rather than indifferent, is an abused and abusive artefact, a commentary on the political space occupied by and occupying the concept of garden as pleasure and even deeper inferences. Boiardo however, agrees in principle with Alberti. "Man exists to contemplate the universe and to imitate it." Falerina's artefact, expression of nature perverted, natural space turned inside out, symbol of the power of tyrants, is destroyed by removing the source of her wealth, an inverted tree of divine sustenance, an equivalent of Alberti's image. Contemplation of the energy of the universe and its imitation involves destruction in at least the same measure as creation. Humanity somehow prevails despite the internal pessimism and bitterness shared with Alberti. In this Boiardo precedes Mannerism. In Ariosto, in common with the *maniera moderna*, sexuality is broader and more prominent. Some critics concentrate on this aspect of Mannerism, but its prominence is probably more due to a sensed need to enliven ideas by more open and complete eroticism, life-giving energy. Blatant sexuality does not seem to be the aim, but is certainly a powerful means of achieving something less precious than the courtly love lyric or the Garden of the Rose. It frees humanism from many of the remnants of Medieval conventions. Despite its frequent misogynist attitudes, it reflects women in more realistic positions than virginal love objects central to the labyrinth of a rose garden.

Falerina's labyrinth.

Boiardo himself calls Falerina's enclosure a garden. It is an artefact. Its creator, survivor of mythic pasts, is an enchantress, a cantatrice, one who performs incantations. Were she male, then the epithet priest might have been applied. She is not, and the space she both creates and inhabits in a male role, though with the behaviour of the female spider, is therefore made an inversion of the Christian humanist space of the cloister.³⁵ The cloister incorporates the templum, a sign of space preoccupied with the male principle. It is an abstraction of spatial values with far-

³⁵. Early humanism and Christianity were not in conflict. The humanists sought to reconcile the world they observed with the one that Medieval Christianity had construed out of its examination of classical antiquity. The process is infinitely complex.

reaching overtones, since it represents the ultimate transference of landscape values from the female realm to the male warrior prince concept of a "triumph".³⁶ Roman culture gave that transference its final seal. Thence it became part of the essential structure of Christianity. During Boiardo's lifetime there was the unedifying spectacle of Lucrezia Borgia's manipulation by male members of her family, followed by a popular history that survived generations.³⁷ He died before her marriage into the d'Este dynasty, a marriage which seems to have given her stability and positive outlet for her talents. She employed Ariosto, who composed the sequel to Boiardo's fable. All of Boiardo's demons are women, and all are associated with landscapes, a stereotype of the rhetorical tradition. Perhaps his translations of Apuleius were responsible in part, but the association is historically based in the beginnings of Western literature, as we see later. It is a cultural stereotype, a Sophist set piece.³⁸



Falerina's grove is a scheme of cardinal point "gates" (aspects of personality), fountains, groves, grottos, palace and miraculous tree.

Wilderness was the realm and haunt of the Goddess. As that resource dwindled under the onslaught of the traditionally male concept of city, so did her power. Guardians of that resource, placators of its power since pre-history, were shamans and priest-kings. Landscape was the province of both. Shamanic practice was transsexual, the role of its practitioners to placate the female fecundity of a surface disturbed by the male ritual hunt. Boundaries between the female principle and the male were made passable by rites. An ancient symbol, before the labyrinth was fitted with its templum, its structural key, was the labyrinthine womb. The female principle, the mundus, is in places where the surface of the earth gives access through dark holes, grottoes, to the abyss beneath. The wilderness was a

³⁶. This is embodied in the central concept of tholos (more below).

³⁷. 1480 - 1519. Married Alfonso d'Este 1502. Duchess of Ferrara 1505, making the court a centre for artists, scholars and poets.

³⁸. In this context, it is worth noting that Longus' *Pastoralias* was first published in 1559, though it must have been known in manuscript form.

surface, fecund in its own right. In being so it presented also the challenge of an *apeiron*, of a trackless and untrackable expanse within which human existence depended on recognition of small, even minute impermanent differences. Tracks, once made, become covered again by its movements or growth.

This still forms part of signing, an ecological management used by aboriginal Australians. In addition to the normal skills of the hunter gatherer, seeing a broken twig, a surface mark, broken fruit or bent grasses, the movements of weather and water, temporary settlements were systematically marked. Such sites were used by different tribal groups. To avoid over-use, signs utilised natural processes. When obliterated, the site was suitable for re-use; until then, it was avoided. Often considered traditionally male such skills are obviously shared instincts developed as need arises.

The task of Aphrodite within Greek culture, even more Venus within Roman, was to placate the male. Her venue was the garden. Garden and goddess is a very ancient association, already well used in Sumerian literature. In this manifestation therefore Venus has an ordered and orderly garden, not a great wilderness. Her garden is simultaneously a celebration and denial of the powers of earth, a celebration of the human will to mark and maintain a place for "nature" as formal concept. The underlying assumption is always that the male enters the garden for seduction, enticed or forcibly. Separation from more destructive manifestations of the earth goddess makes later "humanist" Landscapes palatable and vulnerable.³⁹ The grove of Nemi represented relics of the destructive powers of a feminine wilderness well into Roman times, the kind of place where Actaeon met his inevitable fate. This is the garden of Falerina, a labyrinthine grove landscape subverting its earlier sense. Seduction of the hero becomes his destruction. It is used to deceive the warrior hero, using his personality to lead him astray, a Neolithic form of defence.⁴⁰ Once inside the gates retreat is impossible in a one way system with binary blind choices. One is destructive the other dangerous. Choose the destructive one and the story ends there. Choose the alternative and there is a chance of survival if the techniques and perceptions of the protagonist are right.

³⁹. Bomarzo deals explicitly with the destructive element as well as the productive.

⁴⁰. Neolithic is considered a goddess based society. Its fortified settlements were protected by labyrinth approaches. The twists and turns disoriented attackers, rendering them not only physically at a disadvantage but also psychologically vulnerable. This does not seem to have deterred the romans at Maiden Castle!

There is no innocently beautiful garden in Boiardo as appears in Boccaccio. His male view of space espouses the courtly tradition. His sources in Vergil and Apuleius do not differ in this respect. He uses the stereotype pleasance in such a way that inner truths are revealed.

*Off he wandered in mid May,
With everything around profuse in flower,
And giving the place such delicious odours,
Whose presence enlivened his heart.
..... overhead in rich verdure were birds,
Singing with lively voice and soothing.
Rabbits capered and deer gambolled,
Peacefully watching and tame,
Hares and hinds coursed everywhere,
Multitudinous birds adorned the whole garden.⁴¹*

It may have been coincidence that Vicino Orsini at Bomarzo suffered profoundly as warrior and hero, cheated in love by death, sympathetic resonances causing him to examine Falerina's labyrinth garden in some depth.⁴² Boiardo's verses in this manner do not differ significantly from similar passages in Boccaccio, Teseida, or the letters Orsini wrote about his Sacro-bosco at Bomarzo. Sannazaro's *Arkadia*, a long elegiac pastoral epic, is devoted entirely to tracing these disordered dream wanderings of a frustrated lover.

Literary origins and mythic scale unite in Falerina's garden. It reveals a Renaissance way of viewing allotted space. We read about "30,000 stones" in the encircling wall, of Orlando peering over the same wall a thousand stones high. It is really quite small in circumference, inordinately high for peering over.⁴³ Depictions of ancient cities encased in high circular walls echo the image. Once inside, this landscape of the psychosomatic dream expands and becomes the *mundus* itself.⁴⁴ It is all in the mind of the intruder. Space does not exist; it is created. Dolorous plains and glad hillocks, subjective images, with lovely groves of pine

⁴¹. Canto 4. Stanzas 22, 23. author's translation.

⁴². Bomarzo's Sacro-bosco was begun in 1547 and finished 1580. Orlando innamorato was left incomplete in 1495; Orlando furioso was published 1516, 1521, 1532. By Orsini's time the latter had become an exemplary traditional epic set against Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. See below.

⁴³. In fact, no more than a tower.

⁴⁴. "A pit then, deep above all in meaning. It connected the city, the space above ground, land-as-soil and land-as-territory, to the hidden, clandestine, subterranean spaces which were those of fertility and death " *Lefebvre, H: Production de l'espace*. Paris 1984. (tr D.Nicholson-Smith). pp 242. Rykwert (see below) recounts a recorded Etruscan rite for founding a new city. A symbolic clod of earth was cast into a specially prepared ditch called *mundus* or world. The clod of earth had first to be given by an aboriginal inhabitant. This has close association with the templum in recognising and extinguishing prior claims on the landscape.

and fir extend to the horizon. What horizon? The Landscape is only thirty stones compass! The wall reaching to the sky has disappeared with Orlando's conquest of his own draconian fears. Having "a majestic gait", he strides easily to the top of a hill to see from there a palace of sculpted marble.⁴⁵ This is Renaissance and Mannerist fusion of space. Rykwert points to the dream status of cities, a fusion of "assonance, rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, allusion, resemblance".⁴⁶ He forgets illusion. These gardens reveal common traits, not so surprising in context. At Ferrara, the d'Este parks were an integral part of a city planned with care based on the philosophy of Alberti.⁴⁷ Their distribution in the plan of Ferrara was cosmic, occupying corners which the Brahmanic city considered key places, with the palace at the centre. The disposition points to conscious identification of this unity in the quincunx, a continuous form of templum. It has strong three-dimensional implications in the graphic sense, but does not stop at that. There is also close congruence with a contemporary Renaissance fascination with Sacre-monte. This Brahmanic idealised city form of the same idea represents a view of cosmic space as mountain with great monumentality and ideological precision.

Ariosto's princely parks.

Boiardo was part of the d'Este clan. This apparently did not preclude him from suffering at their hands. Some of the biting concealed satire in his work arises from this. He incorporates it into the programme of Falerina's garden, including the creatures. The peacock whose gay facade conceals an anus of lethal proportions, the bird of Hera and the sacred lavacrum of Old S. Peter's. Ariosto, on the other hand, was an employee of the ducal court, a professional. There is greater detachment, even circumspection in his depictions. Allegory was ever a way of creating ambivalences to conceal-reveal. Originally it hid truth from the uninitiated, a device from the time when poets were keepers of religion and history. It remained also part of the armoury of the court "Fool", whose privilege it was to conceal-reveal through mockery. Renaissance poets, still believed the keepers of cultural standards of truth and morality, turned this to advantage when persecutions made it expedient to hide

⁴⁵. A perspective view of Ferrara dating from the end of the XVIc shows a park with a hill in it from which the ducal palace could be observed. (Benevolo, see below)

⁴⁶. *Rykwert, J.: The Idea of a Town. Town and Rite.*

⁴⁷. *Benevolo, L.: The History of the City.* London 1980, fig 835. Benevolo considers Ferrara a failed experiment in new town development. The plan reveals a patrician spaciousness of internal landscape quite apart from the ducal parks.

unpalatable or dangerous aspects of truth, probably a large element of Boiardo's Landscapes, where he concentrates allegory.

Ariosto is more open with problems. His status perhaps carried special tolerances. By the time he was writing, Mannerism was declining, already overlapped by Neo-Renaissance ideologies. Expression of sexual matters had been freed from the restraining conventions of the courtly tradition. Vasari, who viewed licence as the fount of aesthetic emotion, explored the relationship between suggestive classical imagery and Christian symbols in some detail.⁴⁸ Bramante's classicising churches are ornate architectural evocations of ancient sacred grottos such as that from Longus.⁴⁹

..... Whither he led his flocks was a cave known as the cave of the nymphs, a rock of great bulk, and within it the nymphs were carven in the stone with unsandalled feet, their arms naked to the shoulders, their hair scattered around their throats, girdled above the hips, each with face delighted yet sober, as if they had come together to keep step in some mystic dance.

They have ventured into the realm of Asklepeios and Hygenia via the baths of Caracalla.⁵⁰ Venus frequently appears in the guise of Mary.⁵¹ Elsewhere images of the Madonna appear as Venus.⁵² All are present within Christian iconography. Adaption had been covert, but essentially part of a need to extend the scope of political influence at the end of the Roman empire. The process caused Medieval philosophers majestic contortions to explain inner meanings. This was particularly true of quadripartite Landscapes where symbolism was already compressed and abstract. The Renaissance sought to replace these antique forms with their own reconstructed system and reconcile the forces. The cloistered garden [6] became permeable. Countryside beyond its walls, once a female province symbolically excluded from male introversion in the monastic stereotype was again permitted concourse with its crystallinity.⁵³

Mannerism seems to have made a point of referring to a reconstructed subconscious in Hellenistic meaning when it could

48. Tafuri, M.: *Discordant harmony from Alberti to Zuccari*. AD ???? pp 37.

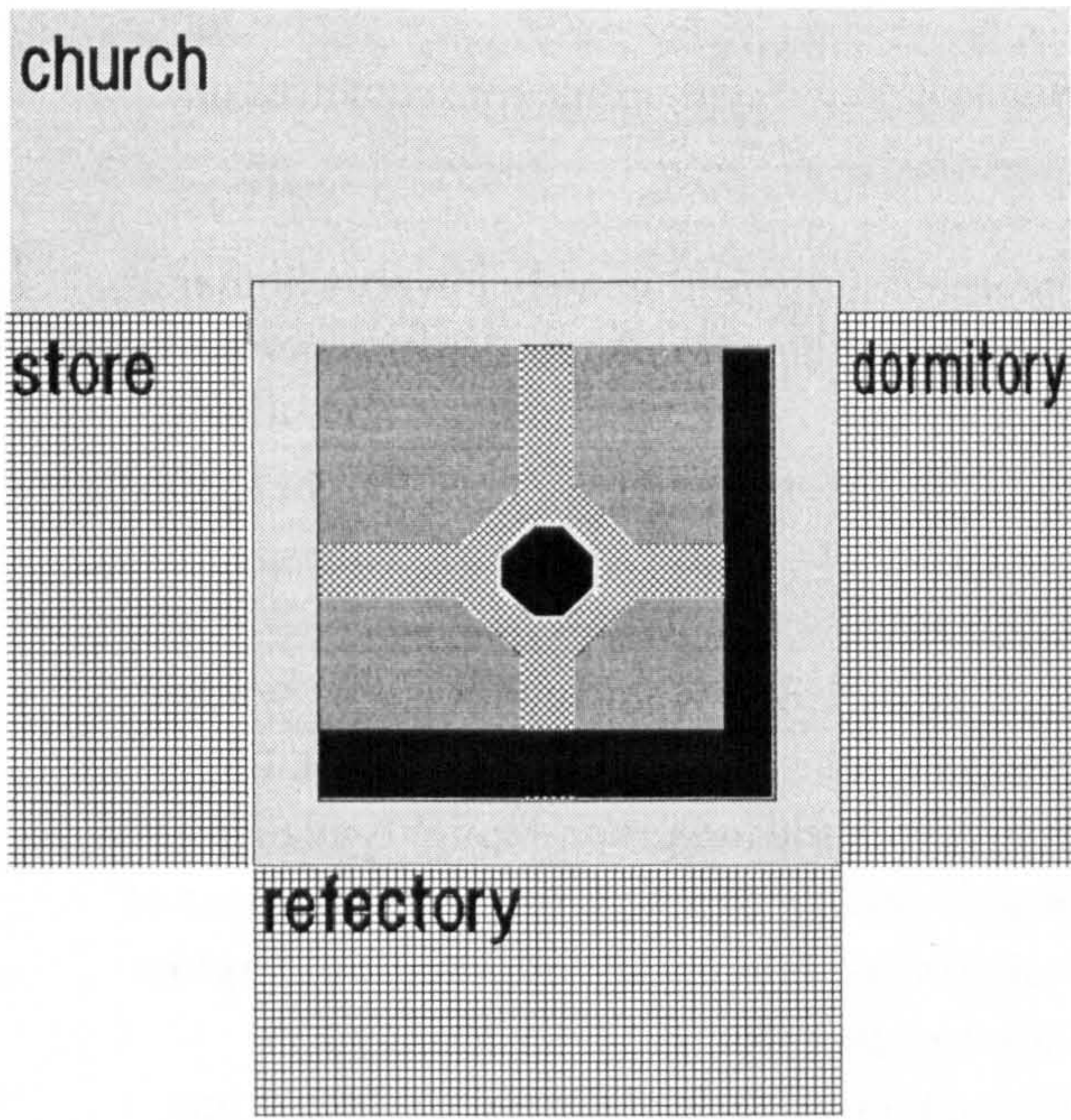
49. Vasari ed. L. Collobi: *Il libro de' disegni del Vasari*. Firenze 1974. pp 135 ill 262.

50. See below on the tholos form.

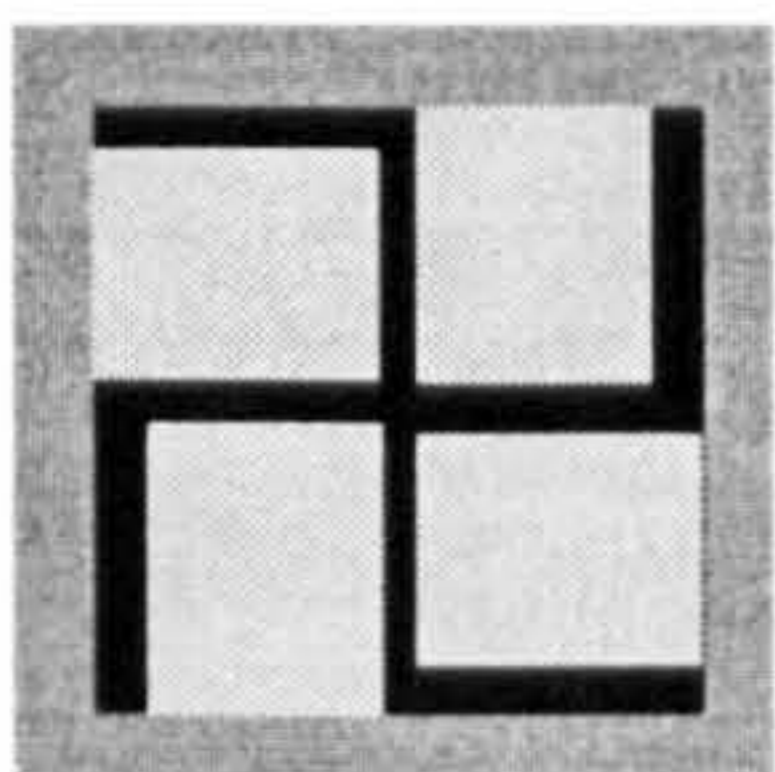
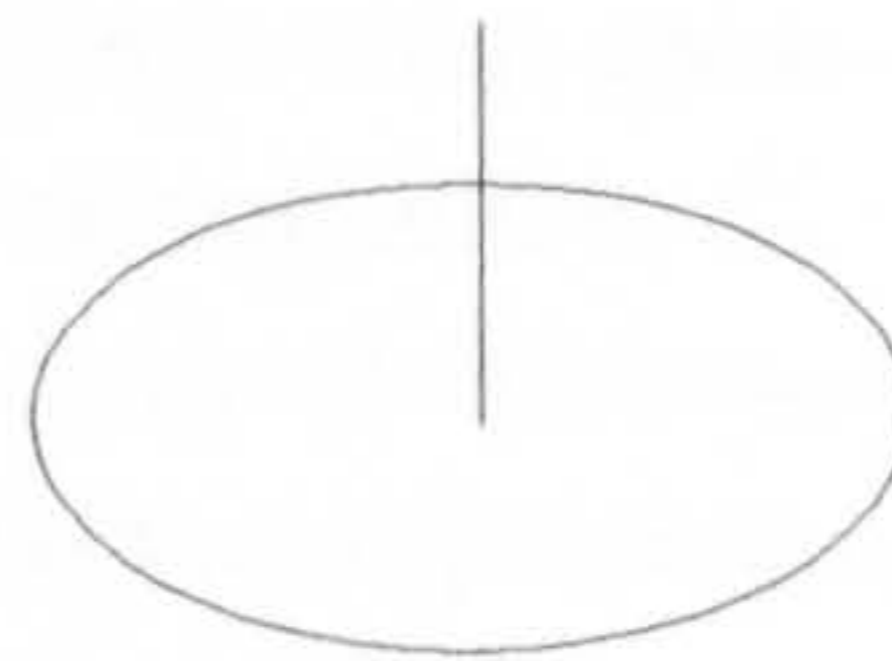
51. Vasari ed. L. Collobi: *Il libro de' disegni del Vasari*. Firenze 1974. 88.183 school of Francesco di Giorgio. Design for an altar. (This is presumably F. di G. Martini, painter theorist and architect (1439 - 1502)).

52. *Ibid.* pp 30 Jacopo della Quercia: Fonte Gaia.

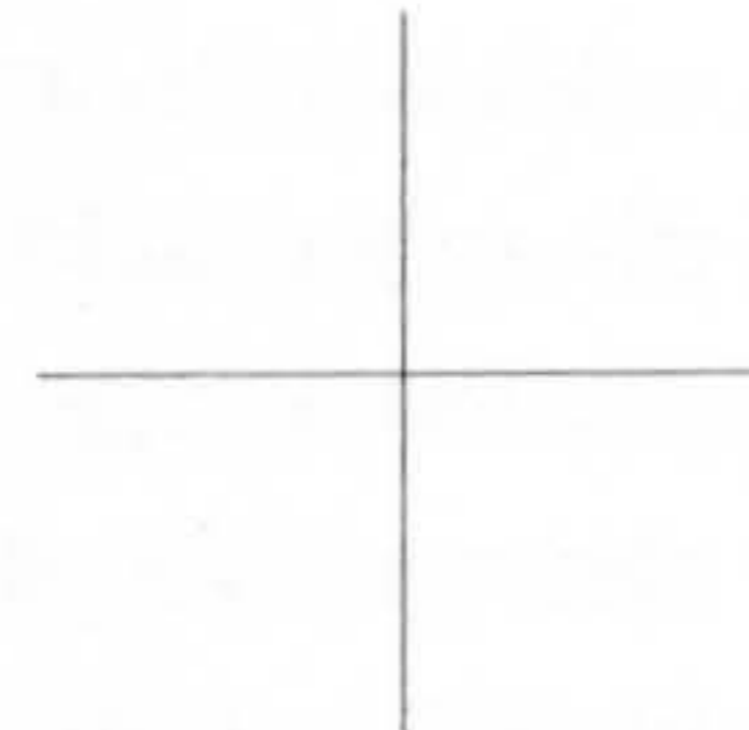
53. Sometimes defensive reasons prevail, but it seems most likely that both aspects supported each other.



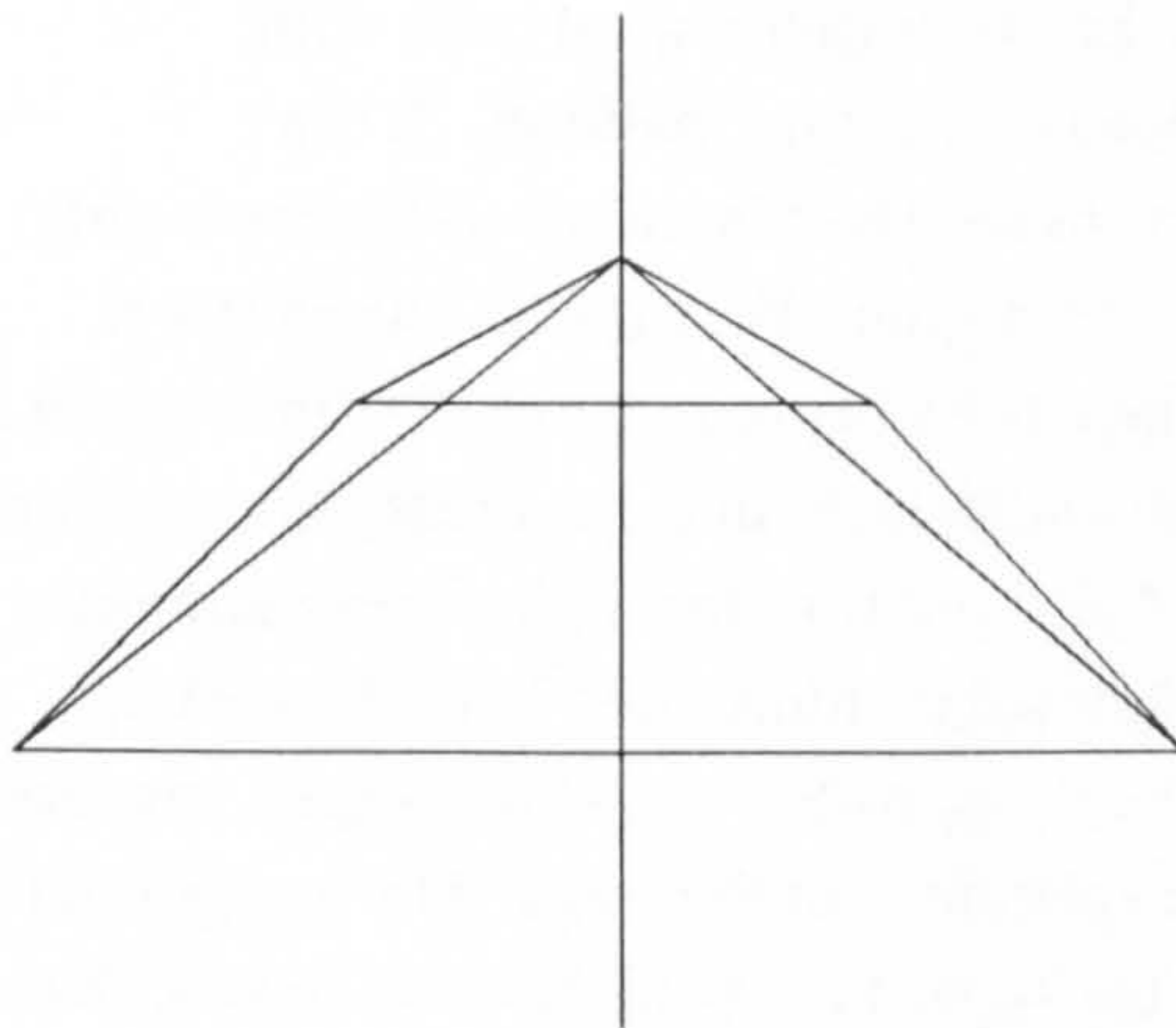
Cloisters form was fixed, based on the spatial concept of the clock. Passage of the sun marks days months & years and associated rite. Day is a meditational procession about its centre, a conflated symbol representing Eden; it might be tholos or tree of life and knowledge, fountain This was the object of veneration, the meditational focus. The form is oriental, probably Byzantine, and derives from the concept of the love garden, like Lamon's.



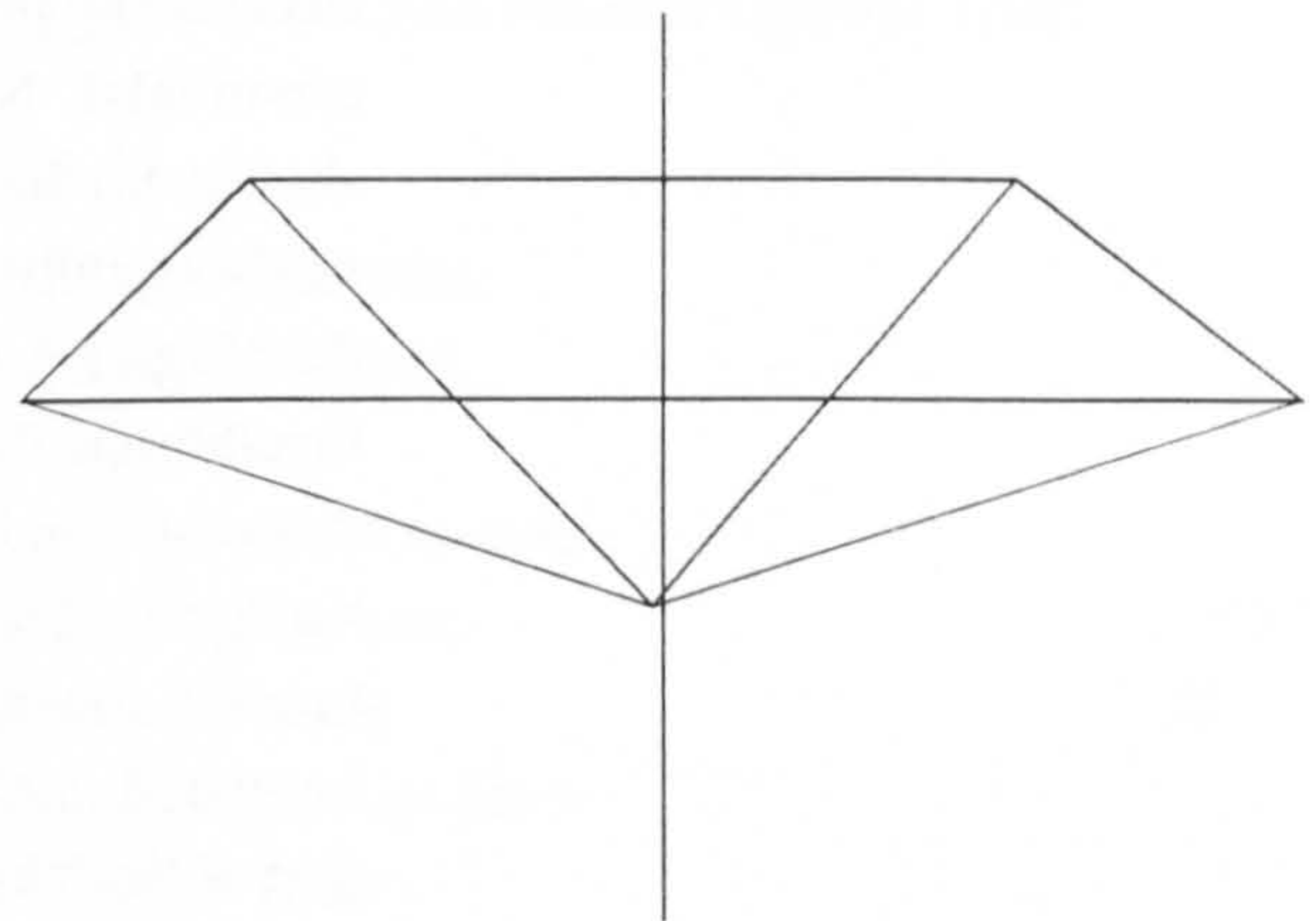
Sun signs are embedded in cloister form, combining the centrality of the templum with graphic movement.



Templum signifies stasis; it contains directional information in vertical and horizontal planes implied in tholos, tree or spring at the hub of cloister.



Templum signifies the third dimension and abstract space beyond, which is in effect the fourth. It is both mountain and pit, the sign of the mundus – see text.



Templum signifies & positions mundus. Mundus is the pit at the apex of a city mound, its inversion. Cloister is an inverse mountain which protects inner space. Centrality is revealed as the male vertical principle within.

Cloister as Paradise

be discovered, often isolating it with ironic consequences or intent.

Since the direction of this study is ultimately towards Bomarzo and Lante, Ariosto's fantasy landscapes are also of concern. Most of the battles of the Ferrarese courtly tradition, in their literary manifestation if not in reality, seem to have been fought against a background of the Garden of the Rose. Paolo Uccello's painting, the "Battle of San Romano" [7] typifies this image of Charlemagnic knighthood.⁵⁴ Everything about it is as symbolic as the quadripartite landscape of the cloistered garden, the paradise of Assyrian art. In the foreground knights challenge each other in a ritual, if savage, dance. It might be the dance of the Minotaurean labyrinth combined with the battle of Lapiths and Centaurs of more ancient vintage. Even Mantegna's masterpiece, mythic in topic, "Battle of the Sea Gods" [8], has more realism. These knights are set apart from the grey utilitarian landscape beyond, only faintly tinged with ochre light, where ordinary foot soldiers stumble into each other over ploughed fields and vineyards. The knights have a stage, a platform. A precisely delimited area, it is set about with spatial conventions. Thickets of roses and orange trees are its backdrop, its floor sanded and marked out with the precision of a carpet. Oranges and citron illuminate the dense verdure before which the paladins wield treacherous technological tools with devastating power and skill from their palfreys. It is a ceremonial. No cannons here! The Mannerist influence is only slightly mediated by the background's realism. Otherwise it might equally as well have been Benozzo Gozzoli's "Procession of the Magi" [9], where oriental princes in court dress, mounted on foreshortened palfreys twist and turn through a mountainous Arkadian landscape inhabited by hunters.⁵⁵ In each painting background landscapes are opposites. Uccello's is grey, meagre in comparison with the splendour of the stage. His foreground is for proud initiates; the background is wilderness as desert, that part of the labyrinth where the uninitiated wander aimlessly whilst their leaders make decisive ritual on its templum. Gozzoli's procession winds through the Landscapes of an ancient revered civilisation. Uccello's depicts "civilised" warfare from the days before firearms caused their trauma, the setting of Ariosto's epic; its publications were co-ordinated with crises in the war against Islam which Europeans seemed always on the verge of losing.⁵⁶ In Boiardo and Ariosto the symbolism of

⁵⁴. Painted for the Medici palace at Firenze, before 1456. Three parts, sadly dispersed in Firenze, Paris, and London. Celebrate a Medici controlled battle from 1432.

⁵⁵. Benozzo Gozzoli 1420 - 1497. frescos at Palazzo Riccardi, Firenze, painted 1479.

⁵⁶. 1516, 1521, 1532. cf. Reynolds, B. Penguin translation of Orlando Furioso. pp 13.

allegorical devices, like the palace gardens, has to be read in this propaganda context. Nevertheless, these allegorical depictions popularised the Arabic gismo-garden with its restored and evolved Hellenistic technology [10].⁵⁷

Like Lamon's pleasance and Alkinoos's palace precinct, Circe's dark groves and Calypso's temptations, Alcina's territory is an island one. Ariosto almost starts with his pleasance. Boiardo's is near the end, though the poem is incomplete. Poetically more conventionally disposed than Boiardo's garden for Falerina, Alcina's is an expert production, distinctly oriental, even Mesopotamian, in flavour. "*Not far away he saw a spring, set around with cedars and date-bearing palms.*"⁵⁸ Perhaps not surprisingly we see a date palm in one of Ferrara's parks in the XVIc birds' eye view [11]. Alcina's groves do not have the density of Boiardo's claustrophobic garden for Falerina the fay. Here they are "*welcoming groves of laurel, cool and soft, of palm and myrtle, fragrant and most sweet, and orange trees and cedar gently waft their perfume, as their fruit and flowers meet in myriad lovely forms which twine aloft a leafy shelter from the summer's heat.*"⁵⁹ Alkinoos's mythic space is here realised and specified, where fruit and flowers are simultaneous, along with Lamon's boughs. Ariosto is very specific about his plants. The fact that they talk is strange in context, but fitting to the entertainment. When we arrive at the palace garden, many stanzas of myrtle-oozing tale later, we find an Alexandrian conceit more remote than Philetas's garden from Longus.⁶⁰

*Among the topmost branches of the trees,
Laurels and conifers, tall pine and beech,
Gaily rejoicing in their victories,
Small Cupids flutter, chattering each to each,
And if a heart as yet untouched one sees,
He shoots; or else if it be out of reach,
He spreads a net. Some to a stream are flown
To temper darts or file them on a stone.*⁶¹

Apart from artificiality, this strikes resonances with Roman frescos which depict such fluttering baby scenes with relish, a fantasy convention depicting villa life. Longus incorporates a similar metaphor for the Alexandrian conceit in Philetas' garden

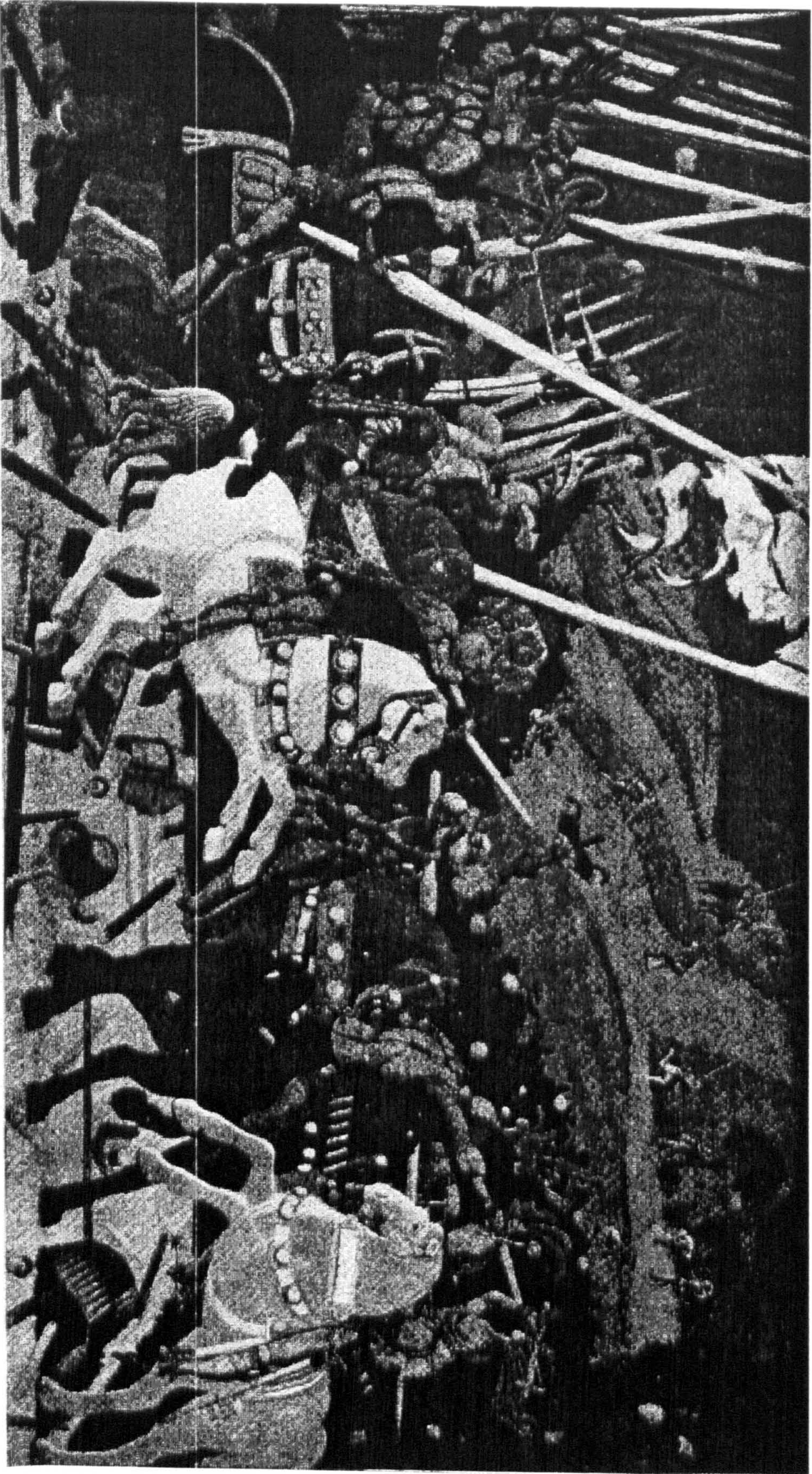
⁵⁷. Hillenbrand, R: *La dolce vita in early Islamic Syria: the evidence of later Umayyad palaces*; Art History, Vol 5 no1, March 1982 pp 3.

⁵⁸. Ariosto VI.24

⁵⁹. VI.21

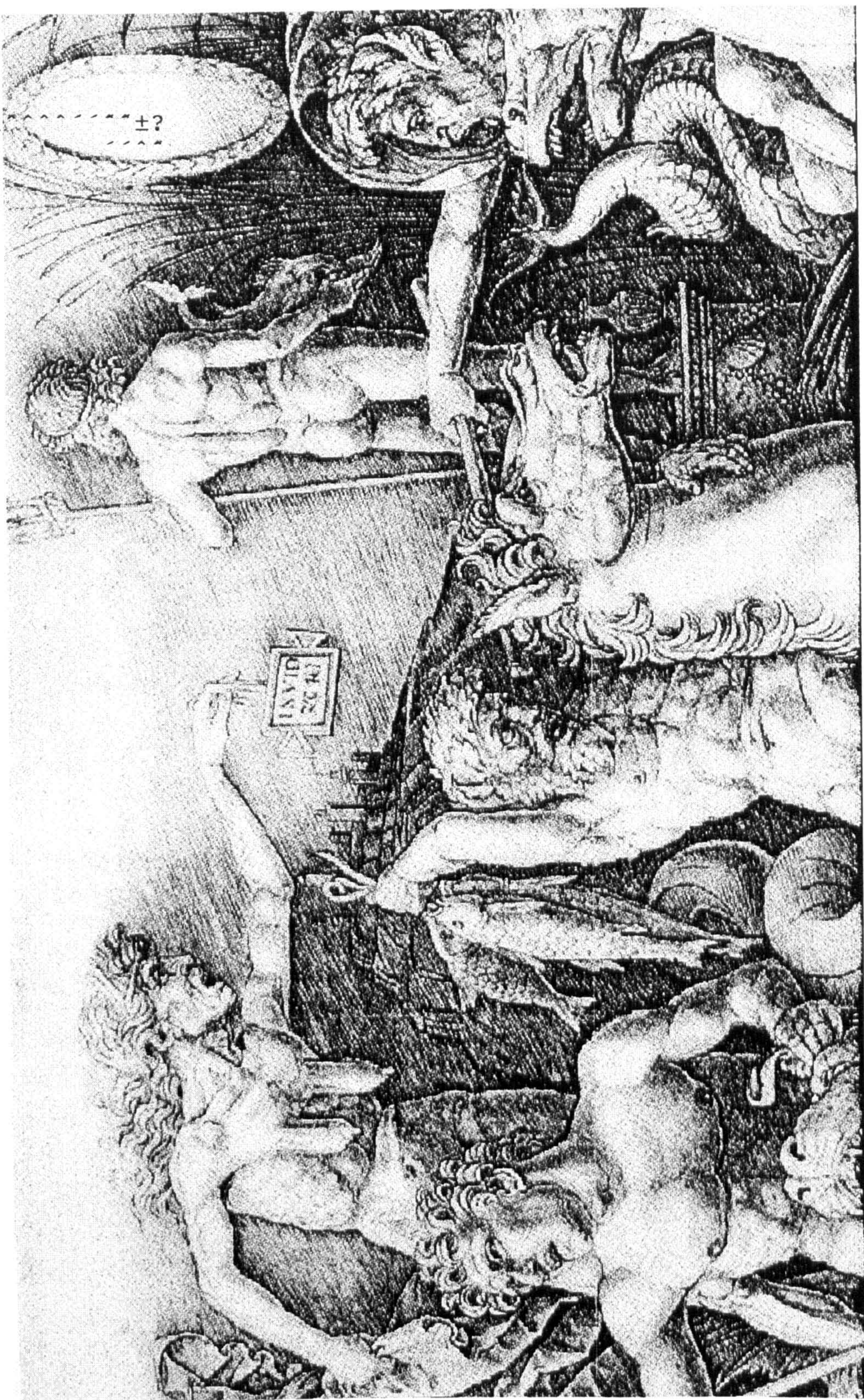
⁶⁰. see below for detail.

⁶¹. VI.75



Uccello's Rout of the Romans via Berenson

War of the roses



Martineau 1992 no 79

Mantegna's Sea Gods display their prowess in the reed beds beneath an Italian hill town (detail)

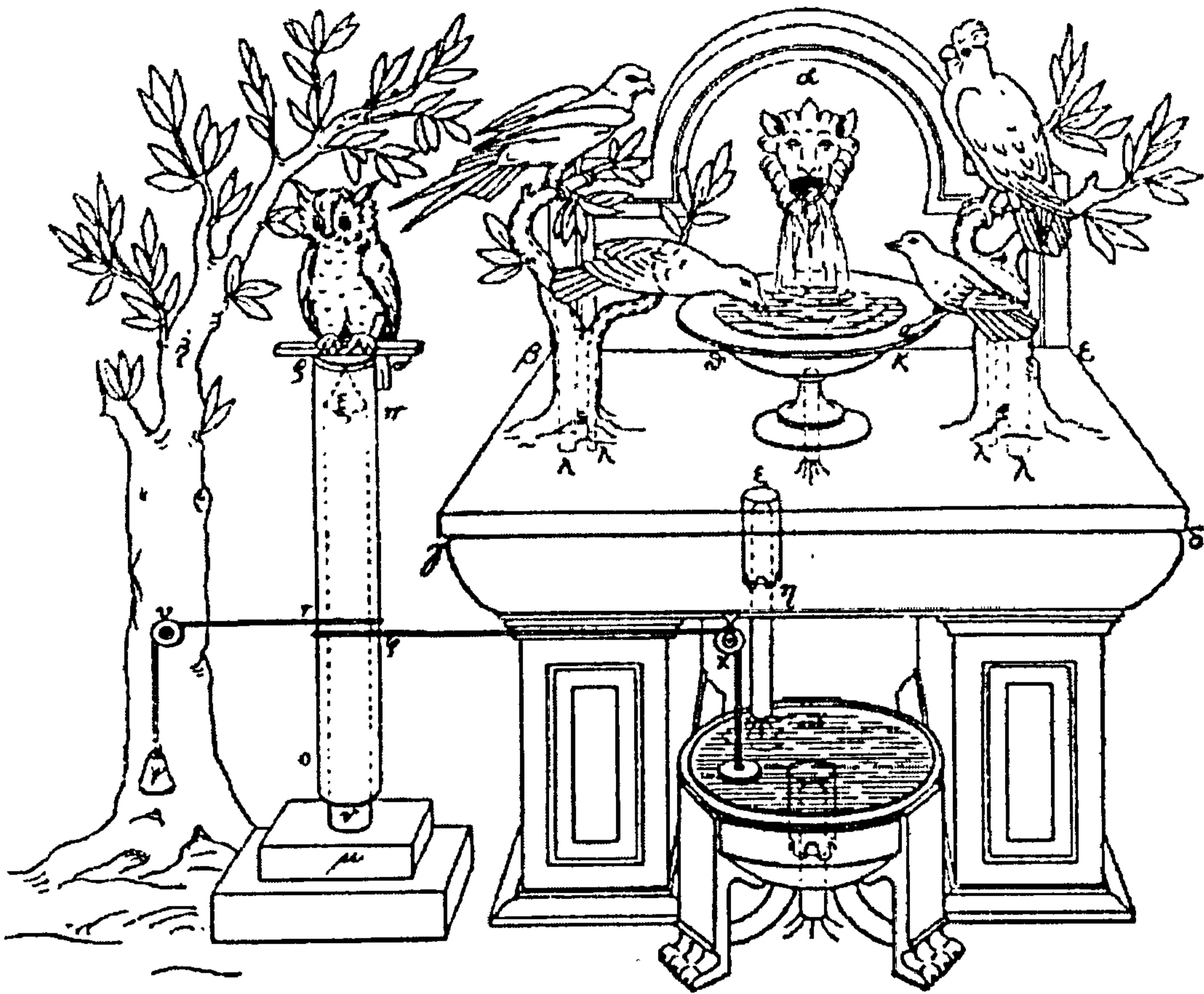
Mantegna: Battle of the Sea Gods



Benvenuti fresco Magi procession 1450 Crisp pl 27

Similar to Gozzoli's Medici chapel frescos, triumphal procession here is signified by a winding path to the city on the hill.

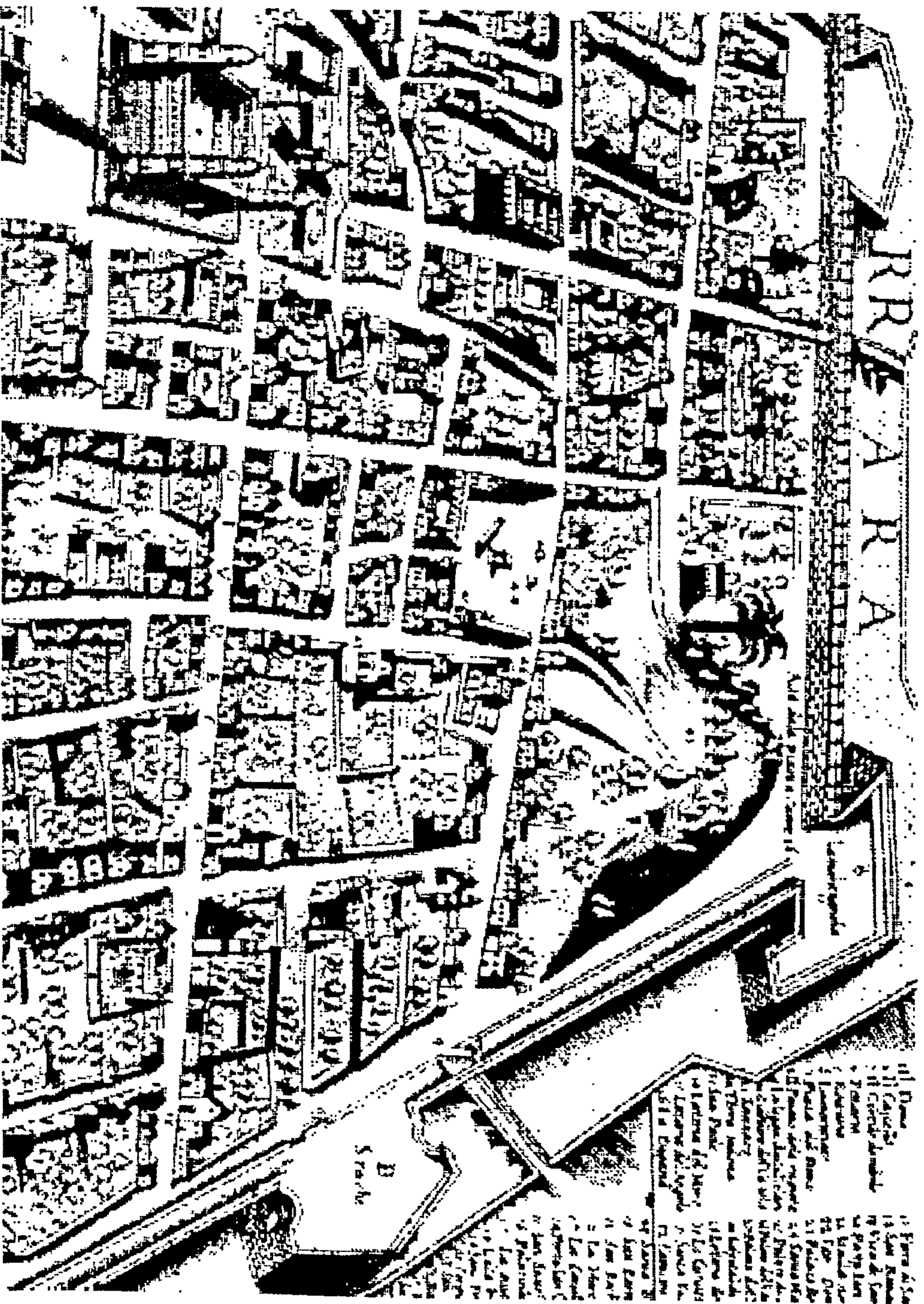
Processions



Morton Waters of Rome pp 26

Did devices like this stand for "Landscape" in Hellenistic metropolitan villas? This seems like an enactment of many Pompeian frescos. Similar imagery, evolved through Arabic skills, is probably the inspiration for Falerina's Landscape. Spatial compression and mechanical devices mocking nature are present in both. The illustration is derived from Hero of Alexandria's *Pneumatica*.

Hellenistic technology



Ferrara XVic via Benevolo

Palace occupies centre, like the Brahmanic city, the peak of the notional mountain. Top right is one of the famous landscapes with its "sacred mountain" and, prominently displayed, a large palm tree. This is the d'Este city of Colonna and Bolardo

XVic plan of Ferrara

from *Pastorales*.⁶² Here in Ariosto it seems sheer Fragonard or Watteau. We, in our twentieth century hindsight, instantly latch on to that image from these words. It has all the admixture of reality and dream characteristic of Mannerism whose later home was indeed the French court. Absent are the cosmic gates from Falerina's enclave. The heavy accumulation of Medieval symbolism has been stripped away. Irreality is expressed differently. The space remains undefined, circumscribed only by the mind of the reader. It is generally thought that Ariosto used fairly accurate impressions of his employer's parks and pleasancess. If this is the case, then once again we have in words this concept of spatial compression being opened by the mind, by memory "in her glittering crown".⁶³ The Renaissance garden becomes the world outside in one sense. In another it enfolds on itself, ambivalent and escapist, in Chinese, a world apart.⁶⁴ Perceived space, like the structure of literary allegory, is, through the intervention of mnemosyne almost always larger than any dimensional reality. It is use of this classical poetic skill which gives Italian Renaissance their uniqueness, raising them above all imitators, Netherlandish or French.

Ferrara is the homeland too of the *Hypnerotomachia Polifili*. It was a city planned on the principles of L.B. Alberti, also implicated in Francesco Colonna's work by example.⁶⁵ We should expect a similar mixture of rational, cosmic, and fantasy space in both parks and Ariosto. Perhaps we should also expect Colonna's work, with its various debts to Dante and Boccaccio, influenced in its fantasy and historicism by his compatriot Alberti, to have been a source book for other poets as well as influencing development of the parks.⁶⁶ Perhaps too, we should recognise the influence of Colonna's work in the detail of the landscapes of Alcina's retreat. Boiardo died in 1494. Ariosto commenced *Orlando furioso* in 1502, but it took him until 1532 or 1533 to complete it, forty years on from *Orlando innamorata*, during

⁶². Philletas was one of the foremost intellects and erotic poets of Hellenistic Alexandria. His poetic speciality was the conceit, so, in this allegorical history of Greekness in poetic culture Longus gives him a perfumed garden filled with flowers and a vision of naked Eros himself mischievously bathing in the dewy moisture on them.

⁶³. In Pindar, tr. Bowra, C.A. Oxford 1964. pp 10.

"..... with the aid of memory in her glittering crown,
Recompense is found for labour
In Words' echoing melodies."

⁶⁴. Li Po's renowned Taoist Peach blossom poem sets this out. His river floats peach blossom - symbolising, even being, the mirror world of dreams - into the grotto of life after death, where, he says "... we have a world apart", meaning eternal life.

⁶⁵. Alberti 1404 - 1472; Colonna, F. 1433 - 1527; Boiardo M.M 1441 - 1494; Ariosto 1474 - 1533. *Hypnerotomachia* published 1499, 27 years after Alberti's death when its author was 65, just before Ariosto, at the age of 25, began *Orlando furioso*. Colonna's longevity allows him to overlap all three of the others, an amazing continuity. He is now believed to have been associated with the d'Este court (see below).

⁶⁶. In its manuscript form in the d'Este library.

which time the Ferrarese parks, already in existence in Colonna's time, should have attained considerable maturity.

The fantasy landscapes from Orlando's madness also concern us. Canto XXXIV takes us to the moon on "four chestnut steeds, shining and ruddier than flame, drawing a coach". There we find a landscape "*bright as spotless steel, for the most part equal to our own globe, the last of those confined within the encircling spheres, though not quite identical, for if that were to be, the moon would be encompassed by the sea. ... other lakes and rivers, other rills from ours down here ... and other plains and valleys other hills extending all around are deep and solitary forests where Diana's huntress nymphs pursue the deer.*"⁶⁷ Also found there were " ... ruins of cities and of fortresses ... scattered all about, with precious stones, serpents whose faces had the semblances of thieves and coiners and seductive whores."⁶⁸ From here, images of landscape picked up later by Orsini at Bomarzo are the giant urns, filled with the wits lost by the feckless, and that last reference to coiners and seductive whores. Ariosto's moon is the other side of the world. It is the hole, the pit, in short the mirrored *mundus*.⁶⁹

Canto XXXV takes us to Lethe, still on the moon. There a landscape is constructed which is dark and uncompromising, hovered over by crows and vultures. Through this landscape flows the river. Into it are cast the name tokens of the famous and infamous made on the moon by the cronies. Only those name tags rescued by two white swans gain a place in posterity. These the swans pick out and take to a hill, just within sight of the stream, crowned by a temple. There the plaques are tended by a nymph and placed on a column. A little flash of ironic historical insight into one cultural mystery is gained in Stanza 26:

*"Not so beneficent Augustus was
As Vergil's epic clarion proclaimed.
His taste in poetry must be the cause
Why his proscriptions were left uncondemned."*

⁶⁷. Stanzas 70 - 72.

⁶⁸. St. 79.

⁶⁹. See footnote re Lefebvre/mundus above.

What Sannazaro (and Sansovino) saw in the pleasance.

*An Arcadian disillusionment; model for new pastoral landscapes.*⁷⁰

Sannazaro's Arcadia 1482 - 1489 ("high Renaissance") died 1530; Francesco Sansovino, author & publisher, son of the architect Jacopo Sansovino, friend of Vicino Orsini and author of biographical publications on his family. Published *Arkadia* in Venice, 1565 and in 1570 a new edition with illustrations with a frontispiece dedication to Orsini's garden at Bomarzo; Vicino Orsini, born 1523, died 1585. Bomarzo 1547 - 1580 ("Mannerist"). 1559, Charles V and the "Counter Reformation", or Cochrane's consolidation of Renaissance ideologies; economic growth. Ariosto 1474 - 1523. Orlando 1516; Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* 1580, 1581, published in two parts.

Lamon's garden is only one of the allegorical episodes esconced in the narrative of Longus' *Pastoralias*. The author alerts us to their presence right at the beginning with a most delightful image of a sacred grove. Within it, set amongst trees and herbage of great beauty, is a painted relief. Nearby is a grotto dedicated to Heracles and the nymphs.⁷¹ The relief recounts a love story, presented in such a way and setting that it is every love story.

*The grove indeed was very pleasant, thick set with trees and starred with flowers everywhere, and watered all from one fountain with divers meanders and rills. But that picture, as having in it not only an excellent and wonderful piece of art but also a tale of ancient love, was far more amiable.*⁷²

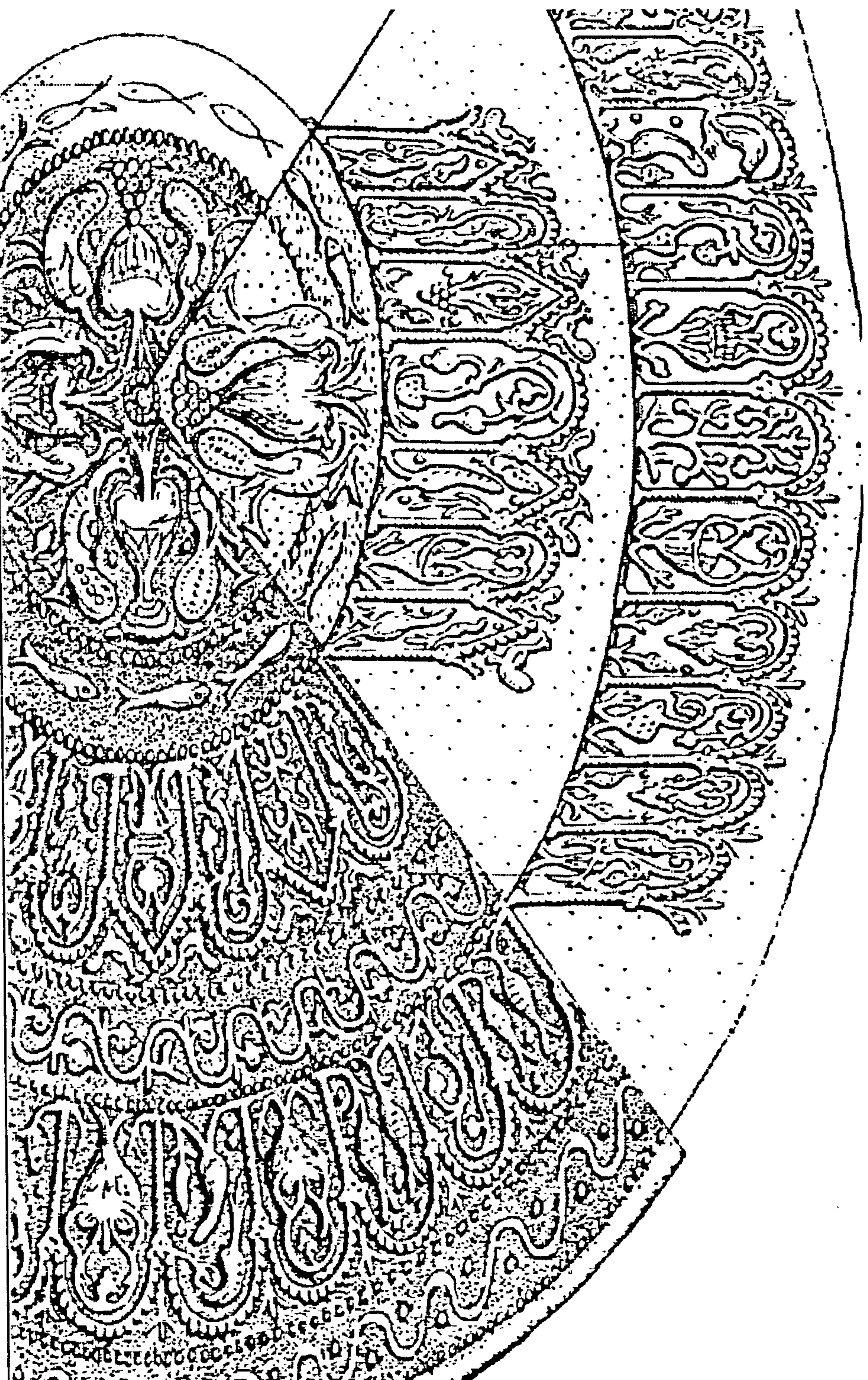
Its universality within the empire is underlined. Many people came from abroad to see it, a telling remark revealing the existence of extensive tourism.

Falerina's garden is also a garden of love. Accept what it offers, and one is merely devoured, a concept dominant in Symbolist art and frequent in ancient literature. But, the creator being paranoid, refusal leads to ruthlessly remote warfare whose every move is potentially destructive. This barbarism recedes with each successive use of the image after Boiardo. Alcina's paranoia leads to a more plaintive response. With Tasso, we return in many ways to Longus. Canto XVI of *Gerusalemme liberata* opens, like the Proemial to *Pastorales*, with a magnificent work of art, a

⁷⁰. Jacopo Sannazaro 1475 - 1530. Neapolitan poet; Jacopo Sansovino 1486 - 1570. Sculptor and architect, first in Rome, then Venice.

⁷¹. See author's *Un lucido delirio, una sana febbre: the grove in the European Garden*. IoAAS York.

⁷². *Longus: Pastorales*. Loeb edition. Proemial.



Ringbom: *Paradisus terrestris* ff 87

This diagram shows how to interpret the two-dimensional imagery of a Persian "Paradise plate" into its three-dimensional origins. Concentric arcaded bowers - plants or architecture - surround a central feature which has the form of a plant phial and peacocks, much as the cone of the lavacrum Agrippae, set in a pool (see illustration *Porta triumphalis lavacrum*). This enshrines the centralised Sumerian ritual garden and links with Hellenism, the European cloister and paradise - an architectural representation deriving from late Roman basilicas. This is the concentric Landscape from Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia* and found in the compressed Landscape imagery of Boiardo and Tasso.

Paradisus terrestris - a Hellenistic Persian plate

love story which is that of Anthony and Cleopatra. Its rhetoric is seductive in the extreme, with Tasso dwelling on ideas of how different history might have been had Octavian lost that battle. Such feelings among Romans might have stimulated Octavian's Ovidian politics. Armida's artwork is set within porticoes, in similar manner to ancient Stoic paintings, rather than openly within the archetypal Greek grove of real trees, not colonnades, used by Longus. Its antecedent is very evident though:

*Round is the precious home whose inmost part
(almost the centre of a circle) hides
a garden, oh, by far the loveliest
of the most famous gardens on this earth.
The demon-architects around it built
a labyrinthine row of balconies
whose wildly winding mazes make its door
unknown to human sight forevermore [12].⁷³*

Tasso is obviously familiar with the Longus images. In Armida's landscape he incorporates one of the most seductive love stories of all time in panels. It is compressed into a cloister garden whose architecture mirrors that of Lamon's grove, the labyrinthine row of balconies, in effect a stoa, calling to mind the concentric trees of the sanctuary of Dionysos on rural Lesbos. Daedalus' skills have truly encompassed landscape. Everything about Armida's garden invites love. Even before entering it, the two knights of the crusades had been enticed by a pair of nymphets, "bimbos" in modern terms, utterly baffled (understandably perhaps) by the indifference of men to their sportive adolescent nakedness in the lake:

*Vanquished and baffled the two damsels stood,
while, bidding no farewell, the two knights walked
inside the palace. Hurt by such a staunch
refusal, deep into the waves they plunged.⁷⁴*

Instead of seeking to destroy the knights, as Boiardo might have had them do, they auto-destruct. Such ladies are only implied in the crystalline fountain of Falerina's garden. Orlando's urges derive from concealed forces within himself, his own sexuality stimulated by the crystalline water (isn't it always crystalline) rather than Armida's mirage nymphs.

⁷³. *Tasso, I: Gerusalemme liberata*. XVI.1.

⁷⁴. *Tasso, I*. XV.66.



Nymphs and sparkling rivers are, of course a classical commonplace, a stereotype:

But from the river nearby, without my perceiving how, all at once there presented herself before me a young damsel most beautiful of feature, and in her walk and her gestures truly divine, whose garment was of a cloth most subtly thin and so lustrous that, except that I saw it was soft, I would have said for certain it was of crystal This creature came towards me and saying to me - "Follow my steps, for I am the nymph of this region"⁷⁵

Tasso's sportive nymphs invert the eternal goodness of Sannazaro's image. They are more likely to have inhabited one of the Renaissance parks than these created by Sannazaro to guide his lovesick courtier back to the realm of Arkadia. Sannazaro creates for his character in search of truth and escape from love a veritable encyclopaedia of classical landscapes. Into it are interwoven, like "silks of divers colours into a web of wondrous artifice" a Dante-esque journey through mythic time and space, mountains, groves, grottoes, temples and glades in the best scholarly classicism. His opening lines to the Prologue reveal something quite different:

More often than not the tall and spreading trees brought forth by nature on the shaggy mountains are wont to bring greater pleasure to those who view them than are the cultivated trees pruned and thinned by cunning hands in ornamented gardens And who has any doubt that a fountain that issues naturally from the living rock, surrounded by green growth, is more pleasing to the human mind than all the others made by art of whitest marble, resplendent with much gold? Certainly no one, to my thinking.

That was written in XVc Italy, not XIXc England, and forces acknowledgment of strong latent forces of "natural" Romanticism within the High Renaissance, contradicting in large measure the popular view. Questions are raised by it about the significations of geometric design in Classical and Renaissance landscapes. Much of the discussion of the frescos explores this context. In the context of Bomarzo, especially in view of Sansovino's dedication in his 1570 edition of *Arkadia*, it cannot be over-estimated. There are also similarities in the social backgrounds of Sannazaro and Orsini which create resonances in their work. Sannazaro, though,

⁷⁵. *Sannazaro, Arkadia*. Chapter 12.

is not creating a new concept of landscape. Rather he is picking up strong elements present in Classical Antiquity, giving them wider audience. *Arkadia* proved one of the most popular and influential works of High Renaissance poetry, stirring Sir Philip Sidney and the English Renaissance as much as mainstream Europe. Unfortunately it was left to the XXc to translate it into English. What, one imagines, would Sir John Harington have made of translating this majestic work?⁷⁶

Having made this direct expression of classical landscape in precisely the same position relative to the work as the sacred grove in Longus, the poet proceeds to explore its imagery further, also in the manner of Longus:

There lies on the summit of Parthenius ... perhaps a dozen or fifteen trees of such unusual and exceeding beauty that any who saw them would judge that mistress Nature had taken special delight in shaping them. These trees ... ennoble beyond measure the natural beauty of the place. Nor are the trees of which I speak so discourteous that with their shade they altogether forbid the rays of the sun to enter the pleasant little grove; on the contrary, so graciously do they admit them in divers places that rare is that tree that does not receive from them the greatest invigoration: and though it be at all times a pleasant spot, in the flowery spring more than in all the rest of the year it is most pleasing."⁷⁷

This compares in ideas almost exactly with the Proemial to *Pastorales*, one of the most beautiful descriptive passages of landscape anywhere, where is found the following:

The grove indeed was very pleasant, thick set with trees and starred with flowers everywhere, and watered all from one fountain with divers meanders and rills."⁷⁸

Another classical stereotype is revealed in other terms than those of the loveless all-devouring woman's neurosis. Nor does Sannazaro spare us the naked nymphs, whose presence is woven into the *storia* of a temple painting.

But what I was pleased to examine more attentively were certain naked nymphs who were standing, half hidden as it were, behind

⁷⁶. This is intended as no slight on the excellent translation, used throughout, by Ralph Nash, who comments (page 26) that it "..... should really have been translated in the seventeenth century, not the twentieth."

⁷⁷. Pausanias' Guide to Greece. Boeotia.

⁷⁸. The Judaic Garden must have been familiar to Longus, whose scholarship seems extensive from the allegorical references he uses. It is merged here with the Homeric pattern.

the trunk of a chestnut tree, laughing at a ram four Satyrs with horns on their heads and goatish feet were stealing very softly from a thicket of mastic trees (the Nymphs) hurled themselves into flight through the thick forest, not even avoiding the brambles others in their fear had thrown themselves into a river and were swimming it in their flight, and the crystal waves were hiding little or nothing of their white bodies.⁷⁹

Sannazaro was obviously enamoured of the Mannerist painters' technique of portraying transparency, for such descriptions recur in various guises along with recalcitrant nymphs and ever-ready satyrs, inhabitants of this fantasy Arkadia. All the characters are, of course, courtiers disguised as shepherds or shepherdesses, egalitarianism included, and in Chapter 5 we find them joining a group of cowherds performing a round dance encircling a lofty tomb. Since lofty tombs were the province of neither cowherd nor peasant, notwithstanding Vergil's gnat, we must read what we can into its presence as a marker of allegory. It was a venerable tomb; the name of its occupant was Androgeo - "other world" - and the group was performing ancient rites afforded to dead heroes.⁸⁰ What they were using was hardly the stuff of peasantry, even (or particularly) Renaissance peasantry; sanctified blood, a heady and most noble wine, and a plenteous supply of delicate flowers of divers colour. It would grace Botticelli's *Primavera*, and the world it inhabits is that painting's poetic equal in dream and image.

Where Longus proclaims the quadripartite garden of Lamon to be a product of nature, not humanity, an inference also contained in Boiardo's provenance, Sannazaro uses the indeterminate grove originating with Theocritus.⁸¹ This was an anti-polis environment, an atheistic precinct whose boundaries merged imperceptibly with surrounding woods. It has been termed pleasance, its distinction from other woodland, particularly grove, being a pleasing disposition of trees and glade.⁸² Grove retained religious connotations until Hellenistic beliefs were banished from the empire.

⁷⁹. Chapter 3. para 4. This is also a familiar image from the work of Vasari, whose nymphs float on the surface of the water in their transparent attire! No part is submerged.

⁸⁰. In other words, a tholos.

⁸¹. Traditionally Theocritus is the originator of the pastoral elegy, or elegiac pastoral, however you wish to view it. This is disputed territory, and more modern critics see it as an ancient form given cultural status by Theocritus' induction of it into courtly literature. It occurs among the *Idylls*. More below.

⁸². Rosenmeyer, I.G. *The Green Cabinet*, Berkeley 1969: Chapter 9.

Chapter Two:

Dream frescos, dreamtime voyagers.

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Villa of the Agrippae.

[The main sources used for this study are von Blanckenhagen, Schefold, d'Arms, Peters and Zanker.¹ Significant material has been gleaned from innumerable other sources in smaller quantity.²]

Railway construction at the turn of this century accidentally unearthed a ruined villa at Boscotrecase, Herculaneum. Sparse remains were barely documented, then destroyed by volcanic eruptions before complete excavation [13]. Its planning is in the Greek style adopted by Octavian. One would expect this from M. Vispanius Agrippa, its owner, close friend of the *princeps*. Large portions of fortunes they acquired campaigning in the East were spent rejuvenating Rome in a classical, spacious image suited to a world capital. Both were imbued with enthusiasm, skill and energy. Octavian concentrated on state structures and religious precincts. Agrippa, immortalised in the masonry of the Pantheon and in the Lavacrum Agrippae, part of the triumphal way, created new spaces and gardens. Octavian and Agrippa made collections of priceless antiquities - later unearthed by Renaissance diggers - accessible in new urban places.³ Agrippa's untimely death robbed Rome of a second princeps probably greater than Octavian.

The full scale of the villa remains unknown, but was certainly larger than the excavation. Architecture of restrained luxury would accord with Agrippa's personality and the political ethos of the time. A colonnaded peristyle was bounded on two sides by rooms [14]. With an open area about nine metres square surrounded by a three metre colonnaded overhang, it was large. Segregated from the domus by a wall, the factory was on the eastern side with its own courtyard. The plan was probably similar to that of Sette Finestre, a Tuscan senatorial class villa. Beyond the wall to the north unknown territory faced Vesuvius towards the cone from these spacious outer suburbs of an elite town.

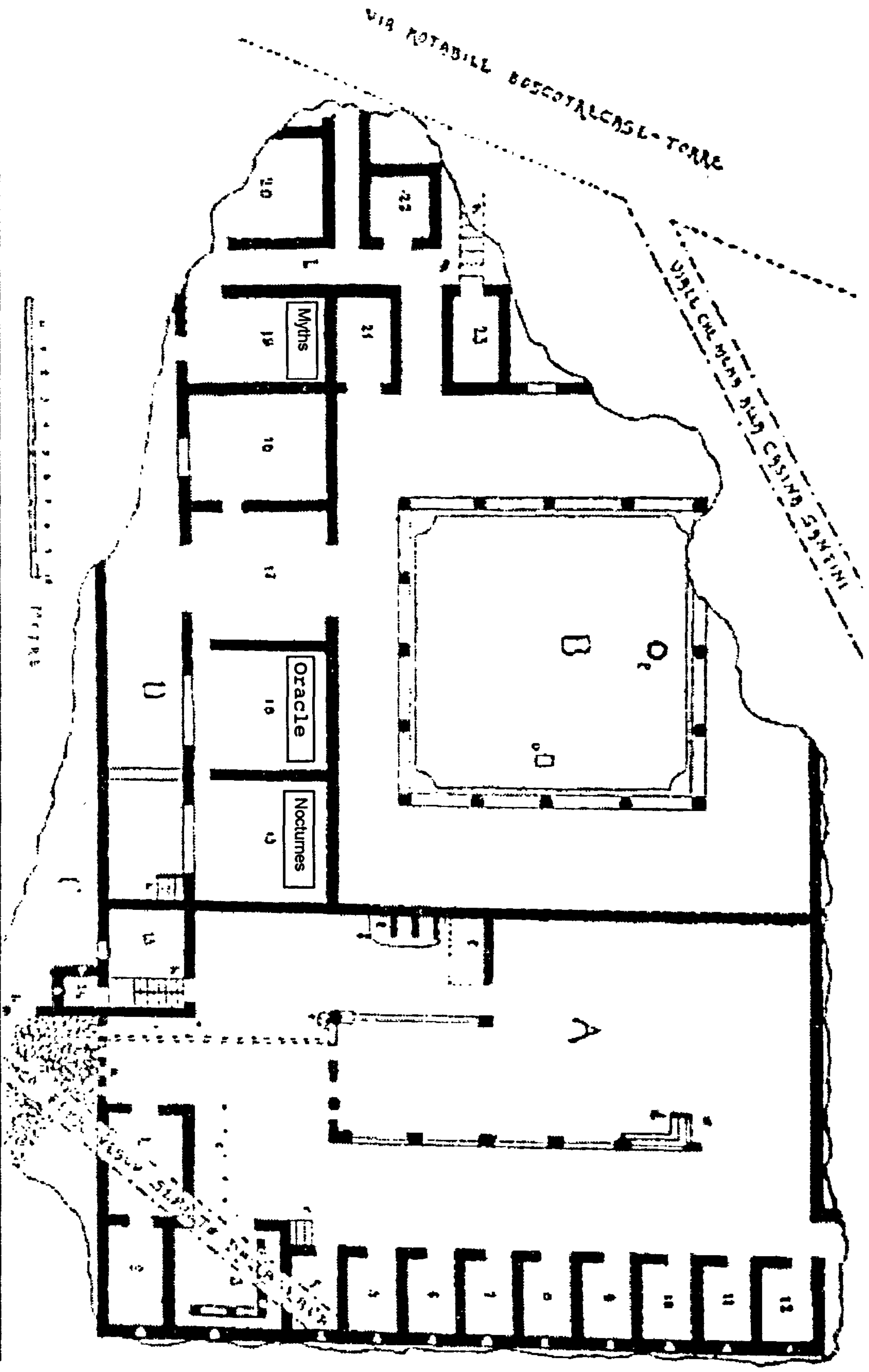
Augustan cubicoli opened off the terrace. Rest rooms, they were spatially uninteresting if carefully proportioned. Standardisation of villa form at this time was part of social semiotic systems.⁴ Extant frescos are from neighbouring, though not necessarily contiguous

1. *von Blanckenhagen, P.H & Alexander, C: The paintings from Boscotrecase*. Heidelberg 1962 (Blanckenhagen 1962). *Schefold, K: Vergessenes Pompeii*. Munchen 1962. (Schefold 1962). *Zanker, P: The power of Images in the age of Augustus*. Michigan 1988. (Zanker 1988). *Peters, W.J.T: Landscape in Romano-Campanian landscape painting*. New York ND (Peters).

2. A full set of references is given in the bibliography, and these have been used even when direct reference is not made in the main text or footnotes.

3. This is sometimes said to be "the people of Rome".

4. This might be as a result of Octavian's socially unifying policies. He comments on the longing for order, calm and clarity. His target was the upper echelons of Roman society, the people he wanted to produce leaders for the empire. The court set the fashion, and society followed, resulting in a surprising conformity.



von Blanckenhagen fig 1

15: Nocturnes; 16: Oracle; 19: Polyphernus & Andromeda

Villa of Agrippa:excavation plan

cubiculi. They are generally classified as Pompeian Third Style, seen by some as paradigmatic for the style.⁵ Neither Agrippa nor Postumus originated the frescos, and they must have been commissioned by one of the women.⁶

A prime site on rising ground, its south terrace hung poised over luxuriantly verdant slopes, encompassing a stunning view. The cubiculi enjoyed a panorama over this Hellenistic playground of the west. Peters thinks the frescos had visual relevance to external landscapes.⁷ Gleaming marble, stucco, and painted villas on the distant shoreline rivalled the sea shimmering in the Gulf of Naples.⁸ Foreground verdure provided contre-jour richness of tone and colour. It was already Landscape, countryside consciously adorned, a place of pleasure and repose for M.V. Agrippa. Vesuvius was a Sacred Mountain. In ancient Sumer it would have been the haunt of the Moon goddess, but Cybele, Dionysos and Pan had long since appropriated most of her attributes. Heracles, to whom Herculaneum was dedicated was linked with Dionysos, which means involvement in Orphism.

A villa fashion started by predecessors like Scipio Africanus and Lucullus, developed cultural significance from contact with lively Greek colonies like Neapolis. An offshoot from Cumae this city state retained independence from Rome throughout the Republic and Empire, a honeypot for Alexandrian gliterati.⁹ Romans sojourning in the nearby resorts of Cumae, Stabiae, and Pozzuoli dressed Greek and adopted Greek attitudes. Technological and artistic innovation occurred here rather than in Rome where sterner conservative precepts applied.¹⁰ Roman law did not apply here. Power was greater for the wealthy individual. Lower land values permitted deeper stratification of enthusiastic villa building with its gloss of Greekness. This special urbanisation, peripheral to Rome, central to Hellenistic culture, within easy reach of the metropolis, adopted Greek cultural values. The nouveau riche, merchants and soldiers who had risen to power with Octavian, ardently supported his Greek ideas. Not surprisingly it is in the suburbs of Campanian towns and cities that their ideas found expression in villas and their Landscapes [15] [16].

5. Notably *von Blanckenhagen 1962 & Schefold 1962*.

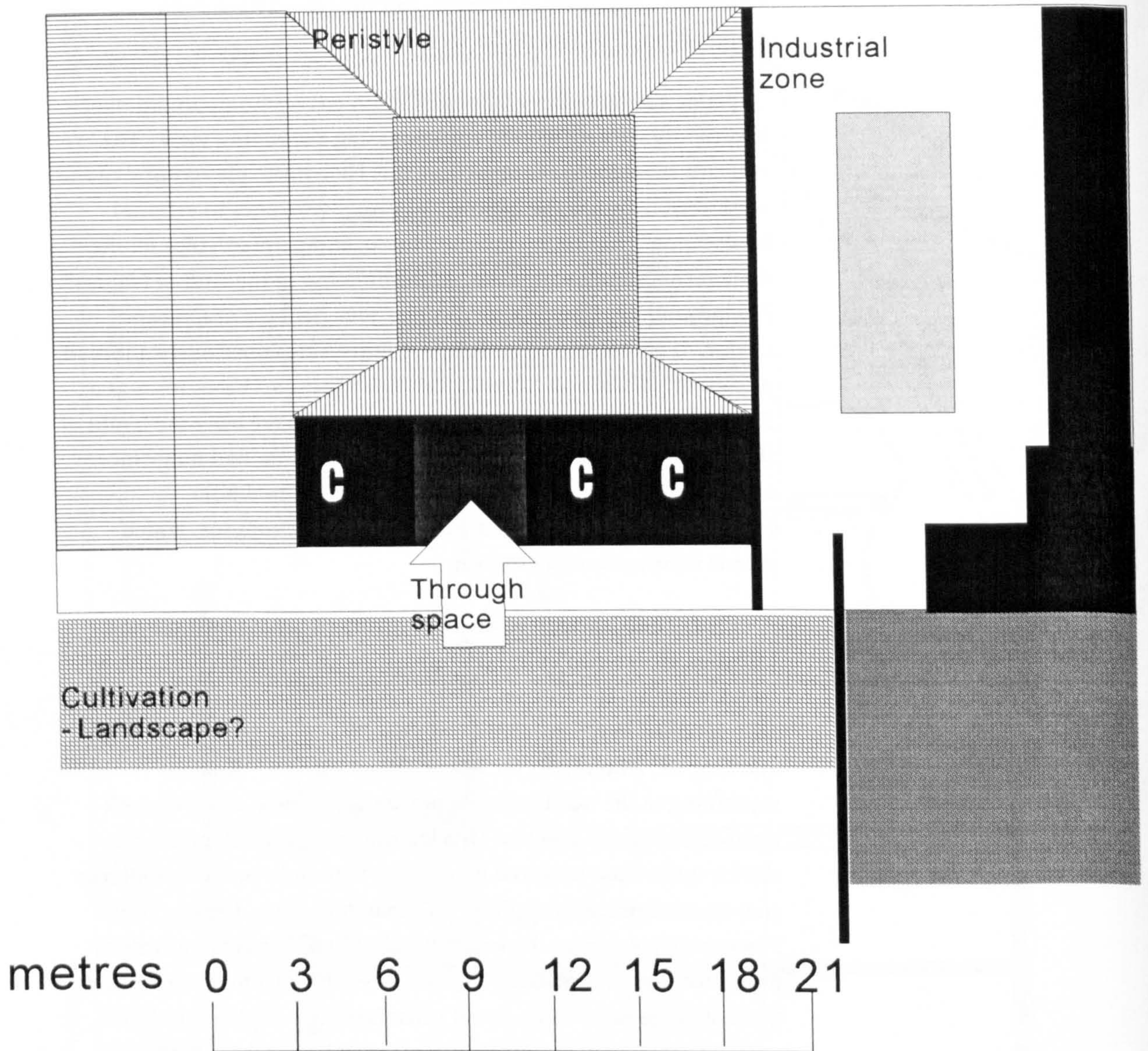
6. There is some confusion about which because commentators find the younger Julia's promiscuous behaviour difficult to equate with religious paintings. This has led to various suggestions. It is not really a factor in deciding dates. In any case, it is relatively unimportant for this study.

7. *Peters* pp 70.

8. *d'Arms* 1970.

9. This was as a result of the tribal wars in the Peninsula, when the combined forces of Rome, Etruria and Italics were unable to subdue it, instead reaching a treaty of equality, undoubtedly an example of Greek shrewdness.

10. This is the main thrust of d'Arms' work in the above reference. The toga was de-rigueur in Rome.



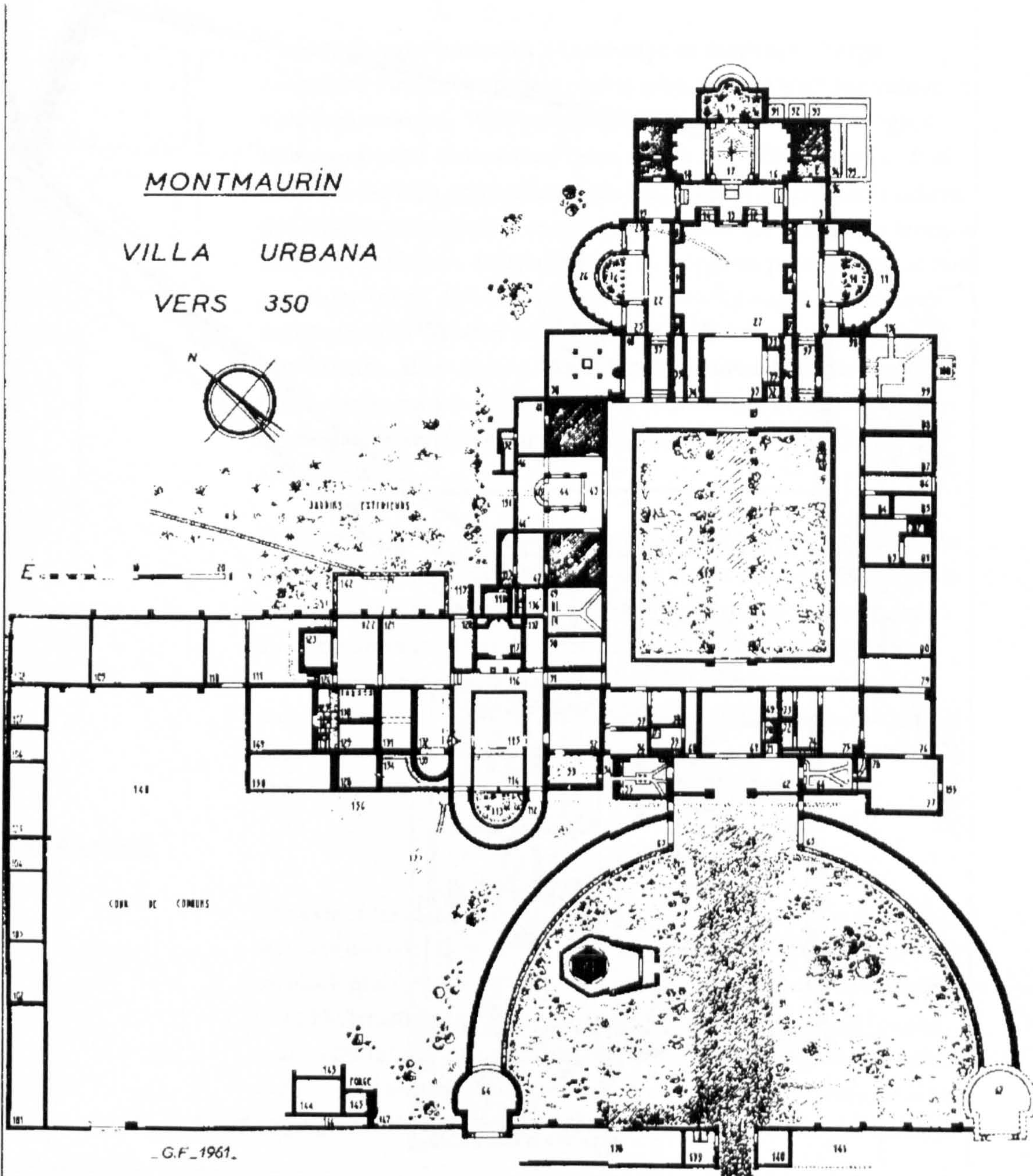
North is to the top; the villa was on a south slope overlooking the Bay of Naples. The terrace, an essential part of any villa, looked south. The view from cubiculi was therefore downhill. All of the Oracle group of frescos look uphill, that is, the relevant landscape as it might have been were any views available from their space. The cubiculi backed on to the peristyle. The plan is regular, in the "Attic" style promoted by Octavian and Agrippa.

Villa of Agrippa, Boscotrecase

partial reconstruction



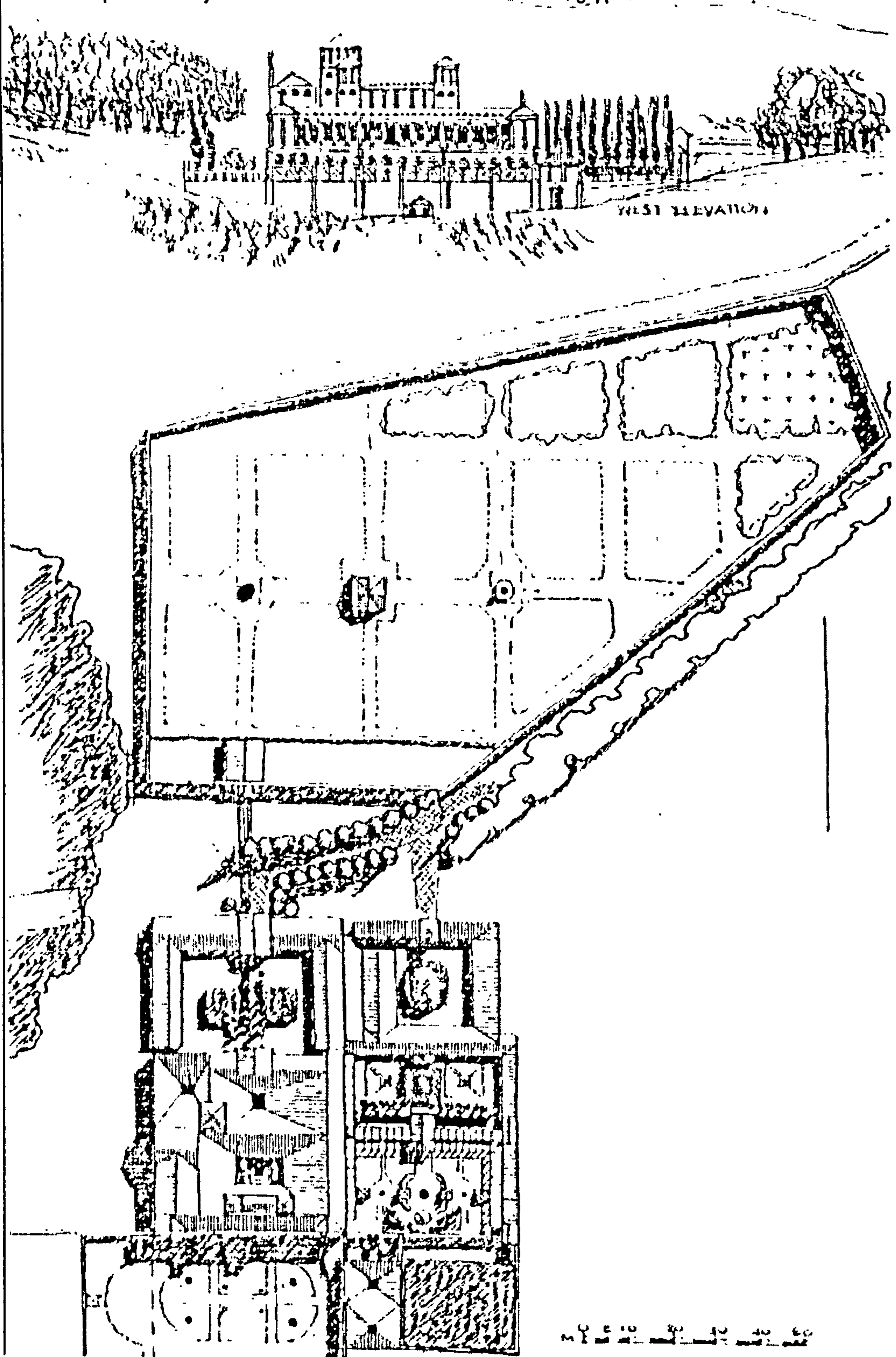
Villas of widely different scale developed pleasure gardens during the empire; a minute villa outside Rome enclosed its hortus; the villa of Montmaurin was built as a garden villa in Provence.



Villa landscapes

Michael Selwood

Author's sketch reconstruction of a villa at Cosa called Sette Finestre. Plan and elevation. Details are based on devices illustrated from villa landscapes at Herculaneum and Pompeii, how it might have been, not necessarily how it was! Internal and external space is closely associated. This was the same class of villa as Agrippa's.



Villa landscape at Cosa, Tuscany

Socialist ethics view villa development as destructive, removing land from agriculture and farming.¹¹ Others see it raising local standards of living above subsistence agriculture. Gentlemen farmed as a leisure interest, Horace and Vergil included, and didn't think it subversive. Initially some were working farms. Gradually the empire imported more from rich provinces. Rome, with its playground Campania, became an insatiable consumer of the world's wealth, using produce from the far side of Asia, with consequent decline in home agriculture releasing land for Landscapes.¹²

Vergil's *Georgics* promotes a Landscape of diligence. Vergil concerned himself with state philosophy, Horace with the values of villa communities. Villa paintings codify inherent psychological structures, none clearer than those on the walls of Agrippa's. It is said that the villa appropriated the language of sacred architecture, debasing it. Perhaps it is more rational to see the process in terms of Octavian's reforms. State emphasis on religious practices generated a genuine surge. Devotion was centred on the home. Parts of the domus so affected were perceived in terms of appropriate architecture. Basic rooms, like cubicoli, remained architecturally plain, ornamented with the mutable architecture of frescos. Domestic ceremonial centres became ornamented with cultic architecture.

In Campania, responsibilities reverted. Patrician houses expressed responsibility and privilege by making their villas private religious centres with a triumphal architecture to match, an aspect revealed by our paintings. They never depict working countryside, they never show peasants. Villas were inhabited only by servants for most of the year. A favourite visiting time was autumn, the season depicted in these frescos.¹³ Each return was a mass Triumphal procession out of Rome!

The frescos.

The extant frescos belong to three groups. Each group is distinct but they are linked. They are a Homeric group of two, three vignettes on black grounds, and the "Oracle" triad [17]. No parallels survive from Hellenistic painting and little from Roman. "*Sadly only a few walls of the third style remain*" says Schefold, "*because these accomplished and powerful decorations had less impact on the excavators than the brassy exuberance of the second style or the narrative mythologies which the third*

¹¹ Vergil notes it in the Eclogues.

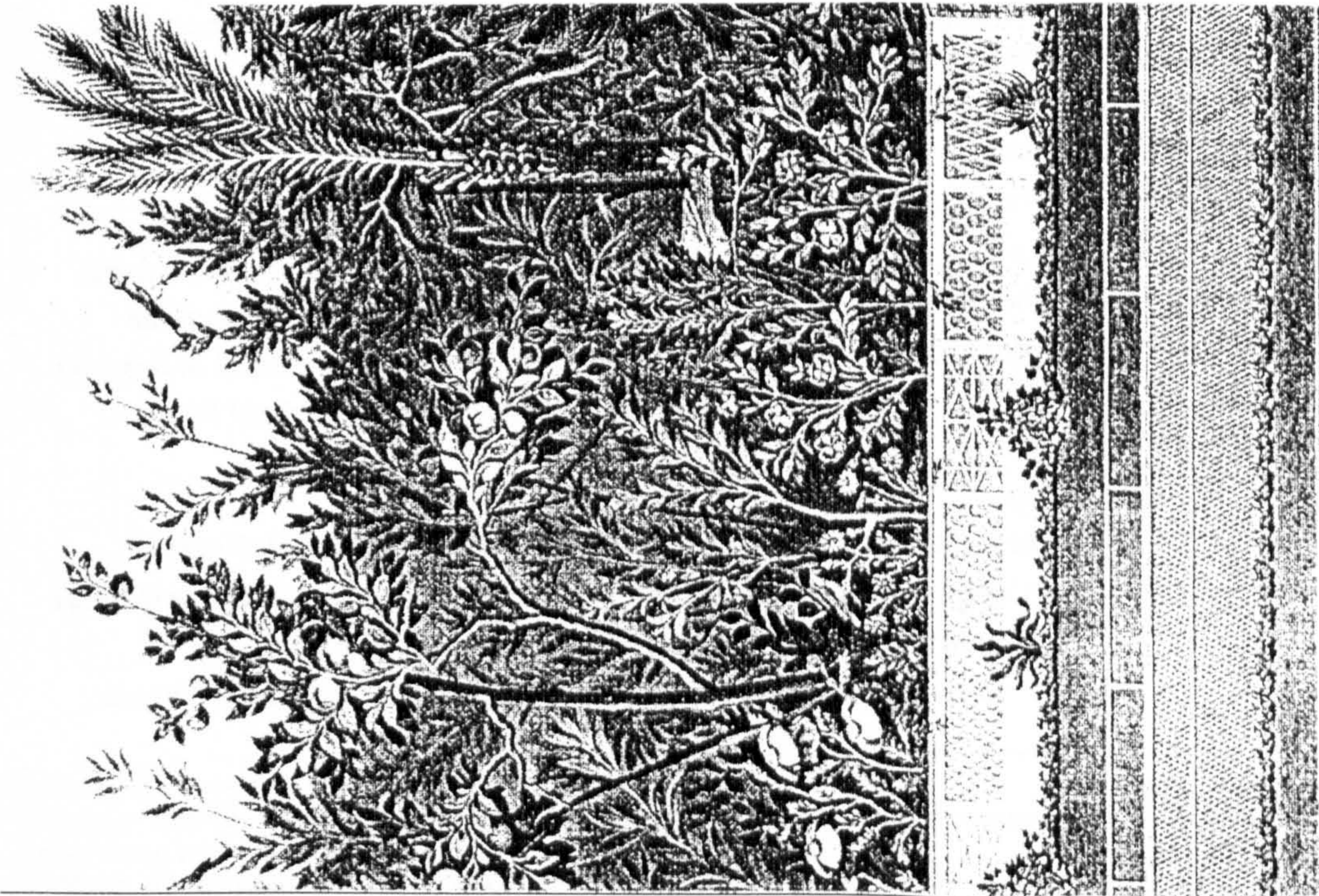
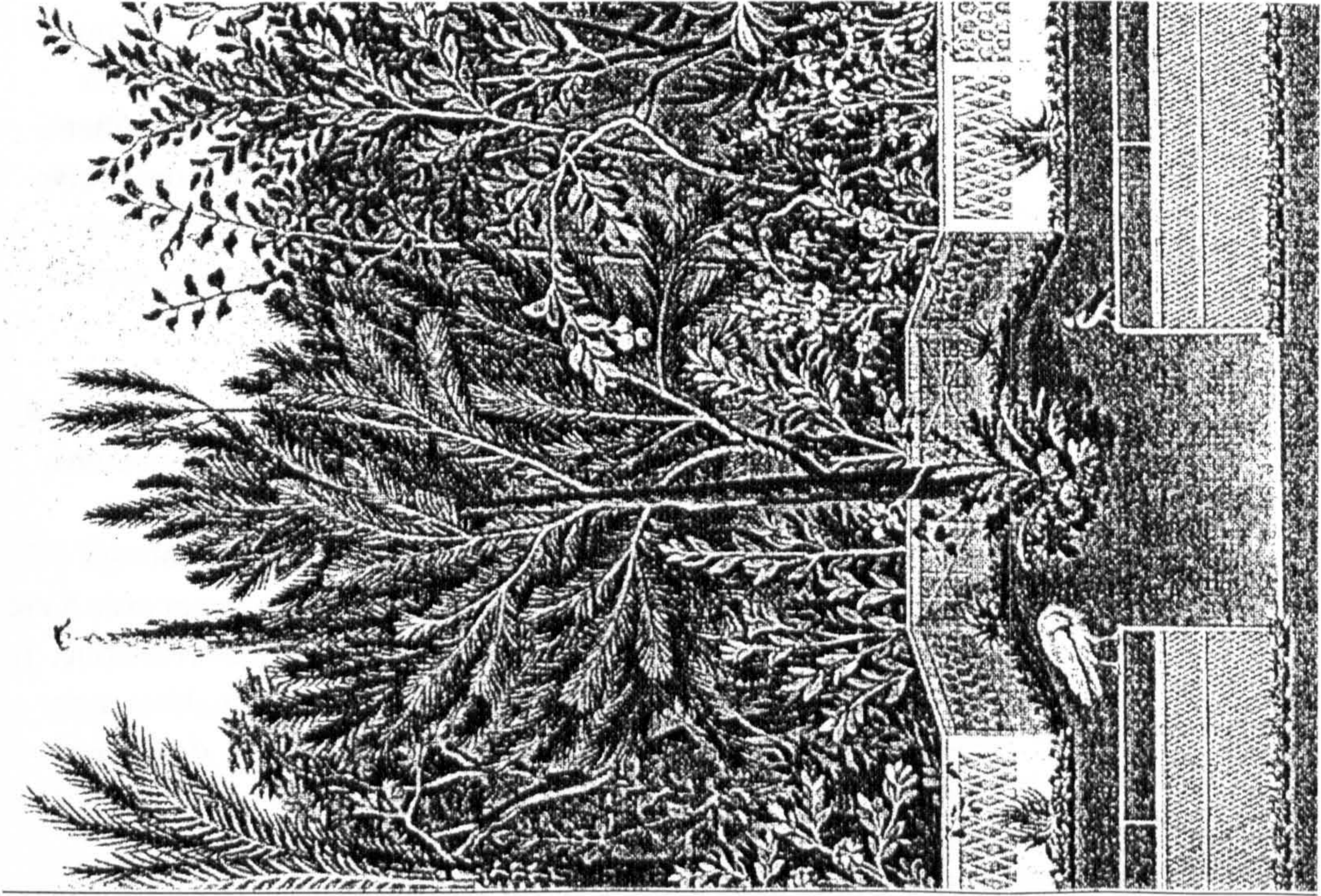
¹² *Sitwell 1984*, pp184.

¹³ *d'Arms, J.H.: Romans on the Bay of Naples: a social and cultural study* Cambridge Ma 1970. pp 48.



Schefold Vergessenes Pompeii pl 8 detail

Boscotrecase:Oracle



Boscotreale's garden frescos are sufficiently well known to need no comment. They reveal a particular kind of spatial enclosure that appealed to Roman villa society at its higher end. The purpose of including them here is to mark the contrast with the Boscotreale Landscapes in both content and style. It highlights the reverential mood of the latter. Trees and shrubs are present in a wide variety which moves some of the cultic content present in the 'treasure' frescos. However, the density of planting and the seclusion it creates resemble a scola like those represented in the frescos. This is not a real landscape, but a painting, purely abstract space, mirror and wall.

Boscotreale's "gardens"

style found on the walls of patrician villas. Luckily August Mau, who especially loved the thrid style, left many drawings."¹⁴ Tempera paintings on wooden panels, more at risk than frescos, from stoa colonnades, were pillaged by Romans and re-hung in Roman space.¹⁵ The surrounds of the Oracle group might represent Hellenistic frames, since Stoic paintings were cultic. Imaginative care over detail provides visual contrast, matching technique to subject, avoiding the kind of virtuosity found at Boscoreale [18].

Schefold suggests that legend arises out of history in the making. Collective wisdom, it selects from abundant stories events with particular cultural appeal, constructing mythic models from them, isolating figures of lasting quality, placing them outside the course of fleeting history.¹⁶ Myths seek objective values similar to those professed by religion, something apposite to Homer. This applies to most high art which retains aspects of its origins.

Renaissance princes or princely churchmen, whose garden, devised by the foremost designers, cost the equivalent of modern millions, sought to justify this expenditure by including demonstrative propaganda messages in programmes. These Roman paintings reflect conservative historical processes which were to pervade XVIc and XVIIc Italy. Like Renaissance motivation, it can be reductive. It involves discovery and revival of a Greek past with qualities more glamorous than stress-ridden, apparently destructive, dynamism. Mediaeval achievements were overshadowed by promulgation of this approach. Appropriation of stable cultic imagery with its apparent objectivity and the ancestry it was devised to convey, has repeatedly insinuated the kudos of classicism into the homes of powerful elites. Of this aspect in contemporary life, Cicero, comments:

*"Those whose fathers or ancestors won glory by outstanding performance in a particular field generally devote themselves to excelling in the same way themselves Sometimes though, it turns out that some people decline to imitate their ancestors and pursue some course of their own. Those who exert themselves most in this way are men born of unknown ancestors who aim for great things themselves."*¹⁷

Sententious, but it indicates one aspect of the social climate in Republican and Augustan Rome. It favoured the rise of self-made men from certain class backgrounds, like Cicero himself. Unsurprisingly adept at myth making, Octavian's intellectuals

¹⁴. *Schefold 1962*, pp 59.

¹⁵. Of which a famous literary example is that in Longus' *Proemial to Pastorales*.

¹⁶. *Schefold 1964* pp 50.

¹⁷. *Cicero, de Officiis, I.116* tr. M. Atkins, Cantab. 1991.

created a myth of Greekness in Rome. The nature of the process is similar to Homeric portrayal of heroic warriors and not more devious. Agrippa adorned Rome with civic spaces, freemens' parks luxuriant with landscape and looted or bought statuary from the shrines of Attica and oriental Greece. This process played with genuine idealism as well as glorifying and ingratiating the ruling class on a grand scale.¹⁸ On the other hand, Agrippa was instrumental in the destruction of a major sacred site in the pursuit of wealth. He cut a canal through Avernus, felled the sacred woods, and speculated in villa development.¹⁹

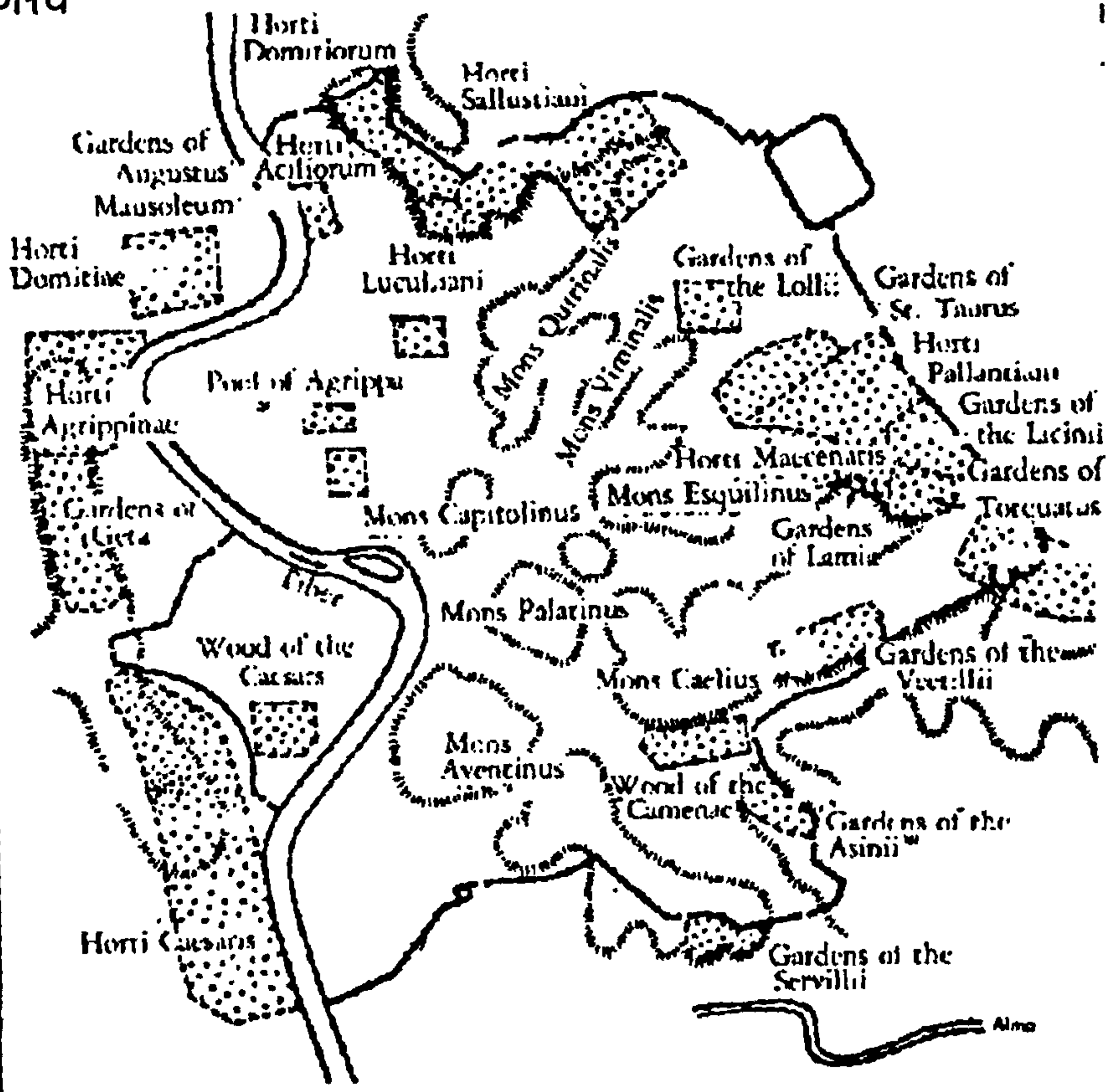
In the light of Agrippa's contribution to Rome [19], which was unmatched in the Renaissance [19 bottom] these programmed landscape paintings seem apposite. Perhaps they resulted from enthusiasm in a wife who shared his last expedition to the eastern provinces shortly before his death and who, carrying his son, must have grieved much in the period of the paintings. Julia would have been familiar with the frescos at Boscoreale and the House of Livia in Rome.

The Painters

Boscotrecase's frescos, illusionistic "windows", open inner psychological space, presenting it through Landscape themes. To call these paintings and vignettes "landscapes" and mean that they represented accessible external views might be delusion. Landscapes in another sense, they epitomise a collective dream already explored within Alexandrian literature, clothing it in the comfortable order of Pythagorean revival. Typically Hellenistic, they explore the sense of continuity between abstract unseen space and the perceptible world in a way that few contemporaries did so well. These are dynamics we find in Renaissance Landscapes. Instead of architectural fantasy worlds of palatial proportions in paint, self-mockery of small rooms and inadequate architecture in the villas they adorned, here is an expression of spatial concepts which underlie Hellenism. It divulges metaphysical aspects of kingship, the hidden world for which kings mediated. Cosmic space represented in their status is promoted. Palaces of kings and princes, the literal topic of "Second Style" fantasies, are replaced by a particular vision of another world, "there", which their form embodied and epitomised in the architectural detail. It coincides with the designation of princeps as god.

¹⁸. Zanker 1988 has the best analysis of this process. The chapter *Attributive Space* below discusses spatial theory in the urban context.

¹⁹. *Murrin, M: The allegorical epic*. London 1980. Ch 2.



Antique Rome's urban Landscapes



Morton Waters of Rome pp 122

Rome in 1590

"Oracle" is undoubtedly masterpiece and centrepiece. The painter was probably Alexandrian. Many commuted between that centre and its equal at Neapolis.²⁰ He was certainly a major court painter. Zanker comments that the rapid dissemination of the third style could only have been achieved through a clientele from the inner court.²¹

Fresco secco enables freshness of expression comparable with water-colour painting, the white ground always apparent under pigment. Luminosity and moderation of hue arise from this transparency.²² It requires of the artist a complete vision before commencement, followed by rapid and concentrated realisation. Nevertheless, von Blanckenhagen and Schefold agree that the workmanship is equivalent to that of an Alexandrian court painter. We may perhaps take these paintings as examples of the best Hellenistic wall paintings of the period.

The Great Landscapes

Mystic landscapes, the Oracle paintings glow in polychrome from a halo of light, each gilt frame set in rich red panels [20 shows the whole group in situ]. Augustan, subject matter usually consolidates historical style.²³ Red was a colour for sacred subjects. Umberto Eco defines qualities of light as a preoccupation of Medieval scholars and artists. *"The most obvious symptom of qualitative aesthetic experience was the medieval love of light and colour ... a most lively feeling for the purely sensuous properties of things ... a spontaneous reaction, typically medieval, which only later came to be expressed scientifically within their metaphysical systems."*²⁴

Two human conditions operate in states of lateral logic. They are ultimately responsible for most global conceptualisation extending beyond existential experience. Conceptualised space like the shape of the universe are as much part of this as are the longings of Verlaine, the convolutions of Ruskin's Hampton Court experiences, or madness itself. The two conditions, delirium and dream, are sometimes indecipherable. So important are they to holistic lucidity, that herbs and foods containing drugs which induce them are still sought for festivals, group ritual, and the release of "oracular"

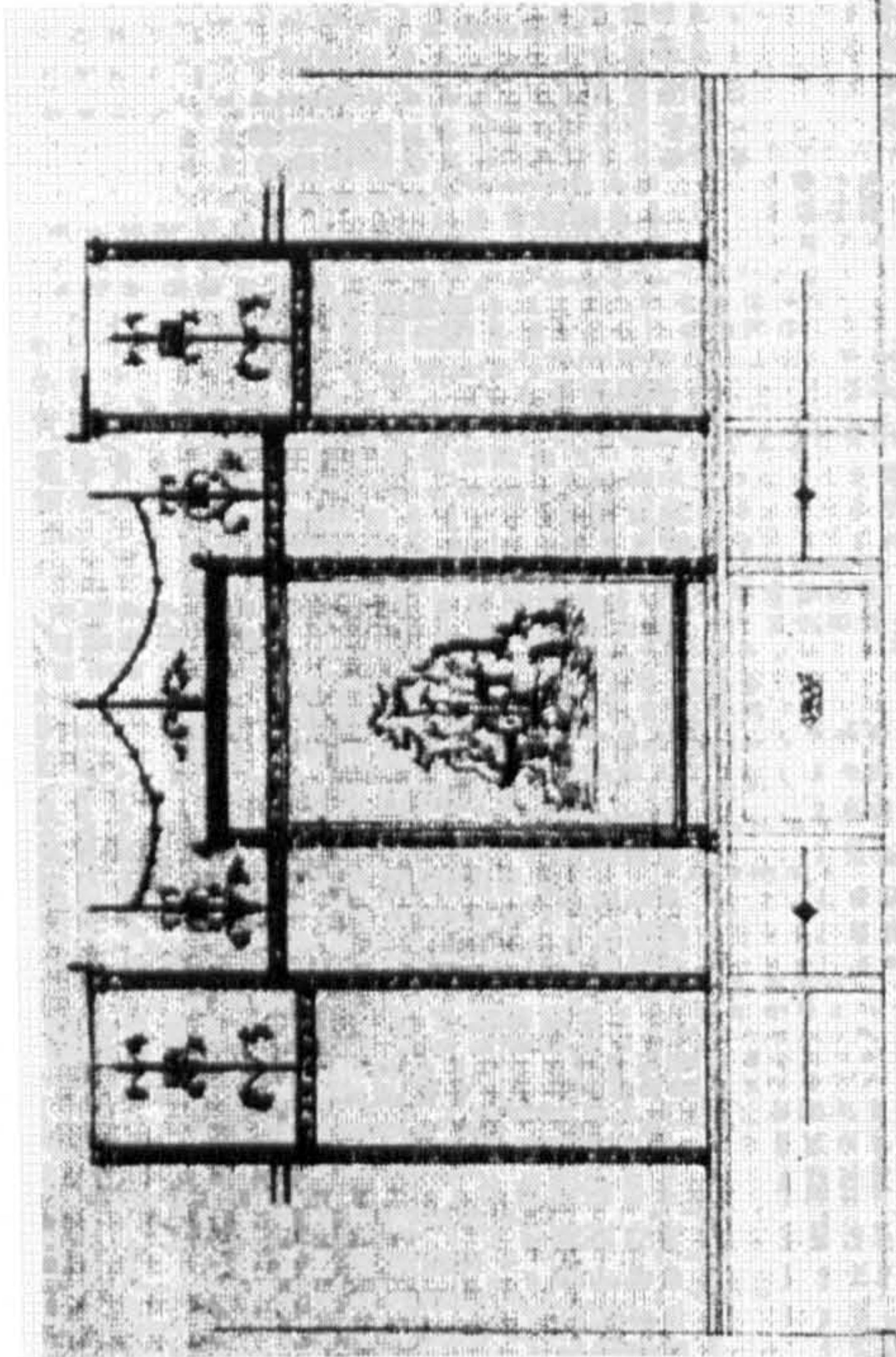
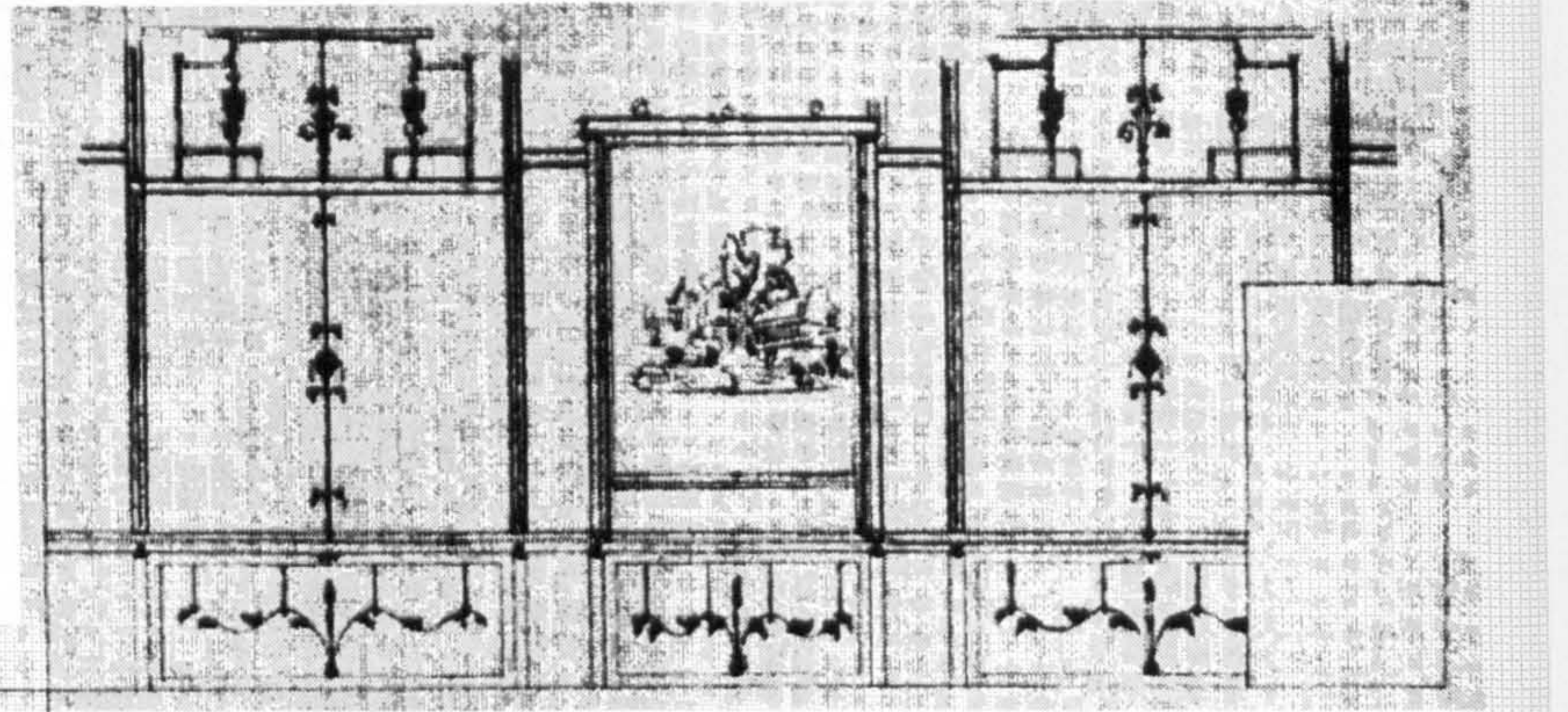
²⁰. Blanckenhagen 1962.

²¹. Zanker 1988. pp 280 - 287 discussing murals.

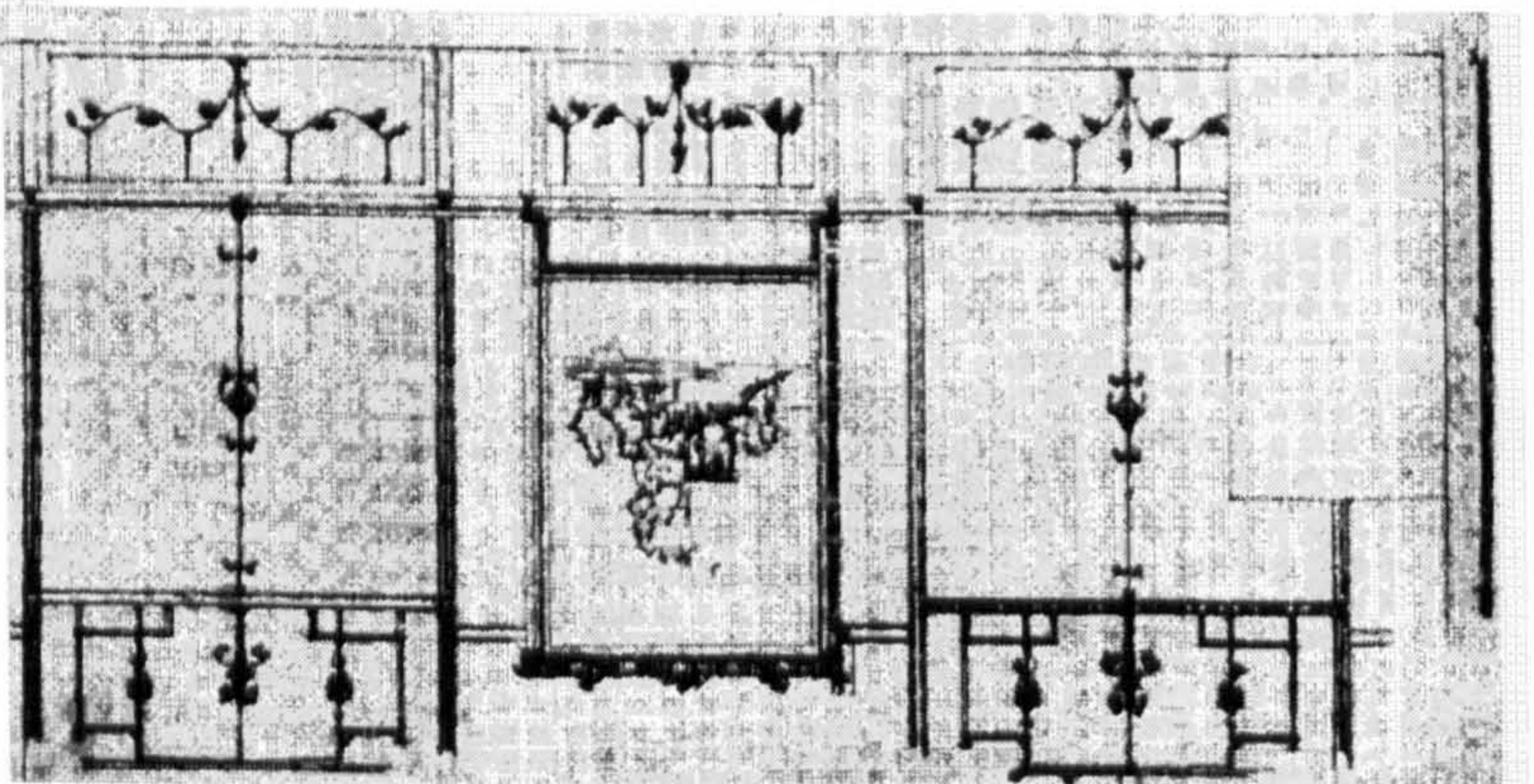
²². The technique is very thoroughly explored in von Blanckenhagen 1962, a special chapter being devoted to it.

²³. R. Cotterill: *Sunt alliquid manes: personalities, personae and ghosts in Augustan poetry in Post Structuralist Classics* ed. Benjamin. London 1988. pp 229. "Augustus' names a politics of restoration. Restoration in turn is that turn of ideology which seeks to denote an origin as, by unique good fortune, succeeding that which it originated " Also Zanker ****.

²⁴. Eco. *U tr. H. Bredin: Art and beauty in the middle ages.* London 1986. pp 43.



window to
terrace



Blamckenhagen pl 10

Oracle Room

vision. They are the essence of shamanic power. No quaint ethnic phenomenon shamanism has shaped Western culture through the dynamo generated within Greek thought under the tutelage of Orphism.²⁵ This will have relevance later.

Linear logic requires leaps of imagination, procured by "illogical" dreams and delirium. Dream states arise from subliminal response to terrestrial environment, to aspects of spatiality, our own centrality as intellectual focus of its powers. They are complex mappings within the neuronal system of those parts of experience which do not respond readily to serial logic, like the logic of these words. *"As a man gets older, he takes in all knowledge at a wide circumference, but can only speak it from his little mouth in the middle like an echinus: and his mouth is no bigger than it used to be,"* says Ruskin, commenting on the restrictions placed on exploring simultaneous ideas by the tyranny of transliteration.²⁶

Cities are dreamscapes. Ruskin thought so, and so does Rykwert.²⁷ Comprehensive urbanisation of countryside, its conversion into Landscape, resulting from Roman territorialism sought to make that part of the dreamscape. *"Everywhere there were groves, grottoes, nymphaea, herms, shrines and all kinds of votives. The countryside was inhabited by gods, and men permitted to live in it"* is one famous commentator's view.²⁸ Town was linked to town with continuity threads, town to city with greater ones. Processional routes extended throughout imperial space. Along them, potential triumphators wound their way back to Rome through a countryside filled with and changed by insignia.

Orators and literati at the period beginning the Empire were usually unable to write. Scribal skills were the prerogative of an independent profession. Patrician rhetoricians were happy to leave it that way! Cicero dictated his work to a scribe, as poets had done for two thousand years. For his speeches he used techniques similar to those with which Homer was familiar. They consisted of mnemonic devices and a mnemosyne of stock phrases. Homer's device, his lyre, was part of the perceived performance. An orator's could not be. Associative scenic diagrams were used. They might be separate sketches, each a characteristic *topos* which reminded the

²⁵. We find in particular that Apollonian practice and psychology, like that of Asklepeios, has strong elements of shamanic states. One aspect is Apollo's ambivalent sexuality, a feminine male, never very successful in his pursuits, like Pan. Another is the ecstatic oracular practices induced by herbs or other toxins - gas and water are two. Apollonian followers took over the Delphic rites from the Great Goddess, whose Artemis manifestation is represented as his virgin sister (virginity = purity of environment) and who inherited the attribute of mistress of the animals. It was as sacrificial priests to this deity that shamanism originated. Hence the element of self sacrifice as saviour in related cults.

²⁶. *Ruskin, J.: Diaries*. pp 869 via *Fellows, J.: Ruskin's Maze*. Princeton 1981. pp 207.

²⁷. *Rykwert, J.: The Idea of a town*. London 1976.

²⁸. *Curtius, L.: Die Wandmalerel pompejis*. 1929 via Schefold 1962. pp 63.



Sung painting via Sullivan 1969 pl 48

Spreading white light and a disposition of shrines within mountainous landscapes are characteristics shared by the Boscotrecase frescos and these ca. 1000AD Chinese paintings. So is "distancing", though the two cultures achieve it in entirely different ways. In this painting it is by a godly overview; in the 'trecase frescos it is through symbolic content.

Light and space

speaker of certain modes, as had the Homeric rhapsode's lyre, or had specific cultural associations and significance. They were frequently sketches of Landscape. Greater drawing skills assembled them into composite scenes, perspectived. Each element was a layer. Dominant ideas took the foreground, background the rear, a hierarchy of organisation which set the oration's form. Cicero is notable for such sketches. Like Homer's lyre, these were not accompaniment or decoration, but core and carrier. They were the crucible of ideas, for oratory, and its vehicle rhetoric, was performance which must suspend disbelief. There were obviously deeply rooted reasons for using Landscape scenes to epitomise this energy.

Darkness has gone and light has arisen.²⁹

Our frescos depict such scenes. The "Oracle" (author's label), is constructed in this layered manner, though visually more skilled and elaborate. The triad suggests meditational images. (Buddhism had a concession within the Hellenistic states, even Attica). Parallel techniques occur in later Chinese painting (XXI). Others make statements related to the complete suite of eight. Only three cubicoli are represented, so the cycle might be incomplete.

Systematic sequences of Landscape sketches used as a mnemonic device to generate words under the pressure of performance, must draw on subconscious imagery in the mind of the orator, even subliminal. This being so, they have a cultural context. A sequence of paintings as elaborately layered with obtuse symbolic imagery as the Oracle group can certainly function as meditational triggers. It is not part of the argument or purpose to prove the existence of buddhist thinking in the Empire nor dharma in the paintings.³⁰ Nevertheless, undercurrents in the imagery could be construed as essential dharma for a man of the dynamic power and imagination of Agrippa. The purpose of this chapter is to explore some of the signs underneath the exquisite state of rest enjoyed by paintings in a serial sequence.

The heading above comes from a Sanskrit text. It does not depict a state but a process. Like process allegory it is dynamic. It says that one thing has passed and another is beginning [21]. At the same time it implies the balance of stasis. Everything is poised. A narrative implication is that what has gone was waiting for, and caused, that which has come. This quality in the frescos fascinates.

²⁹. *Anguttaranikaya* 1.164 ed. R.Morris & E.Hardy. London 1885 - 1900.

³⁰. Their presence though, even if only in the form of elements absorbed into one of the highly competitive Hellenistic religions related to Orphism and particularly Dionysiac Orphism, like that of Asklepeios, cannot really be dismissed, given the knowledge that Buddhist monks operated under licence in the Hellenistic empire.

They seem unique, expressed in the direct iconic Landscape imagery of dream related to the elegiac pastoral tradition developed by Vergil and found in Longus.

Chorography.

Geographical as well as intellectual exploration bloomed in Alexandria. Skills developed to visualise and depict the earth's surface. Mythic models no longer sufficed. Scholars and artists evolved a part representational, part symbolic illustrative form which outlined topography and inset sketches of mnemonic cultural features - shrines, cities, significant towns [22]. Sketches often incorporated elements which comprise the Boscotrecase frescos, recognised signs for certain locations. The net result was to make available to merchants an overview image in which they could locate geographically and culturally. Surface is codified and wandering ceases. It no longer takes heroes to conquer space. Merchant and tourist became new age heroes, sharing the conquest of space as the Phoenician traders did with Alexander. No doubt their villa holiday tales matched those of Odysseus! Taking the idea to majestically compressed proportions, Hadrian created a tangible architectural chorographic image of the empire at Tivoli.

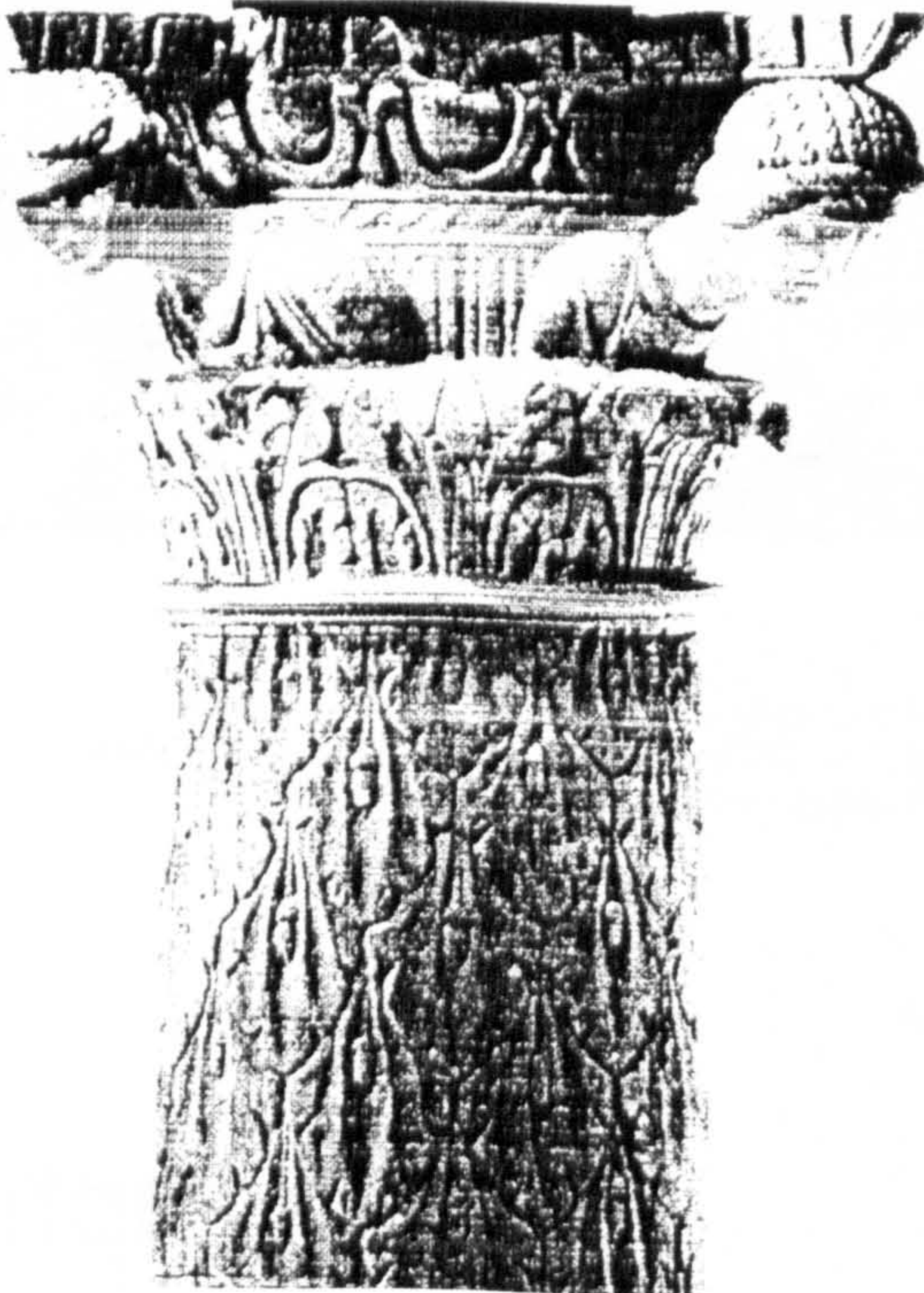
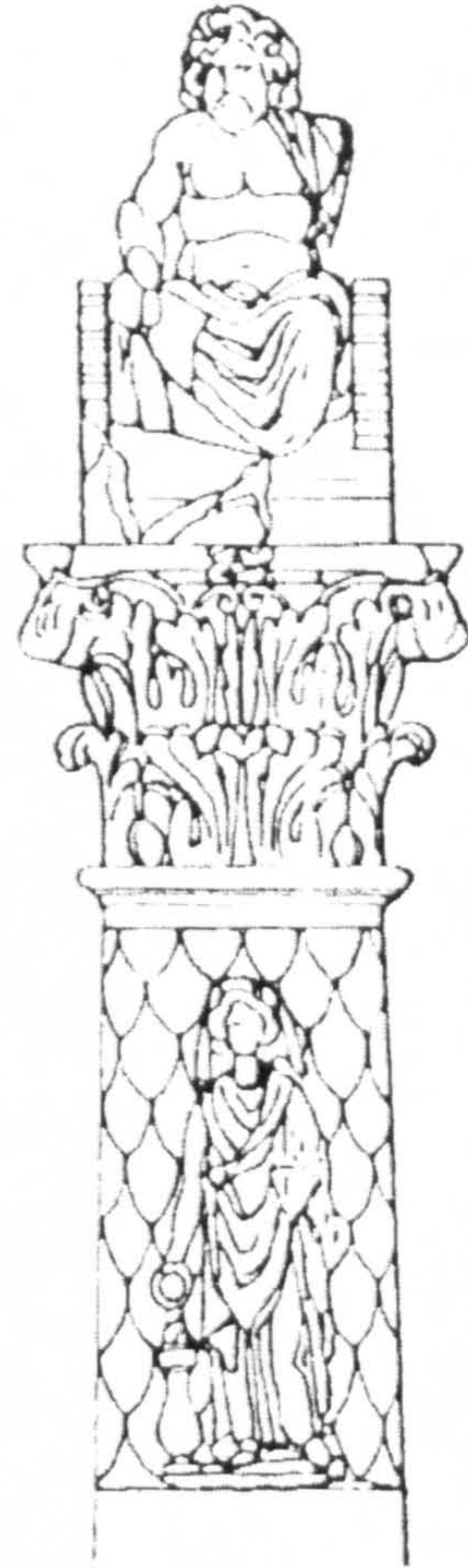
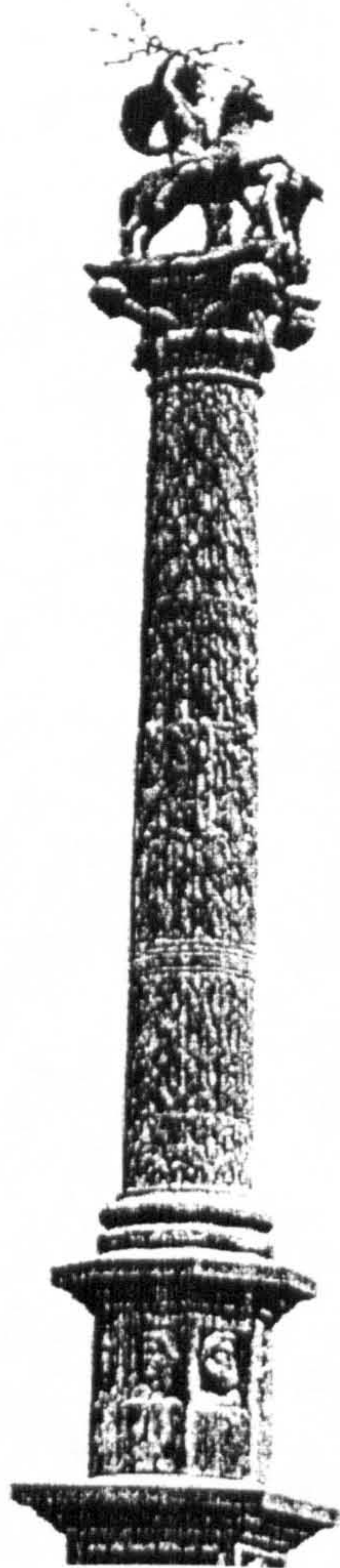
This representational system of landscape features was obviously significant in orientation. Its expansion in Roman urban design confirms that. Jupiter columns, Imperial calendric encyclopaedias, were used in the northern provinces of Europe for geographical and cultural "orientation" [23]. They indicated the extent of Imperial protection and informed of the duty to observe. A grand overview of Landscape is essential for extending chorography back again into physical reality. This indicates the increase in travel involved. Instead of skilled and daring explorers adventuring into the unknown, there was obviously a need to supply navigational aids for travellers less skilled even than merchants, itinerant traders, troops, walkabouts and the dispossessed. Landscape signs indicated the extent of Roman law and influence. Where they ceased a different system began. They delineated, just as religious shrines in more ancient societies, or the tombs of kings whose thickets protected the remains of those who protected their domains when alive. The imperial eagle maintained an overview of its dominions and colonial interests. The system of illustrative topography in birds' eye view initiated by Alexandrian Greek or Egyptian scholars was surprisingly accurate. It was also sometimes equally inaccurate, retaining components which had once belonged to myth and did not share the new logic [24].



Ptolemy Cosmography map of Sarmatia (Caspian)

A simple example of chorography from Ptolemy's atlas. Two pillars mark Alexander's passage through the mountains, and a shrine marks a place special to Caesar. Some sketches on maps were more elaborate.

Chorography



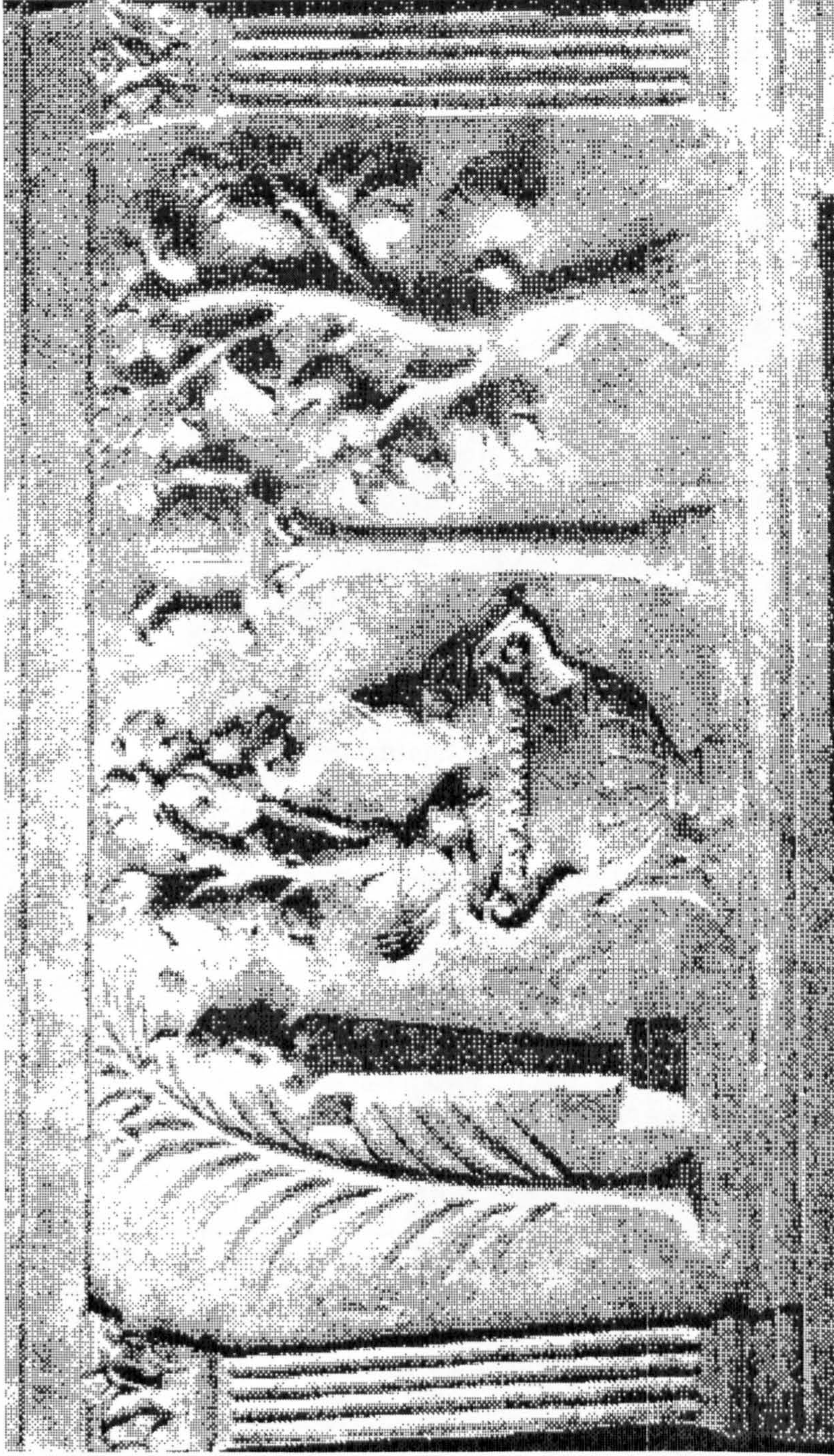
Top left: reconstructed Jupiter column from Hausen an der Zauber showing Olympian Jove on the capital of a column whose shaft parallels column and tree. Its base and capital are calendric, 4, 8 and 4, and its capital suggests origins for the details of many Mediaeval colonnades.

Bottom left: a detail of the surviving remnants of the original.

Top right: drawing of a Jupiter column from Mainz with a Corinthian capital (not Roman composite) and seated Jupiter. The column is scaled to represent tree bark and has inset reliefs, normally calendric.

These columns mark the triumph of the empire in its northern progress. Their purpose was didactic and political; they instructed "barbarians" in the Roman system and marked the protection of its laws. Trajan's column has a certain irony in this context, being erected by a provincial emperor at the centre of the empire

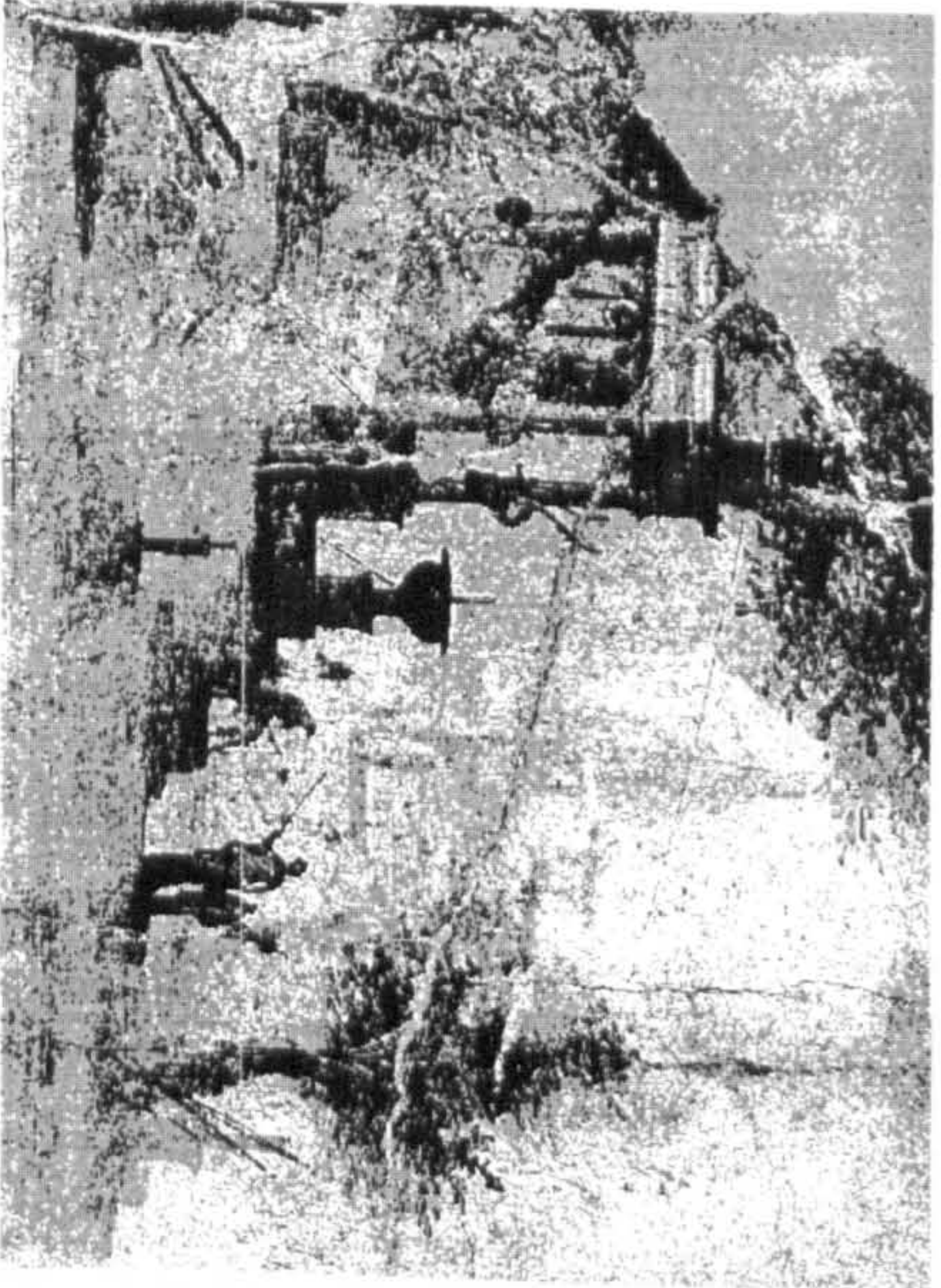
Jupiter columns, tree & empire



Zanker ff 221 detail from marble tomb

Seen through a portico this relief is a collection of icons which collectively stand for a villa Landscape. Each element is abstract representative space, exotic palms, fig trees of Aphrodite, Hellenistic style statuary and fountain, a Corinthian column. They are either what the deceased aspired to or owned and wished to take with him. This is a similar principle to that of Hellenistic kings except that here it is private space. It is space which exists only on a surface; the purpose of the surface adds meaning to already meaningful symbols, each of which carries a certain kind of spatial quality into the frame. The icons are those of the 'treasure frescos, but organised very differently. We erad them as less numinous, but did a Roman?

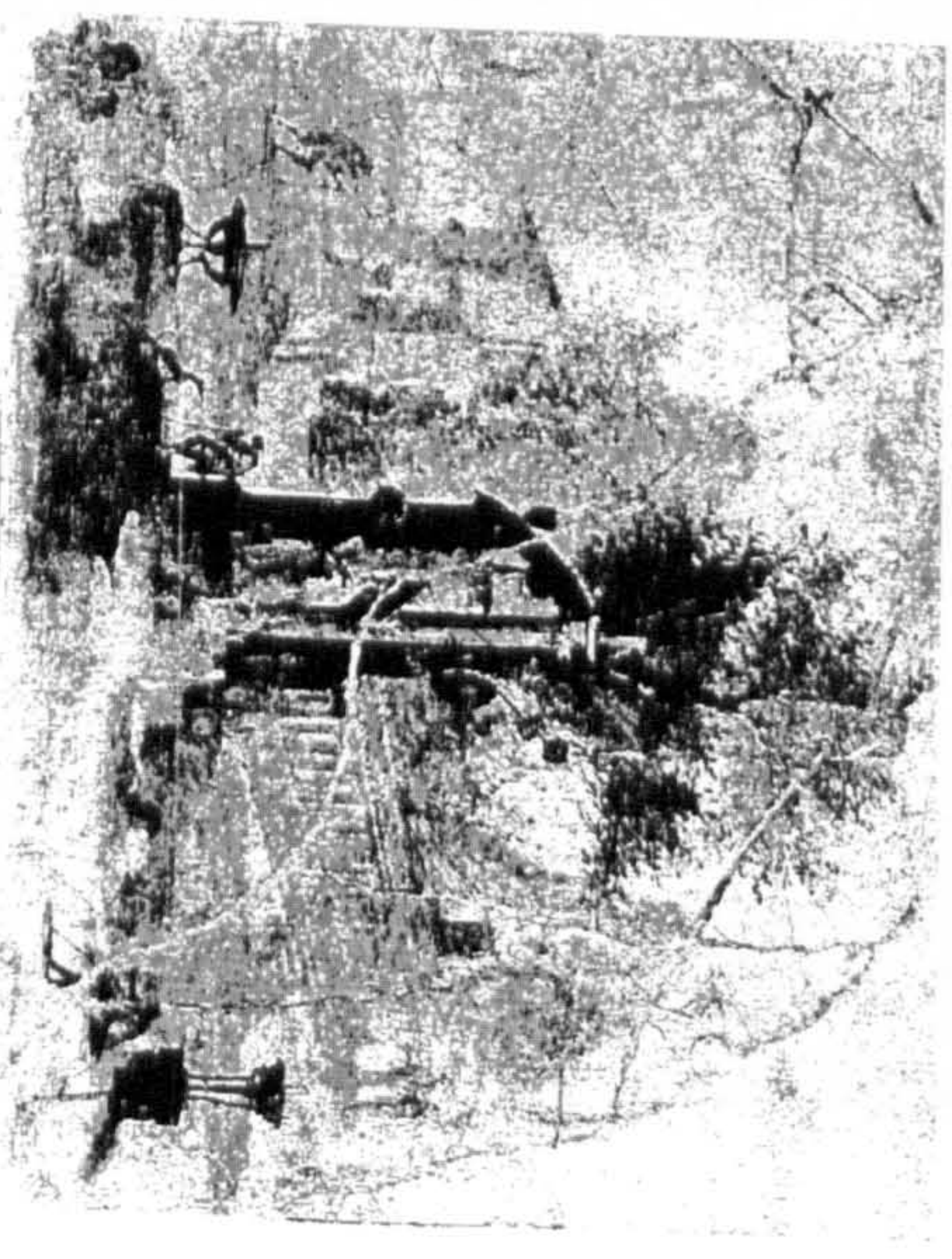
Villa Landscapes - spatial abstractions, Abstract space



Tetrastyle



Oracle



Stoa

This illustration places the Oracle triad images in sequence without their frames or surrounds. It shows how the imagery of each leans towards the centre, even though they have much spatial autonomy.

Frescos: Oracle triad

The Oracle triad.

Deft, poetically idyllic, narrative content earns three frescos the name "Oracle group" [25]. Close scrutiny unearths extensive underlying geometry.³¹ Imagery, compositional techniques and their information compare with the poetry of Vergil. Where Horace confined himself to the popular literate imagery of villa communities, Vergil explored cultural meaning inherent in Greek predecessors, his purpose to enhance Roman prestige. Obsessed with a sense of destiny, *Aeneid*, created a philosophical structure for the Augustan world embracing not only grand ideas in the Attic tradition, but ecologically reflective ones.³² Few concepts in Homer's *Odyssey* are left without modification or critical restructuring. Where *Georgics* explored the technology and ethics of Alcinous's symbolic garden, *Aeneid* probes other inner landscapes concerned with ancient wilderness, its ceremonials, passages and rites. It deals with processes rather than states. Everything is in flux. Alexandrian geometric techniques, textual sacred geometry, are infused with such skill that only computer analysis re-discovered them.³³ Their presence in *Aeneid* as in these paintings emphasises, as it does in ancient vase painting, that the world and humanity are part of an ongoing set of modulations. They imply that the images presented are a significant part, one stage, one state, in a continuous process. Rite then holds them. Writing extended poetry around sacred proportional systems is startling enough to the modern world.³⁴ That Vergil should expend much effort and time structuring his poetry with them, idyll and epic alike, reveals the cultural importance they held in the Rome of Octavian's time. Latin, written without spacing the words, makes this geometric presence, also in Homer, more profoundly felt. Probably more apparent, it directed pauses and phrasing in language intended for hearing not reading off the page. It makes epic poetry a spatial exercise, framing heroic activity within an abstract cosmic arrangement of profoundly symbolic Landscapes. For this geometry is precisely that. In this use one sees that which made poets the guardians of a culture, historians and educators, a status held throughout the Renaissance. Landscapes of the mind receive deep cultural meaning through

³¹. It is known that many of the surviving frescos have scored lines in the base coat, but no analysis is available to present according to those working in the field.

³². That is not to say that Horace was shallow; it is a feature of Vergil that, like Mozart, his imagery can be read at many differing levels, where frequently strong irony is veiled by eloquent rather than slick rhetorical devices whose use, like symbolic languages, frames, encapsulates and gives access to ideas whose logic is intuitive rather than explanatory, and which can lead us deep into the labyrinth.

³³. Summarised in the sequence of Appendices attached dealing with the use of sacred proportions.

³⁴. It was however a standard for ritual incantation in Egyptian religion.

utterance, the Word emerging from the mouth, from inspired human cavities, giving shape that its appearance in print could not have. Ruskin, whose quantity of written words must rival anybody's, talks of ideas being squeezed through the echinus mouth, which signifies the greater space within. When we read the score of a late Beethoven quartet what do we hear if we are not also listening? How many times do we, perhaps sneaking a look at our score during performance, think "I had not heard that before in my mind's I?" or "Oh! That's not how I hear it but it's new and beautiful!"

The eight frescos from Boscotrecase are survivors of an ancient landscape catastrophe. They collectively address parts of a theme, framing philosophical and imaginative processes which transcend the literal image, lovely though that is. This induces awareness of the power of human collective consciousness.³⁵ Underlying geometry gives spiritual meaning to cosmic experience. We are more accustomed to its presence in the visual and plastic arts. "Oracle" uses it with the same artful concealment as Vergil. Consummate care in concealed elements must arouse expectations that every visible component has meaningful significance. These paintings are removed from the conceit, even further from the pursuit of architectural triumphalism apparent in Campanian predecessors. They suggest a custodial stance parallel to that discovered in Neolithic nomadic cultures.³⁶ They are about "landscape" as well as "Landscape."

As with all Alexandrian art the conceit lends surface elegance in the paintings and tempers a deeper mysticism, a quality familiar to this Alexandrian painter. They reveal a society with confidence and poise, eschewing the need for grandiloquent gesture in its private world. The atmosphere, close in some respects to that of Theocritus' grove, lacks the latter's shepherd leanness. It is Roman. In contrast with Theocritus' casually cast-down carving, these frescos are stiff with exquisite marble, carved olive and cast bronze. Here is no escape from urbanity but a revelry in urban appropriation of rural space.

Quiet and serious, the tone of the paintings avoids popular Roman taste for the macabre or sentimental. No "ancient Etruscans", no centaurs, no fauns, and no winged putti prevalent in Pompeiian painting, no composite human forms which signify archaic and

³⁵. The word oceanic here refers to the state which generates creative energy as defined by *Anton Ehrenzweig in The Hidden Order of Art*. London. He defines the dynamic process of the first inspiration and will in this way.

³⁶. Notably recent discoveries of elaborate systems of notation and use of landscape by Australian aboriginals. The discussion was heard on a lecture series on Radio 3 before commencing this study, and the reference not taken.

arcane scenes in Greek mythic painting inhabit the spaces.³⁷ It is self-conscious "Attic revival". Spaces are Arcadian, grove, precinct and sacred way, a rural procession quite unlike those from the *Idylls* of Theocritus, which remain undefined in extent, symbolising freedom from the constraints of urban and civic responsibilities. These are the essence of villa life and otium, loaded with objects the Romans used to urbanise interstitial space.

Mirror, window, wall.

Mythpoeic space, being of the mind more than the perception, possesses special qualities which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. These frescos play with their wall space in a special way, manipulated by many-layered devices (XXVI). Structural space in myth differs from that of normal linguistics. Global form is also ultimate meaning. This derives from origins in oceanic awareness and dreams, an early modelling of profound realisations.³⁸ In normal language this breaks down into logical serial components which progressively explain or amplify the whole; myth does not. There is no logical growth. Components are juxtaposed to accumulate meaning by suggestive association. Each component uses a structure similar to that of the total "image". Fragments are entire in themselves with an accumulated logic that is labyrinthine but without the labyrinth's linear progression - without the thread.

This technique is used for the main components. Eventually it creates a new landscape ideology to rival and surpass Homeric imagery. Each element can be analysed on this basis though many interpretations are possible. Imagery organisation has the structure of mythic rather than linguistic logic. Like myth, components hang together by imaginative association. This is seen by defining semiotic boundaries. Having said that, there is a narrative thread woven within the recurring shadowy figures who participate in the arcane scenes.

Oracle shows it most clearly. Boundaries are signed but not stated. They cannot be defined because they are signed by an element that is both absence and presence, highly ambivalent. Narrative commenced by foreground events is discontinuous. It can be pursued only by dream dynamics where transitions are absolute and cannot be retraced. Links are understood associative imagery, like the earthy presence of Priapus, the spaces of the intermediary, finally Olympian dazzle. Each group, in each room, is a sequence of

³⁷. *Carpenter 1991*. The reference to ancient Etruscans will be found in Chapter 9.

³⁸. Myth arises from consolidation (reductionism) of such models for which insufficient analytical or serial thought is available.

flat plane images which make of their solid walls both windows and mirrors, for one cannot go through except by going in [26].

Oracle.

Because Oracle is the most complete of the frescos, the analysis which follows concentrates mainly on that painting (XXVII). It is one, though perhaps the key, in a serial essay. If *Aeneid* is represented in Roman wall paintings, it is here in these eloquent paintings from Agrippa's villa. They don't seek to illustrate Vergil's epic. They take its processes, its dynamic progression, and reveal an original work which explores Vergil's philosophical and rhetorical themes. Its concordance with some Renaissance, and certainly neo-classical Landscapes amazes.

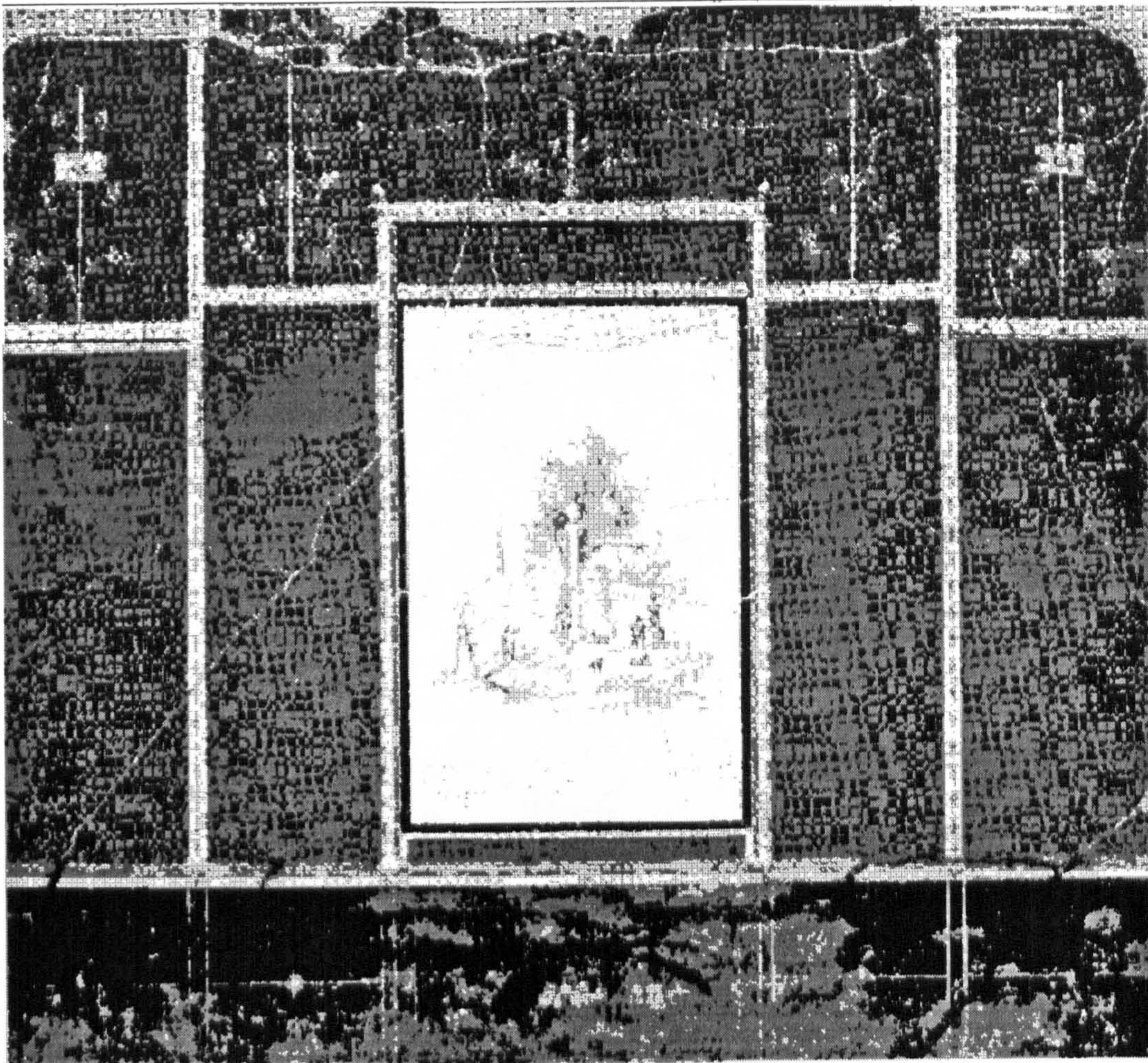
Each fresco in the Oracle triad is crowded with territorial symbols. Compared with the spaciousness of the Mythological paintings they depict a busy world. Symbols are arranged with precision within the picture plane, governed by sacred geometry. All are attributes whose provenance is sacred Landscape. Each marks part of a sacred way, a sort of rural triumph within a "there" Landscape. Oracle, their monumental centre, is symmetrical, founded on Pythagorean triangles [27]. The supporting paintings are asymmetrical, looser, ensuring its pivotal role. Part of peripheral vision when contemplating the central theme, they create dynamic symmetry. Oracle's geometry of Pythagorean triangles acts like a Renaissance dome. It draws into itself the space it dominates and that which it depicts, and becomes a celestial vault for the entirety of cumulative space, existential and abstract (XXVIII reconstructs the space as a landscape plan).

Domain of Priapus.

We may contemplate the space of these Landscapes. There is no invitation to enter it [28] [29]. It is firmly "there". Curtius comments: "*We are not invited into the work, as in Eastern landscapes, but are vouchsafed a glance of Arkadia from these beginnings of our art Bucolic paintings served especially the needs of Isis worship and then of Christianity.*"³⁹ Contemplation takes us through stages. Where a dark foreground terminates at a stretch of limpid water we must pause. Priapus, god of homes and gardens, marks the crossing. His shrine is shaded by a small tree.

*'O Priapus, shade and shelter be yours,
That sun and snow may never harm your head -*

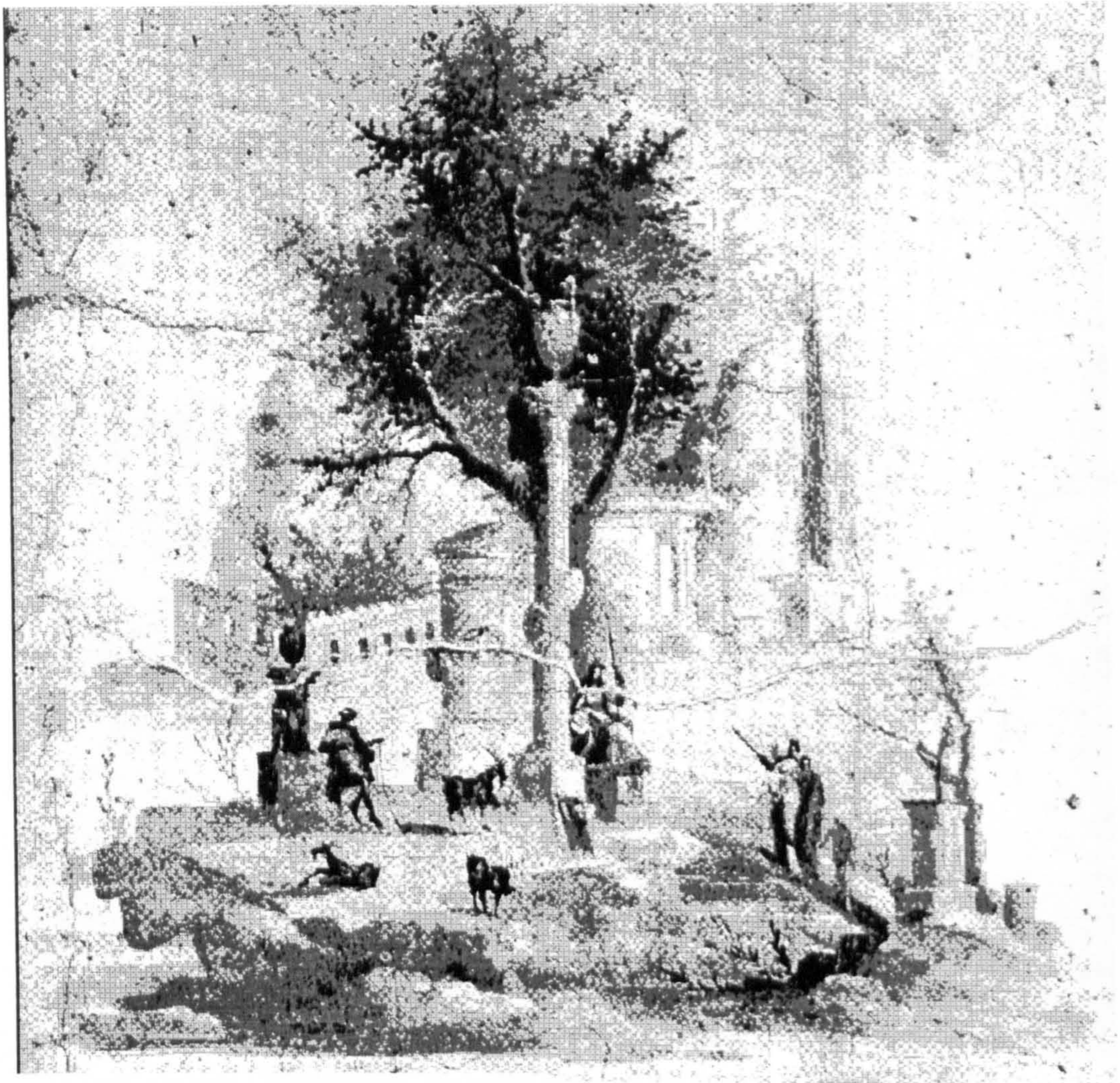
³⁹. Curtius, I: *Die Wandmalerei pompejis*. 1929. via Schefold 1962, pp 63.



Schefold Vergessenes Pompeii

All frescos in the villa at Boscotrecase are set in impeccable frames of sacred geometry. The Oracle sequence is especially distinguished. The device serves to unify wall space. One wonders if these are images of the kinds of frame Greek stoics used to hold their panel paintings in stoas. In 'trecase the geometry infuses every aspect of the "Oracle" image, as well as its frame. Else Kielland's ideas might well be applied to this image. Mirror, window, components of wall, conjure with space.

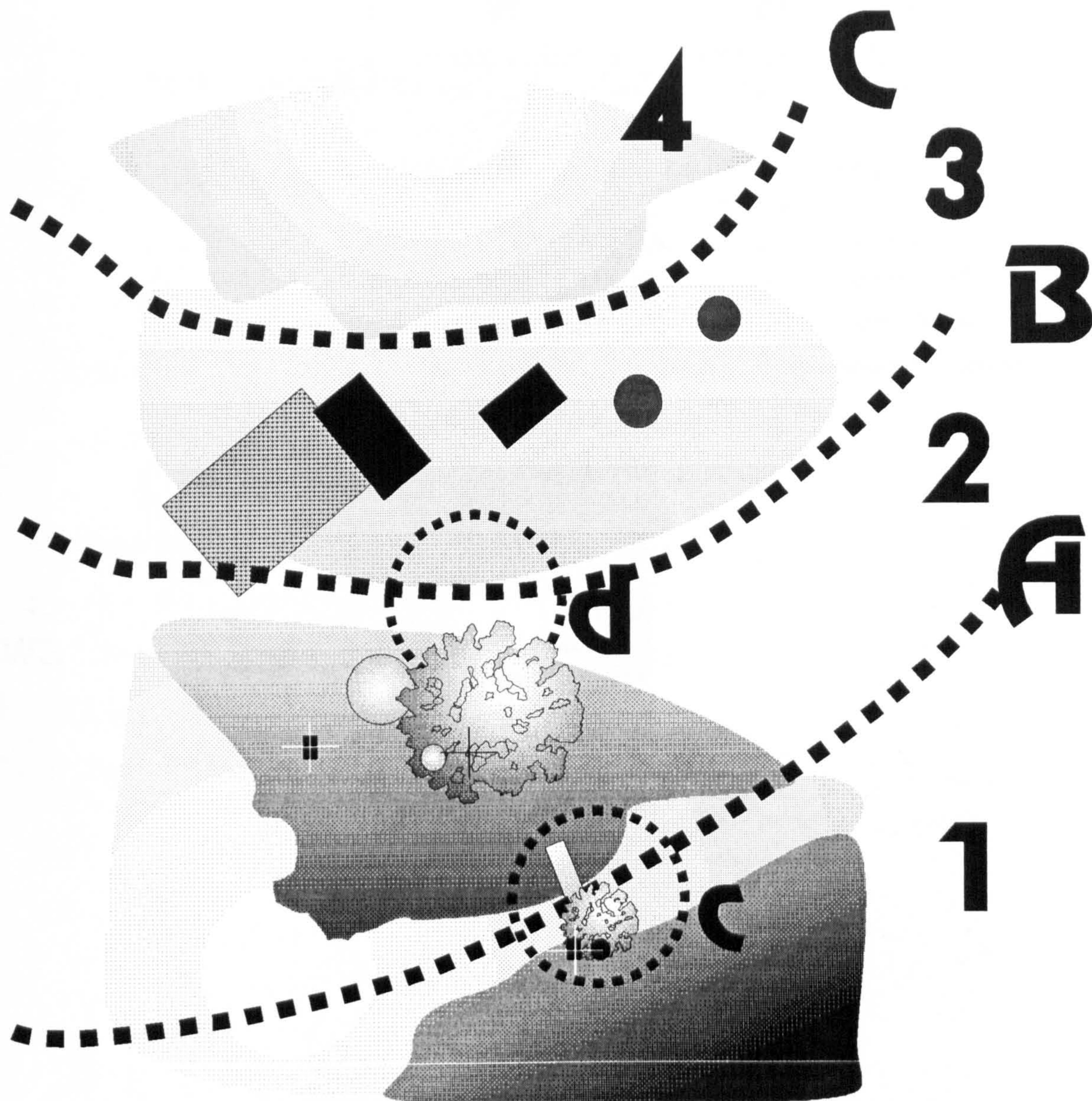
Boscotrecase:Oracle



Oracle fresco detail Blanckenhagen

Oracle is a densely programmed Landscape fresco. It is allegorical, each element carrying its load of implied meaning and hidden allusions. In this it differs from other contemporary paintings which survive, for example the Odysseus cycle. Its triangular shape is Pythagorean, leading from the vesica, and elements are disposed within it in this way. It also implies pyramid and therefore mountain along with other dynamics.

Boscotrecase:Oracle



key

1. Landscape - the villa's edge, earthly paradise.
2. interface - the abstract space of intermediaries; religious experience.
3. divinity - the abstract realm of the spirit.
4. mountain - the realm of gods;

Semiotic Boundaries.

- A. Absolute space, an aporia as separation between Landscape and abstract space.
- B. undefined space, the unknown as separation between intermediary and divinity.
- C. unassailable rock faces - the acropolis of ultimate abstract space.

Semiotic Links.

- c. a bridge which never arrives; you may start with knowledge of the journey, but its termination is a mystery.
- d. intermediaries are the spiritual bridge. This bridge has fewer "aids"

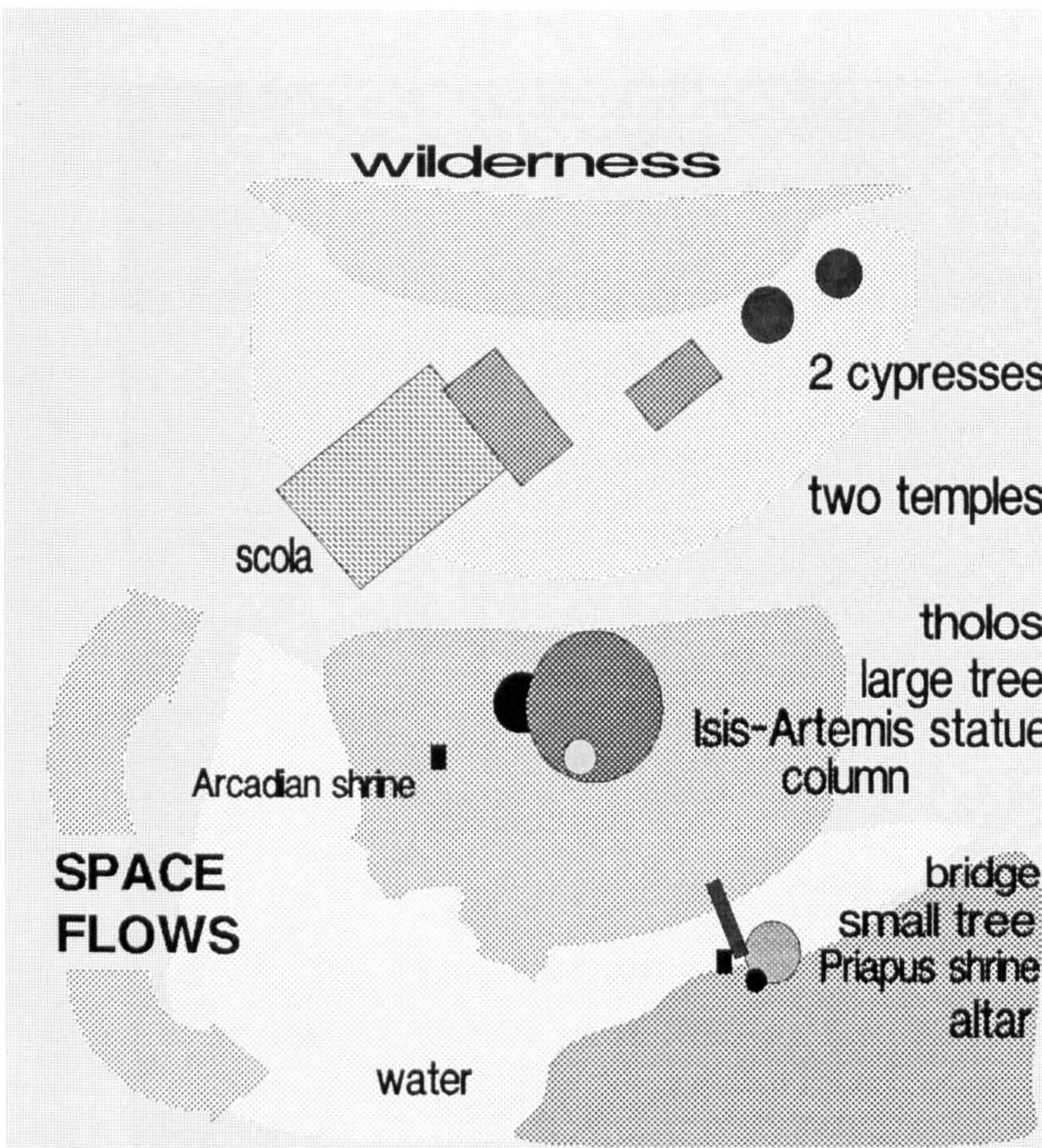
Plan of Oracle layout

Three barriers separate four spatial zones. Each barrier has physical properties and spiritual connotations. Gradation from foreground to distance is emphatic, traversing from dark to blinding brilliance. It is depicted rising to a mountain peak. There is no invitation to invade the image, despite psychological "bridges". Once beyond the immediate foreground of the image, each component becomes esoteric. The wall frame bars entry, as did the moat between stage and audience in the classical theatre. The scheme is basically Platonic and Pythagorean, the journey of the soul towards the light from which it originated. Each category of space is set out, and is indicated in the geometry of the painted image. This drawing represents a theoretical landscape architect's plan of the Landscape in the painting.

Oracle fresco

obtuse scheme

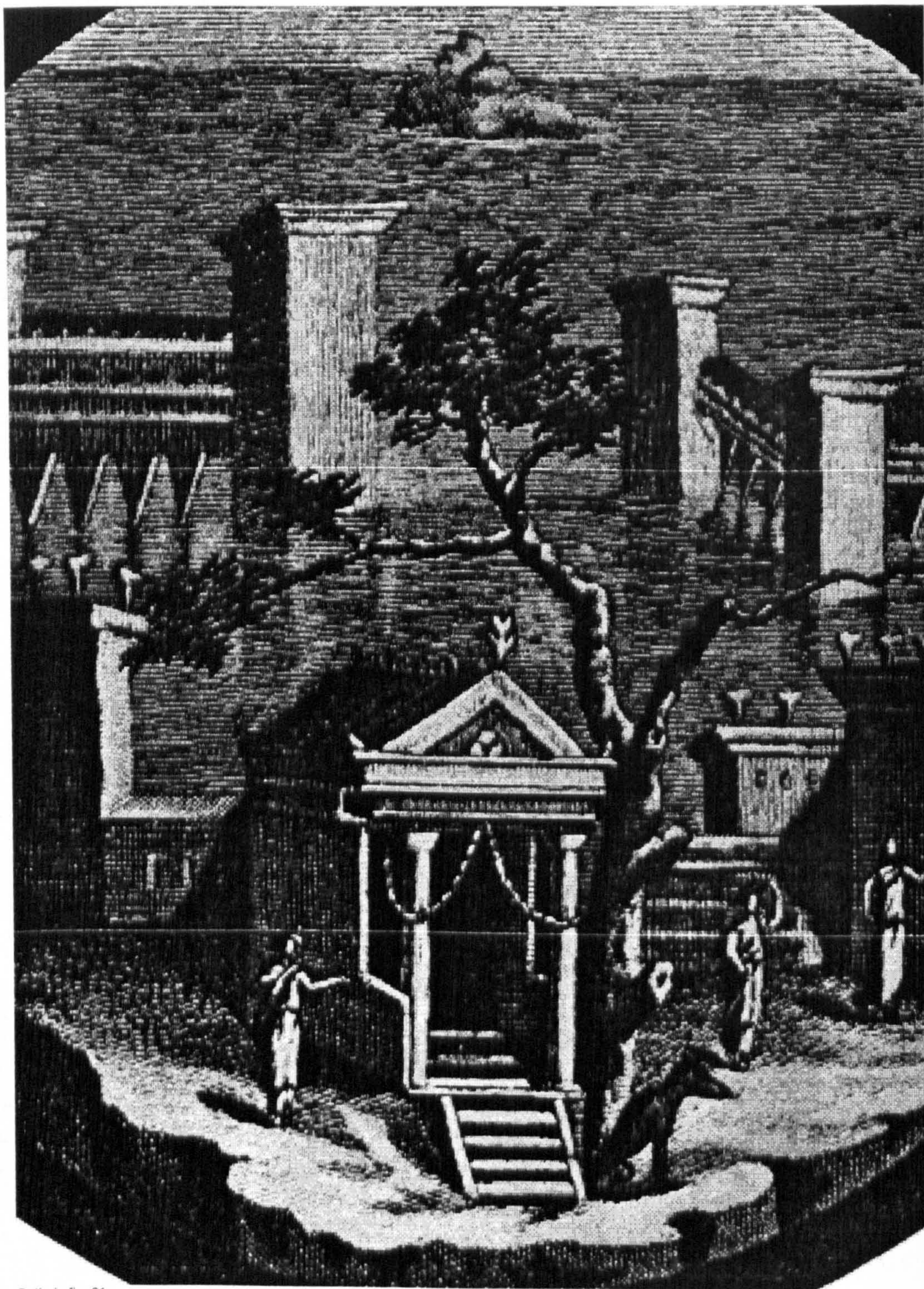
c.MICHAEL SELWOOD 1990



Oracle fresco

Description A schematic plan

The Oracle fresco is a statement about space and its human occupancy and also a systematic commentary about "landscape" in terms that might be familiar to XIXc English landscape theorists.



Gothein fig 61

Sacred tree and small temple set on a sacred island (marked by a sea wall temenos) serve to comment on the stereotypes in the Boscotrecase frescos. No date is given for this one.

Sacred tree & island

*What is your trick for captivating lovely boys?
After all your beard's not oiled and your hair uncombed.'*

So sings Tibullus, a minor contemporary poet. It is a recognisable stereotype, with understood space and functions. We twentieth century viewers, uninitiated as we are, can only partly participate. Visual imagery leaves us latitude to reconstruct. The small tree is mature, not a young sapling. Seedlings sprout from under rocks all around. They have the characteristics of willows. The immanence of Priapus stands on a pedestal, spatially ambiguous, back to the altar, engorged penis pointing to the beyond. It is a transition point. Here the world of villa parkland ends. It signals passage from the familiar to the space of eternal events. This is the boundary of imaged reality. Only imagination can traverse the all-enveloping brilliance embracing the triangle of soft vibrant polychrome beyond.

Priapus reinforces symbolism attributed to the combination of solitary column and tree, long-standing stereotypes (XXIX). The asherah was commonly associated with a solitary tree or small grove on high ground. Tibullus's last line suggests that Pan and Priapus (and probably the Roman Faunus too) were already conflated. This lack of differentiation suggests absence of a need to distinguish between the landscape types originally attributed to each. Their space too had become conflated into a generalised here, encompassed by the villa rather than heightened awareness of Arkadian forests inhabited by Pan.

This view is partly confirmed by Longus' treatment of Pan as guardian and saviour - Dionysos like - in *Pastoralias*. Renaissance iconographers re-established Pan, though Roman conflation remained. They seem to have taken the model presented by Longus perpetuated in *Romance of the Rose*. Sexual ambivalence became sexual neutrality, allowing the bisexual nature of divinity to be projected.

This painting conceals Landscapes within Landscapes. Space is convoluted like an Escher illusion or like Russian dolls, opening one reveals another. One could explore it for hours, and still arrive within millimetres of the point of departure. Elements like the stream are fairly simple, and invoke rites of passage. Water emerged as a gift of the underworld, where it flowed in hollows as labyrinthine as a rabbit warren. Crossing bridges demands major strategy from Boiardo's XVc heroes: in this painting no less so.

Once over, we are met by a battery of symbolic imagery, each component of which signifies a particular Landscape complex. There is a solitary column, a deity or statue, a sacred tree, a tholos,

and an Arkadian on a precipice. It reads almost like the convoluted Landscape of one of Boiardo's fays.

Polished porphyry.

On its marble pedestal base, this column with Greek orders is topped with a bronze urn. The urn is not axial, suggesting temporary placement. The column is particularly rich, signifying a trophy from some eastern Greek shrine. In oriental Hellenistic Graeca-magna their association in a landscape with a solitary tree marked a shrine of homo-erotic cult. Solitary columns became a prominent landscape feature marking imperial space. Implied space is that of the templum. They mark a cross, a point of location and decision, remaining themselves directionally neutral. Shields or tympani hung on its porphyry shaft reinforce aspects of trophy, procession, and triumph. It signifies Man triumphant, a vertical in horizontal space. Like other symbols here, it has a vertical downward significance, for templum was used to replicate the presence of mundus. Thus templum space associated with the column is that of the founding city. Its introduction into countryside changes the symbolic characteristics of that landscape.

Sacred willow.

A majestic solitary tree with a dense canopy rises immediately behind the column, which it embraces discreetly. It has the characteristics of a mature willow, the tree of transitions. Trees expressed perfection, the symmetry of their parts being deemed to permeate the whole. In this painting, it dominates the sacred mountain beyond. Space above ground is replicated by space below ground. Like a spring, it arises from the world of Persephone, bringing with it chthonian power. Water has similar implications. Tree and fountain became interchangeable with tholos in symbolic Landscapes, eventually marking the epicentre of the familiar quadripartite "garden" of the cloister.

Most shrines in Hellenistic art had their venerable tree, rarely so realistic. In Judaic tradition there is first the sacred tree; when it dies, the stump is honoured; when that finally rots, the *asherah* is "planted". Sacred tree might stand for grove. Hebrew texts draw upon well-travelled sources of ancient ideas and rites, selective in commending or bending those which applied particularly to their own governing moralities. We may reasonably infer that the progress of tree to *asherah* represents a tradition of substitution which links column to tree. This tree, though ancient, is strong and vigorous, in its prime, no subject for replacement. Its lush canopy emits flashes of gold. That these are the "golden bough", the

mistletoe of Asklepeios, Apollo and Aeneas, growing in its host tree is unlikely. Perhaps it is autumn, time of the favourite Roman migration; the light of the painting has that particular quality found in Campania before the rains. It is not evergreen.

Trees stand for the male principle. A forest mass differs. It is part of cosmic creation, the horizontal principle in the division of the *vesica piscis*. Aeneas had to hunt for the significant tree in his quest for the bough. Solitary they are ambiguous, vertical, yet of the earth, part of the symbolism representing that which arises from divisions in the cosmic circle. That too has its ambiguities.

Octavian's reforms produced a Roman art obsessed by religious virtue, sexuality and fertility.⁴⁰ A major drive within those reforms was stimulation of patrician fertility. The use of obtuse imagery to promote them within visual art is powerful. It is fundamental to Greek Hellenistic art and culture. Octavian made a "thing" of it in a newly moral and Greek way. One result was Ovid's *Ars amatoria* and Roman fascination with the strange concept of the hermaphrodite, surely part of the principle expressed in this self fertile embrace of column and tree. Elsewhere in fresco paintings, particularly those from the *House of Livia*, trees and columns positively swoon over each other. Apart from that, the realisation of man and nature as one in promoting fertility is equally obvious. A column is an artefact, embodiment of everything that is best in humanity expressed through the male character.

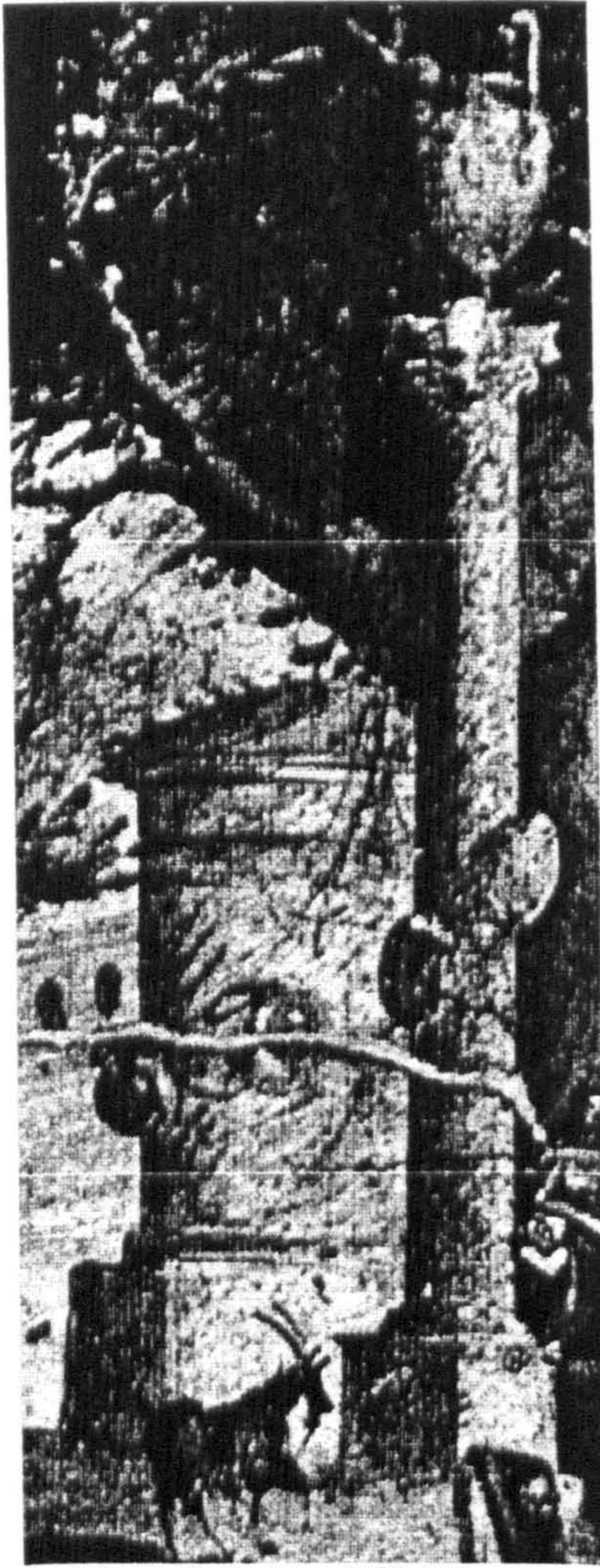
Tholos.

Seemingly innocuous, the gentle tholos is half hidden by the vast tree [30] [31]. It is complex symbolic architecture. For this reason an analysis is undertaken in a separate chapter. The two following illustrations show some characteristics.

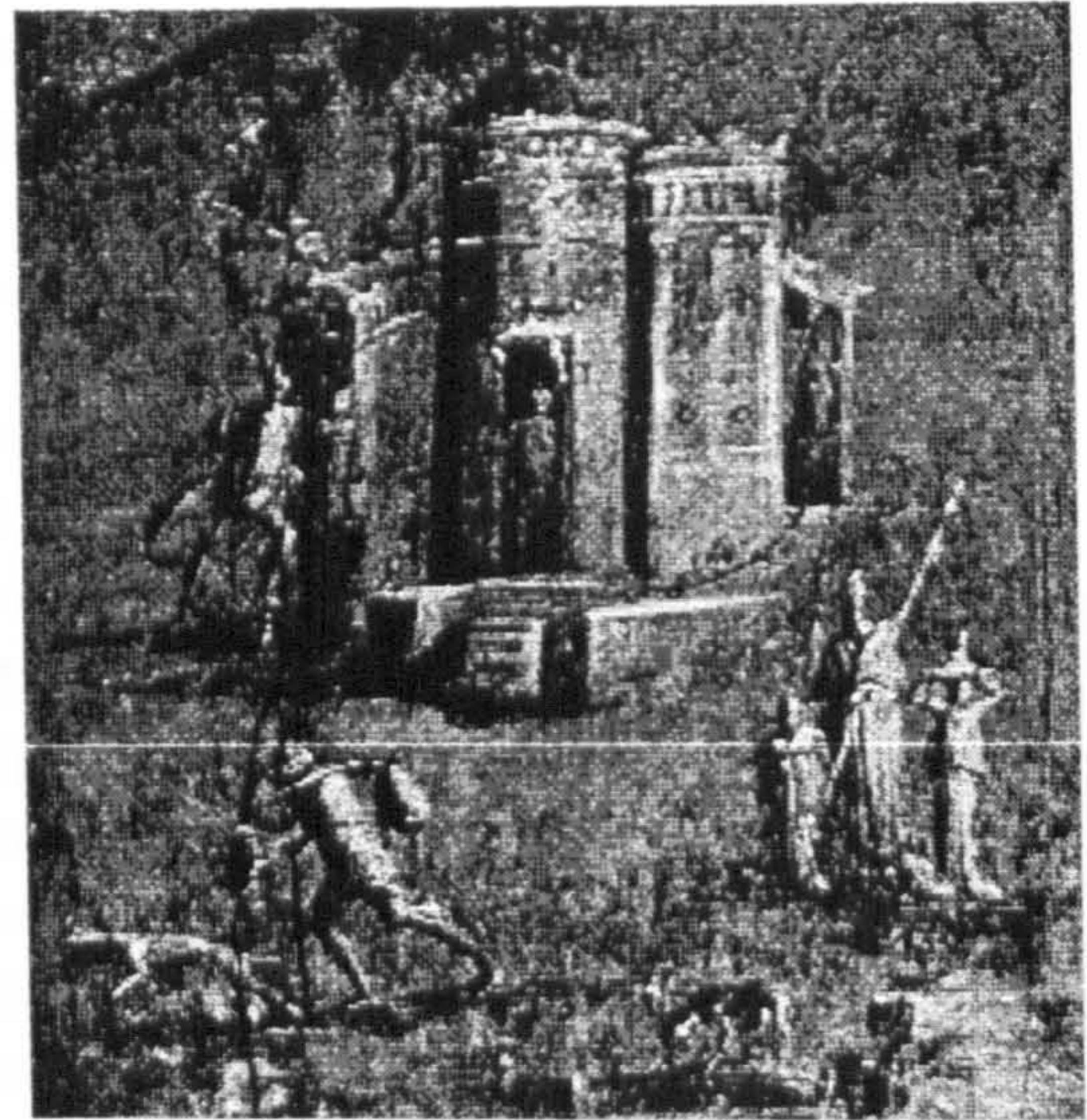
Tholoi and Heracles are linked. Tholos shrines were frequently dedicated to him as archetypal hero. Heracles shared attributes with Dionysos and Apollo in being sexually ambivalent. Calendric Hylas, over whom he was distraught to the point of total imbalance, is a popular topic in Campanian murals. This ethos seems part of the era. Agrippa, not averse to self promotion in his great urban landscapes, made public proclamation on the public display of Greek art. In the *Saepta Iulia*, paved in marble and lined with rows of marble colonnades, the voting place of plebeians (mostly unused!), emphasis was on Greek erotic and homoerotic statuary.⁴¹

⁴⁰. Zanker, 1988.

⁴¹. d'Arms, J.H: *Romans on the Bay of Naples*. Cambridge Ma 1970. pp 62. He gives a useful summary of Agrippa's projects.



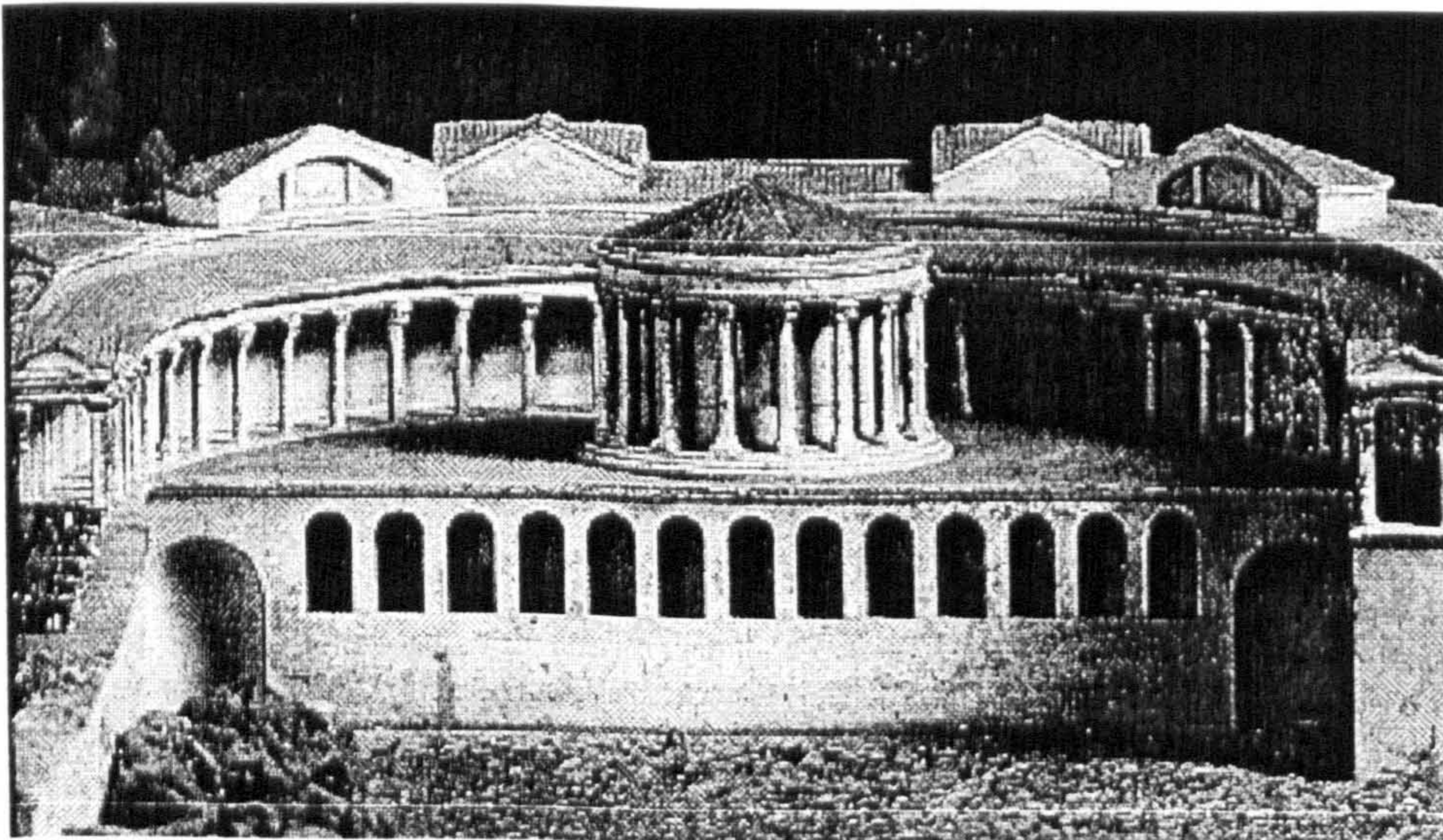
Oracle fresco (Charbonneaux ff 178) detail



Tholos fresco, Naples (Blanckenhagen pl 49)

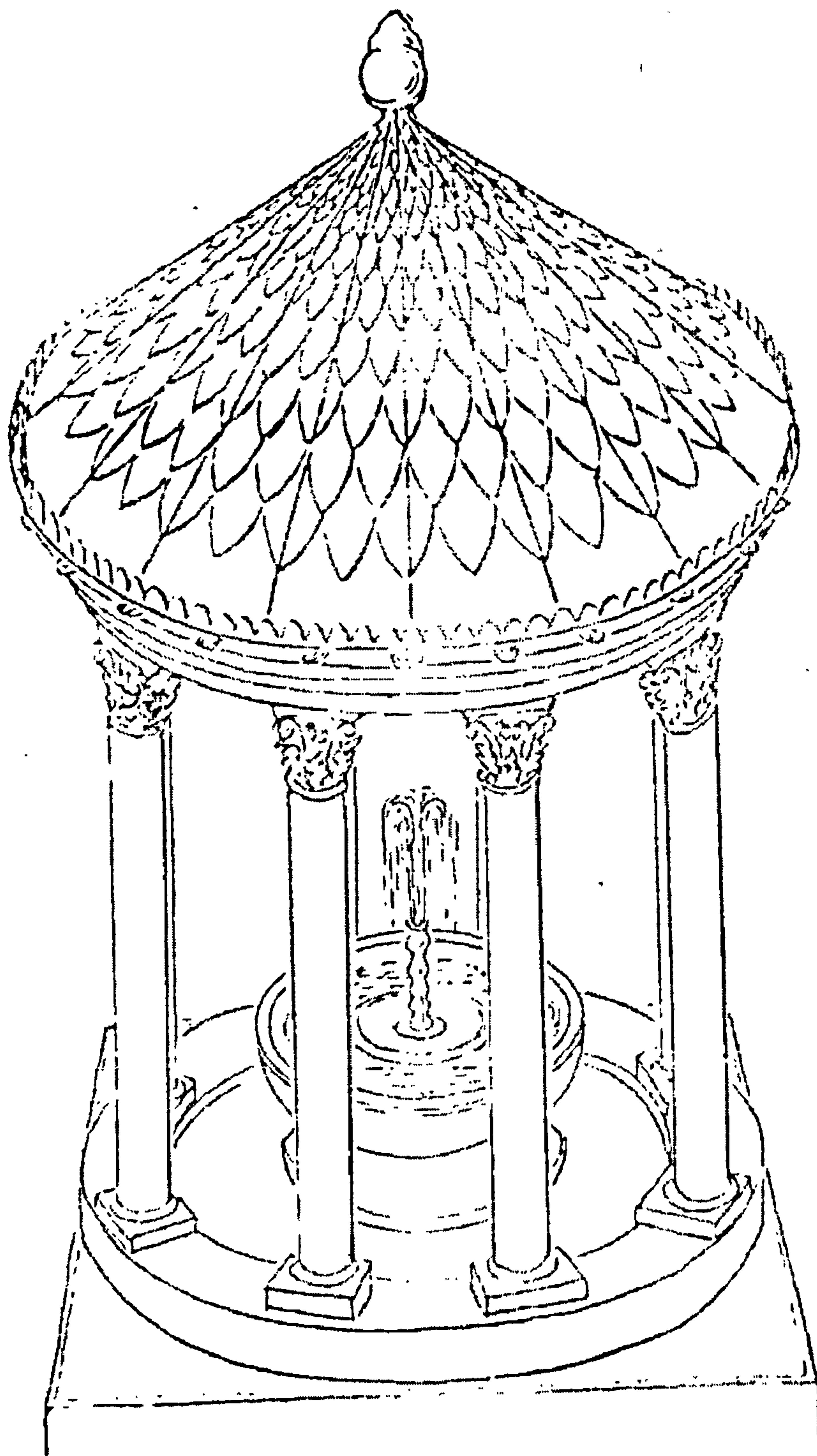
The tholos in "Oracle" (left) has similarities with that in the small fresco above. The one above has architectural accretions reminiscent of the domestic origins of tholoi. Skias retained these in early manifestations.

Hadrian's palace (below) at Tivoli uses a majestic tholos of the Thymele-Delphi-Phillipeion type in an unusual way. Being set within an exedra makes its symbolism tautologous. Both are heroons. Phillipeion contained an exedra on which were placed dynastic and mythic statues. Is this something Hadrian saw? Or is it a figment of his fertile architectural imagination? It indicates developments to which Roman usage put archaic forms. It contained an Aphrodite.



Mielsch ff 78 (detail)

Tholoi: Roman forms



Fountain from a ninfeo at Olympia, 160AD, a Hellenistic conflation of baldachin with tholos. The stone-pine cone finial signifies Aphrodite. Sources do not state whether this was bronze, like the lavacrum Agrippae, or marble, but it has similar form and undoubtedly arises from similar ideologies and myths.

Lavacrum and apotheosis



Scola from Oracle (detail)

The scola is an enclosed thicket grove. This one has a particularly ornate wall which approaches a balustrade. Its material is unclear, even in colour. Behind the crags of the mountain tower.

This is the equivalent of the gardens inset in the parks of Boiardo's various seductresses, though they are evolved and elaborated. Here it is sacred ground within a sacred precinct of the temple of Dionysos. It is an Apollonian attribute, Orphic in character.

Commentators identify this as a temple of Dionysos. It could be Apollo though. It is a simple form in an interesting setting which draws attention to the landscape character of many Hellenistic precincts. It is unclear from the photographs of the fresco whether the tall images are cypresses beyond another temple or smoke from altars. This author plumps for smoking altars in context and milieu.



Temple (Dionysos) & altars Oracle (Detail)

Boscotrecase:Oracle (details)

Rome's secret tutelary deity is believed to have been hermaphrodite. Heracles was as popular as the name of nearby Herculaneum suggests among the patrician elite. Perseus, present in the Homeric paintings (below) appropriates his attributes. Other links are present, but tortuous. What they all have in common is an association with Hera, an ancient and autochthonous Greek earth goddess. Heroes, Herakles, Hephaistos, Asklepeios - all share this. Royalty then, to which most tyrants aspired, derives from the sacred kings of Hera. This makes the depicted shrine a heroon.

Arkadian leanings.

The presence of the Arkadian is a sheer delight in the painting [32] [33]. His space is the original Greek homeland, the only undisputed autochthonous tribe in all Greece. His goats are arranged in the sacred square, Pythagorean geometry for humanity. Undoubtedly a stereotype, the depiction is managed with affection, even down to the weighted tether of the billy. Arkadian space has, and had then, so many connotations that whole books are still written trying to pin them down.⁴²

Be - longing.

The point of this discussion is to demonstrate how densely the paintings are programmed. Roman adoption of Hellenism involved massive reconstruction. Messages are conveyed through such programmed Landscapes. The political manoeuvre is the same as the appropriation of oriental palace architecture for bedrooms, but now there is the assurance of secure possession of the space those palaces stood for. If there were paintings, as there were words, can we assume that there were also villa parklands programmed in this way? Pliny II describes his topiaries, but never mentions hidden meaning.

Within this image of emotive architectural gems lurks another architecture, that of cosmic space, hidden Landscape with many gradations. Similar artefacts were used to develop spatial continuity between cities and towns. Multitudinous columns, sacred trees, shrines of Lares, fountains, and tholoi lined imperial routes through countryside and in towns. The protection afforded them indicates communal purpose beyond decoration. A history of this abstract landscape is organised into elegant episodes in the frescos, articulate with a running architecture of continuity, as unified in its meaning

⁴². The shepherd's crook is prominent. It is the most ancient insignia of kingship, part of the origin of words, "to rule". The status of "ordinary" men as rulers is implied and appropriated, the concentration in the staff being on a proper care of property rather than the existence of property itself (*Frankfort, H: Before philosophy*, London 1949, pp 88).



Drinking goat (detail)

Water is depicted with skill. A goat drinking spread rippled reflections. The water is both mirror and transparent, deriving from under the earth and reflecting the celestial world.



On the bridge (detail)

Bridges are a focus of heightened activity in most literature of Landscapes. This is noticeable in Boiardo's Orlando, where rites of passage occur in sometimes startling forms. Here the bridge starts solidly, but fades before it reaches "there", no invitation to pass beyond, despite the figures.

An Arkadian poses characteristically, a stereotype. His nonchalance marks him as a familiar in this cultic scene. Like most of the other components of the image he brings with him a particular quality of space. All the image is a reflection of the inner mind of the onlooker. It is a mandala which triggers reaction from the mind of the viewer in accordance with their knowledge.



Arkadian on overhang

Boscotrecase:Oracle (details)

as it is diverse in its imagery. The idea of Landscape is fully explored, as it is in Longus' *Pastoralias*. Every artefact takes a rightful place, its position and form clarifying its role. We speak of Gothic cathedrals these days in terms of encyclopaedias; this painting possesses encyclopaedic qualities in abundance, but they are not readily nailed.

Imagery builds up, element by element, layer by layer, each with its own symbolism, fugitive, mutant dreamscapes, places between not space. "Emptiness" is eliminated. *Apeiron* has disappeared. Nothing is stated, nothing explained. Implications and obtuse significances dominate. Yet the images seem fully realised, concealing revealing without touching explication. Their nearest reality is in dreams induced by Dionysiac rite, the cult of the magic mushroom, shamanic practices which, once realised fade from the foreground of thought. Interleaved energies created colour daily perception outside themselves irrupting through surfaces. The result is serious yet joyous. Sonorities blend as only mythic structures can. Conventional tonalities and associated modes are somehow inverted, rendering between modes teasing, intently dreamlike.⁴³

The world Priapus faces underlines spatial ambiguities [33 centre]. At the edge of the world, "here", he stands over limpid water. His back is to the altar, marking change. This image is preserved in Islamic Landscape, refined to pure geometry in the Myrtle Court of the Alhambra. The spout of the fountain bowl pours ever into the still pool, each proportioned and precise in an eternally renewing relationship.⁴⁴ Outlines here lack Arabic precision in delineation, born of minutely perceived minimal environmental differentiations and obvious pleasure in pure geometry. Other aspects of the theme occur in the Polyphemus and Andromeda panels.

Rippled sunlight lenses the water bed by the drinking goat [33 top]. Sea is portrayed using similar conventions. A fragile stone bridge crosses a sound in the Polyphemus painting, but Polyphemus can't

⁴³. Winterreise, for example, takes landscapes such as these, presents their opposite mode, taking us into an almost unbearable world of emotional desolation. Some of that valedictory characteristic inhabits the frescos, but is here softened and warm, a dream world of peace and relaxation in balmy autumn.

⁴⁴. The Islamic world inherited the Hellenistic tradition directly and without the intercession of Byzantine Christianity. Indeed, it was already part of it, arising as it did within the oriental Semitic world. By the time the Romans inherited this rich tradition of landscape awareness and imagery, it had already spread far eastwards, becoming modified into distinct forms. Between Sumerians and Greeks it had already been re-seeded many times, to use the Priapal image, but each time retaining its essentials. Zoroastrianism had introduced the kind of abstract refinement that was to find ultimate expression, in gardens at least, in the compressed and suppressed symbolism of such fountains. It is important to note also that this particular religion, extant still, was prominent in the Roman empire, no less than Nero being a convert. Iranian in origin, it would undoubtedly have shaped the inherited symbolism from the Babylonian empire. There are two attitudes from experts towards the Islamic architecture of Spain: one is that, being remote from the centre its freedom to experiment was greater; the other is that being remote, the need for strict conformity in imagery was paramount. The latter seems the more modern. Either way, the purity of expression in this particular image is not greatly changed.

cross it. Many Campanian villas were built with Landscapes threaded among small islands, on lakes and coast alike.⁴⁵ Configurations of the upper slopes of Vesuvius are not known from the period contemporary with Agrippa's villa. We have to accept the generality, the symbolic presence of water at this point, abstract space with its bridge and expressionistic figures. It is an imaginative figment whose prototype could have occurred on the slopes of a Vesuvius resplendent in pre-eruption verdure, some collapsed vent filled with pure water from fissures. Equally it could be crags on the shores of a sacred lake, like those afforded Astarte in Asia Minor. Either holds significance in the context of paintings and client. Agrippa's Roman improvements included new aqueducts, without which his generous endowment of fountains and parks would have been impracticable.⁴⁶

The bridge is weightier on the near bank. It also has greater substance, fading away before it touches the world over the water. This is not realistic. A more accurate representation would have been easy for a painter of this skill. Interpretation is demanded. We, like the original patron, are being instructed to contribute at this first significant boundary in a painting filled with them.⁴⁷ Figures reinforce the mutability of the medium. Unfortunately we are less well equipped to interpret it than the painting's commissioners and contemporaries. Demands on the viewer creates a strong mirror dynamic. One must look within oneself to see.

Shadowy figures, wanderers, haunt mystic backgrounds. Unlike the Arcadian they are not mythically deified components. Thus the structural fragility of the bridge inhibits physical contact with worlds beyond.

⁴⁵. For example, see *Mielsch, H: Die Roemische Villa*. Muenchen 1987. pp 50 -

⁴⁶. The paradox that pure life-supporting water emerged from the kingdom of the dead was fully realised in myth. That water from beneath the earth was also part of chaos, primordia. In Egyptian system water = chaos; creator emerged from chaos by creating a mountain, a sacred island = temple = primeval hill = pyramid = all people; waters of chaos = oceans surrounding earth = subsoil water = channel surrounding surrogate mountain or surrogate water symbol (double stair) = waters of nether world which the dead and the sun must cross = all life potential = Nilotic Inundation. This extends deep into the triumph aspects of our thesis. Inundation by river and groundwater in an otherwise rainless climate was conceived as a triumph of human survival earned at great cost, therefore more "real". Sumerian god Enki was "lord of the earth" = "earth water", a differentiation out of an earlier deity's attributes generalised as "earth". *"Make dense clouds, grant water in abundance to all ploughlands, To make corn lift its head in furrows and to make pasture abundant in the desert, To make young saplings in plantations and orchards sprout, where planted like a forest, These acts did Anu, king of gods, entrust to thee cause deserted cities to be re-inhabited"* (*Frankfort, H: Before philosophy*. London 1949. pp 20 - 26, Discussion on mythopoetic thought, and 147 - 161).

⁴⁷. The figures are secondary in this study, but their importance at this point is in emphasising this stasis and serene grandeur of the landscape they occupy.

Sacred Island.

Beyond bridge and water, the crowded island is "there". Perhaps it is a small peninsula extending from Elysium. Even that is not determinate. We must interpret within our own experience, just as the original users of this cubiculum. They might have better understood significations hidden from us. Surprisingly, it is not verdant. This is no *elysium* captured by Vergil for Anchises. Nor is it the tormented Landscape of Tantalus. These could hardly be described as "soft river banks", or groves fragrant with lush herbs portrayed, years later, by Longus. They are worn, sparse, goat- or sheep-grazed. Surely, they can't be verdant villa parklands. There are some grasses; a vast tree whose canopy dominates every part of this imagined world, the column has a bare trunk, abhorred by villa gardeners. Willow saplings sprout, undevoured as yet by the Arcadian's goats.

All four components of this "dynamo" are Landscape elements - tree, column, deity and tholos. Immensely powerful, the tree seeks domination of space, almost filling sky, symbol of patronistic umbrellas like the dome in Brunelleschi's Florentine duomo. In its prime, but venerable, the artist has added small keys, like a branch dying back, to signify age. Among its branches are clusters of bronze leaves which we are left to interpret - Golden Bough? autumn? We, like the educated Roman of the period, familiar with the majestic religions of the East, are left to make contact with Ezekiel, Mazda, Buddha, Astarte, or Corinthian and Attic iconographies.

Deity as Intermediary

To the initiate Greek, deities represented aspects of One, Hen, the undifferentiated circle or sphere, the apeiron. Each had characteristic spatial and environmental attributes of quantity, quality, location, orientations, and associations. To invoke them in art was to invoke that space. Attention was drawn to a particular. Chthonian deities were more often than not death deities, affiliated to a range of wilderness or subsurface attributes. A love goddess was urban or suburban, always affiliated to a city, as Venus to Rome and Aphrodite to Troy. This would appear to derive from early Sumerian practices. More specifically, Venus, though sea-born(e) was attached to gardens with geometrically formal pretension, a male province. All these deities are intermediaries between the One and humanity, agencies arising from prising apart heaven and earth.

Due to colonisations, conquests and trade, notably Phoenicians and Greeks, and contact with Egyptians, Hellenism inherited an impossible array of locally specific deities. Re-organisation of these was an endless task, politically worthwhile. Most active in this were the Ptolemaic court at Alexandria and the Argolids at Pergamum, both significant to Rome. Their motive was the prize of ancestral Greekness, affiliation with the aboriginal kudos of Arkadians, who had no such problem. Athens had long been involved in similar activity. This hideously complicates matters, but makes a rich ground for allegory.

Dynastic heroes founded cities. Greek colonies in Italy rivalled Alexandria. So we find that Cybele, a fairly "modern" Greek deity with Egyptian connections, became accepted by Rome in an "official" capacity, the first of many such imports. She was part of the new chthonian emphasis. Full advantage was taken by Rome to reorganise the mess into a hierarchy headed by Olympians with Latin names. Cybele remained as Great Mother of the Gods, conflated with Demeter, Astarte, Artemis, Aphrodite, Isis So we find in this painting a goddess with chthonian attributes which might apply to a permutation among these. The tree gives some clue. Being a willow, it is the tree of Cybele as goddess of the earth cycle of death and fertility, in her Isis-Artemis guise. Much later we meet her again.

Appropriation of a tree for cultic purposes is a direct appropriation of natural or absolute space, converting it instantly into abstract ideological space. The column appropriates space which already had such connotations. It introduces a force linked through many such columns to a territorial system.

The column in Oracle is not a Jupiter column which carried a gigantomachy, (like the Mantuan frescos), the message of Imperial cosmogonies to the Celts. Their shafts were ornamented with bark designs, an overt statement of implied symbolism in columns for the benefit of outsiders.⁴⁸ But they do indicate a function of wayside columns as a signalling system within networks of paths and roads. They were part of that linkage of space, making architecture out of landscape, at which Romans became so adept. A bronze urn assumes funerary ashes; the fresco could depict a shrine to Agrippa. The column properly belongs to the iconography of the period of Octavian's reforms and their wake.⁴⁹

⁴⁸. *Bauchhens, G: Jupitergigantsaulen*. Stuttgart 1976. pp 16.

⁴⁹. There is quite distinct conflict between various commentators on this point. *A.W. Lawrence, In Greek Architecture*, London 1937, states quite categorically that it is a Greek innovation. However, in a footnote, Lawrence suggests that there may have been some knowledge of a precedent in the form of a royal tomb.

Temple Precinct & scola grove.

Beyond the great shrine is smaller Landscape [32 top]. A scola (enclosed temple thicket) is filled with dark Apollonian myrtle. Its sculpted wall resembles a balustrade. A small elegant temple to Dionysos or Apollo is fronted by an altar from whose platform smoke rises vertically in still air.⁵⁰ Still air is stasis, cataleptic calm. Sacrificial offerings are human processes seeking responding external processes. Is the figure a shade awaiting his share of the feast? Behind them a tumultuous summit heaves with rocks and wild trees and perhaps a cascade. Is this a pre-eruption Vesuvian landscape, the sacred mountain dedicated to Dionysos, its lower slopes abundant with the gifts of Cybele?

Schola Grove.

Many temples and hero's shrines in antiquity had groves. Some fronted the temple, unwalled and accessible. Others were hidden *segeti*, accessible only to a specific caste. The Athenian Hephaisteion had groves on three sides meticulously planted and maintained to match the rhythm and scale of the temple. Alcmaeon's modest tomb was surrounded by a cypress grove, whose "maidens" were so high they dwarfed the mountain. Pausanias' tourist guides to Greece offers many descriptions and comments about groves, at least fifty of them in detail, revealing variety within common attributes, obviously a feature of some importance. Some were, like the one portrayed in this painting, thickets of young trees and bushes and maintained that way, like villa gardens. Temples to Zeus had this type of schola. Others contained the tallest and straightest trees, reserved for sacred monuments, in Boeotia notably the Daedalum.⁵¹ Xenophon describes planting a grove dedicated to Artemis and the hunt, one of the most prominent dedicatees of groves together with Apollo. Demeter has many, as an ancient cult from whose triad the Maid is derived. Many contained no buildings.

Kossoff and Benevolo support the oriental origin idea. But Lawrence reinforces his verdict with: "None of the neighbouring countries built anything resembling such tombs". (p 57) The consensus would seem to be that it was a Greek innovation in the northern Mediterranean with oriental precedents, since they are also known to have been part of the Minoan complex slightly earlier. However, there is a very early one from northern Sumer, noted in *The Dawn of Civilisation*.

⁵⁰. The author does not share Schefold and von Blanckenhagen's interpretation of this as a smaller or more distant temple. After much scrutiny of a good reproduction (the original has not been visited), and earlier interpretation of the tapered columnar objects as cypresses has been questioned. There appears to be a flame at the base of one. However, the interpretation is still not secure.

⁵¹. *Pausanias: Guide to Greece*. Boeotia II.4

This one seems Orphic, Dionysiac or Apollonian, a dense thicket representing the kind of environment in which forbidden rites could once have been held in private. Its wall is surprising in its richness. It has pretty mouldings and a pierced effect as near to balustrading as one could get without balusters.

The background landscape in all three of the Oracle paintings is mountainous. Its detail, most prominent in Oracle, fades into eternal brightness. Compared with the elemental portrayals in the Homeric scenes (see below) this is tamed and picturesque - ironic in view of the revenge Vesuvius took on these golden age seekers. The images mark the extent to which the boundaries of wilderness, against which ancestral heroes ventured and won to establish their colonies. It appears to be a summit.

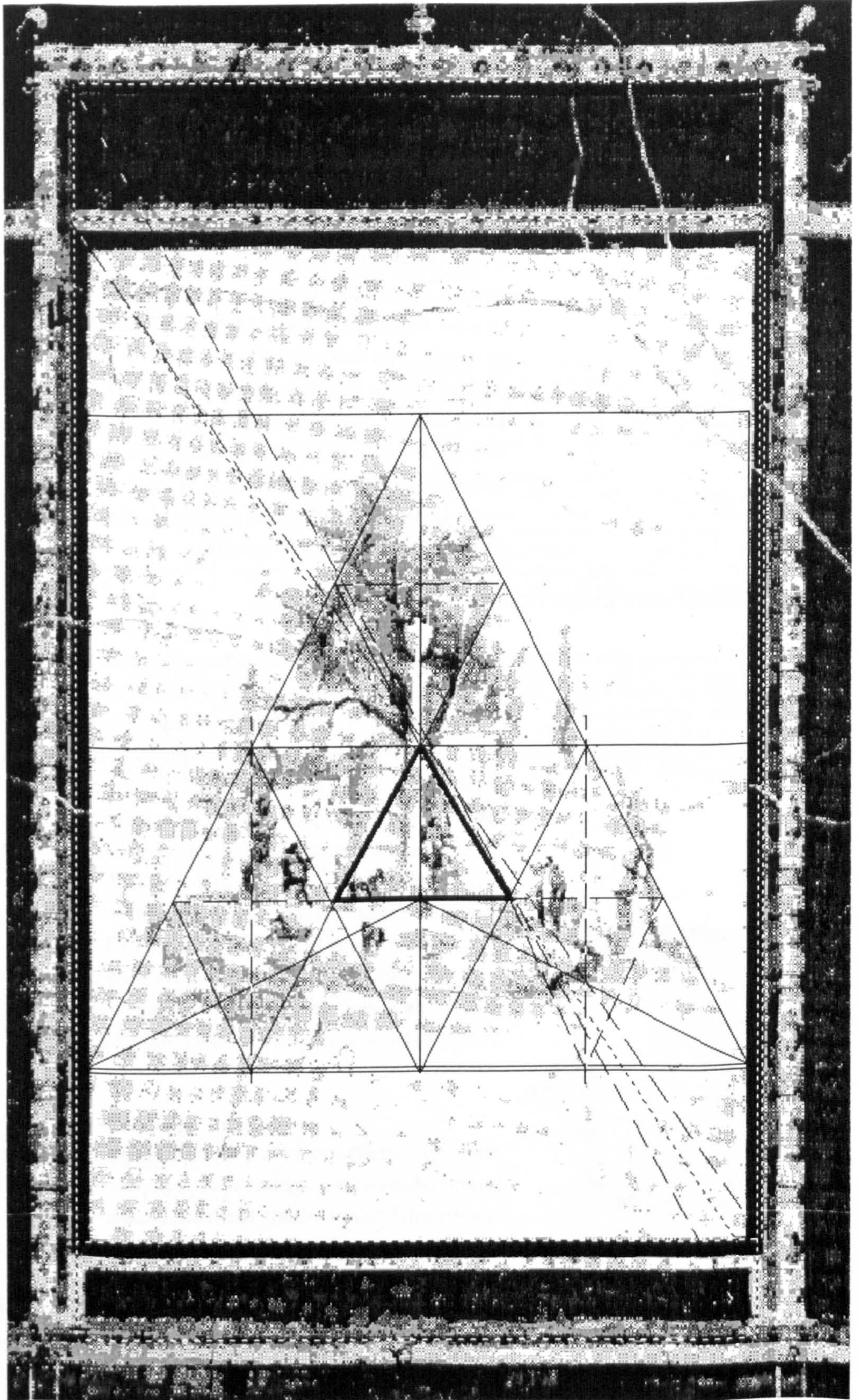
Outer space.

A major image component of this fresco is whiteness. It invades, permeates and supports every aspect of the space, an image of the ineffable and indeterminate. Set beside the night surround of the vignettes we have the polarisation which is creation, whose geometric expression is the partition of *vesica*. In the Nocturnes there is a sense of permeating negative space, neither threatening nor melancholic, but enveloping, cloaking and enfolding night, calm and serene, impenetrable but alive around the simple rituals. Here in the Oracle room, white light floods from behind the crimson wall, radiant with creative intellect.

Consummation of the sequence is vested in the Oracle trilogy. It would be hard to devise paintings to follow. Imitations fail to capture the emotional mood. So great is the skill that the images neither emerge from nor merge into the whiteness so strikingly suggestive of brilliantly illumined space. Image and ground remain in a state of indeterminate flux relative one to the other. The image is bathed in a supernatural brilliance which itself seems both cause and effect. Ambivalence is fostered by dualities in spatial disposition as well as by colouration and mystic content. This quality projects a meditational aura. One feels that however objective and universal the medium, the painter has succeeded in communicating deeply held personal experience, particularly in the central painting, the Oracle.

The Cosmos Within - The Concealed World Image

Seductive though the dreamlike images of these Landscapes is, it conceals underlying meaning and order [34] [35] [36]. Like Vergil's



Oracle uses the most significant vesica geometry in every part; frame is a root 5, white plane root 3; picture based on root 3 triangles framed within square (root 2)

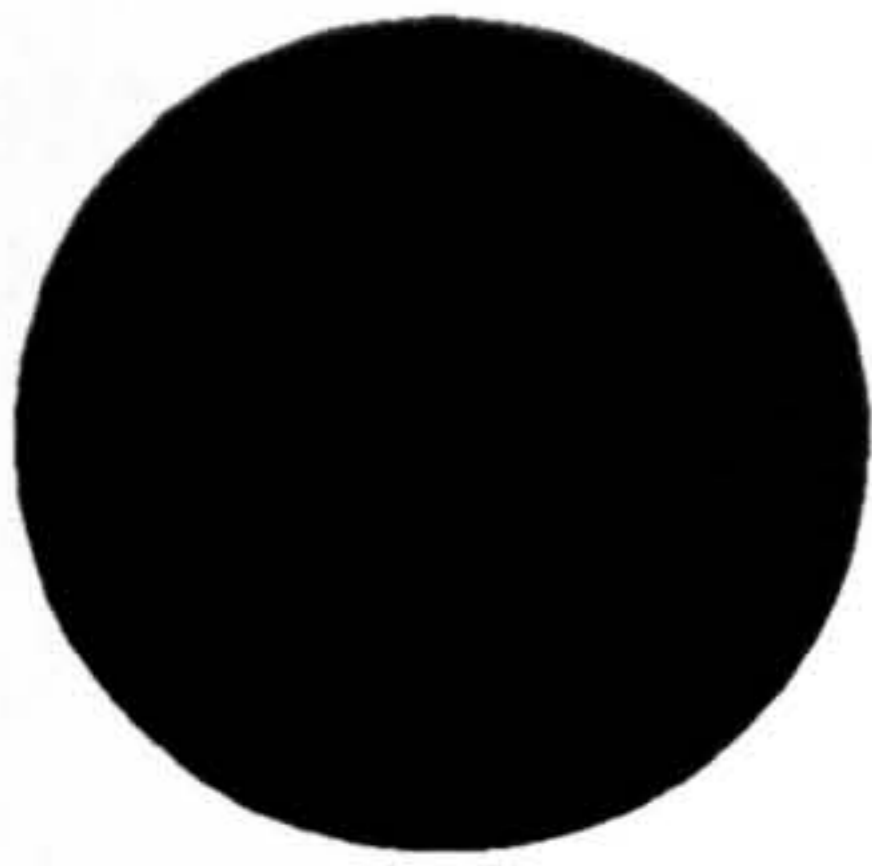
late works they consummate a Hellenistic view of the world at its most sophisticated. Their superficial beauty is an external vision of internal powers. They incorporate the structural geometry of cosmos, resonances which tap the mechanisms and processes of giving life. Images contain references to cultural beliefs of the time. Arkadians, columns and trees, watersides, distant temples and wild crags - all are stereotypes. They contain codified references to unseen space, like those compressed in the tholos. What was beyond depiction to the Hellenistic painter is signified by this presence. The consummation is far greater than the sum of the elements. The structure of this painting re-creates allegories of process like Vergil's *Aeneid* without quotes from that epic. Though literary in a sense in that it contains dramatic incident and has some narrative, its allegory is not that of words but of the nature of cryptograms expanded into paintings. Similar ideas might apply to the landscapes of sacred precincts.

Geometry in the Panels.

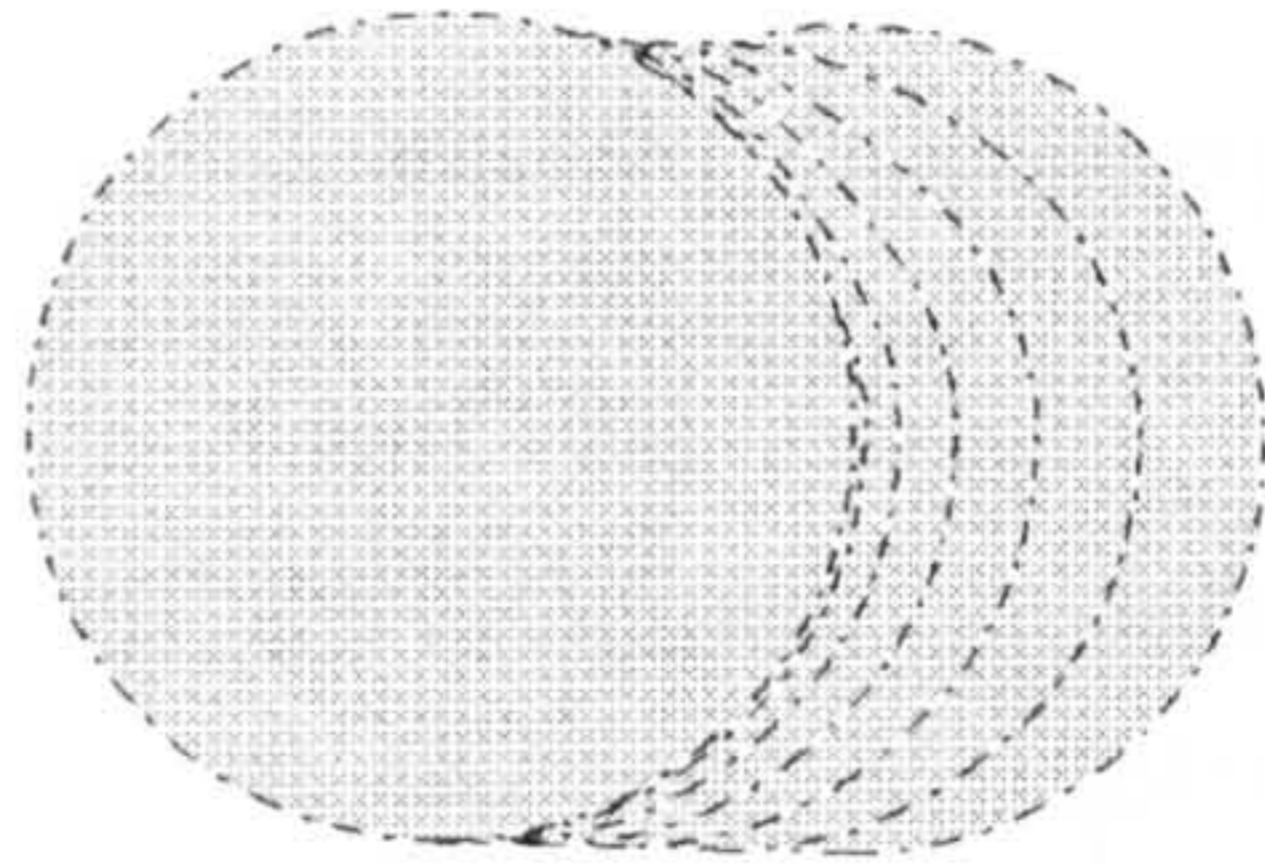
Surprising in Oracle is the extent of underlying sacred geometry. Its harmonic progressions are the structure and main source of dynamic urge. The visible shell cloaks messages reserved for cognoscenti. Taken to basics, the purpose of dynamic urge is connection with the life force and the eternal cycle of death and renewal. So in this painting the serenity of the obvious leads to the dynamics of cosmic space and process. Each component is connected with others through it. A substructure emerges which belies the casual, relaxed appearance of the surface. Through it the polychrome image fields connect with their bright backgrounds and with the painted panel frames, so detested by Vitruvius but loved by everybody else, giving special meaning to these elements. The frames mark space, create mirrors and draw up Greek contexts.

Spatial mysteries.

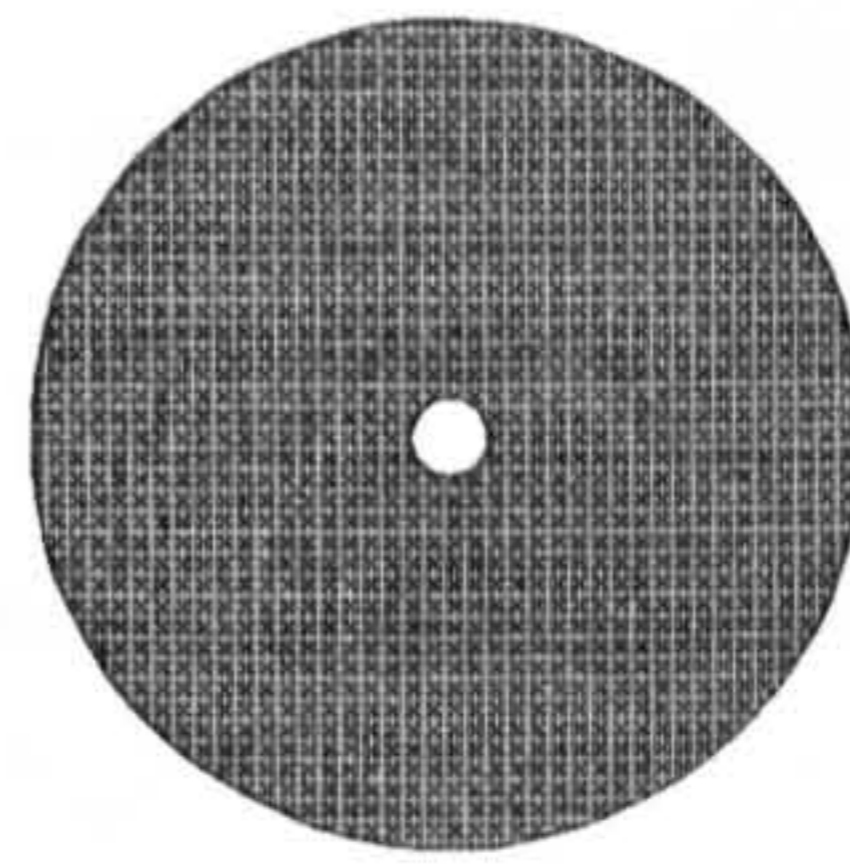
Harmonic structures hold each pictorial element within relationships which are not always apparent, though hinted at in the constrained composition. Intricate, sustained, and erudite use of ancient systems of sacred proportion, once realised, reveal time-space inventions that penetrate the realms of the infinite, indefinable and ineffable with the same flair that the white area invites their exploration. The geometry reveals what cannot be depicted, densest in Oracle. The Polyphemus myth is finite and ultimately destructive. Its end is known, its internal ironies and narrative dynamics as familiar to an educated Roman of the 1st AD or BC, as to Greeks before. The painting structure reflects this. Its internal movements are strong but terminate within the image boundary.



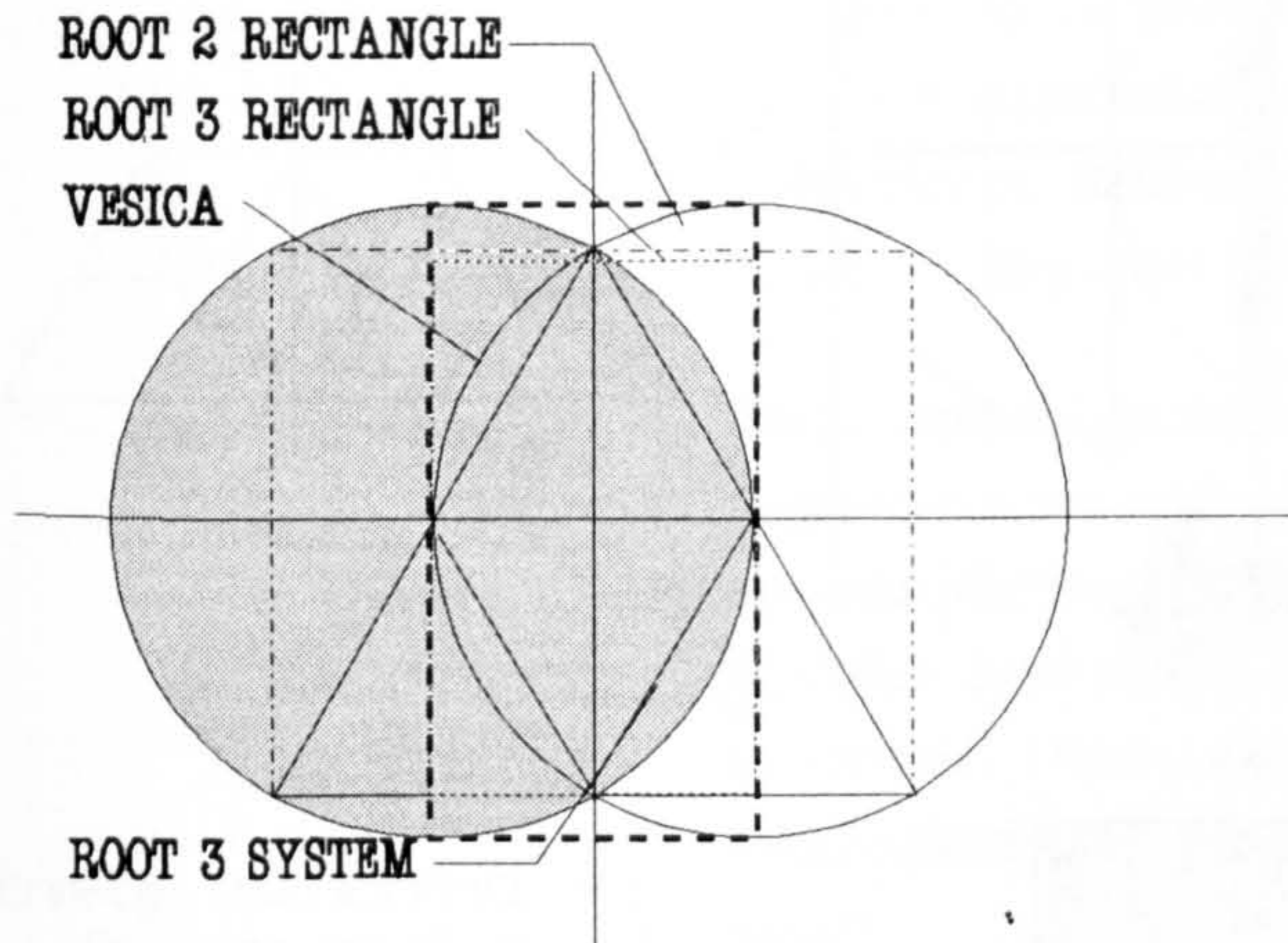
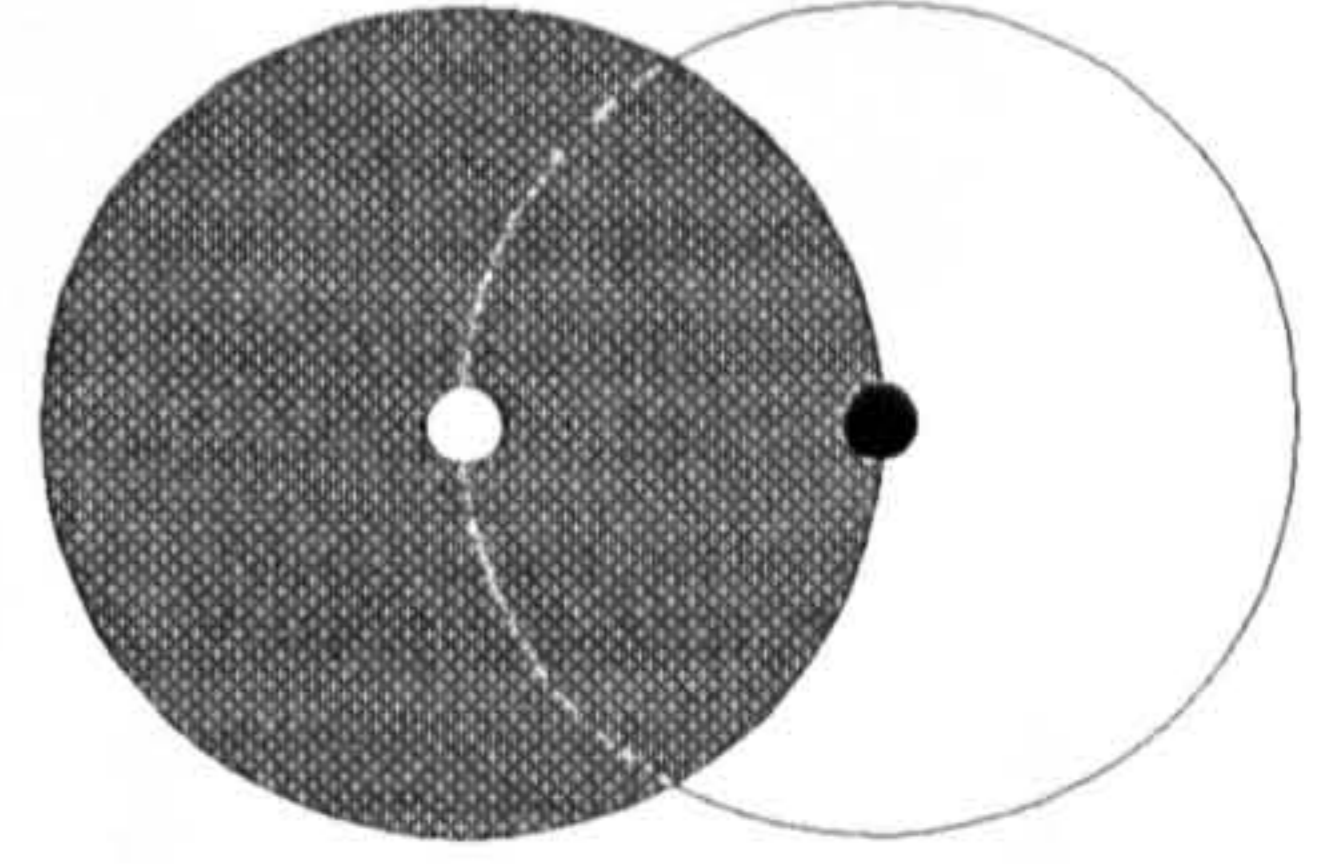
Circle is unity, the One, Hen; the original chaos, the apeiron, trackless, intractable, without human meaning



Light separates the one that is hidden from the One, a mystery that proliferates geometric Pythagorean meaning.



Kosmos defines the centre; it is the human position. Its location determines degree & all subsequent harmonics & proportions.



See Genesis in Geometry (over) for continuation

Resultant geometric forms express all enharmonic relationships. This is named Sacred Geometry, form with special meaning. All "harmonic" resonances can be expressed through this concept.

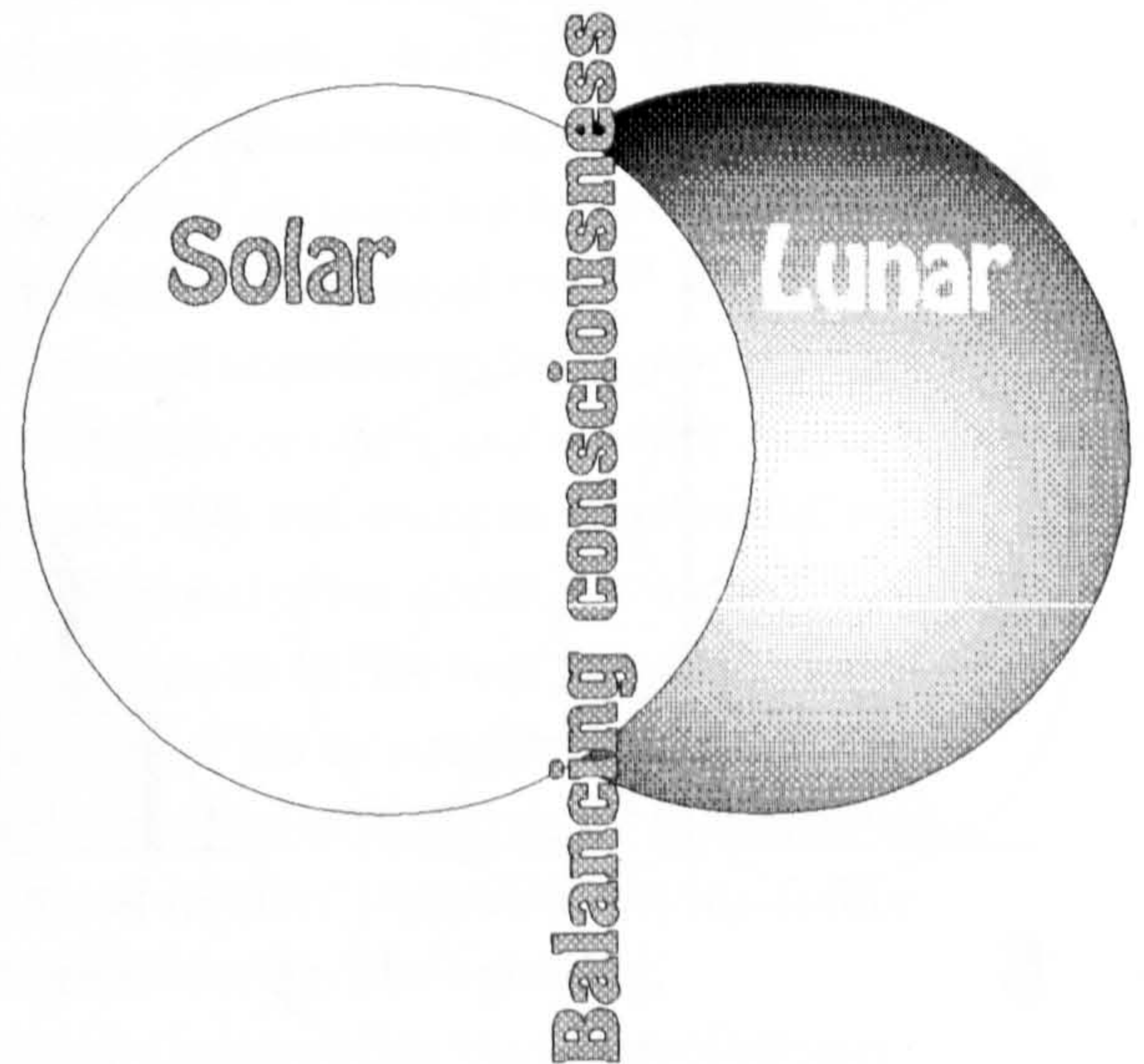
It is a process, dynamic; within it certain positions provide stasis, symbolising perfect poise, periods. It should therefore be seen as unfolding continuously thus eminently expressing "procession" whose uncoiled movement derives from the coiled movement of dance; this relates it to labyrinth.

Potential in this was fully realised in most Greek art forms; two dimensional imagery in particular benefitted from its inference of concealing-revealing; dynamics within images could be expressed to the knowledgeable through use of geometric symbols encapsulated within surface iconography.

Cosmic movement is horizontal; Balance is counteractive vertical forces, human energy and life force (symbolised by trees, columns, fountains, and so on) - separating heaven and earth. It ensues only on parting the spheres.

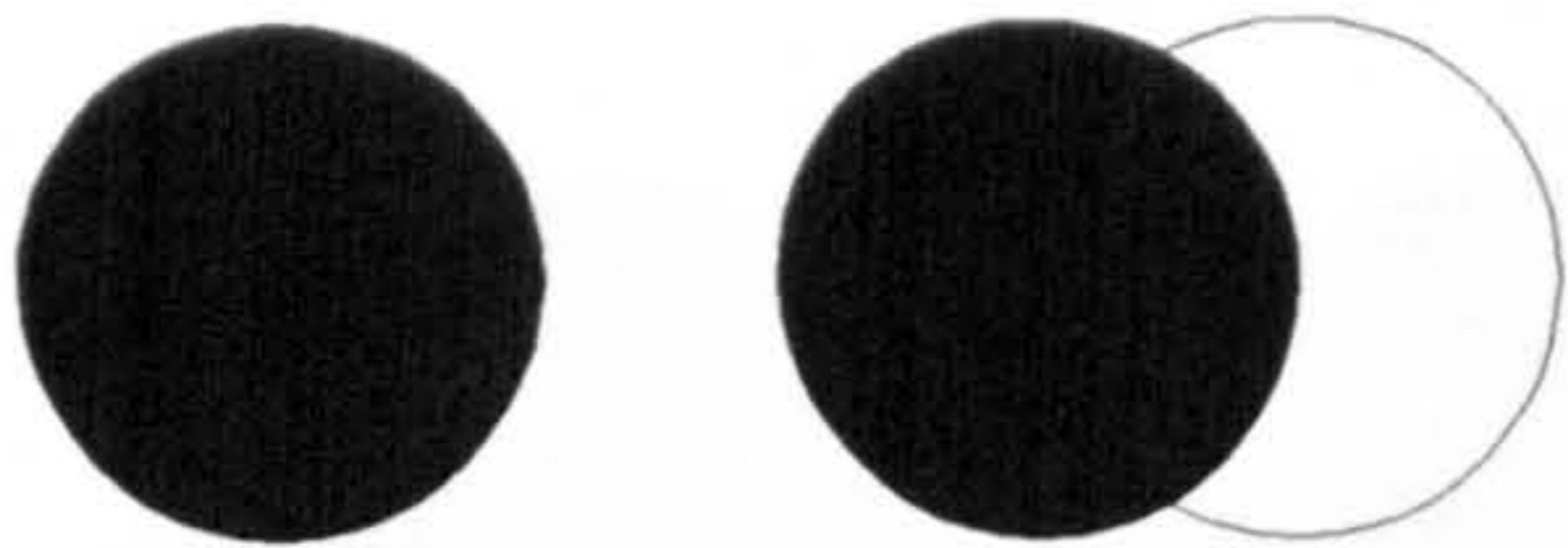
- Solar - stasis, substantive reality, unity;
- Lunar - mutability, actuality, pluralism;
- Balance - human consciousness, intelligent awareness, proportionality

Logical categorisation of states inherent in this became occluded firstly by chthonian revival of Mysteries, and then adaptation to Christian mysticism.



The Christian symbol for Christ is the fish, an icon developed from the piscis of Pythagorean cults. Its presence gained credence for the process later.

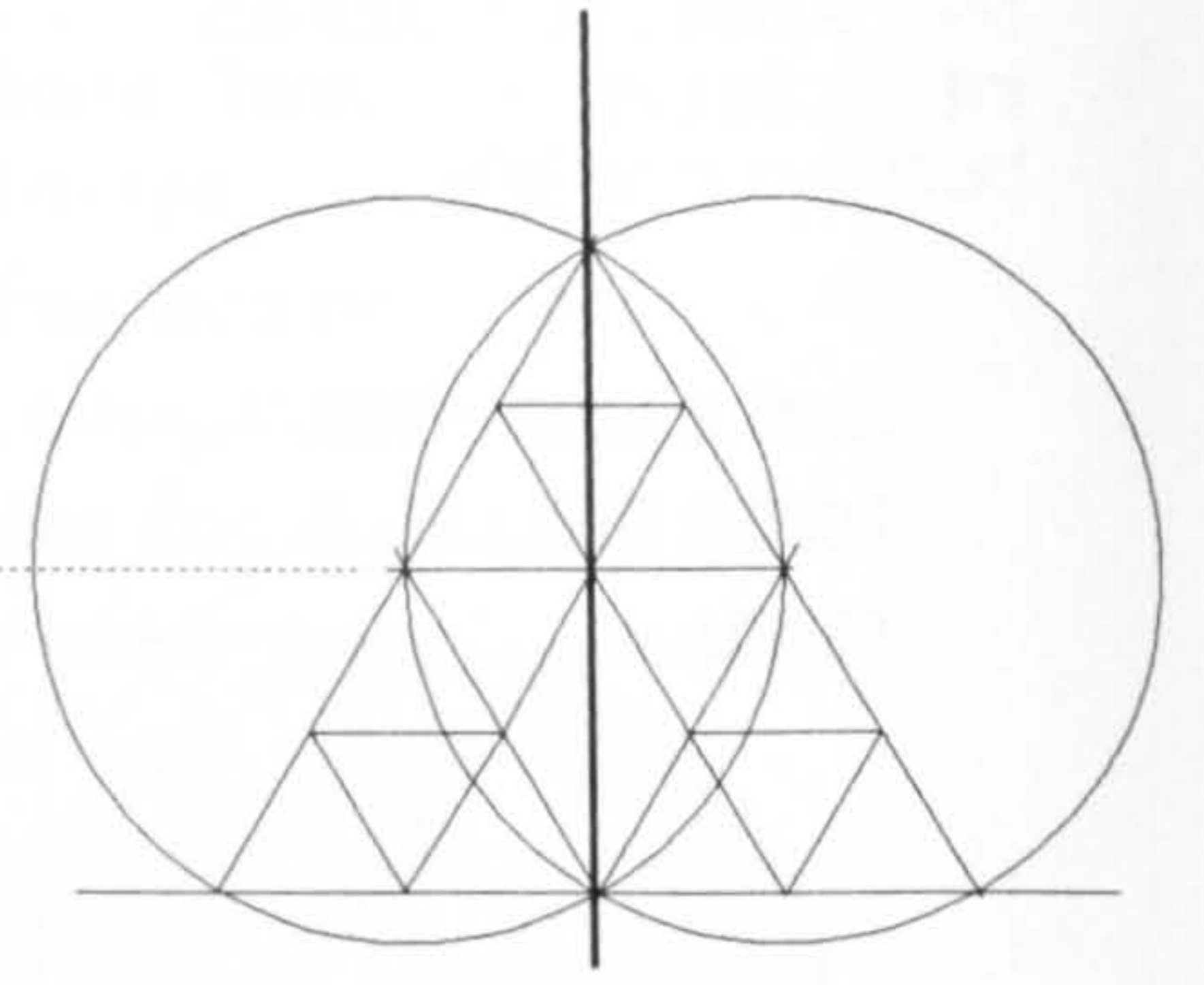
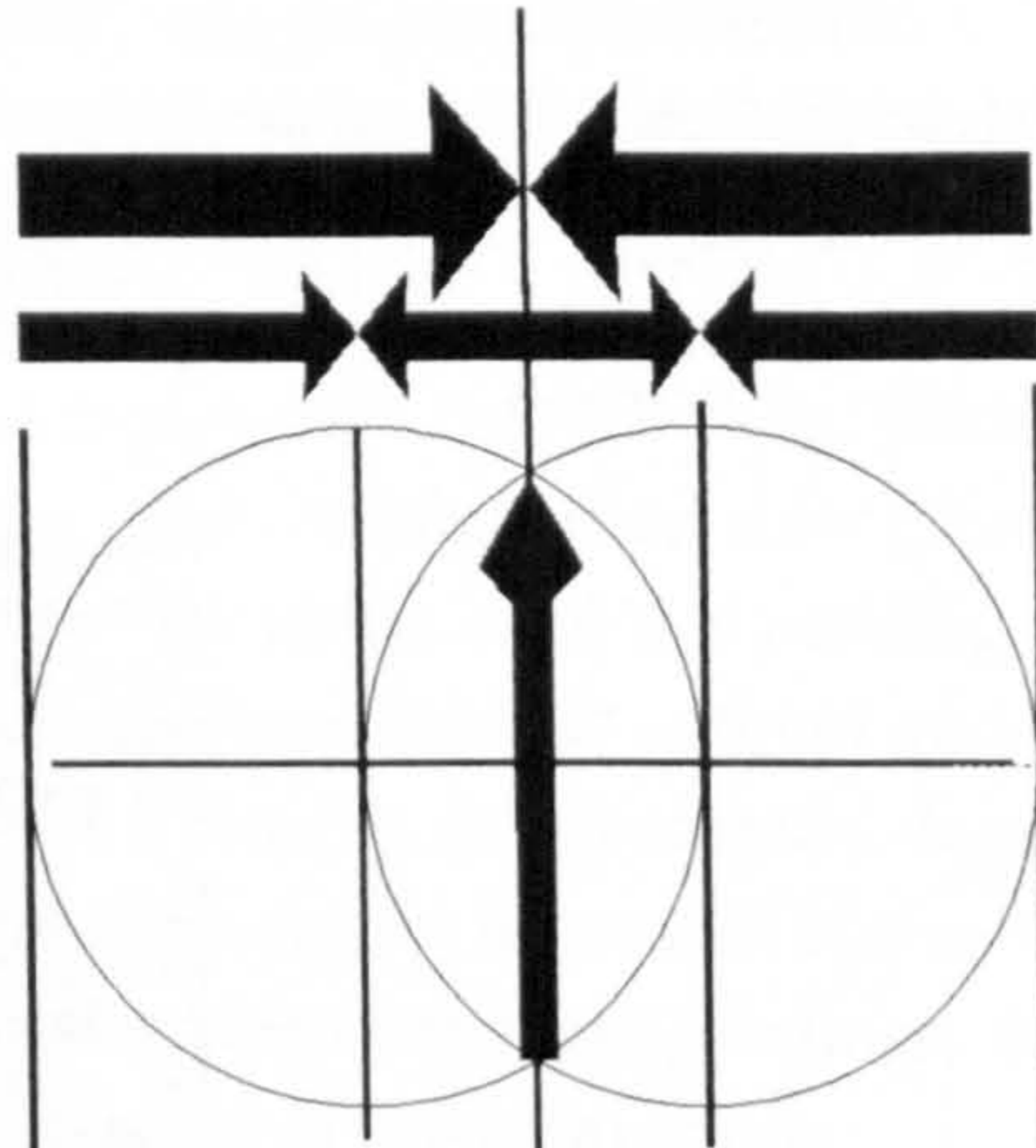
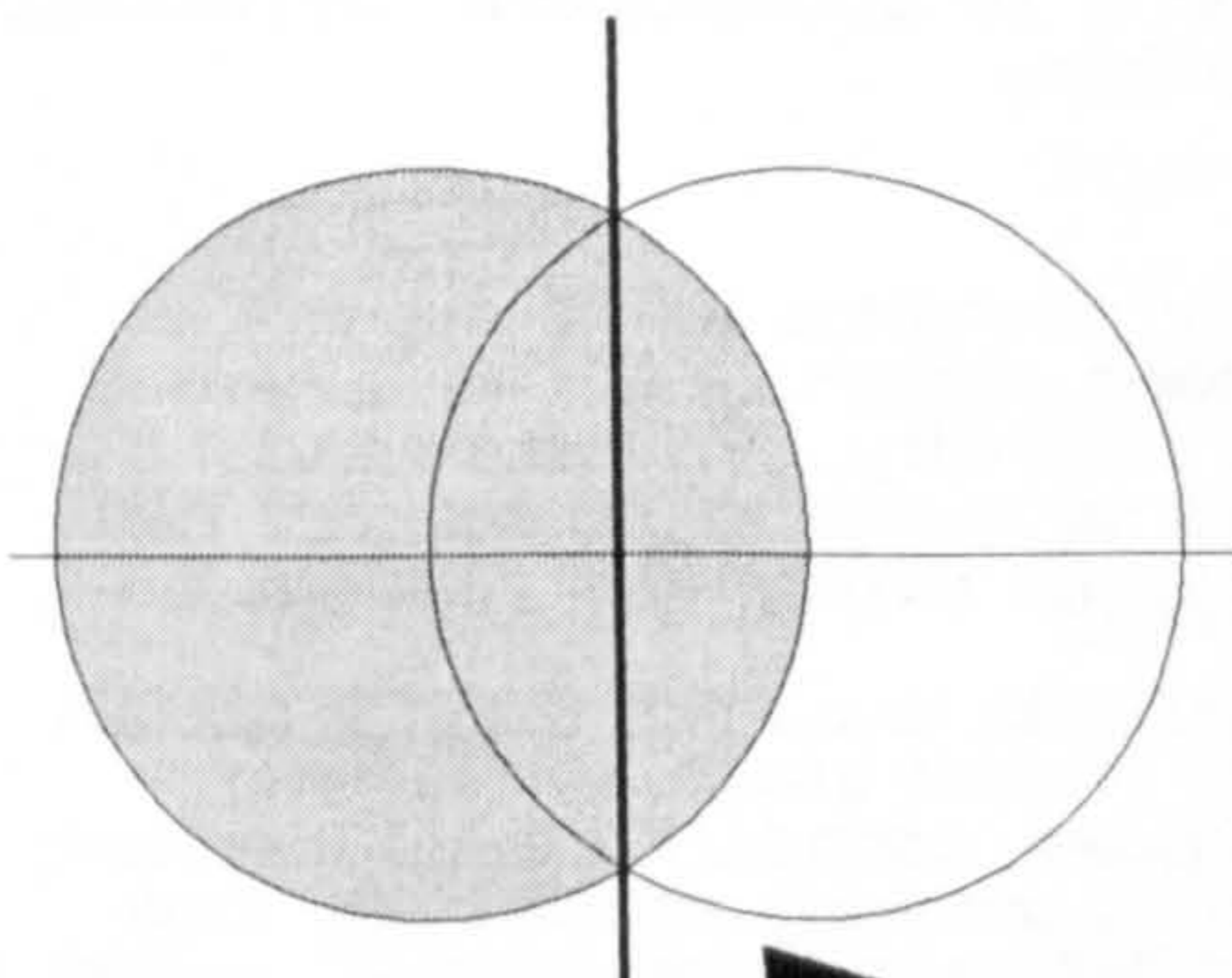
Vesica - a Process



1

2

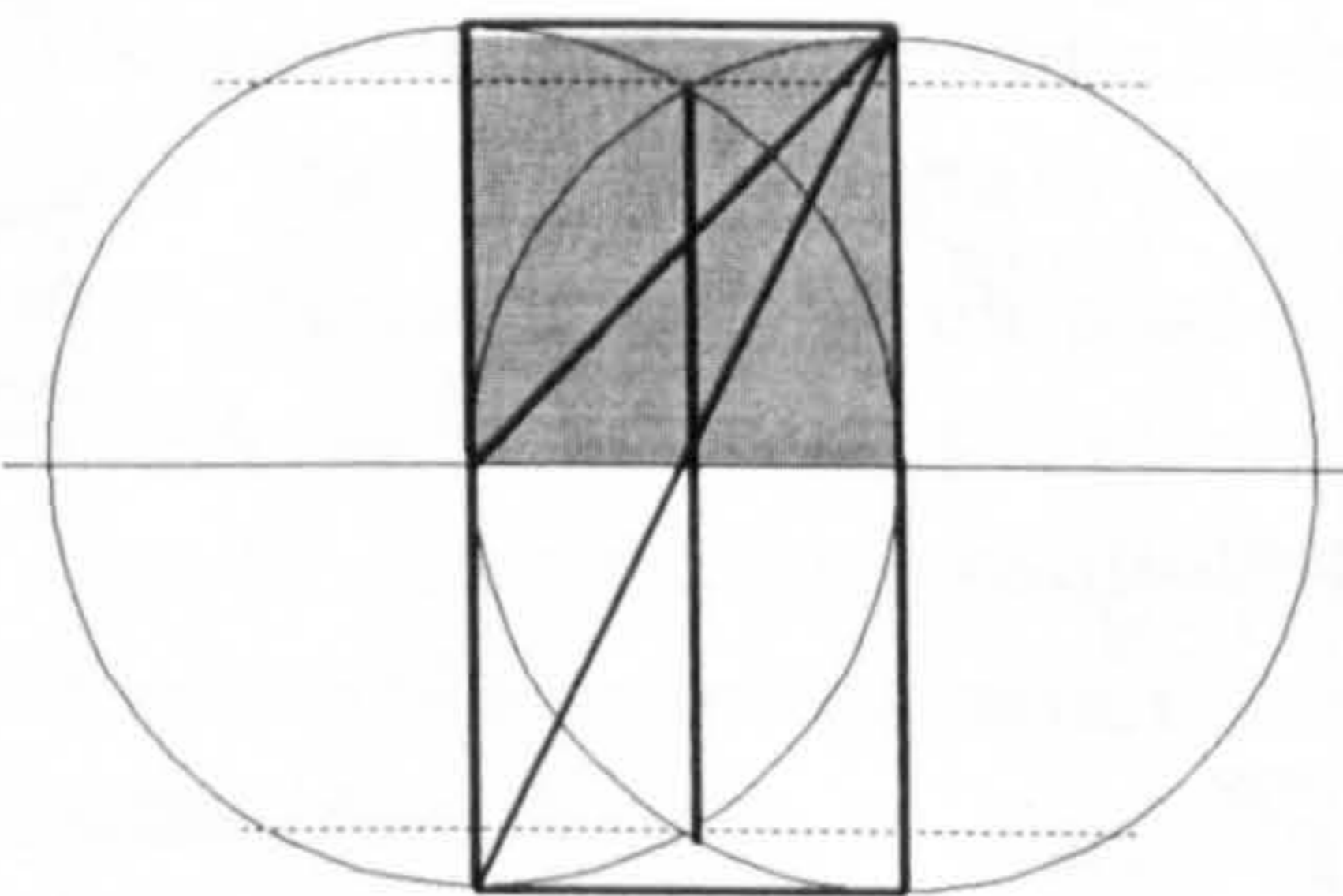
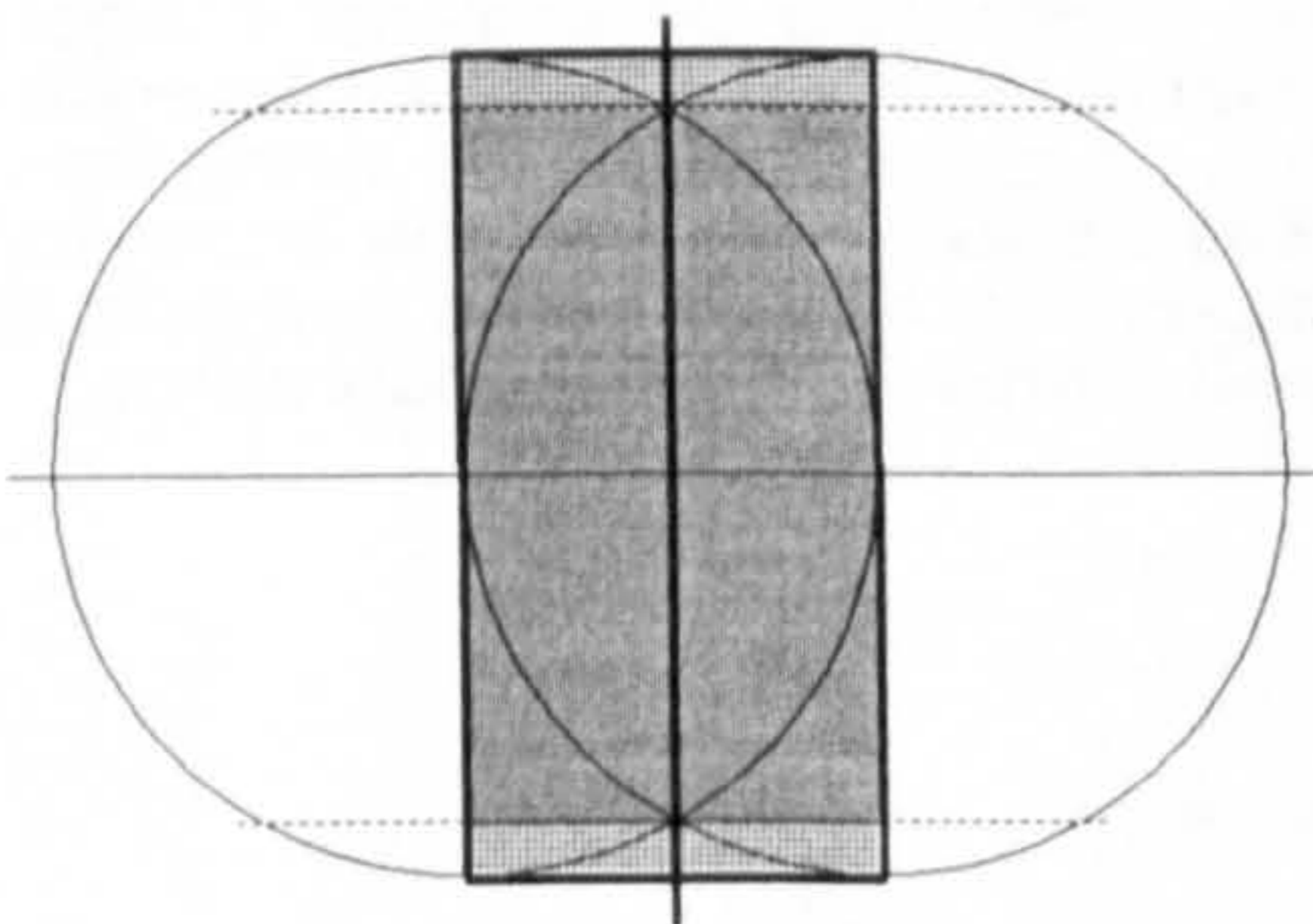
Apeiron and cosmos; Aristotelian and Pythagorean definitions of prima causa in Pythagorean symbols.



3

4

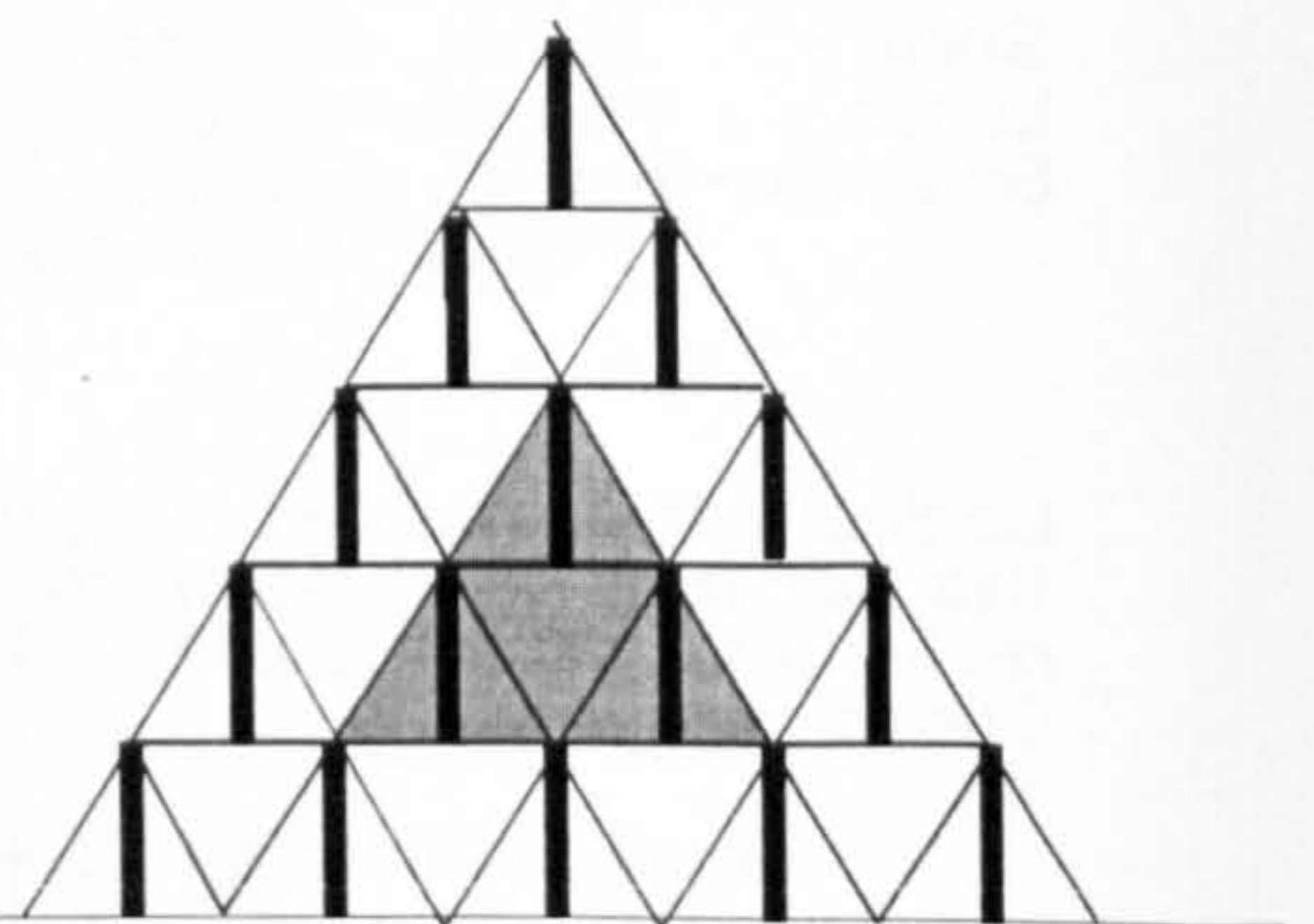
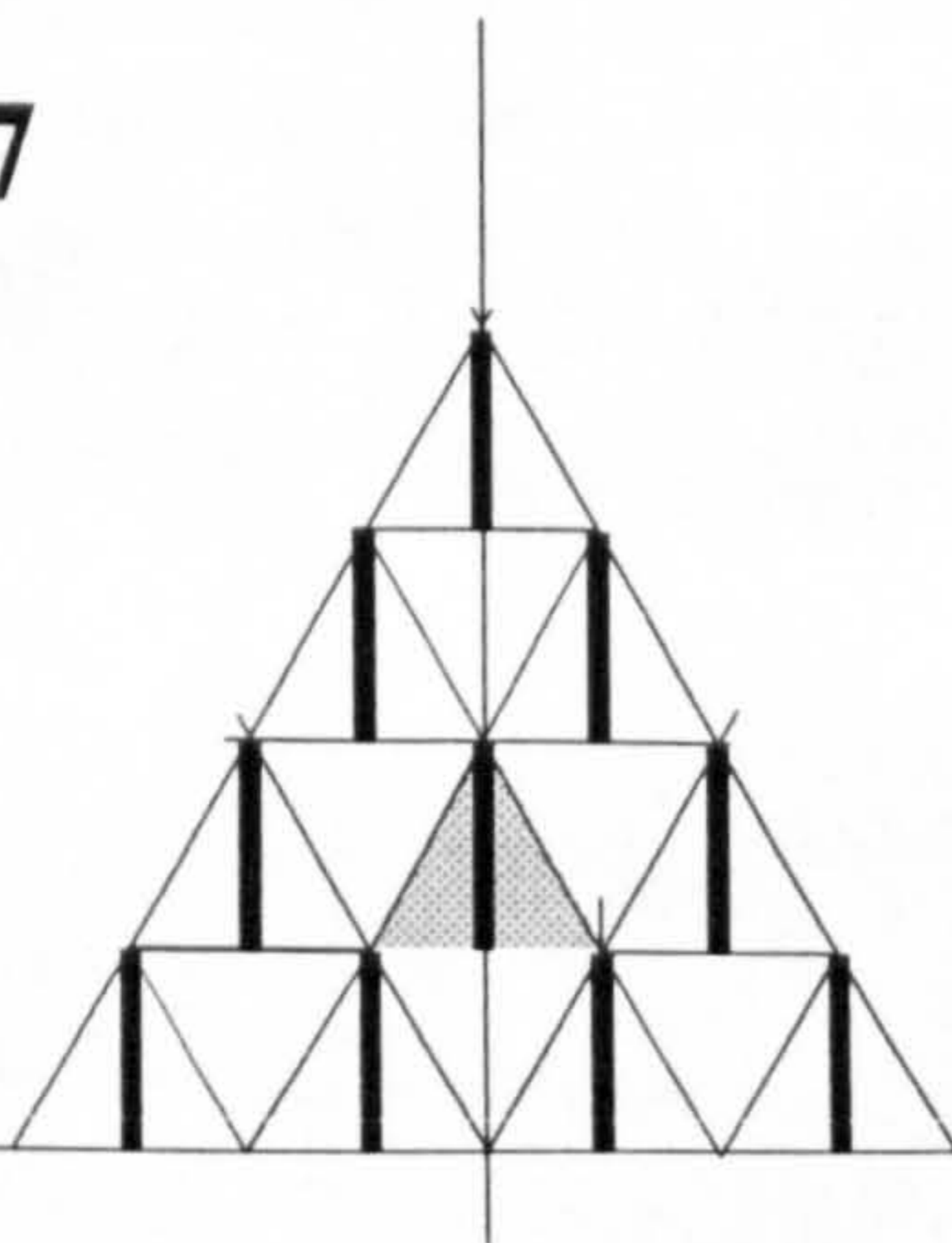
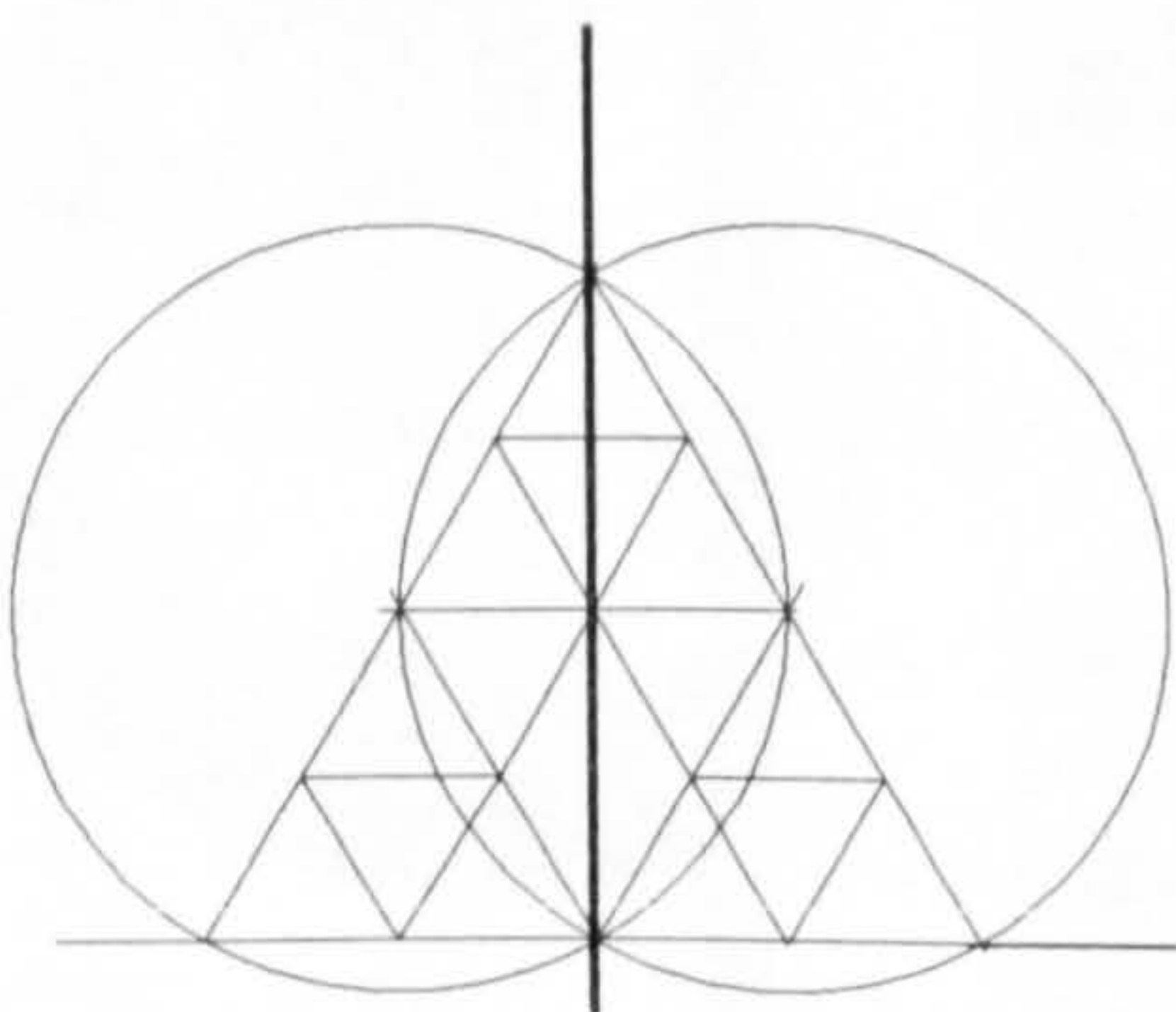
5



- 1 - primordia; apeiron
- 2 - division reveals
- 3 - cognition = differentiation
- 4 - cosmic horizontal gives human vertical
- 5 - the concealed cosmos is revealed within apeiron

6

7



8

9

10

6 - rectangle of the mean
7 - rectangle of the double square (root 2)

8 - Pythagorean triangles project from parallelogram
9 - Greek system with central unity

10 - Egyptian system with central triad

Genesis in Geometry

Landscape edges do not project beyond the frame. They meet its boundary resolved.

Oracle is infinite. Geometric balance resides in cyclical resolution of every segment. It is full of energies. Internal structures flow out across an intervening abyss of light extending into the painted ceremonial framework. They are not stopped by the frame, but seem to emerge from behind it. Frames do not contain the images as those of the mythological ones do. They relate internal geometry to the room's space, transforming the cube. The master painter of this series of frescos used allegory in a similar way to Vergil in *Aeneid*, a new technique achieving simultaneous multiple meanings or polyvalency. Michael Murrin suggests that the technique is to juxtapose apparent contradictions.⁵²

The concealed geometry takes the contained movements and sets them into a space so expansive that this small cubiculum must have seemed like the universe. Use of sacred geometry implies and signifies three dimensional realities on a flat plane, for that is how it is derived. Here it extends into the fourth dimension of space-time and beyond, revealing realities in a cosmos released from mythic space.

Pliny comments on contemporary use of geometry in painting. He accredits it to a Macedonian, Eupompos of Sikyon, "*for a long time the homeland of the art of painting*". Eupompos was a contemporary of Zeuxis. One of his paintings was *Odysseus on his Raft*. "He was", says Pliny of the painter, "*a Macedonian by birth ... and he was the first painter who was erudite in all branches of knowledge, especially arithmetic and geometry, without which, he held, an art could not be perfected thus painting was received into the front rank of the liberal arts.*"⁵³ He also refers to another established concept in painting, "*mensurae*", or "*.... how much distance should be left between one thing and another*", related to internal proportional systems. This was apropos Apelles of Cos, painter and personal friend of Alexander the Great. Octavian dedicated famous works by this painter in "*the most frequently visited parts of the forum*", no doubt as part of his own myth building in the mould of Alexander! It coincides nicely with Agrippa's biographical portrayals in like manner. One of Apelles' attributes was his ability to render mythic manifestations of nature, like lightning, thunderbolts, and even thunder. One sees this kind of evolution in the handling of atmospheric qualities in the Boscotrecase frescos. Another of his techniques subdued bright colour, a change in taste perhaps. "*.... he coated his work with a black varnish so thin that while it*

⁵². Murrin, M: *The allegorical epic*. Ch 1. pp 19.

⁵³. Pliny, *NH*. 35.75-76. (Pollitt 1965, pp 158).

*accentuated the reflection of the brightness of all the colours and protected the painting also involved considerable theoretical calculation, lest the brightness of the colours offend the eye, as in the case of those who look through a transparent coloured stone, and also so that, from a distance, the same device might, though hidden, give sombreness to the colours that were too bright."*⁵⁴

Oracle pivots about its central tetrad. There is a sense as in Tao philosophy, of man in an ecological space-time continuum which proceeds at its own pace. There is a hint that it arises from the Pax Romana which was inevitable and will prevail for ever. There is also spatial unity, an appropriation of universals enrolled within one organism, Rome.⁵⁵

Each painting represents a stereotype Landscape space. None is natural or absolute space, but space permeated by the magic and religion of a culture. They purport to refer to natural space, but in doing so register its extermination by massive overwriting. In the background of each painting is a rocky wilderness of the kind encountered in Polyphemus. It is tamed, made part of the sacred precincts which inhabit all. The process is summarised by Henri Lefebvre:

*"Absolute space was made up of fragments of nature located at sites which were chosen for their intrinsic qualities (cave, mountain top, spring, river), but whose very consecration ended up by stripping them of their natural characteristics and uniqueness. Thus natural space was soon populated by political forces."*⁵⁶

Representational space was, is, vital to ideologies. Longus manipulated that concept, using what he conceived to be fundamentally Greek space in his late Empire allegory. It is also vital to popular understanding of the aims of the state. Do these paintings, like the writing of Longus, portray a Greek Alexandrian view?

*"..... the ancient city had its own spatial practice: it forged its own - appropriated - space with its own specific time or times, and its particular centres and polycentrism (agora, temple, stadium, etc.)."*⁵⁷

⁵⁴. *Pliny*, 35.90-95. (Pollitt pp 161-2).

⁵⁵. See *Lefebvre 1974, The Production of Space*.

⁵⁶. *Lefebvre 1974*, pp.48. The process is repetitive. Quality becomes incessantly interfered with as each successive consecration changes or seeks to change the meanings, and with each of those changes the absolute character becomes more and more remote. Probably the essence of the concept of conservation is to seek to retain the best of each successive interpretation, but the process is irretrievable, leading to dilemma and serious questioning of the concept of conservation of historic monuments itself in this respect.

⁵⁷. *Lefebvre 1974*, pp.31.

Or again:

*"In the Middle Ages, spatial practice embraced not only the network of local roads close to peasant communities, monasteries, and castles, but also the main roads between towns and the great pilgrims' and crusaders' ways. As for representations of space, these were borrowed from Aristotelian and Ptolemaic conceptions, as modified by Christianity..... Such spaces were interpretations, sometimes marvellously successful ones, of cosmological representations. Thus the road to Santiago de Compostela was the equivalent, on the earth's surface, of the way that led from Cancer to Capricorn on the vault of the heavens, a route otherwise known as the Milky Way - a trail of divine sperm where souls are born before following its downward trajectory and falling to earth, there to seek as best they may the path of redemption - namely, the pilgrimage"*⁵⁸

There is surely something of this in these images. Lefebvre speaks of representations borrowed from Greek concepts. Eco speaks of their survival and continuity, their constant enigma and renewal, the consternation they caused Christian scholars from the middle of their enclosed, symbolic system.⁵⁹ Seznec traces the continuity of ancient cultic concepts and religions throughout the same period.⁶⁰ Roman cities were specifically designed to extend and fill countryside. Almost all the world came within the energy orbit of Rome in this manner. Space is a function of energy. Space was Roman. Ptolemaic, Euclidean and Pythagorean geometric concepts, themselves deriving from more ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian ones which underlie this painting appropriate, perhaps with some irony, all space and its history to Rome.

Clear distinctions are made. Polyphemus and Andromeda inhabit mythic space, a uniquely flexible structure within which allegory flourishes [37]. The Nocturne frescos (an adjoining group) project ease and repose. Oracle sequence imbues stasis with dynamic purpose, leading back towards a feeling that this internal structure is the real purpose. This reinforces the message of every visible image component each of which is part of signifying reality in Hellenistic landscape. It is fruition.

All of this is encompassed within a technique with affinities to VcBC skenographia, a method attributed to Agatharcos of Samos.⁶¹

⁵⁸. Lefebvre 1974, pp.45.

⁵⁹. Eco, *U: Sviluppo dell' estetica medievale*. Roma 1959 and *The aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*. Milan 1970.

⁶⁰. Seznec, *J: La survivance des dieux antiques*. London 1940.

⁶¹. Vitruvius, *2*, praef. 11.

Spatial manipulation.

Their psychological space demands multiplex thought from the onlooker. Manipulation of the painting plane in each case is matched by corresponding manipulations in the imagery, inducing a condition in the viewer as rewarding as that from profound music. Each depiction of architecture, deities and landscape gives access to internal dynamics which enrich the surface. The paintings are full of fabricated holes through which the mind can pour into other worlds within and without. They are the work of a skilled philosopher who knows well the principles of high rhetoric applied to his craft. He persuades viewers into believing themselves undergoing metamorphoses more intricate than Ovid's encapsulations of delusion traded through the vehicle of adventuresome deities. Like Ovid's, these metamorphoses permit corporeal bodies to pass from one plane of existence to another, exchanging picture plane for spatial abstractions and substitutions of external reality through mnemosyne. Oracle uses every aspect, including the internal subject matter, to extend into the infinite without sacrificing comfort.

Polyphemus exists in a Greek cultural setting drawn from Sicilian Arkadia [37]. The spatial and landscape imagery is an almost direct rendition of Theocritus's Idyll 11:

*His flock would come home to the cave unshepherded
From the green pasture, while he would be off by himself
All day, singing up the dawn of the weedstrewn shore
And pining for Galatea as he nursed the wound
Which the dart from the Cypris had cut into his bowels.
Gazing seaward from the high rock where he sat
Let the green sea waste its anger on the shore:
Night spent in the cave beside me is far more sweet.
Baytrees and slender cypresses grow there, ivy
With its dark leaves and vines with sugary grapes.
Fresh water flows there, which forest-sided Etna
Sends down for me, cold fruit of her white snow.....
I must learn to swim at once; but perhaps if I wait
Some kindly stranger will come in a ship to teach me.
Then I may fathom what pleasure lives in the depths.
Come up from the sea Galatea. Forget to go home.⁶²*

Between blinded Polyphemus and the ship with its "kindly" stranger is a slender cascade of white water plunging perpendicular into the sea. Theocritus the Sicilian knows his landscape and so does this painter with his representations of space foreshortened by precipice, of sea enclosed by mountainsides. Fellow-feeling fills representational space with the poignant irony of Theocritus's

⁶². *Theocritus: Idylls No. 11* tr. Robert Wells. Manchester 1988.



Polyphemus Blanckenhagen pl 40

A Hellenistic masterpiece this painting depicts the Polyphemus episode from Homer's Odyssey. Mythic space-time compartments are adhered to. Odysseus intrudes in a continuum with tragic consequences. Each mythic group has its own spatial attributes and Landscapes which are recalled on "reading" the painting.

Boscotrecase: Polyphemus

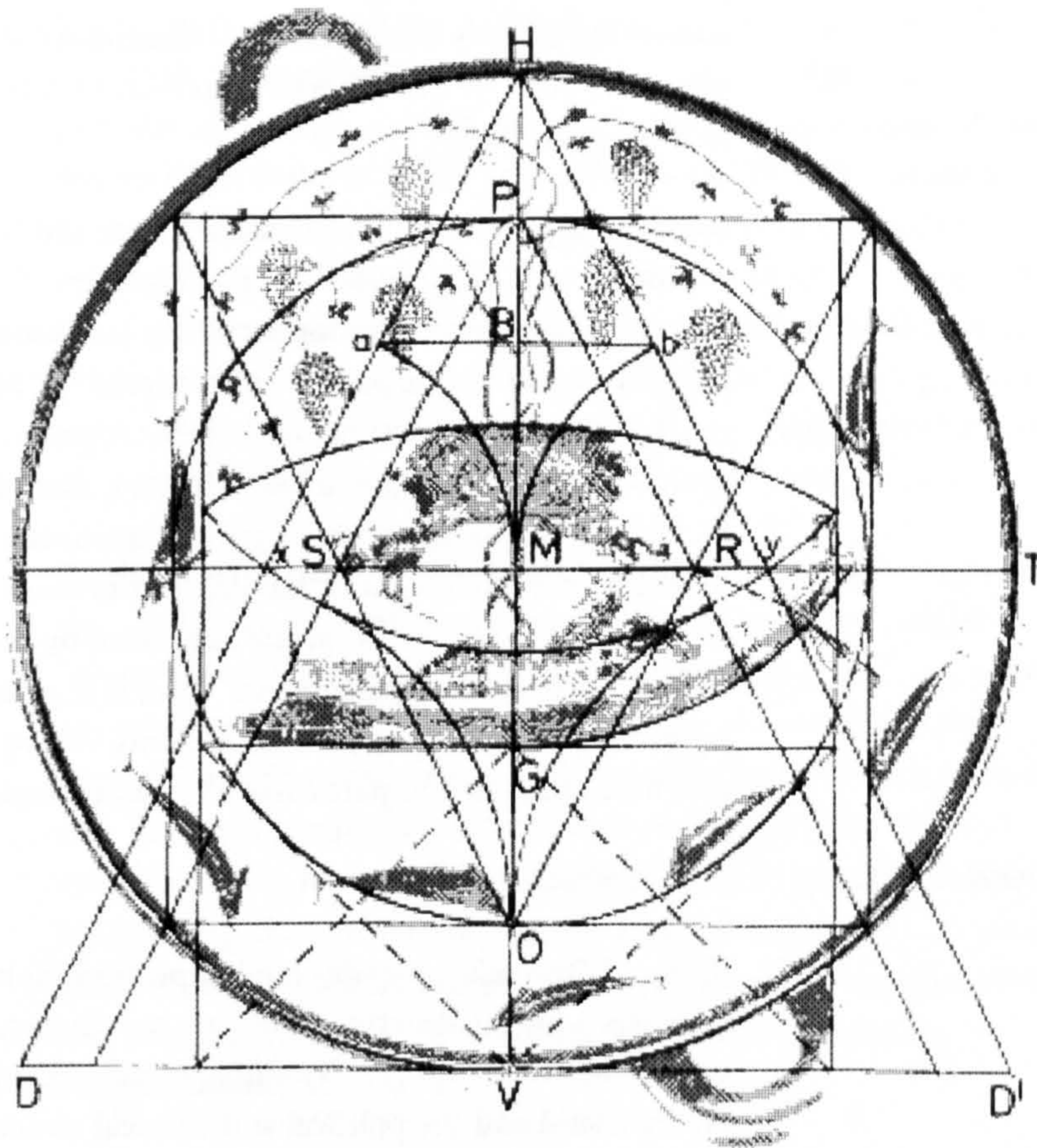
words in an Apollonian landscape without sunlight, quite strange really.⁶³ Ancient myth and painting represented spatial vastness by incorporating miraculous horses. Here the painter has placed Galatea on a Dionysiac dolphin whose speed would ensure a fleeting, illusory vision for the poor lovesick clay footed Cyclop as she traverses the sea's chaotic immensities whose *aporias* outscale those encountered on land.⁶⁴ In its exit on the opposite side of the fresco, Odysseus's ship, already half out of the picture, cannot match Galatea's mount, placed in the picture quite secure in eluding the frantically lovelorn Polyphemus or his cruel fate. It is outside the powers she represents, no part of her space, in the painting or in mythology. The half ship, barely able to elude Polyphemus's blinded rock-hurling, travels in short distances not mythic delphine ones, however heroic its occupants or swift its passage between one hurled rock and the next. This is space represented in many dimensions with only a flat piece of wall for communication. Manifold space is created with subtlety, imagination and masterly skill. One would expect it to be internally communicative to the same degree.

Black vase paintings tend towards direct two-dimensional imagery, their emphasis on movement [38]. Nowadays we consider this tonal relationship "reversed", a reversal of reality, a forced re-appraisal of our perceptions. Clarity of outline defies penetration. Darkness is blank to sight but not to insight or vision. Its space is indefinable to intellect, as Anaximander's *apeiron*, to which responses are alerted though sometimes confused. Without representing space in the Nocturne triad, the painter concentrates attention on it and small human actions it encapsulates and amplifies. It is obvious that the domus is focus of both spiritual and practical living. The paintings draw into the lives of the occupants awarenesses of special ideological space occupied by religious practice. But the painter does not want us to consider that consciously any more than he wants us wandering off into analysis of the infinite, ineffable, and indefinable, encouraged in the Oracle sub-sequence.

In each set of paintings, particular representational space is defined. Each definition relates to historical literary and geometric concepts crucial in Hellenistic philosophy. Cultural Greekness is asserted through incorporation of abstract thought into painted imagery. It is a summation of ideas the Greeks appropriated even before the Dark Age, (whatever that was), made into philosophical and scientific concepts. Do these paintings tell a Roman elite, "in the best

⁶³. Cyclopes were creatures of Apollo.

⁶⁴. This is however not the ultimate sea wilderness. Ancient and Roman concepts distinguished the sea, which implied the Mediterranean, from Oceanus, the even greater Atlantic beyond the pillars of Hercules, or the monsoon-driven Indian Ocean.



Kielland, E.C.: Geometry in Greek Art pl XV

Ms. Kielland, a Norwegian artist, demonstrates effectively how Greek artists used sacred geometry to signify depth and movement in two-dimensional imagery. This illustration is taken from a group of three in a profusely illustrated and comprehensive volume on the topic. With the group she shows how the rocking movement of Dionysos' ship is implied.

Sacred geometry in practice

possible taste", that they have inherited something nearly complete, something already been attained? It remained that way for another thousand years.⁶⁵ The Roman achievement was its reconstruction and encapsulation.

Neo-Pythagoreanism, a IcBC Alexandrian and Roman revival and reconstruction, contributes inner spatial logic.⁶⁶ Divine geometric figuration suggests commitment. With Tarentum as a Pythagorean political centre, this is perhaps not surprising. Stoicism contributed much to Roman perception, with its ideas generating human involvement in ecological affairs. It is apparent in the Oracle with its little groups of expressive figures. Epicurean thought is apparent in architectural detail, in its modified form subsumed by Isis worship. The concept of *apeiron* suggested by the spatial treatment of the Oracle seems Pythagorean. Void is separated from indefinable cosmic space, the latter richly vested with mystic light and here attributed to particular representations of landscape.⁶⁷

A New Concept Of Landscape?

Longus' *Pastoralias* encodes landscape gradation. The light romance conceals political structure in its process allegory. Analogy is created between topography and agrarian organisation in a typical Greek island and the political and cultural structure of the Greco-Roman relationship. Longus reveals Hellenistic manipulation of ecosystems. The work is archaising, reflecting Hellenistic (and Roman) concern with economic independence in city states. Myteline as local power, to the agrarian community of saints and sinners is a distant force. Urbanised behaviour is depicted as contradictory, as destructive as pirates, and supportive. Those reading or hearing the story would be urban, revealing didactic purpose in this symbiosis of city and agricultural community.

Land is not generally owned but in the custody of the community. People of all kinds wander freely through pastoral landscapes. The "simple" community suffers at the hands of pirates (obviously regrouped after Octavian's and Agrippa's eliminations). Late in the story urban overlordship is revealed, with it the story's target audience. The main pastoral protagonists prove urban.

⁶⁵. The author does not believe in the idea of a Medieval Europe plunged into confusion and cultural darkness. Dark ages are our own concept, indicating our lack of skill in extracting information from societies who perhaps did not choose to record in words, just to live.

⁶⁶. *Phillip, J.A: Pythagoras and early Pythagoreanism*. Toronto 1966. Pythagoras seems to have been somewhat enigmatic being pre-literate, his followers subject to many revivals, reconstructions and suppressions, including those of Aristotle and Plato. But in Rome between IcBC and IlcAD, reconstructions of his supposed ideologies seem to have been prominent and important.

⁶⁷. *Phillip 1966* interprets *apeiron* as void; but this seems contradictory to more recent scholarship, such as *Kofman 1983*, which clearly suggests distinction between *apeiron* and *kenon* which Phillip conflates. The discussion in Phillip also implies Pythagorean differentiation of indefinite *apeiron* and the infinite void which exists beyond it.

There are no ploughmen. Arable is entirely excluded from his narrative, in accordance with Pastoral etiquette. Agrarian populations remain distinct, at least in literary convention. Barley barons don't feature! There are no foresters. This enables us to place the landscape of the story in a fairly defined zone of coastal belt and intermediate slopes. Beyond it are wheatlands then cattle-grazing and mountain forests.⁶⁸ This ecosystem was codified and in economic use. The principles are enshrined in the Greek pantheon, where space is allocated on a similar basis and hierarchical structure changes historically as the relative importance of each shifts.

By the Empire, mystery chthonian religions dominated. Ancient practicalities within cults with tutelary value were subsumed beneath a superstructure of myth and superstition. Perhaps in real agrarian communities there were relics, but they were not the concern of writers and artists. Despite policies, Romans adopted a consumerism comparable with that of modern Britain. Almost everything was imported, resulting in mercantile growth and a landowning class with little concern for productivity in villa estates. Their rural values were more concerned with urban escapist ethics and imagination, a dream of patrician privilege without its responsibilities.

Some of this pervades the Oracle sequence. They depict truncated segments of countryside apposite to the escapist villa life. The villa was probably set in quite extensive parkland, but, like that of Sette finestre, with a factory area for the processing of produce from the estate. This is ignored in the frescos. They present aspects of Roman thought stimulated by Octavian's reforms, a return to piety. The triad assembles a ruralised triumphal way which could be any part of the interstitial Landscape of Herculaneum. Each Landscape is scrupulously gradated, leading from foregrounds redolent of parkland edges away to craggy mountainous wilderness. Shrines are those of "friendly" religions generating socially acceptable levels of ecstasy at the time of their painting (10BC - 7AD). These aspects of spatial organisation concern us later, sacred ways and the Triumph or Epiphany, Sacred Mountain, ritual water, wilderness, and particular abstract space referred to below as Attributive Space.

⁶⁸. See *Shingley, G: A history of Samos 800 - 188BC*. Oxford 1987. pp 8 -. This gives considerable detail of an typical wealthy island's agricultural organisation.

Stoa

Subject matter here echoes much of that in the Nocturne room's east wall [39]. A sacred arch with a column of indeterminate order stands on a piece of raised ground. Miniature cliffs suggest water, which is not apparent. It is raised on a stepped plinth, "above common earth," a convention meaning sacred. On top of the arch is a stub column, like an altar, and an urn. Hung on its side and under the arch are tympani. A deity is posed there. Votive statuettes stand around the base of a tree which strives to look like the one on the Oracle. On its trunk hang shield and thyrsos. The arch marks transition, passage, change, or intention of change. Its purpose is therefore process-dynamic. In this picture the landscape on the right is Landscape, pacified, urbanised. To the left it is "outside". Approach to a villa complex is suggested by background buildings and the long stoa where figures stroll in deep concentration.

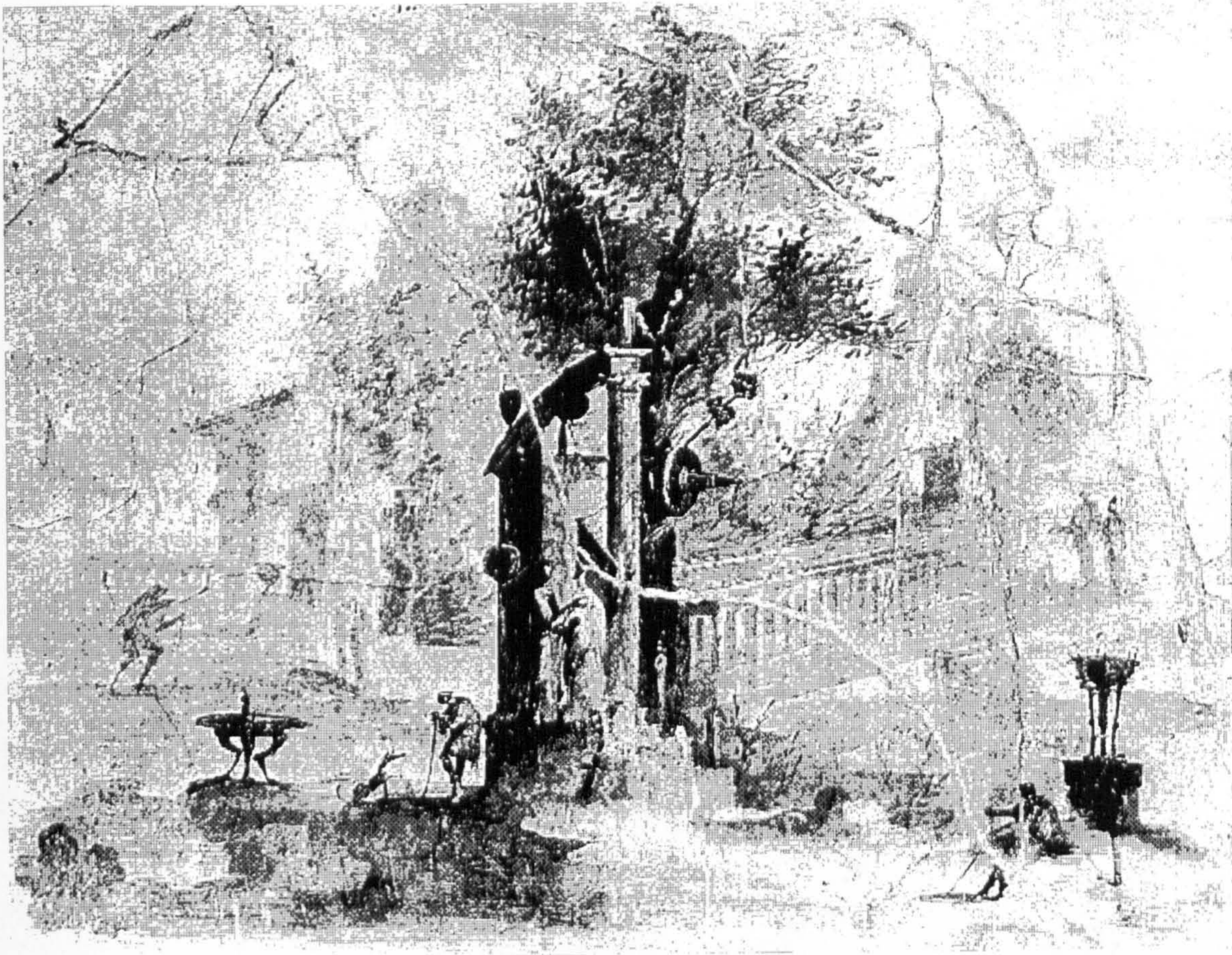
Tripods at the extremities of the foreground field, one with animal legs the other with birds' mark a heroon, a shrine of Hera and heroes. That with bird legs is perched on a plinth. Sapling trees sprout from stones in the plinth and surrounding ground.

Whiteness imparts subliminal space to the fresco, but does not penetrate with the same potency as in Oracle. Spatial imagination is less symbolic, leaving areas between delineated images more casual, apart from the overall geometry. There is no doubt though that the mountainous background is intended to be the the one in Oracle and Tetrastyle.

Tetrastyle.

Like Stoa this fresco differs from Oracle [40]. In Oracle the main body of images occupies the centre, preventing progress along its symmetry. The axis of Tetrastyle is barred to entry, but then distance wends along it, disappearing into indefinable mountain. Like ancient theatre, a moat separates auditorium from stage. A valley contains a Dionysiac shrine on which are placed effigies of a family group. We must be content to muse only.

A truly magnificent monumental fountain stands on its grand plinth. A modest sized gnarled tree protects a small shrine; the large shrine an arboriferous and ancient fig. To the left of the large shrine a scola shelters a thicket, painted in the same manner as those in the scola of Oracle, whose foliage merges with the lower branches of the immense tree. The distant landscape is similar to the



Sto:

Blanckenhagen pl 35

Oracle's right hand supporting fresco this enjoys similar of the wealth of detail but is less intellectual. It depicts a stoa, an unusual departure which suggests a special context. The colonnade is not depicted in sympathetic perspective but floats within its own space. In the background is a group of buildings which could be similar to those of the villa set against a rugged mountain scene. Tripods were for heroons and associated with Hera-Cybele. Similar breadth of conceptual space exists in all three frescos.

Boscotrecase:Stoa

background of Oracle. Crags tower, without trees, emerging from behind the canopy of the fig.

Black vignettes - Nocturnes.

These affectionate images gleam in an impenetrable blackness revealing shrines with participants actively engaged in rite [41]. They are important to the overall narrative balance, but not specifically to this discussion. von Blanckenhagen calls them bucolic landscapes, but compared with their companions of the mythic and oracle sequences the landscape content is small and not very bucolic.

Mythological paintings.

*"There is a rock placed in the depths of the sea, in its centre, projecting on high above it, against which the sea growls and argues. The waves, continually struggling with it, beat against it, worry it, and many times dash against it so strongly that it is entirely engulfed; again it sheds the water It does not keep any one shape, but is always changing, always re-forming, appearing in a new shape and transforming itself. It is always clothed in a different manner: when it is open to the air and Zephyrus rides the sea, this breeze brings out flowers and makes them flame like stars, and makes the grass spring up green"*⁶⁹

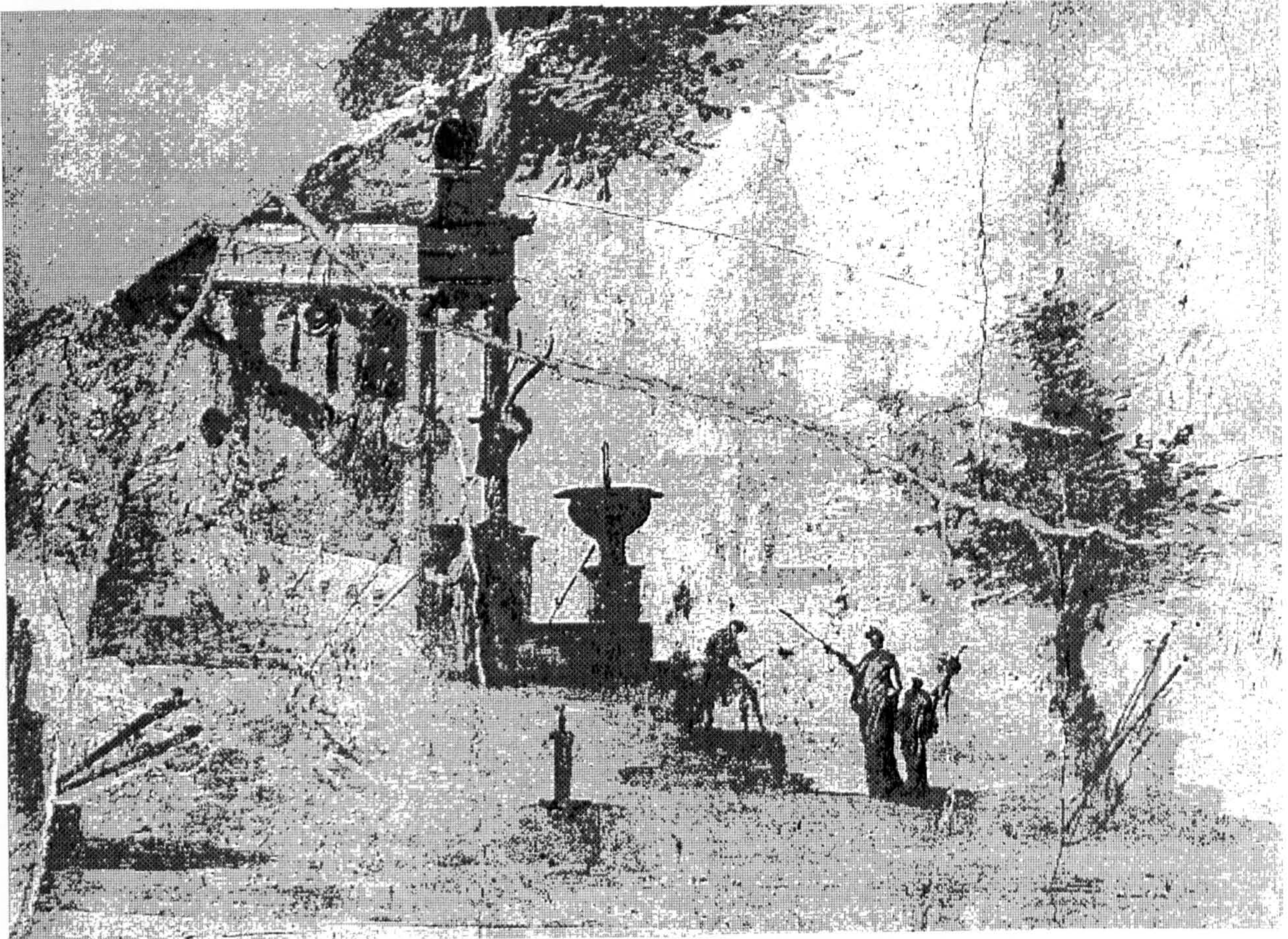
Two Homeric paintings survive, badly damaged.⁷⁰ Sobriety, stylish and lively technique fits the subject. A third painting of the group is sometimes hypothesized as Actaeon.⁷¹ Those surviving feature Polyphemus and Andromeda. Both are from epics of dynastic wanderings, *Odyssey* and *Argonautica*. Though they lack some of the deftness of the famous *Odyssey* sequence, [42] they project greater inner intensity and power using similar technique.

⁶⁹. *Lorris, Guillaume de: Le Roman de la Rose*. line numbers 5921 -.

(Parallel text edition: Ronald Sutherland, Blackwell, Oxford 1968. Chaucer & fragments from early French sources).

⁷⁰. von Blanckenhagen does not assume three, or that if there were three all were mythological.

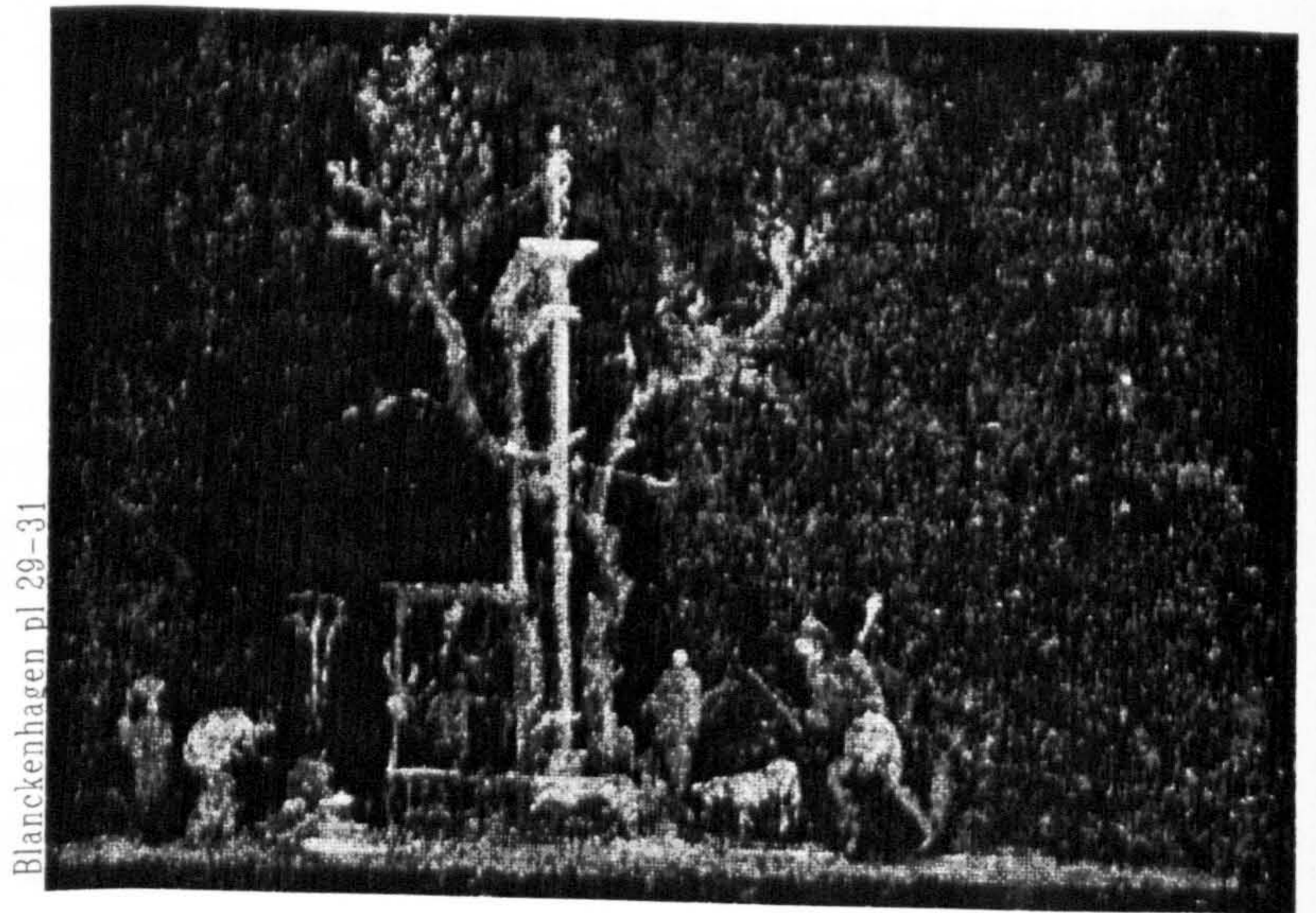
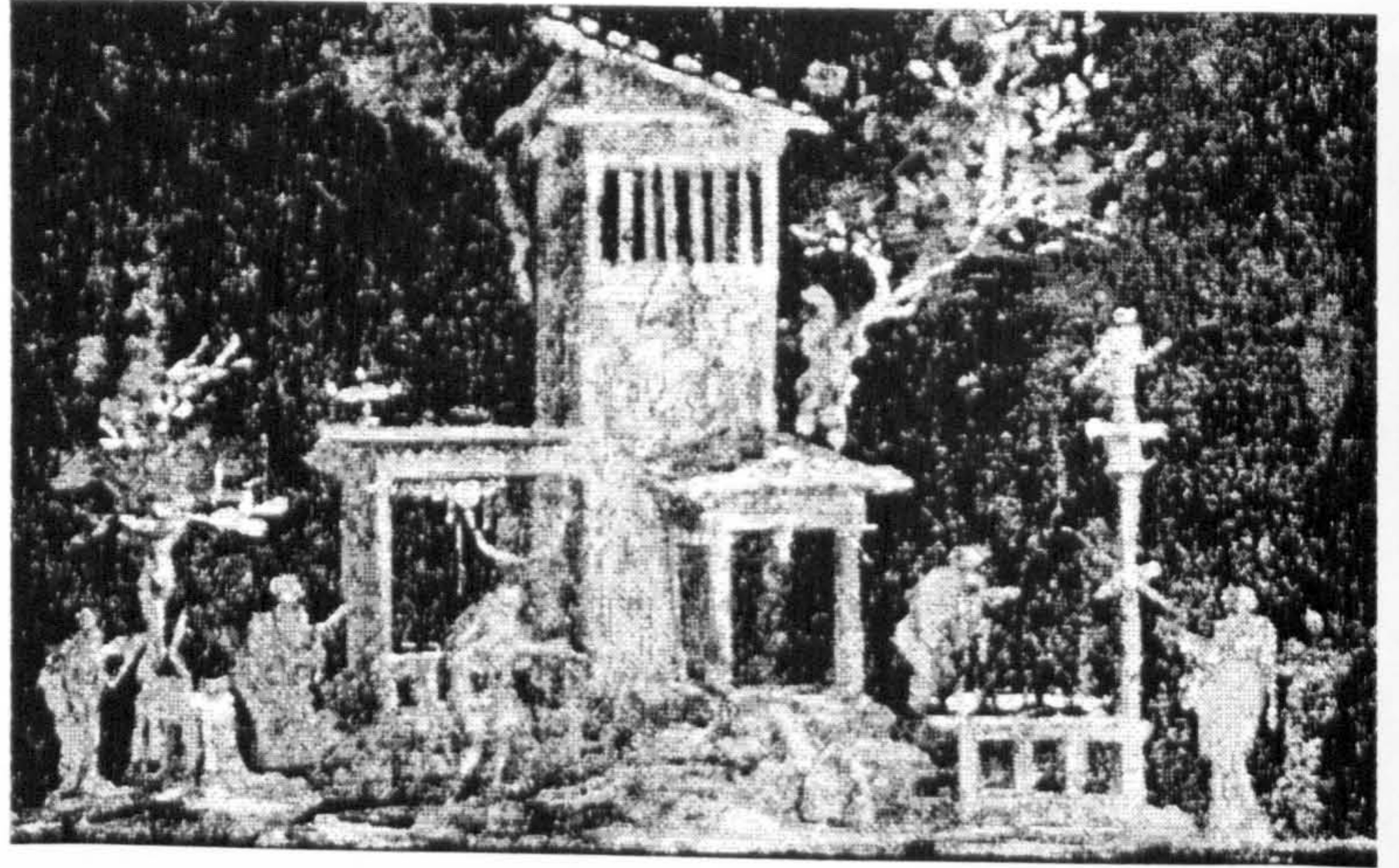
⁷¹. I am tempted to doubt this. On analysis of the subject matter of the group the myth of Actaeon (perhaps more legend than myth) only nearly fits. It does not lock completely nor elegantly enough into the arguments presented by the others. However, given the mythic skills of these painters, it could have been possible to bend it; the others though, needed no bending. von Blanckenhagen refuses to guess, leaves the question open and outside scholarly research.



Boscotrecase Tetrastyle Blanckenhagen pl 38

Oracle's left hand supporting fresco some of this might have been painted by an assistant. It depicts a tetrastyle shrine linked with the goddess Aphrodite, housing a magnificent fig tree. Unlike Oracle it is markedly asymmetrical with a central space as vista. The foreground still forbids entry, and the general structure of the image tends to deflect towards Oracle. The mountain is more distant, the geometry looser.

Boscotrecase:Tetrastyle



Blanchenhagen pl 29-31

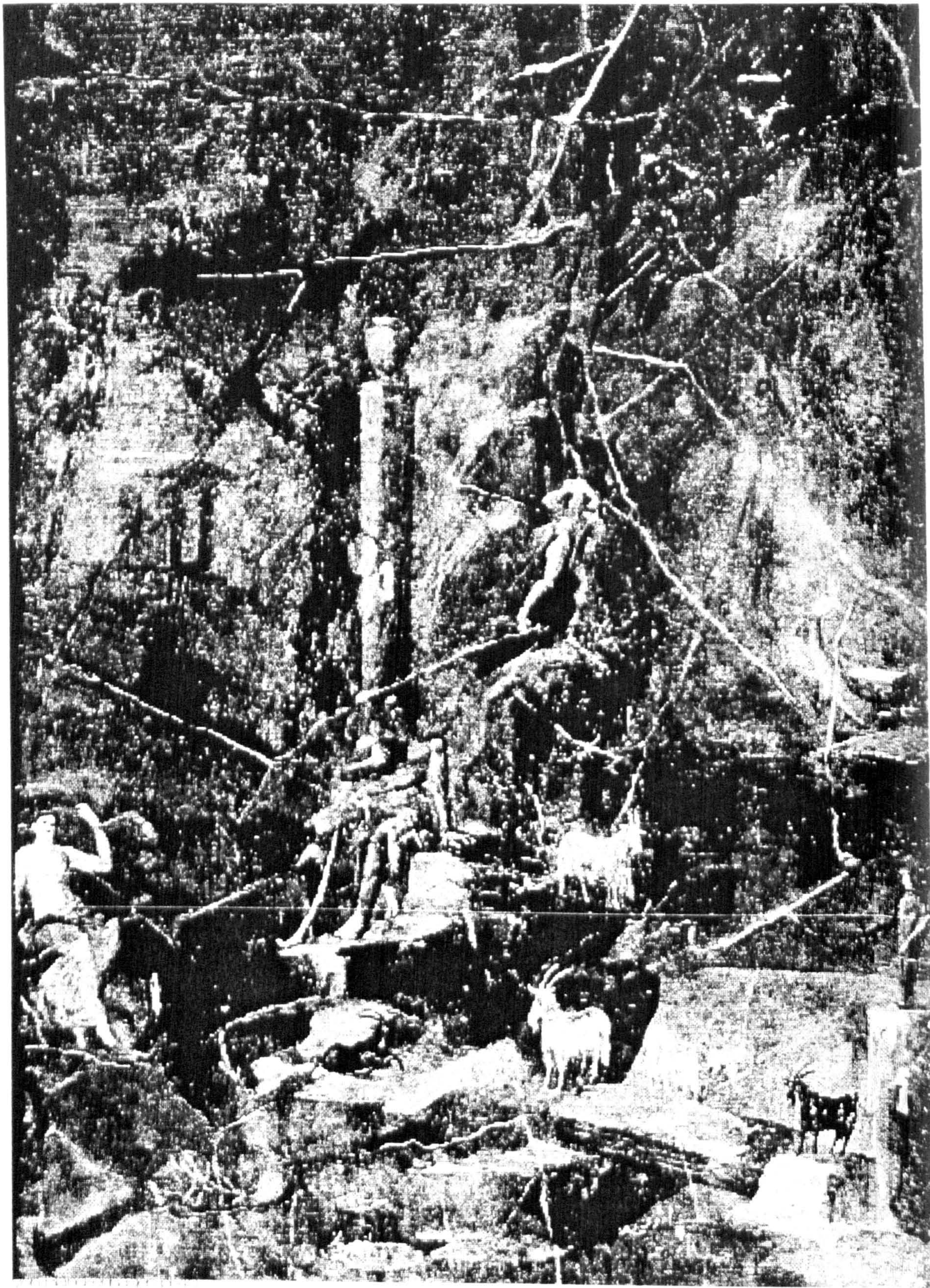
The Nocturnes



Odyssey frieze (detail) (from Havelock PI XVII)

Odyssey friezes are a cycle of fresco paintings thought by some to be Roman copies of Greek originals. They are less heavily symbolic than the Boscotrecase frescos, more deft in their handling of Landscape space.

Landscape frescos



Polyphemus & Galatea

Polyphemus.

Homer's *Odyssey* is a landscape of words. It sets out early Greek concepts of spatial immensity. Cave Landscapes are settings for Polyphemus and Calypso, a rich theme for programmed Landscapes [43]. In one cave Odysseus loves the archetypal seductive goddess of oblivion; in the other he meets ancestral death. Each draws nuggets of meaning as habitations in landscape foci with deep mythical connections, ancient stereotypes with common origins.

Polyphemus represents Greek hero's encounter with pre-cultural ancestor, creature of Poseidon, Prometheus and Apollo (XLIII). He is perhaps a prototype Hephaestos. Ancestor status makes him sacred within the Greek code. Landscape - rugged as pre-Cadmian Arkadia - and inhabitant are Greek ancestral space. Polyphemus represents the beginning of the age of bronze, the time before heroes, part of mainland Greek attitudes to re-discovered earlier technologies in remote colonies, a time-space dimension in a complex text. Ancestral status and Sicilian locus make him fair game for Vergil. Aeneas's encounter with Polyphemus enabled Vergil to suggest that Rome was founded before Odysseus returned to his patrimony. Aeneas and Anchises meet one of Odysseus's crew only three months after they had left:

He had scarcely finished when we saw Polyphemus himself, massive and monstrous, walking down from the mountain-heights with his flock about him, which he was shepherding as usual to the sea shore, a horrible and hideous ogre of a giant with his eyesight gone. He carried a pine trunk cut short, to guide his hand and steady his steps; the fleecy ewes which went with him were his sole joy and now his only consolation.⁷²

Our fresco painter has promoted him to goatherd. Error is unlikely, so meaning hides in the change. Aeneas has his share of Odysseus's penchant for exaggeration! He likens the Cyclopes to "a group of cypresses in Diana's stately grove". The space and landscape of the myth is specific in atmosphere and form. This is echoed in the painted image. Each presence introduces, as Oracle, other stereotypes, other "theres". Goddess cults concerned themselves with secretive landscape beneath earth's surface, a ritual world of grottoes and caves, like that of Polyphemus, and a moon that lived at the top of the earth mountain, its movements measured with the bronze labrys. Odysseus effectively becomes Calypso's (Hera? Aphrodite?) sacred king.⁷³ Perhaps his tanist is Polyphemus,

⁷². *Aeneid* II 655 -

⁷³. An Adonis, a king of the sacred grove of the goddess who died at the end of his year of "office".

another link between cave myths and Hephaestos, maker of the first bronze Delphic tholos.

Island landscapes feature in most Homeric allegory. Islands are always apart, always "there". This fresco has given the Sicily of Polyphemus a sombre beauty, a "Gothic" verticality of treatment met later in Mediaeval literature exemplified by the quotation above.⁷⁴ Islands, like gardens can be grasped as psychological entities. Renaissance literature portrays both in this way, and it was a stereotype Mediaeval space. They exist within small aporias, marking recognisable places within something that is otherwise undifferentiated. In Longus' *Lesbos*, Lamon's garden is apart in this way in its pastoral matrix, a model for park and garden enclosures. Myteline is contained within a matrix of pastoral activity. It has power that is more defined and codified than the logos of the whole island. It is one component of structured space which accommodates both. This is absent from Homeric islands, whose inhabitants are unknown, of different creeds, and therefore, though in identifiable places, are themselves psychological *aporias*. These, surely, are the mutative islands which the poet of the *Romance of the Rose* portrays.

It is as though that Mediaeval writer had seen the frescos, which is impossible.⁷⁵ It reveals continuity in prevailing undercurrents appropriating Homeric space, (in this case possibly Vergilian, for Vergil was well loved by Christian theorists). This Gothic island subverts humanity by its unpredictable illusory landscape, like Calypso; Hellenism ultimately does not, though it takes Odysseus several years of pleasure to realise his behaviour is not proper to his creed. In the passage from the *Rose*, it is possible to visualise an intensification of a Sicilian landscape similar to that of the frescos. Another could be interpreted to fit the precincts of Andromeda, hung precariously on insubstantial cliffs in the next fresco:

*"On high, at the top of the mountain, on the slope, not on the plateau, always threatening ruin and ready to accept a fall, the house of Fortune stands aslant. There is not a single storm of the winds nor any torment that they can offer that this house does not have to endure."*⁷⁶

The painter has rendered the island of Andromeda as wilderness within wilderness, the sea. Polyphemus is different. Sacred signs sprout from his crags. He is primitive made captive by superior

⁷⁴. *Roman de la Rose*.

⁷⁵. But he had read Homer, Vergil and Longus.

⁷⁶. *Lorris, Guillaume de: Le Roman de la Rose*, line numbers 6079 -.

(Parallel text edition: Ronald Sutherland, Blackwell, Oxford 1968. Chaucer & fragments from early French sources).

natural forces to which as a Cyclope, he is close. He is representative of a pre-Mycenaean past whose cultural currency was important to the Homeric Greek psyche. This cultural currency was aboriginal Greekness. Cyclopes were sons of Hera and Ouranos. In the battle for supremacy between Olympians and an earlier pantheon of Titans, the Cyclopes forged Zeus his ultimate weapon, the bolt, an over-dynamic labrys.⁷⁷ Vergil's representation of Aeneas, a survivor from the Trojan side of the same conflict, as founder of Rome was a Latin masterstroke without literary parallel in ancestral claims. It set polarities and similarities, Greek and Greco-Roman, into a new context, gaining for Rome cultural space and re-assembled Homeric appropriation of ancient Landscapes. Aeneas' is portrayed with mission and greater skill at handling himself, with more acute self-knowledge. Unlike Odysseus's dalliance with Calypso, he needs little arm twisting from Mercury (Hermes) to desert Dido. Rome is thus presented as balanced inheritor of an older urbanity and "Greekness" (or Arkadianism) criticised. The mode and intellectual slant of the murals is partly from *Aeneid*, but they are distinctly Homeric and Augustan Pan-Hellenic (a reply?).

Polyphemus was son of Ouranos-Poseidon. Poseidon's landscape is the abyss, originally the primordial chaos under earth mountain. Polyphemus therefore occupies the boundary between sea and land, that of primary colonisers, half pre-Olympian, transitional between old and new orders. That was the *zeitgeist* of Octavian's era. This interpretation is reinforced by Mantegna's painting "*Battle of the Sea Gods*". Where one might expect to find them in mid ocean, they flounder in reed beds, violent and primitive with a not-so-distant Italian hill town behind. Hurling rocks from a crag, Polyphemus, alive with primitive anima, simultaneously sits, human, pensive, on a rocky shelf in the foreground, crooning Galatea, caught in a mythic time warp. Little vegetation adorns his bleak and windswept abode other than the stout tree rising from the base of a sacred column. Polyphemus is no farmer but a technological herdsman whose flock strips vegetation.

A small rocky island is separated from the crag by a narrow cob bridged with stone. It has a truncated columnar pedestal with a cultic statue, indistinct, one hand spread in benediction like Hera-Cybele-Isis. Polyphemus leans hunched against a column decorated with shields, topped by a hero's urn. A thicket appears to inhabit

⁷⁷. For good summaries of the genealogy related to art subjects see: *Carpenter, J.H.: Art and myth in ancient Greece*. London 1991. This reference pp 71. The labrys was a navigational aid, a decoding device like Ariadne's thread. It was calendric. Zeus's bolt is a very similar looking object, but is given male dynamic attributes. This has important hidden connotations. As creatures of the Goddess, the Cyclopes had access to the secrets of Labrys. It draws together several aspects, including labyrinth.

the top of the crags behind.⁷⁸ This kind of grouping of elements is characteristic of the paintings, ensuring mythic connectivity.

Perfectly poised on her dolphin, Galatea disregards Polyphemus, gazing straight at us, elated, slim, alluring, typically an aristocratic nymph or priestess of Aphrodite. He matches his landscape of caves smoking with sacrificial burning, metallurgy, or emissions from the mirror world beneath. Galatea's duty is to guide heroes voyaging the other side of the mirror, serving her mistress, Aphrodite (Calypso).

Hundreds of years later, we are reminded by Boccaccio that Polyphemus was symbolic of natural powers underlying humanity, and an Arkadian:

*There while Erinys roused us brawling boys,
behold swift Polyphemus, our kinsman,
born from our father's fields, raised on the shores
of farthest Hyster on the milk, I think,
of wildest beasts, now maimed by a sure blow,
though by whose javelin it is not sure,
kindled with righteous rage and wrath rushed down
just as a torrent, swollen with winter rains,
sweeps down the lofty mountains, far resounding,
uproots these trees, shakes those, and proudly dragging
mighty rocks, hurls them upon the crags.⁷⁹*

Polyphemus and his landscape constitute a masterpiece of art. Narrative and image illuminate each other with sensitivity and power. Contrast it with the grossness of Agrippa's delphine imagery in an honorific statue! [43].

Andromeda.

White, alluring Andromeda, stand-in for the Sea Goddess Astarte, awaits her destiny [44]. She is part of Argonautica. This Alexandrian painter captures nuances expertly - another island, bare this time, wild, towering crags only. The sensuous figure of Andromeda is starkly contrasted by the crag. Perseus, suspended, struggles to direct stage machinery towards her, masculinity at the ready. Son of Zeus and Danae, born in a tholos, Perseus is presumably granted this gift of levitation.⁸⁰ In legends he has

⁷⁸. These are uncertain in the colour reproductions available. They could be large blemishes or lost detail.

⁷⁹. Boccaccio, *G: Eclogues IV.60 - 70*.

⁸⁰. Discussed also in the context of Tholoi, where it has importance. Based on Graves. There is significance in the choice of parents for Perseus, Prince of Argos, and for his being conceived in a tholos, since he emerges as one of the great navigator hero-ancestors of a powerful dynasty. Does the rise of the tholos coincide in any way with the rise of the Argolids? It also represents a union of western and eastern states, which had political significance. Perseus and Andromeda are also ancestors of Heracles, and Danae



Andromeda Blanckenhagen pl 44 (detail)

This mythic fresco accompanied the Polyphemus. Similar landscapes are portrayed in a similar composition

Boscotrecase:Andromeda

Hermes' sandals; later he rides Pegasus. Hermes is guide for the souls of heroes, master of the labyrinth and of apeiron, apotheosed navigator. Poseidon's ancient ,devouring goddess is the monstrous ketos (bottom left). A disconsolate nymph sits bottom right. The landscape has no sacred attributes, unique in these paintings.

Perseus, being divine (at least in part), has the gift of omnipresence, and on the right hand side of the painting is seen obtaining his dessert apples from the hands of Andromeda in her seaside villa whilst to the left he has not yet "rescued" her. In reality of course, the villa is a terraced precinct hung on the cliff side:

One part of the hall mounts upward; another descends. One can see the house inclined so much that it seems as though it must fall. No one, believe me, ever saw so variegated a house. In one part it shines brilliantly, for there the walls of gold and silver are fine, and the entire roof as well is of the same workmanship, glowing with the clearest and most brilliant precious stones ... And if anything unstable, vagabond, and mutable has any definite habitation, Fortune has her mansion there.⁸¹

Whilst the pessimism of the final despairing comment is distinctly Gothic and not appropriate in a Roman context, there is a sense of emptiness about this particular fresco not present in its companions.

Temples and shrines are picked out as sublimations of Landscape, starting with the single column. Each is a manifestation of sacred presence, the emanation of deities inhabiting and responsible for landscape, markers of time and space and their eternal exchange.

Do we interpret this bare landscape as a late Hellenistic stereotype of the orient? The voyage of the Argos was a political expedition into the Caucasus, newly roman. We might be tempted to read the Polyphemus panel as a reference to Agrippa's harbour building along the Campanian coast.

The myth is loaded with political importance and territorial relevance. Perseus is one of the ancestors of Persis, king of Persia and its founder, one of the Argonauts. He was protégé of Hermes. Agrippa, in one of the colonnades he donated to Rome, installed a complete fresco cycle of the Voyage of Argos. It probably drew attention to his successes as admiral. Another commissions was a public fresco mappa mundi, making Romans aware of the vastness

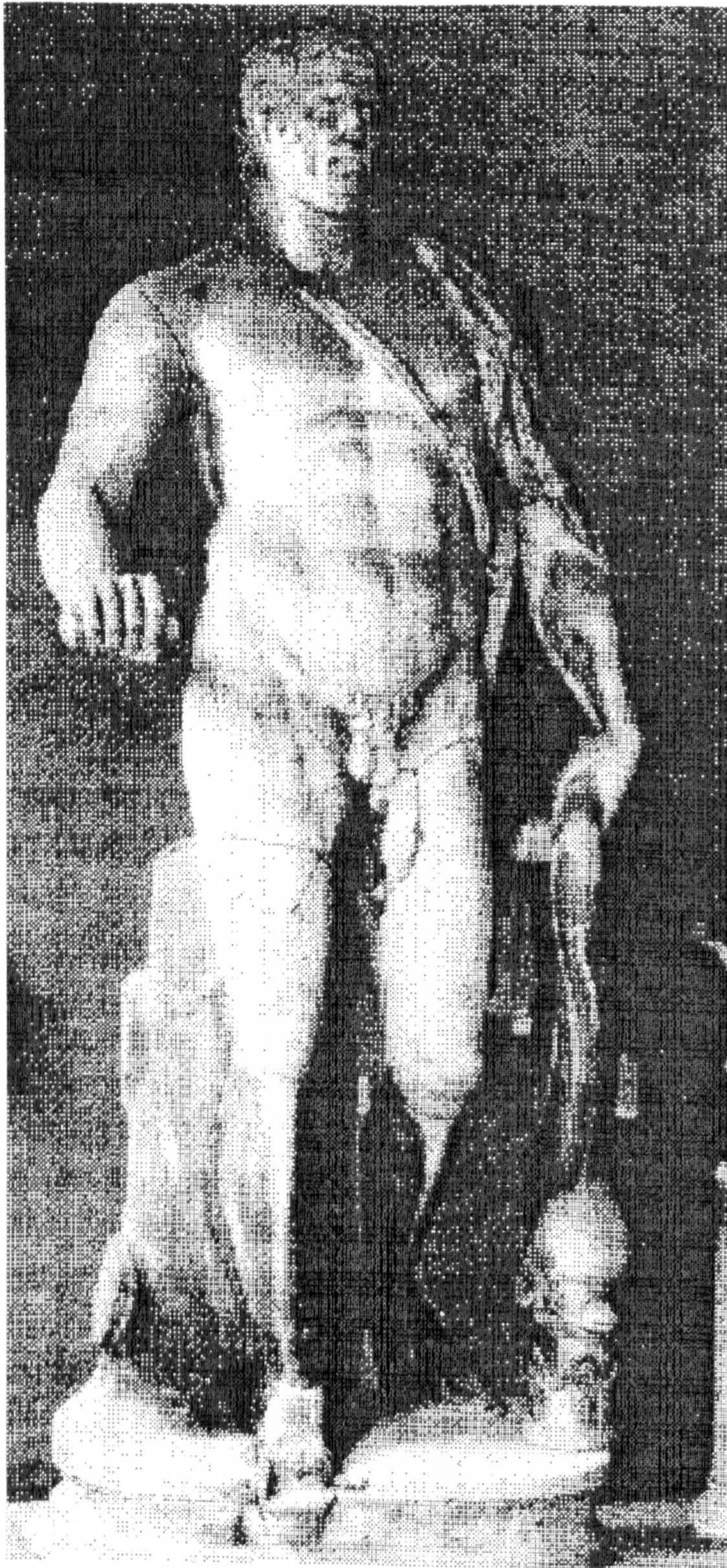
daughter of Eurydice, famed as the bride of Orpheus, and one of the signals of ancient rites related to king and fans. Perseus's ancestry is well rooted in eastern dynasties from the Io - Zeus union.

⁸¹ . *Lorris, Guillaume de: Le Roman de la Rose*. line numbers 6093 -.

(Parallel text edition: Ronald Sutherland, Blackwell, Oxford 1968. Chaucer & fragments from early French sources).

of this great new empire. To quote Seneca: "No other implemented the idea of publica magnificentia more fully and more consistently than Agrippa [45]."⁸² Appropriation of Perseus from the Greeks brought with it the right to rule the Orient, an attributive space.

⁸². *Seneca: de ben* 3.32.4. The map came to rest in the Porticus Vispanae.



Zanker ff 195

A particularly tasteless (hon)orific statue of Agrippa with his "attributes", ca 30BC after the battle of Actium. Galatea has surely changed places with Polyphemus. Dolphins were adopted by Agrippa as his sign; in accord with contemporary politics, an iconographic slant can be interpreted from this statue and the fresco of Polyphemus. In total it involves much devious mythology, but in principle the defeat of Anthony was excluded from direct reference in triumphs; it emerged in allegorical images, of which the blinding of Polyphemus was one appropriate to Agrippa who, like Odysseus, was in charge of the fleet which took Alexandria. This is Attributive Space par excellence; knowing its meaning takes the image of Agrippa into another world altogether, a Heracles to Anthony's Dionysos in the flower of the Hellenistic world. One wonders how many of these sculptors of the imperial rich and famous had rigid tongues firmly in hard pressed cheeks considering other meanings attached to dolphins in cult imagery.

Boy with a dolphin ?

Chapter Three:

Literary longings.

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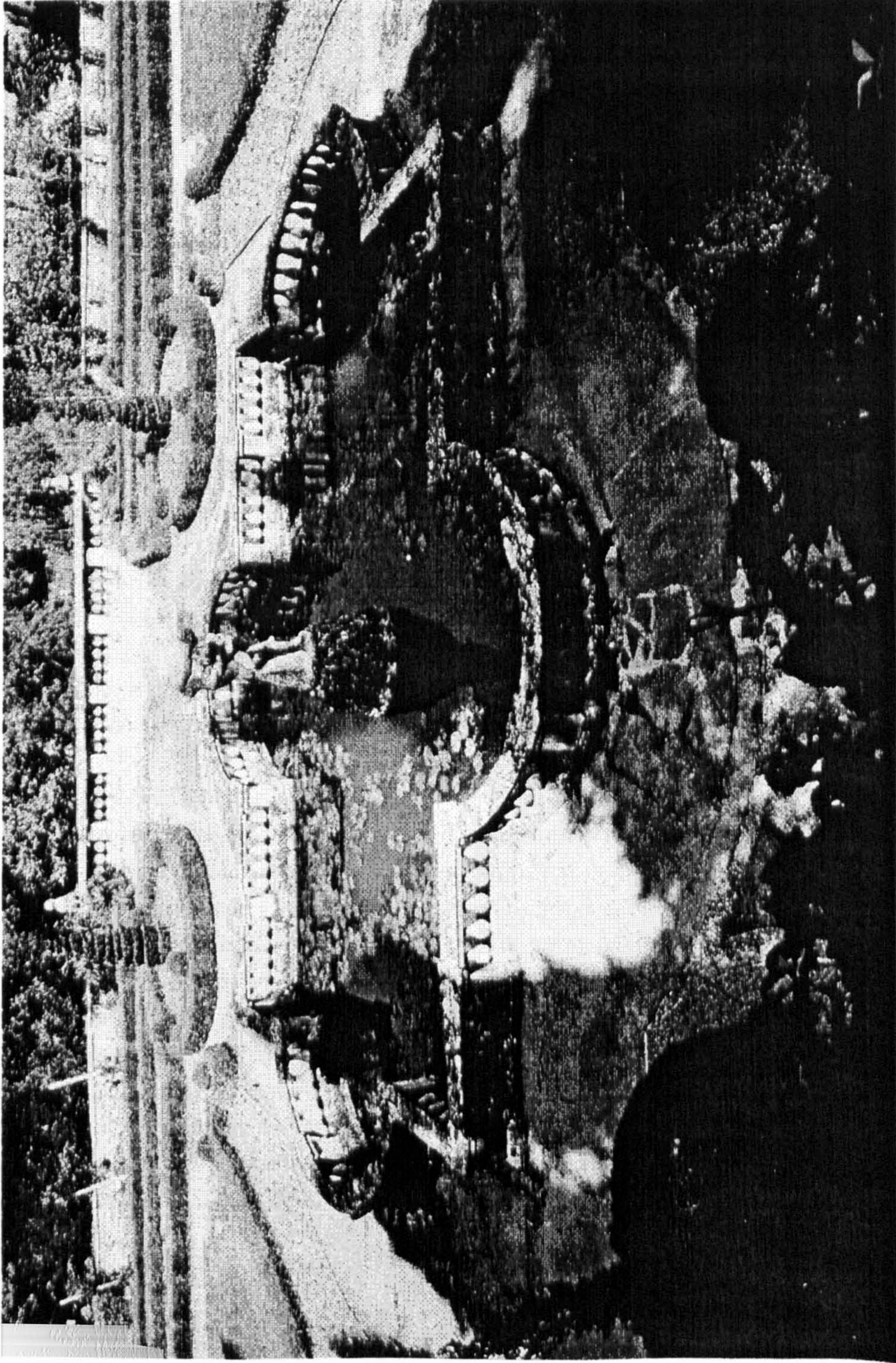
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Introduction

We commenced with Italian Renaissance literary Landscapes. Since then we have explored a Roman and Hellenistic view of the idea of Landscape through a cycle of expressive and elegant frescos. Before scrutinising more closely important themes hidden in those frescos, it is necessary to gain an historical perspective. Since we started with Longus, Longus will be our guide for this chapter. Roman antiquity generated immense enthusiasm for things Greek. At first mimetic, it evolved its own style. Most of the vocabulary of Hellenism was retained, but meanings were changed. For the villa communities Greekness was an escape from being Roman. Their Greekness, as a consequence tended towards the idyllic, a dream of Greekness comfortably set within Imperial law.

Quadripartite gardens, like that of Dionysos in *Pastoralias*, are often thought typically Roman. One is hard put to find them in Campanian or Italian villas of the Empire. They surface prominently in Mediaeval Europe, and might have emerged in the cloistered villa precincts in which remnants of the Roman ruling classes lived in semi-otium following fragmentation of the empire by invaders and subject princes. Certainly the evidence for continuity beyond the collapse of the empire is quite good into the seventh century.¹ [46 is a photograph of a baroque garden built over just such a Roman resort some of whose features survive]. Of particular interest is Cassiodorus's converted villa in Calabria, called Viridarium. This he made into a retreat, resplendent in well irrigated gardens and elaborate grottoes - no mention of the quartered form. Discussions at various conferences and seminars reveal misapprehensions, but those working in the field of landscape archaeology agree on its absence rather than presence in villa landscapes. However, it needs to be explored, because absence or no absence in the villas, it has important significance and existed somewhere, not only in the minds of Greek(ophile) literati. The most likely provenance is Byzantium.

¹. *Littlewood, A.R: Ancient literary evidence for pleasure gardens*. Washington 1987. pp 29. (In Jashemski ed. *Ancient Roman Villa Gardens*).



Herakles and Antaeus wrestle on in this immaculate baroque garden of a San Michele villa near Verona. Villa and garden are built over a late Roman pleasure spa whose water ducts and theatre remain in its grounds and grotto. This is the kind of place which survived the "Barbarian" takeover of the imperial system and to which the Roman aristocracy retreated into a perpetual otium. The baroque garden is of course one of the innumerable compressions deriving from Vignola's Lante but carried out with exquisite simplicity.

Baroque on Roman - a Veronese villa

Pastoralias.

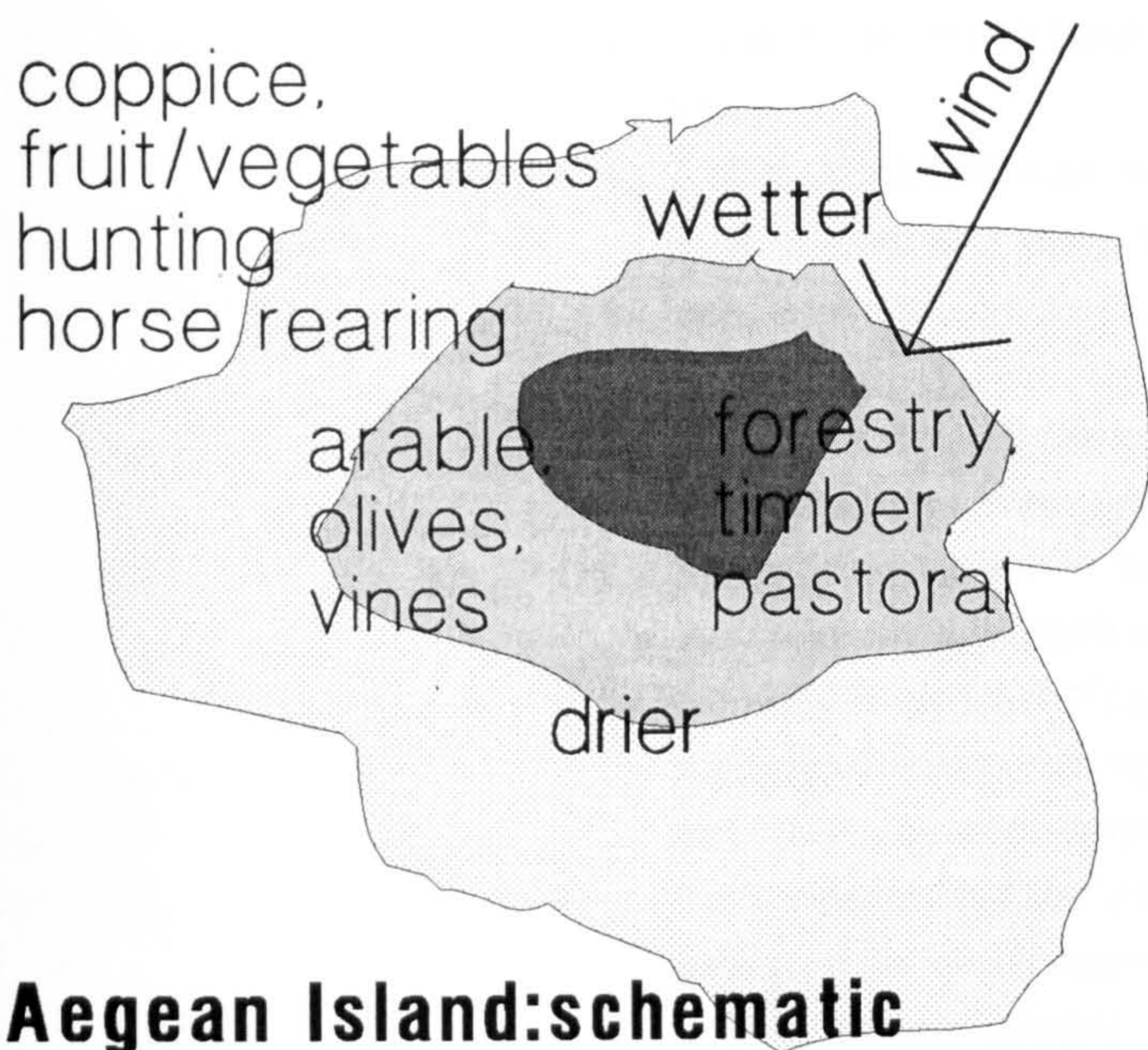
An excellent study of the ancient Greek island of Samos contains an examination of its agrarian economy.² Samos was probably an equivalent, economically speaking, of Lesbos in antiquity. Clear stratification is based on topography, gradients, mean heights, and orientation of land relative to mountains, water levels, and prevailing winds [47]. The study stops several hundred years short of Longus's time, and Samos (home of Epicurus) is possibly more extreme than Lesbos in its contours. Mountains were heavily afforested and still are, famous for oak and cypress. Two of its villages are now named after trees, Kastania and Platanos (chestnut and plane). It had its share of laurels and ivy. Viticulture existed. Samos had a strong home built fleet, and high quality timber was exported for buildings at Eleusis. Many of these things occur in obscure references somewhere in our romance of "Lesbos".

Arable land on Samos was disposed in and around two plains in areas of deep upland soils, not in the present day lower alluvial areas, as one might expect, but on intermediate slopes. Modern cultivars changed the ecology of wheat. Its natural habitat was these intermediate zones. Arable crops were always uncertain due to a prevalence of thunderstorms in May and June. Wheat was not a staple, but a luxury crop. Terraced vineyards occupied those intermediate mountain slopes unsuitable for arable. Between arable and lower pastoral areas were gardens and orchards.

Coastal fringes hosted pastoral and hunting pursuits. Marshy areas were essential to polis economies. The Lesbos depicted by Longus contained a polis based on Myteline. Marshes provided coppice timber for ordinary purposes, seafoods, and wildfowling, in addition to horse breeding by the aristocracy, and fishing.³ Samians had a high reputation as sailors, developed from skills in dangerous sea straits around the island. Officially sanctioned piracy was profitable to the state, essential to its economy in the period of Dr. Shipley's study during the rule of Polycrates. Trade flourished between the island and the Levant and Egypt. Polycrates, its tyrant in the VIcBC, was proverbial for his wealth and extravagance, though the reality seems to have been less glamorous. The history of the island is typically a cyclical one of change and retrenchment, with corresponding fluctuations in economy and way of life. One would expect broadly the same of Lesbos, whose culture and wealth

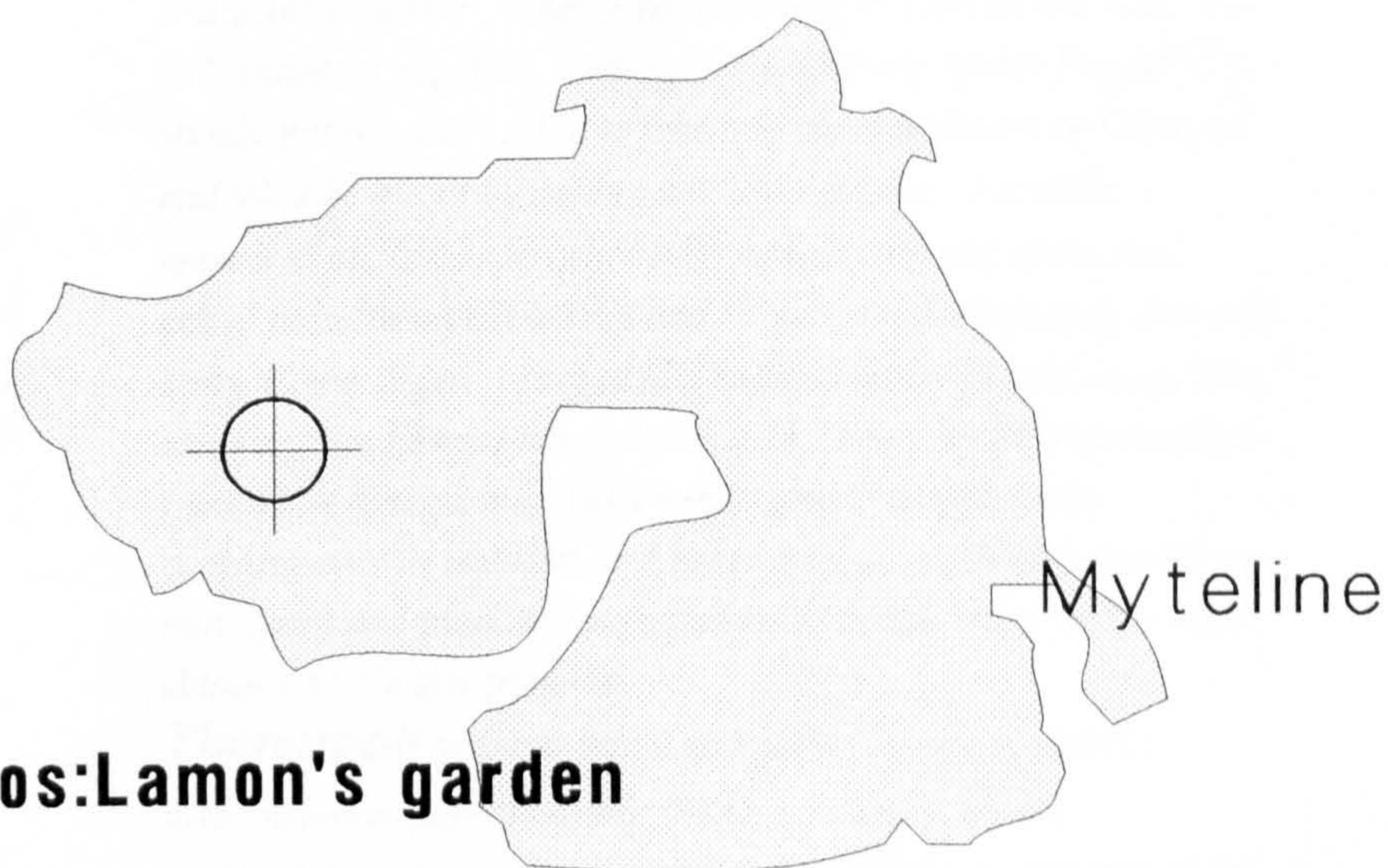
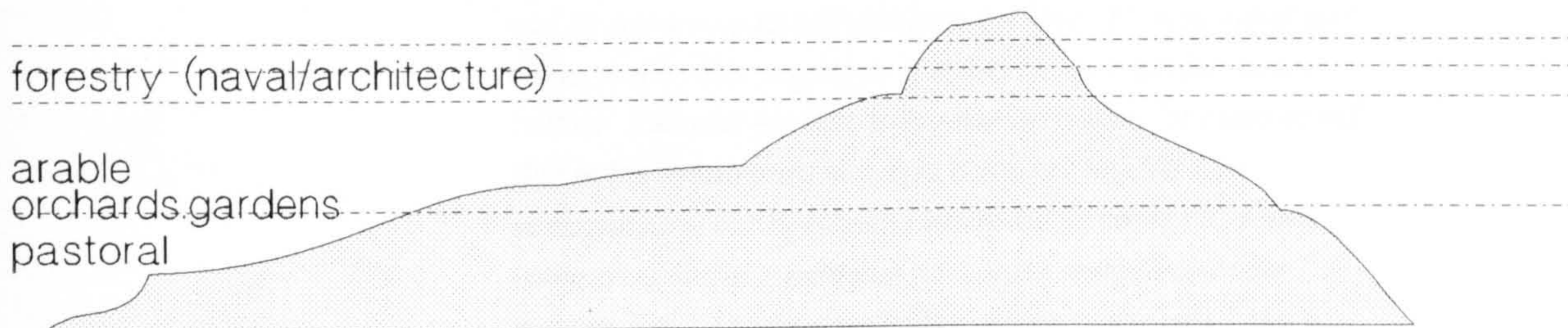
². *Shipley, G: A history of Samos 800 - 188BC*. Oxford 1987.

³. Already part of the domain of Pan as well as Artemis.



Aegean Island:schematic

Aegean Island:schematic section



Lesbos:Lamon's garden

Pastoralias & island ecosystems

affords with the overall landscapes presented by both frescos and Longus:

I am old man Philetas, my children. Many songs have I sung to these Nymphs here, many times have I piped to yonder Pan, and many a herd of cows have I guided by my music alone. I am come to inform you of what I have seen, to report what I have heard. I have a garden which I have worked with my own hands from the time that old age stopped my herding. Whatever the seasons bring my garden produces. In the spring it has roses, lilies, and hyacinths, and both kinds of violets; in the summer poppies and pears and all varieties of apple; now it has vines and figs and pomegranates and green myrtles. To this garden troops of birds make their way each morning, some for food and some to sing, for it is overarched and shady and abundantly watered by three springs; if one would remove its hedge he would fancy he was looking at a natural wood.

When I entered my garden today I espied a little boy under my pomegranates and myrtles, some of which he was holding in his hands. His complexion was as white as milk, his hair bright as fire, and he shone as if he had just been bathing. He was naked and alone, and he was playing as if it was his own garden he was culling. I started for him, to lay hands on him, for I was afraid that in his wantonness he might break my myrtles and pomegranates; but lightly and easily did he evade me, sometimes scampering under rosebushes, and again snuggling under the poppies, like a fledgling partridge. Often in the past I had my troubles in chasing nursling kids, frequently I wined myself running after newborn calves; but this was a mercurial creature and utterly elusive. I soon wearied, being as I am an old man, and so I leaned on my stick, keeping him under my eye so that he should not fly, and I asked to which of my neighbours he belonged, and what he meant by culling another's garden. He made no answer at all, but approached with a most winning smile, and pelted me with myrtle berries and in some mysterious way charmed away all my anger. I begged him to come where I could touch him, assuring him he need have no fear, and I swore by the myrtles that I would let him go, and that I would give him apples and pomegranates in addition, and permission at any time to gather as much fruit and pluck as many flowers as he wished, if only I could obtain a single kiss from him.

Thereupon he burst into a gay peal of laughter, and his utterance was more charming than a swallow's, than a nightingale's, than a swan's when it has grown old like me: "I do not in the least grudge you a kiss Philetas, for I take greater pleasure in being kissed than you would in recovering your youth

... Nor am I a child even if I seem to be one; I am older than Kronos and than Time himself ... Now I am shepherding Daphnis and Chloe, and when I have brought them together of a morning I come to your garden and take my pleasure in the flowers and the fruit, and bathe in these fountains. That is why your flowers and fruits are so beautiful: they are irrigated by my bath water."

*When he had so spoken he leapt among the myrtles like a young nightingale, scampered from one bough to the other, and through the leaves ascended to the very top ...*⁵

Quite apart from landscape interests, this is a lovely and complimentary eulogy for an eminent Alexandrian predecessor, intellectual poet of the elegant conceit. Its obtuse signification is in part an indicator of Longus's flag, in part a way of setting the period for his romance. Greekness is made clear in allegory.

The setting is that of a grove garden, attribute of Aphrodite, from the outset. All the plants are those of the formalised garden of love. Underlying this episode, there seems to be a custodial element. Nominally owned by Philetas, Eros implies that it is under the guardianship of this old man, who from the highest rank of pastoral tradition, cowherd, has sufficient fire to proposition the boy. Most people will recognise the direct similarities with Vergil's *Bucolics*, infused in the character and the language. We believe the flower garden was almost absent from the Roman villa landscape, being a commercial thing. This grove is complete in its ecology. It has a tree climax, like the grove of the nymphs, and like that grove has its beautiful flowers. Abundant shrubs are the kinds prominent in villa Landscape paintings, fruits of Aphrodite, including the Golden Apple of the pomegranate. The imagery is presented in a similar manner to fresco paintings from Boscoreale, remote from the dream symbolism of Boscotrecase. The latter seem heavy by comparison. Longus presents THE garden of love with great affection and subtlety belying the outward simplicity of the story.⁶

The Proemial.

The grove of the nymphs from the Proemial has more relevance to the Boscotrecase frescos, though even there comparison lasts only a short time. With Philetas' garden and Lamon's orchard grove, this is a meraviglia, one of those marvels of process allegory whose mythic status Boiardo used with such power in the XVc. Like the appearance of deities in literature, these environments are foci for dynamic processes, happenings set in a narrative, where they draw

⁵. From *Three Greek romances*, tr. M. Hadas, London 1953, pp 20 - 21.

⁶. For example, Longus could be pointing out the debt Vergil owed to Alexandrian as well as Homeric verse.

together inner forces special to underlying themes. The grove of Artemis is one of a group of shrines within a matrix which might be Lefebvre's absolute, or natural, space. It is part of a domain though, in reality as much symbolic and abstract space as any in this study. Like all allegorical imagery, it is a compression, a condensation of complex processes into an envelope where they can be grasped without explanation. The grove of the nymphs is thus understood as the domain of Artemis in its entirety, a landscape type not just within the limits imposed by description. However, Longus gives readers a caution. "Of nymphs, my girl, there are many kinds - Meliae or Ash Nymphs, Dryads or Oak Nymphs, and Eleiai or Marsh Nymphs. All are beautiful, and all are musical."

The Boscotrecase frescos deal with space in like manner. They too are condensations, of the whole into a part. They stand for many things, sharing Vergil's polyvalent allegory, which, "by its very nature condenses, presents much in little."⁷ It permits a smaller, more credible cast of deities or images, to net wider regions of happenings. The frescos take up precisely this point, making a virtue of it, implying factional consent through the symbolic elements depicted. As we scan these frescos, we are constantly forced to see not just one element, but image with after-image and consequent underlying meanings, all superimposed instantaneously in a way which only the brain can accommodate, not language. It has already been noted that to do this successfully requires at the very least the knowledge that these other things, these aspects of "there", are present, no problem to the kind of participant to occupy these cubiculi. Similar techniques imbue these marvels encapsulated within *Pastoralias* with their sense of the divine. We return to the theme from a different slant below. For the present our concern is a historical perspective.

Literary stereotypes in ancient landscape.

Landscapes of the abstract variety appear in the first literature. Longus gives insight into amazing continuity. *Pastoralias* is a work of fiction within modern definitions. It contains much philosophy but is not of itself outwardly philosophical. A certain mockery in the plot, typical of pastoral literature, makes us ironically aware of grand and heroic themes in Greek tragedy. It is not the broad humour of the human condition portrayed by satire and Euripedean comedy. Turns of phrase and little patches of pastiche direct us to precedents for these marvels, but heroes are not of the Odysseus or Aeneas mould. Vergil's bucolic farmer has already been noted. With Lamon's orchard, we are directed towards Homer.

⁷. Murrin, M: *The allegorical epic*. London 1980. pp 18.

Alkinoos.

Most people are familiar with the Alkinoos episode in *Odyssey*. This royal and divine character also occurs in *Argonautica*. Somebody, Homer or a later scribe according to one's taste, has placed a descriptive passage of an orchard in the adventures of Odysseus on Alkinoos's polis [48]. In setting out an ideal polis as Homer considered it ought to be, here is the miraculous grove which stands for the community. The city state is, like the Lesbos of *Pastoralias*, an island. So are Homer's other important groves, Calypso's and Circe's. That of Alkinoos is their culmination. It is somewhere. Major allegorical subject matter from the text is woven into this *meraviglia*. Allegorical and didactic intentions are signalled from trees and form. Detail in its description makes it obvious that it is not a stereotype of its time. It became one later.

But without the courtyard, hard by the door, is a great orchard of four acres (four plough gates meaning four plough ways), and a hedge runs about it on either side. Therein grow trees, tall and luxuriant, pears and pomegranates and apple trees with their bright fruits, and sweet figs, and luxuriant olives. Of these the fruit perisheth not nor fails in winter or in summer, but lasts throughout the year; and ever does the west wind, as it blows, quicken to life some fruits and ripen others; pear upon pear waxes ripe, apple upon apple; cluster upon cluster, and fig upon fig. There too is his fruitful vineyard planted, one part of which, a warm spot on level ground, is being dried in the sun, while other grapes men are gathering, and others too, they are treading; but in front are unripe grapes that are shedding the blossom and others that are turning purple. There again by the last row of the vines, grow trim garden beds of every sort, blooming the year through, and therein are two springs, one of which sends its water throughout all the garden, while the other, over against it, flows beneath the threshold of the court towards the high house; from this the townsfolk draw their water. Such were the glorious gifts of the gods in the palace of Alkinoos.⁸

Spatial organisation reflects social space structure [48] [49]. Were it already a normal Greek orchard at the time of writing (or the time of performance) detailed description would have been inessential. It proselytises, projecting skills from a more advanced and settled order this orientalist Greek poet considers desirable. Obtuse inferences guide thought towards social and economic progress through political stasis, condensing the philosophy of the whole episode. Alkinoos is a king-ancestor of the order Odysseus has just

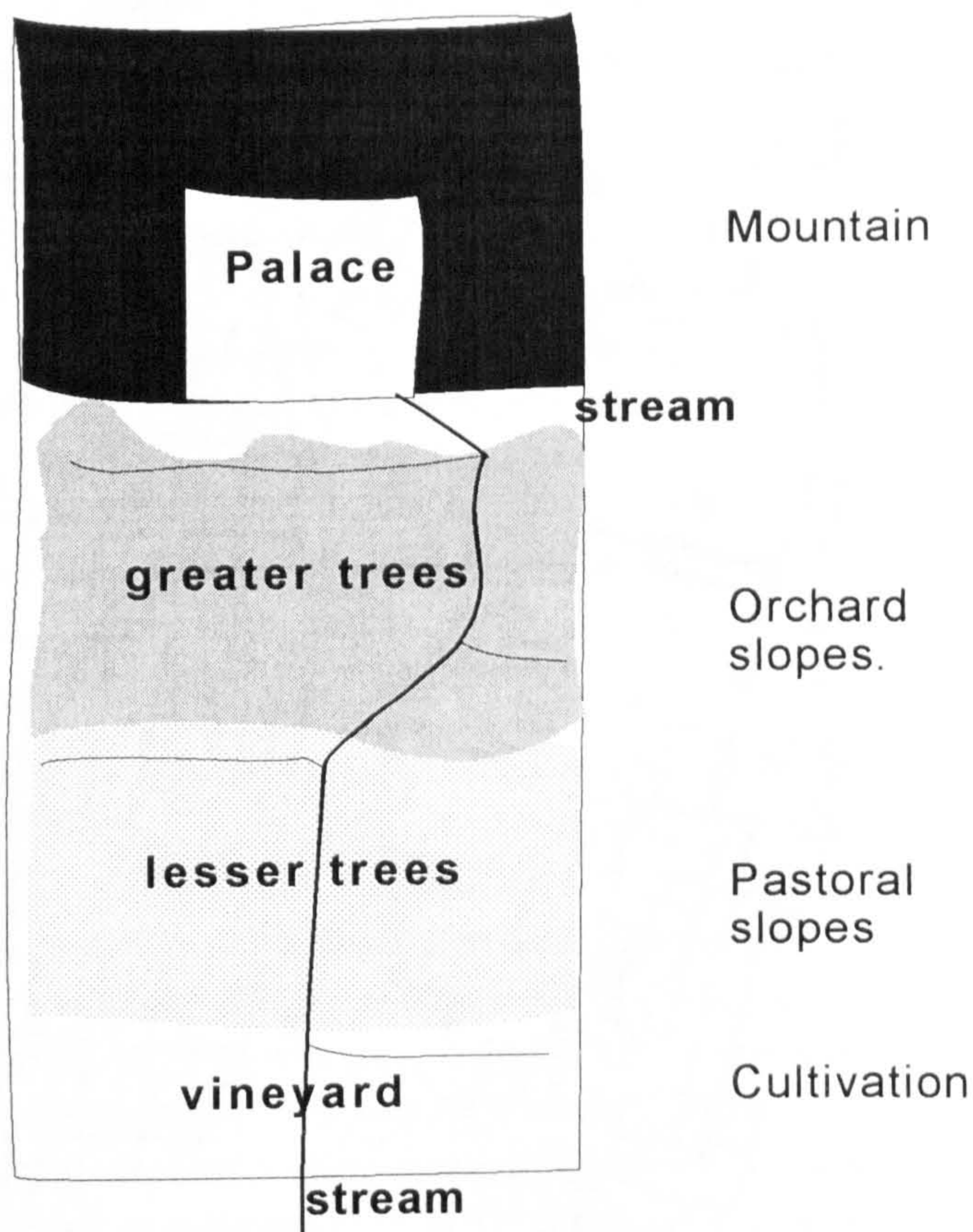
⁸. *Homer: Odyssey*. Loeb. VII.112-133.

Alkinoos - mighty mind
= Zeus. He who thinks.
Archetypal Homeric king.

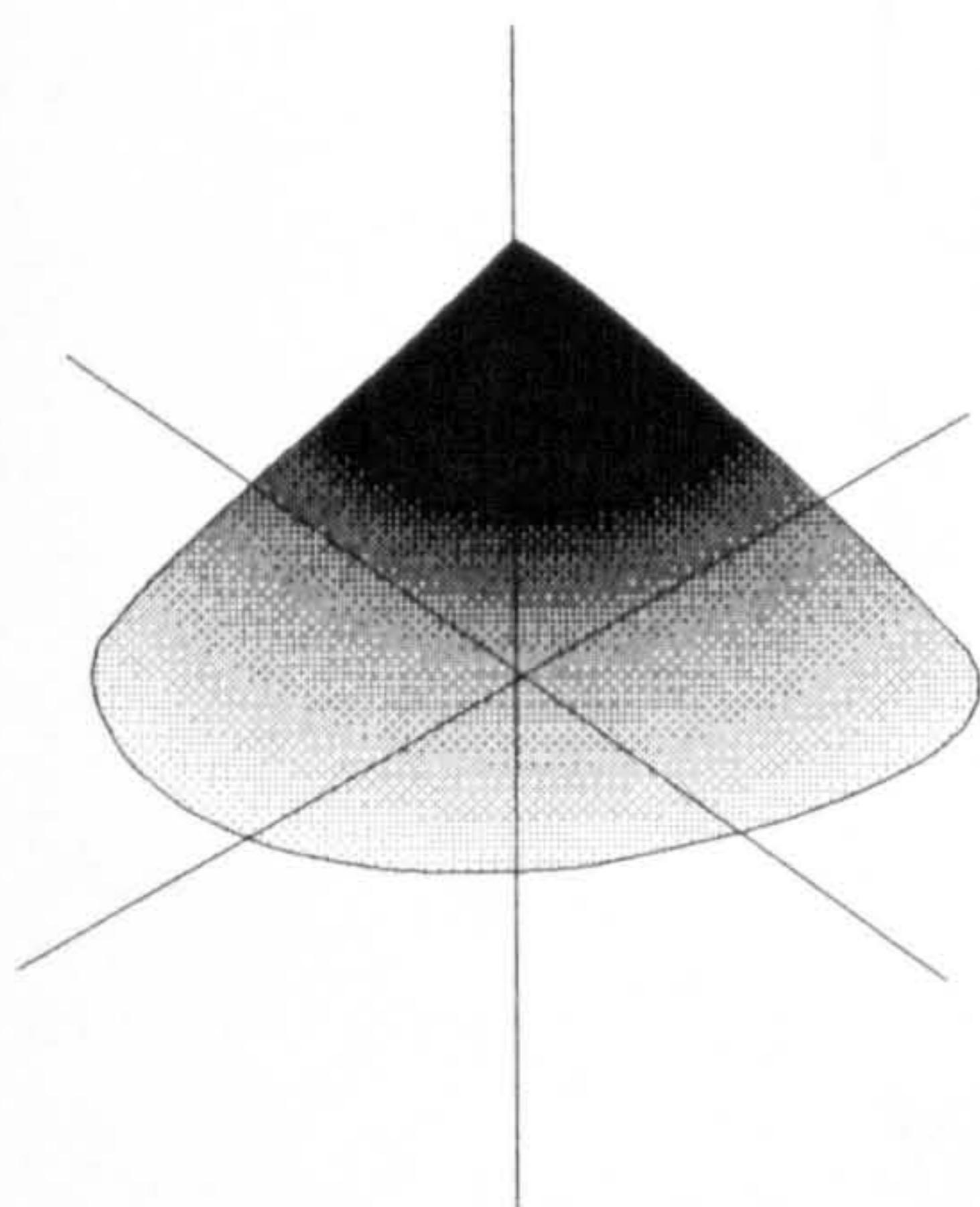
Olympians - those
who rule cosmic
order

Minor deities and
Hero-Daemons.
Intermediaries,

Humanity -
those who labour
in the vineyard.



schematic plan of grove

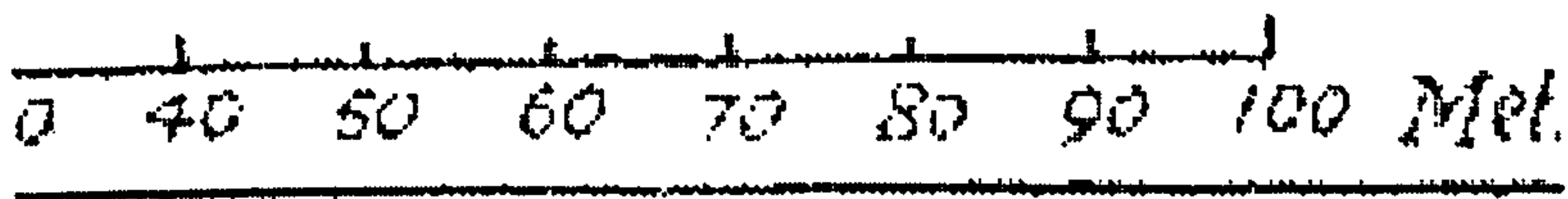
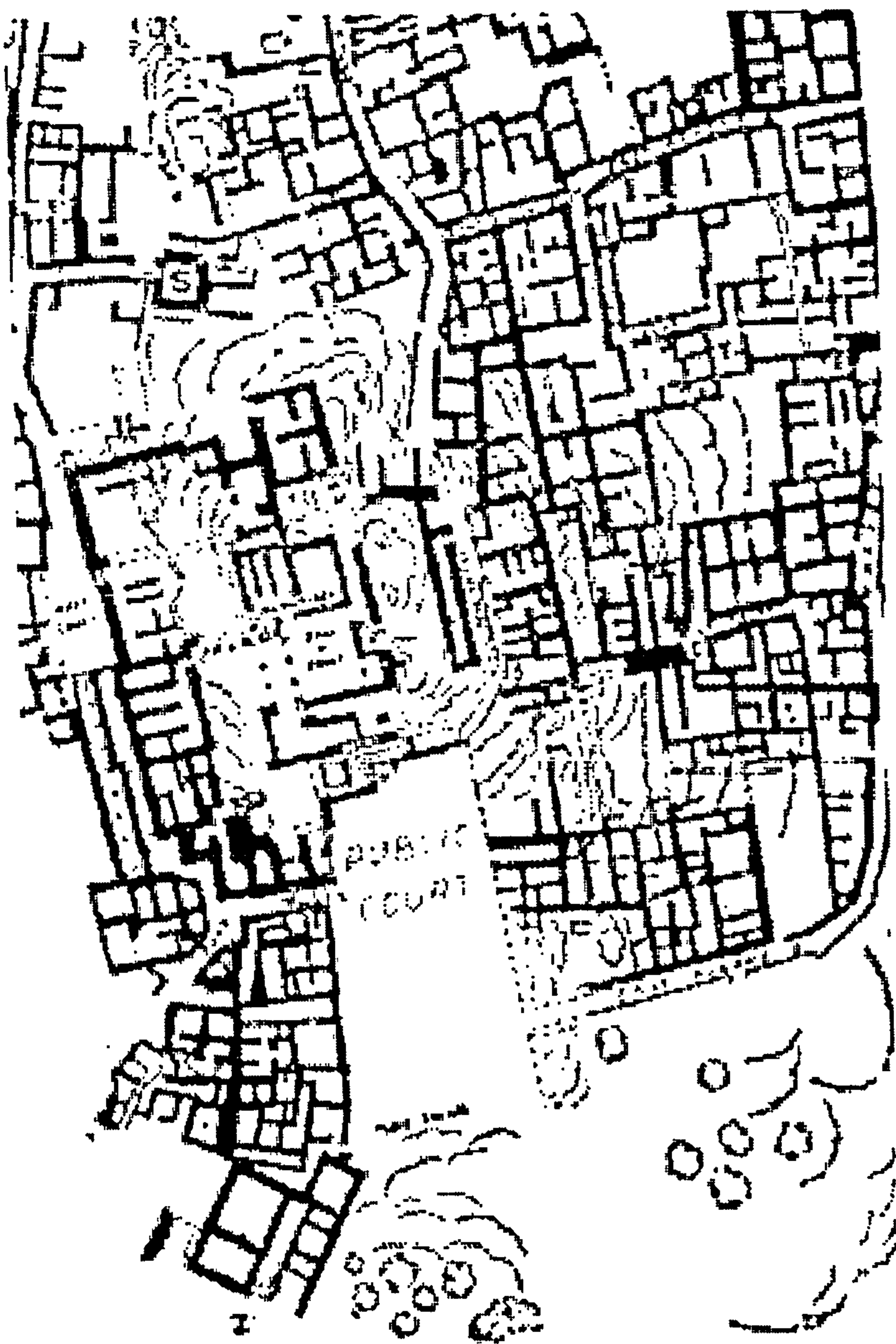


underlying idea

The description in Homer is of layout. It has slopes, is on an island, is an island. Implied is the mount - "olympus" - an oriental imported word. The culture of the grove is oriental, probably adapted from Judaic and Egyptian sources.

Alkinoos' palace Landscape is symbolic, Landscape masquerading as landscape. Its scheme is not concentric Egyptian but Mesopotamian like Cretan design. The diagram interprets the translated words, revealing essential layering. As a meraviglia it is process allegory representing dynamic events as abstract space as well as technological attainment. It fits within the scheme of the preceding plan of Cretan Gournia. It is a sacred mountain, Olympus; it represents political organisation of Olympus, promotes an ideal state on earth & Mesopotamian garden technology.

Alkinoos' famous grove



This plan of Gournia illustrates the position of Alkinoos' palace and grove better than most Mycenaean palatine town plans. The palace occupies the acropolis. At its gate is a great public court, which is the kind of space suggested by Homer's description of the spring issuing from the threshold of the palace into the great court to supply the populace. It is not too difficult to imagine an extensive grove descending the hillside to the bottom right of the plan, forming part of the approaches to the palace. It would be more compatible than the many suggestions made, like Tyrins, Mycenae, which have inadequate landscape space.

Homer's Alkinoos: plan of Gournia

helped to destroy. Statesmanship must be learned if Odysseus is to succeed on his return. Palace and orchard are memorable images of late Mycenaean culture, formal, almost ritualised. There is no evidence of a quadripartite pattern in the description of linear descending order from the palace gate reflecting a polis about the acropolis. Power is at the vertical head, not necessarily the geometric centre. This is a diagram of vertical space, where gods exchange power with peaceful heroes who enable their subjects realise ideals. Boscotrecase's frescos reflect this too, progressing from an environment filled with fears of the unknown, through simplicity, towards a peace that pivots on a mountain.

Date Stones.

Homer's garden, like his plot, has more ancient models. Some of them we know from the earliest literatures. Origins extend beyond that, unreachable. It also derives from ancient Semitic origins with recognisable precedent in Sumerian and Assyrian cultures, the Aramaic garden in Eden. Whilst it is impossible to reconstruct the detailed form of the most ancient grove gardens, we can discern certain patterns and even parts of their technical evolution.

Gilgamesh contains the most obvious source to which we can turn. Originally it offered an extended description of the petrified grove at the end of his dark mountain labyrinth. Most of it has been lost on broken tablets, so there is only a fragment whose cryptic condensed images indicate an oft repeated and well loved picture:

*After he has travelled twelve double hours, it is light,
Before him stand shrubs of precious stones, as he sees them he
draws nigh.*

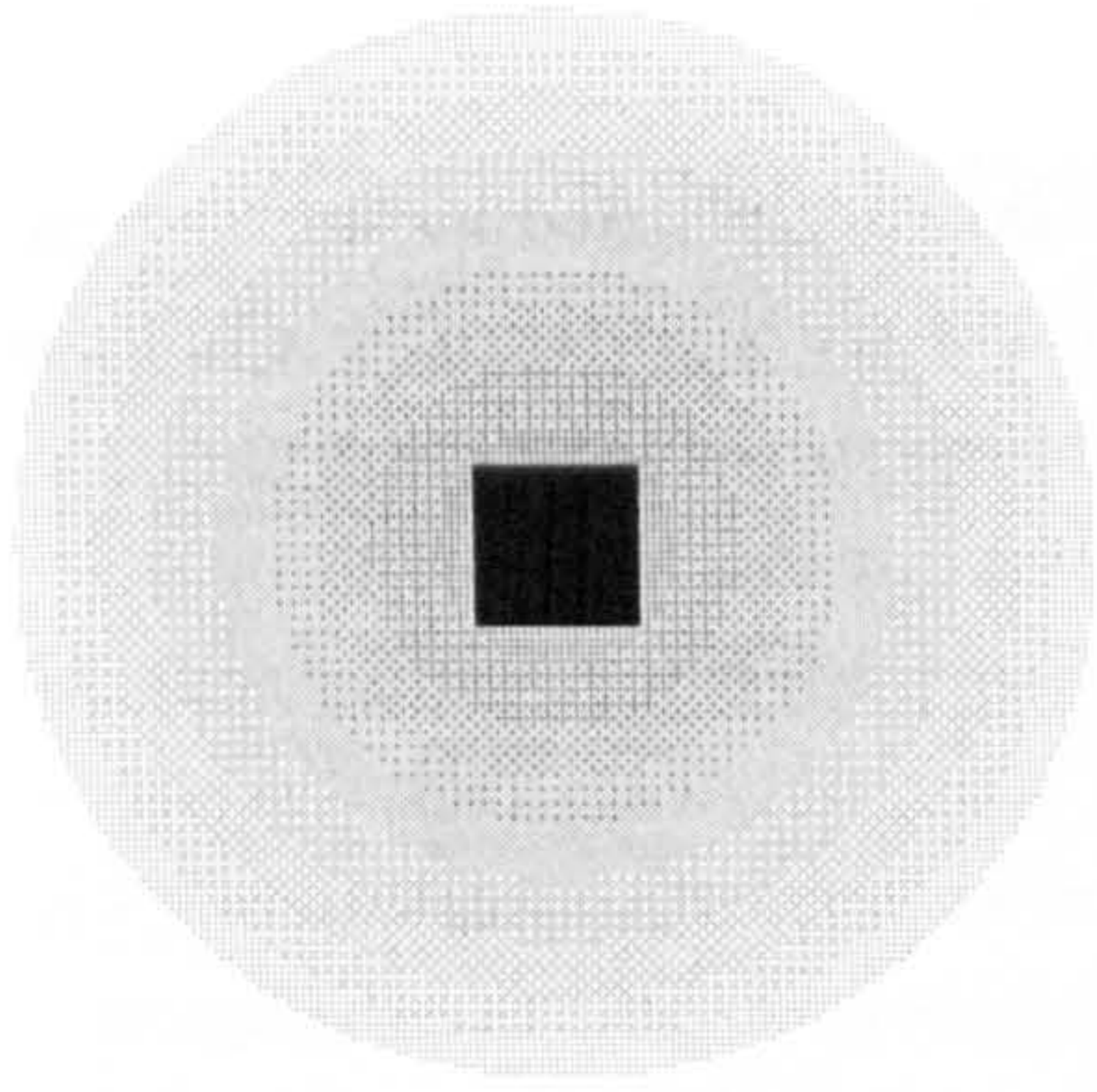
*The carnelian bears its fruit;
Vines hang from it, good to look at.*

The lapis lazuli bears

Also fruit it bears, pleasant to behold.⁹

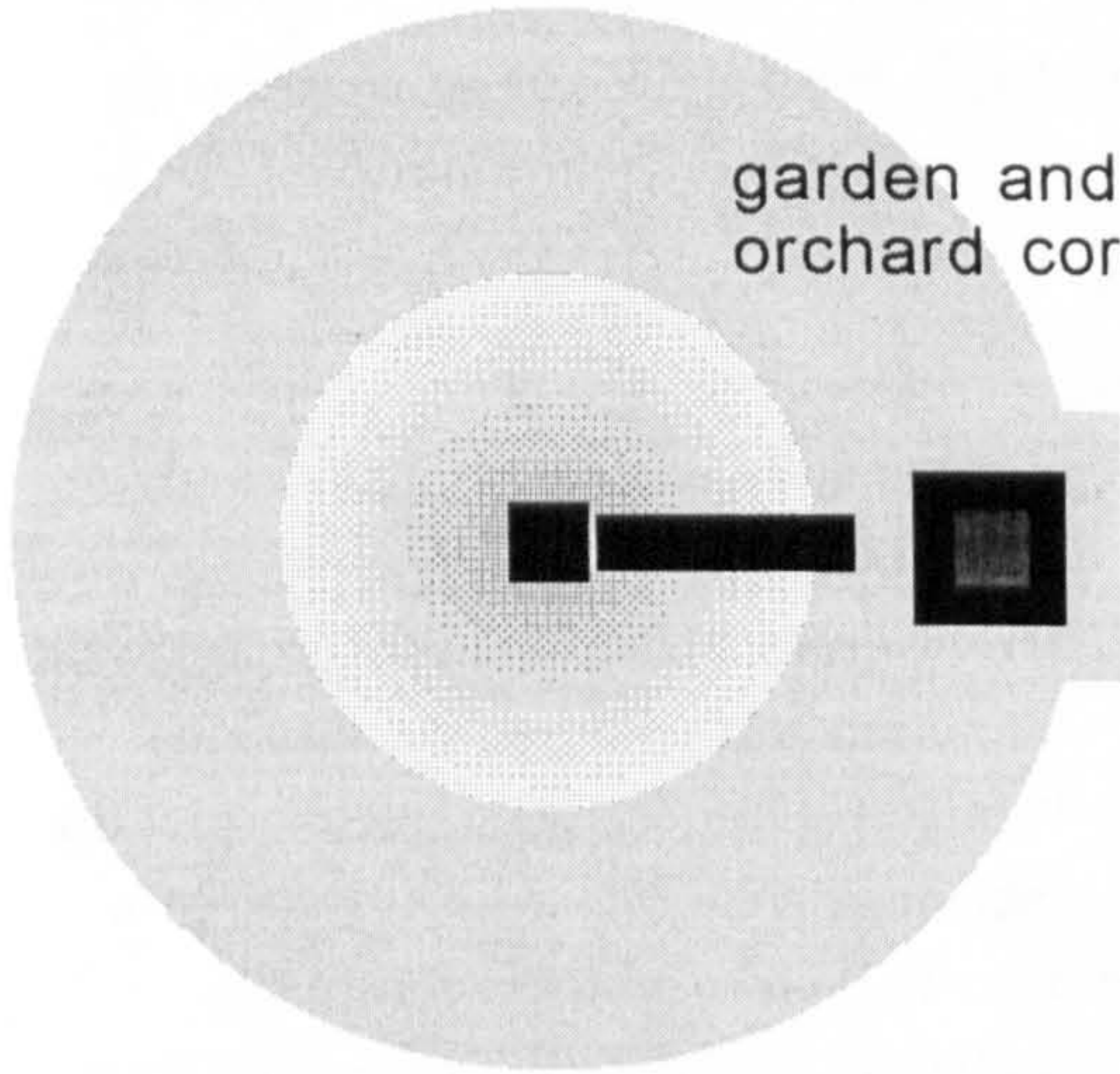
It has to be said that interpretation of this involves dubious exercises. The first process is transliteration from an ancient, variable, largely unknown pictogram alphabet. Modern kanji, which also presents simultaneous signs whose logic is instantaneous to literate Chinese, is problematical enough to approximate into the attenuated linear logic of linguistic syntax. Ancient Sumerian is all pitfalls. It is unlikely that we will ever know what these names of stones really stood for. We can only guess at purple and blue berries and ripening dates. Assuming the transliteration of "shrubs" to be correct, then this is a petrified version of a normal Sumerian fruit garden, and not a date grove. Only the general principle that

⁹. *Gilgamesh*. tr. Heidel, Sumerian version. Tablet IX: Column V: line 46 - 51.



Sumerian cities were concentric in their scheme set out from the centre. At the centre, on a hill, was the temple complex. After the institution of kinship, it was also a palace. Institutional fields and gardens surrounded it. Housing was dense, rich and poor living un-segregated, though at different scales. It was unplanned and autonomous. Gardens were outside the city.

Sumer - garden city

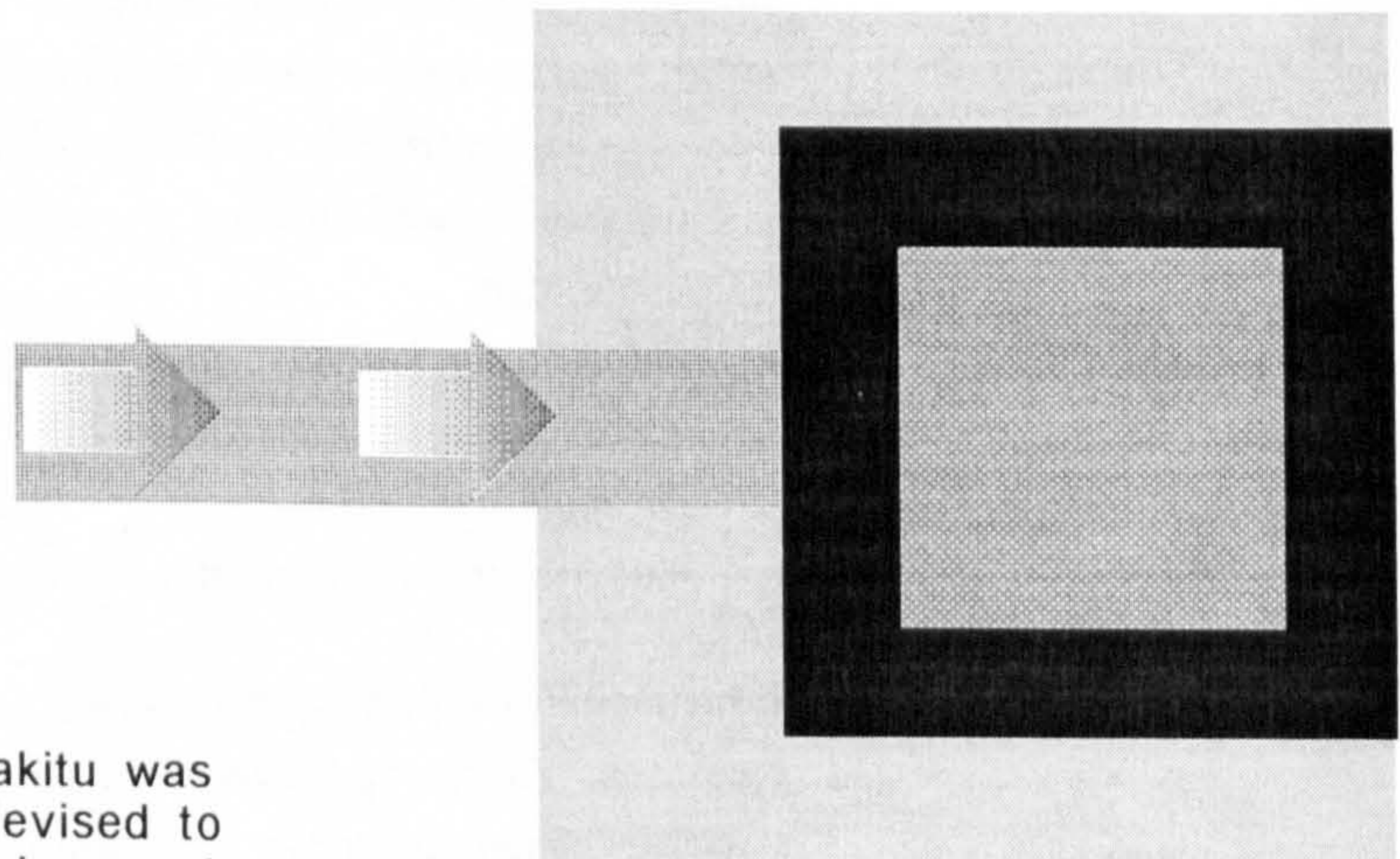


Among the citizen's gardens outside the built up area, was the Citizens' Garden later called Bit-akitu. It stood for THE garden and all gardens. Elaborate festivals attached included epiphanyes and deaths of kings or king-priests, a reverse epiphany or return.

city and garden

Bit-akitu epitomised Sumer's agricultural technology. It had the best irrigation, outside its peristyle temple a grand grove of date palms each set in its own pit. It introduced arriving kings or emissaries to qualities the culture most valued. From it kings processed to the city whence he was escorted to the ceremonial centre by a festive crowd. When the time came, the priest-king was sent into dreamtime through the same route.

The peristyle court of the Bit-akitu was heavily planted and irrigated devised to create the lushest possible environment. All the technology which had created cultural wealth was brought together here. In it family rites from private gardens assumed civic proportion, exchanged with gods via priest kings. Early democratic privilege was later appropriated by totalitarian kings & conquerors.



peristyle court & grove

Bit-akitu - THE garden schematic plans

this is presented as a "marvel" can be interpreted with any security. Clues are given about its ordering though:

Siduri the barmaid, who dwells by the edge of the sea

Dwells

For her they made a jug, for her they made an olden mashing vat.

She is covered with a veil

The barmaid looks into the distance;

She says to her heart words,

With herself:

Surely this is a murderer!

Whither is he bound ?

When the barmaid saw him she barred

She barred her gate, barring it,.....

.....

"Barmaid, what didst thou see

That thou hast barred thy gate?

I shall smash door and break gate.¹⁰

Heidel's "Barmaid" approximates Siduri's functions. Kramer's "Ale wife" is more to the point.¹¹ She was the consort of Shamash, the sun god. As such, like any good wife in a Sumerian summer orchard, she kept control of the beer supply held at the entrance to his garden for guests and workers and controlled who entered [50]. Her ministrations were available to kings who wished to depart this world without the gory glory of battle.¹² One of the functions of the *Bit Akitu* was to celebrate the triumph of death, the passage from one dream, that of kingship, to another which was godlike and eternal.¹³ The passage, entirely voluntary, was eased by the presence of a woman at the entrance, who doled out narcotic beer from a gold cauldron.¹⁴ Siduri's veil is her attribute as bringer of peaceful death. She is invisible and therefore not a frightening apparition. Grove and ceremonial way celebrated the triumph of a new king's arrival. In the grove temple he stopped the night. When morning came he processed to the eastern entrance to the city with the rising sun, welcomed as a god by a bacchic crowd. In like manner it was the focus of the biannual New Year orgy. This *Bit Akitu* was a temple garden or garden temple which lay outside the city along a ceremonial way. It was the state's ritual orchard, profusely watered and planted, with many date palms. Symbol of all orchards, it was the realm of deities personified in kingship.

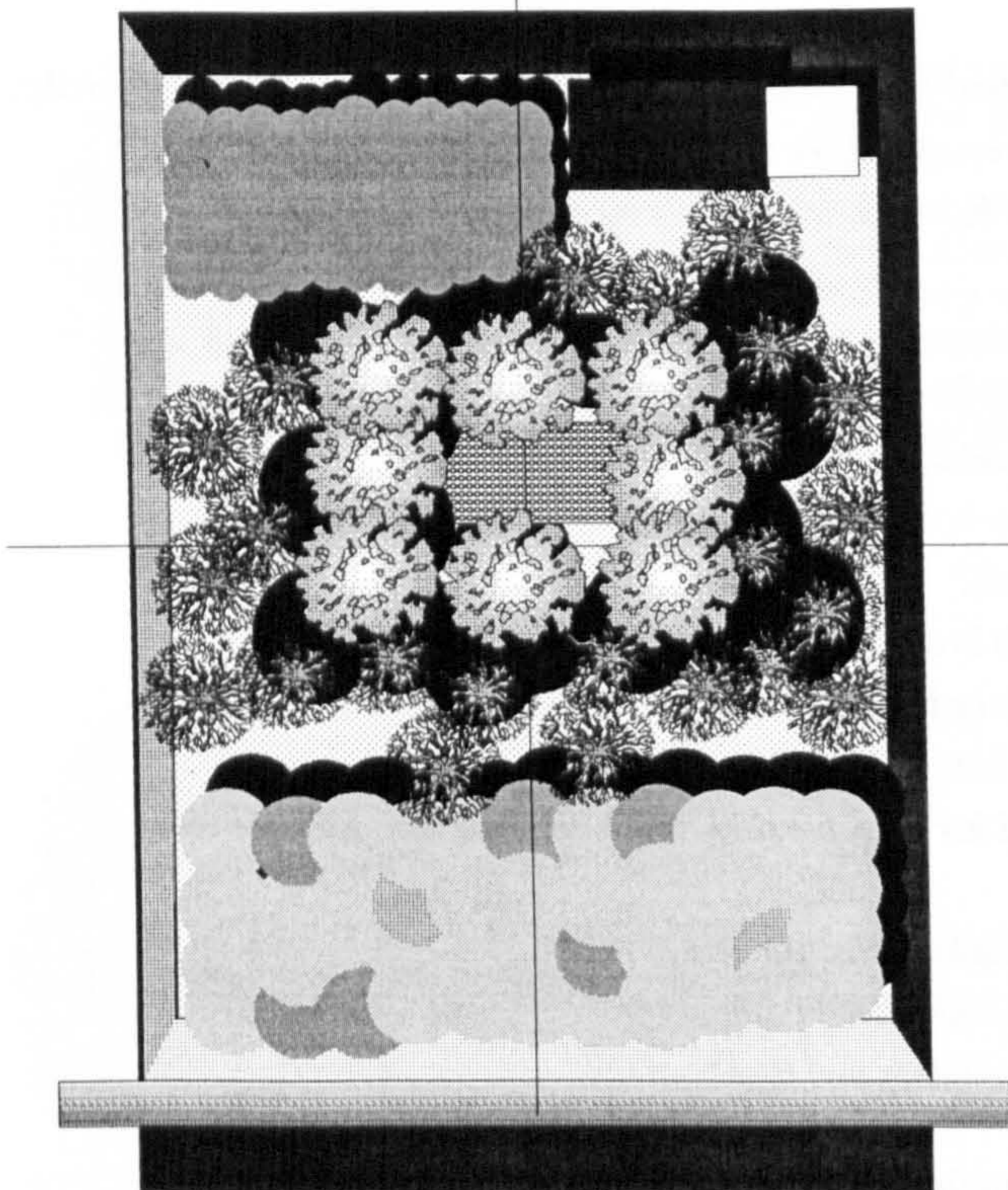
¹⁰. *Gilgamesh*. Heidel's Assyrian version. Tablet X: col. I: lines 1 - 19.

¹¹. *Kramer, S.N. tr.: Gilgamesh Epic*. From *Pritchard 1958*. (title lost) apologies)

¹². *Frankfort, H.: Before philosophy*. London 1949. pp 147. Sumerians assumed identity between men and gods. Attributes were shared, as they were between gods, a "realistic" mirror of humanity where we use the metaphor still "to borrow" the eye, ear, or nose of another for a special purpose.

¹³. It was not available to any others than these priest kings. Everybody else went into the oblivion of Gilgamesh's mountain maze.

¹⁴. Most surely the origin of the many-breasted Artemis of later mythographers.



watchtower, summer
arbour and gate

lesser trees form cordon

great trees at centre near
irrigation pond & well

irrigation system
balancing pond,
well and channels
plots centralised for
practical reasons;
became enshrined for
mnemonic reasons

fruiting bushes fed
by irrigation channels

ground plane covered with
plants to reduce evaporation

surrounding bank & barrier
of thorn bushes

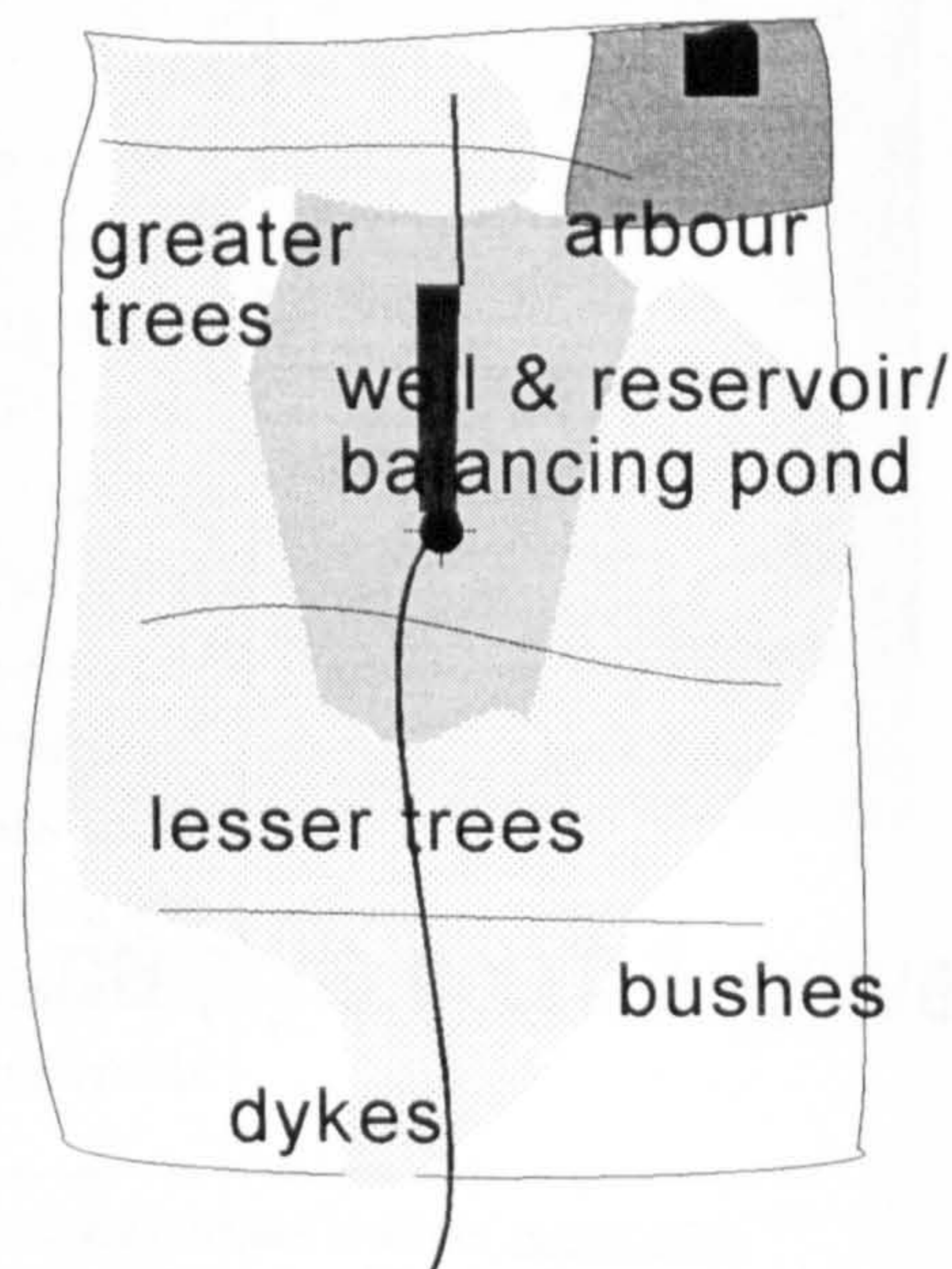
irrigation channels

Plan

N.B. Information for this reconstruction is derived from transliterations of numerous Sumerian fragments by Heidel, Kramer and others.

TECHNOLOGY

Formidable underlying technology made these orchards possible. It needed a combination of communal organisation and civil engineering techniques. Water entering dykes from canals was controlled; surrounding banks and dry hedges encouraged deposition of silt from floods; wells supplied ground water to extend growth season; balancing ponds allow efficiency of canal intake and control of well water; they also provide fish.



Sumerian orchard - reconstruction

Each of these celebrations had a pattern that was both welcome and farewell, a place of important transitions. A love garden and a death garden, it was the province of Ishtar, whom we met earlier in her more savage guise as Astarte, geometric in layout.¹⁵

To gain any insight at all into form, we must examine the principles underlying the Mesopotamian orchard and garden [51]. The two might originally have been distinct, but became merged by the introduction of new techniques under the tutelage of a dream Innana (Sumer's Ishtar). Everything worked by irrigation in the river plains. Long periods lapsed between rainfalls. The landscape was almost entirely man-made. River banks, channel margins and ditches were pastoral. In these areas vegetation remained longest fit for grazing. They are the topic of social comment in a poem dealing with problems of dominance and conflict between pastoral communities and cultivators:

*He rejoiced, he rejoiced on the riverbank loam, he rejoiced,
On the riverbank, the shepherd on the riverbank rejoiced,
The shepherd moreover, led the sheep on the riverbank.
To the shepherd walking to and fro on the riverbank
To him who is a shepherd, the farmer approached,
The farmer Enkimdu approached.
Dmuzi the farmer, the king of dyke and ditch,
In his plain, the shepherd in his plain starts a quarrel with him.¹⁶*

Orchards and gardens were criss-crossed with a hierarchy of ditches, controlled by sluice boards in rivers operated by officials. When the rivers ran too low in summer, a deep well supplied water. Plots were surrounded by a low dyke and ditch. The dyke served a dual purpose. It captured valuable silt in the flood waters, and it protected the ground surface from the current erosion. They were enclosed when cities were not. This might have been to keep out animals, but they were also guarded during fruit growing to keep out human intruders.

To make the most of an efficiently regulated irrigation system, there must have been some kind of balancing reservoir for each plot or a co-operative group of plots. This would take the water as it flowed from the ditch, allowing its distribution over a period of a few hours. Such ponds existed, and were also used to supply fish. This would produce the pattern familiar from the description of the garden in Eden, where the best trees were those at the centre reserved for the lord, subject to severe proscriptions.¹⁷ Watchers in

¹⁵. Which she also has in Mesopotamian times, for Gilgamesh skillfully and assiduously avoids her ministrations. The often noted heretical aspect of Gilgamesh could be in this refusal to accept the dream.

¹⁶. *Kramer, S.N.: History begins at Sumer.* ?????? pp 203.

¹⁷. This is symbolised in an antique mural from Sa. Maria Maggiore (*Tholos & Delta* in Chapter Nine below).

an aristocratic garden were sometimes slaves from subject tribes or invaders. It appears that they were permitted to eat a proportion of the produce, but not from reserved trees. These patterns persisted in the Semitic Near East until modern times. The logical form to arise from these known factors is of a platform, raised above the general ground level and with a symmetrical layout. This layout could have been centrifugal, as in the quartered garden, or linear as that of Alkinoos.

From another very jolly large scale poem we learn of a new technique:

*He lifted up his eyes towards the lands below
 Looked up at the stars in the east,
 Lifted up his eyes towards the lands above,
 Looked up at the stars in the west,
 Gazed at the auspicious inscribed heaven,
 From the inscribed heaven learned the omens,
 Saw there how to carry out the divine laws,
 Studied the decrees of the gods.
 In the garden, in five to ten unapproachable places,
 In those places he planted one tree as a protecting cover,
 The tree's protecting cover - the sarbatu tree of wide shade
 Its shade below, dawn,
 Noon and dusk did not turn away.¹⁸*

Inferences in this are profound and many. Those which concern us are fortunately fewer and simpler. Firstly it records in detail a form of cultivation still current. That it records it in detail we know means didactic intentions, proselytising something fairly new. It suggests an average sized vegetable garden which must be quite large to accommodate five to ten trees with spreading canopies. Another unavoidable assumption is that these gardens have wilderness patches - unapproachable places - which suggests a northern Mesopotamian origin for the poem. This is confirmed by the preceding passage which gives the reason for this technique as protection from wild sere winds off the mountains. What a positive attitude towards the apeiron of the skies too, sensing from its chaotic and primordial wilderness those patterns which shape human needs. Inspiration and intellect combine perfectly in meditative counsel. The numbers five to ten are also quite significant. It is not too difficult to imagine their incorporation into some magical official incantation, arriving at the spatial logic of the quincunx. Elsewhere Humbaba codifies Gilgamesh's conquest of wilderness, for Humbaba was not merely a monster. He was

¹⁸. From *Kramer 1958*.

visualised as the coiled intestines of the earth, a creature of the Great Goddess, the labyrinth.

Ancient cultures were ecological but not flawlessly so. Prominent negative aspects arose in the agricultural technologies of permanent settlement. Irrigation was one of the less irresponsible techniques evolved. Even that ultimately led from super-abundance to arid salinity, even in the time of Cyrus I, when its negative aspects were known. Its development continues even now, and in the extremes of Middle Eastern and north African climates the salinity is intensified. "Mesopotamia" writes Robert Byron, "a land of mud deprived of mud's only possible advantage, vegetable fertility. It is a mud plain, so flat that a single heron, reposing on one leg beside some trickle of water in a ditch, looks as tall as a wireless aerial. From this plain rise villages of mud and cities of mud. The rivers flow with liquid mud. The air is composed of mud refined into a gas. The people are mud coloured; they wear mud coloured clothes, and their national hat is nothing more than a formalised mud-pie."¹⁹ Evolution of shade tree gardening probably alleviated the salination process, delaying the ultimate nadir by reducing evaporation of irrigation water to small scale crops. Parallel with our current concern for destruction of world ecosystems was wholesale felling of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern pine and cedar forests for cash crops, either by robbery, as in *Gilgamesh*, or mercantile processes as practised by the Minoans. A spoliation of natural space consequent on this, combined with cultic or religious appropriations as well as cultivation, created a wholly different kind of ecosystem, particularly on the islands.²⁰ Natural space appropriated by post-Neolithic societies, tends to be regarded as owned rather than custodial space, no longer the realm of Gaia. This is less sophisticated than the careful management practised by nomadic aboriginal Australians.

Much more material is available inside these most ancient poems, since poetry was the only way early language was made to communicate. It was transposed learning verse, a mnemonic device for ritual precision. We arrive at forms differing from the traditional orchard, with a small number of trees of specific type whose sole purpose is to protect delicate crops and humans. That we have met, in Lamon's grove. An important implication is that these differed from orchards. Both forms bear striking resemblances to those celebrated in classical and Hellenistic Greek literature from two thousand years later. Surely too, the hybrid of these two forms is

¹⁹ *Byron, R: The road to Oxiana*. London 1937. Irak 27th September par. 2.

²⁰ Lack of knowledge of the full consequences was the reason. But without it the phenomenon we call civilisation might not have appeared. Certainly the two things ran concurrently. Forests disappeared at a speed commensurate with that of the appearance of cities.

the foundation of the Persian paradeisoi from the same area, already in existence by Longus' time?

There are no Boscotrecase landscapes lurking there! There might be somewhere else from the same period:

*I built my house, a shrine, in a pure place, I called it with a good name,
I built my Abzu, a shrine, in a ... I decreed a good fate for it.
My house -its shade stretches over the snake marsh,
My house, its ... wears a beard among the honey plants
The carp wave their tail to him in the small reeds,
The sparrows chirp in their ...
The lofty marshland, my favourite spot,
Stretches out its arm to me, bends its neck to me
The oarsmen drew on the oar in unison,
Sing sweet songs, cause the river to rejoice ...
I would watch over its green cedars ...²¹*

Remove the more specific references, and this poem encapsulates ambiances of Campanian villas, its mood approaching that of the frescos. Not much further into the text we find: "Sumer, great mountain, country of the universe, filled with enduring light." Those cosmic references do not depart far from the images at Boscotrecase.

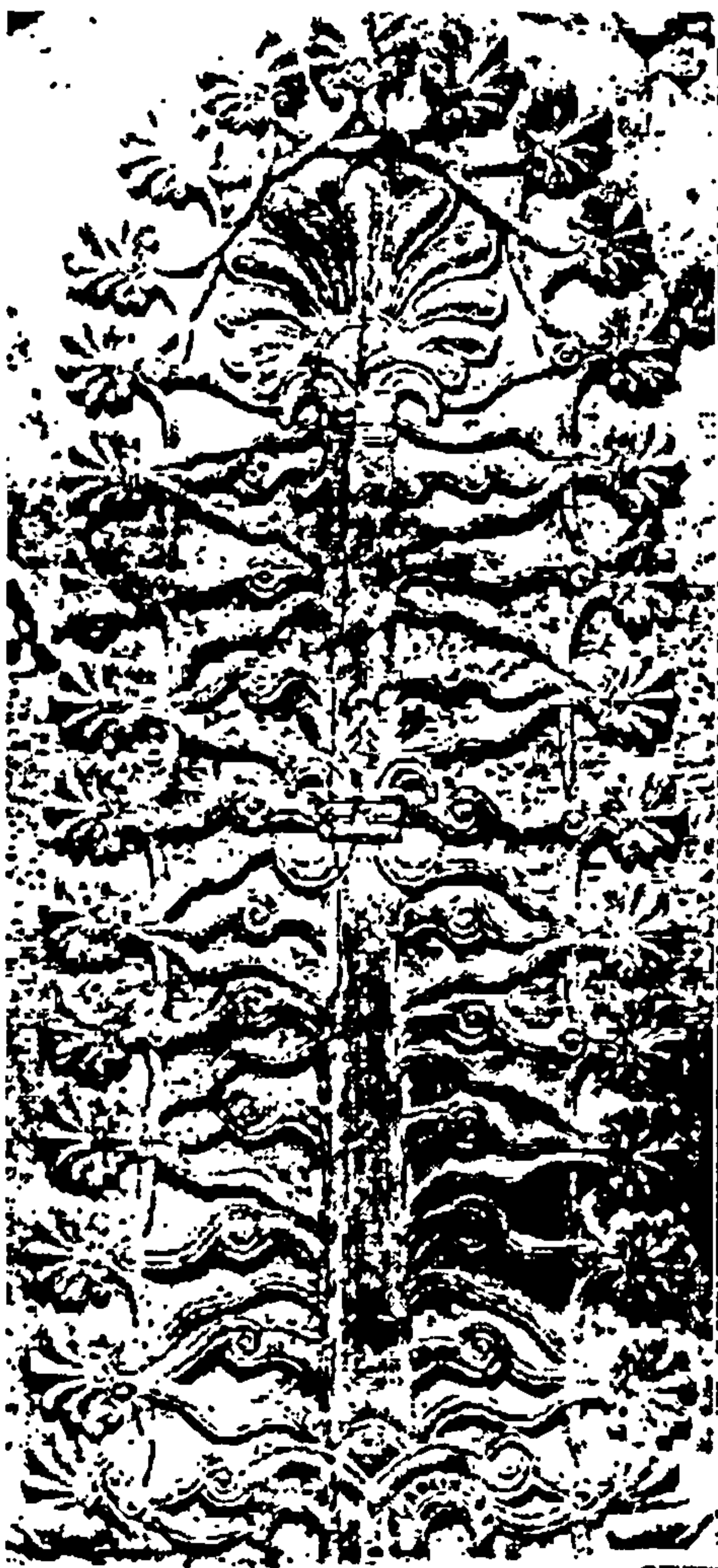
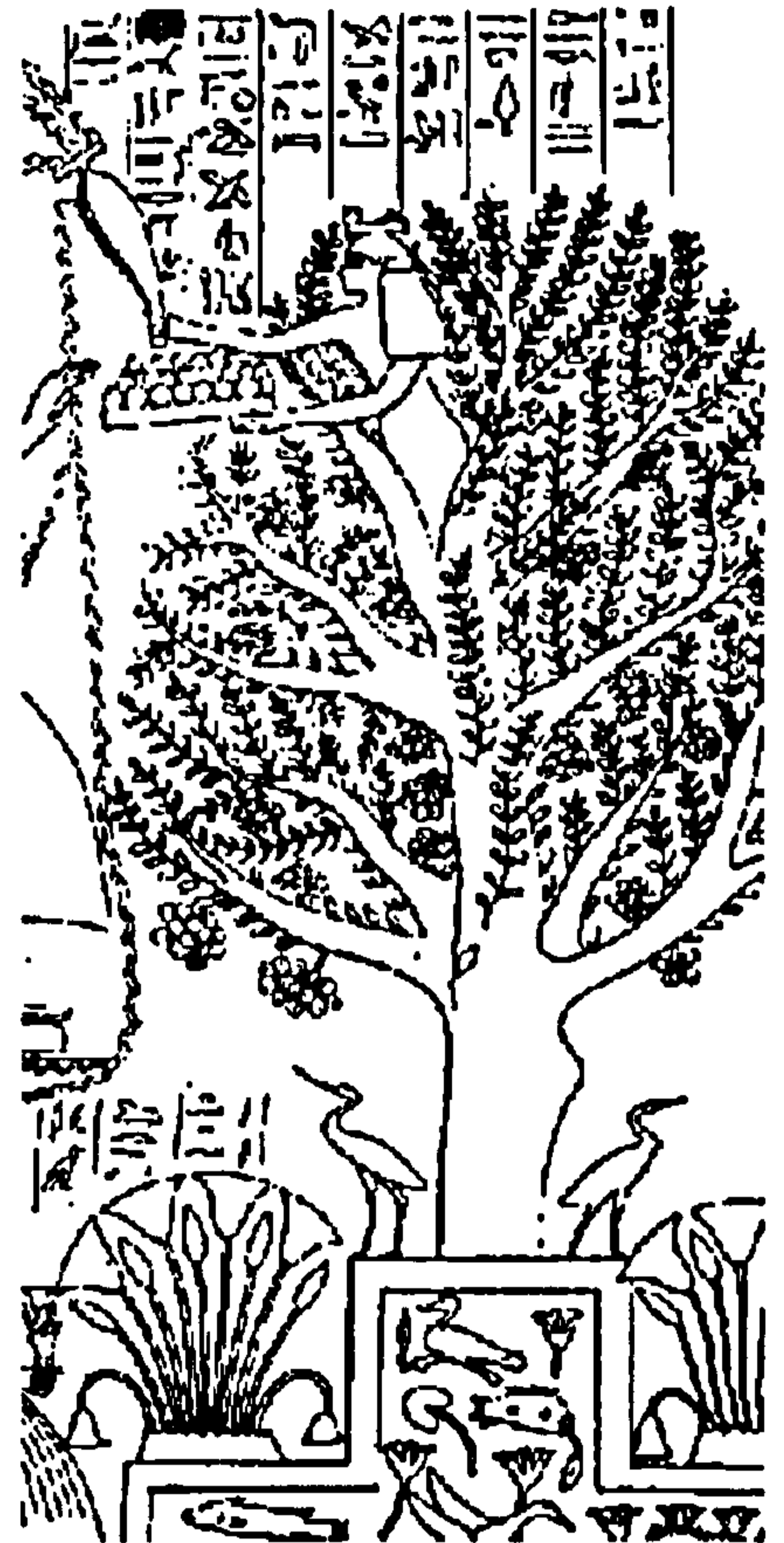
That Other Garden.

Semitic culture perpetuated the mythic quality of *garden* in another way. It is the way with which Western thought is most familiar, deriving from Jewish tribal Genesis. Extant in Homer's time, it derives in a similar manner from similar sources to the kingly orchard of Alkinoos. Its form is completely encapsulated though, and not in any way descriptive. Only salient features are mentioned. Rather significantly, they resemble those of the grove of Shamash in *Gilgamesh*. Like the garden of the Bit-Akitu, it is a place of passage, transient but substantial. Dreamy euthanasia has been replaced by a more realistic exile, enforced by winter and the advent of adulthood. An earthly garden, the myth holds many characteristics which survived in Near Eastern horticulture, at least into the 1930's.²² It freezes a prosperous Mesopotamian orchard that was already a stereotype when the myth was originated.

²¹ Kramer, S.N.: *History begins at Sumer*, pp 65.

²² See Brock-Utne, A: *Gottesgarten. Der: eine vergleichende religionsgeschichtliche Studie*. Oslo 1936. This is an exhaustive and detailed study of the origins and inner significances of the Genesis garden. The author sets it into the Palestinian perspective of his time (1934) and analyses very carefully the social perspectives inherent in the mythic encapsulations. It is this which has made possible much of our Sumerian reconstruction.

Right. Egyptian iconography has the tree of life and death - a passage image - growing from the "waters of the depths"; this links with later substitution of tree and tholos. It most probably derives from much earlier associations. In ancient Sumerian gardens the greatest trees grew nearest the source (well or reservoir). Below: Sacred tree on the earth mountain flanked by the bulls of the goddess Innana. Mountains were forested in Babylonian times, a source of water; the moon goddess was rain deity.



Nimur IXcBC sacred tree



The garden from the Judaic Genesis has many precedents in more ancient cultures whose continuity enabled their expression in more graphic way.

That other garden - Edenic stereotypes in host cultures

The landscape it inhabits is verdant and abundant, watered by four rivers. Like its Mesopotamian stereotype, a central grove contains reserved trees [52] [12]. It is either a temple garden set aside for the gods, or a lordly garden set aside for the owner to share with the gods. The prevalence of this feature leads inevitably to at least one practical element of layout. This is the centrality of the well. Well and balancing reservoir work together as efficiently as balancing reservoir and riverine irrigation. In both, the reservoir, kept in shade by the trees whose growth it encourages, takes the initial influx of water, allowing it to be distributed by the simple method of hoeing small dams in internal irrigation channels, releasing them in their turn whilst continuing the flow. When using controlled water from river sluices, the reservoir prevents an erosive rush of water and provides a holding.

The other features of this Aramaic orchard grove - probably a temple grove, for it contains many trees in the manner of the Bit-Akitu - are also salient in all mythic concepts of garden. Intense joy and yearning are both present. If we look at the death ceremony of a Sumerian court, we find peace and contentment at leaving a dream to enter another reality, another dream accessed through a garden. Like Siduri, the ale-wife at the gate controlled who had the dreams and who did not in this voluntary act. There must always have been some sense of loss among those left behind. This ritual act also related to the more normal garden society of Sumer. In the spring the young approaching puberty took over guardianship of the orchards. They continued in this role until after the field harvest. Following that event, the populace retired to their orchards to prepare for the fruit harvest. In autumn, the young who had started their guardianship in the spring had found sexual partners. Mass marriages in November consummated these liaisons, revealing an ingrained garden custom. The whole family left garden for home in autumn, for bitter cold descended quickly. For two reasons the carefree naked summer existence of the young ceased at this point and they took over the beginnings of adult responsibility. For the adults in the garden, beer was plentiful, supplied by the owner's wife at the gate, a kind of regulated, happy oblivion. The concept later to emerge of Dionysos as a generator of song and dance, of Orphic release and orgiastic release, both, was originated. Artemis and Apollo emerge too in their role of harbingers of easy death from Siduri and Shamash in their eternal garden. No doubt the sun god, depicted with flames and wings, provided the image of cherubim, fortified with brilliance and flaming sword, as guardian of the gate, reinforcing its temple(um) characteristics. Landscape and vivid

illumination, cognitive and metaphysical, have this early association, also found in Iranian worship of Mazda, Zoroastrianism.

Kings' house and garden.

Homes for dead kings perpetuated an early Anatolian custom. Charnel houses depicted on reliefs from the neighbourhood of Catal-Huyuk in 6000BC were large reed structures, ornamented with decorative devices on terminal points which tied up the bundled ends. They existed concurrently with stone and plastered rectilinear palace architecture compressed into labyrinthine citadels, reflecting an obsolete form of dwelling perpetuated through rite.²³ Excavations at Passargadae, built for the Persians immediately after their conquest of Mesopotamia by Ionian masons in the oriental Greek style, reveal extensive formal gardens watered by stone irrigation channels.²⁴ Not far distant, on an axis with the ceremonial hall, is the tomb of Cyrus II. Arrian tells us that this was set in an irrigated enclosure, sadly neglected, during Alexander's campaign, the massive masonry palace-tomb still visible above its thicket. The style has affinities with Lydian stepped tombs which resembled a chamber on a miniature pyramid. Cyrus's tomb is a two storey structure set on a pyramidal base whose steps are each almost two metres high. In the charge of magi, it was a hunting parkland, linked with the palace by attenuated axes.

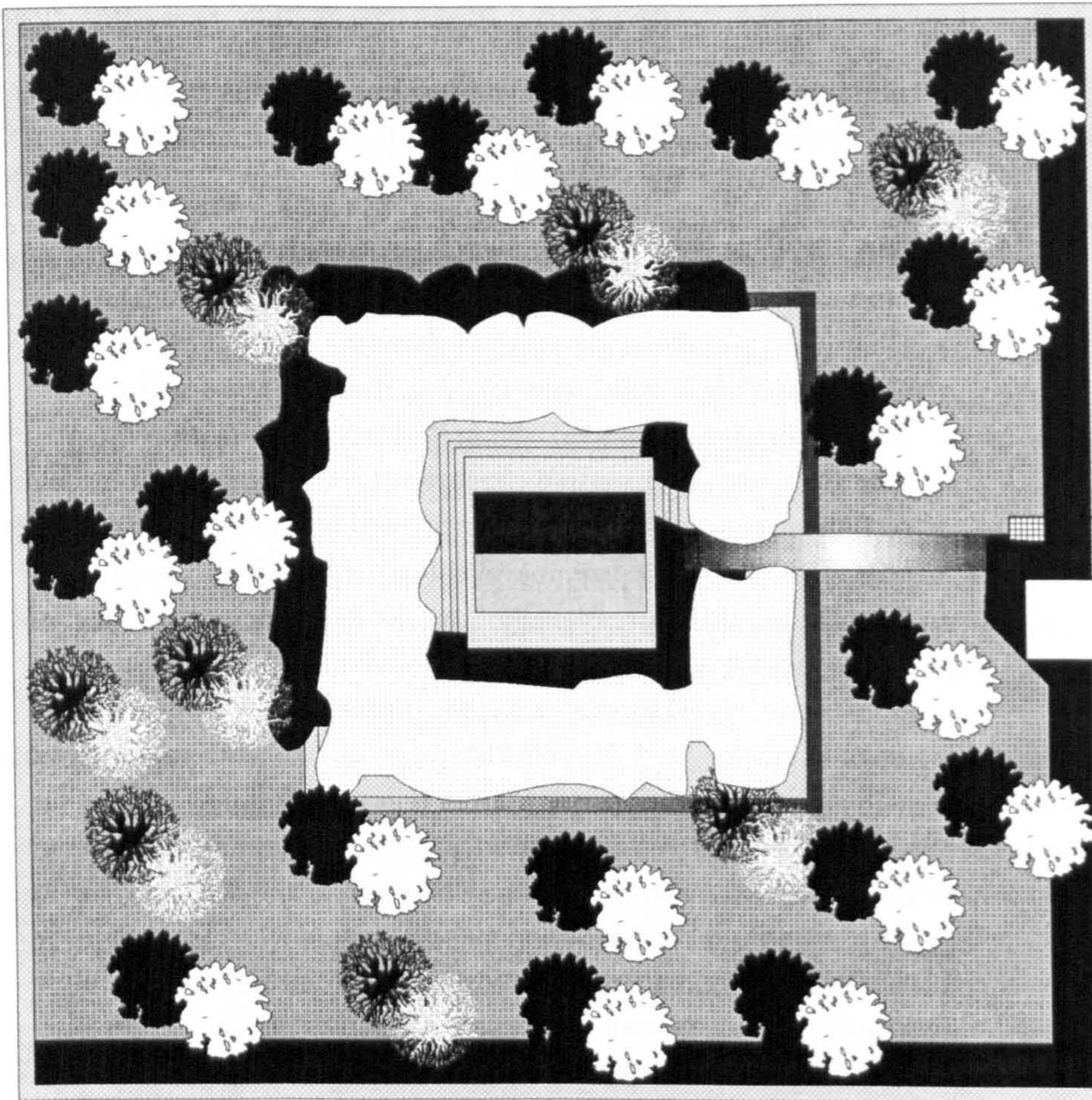
We may perhaps conjecture its original setting [[55] [56]. Its enclosure would be irrigated, as was the parkland [53] [54]. The priests, whose task it was to mediate for Cyrus's soul, were supported from its orchard in the manner of those Sumerian child guardians and the gift of sheep. There is a thicket around the tomb and an orchard with flowery grass for grazing. One should expect symmetry. The tomb, a king's home, symbolically occupies the focal place of the well in those ancient orchards, just as that of Alkinoos is the water source for orchard and polis.²⁵ Home for a dead emperor, its layout would refer to precedent, an archaic style. Elements of the great palace of Passargadae might reasonably be expected.²⁶ Irrigation channels could have been stone, later rifled for recycling, or of puddled earth (as most canals). Either technology was available. Since the balancing reservoir is likely to have been part of the technology of ancient Mesopotamia, its presence could have been part of this space, providing additional food for the priest. This is conjectural, but possible and practical, and we know it

²³. Dead were buried under divans in the rooms of these citadels. (*Mellaart, R: Catal Huyuk*).

²⁴. *Nylander, C: Ionians in Passargadae: studies in old Persian architecture*. Uppsala 1970.

²⁵. Again, refer to the murals from Sa. Maria Maggiore.

²⁶. It is interesting, perhaps significant, that there is no evidence in the architectural symbols of those elements which might indicate a nomadic background such as were incorporated into the ceremonial architecture of Rome (eg. baldachins) or Alexander.



Tomb of Cyrus II

entrance

Magi's house

**sketch plan
reconstruction
based on
remains &
Arrian's
description**

Cyrus employed Greek Ionian architects to design Passargadae. They used many of their own techniques and architectural details. His tomb is within the park of this palatine city. Its form is similar to that of Lydian chest tombs with their miniature stepped pyramidal bases. A chest tomb which resembles an early building type is set on a stepped base, each rise of which is about 2 metres.

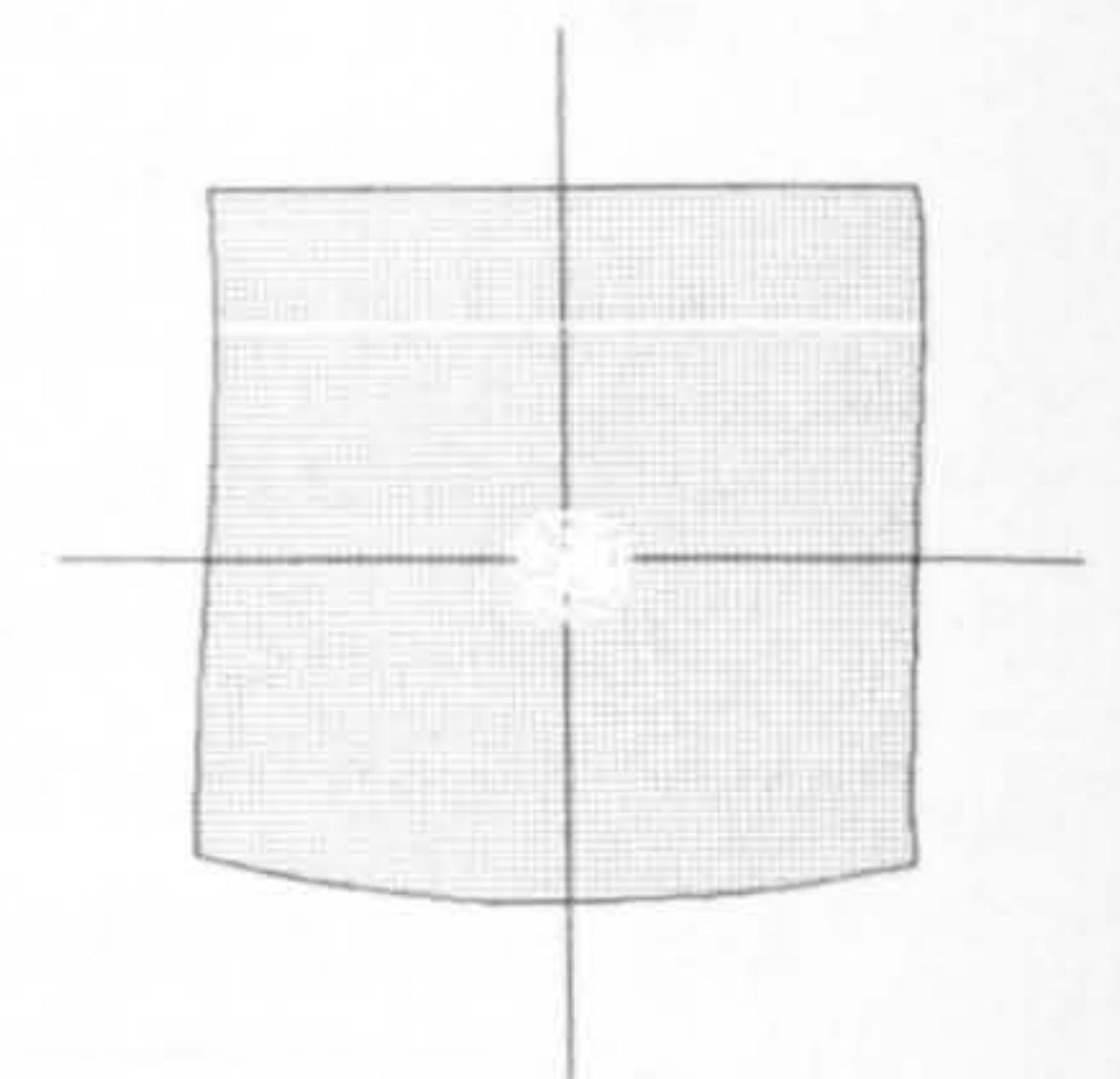
Arrian offers a description of it just as it was going into decline.

He mentions an orchard grove, house for the magi (priests of Zoroaster), abundant irrigation (which would run through the hunting park anyway), and the tomb standing above its thicket at the centre.

The sketch plan, which is not to scale, attempts a reconstruction from the description. Devices known to exist at the palace of Passargadae have been used. Its square or square-ish proportions are not certain but likely.

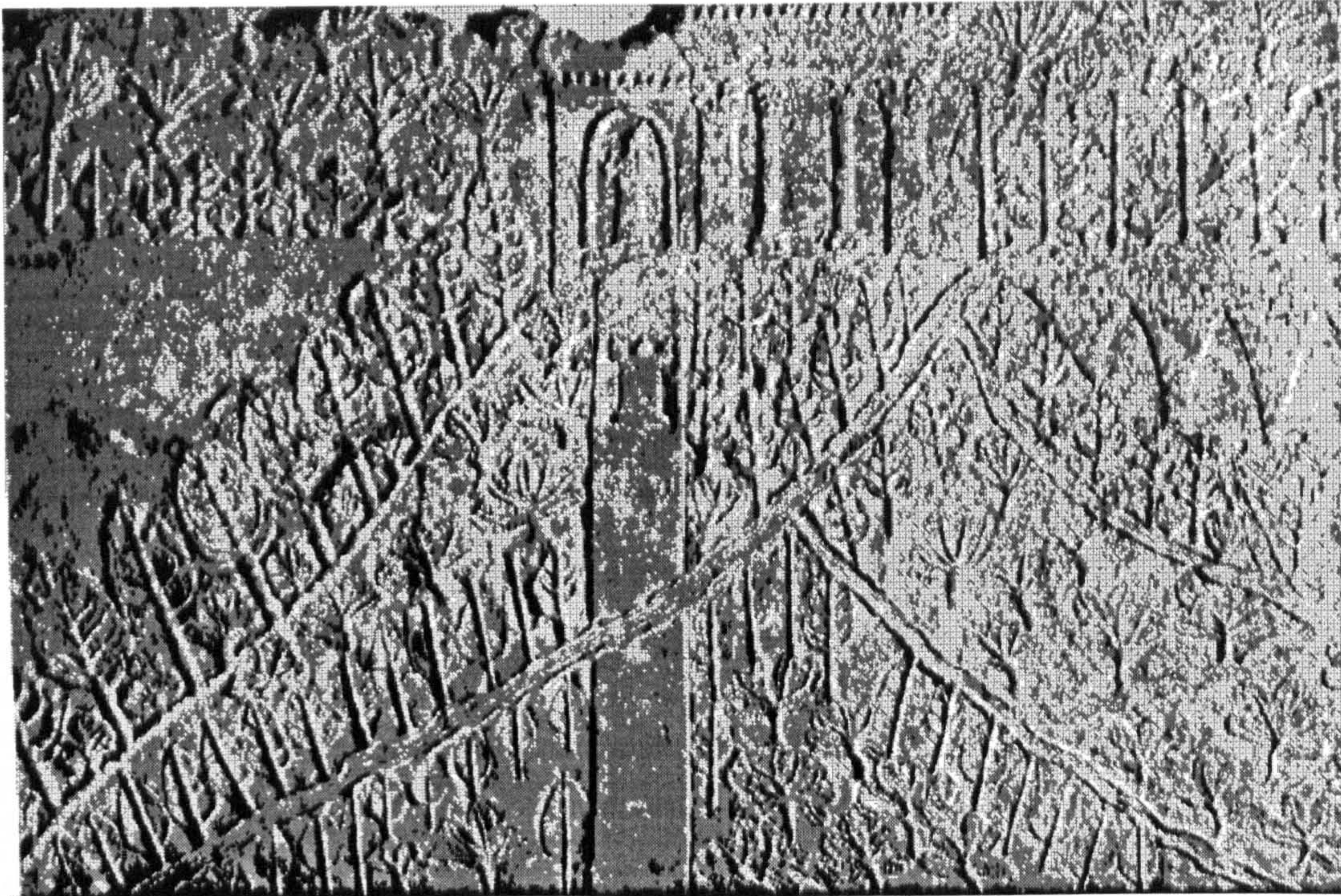
As in the Aramaic grove (Hebrew OT, Genesis), the magi had use of the fruit from the trees, and also some sheep, which probably grazed in their shade.

It is a kingly garden, representing an ancestral home. It does not differ significantly in principle from the Sumerian stereotype, which was a stable form in Asia-Minor until modern times. The gigantic sarcophagus is central, taking the place of the well, and perhaps the bower, of a Sumerian orchard. This is the place of ancestral transfer common to many cultures. It is the place signified by tholos and its many derivatives into Mediaeval European grove traditions.



The king's house & garden

c. Michael Selwood 1992



Assyrian reliefs pl 133



Assyrian reliefs pl 44

Top. Irrigation channels in this parkland are not quite so regular as one might expect. This is the kind of environment in which the tomb of Cyrus II would have been set. A fire altar sits among groves of mixed trees. The horizon is a temple, whose architecture holds up the firmament. Trees extend into the plain beyond. An arched terrace supports a hung garden of pine trees. As a sequential landscape it embodies principles present in the Boscotrecase frescos.

Left. Free standing vine.
Below. Figs in a mixed orchard

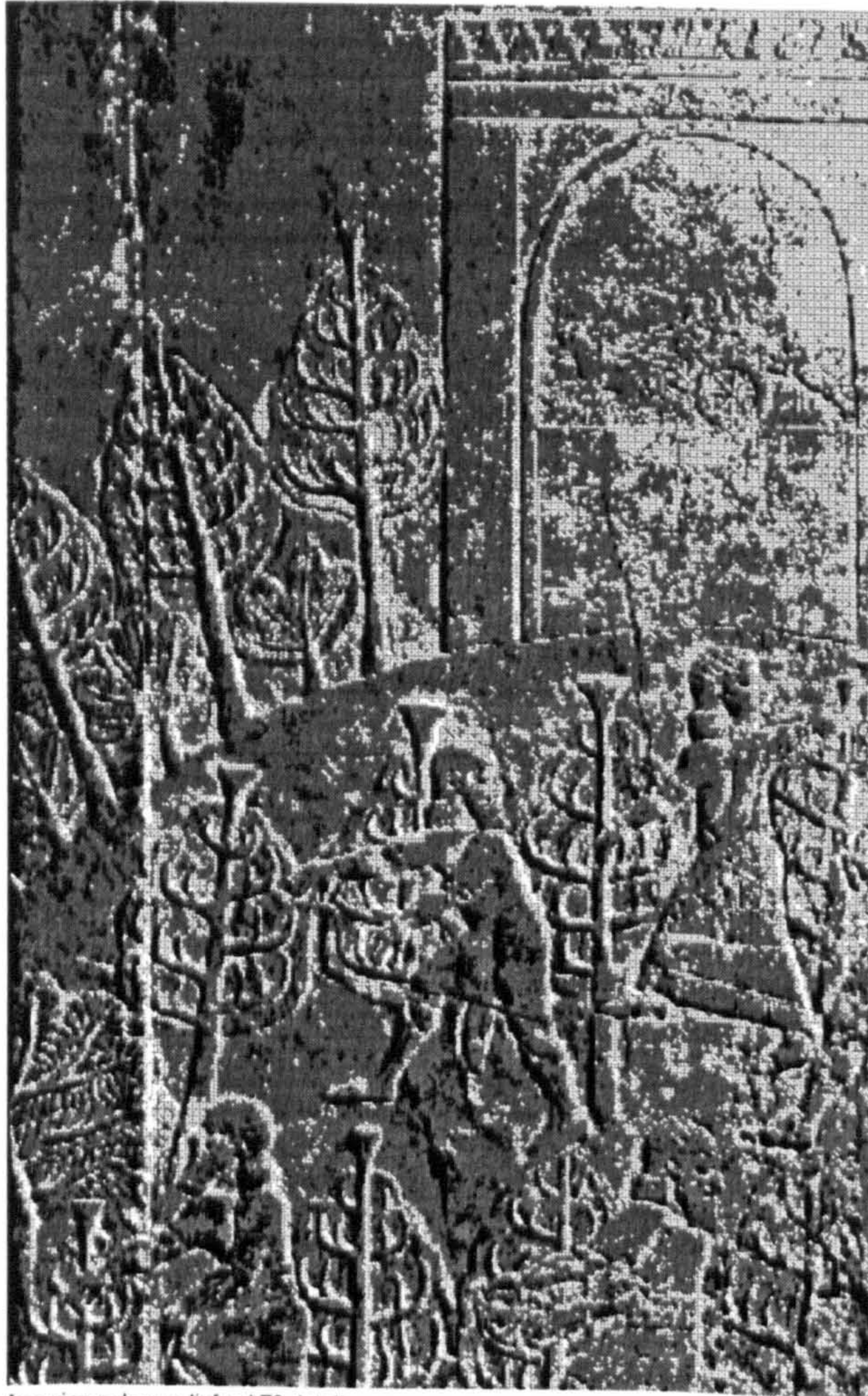


Assyrian reliefs pl 49

Each image is symbolic. They depict only things important to the iconography of a palace. Landscape is obviously one in an imposed regime.

That other garden

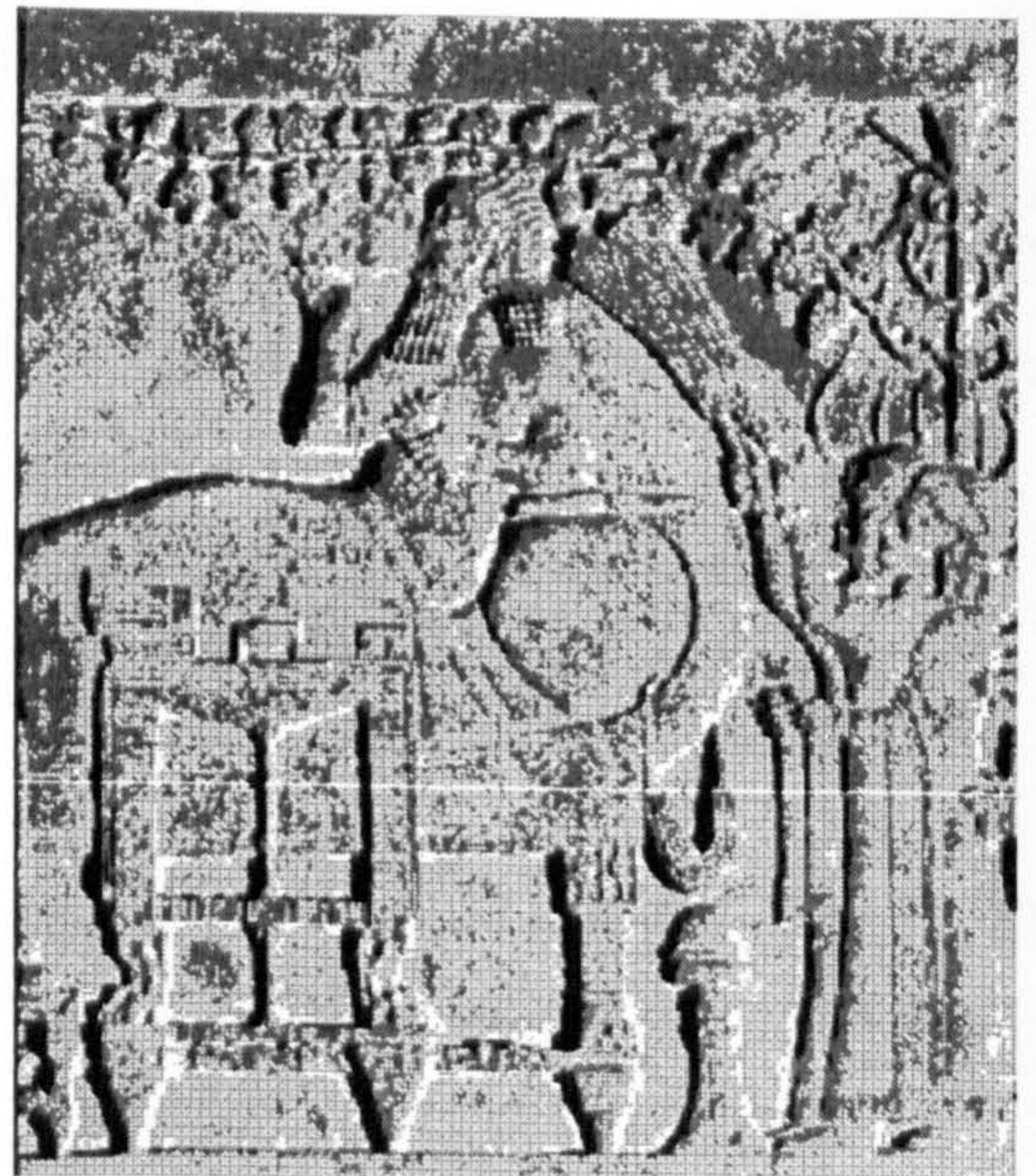
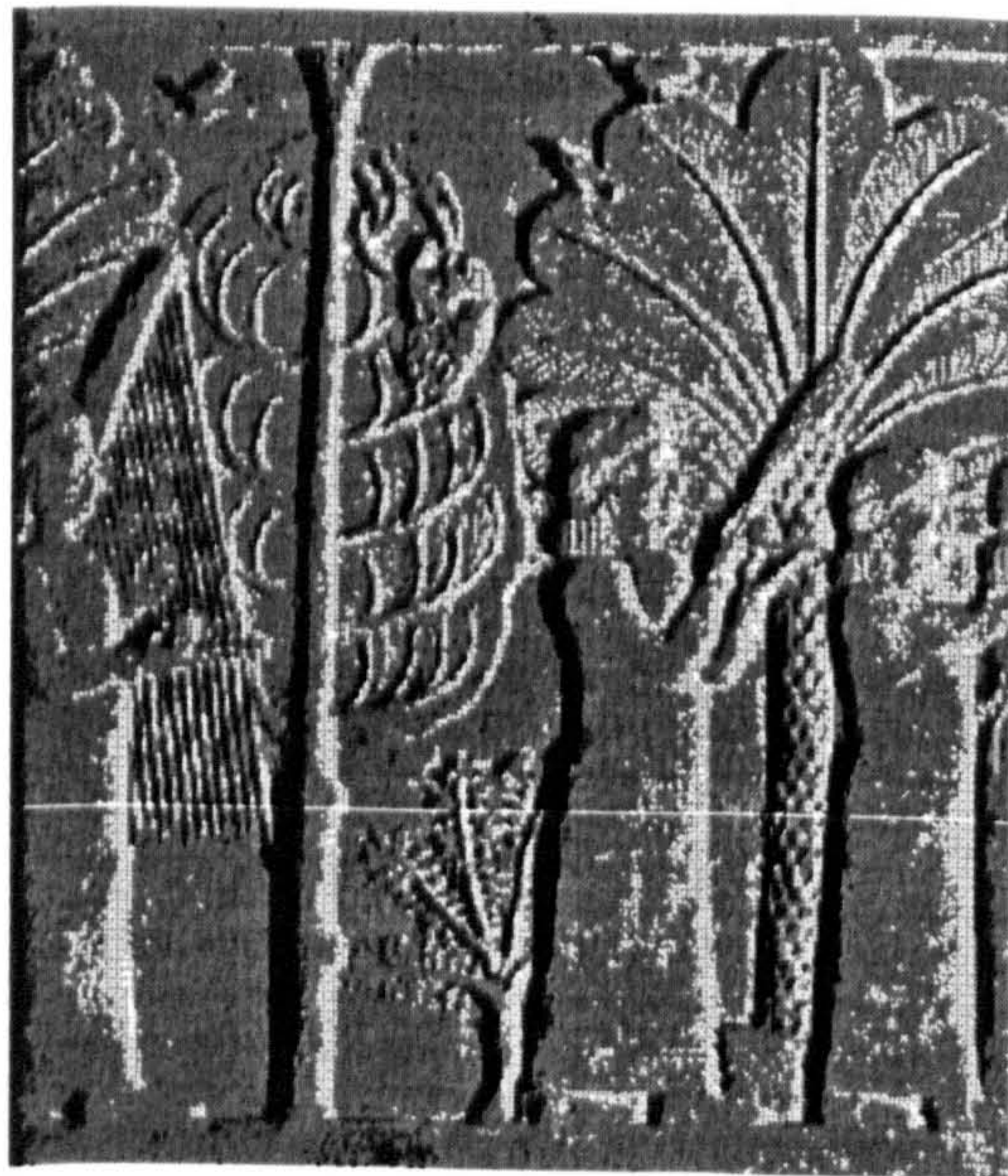
Assyrian landscapes 3



Top. A lion hunt progresses in a park. Spectators watch from the security of a grove of pines and tamarisk. A royal arch follows the hunt around to demonstrate that the king is in heaven! In this open landscape the arch supports and symbolises the celestial vault.

Below. A quiet ministerial tet-a-te under a shady vine bower in the king's park. A musician is kept at a safe distance and accompanied by birds to be on the safe side. In this enclosed space the king's bower supports the sky via the pine trees.

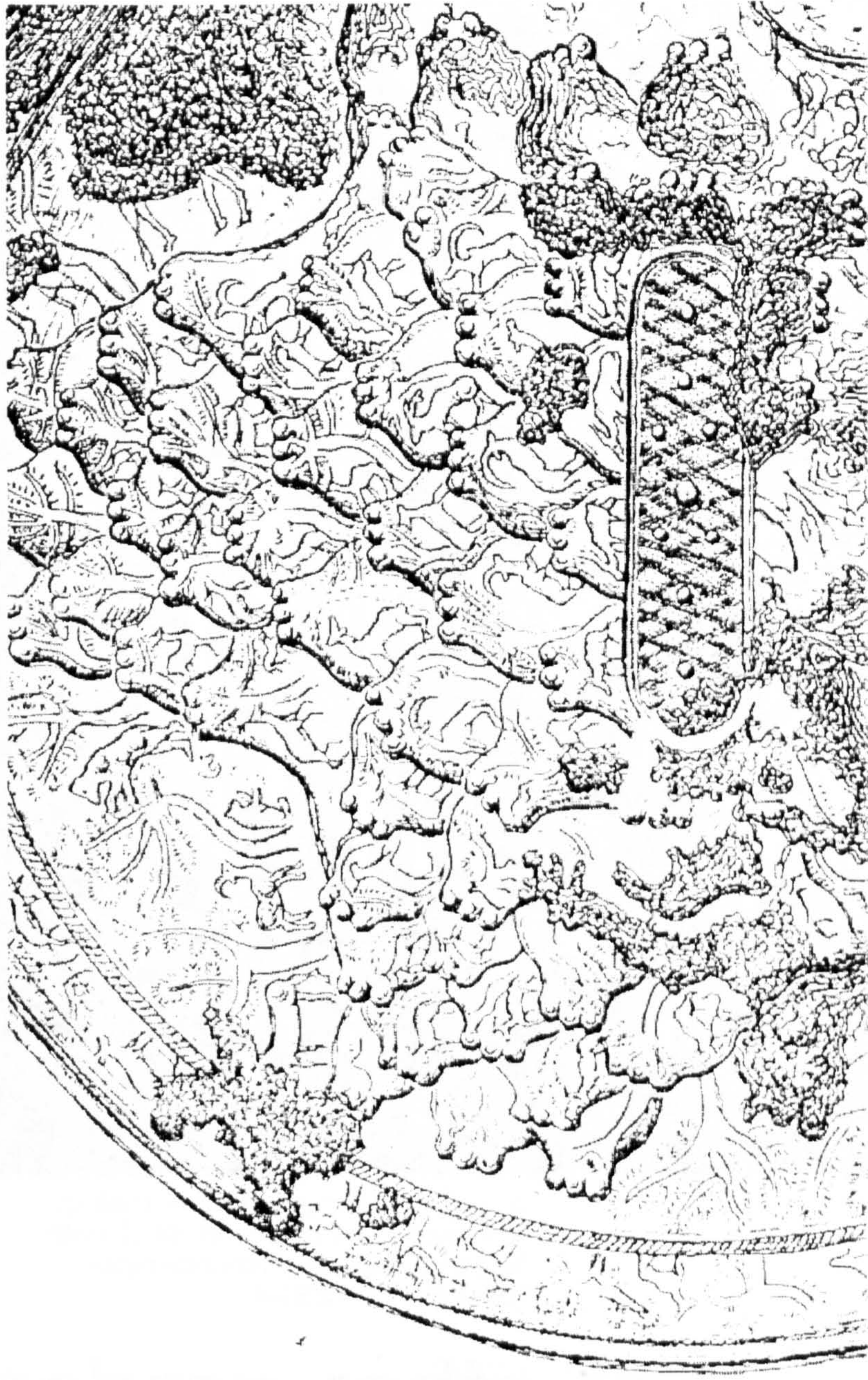
Assyrian palace reliefs pl 79 detail



Assrian reliefs pl 105 details

That other garden

Assyrian landscapes 2



Ringbom Paraddisus terrestris ff 50

Bronze dish from Urartu, 800BC, depicting the earthly cosmos. Arid mountains (bottom) and forested mountains full of wild creatures (top) surround a sacred lake which separates them. The lake is the centre of the Earth Disk, a world picture, its paradise. Urartu was one of the main transmission cultures between Mesopotamian and Phoenician and Greek peoples. Its culture revived Anatolian urbanism and was interactive with Hittite urbanism, also influential on Greek ideas, particularly Lydian. It was probably a source of some Homeric imagery, along with Minoan and Mycenaean. This is the Landscape of Artemis, source of water and forest. Unless the sacred lake is also symbolic for the city - which is possible, for it contains geometric devices - urbanisation is not depicted. On the "coastal" edge lush trees grow large. Probably north is to the bottom.

Sacred lake and mountains: dish from Urartu



Assyrian palace reliefs pl 55 detail

A lovingly depicted vine trailing a fronded tree (tamarisk?) with flowers; palace Ashurbanipal ((detail) BM 118914)

That other garden

existed in Sumerian palaces. We arrive at a plan where the magi take the place of Siduri at the entrance, depicted in the plan attached. Typically too, the dead king's home would be thought of as his palace, the focus of a city, though not necessarily its geometric centre. Geometric symbolism would indicate this.

The orchard has taken a significant step from the technological "marvel" to the symbolic as depicted by Longus. However, Longus was writing an archaising novella, that is, he was using the same process culturally applied to the tombs of kings. It is not possible to decide whether the thicket was a cordon at Passargadae, or whether it crowded about the tomb. In its own time the enclosure, the dead Cyrus's own paradeisos, was not surrounded by desert and bare hills, but by lush parkland, so an outer cordon would not be essential. Either is possible. Ionian Greek influence and presence is important. Even were they not originators of this concentric style, they had full knowledge of it and its symbolic functions. Is the description of Alkinoos's orchard an addition to Homer which introduces new technology to western Greek practices, or is it an original part of Ionian Homer's orientalising imagery?

Chapter Four.

Where does it all fit?

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What is Landscape?

Landscape (capital L), which is also City, is distinguishable from countryside and wilderness by the density of created symbolic space embodied. Urbanising abstractions and ideologies extend into countryside - land shaped by labour - making territorial claims, imposing special forms which proclaim cultural origins. It is part of a process Lefebvre calls "production of space". Types of space which exist only within the mind become fused into complex structures whose resembling rhetoric.¹ Cities as cultic preserves are small focused areas seeking to represent or resemble something greater.

It can be logically argued that space exists only as an extension of mind. The process imagery encapsulated in Pythagorean geometry, vesica, encapsulates that idea. Invisible space, like unseen ancestors or deities, was a brilliantly inventive strategy. Invisible space is a product of the dreaming mind, the power of he who sees. While it retains cultural relevance it can be used to inflate superficial area on a surface it often ignores. Gaia becomes not merely an inexhaustible reservoir of "natural" resources, but also of human spirit and energy. Attributed to ancestors, its "inhabitants" can be invoked to back claims, a conservative force in the process of successful settlement around which Landscape hinges. Conservative "ancestral" forms denote its presence, even when overthrown, as in the Theseus legend. Sophistication in adapting these forms gives rise to increasing complexity or compression, when simplified iconography stands for elaborated meanings, as templum and derivatives.

Differences between Mesopotamian and Greek ideologies underline Hellenistic success in manipulating this reservoir. Early Mesopotamians cultures perceived humanity growing stronger with each successive generation. Ancestral space was supportive but vulnerable, manipulated by humans. Greeks believed humanity weakened. Ancestors are Titans, Giants, Gods and Heroes, their space assuming greater importance relative to a small city state.

Urbanised societies all evolved at some stage from or within pastoral cultures. Urban space becomes luxury with high population densities. Where it cannot exist, it must be produced. The inevitable peak arising from this is the city, a dreamspace, Landscape insupportable other than as an ideological focus.

¹. Rhetoric was also originally a space-dependent device whose sole function in ancient Syracuse was to justify expropriation of land.

Wandering is discovery; it creates space. One who travels has greater command of space. Conquest of space ultimately expands knowledge. Conquest was once the prerogative of warriors, Odysseuses of this world, combined strength and nous. It requires knowledge of processes as well as distribution of space. Conquest, the production of space through war, for warfare both creates and destroys, was the duty and prerogative of chosen kings and their selected warriors, epitomised by Gilgamesh, Achilles, Heracles, or a Medici prince. Ancestry, descent from deities, became at some stage an essential attribute of these chosen people, giving them access to that hidden space. From such ancestry arises the importance of invisible space, like those experienced inside the earth mountain by Gilgamesh. "My ancestors, who discovered this space (or to whom it was vouchsafed) live there and from there imbue me with knowledge and power they gained, therefore I am entitled" is the gist of this idea. As Abstract space it can be compressed and inflated to encompass a whole empire, an image of city and the construction of Landscape [58] shows the iconography of eternal wandering allegedly assembled as an early mandala; it might also be an arcane symbol of the power of kingship).

Space acquired in this manner can be given whatever attributes are desirable. It can then be signed by symbolic forms, invented or culled from ancient traditions. Each Sumerian city, for example, had its hole, its own unique access to the reservoir. Later it was to become the Etrusco-Roman mundus. Through this hole the king passed into dreamtime via the goddess. The epic of Gilgamesh is that of a royal revolt, a refusal to comply with this convenient convention for convenient dismissal. Instead of accepting the blandishments of the goddess Ishtar who offers dreams of fulfilment he experiences Humbaba (the visceral earth labyrinth), the promised land, the borders of oblivion under the great sea, but returns. The episode is shamanic, revealing shamanic symbolism freed from sacrifice. It is retrograde birth through the vagina of the goddess, the uterus and womb, dream worlds at the centre of conception and the mirror world of water. The dream death of Sumerian kings is revealed together with inner Landscapes it encompassed. It is precisely the set of mirrors whose illusory space fabricates templum, giving power to symbolic quadripartite forms. Thus templum, like vesica, is not a static icon, but a mythpoetic compression of a vital process or part of a process. It is reference to this that we find concealed-revealed within the architectural abstractions of Landscape of tholoi, the painted imagery of the Boscotrecase frescos, and embedded into Italian Mannerist literary Landscapes.



Cycladic mandala Purce fig 42

A spiral labyrinth centres this 2500BC Greek mandala, surrounded by an iconography of wandering. It stands for the ORIENTATION of perfect Man. The object is circular; this a detail. The mandala combines sacred numbers 7 and 9 (time-space episodes (also Egyptian)). The labyrinth has 7 windings and a still centre. It stands for and gives access to space which is not "here". The epic of wandering in vast spaces and surrogate death can be attained without moving and without dying. It is purely abstract attributive space but can be "entered" and re-created. (illustration from Purce, J: *The Mystic Spiral*. London 1974).

Wandering & death

- an early Greek Mandala

Into these symbolic forms ideologies can be introduced to modulate meanings, thereby also modulating perception of the form and its residual collective power. These may be genuine attempts to cope with improving differentiation skills or deliberate ploys to manipulate for power. There is much apparent consistency in the Landscapes of early goddess religions. Caves, holes, mountains are set in a wilderness *matrix*, that word perpetuating the idea into modern language. Sky and earth's surface were merely membranes, like those of the body, through which selective passage could be made into permeable hidden space on special terms. Draw the shape of this space on the membrane, make it convincing, give it forms capable of complex ambivalences miming enriched spritual or sensual processes and the principle already well established in the pre-historic ritual hunt can be invoked equally well for "city".

It is in fact Landscape, a supremely attributive space, fully under human control. For ancient Sumerians deities appearing within human space-time could be mocked, slighted and violated, subject to human vicissitudes and the simple brutalities of the peasant. Their subsequent wrath, however dire, could be outwitted by the collective wit of the city, portrayed as an organism. For Greeks this psychology was less secure. It was to ancestral strength they turned for psychotherapy in the Asklepeian tholos, their own genetic inheritance. Thus we find Landscapes common to Cyclopes and Prometheus, Heracles and Asklepeios, marking stages in cultural evolution, created within the collective imagination and memory. They seem ambivalent, both vast yet strangely specific, as defined as the collectives of small city states which engendered them for bonding yet with powers reaching into "there", ancestral space.

The outcome is cultic space, Landscapes which signify important collective processes either through tyrannical superimposition or spontaneous expression, space the organism believes it occupies, terrestrial or extra-terrestrial. Attempts to realise the latter result in Landscape, cult space which concentrates the forces of the collective. This chapter sets out to examine some aspects of its process and form.

Cult space in the frescos.

Boscotrecase frescos present multifarious objects in a special order. Logical coherence is apparent at several levels, interlocked through iconography, part of an encoded system. They form a suite or the remains of one. None of the elements are applied in

the manner of modern "Decorative art". Each group depicts allegorical Landscapes of death and ancestral life in death, the theme of *Aeneid*. We called Oracle Triad a Sacred Way, noting how "entry" into its perspective is obstructed, and many parallels with the iconography of a Roman Triumph moved into displaced interstitial space. Such space is a feature of mythopoeic thought, co-ordinating systems through recognition and manipulation of inherent cultural values.² It establishes periodicity values common to individual human life and the rhythms of the elements as well as the imagined shapes of invisible space.

Such space and values allotted to it is fundamental to ancient and Hellenistic thought. Polyphemus is part of an allegory of ancestral immortality acquired through evolution of specially important skills.³ Space is expressed as time, time as space. Perseus takes the Golden apples like Heracles gaining immortality through his rape of or by Aphrodite-Astarte.⁴ Each is both process and space particularised to that process. The serenely lovely Boscotrecase Nocturnes depict rites of the dead, lovingly luminous images centralised in voluminous night, personal, intimate, fused into the monumentality of the total sequence. Oracle Triad objectifies private grief, transforming it into the imagery of imperial rite, taking it into the realms of universality. Encyclopaedic portrayals of Hellenised Roman ideas pervade the suite. Death is a Greek Elysium as were Campanian villas!

Myth and mythic structures, spatial in attribute and expression, provide the main framework. Internal components accumulate space within it. Ideological elements from early settlement remained embedded complete with their enriched imagery of cultic Landscapes.⁵ Each sublimates through sophisticated architectural forms and their components, whose details evolve with imaginative elan throughout classicism.⁶ Something of a jolt in perception can be discerned in the frescos.

Ancient configurations of parks, groves, fields and orchards, components of countryside and landscape arising from

². *Frankfort, H: Before philosophy*. London 1949 discusses this in some detail.

³. Supported by the first 'saviour' Prometheus, he is, like Hephaestos, deformed but powerful, a prototype of humanity. Perhaps the idea is not so distant from the rather large humans thought to have inhabited the interior of East Africa in distant pre-history. *Piggott, S: ed The dawn of civilisation*. London 1961. pp 20 - 24.

⁴. Priestesses were the deities they represented.

⁵. Cultic Landscapes were (and indeed are) reconstructions of landscapes associated with myth. They have origins in normality, but have critical components emphasised according to the political motivations.

⁶. Also, when transplanted to other cultures, they acquire variants and new stimuli, taking on a new lease of life. There is evidence of Hellenistic ideas or ideas derived from the same sources in most cultures.

permanent settlement in pre-historic times, had mnemonic purpose. Successful organisation thrived, becoming recorded in collective iconography before writing evolved. Poets, as priests of the collective memory, encapsulated inner ideas within their stock phrases, each of which had recognised common meanings. Priesthood evolved from shamanic practices attached to prehistoric ritual hunt and associated tribal activities.⁷ They propitiated carnage, 'sacrificial' intermediaries between the Great Goddess as Mistress of the Animals (a function later attributed to Dionysos) and this hunt-feast-dance, prototype 'saviours'. Monumental spatial devices arising from this or through it from earlier times, like labyrinth and pit, most of all their dynamics, inevitably impregnated subsequent cultic Landscapes, including architecture and settlement, with threnodic meaning. Sacred kings, heroes arising from shamanism in some way, as founders of settlements, needed to incorporate support from this cultic fertility power. This power can be transferred and metamorphosed. Signs which encapsulate it can be used to accrete or over-write pre-existing symbolic space.

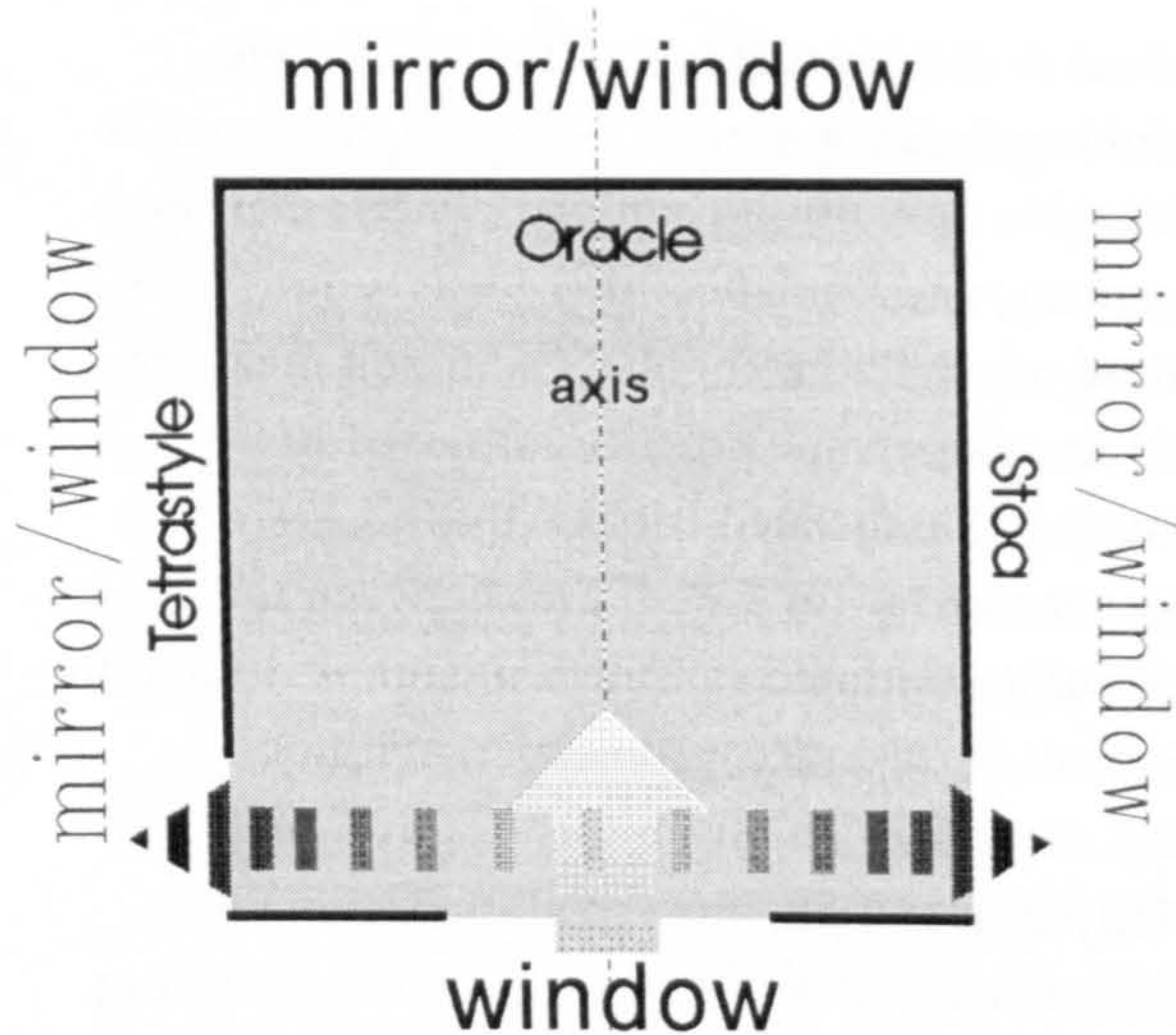
Boscotrecase's conversions.

Careful exploration of the arrangement of the Oracle frescos and the signs and symbols they depict reveals sophisticated use of accumulative symbolic space, none of which exists anywhere other than the mind, though it purports to, and projects an illusion of extending defined space. This it does in many layers, each interactive like the layering of allegory. The deepest layers demand most arcane knowledge and interpretation. They refer to Attributive Space, fundamental to the power dynamics of all symbolic space, beyond the reaches of normal allegorical Landscapes by the XVIIIc. It exists through interaction with stated, implied, illusory and obtuse spatial imagery.

Viewing position in a cubiculum is pre-determined. The cubic form of the room has relict cosmic implications. Imbalance introduced by human movement within it creates a dynamic manipulated by the relative positioning of "real" and "illusory" apertures in its enclosure. Its symmetry is special, resembling that of an audience chamber. This the painter at Boscotrecase exploited with virtuosity.⁸ [59 A below]. This is associative language, part of a group semiotic of the court. It has the effect of creating additional space, physically through manipulating

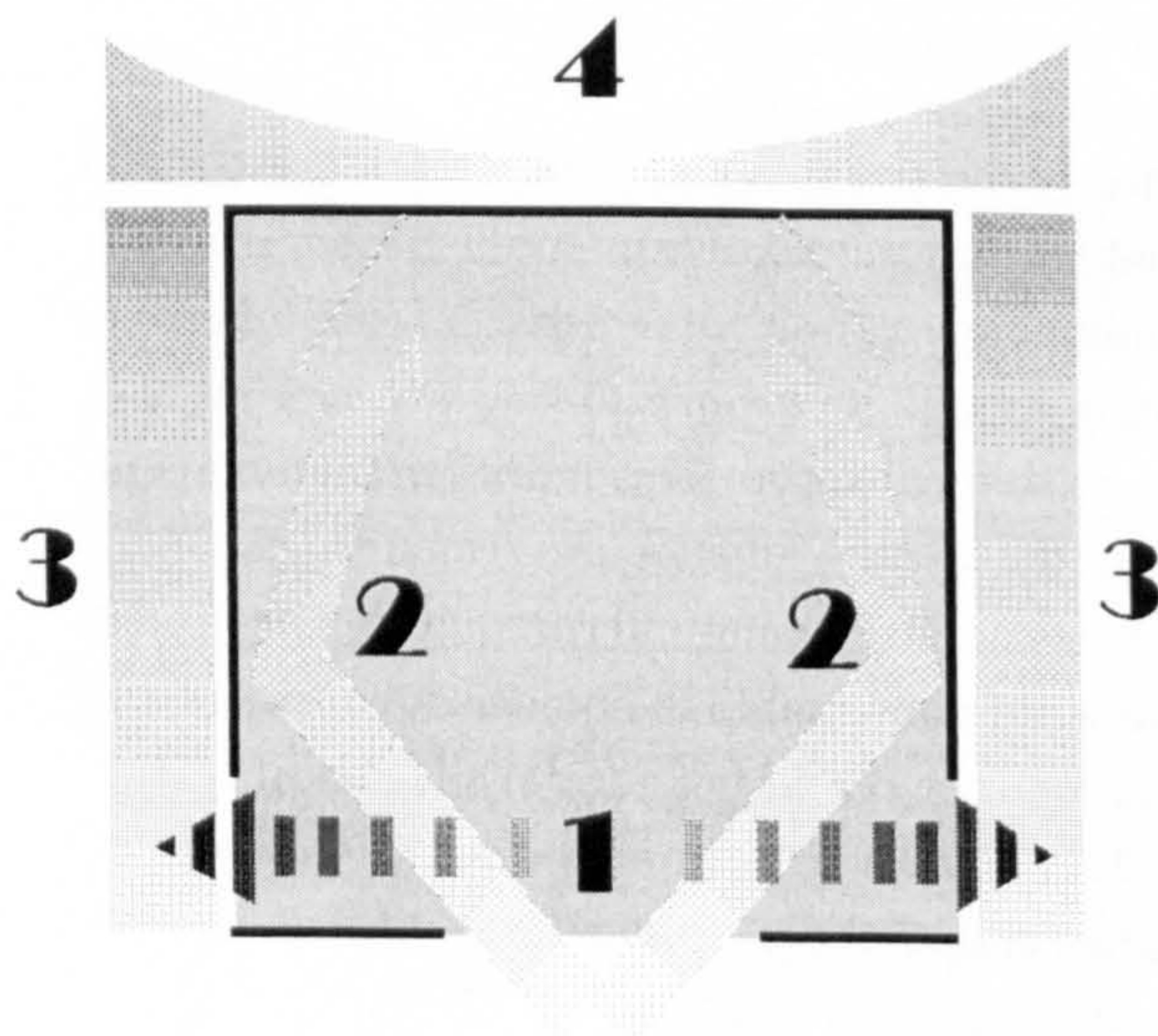
⁷. The Great Goddess was also Mistress of the Animals; her powers were reduced by fragmentation into a triadic form, leaving specialist aspects divided amongst lesser deities who were still thought powerful through the original association, eg. Artemis.

⁸. Or, of course, it might have been devised with such painting in mind.



Disposition of space and circulation in the Oracle cubiculum resembles that of an audience chamber. The painter has utilised this in assembling a monumental triad of images set in cultic frames. In effect he has attributed sacred space to the room outside its normal dimensions.

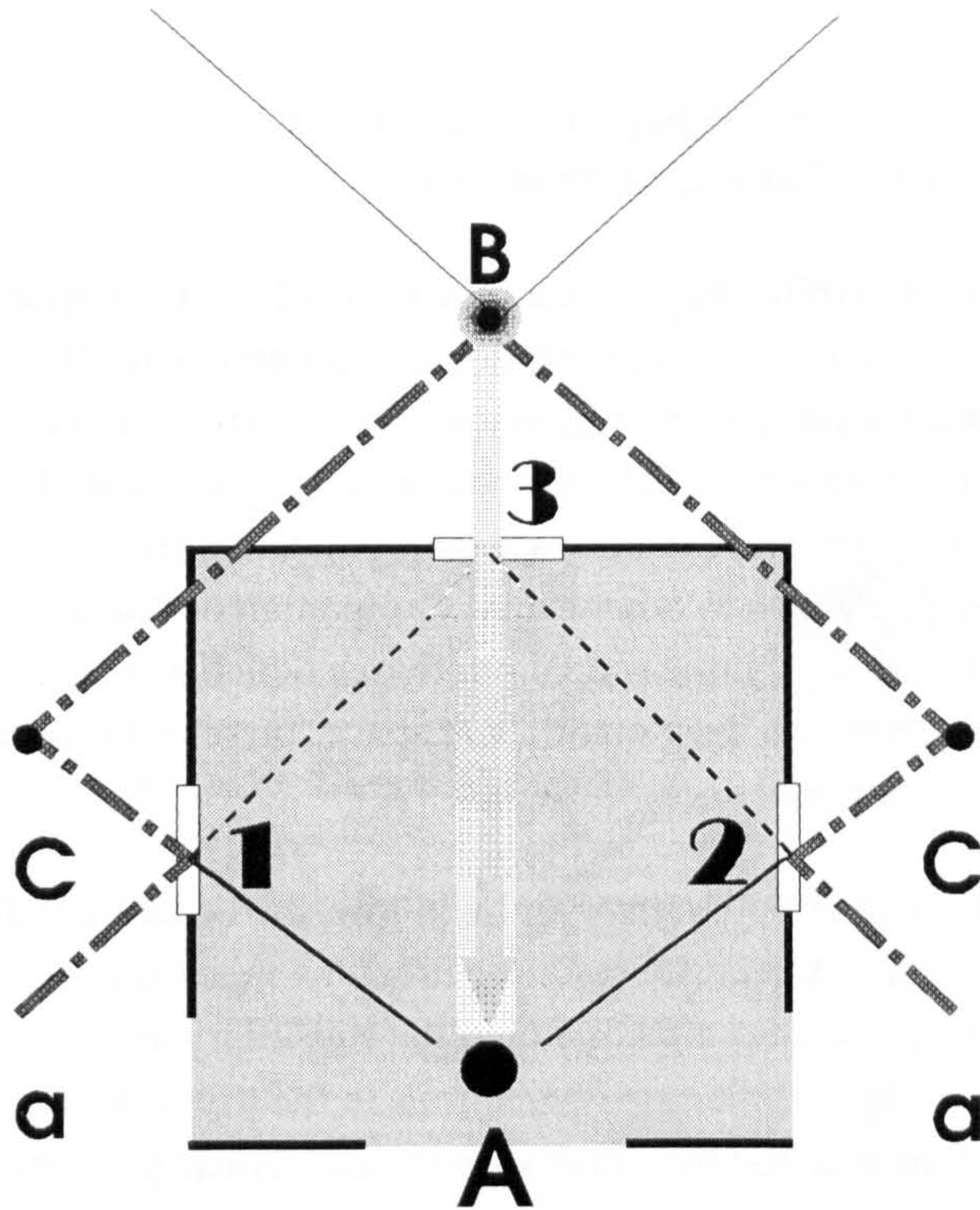
DIAGRAM A - Space as audience



- 1** Movement is part of mnemosyne - previous and future passage through familiar space. This particular configuration ensures passage across an axial image of complexity and importance
- 2** Axial light emphasises the hierarchy of images; it strikes the side walls obliquely & is re-directed, particularly by the whitenesses
- 3** As a result the light on the side walls is heavily gradated, darkening towards the rear
- 4** Light on the rear wall concentrates on the central image, reinforcing its axial structure; it is brighter, particularly at the centre where the compressed image resides in its cosmic geometry

DIAGRAM B - Light and Space

ATTRIBUTIVE SPACE - FRESCOS 1



Dynamic interplay between room volume viewing, & imagery creates space which exists outside the room & modulates perceptions

"Viewing lines" create another volume whose confines are determined entirely by the mind - abstract space

- A** YOU ARE HERE
- B** YOUR MIND IS HERE
- C** YOUR MIND HAS TRAVERSED HERE TO REACH 'B'
- a** YOU HAVE BEEN HERE

YOU LOOK AT AN IMAGE ON A PLANE

you perceive imagery from behind the plane as from a mirror

1 2 these images are presented at an angle; they subtend an inner angle, mirror & window; painted perspective & angle create space behind the plane

3 this image is frontal & symmetrical; it "occupies" space behind the wall which is both mirror & window

} dynamic angles suggest process & traverse space

} vertical symmetry gives horizontal stasis & vertical dynamic

DIAGRAM C - processes in Abstract space

ATTRIBUTIVE SPACE - FRESCOS 2

light and movement, [59 B] psychologically through mnemosyne, a familiar tool of rhetoric, Abstract space.

Parallel processes take place within the psychological component, somewhere between visual perception and mnemosyne. It manipulates the room's natural perspective in order that it might then exploit mnemosyne, collective cultural imagery. [60]. This is devious, for vision and memory are manipulated more comprehensively than in other extant Campanian or Roman murals. It leads to oblique spatial references which it then exploits to generate a deep mandala of space "there" which is also attributed to imperial ancestral status.

Each wall becomes both mirror and window, the equivalent of a two-way mirror. Virtuosity resides here in the manner it is manipulated. We have already noted the subsidiary and supportive nature of the side wall murals in the triptych. The implication here is that they mirror space into Oracle perhaps more than to the viewer, an idea well supported by their iconographic content. Emphasis centred on Divine Geometry is concentrated into Oracle. There it transfers all horizontal "movement" present in the other two into horizontal stasis and vertical processes. This centralises a spatial vortex outside the confines of the room, in effect creating a templum [61]. Mundus, with its powerful forces, is securely placed beyond the limits of the room, "there", and further controlled by the "enclosures" of cultic framework painted on its walls. The relative positions of "mountain" and the imagery focus within this schema compares with the villa siting, the position of Lamon's grove on Lesbos, and the scheme of Villa Lante, suggesting symbolic importance omitted in Vitruvius' discussion of the topic. It is also the scheme of cities. (See City, Mountain & Templum below).

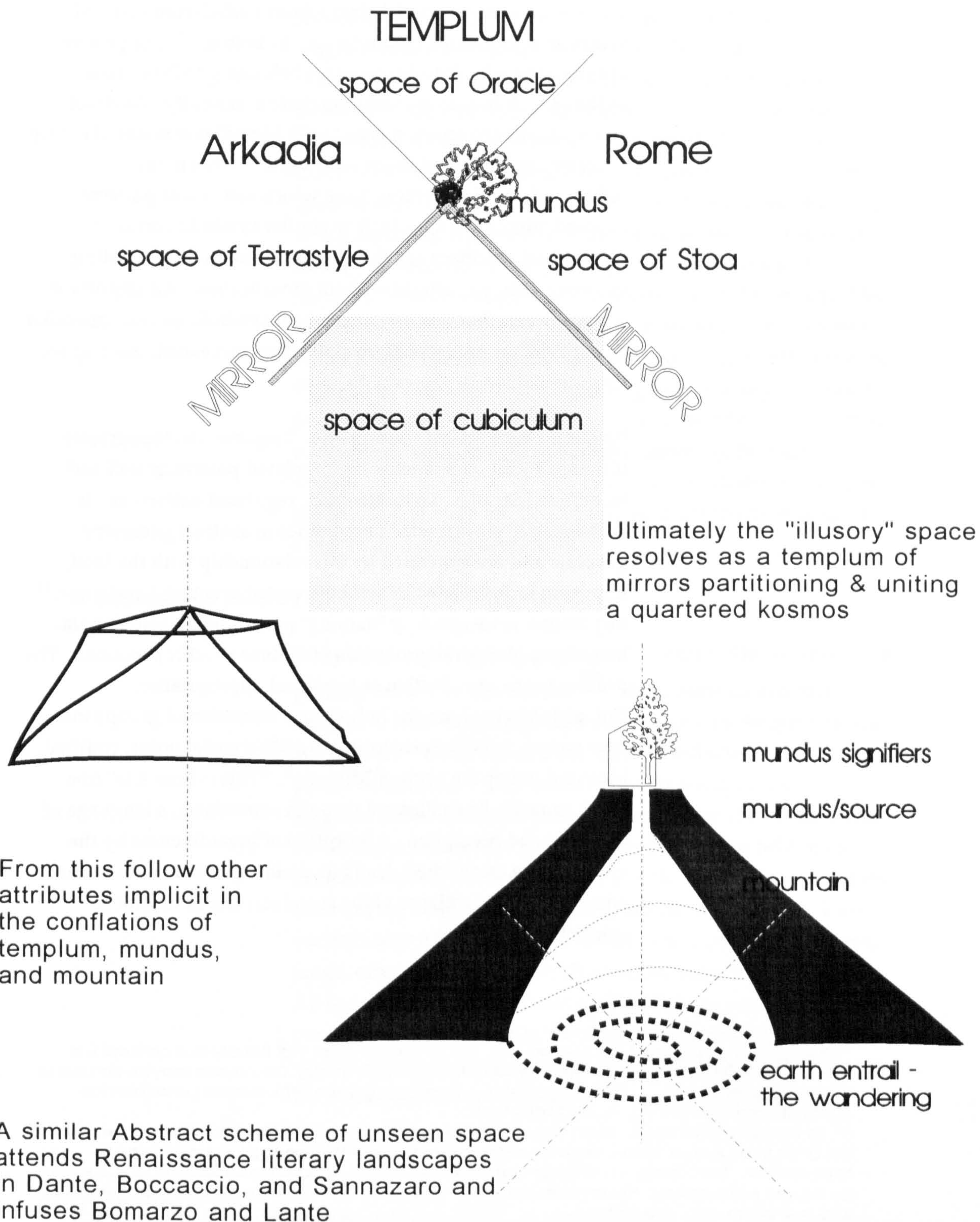


DIAGRAM D - processes in Abstract space ATTRIBUTIVE SPACE - FRESCOS 3

Cities.

Cities were dreams, spatial abstractions culled from evolved symbolic components of Landscape [61 bottom].⁹ The process appropriates Absolute Space, space belonging to Primordia within which human groups operated successfully. Abstract concepts, imaged space, merged with identifiable material reality to create space hedged about with signs.¹⁰ This in turn influenced social structures, from which settlement patterns evolved, ultimately adaptable to similar symbolic forms.¹¹ Conceptualised space can then be transposed within existing environments, sometimes without modification. An important supposition is that possession is taken, symbolic or real, custodial or outright, an Ancestor-Hero skill when successful. Such space becomes subject to games with rules.

Practical needs set out countryside. Responses to topography ultimately lead to geometrically regulated pattern as will and technique improve. To be effectual, regulated pattern needs authoritative power, will. Discoveries in abstract geometry generate and are generated by this relationship with the land, imposing forms related to symbolic space, creating Landscape.¹² Importance is assigned by "naming" parcels using visual meta-languages, giving the protection of culture specific sanctions. The process is one of collective or tyrannical appropriation. Colonising behaviour, the industrious extension of groups into new parcels, modifies according to settled social order, codified, idealised under the aegis of "divinity". "This is how it is" (the way), can only be challenged through iconoclasm, a language of conquest and revolution. Absorption of inventiveness by the system, once established, tends to avoid significant subversion and catastrophic collapse of the social structures to which symbolic space relate.

⁹. *Rykwert, J: The Idea of a town*. London 1976. In fact Rykwert states that the city as a concept is a dream and has the structure of dreams (which is that of mythic space). Countryside may be defined as land transformed by labour. *Guidoni, E: Primitive architecture*. Milan 1975. Guidoni penetrates the concept of architecture into its Landscape roots.

¹⁰. Of necessity these require much conjectural thought. The cores of information on which they are built are often small, require remote deconstruction, and are subject to changing fashions in linguistic interpretation. Sumerology, in particular applied to Sumerian as opposed to Babylonian texts, is said to be fraught with problems. Nevertheless, it is useful to extend in this way, since words are easily modified with new information, unlike cities.

¹¹. *Lefebvre, H: La Production de l'Espace*. Paris 1984. Ch 2. Henri Lefebvre, philosopher to the surrealist movement, provides crucial analytical tools. In Lefebvre's terms, space perceived as natural is transposed, into social space, political space and abstract space in one or more stages. Natural space may be marked or named, metamorphosed directly into political and abstract space without intervening stages

¹². See below.

Early literature infused Landscapes created by these abstract processes with poetic qualities enshrined in collective symbolic meaning. Pythagoras, at the beginnings of Greek philosophy, sought mystic relationships between number and this sense of ordered space, attempting to rationalise and express sensations of spatiality.¹³ Without this kind of attachment and direct human interference, topography remains primordial, *absolute* or *natural* space. Evolution of religious structures generates cultic Abstract space through clever ideas and analogies. Practical geometry, which simplifies regulated land distribution, needs communal stability to succeed. It also presupposes order and a will to impose it, however originated. Geometric centrality invented by Sumerians revealed how to set out a square plot from a known centre point. They could not use the diagonals, since that needed Pythagoras' theorem. The centralising cross, the key originated from arithmetical partition of the sides, is the principle enshrined in *templum*, an archaic form perhaps, surviving through accumulated ritual power. We can see a remarkable survival of the ideological build up around this particular form of abstract space in modern Japanese *kanji*.

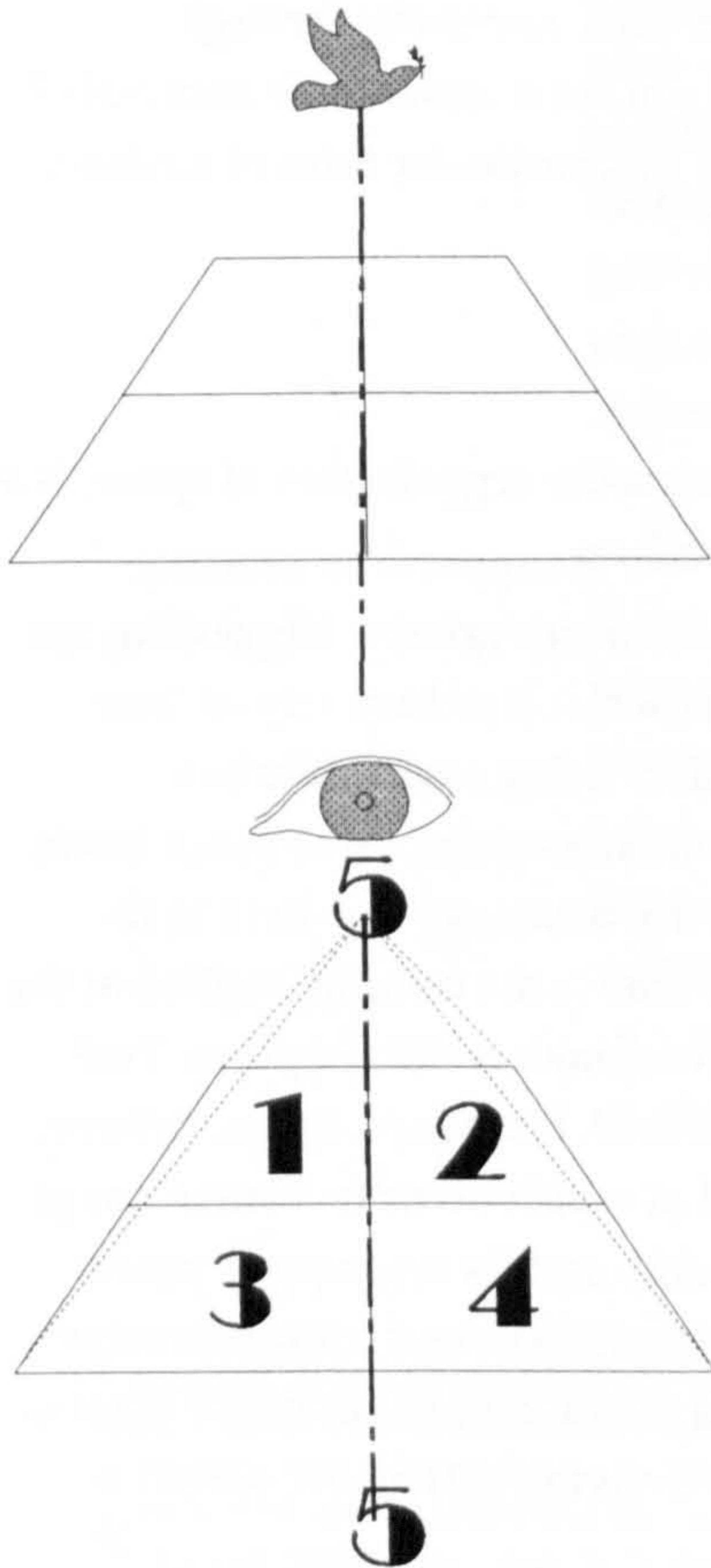
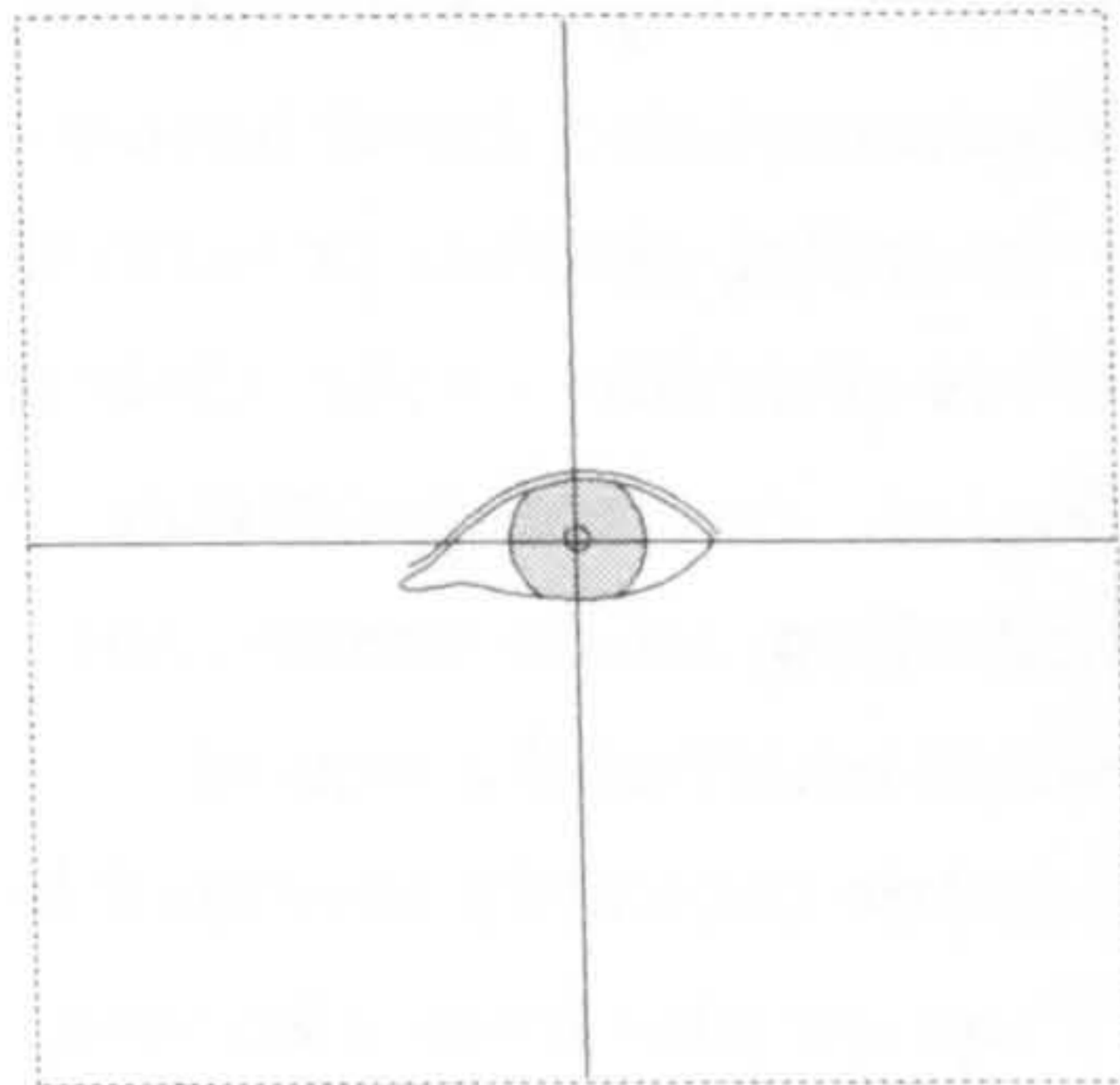
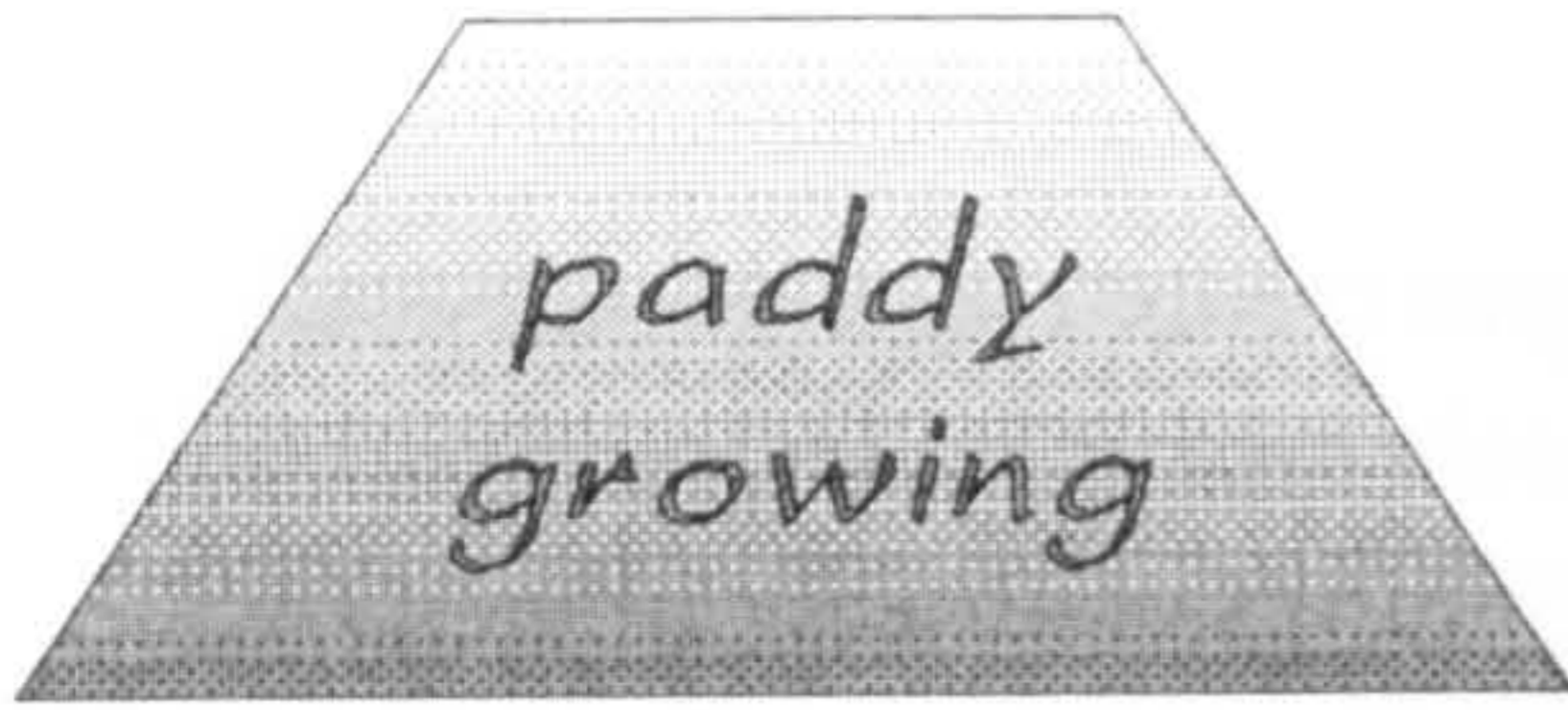
A Japanese paddy.

Templum, signifying this quadripartite organisation of space, is a primary radical in Japanese, *ta* 田. It supports an unusual number of wide ranging groups and sub-groups, suggesting age and power.¹⁴ Dictionaries transliterate it reductively as "rice paddy or rice field". This radical is richly associative to a Japanese mind. Qualifying secondaries change it to mean town, block, street, baron, man (small m), meanings also held in its Hellenistic manifestation where man is the column implied at the centre of the *templum*, and, indeed, man is the *templum*. Two variants later it signifies circle, world, boundary, limits, believe, judge, esteem or mistake-for, all of which occur in Roman usage. All secure the principle of centrality and its consequent power, possession. This process marks significant and comprehensive spatial attribution in language, a theme prominent in the West in the work of Ernst Cassirer. The drawing [62] below shows a

¹³. *Phillip 1966*, Ch 6.

¹⁴. *Nelson, A.W: The Modern Reader's Japanese-English Character Dictionary*. Tokyo 1974. 2nd edition. Code no. 102. Kanji is the image part of Japanese, deriving from the Chinese system. In it, a radical is, as

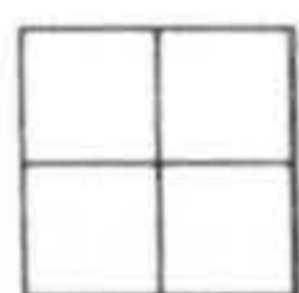
its name indicates, a floor. 田 consists of an outer square, which is even more basic. To this it adds centrality, marking territorial space and authority. The meanings of a radical are compounded by adding secondaries, which might be other radicals. These might extend the meaning or point obtuse evolving semiotic structures which become attached to it through custom.



"..... it was a birds' eye view of a rice field. The boundary lines between rice fields are not stone walls or barbed wire fences, but rather dykes which are an integral part of the fields themselves. When I contemplate this character, this rice field, I become the bird looking down from the optimum vantage point vertically above the centre of the field: it is also the order of the universe, the organizing principle of space. This principle applies as well to the city as to the countryside. In fact everything in the universe is divided into squares. Each square has five parts. The centre designates He who thinks and sustains the order of the universe - formerly the Emperor. An imaginary perpendicular line rises from the centre of the square. This is the ideal line going up to the bird overhead, to the perceiver of space. It is thus the dimension of thought, of knowledge, identified here with Wisdom and hence with the power of the wise man to conceive and conserve the order of nature...."

before the Americans came to Japan crossroads had names but the roads themselves did not"

(unknown Buddhist philosopher, quoted from Lefebvre 1974, pp 153)

Kanji ta 
and Templum

Ancient idea - modern language

a survival of the idea of templum embedded in Japanese

Japanese philosopher's interpretation of 田. (Sketches are the author's).

"..... it was a birds' eye view of a rice field. The boundary lines between rice fields are not stone walls or barbed wire fences, but rather dykes which are an integral part of the fields themselves.¹⁵ When I contemplate this character, this rice field, I become the bird looking down from the optimum vantage point vertically above the centre of the field: it is also the order of the universe, the organising principle of space.¹⁶ This principle applies as well to the city as to the countryside. In fact everything in the universe is divided into squares. Each square has five parts. The centre designates He who thinks and sustains the order of the universe - formerly the Emperor. An imaginary perpendicular line rises from the centre of the square. This is the ideal line going up to the bird overhead, to the perceiver of space. It is thus the dimension of thought, of knowledge, identified here with Wisdom and hence with the power of the wise man to conceive and conserve the order of nature..... before the Americans came to Japan crossroads had names but the roads themselves did not"¹⁷

I ching takes meanings implied within this scheme, removing literal derivatives, making them manifest as power and possession. When assembled templums make grids. Grids transform landscape into abstract space, or Landscape. Templum was used to overwrite pre-existing claims. Its compressions parallel those in symbol languages - Sumerian pictograms, Egyptian hieroglyphs, kanji, or myth. It derives from a perceived need to encapsulate ideas related to a political power base convincingly, delivering them from memory in an officiating society. They have to be assimilable and complete. Resulting spatial forms, clad in the elegance of conceit, had special connotations for Longus, whose Dionysiac orchard grove is a pointedly ornate templum. Like the ornamentation of Hellenistic cultic architecture, each device possesses its own space which it contributes to the totality, constantly modulating the root form, the radical. Abstract Space receives Attributive powers in this process. We see the "overhead viewer" - "He who thinks and sustains the order of the universe (kosmos)" - an Olympian, looking down from the top of his mountain in this component of a modern language where the three dimensional implications in templum become symbolic space. This, the reader may recall, is also the meaning of Greek Alkinoos - "all seeing, all knowing".

¹⁵. Semitic practice in the Mesopotamian flatlands.

¹⁶. Babylonian and Egyptian summary of Sumerian practices in setting out.

¹⁷. Taken from *Lefebvre 1974*, pp 153, a quote from an un-named Buddhist Japanese philosopher.

Mythopoeic space.

The extent of mythic space is determined by collective imagination. It cannot be incorporated into something smaller than itself without compression or diminution. Diminution reduces its profile, lessening, defeating, making it less meaningful. That might be one intentional during appropriation or re-attribution. Accumulated meaning tended to be absorbed and bent, overwritten rather than destroyed in the syncretic evolution of Mediterranean cultures. A process of conflation modulated imported ideologies, aggrandising the resident system without demolishing powers underlying inducted symbols.¹⁸ Judaic developments under Ezekiel were an exception to this. Recognising the power of allegory, Ezekiel sought to demolish it by overloading its imagery to the point of disintegration. Thus we have wordy images which reveal its weakness by opaqueness, including symbolic Landscapes. Nomadic Akkadian and Assyrian conquest of Sumer and Babylon found the importance the concept garden held amenable and useful. Taking over and re-working its imagery, they conquered the power of kings and people.

Ranges of potential meaning might be condensed or re-shaped, to fit new environments, another cosmos. An old cult might be attached to something already large and loosely structured, able to accept it as a peripheral and expand. Accretive use of key symbols and signs makes the process viable graphically. Homer uses compression techniques for familiar known things. Naming alone is adequate for understood stereotypes. Priestly transcribers of rhapsode performances found it necessary to widen descriptive scope when portraying didactic novelties.¹⁹ Paradoxically this set more defined limits, enabling us to make a more practical sense than can be extracted from global "understood" images of poetic diction. Similar processes can also assist space manipulation. An analogy in computer programming and procedures is that of compressing a repeated process into a minute graphical symbol, understood by initiates. This enables it to be incorporated into larger processes, re-openable in its entirety with a switch, a miracle of spatial consciousness!

¹⁸. It is worth noting that the dominance of this culture in north western Europe is largely artificial, a re-introduction imposed on another independent but related one which had, until the XVIIc, supplanted it. The strength of Hellenism lies in its tautology, its lack of economy. Economic use of all elements was a major feature of northern culture, which still urged an underlying enlightening sense of proportional space in all its aspects.

¹⁹. The palace of Alkinoos is a prominent example, marking it as something un-named and not commonplace in the culture he was addressing.

"Understood" images composed of absorbed symbols can become mere convention. They then disappear or are reconstructed. Part of the tenacity of early abstract Landscape is that forms survived this repeated process of compression for so long. It marks the presence of "universals" - components with deeply seated emotional appeal. Nomadic "non-Landscape" cultures time and time again in their conquest of Landscape specific ones, adopt these carefully manipulated surfaces of earth complete with iconography. This suggests that something important relating to human psychological survival was incorporated into early coding of space. The structure of mythic space lies beyond the reach of linguistics alone, in the realm of philosophy, spread over different perceptions, not one branch of expression. Linguistic emphasis ignores important visual pointers.

Myth seems intuitive, facilitating synthesis of individual and collective experience beyond available logic.²⁰ Spatial ideas dominate its view of world mechanisms. Accretive, it bypasses the need for analytical explanation to promote ideas or ideologies, an invaluable visualisation and propaganda tool! Emphasis is on synthesis, syncretic accretive and assimilative production of space. Making myth greater than human daily reality demands warping of the normal humdrum space time continuum by a kind of poetic relativity. Southern Mesopotamians, encased in a flat environment, measured the cosmic expanse of "other" space by extrapolating their experience of limited horizons. Sky and sheets of water reflecting it assume greater significance, since they release visible space beyond the confines of city, garden or grove. Their gardens and their groves though, encapsulated profundities in their life, making them an emotional focus. Northern Iranians perceived infinities from the elevation of the Steppes, a different balance of sky and surface. Greek Nymphs ride dolphins past sea girt ancient technologists, colonial ancestors frozen in time in the Boscotrecase frescos. Would-be heroes borrow the attributes of Hermes. Later they ride aerial horses borrowed from the imagery of Steppe cultures. Chariots clear immensities of sky drawn by supernatural teams. Horse and dolphin epitomise an anima of speed, Hermes the skill in their guidance systems. Together they render conquest of space, drawing into ideas of Landscape knowledge gained from venture. There is something more conscious in this than in Mesopotamian enclosures.²¹

²⁰. However, it must once have been an intellectual device.

²¹. One of the qualities of myth is that it enshrines technologies that are already ancient, preserving valuable nuggets for continued stability, contact with ancestral ways.

Intelligent and sensitive, the production of mythic space is a root visualisation technique of art, allowing extensive intellectual exploration, an appropriation of the prerogatives of the warrior-wanderer. Spatial imagination is supreme.²² The sensation, and others related to this ability to make imaginative leaps is enshrined in early Sumerian poetry.²³

Religious practice rigidifies mythic expression. Tightly conservative, religions seek to evaluate the inexplicable. The tendency preserves power deriving from discovery, which might otherwise dissipate within collective consciousness. It also hinders rash proliferation, suppressing new ideas. It is obstructive, preventing wide ranging quest, though that did not deter Greek scholars from evolving techniques exploring abstract space encompassed by myth. Perhaps increasing complexities produced by these explorations eventually gave impetus to "Saviour" cults, including Dionysos and Asklepeios, in an increasingly chthonian presence.

Mythic imagery is polyvalent. Like Chinese and Japanese kanji it seeks to encompass parallel thought. These are the myths which survive. The intentions of previous modifiers and possessors of myth are repeatedly altered, through discovery of "error" or to bend new ideologies. Tautologies enable flexible and extended connections and interpretations to be made, the essence of allegory. Absolute space is appropriated, the space of ideologies, and abstracted into representative "Landscapes", in European culture, Arkadia, Elysium, Shamash or Eden.

The paintings and mythic space.

Pictorial depiction of mythic space on a flat plane is problematical. It is, in a sense, spherical, both defined and indefinite, delimited and infinite. It purveys illusion and often seems without geometric characteristics. It relates to processes. The geometry of its order and which its order produces is implied, culturally "understood". It exists within but defies scientific analysis generating energy behind iconography.

²². This does not exclude them from maturity, but their presence then tends to be re-shaped by inducted information.

²³. This is more complex than might seem to the late XXc viewer. In a predominantly syncretic view of the world the dreaming or daydreaming mind is a prime synthesiser. Its gift is the ability to produce meaningful human space out of incomprehensible chaos, and has to be viewed in the context of a sophisticated civilisation which believed death to be a passage from one dream activity to another for the chosen ones. Notably in an urban civilisation this process was attained in rural topoi, and rites of passage terminated in that topos intensified and transferred to an extension of the city.

This is like differentiating the Milky Way into divine forms, or encompassing it by ideas like the milk of the virgin, seeing quincuncial gardens in the stars, or entrail divination.²⁴

Image layering.

The "frames" of the Boscotrecase paintings derive from cultic devices. They contain references to special space elsewhere, drawing at the outset attached inferences from that place, in this case Hellenistic stoic. Their pictorial space is organised to convey hidden information, not necessarily because it needed to be concealed - though that is sometimes one origin of the technique - but partly because it helped overcome limitations in the medium which restrict the expression of philosophical complexities. Divine Proportion is used in several ways, each a layer of meaning. Each process is logically defined in its scope, and might simulate linguistic allegory or be one of its early sources. Several layers could be analysed, but for convenience three are suggested. They were used extensively throughout Egyptian and Classical cultures.

Immediately obvious is the aesthetic layer. Colour mutations, compositional juxtapositioning of pictorial elements, their treatment, carry subliminal messages which determine immediacy. We have already seen how flanking walls are subordinated to axial space in the frescos in this way.

Compositional elements are keyed to other layers. Ranges of geometric figures and proportions have "sacred" connotations. These lie under the surface geometry, establishing its order but maintaining independent existence. They lead, mirror like, to a beyond, a layer accessible only in the mind of the viewer. This led to the concept "Attributive Space". Pythagorean ideas, from the inception of philosophical thought, probably still relied much on oriental and eastern Greek ideologies. For them, imaginative discovery was sacred, divinely inspired, appropriated in a sense, set aside from normality.

Surviving works of Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic Greek art pottery reveal continuous and consistent underlying structures. They vary with content, metamorphose and develop, but are not supplanted and rarely omitted. This is the so-called sacred geometry, not a Greek idea, but Mesopotamian and Egyptian. Both used it intensely within the limits of their own conventions

²⁴. Astrological devices, Mediaeval mysticism determining the position of Compostella relative to Rome, Sumerian shade gardens, the layout of Sumerian cities.

but neither with the flair of the Greeks. It is as evident in Homer's *Iliad* as in the Parthenon, a vase painting, ancient Egyptian chant or Vergil. It is a major expressive layer in the Boscotrecase frescos where elaboration creates a subsumed mandala as complex as the overlaid imagery.

It scarcely seems logical that painters should constrain imagery in this way for the sake of convention alone. It had to have use. Like visible imagery and urban space, it evolves, develops. Dynamic information is given, impossible to convey without the benefit of moving pictures or sequential static imagery, another popular technique, like simultaneity, for representing mythopoeic space. Compressions of time and space parallel those of myth. Condensation achieves implied sequential time and space within recognisable stereotypes. Directional modulation imparted in this way relates to physical and intellectual balance, *metis*, and imaginative space, lynchpins in Greek culture, and dynamic relationships with natural and ideated space. In the Boscotrecase frescos we found stasis. Cultic geometry concealed-revealed in the dynamic processes underlines this. Stasis is produced by balance, motion held in suspense, as in gymnastics or repetitive as in dance, and still prevalent in modern cultures. In these paintings, inner stillness is that of "there-ness", the world beyond rites of passage, the triumph of death. Transfer is effected from surface imagery into space beyond which mirrors the mind.

Attributions.

The third spatial layer differs again. Symbolic space resides within each object included in the painting, revealing dynamic spatial links. Each is a "Jacob's ladder", implying transfer between planes of existence and geographical space, rendered in a sculptural manner. They are signifiers of other three dimensional space, but the next stretch required of the inlooker is that of a fourth dimension with a special reading. A large component of the images is, like that of deities, specific space defined in quantity and quality. Statues of deities extensively inhabited Hellenistic and Roman urban space.²⁵ This statuary was afforded specific placement. When in groups, it was organised in a way which introduced narrative and symbolic logic. Symbolic logic arose from geometric disposition which was both quantitative and qualitative.

A statue of Apollo for example, can be read as an abstraction for an Arkadian mountain and all Arkadia, accompanied by another

²⁵. Urbanised space here includes that of precinct, a form of sacred city, and Landscape.

aspect of the same abstract space, that of the Muses which emphasises the form. Hippogriff conjures another image of the same place, a special process allegory with different connotations. Muses belong to Landscapes of death and eternity. Their presence is one of continuous repetitive movement. Hippogriff performed one act, punctuating this cosmic eternity of horizontal space, giving rise to another, the eternal spring of vertical space. As the horse emerged from the neck of the Gorgon, so the spring flows from high in the mountainside, an image paralleled by the mountaintop paradise of Persian iconography. Gorgon, like the Muses, was an aspect of the perpetual round. In symbolic action in symbolic abstract space, parts of the cosmos receive connective spatial logic. However, to introduce imagery of Apollo into a space is to introduce different qualities and different status of the implied space than introducing Hippogriff. Assembling Gorgon (Death-Artemis), Apollo, Muses, and Hippogriff makes of the symbolic mountain Parnassus a time machine of vertical (human) and horizontal (cosmic) dynamics. This space is thus drawn into and adds to the space occupied by planar imagery, expanding it in the mind of an inlooker who knows.

The same principles can be applied to the objects in the paintings, most of all Oracle triad. It enlarges the space already introduced by the sacred geometry layer. No more space exists - in this case in the two-dimensional plane - it is created in the mind. The Tetrastyle marks a shrine of choice, as their presence in an urban cycle marked and regulated crossings. The sacred arch, purely symbolic architecture with no other purpose, marks unidirectional passage, a membrane or mirror in space. Qualities are added to each of these by the presence of other iconography, which modulates the basic idea, just as Apollo alone, Apollo with Muses, Hippogriff with Muses, or Gorgon with Hippogriff recall different dimensions of Parnassus.

Narrative and parallel.

Column, tree, water, tholos, Arkadian, Priapus, not only create narrative linear space within a static composition, but also extend the space pictured with mirror, or image space from the mind of the viewer. The process occurs in three-dimensional fabrications, like Landscape, the essence of their compressions. Ultimately "Garden" arrives in this way. It arises from a special kind of Landscape given to the deity of Love and Death, or to the Sumerian Shamash where it is managed by the priestess of rites of passage. In the enriched symbolic space of palace and precinct

it is an appropriation of particular powers and spatial abstractions incorporated into it by a culture. In this way cloister design could be refined to a few architectural devices which recalled all Paradise. Such reductive processes can and do ultimately lead into arid conventions, "lip-service" icons. Parts of meaning remain. Resurgent interest, like that of Varro in Augustan Rome or Alberti and Mantegna in the Renaissance, reconstructs them with a new slant.

At least three layers in these paintings build allegorical and mythical space where underlying geometry is mnemosyne and variant. Similar geometry occurs in contemporary monumental space, even villa Landscapes. It expresses eternity, dominating Arabic derivations from Hellenism substituting for precluded human form. A philosophical manoeuvre, this uses symbolism implied in its original presence, concealing-revealing the forbidden. Sacred geometry marks the humanised cosmos.²⁶ The "architecture" layer imports complex "second-hand" space.²⁷ Geometry has neither to be quite so careful, nor so elaborate to generate acculturated intuitive response in aesthetic terms.

Geometry conceived as an abstraction, part of remote symbolic codes in mathematics, hinders access to meanings in classical cultures which, revived in the Renaissance, were rather different. It represented explorations of "other" space-time, "there", parallel and invisible, inhabited by gods and their epiphanies and manifestations within time and space occupied by humanity. In other words, this use of geometry presents claims to existence beyond, conceived in terms of the best terrestrial apportionments. A view of perfection, environments approached in the design of sacred and palace precincts on earth, included the villa as an attribute of "aristocracy" for those who claimed privilege based on a role in this other world.

The Images.

Wall planes are space-specific. Imagery on them is part of volumetric space. Internal and external surfaces on a utensil can hold sequential imagery with illusions of motion - especially, under the influence of repeated consumption of certain contents.²⁸ Their imagery is transferable, though often only

²⁶. Whilst in one sense it is conceived as order perceived in apeiron, it is of course a projection of aspects which we find meaningful into a receptive complex whose form is not otherwise nameable. Hence the concealing-revealing aspect, which hides from those unable to grasp discoveries, at the same time making the way at least translucent if not transparent for those able to follow and develop.

²⁷. Each depicted architectural object becomes itself. Thus a column is solid and a-directional, an arch is bi-directional, a tholos is a sublimated cave and so on.

²⁸. This process can be observed in ancient drinking vessels, where imagery on one side of the cylinder is sequential to imagery adjacent to it, e.g. Minoan cups from (σαφίω) Vaphio in the Athens National

within restricted volumes, for much decorated work had specific cultic reference. Though immovable, physical as well as illusory movement is directed by walls, using architectural detail or other applied devices. Mural painting is special. It is monumental. Decorated pots served monumental purposes encapsulated in rite, but there are presumptions about painted walls not shared by other representational forms. More often in a historical context they present messages, a kind of deception. Three variants occur in the frescos. The scale of the mythological murals, Polyphemus and Ariadne, is large enough to "enter", filling its frames and thereby subjugating them. Historical space removes them. The Nocturnes are tiny images set in vast blacknesses, concentrations demanding a static pose, projecting distance like images "behind" a mirror. Oracle triad has intermediate, even indeterminate scale, forcing one to read their whitenesses as well as the polychrome iconography, maintaining distance through symbolism.

Homer does not mention murals in the palace of Alkinoos. Prolific in Cretan and Mycenaean palaces, they projected a collective iconography of power, mastery over space and time. He portrays archetypal embodiments of cultural permanence, imagery encoded in architecture, metal and stone.²⁹ The Word connects it with cultic and philosophical ambiances. Stereotype representation of humans transposes into similar qualitative abstractions to those crystallised in deities. Crystallising implies purifying and condensing, a special kind of spatial compression later embodied in ideas about transparent solids present in Renaissance thought. Frescos simultaneously signify tacit acknowledgement of mutability, transience, and passage and permanence. Easily painted, modified, painted over, the implication is that architecture survives. They project cultural significance and attainment. Some of the oldest surviving from Thera and Crete, depict symbols of immutability by devices appropriated from Absolute or natural space. This was not the general mood of the Pompeiian second style, whose inflated architectural rhetoric received such dramatic overthrow. It was the mood of the Third Pompeiian style.

Museum (Ill Demargne ff. 282-286). Herakles, the favourite demi-god of the villa classes in Campania, was renowned as much for his truly Dionysiac drinking attributes as for his feats of physical prowess.
²⁹. Eternal works whose reference is to the skills of Hephaistos; his bronze tholos was the palace of dead kings, gods and demi-gods; Alkinoos exists in that world, an exemplar of kingship in eternity surrounded by the wealth of bronze and gold.

Phantom ceremonials.

Murals modulate and create space and spatial illusion within two dimensional space which inhabits a volume. In turn the volume has psychological and physical resonances with other space, internal or external. Its psychological centre, within the observer, can be manipulated by the images. Murals influence the position the viewer takes in the space, also modified by the impact of similar manipulations in preceding space.³⁰ Each signifies its own focal point. Perception of the room's volume is determined by handling of three dimensional illusion, reference, or inference, and influences perception in passage from one room to another. It also influences perception of neighbouring walls, decorated or not, part of the mechanics of programming.

Boscotrecase's frescos contribute space to each other, their rooms, and extended spaces. They associate personages, time and space. Narrative thread particularises them, adding a further dimension. In Oracle triad, we find a particular organisation. Composition in subordinate images - Tetrastyle and Stoa - supports the dominant Oracle. So does "architectural" imagery. Shrines depicted in the two side wall paintings mark rites of passage on the horizontal plane.³¹ "Tetrastyle" marks a crossing; all around it are decision facilitating divination shrines. "Stoa" marks linear passage with a sacred arch, time, measure and motion with its colonnade. Tripods offer oracular guidance.³² At the axial image, Oracle, horizontal movement terminates in centralised vertical thrust. Each element in it marks a point of vertical passage, holes and poles between "here" and "there". So does its triangular composition symbolic of sacred mountain into which the holes lead, the chthonian world of Sannazaro's plaintive traveller in the death of love, of Bomarzo's robust erudite wit and Lante's exquisite perfections.

Painted surrounds position the wall face, modulate and condition the way in which contained paintings are understood. These are paintings of landscape paintings hung in ceremonial frames. They are not paintings hung in frames. Central images purport to reveal inner space, space not portrayed but symbolised, just as the frames are not, but symbolise, ceremonial art. Illusionistic

³⁰. In a familiar (like domestic) or cultic environment also with subsequent known space, creating a closed loop.

³¹. There is no horizontal plane in fact, but it is implied.

³². Three feet remained symbolic of The Goddess in triadic form, Hera. As objects sacred to Hera, they were also linked to sacred kings who were Heroes. Heroes mediated in their after life between gods and men. Tripods indicated oracular energies and were among the most highly prized trophies of victors who dedicated them to a chosen patron goddess.

metaphor houses allegory and process allegory, a sophistry infusing and controlling the enfolded space. Large openings in the room extend this interaction beyond the confines. Painted landscapes interact, space implied and space present, a more devious manipulation than grandiose architectural illusion. A concept "Landscape" generates an implanted ideology, linking process with objects, psychology with "ecology", with transference between inner and external space. Marking territory defines and delimits processes here as succinctly as in a Mannerist Landscape like Bomarzo or Lante.

These paintings of paintings at Boscotrecase, undoubtedly "Landscapes", do not portray a locus imbued with personal response as, for example, the paintings of Constable epitomise "England" in Suffolk. Despite virtuoso displays of atmospheric light, they are not ecstatic revelations of a particular ineffable moment in time and space as Turner's later paintings. Yet they epitomise Hellenism in Rome and seek the ineffable, expressions of symbolic Landscapes no less profound.

Encompassing allegory within metaphor, they purport to reveal space beyond. Another kind of representational space is inducted and attributed. Layers react. Space framed and imaged becomes space mirrored in the mind. Notions of abstract space extend allusive space which we can neither see nor sense, "Attributive Space", drawn from our well of knowledge. It has to be understood. Extensions to that space project within a scenic image structure. Superficialities can be catalogued, listed, classified, seen by the most casual onlooker. Surface arrangement conveys feeling for space in the painter. Visible geometry contains keys which, once observed and understood, unlock arrays of devices which refer to third, fourth and other imagined dimensions that seek to outline apeiron. Sacred geometry, properly the space of deities given human form, plays with non-existent holes, imagined labyrinths, eternally cyclical rivers, trees whose idealised symmetry spans generations of humanity. Symbols constructed with sacred geometry or manifesting it, make ways into it. Iconographic innerstanding gives mystic experience.

"Frames" and "panel" receive attributes from the underlay space. Painted, they can be touched but not grasped. Their presence extends a grid of visible surface references into philosophical zones which we can only surmise. They relate to time, eternity and perpetuity. They induce four dimensional space from cultic practices, myth and knowledge shared by Anatolian,

Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Mediterranean culture into two dimensional space occupied by the paintings, in a domus which is a complex of sublimated space. Symbolic functions previously carried by such ornate framework are partially transferred to the walls. They are two dimensional. The originals were structures. Replication of the originals were affordable in the home of a multi millionaire. Partial appropriation is therefore deemed intentional, as more elaborate use of sacred structures became normal in the same class of domus shortly afterwards.

Abstract space permits expansion through this frame as in myth, music or mathematics. We cannot physically penetrate it, but imaginatively enter its dreamspace. Simultaneity inculcates the frame in the process. Elegant "gilded" manipulations and extensions of the geometric principles underline scenes opened within its enclosures. Details properly part of architectural environments depicted in the scenes form components of the painted frame. They diverge from "picture frames" which at first glance they might appear to imitate. There is a modulation of imagery, not a debasement. Iconography from sacred space transposed into the domestic environment of cubiculi is made mutable in paint.

Extensions result from iconographic compressions. None of this space exists within the rooms as would happen with architectural modelling. It exists only in the mind. The more aware the viewer, the more "extensive" the space, for it is part of mnemosyne in painter and viewer, each of whom contributes.

The genius of the Oracle triad is that it enables conjugation of a particular historical moment. That the moment continued for several hundred years is an altruism marking the underlying vitality within Augustan sense of destiny and Octavian's manipulative skills. Compressed iconographic space of this kind passed into Mediaeval Europe through Alexandrian Gnosticism, evident in Longus, and through Byzantine ideologies. Breaking of its codes in the work of scholars like Augustine and Aquinas led eventually to Renaissance success in releasing their increasingly symbolic language back into normal life. This was to become a major feature of Renaissance space, whether in the design of interiors or Landscapes. In Mannerist art it reached a climax. Decoding and re-coding is paradoxically most apparent in Mannerism which sought to separate elements from early Renaissance systematisation. When we arrive at the two Mannerist Landscapes which complete the study, we find polarised interpretations of similar iconographic "space". Both

are Landscapes of Death with immense vitality using surviving encapsulated Hellenistic symbolic space but, even more, the processes it enclosed in Attributive Space. Landscape sublimated in urban space surrounding triumph and audience, part of Rome's ceremonial sequence, is recalled in the murals, in form and content. Quiet landscapes of death simulate a triumph, a passage through Arkadia leading to the final audience and bestowal of accolades, a fitting memorial for a Hero of the Empire. Both Bomarzo and Lante take up this theme and expose it in their different ways, for it became part of the ethos of Renaissance Florentine power.

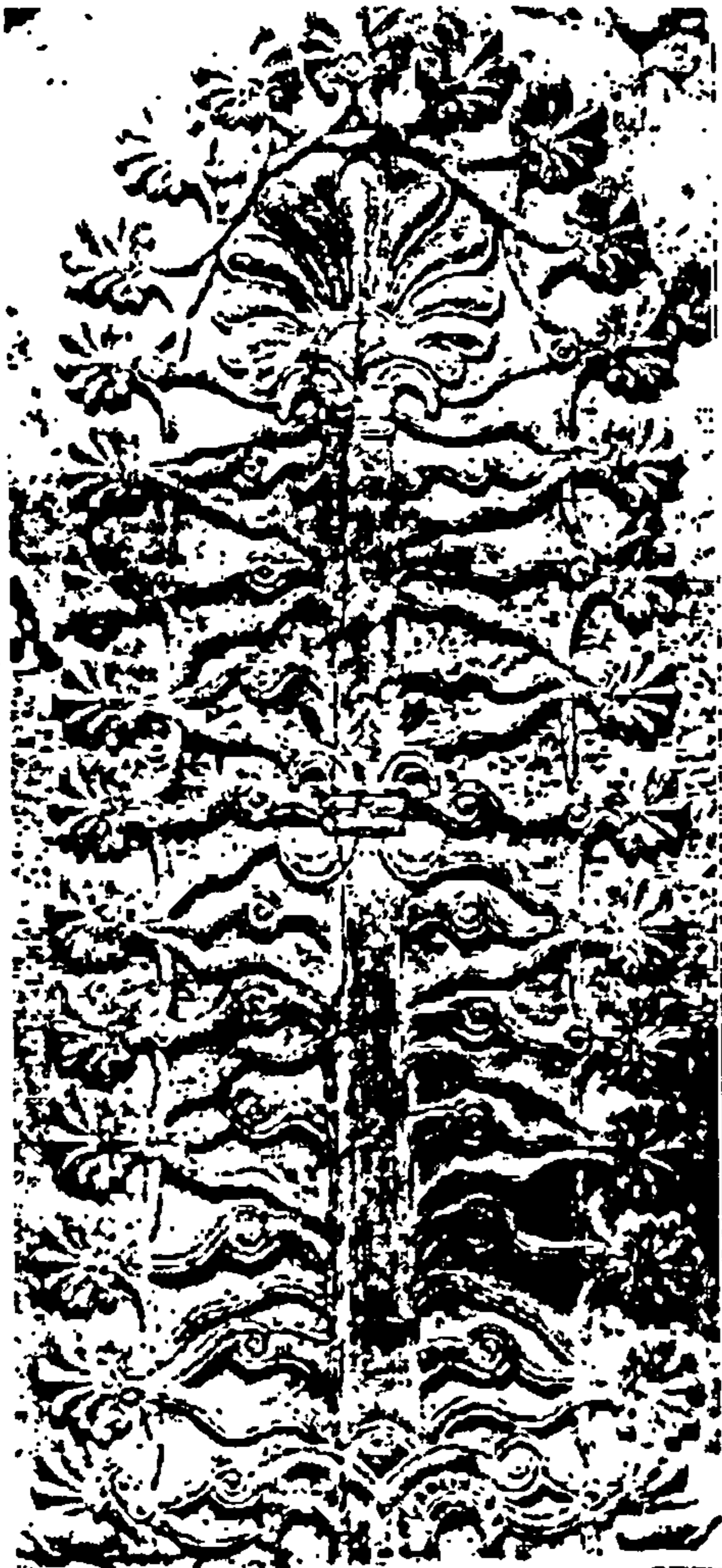
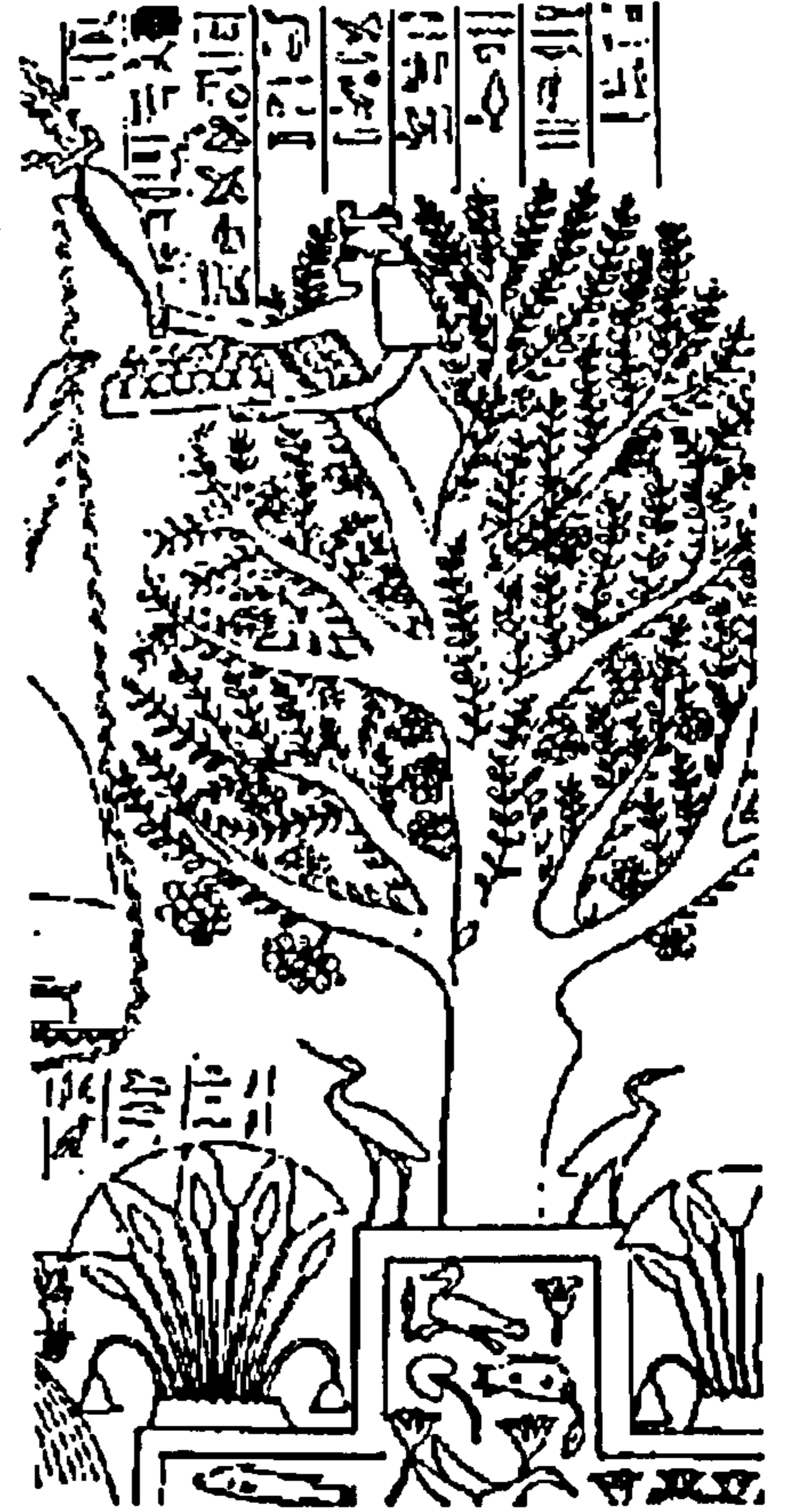
Attributive space.

We are presented with many things, all of which purport to something they are not. "Ceci n'est pas une pipe," Magritte warns. Painted images, they are - and contain - cultural stereotypes. The shepherd is every Arkadian, the priest every priest, and so on. All are keys, unlocking ideas of space located somewhere else. Unlocking, they direct. The shepherd is a cultural territory given due place in a well-organised ordered world aided by the Hero. A confident attitude, casual and monumental, gives historical credence in this brave new world of Pax Romana. It is strikingly reminiscent of the personification of Arkadia in another Roman fresco. Arkadia, he brings into the abstract space of the painting other abstractions. Like a deity, he possesses attributes that are the qualities of Arkadia, imaginary Sicilian landscapes from Theocritus, aboriginal Greek homeland, or a conflation. Theocritus's Sicilian groves, though derivations, are infinite and Pan-Hellenic, their boundaries yet to be discovered. Trees are spaced around dappled glades, pleasantries of otium where, here and there, a carved image of Pan or a Nymph lies, casually dropped, incomplete, to the mossy floor.³³

None of that exists in the painting, but you may see it. A contemporary viewer would see it with greater detail and clarity. The locus of the painting extends to other geographical places, or a place temporally and dimensionally displaced, existing only in the collective mind. New dimensions set up within the viewer bonds them to that distant land, rather like Goethe's Mignon, from *Wilhelm Meister*. We are addressed directly, in the same manner: "Kennst du das land, wo die zitronen bluehen ... ?" Do you know this land, where the free shepherd wanders with untrammelled imagination? It is distant, and it is here. Mignon was present in Goethe's imagination to utter her words, with her

³³. See *Theocritus: Idylls*.

Top Right. Egyptian iconography has the tree of life and death - a passage image - growing from the "waters of the depths"; this links with later substitution of tree and tholos. In ancient Sumerian gardens the greatest trees grew nearest the source (well or reservoir). On this image, the tree stands for space of passage and there; would it have the same meaning beside a pond in an Egyptian garden? If so it attributed space-time from "there" into a present "here". Below: Is this tree on the earth mountain really water? Mountains were forested in Babylonian times; the moon goddess whose Landscape it was, was rain deity. Is this a conflation of abstract mythopoeic space, one culture's view of another's Landscape, both "here" and "there" in perpetual time warp?



Nimur IXcBC sacred tree



Is the Assyrian palm tree garlanded with 29 Lotus palmettes a figure of speech representing solar and lunar cycles? The palm was the love goddess of death and rebirth Ishtar (Astarte-Aphrodite). Does the image lay princely claim to space "there" via the Bit-akitu?

Tree? mountain? water? here? there?

the land of citrus trees and an unrealistic view of classical architecture. Mignon's description of entablatures could never have existed in an ordinary home. By their attribution she marks noble associations, despite her humility. We cannot say it does not exist. It existed in the mind of its creator, and now it exists in yours. Its attributes - spatial distance, certain qualities of environment, affiliations, openness, enclosure, deep cultural roots - all these things are implanted in this small two dimensional area of paint on a plastered wall and a few significant words.

Tree of life.

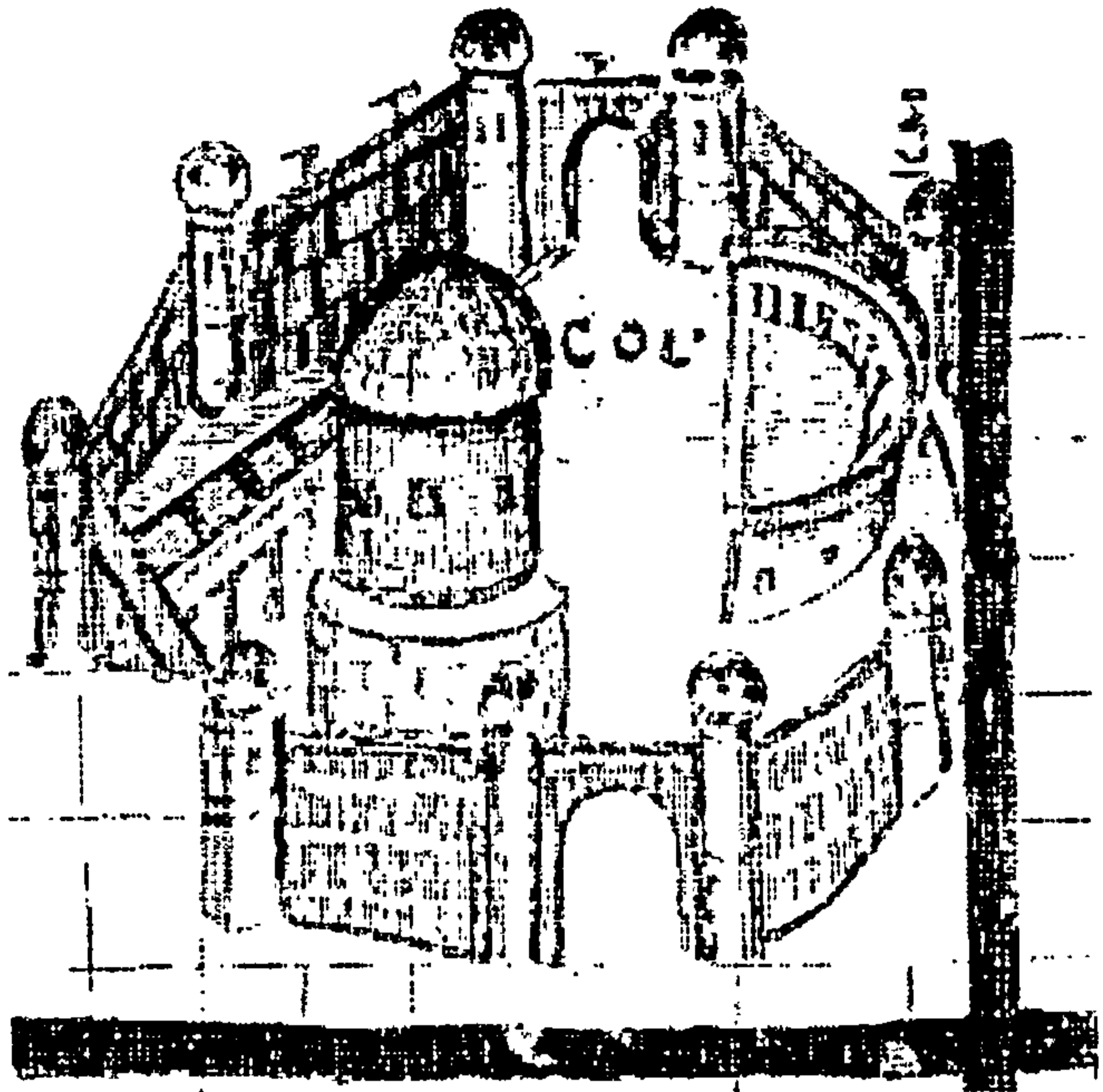
Layers deepen! The tree springs vertically from the mound of earth its luxuriant canopy amply shades, penetrates the Paulian light of the firmament pouring in from the edges. A sallow, it is a tree of Hera, Isis-Artemis, or Kybele, and Aphrodite, aspects of the Great Goddess from whom the concept of hero as vegetation deity springs. It grows on those same soft river banks where Anchises wanders in an eternity of Vergilian words.³⁴ Roots penetrate earthy darkness, drawing out energies, converting them, locking together sky and subsurface. Surface is insignificant, a mere membrane separating eternity from time. The tree, bridging this membrane, exists in both worlds. With tholos and column, whose energies within the domain of Aphrodite and Persephone differ, it establishes a communication between "here" and "there". Its attributes are luxuriant abundance, watery places, and Persephone. It brings with it into the mind of the viewer space which cannot be portrayed within the conventions of the time, leaving it to the imagination of that viewer to fill in details in accordance with accepted stereotypes. Those details would be drawn from a collective background. The tree of life is also the tree of death [63] shows a more ancient representation of this idea).

³⁴. Achises = an - near, ch - , Ises - Isis Aphrodite = near-Isis. *Room, A: NTC's Classical Dictionary*. Lincolnwood 1990. 'Anchises'. Another interpretation may be derived from *Frankfort, H: Before philosophy*. London 1949. pp 25/26: Ises = "deified throne"; enthroning was central to kingship, the throne being a fetish charged with the mysterious powers of kingship = "mother of kings" = Isis Aphrodite, "wife" of Anchises = Great Mother devoted to both husband and son (Horus & Osiris). Thus kingship emerged from the lap of the goddess, which draws us yet again to the centre of the labyrinth-vulva, the templum. In turn, it takes us to the "garden" of Aphrodite.

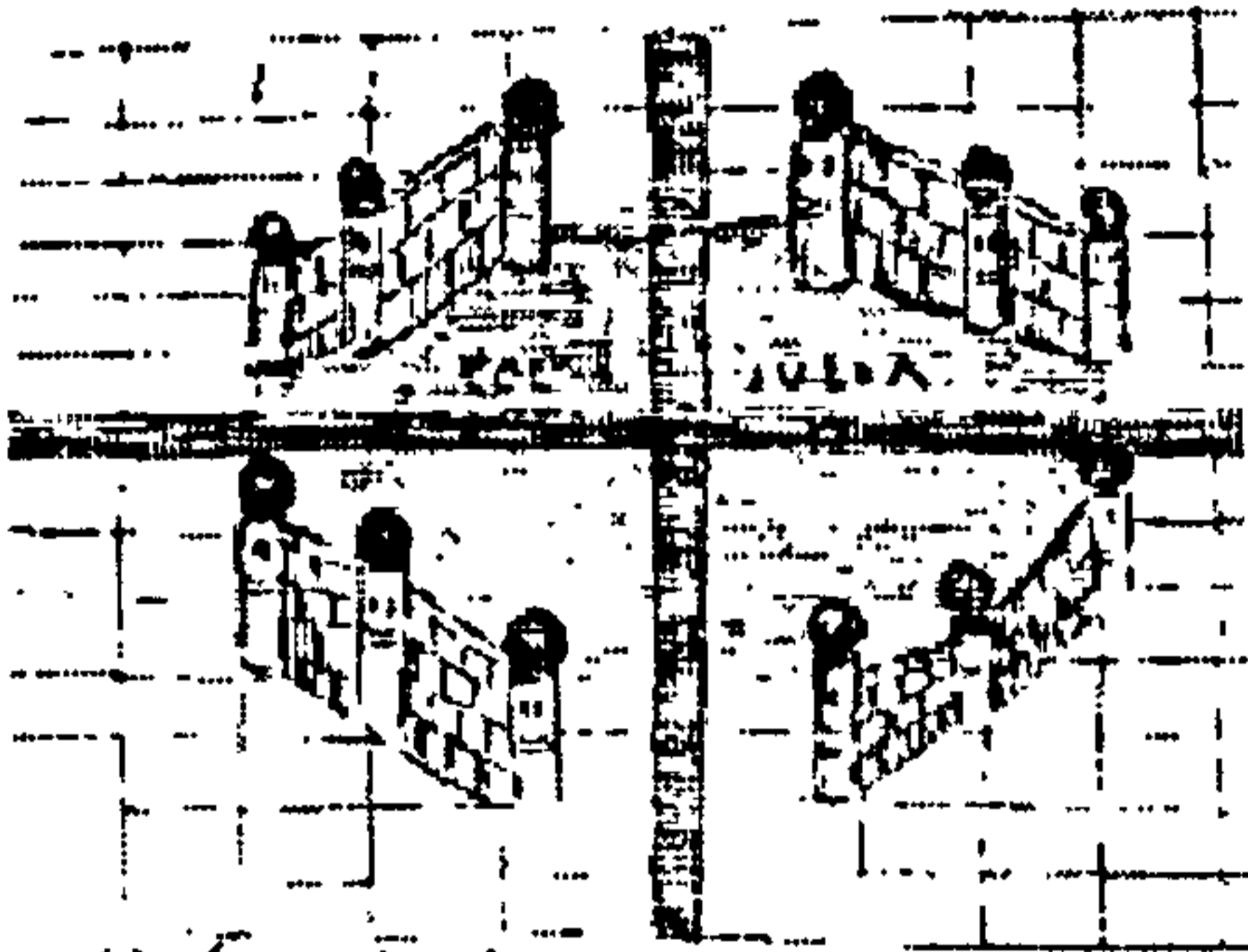
Top. Interesting and unusual, a colonia unnamed depicting a tholos, exedra (like the serapaeum of Rome's porta triumphalis) and portico. All its towers have the spherical caps of the high period; so does the tholos.

Below left: a small colonia with its templum on the diagonal, no arches, but spherical capped imperial towers.

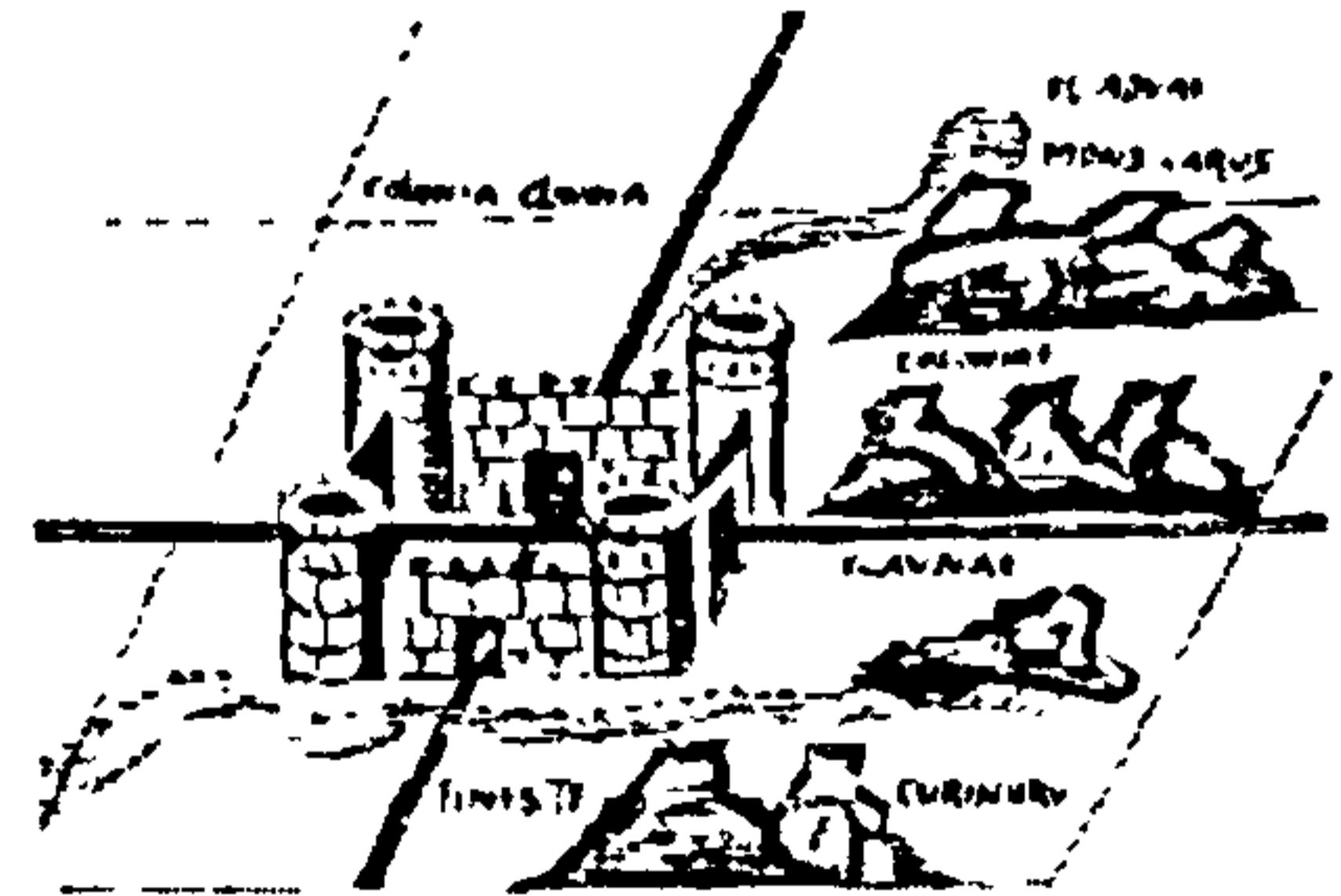
Below right: a more typical arrangement of templum and square castrum colonia



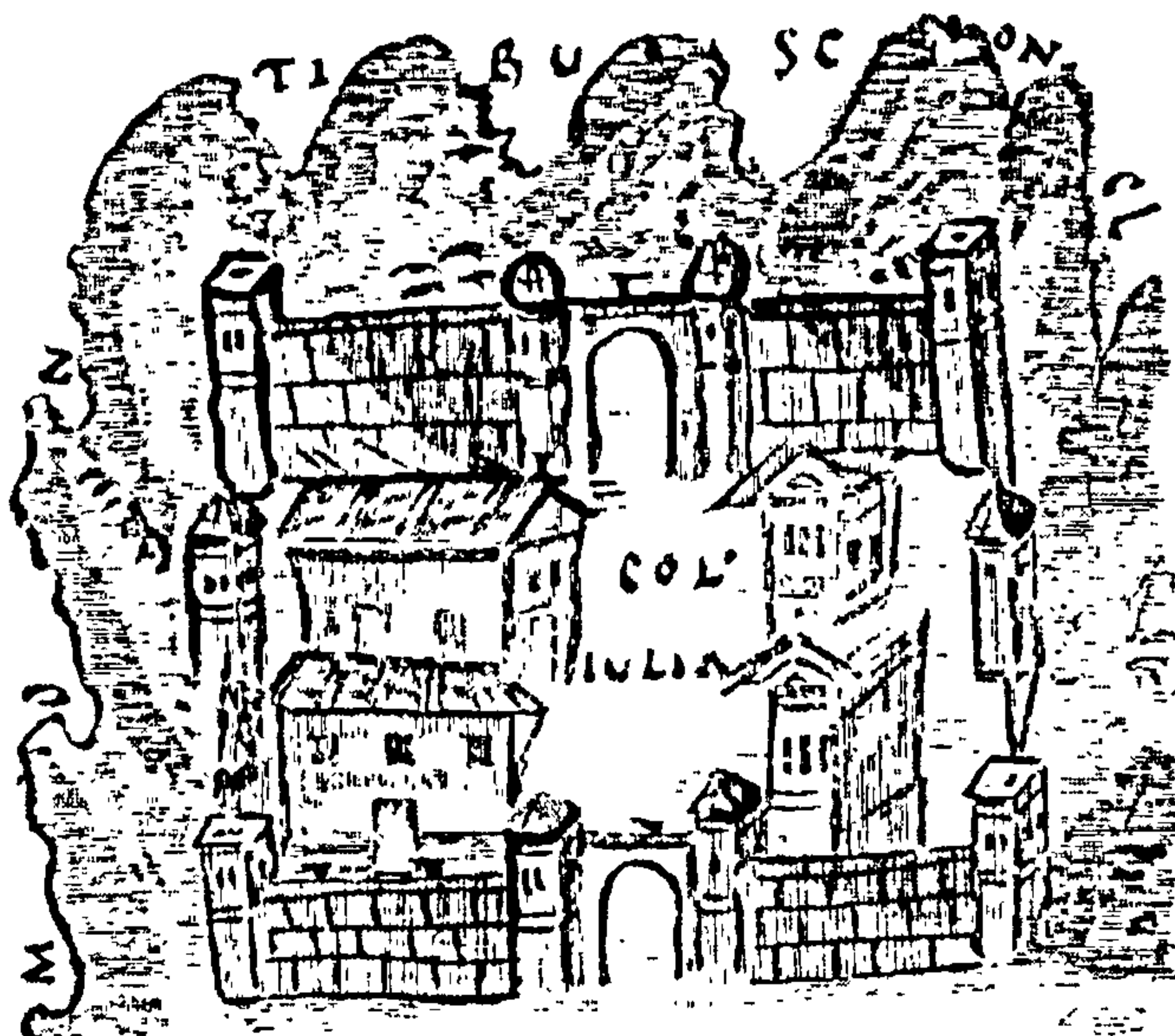
col Baldwin Smith ff 64



colonia iulia Baldwin Smith ff 62



colonia claudia Baldwin Smith ff 55



colonia iulia Baldwin Smith ff63

Left. Colonia in mountainous terrain. No organic Italian hill town this though, with its four temples squared firmly within the templum grid. Note the mixture of tower cappings; two are spherical, obviously more important, four are prismatic, those at the corners have flat roofs for defence, an interesting gradation.

Templum & settlement - centrality and sacred space

Centre of the square.

In practice the column has little subterranean dimension. Rising from the surface, it extends into the light, holding aloft a gilded bronze urn. An imperial presence is denoted, symbol of an idealised male principle. In the imagination of the onlooker, it might mean the might of Roman law marking, with many companions, the extent of imperial influence. It is a point marked on common earth, a centre, and the whole sacred area to which the imperial presence extends.³⁵ The urn raises the ashes of the Hero into the brilliant firmament, towards its Platonic home. We are drawn into the brilliance with it, our awareness heightened into our own dream.

Its subterranean dimensions are mythic and compressed. It marks upward thrust, but, like the tree has a downward component. It is the centre of the mirror, the crossing of the templum. Templum acknowledges life arising through death. Centring the labyrinth, symbolises mundus, which, in the existence of a Roman city, was of paramount importance, defining the essential ancestral presence. On the horizontal plane, templum, like labyrinth, might be circular or square. Like the temenos, corners define its squareness, the implied five, the quincunx, even when the centre is absent. In an abstract two dimensional vertical or horizontal representation, the central vertice is implied. Solitary columns imply its square or circle of influence transported from the originating power. It appropriates everywhere, One.

Some idea of the implied mundus can be gained from examination of an historical sequence. Cycladic (early Greek) burial urns were shaped in the form of a womb. The ashes of a body interred in this way are returned to the body that gave them life and in a sense to every female body, the essence of the Great Goddess concept. Mundus was the place where the founding hero of a city decided the mystical centre was to be, the symbolic space of its birth, marked by the templum from which it hung between the two "theres" [64]. It sublimates and ritualises midden. A real place of burial or symbolic, it was space allotted to ancestral dead. So great was its power, its contents so terrifying, that on those days when it was ritually opened, most of the functions of the city were suspended. Templum marks this place, and with it the presence of past heroes, whose qualities are inherent in the solitary column. Templum also centres labyrinth,

³⁵. In its physical or imagined power.

the territory of the Great Goddess and her "womb". It signifies "homeland", often an aboriginal homeland transferred, a new claim to autochthony encapsulated in the stillness at the centre. Marking in this way, all previous powers are erased or appropriated. Labyrinth also signifies eternity, from which the only return is resurrection or reincarnation. The column transferred to countryside beyond the city, signifies the presence of an extended homeland. It was the territory of Pan, first king of Arkadia, the archetypal Greek homeland to which heroes return after death. In this, the templum is Elysium, a garden of Aphrodite who seduces heroes, goddess of generation, birth, and death and rebirth, as Isis. Roman iconographers were keen to appropriate Etruscans customs, many of which linked with those of Greece. The Renaissance re-discovered this. It became an enthusiasm with sinister undertones, claiming for tyrants and immigrant warlords, like the Orsini, a right to rule, claims to autochthony supporting territorial acquisition. Its acceptance was no less avid in mercantile houses seeking power like the Medici. Hence ancient attributes gained new energies.

This is **Attributive Space**. The game can as well be played in three dimensions, as indeed it was in the whole of Roman imperial urban design, including Landscapes. All of the architectural details portrayed in these paintings were part of something we might call the **Greater Roman Landscape**. Everywhere the imperial presence went, sacred trees - which had been there before - sacred arches, sacred columns, shrines of the Lares, tetrapylons, marked its progress, its pauses, its crossings.³⁶ Urban space reached out from Rome, ran through its provincial centres, which themselves had once been imperial presences, and joined together every part of the surface into the grand pact of Roman law. All space was appropriated, made abstract, whatever its social connotations, and appropriate attributions applied. In the Roman villa, which was an escapist dream from Rome, this was perhaps diverted. In Rome itself, it rose in crescendo to a grand climax. There, and in every city of the empire, architectural detail applied to every public face brought with it clusters of meanings and instructions to those inhabiting urban space.³⁷

³⁶. This is extensively discussed in *MacDonald, W: The architecture of the Roman empire, Vol. II. An urban appraisal*. London 1986.

³⁷. One aspect of this is exhaustively discussed in *Onians, J: Bearers of meaning*. Cambridge 1988. Others are equally well covered in *Smith, E.B: Architectural symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages*. Princeton 1956. MacDonald discusses the application of these details in a regional context in his concept of urban armatures (see above).

Central in Imperialism was the concept of the triumph. It had rites because the status of Triumphator conferred rights and power on the recipient. To give those rites credence, they were forged onto founding ritual enshrined in the templum, whose perimeter represented a ploughed path, sacred perimeter of the city. written programmes were discovered during the Renaissance, setting out processions and procedures, together with celebrations, for triumphs. Some were by Cicero. Medici Florence found appropriation of absolutist power palatable through the medium of reconstructed Imperial triumph, historical connections implying detached credence. Procedures for a Roman victorious general were carefully prescribed. They included ritual washing of blood guilt before entering the city proper, and, like Sumerian kings, a preceding night of welcome in a palace outside the gate.³⁸ This had already been preceded by triumphal passage through countryside along Imperial routes marked by the devices encountered in the frescos. The language of triumph is that of Dionysos. Progress through the city followed ancient boundaries, imitating the mythic rite of Rome's foundation encapsulated in templum. Ritual washing occurred at the Lavacrum Agrippae. Ultimately heroes received audience with the Emperor, who, as god, gave him the status of a living god. Meanings within this form the basis of the quiet landscapes of Boscotrecase, and one of Mantegna's greatest monumental paintings.³⁹ Gozzoli's Medici chapel frescos depict the passage of the Magi as a triumphal procession through Christendom represented as Arkadia, an idea well entrenched in the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio (see VII above and the final chapters below). Live Mannerist Landscapes like Bomarzo and Lante use similar ideas, each quite differently.⁴⁰ Bomarzo takes the Arkadian labyrinth through countryside, Lante the urban sublimation.

The qualities of Attributive Space.

Furniture fills a room if there is more than necessary for its physical and representational functions. It occupies space. A museum stuffed full of relics is as illegible as a late Victorian drawing room. Coherent sense must be made of objects in space they inhabit, including interstitial space. Attributive Space does not crowd in this way, but expands perceived space beyond its physical limits. Furniture necessary to practical and symbolic functioning reinforces the significance of its space. It introduces

³⁸. *Smith, E.B: Architectural symbolism*.... Princeton 1956. pp 21-30.

³⁹. The triumphs of Caesar, from the Sforza palace.

⁴⁰. Also in succeeding contemporaries like the early Pratolino, or Villa d'Este.

spatial elements, creating logical meaningful sub-divisions and introducing its own.

This applies to architecture, Landscape, and landscape. It is as evident on the temples of Mysore, whose Hellenistic proportions support petrified filigree and faceted stonework, textures confusing transitions between building and environment, as it did within a Roman city. It is a particular feature of "sacred" space, temple, palace, urban square or villa. Objects introducing attributed space, furniture in one sense, set aside sub-divisions for particular use but expand a sense of wholeness, of One. This is true when they adorn facades or skylines of temples and when they inhabit any floor, earth or interior. They take away little, contributing much. This contribution is a particular historical, philosophical, ideological sense, bringing with it realisations of space-time beyond which the acculturated mind transposes and translates into new terms. The translation then becomes part the implanted space, a penetration of it into the user. One of these features introduced into natural space converts it. Political and ideological connotations are implanted. It becomes something else, earlier powers being overwritten.

It is also expanded. If already representational, its scope is significantly modified or extended. Positive metamorphosis is perceived. A cave is transformed from a closed humid natural environment into womb, grotto, or temple, a particular stone the presence of a goddess, her child-king and "her" abstract space. A branch decorated with votive offerings within the cave is the tree of life; a small wood becomes a grove, mountainous forests the domain of Pan; building types retains the more ancient attributes of cave.

In the frescos, we become aware of extended, or mirrored space through knowledge of symbolic meaning. One effect of this is to enlarge available space. Whilst the wall remains a wall, and the fresco on it a mere painting, we can be fooled into "seeing" other things. One of these other things is embedded in the illusion. A painting of a tholos is a tholos. Once they are known, we attach similar attributes to the painted image as to the building. Similarly the column, the tree, the Arkadian, and so on. That stage leads to acknowledgement of the symbolic space they sublimate. This might extend in several layers as we have seen with column, templum, mundus, and territory. We read importations of implied space. Tholos incorporates mythic history, a kind of social or abstract space, and encapsulated references to volumetric order. The cylinder is womb and

vertical carrier of the male impulse, enclosed and life-generating volume similar to the Cycladic burial urn. In early tholoi this was underground. Later ones implied underground aspects. Thymele stated it, giving form, making manifest. This space attributed to tholoi is part of the importation into our painting.

The process works with volumetric space. A range of statues on a skyline increase the effective length of the boundary between solid and void. It becomes a fractal, drawing void into architectural space. As with any symbolic structure in that space, statuary imports ideas of quantity and quality. Fountains mirror sky and emerge, often spuriously, from the mirror beneath the surface. The presence of its water introduces a meander to other spaces, an awareness beyond the visible boundaries to the source of the water, hills beyond or earth beneath. Statuary within space implies cultic use. It has meaning in context beyond mere presence, usually representing some external place considered essential. A statue of Artemis brings mountain and woodland to those present, hinting at Landscapes beneath, part of her spatial attributes as goddess of easy birth and gentle death. Devices like these serve more purpose than decoration in our context. As a result, relatively small enclosures can, by this process of accretive attribution, be enlarged beyond their confines. Landscapes like Bomarzo and Lante derive space in this way through meaningfully assembled imagery available from another context, on a scale that represents Cosmos. Bomarzo's suggestion of a hill becomes a mountain through allegorical association with Trenaros and contemporary imagery like that of Mantegna. Perhaps the single most important route for this imagery is Hellenistic elements conserved within alchemy. The single mountain becomes Arkadia, around which Gozzoli's Magical triumph winds. Lante becomes the City of God through intensely applied sacred geometry within sublimated space, its parterre a contemporary cathedral through reference to aspects of templum via processes encapsulated and developed in tholoi, then extends the nave into the heart of Arkadia.

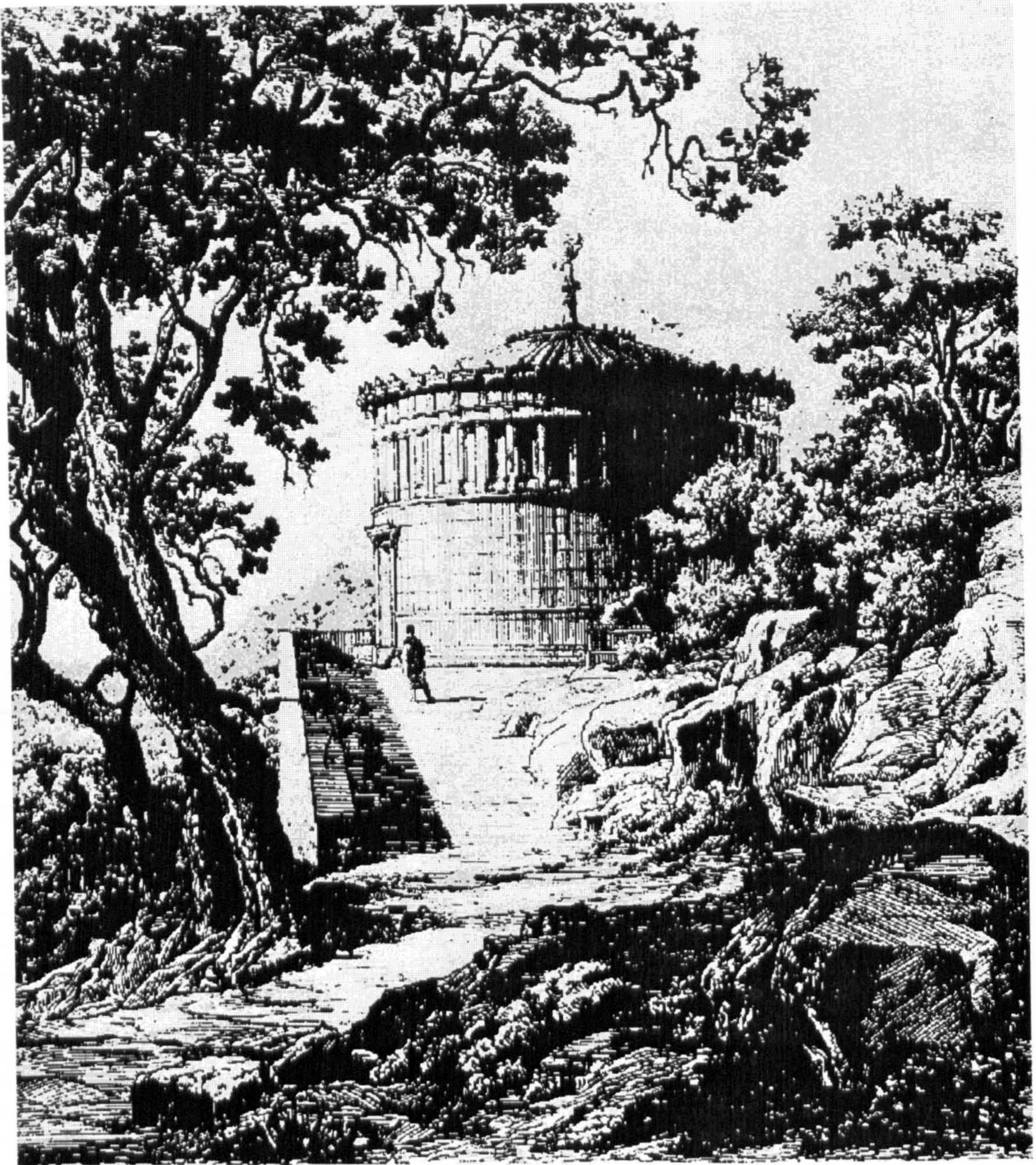
The following chapter explores how the principles might be applied to a unique building type, the tholos, which is crucial to the inner meanings of several symbolic Landscape forms.

Chapter Five:

Unwinding

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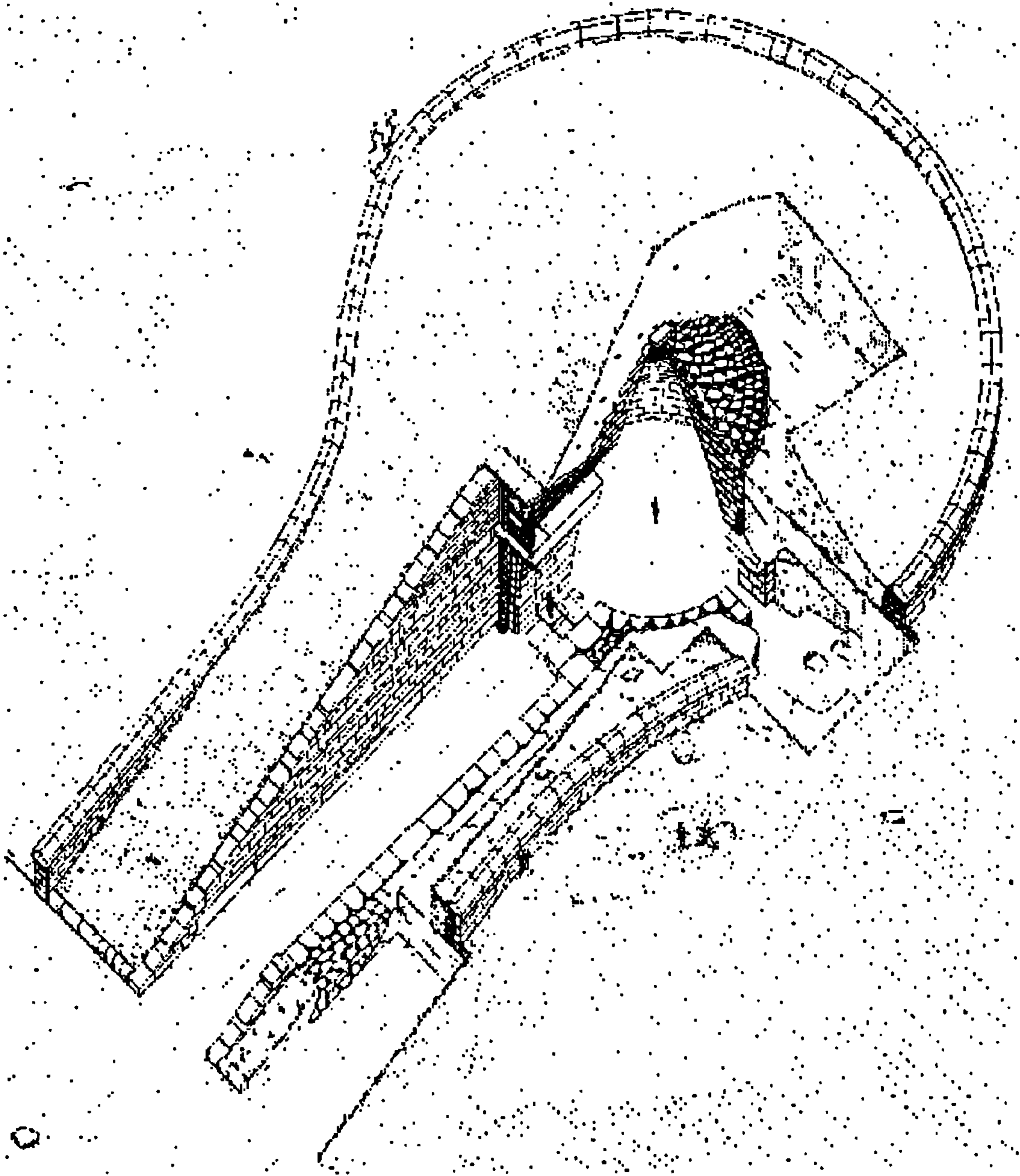
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Arsineion Samothrace reconstruction sketch from Havelock ff 58.

One of the greatest tholoi, dedicated to Hera-Cybele. It differs from the Doric form of Thymele, retaining vestiges of a peripteros in the upper storey. A majestic building, it stretched resources in both architects and commissioners.

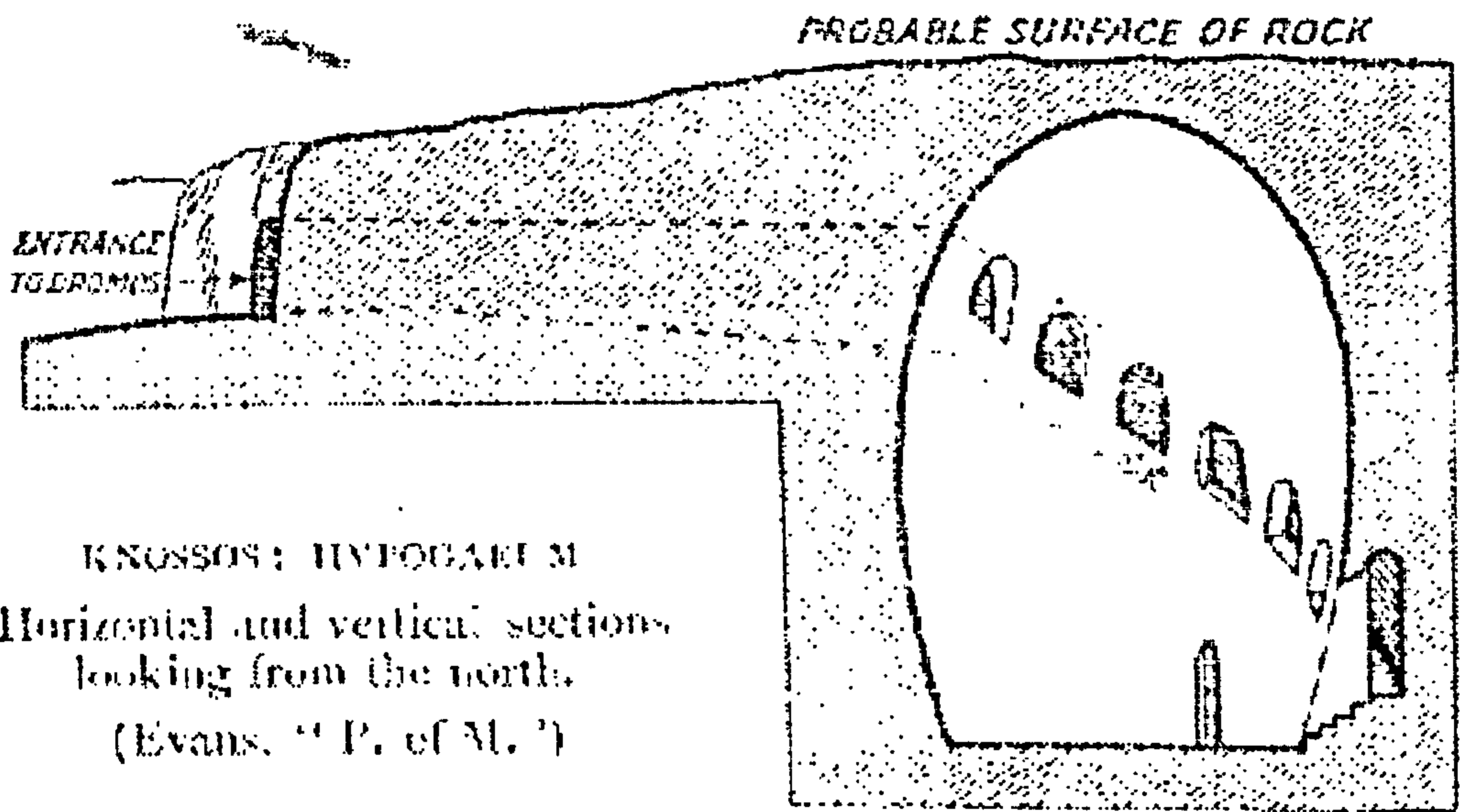
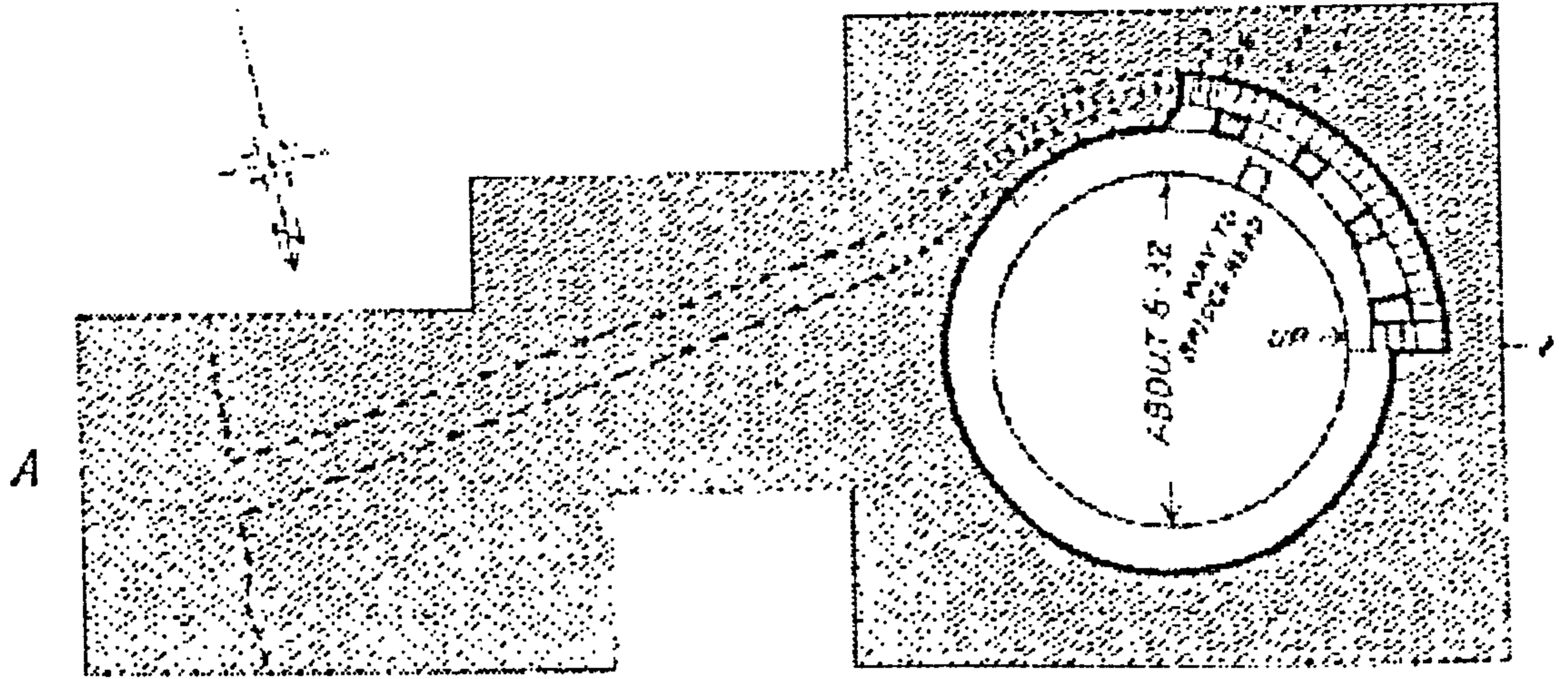
Tholos: Arsineion, Samothrake



Mycenae great tholos XIVcBC (Kostoff ff 5.16)

A Symbolic structure; an ancient form of a king's home is inhumed with him. Thus the architecture of his ancestors is converted back to Landscape forms from which it might derive (see tholos analysis diagrams). Its mound is the earth mountain. The form is very similar to a tholos from N. Mesopotamia of 4500BC, and a Cypriot beehive hut of 5500BC, except that the dromos is unroofed.

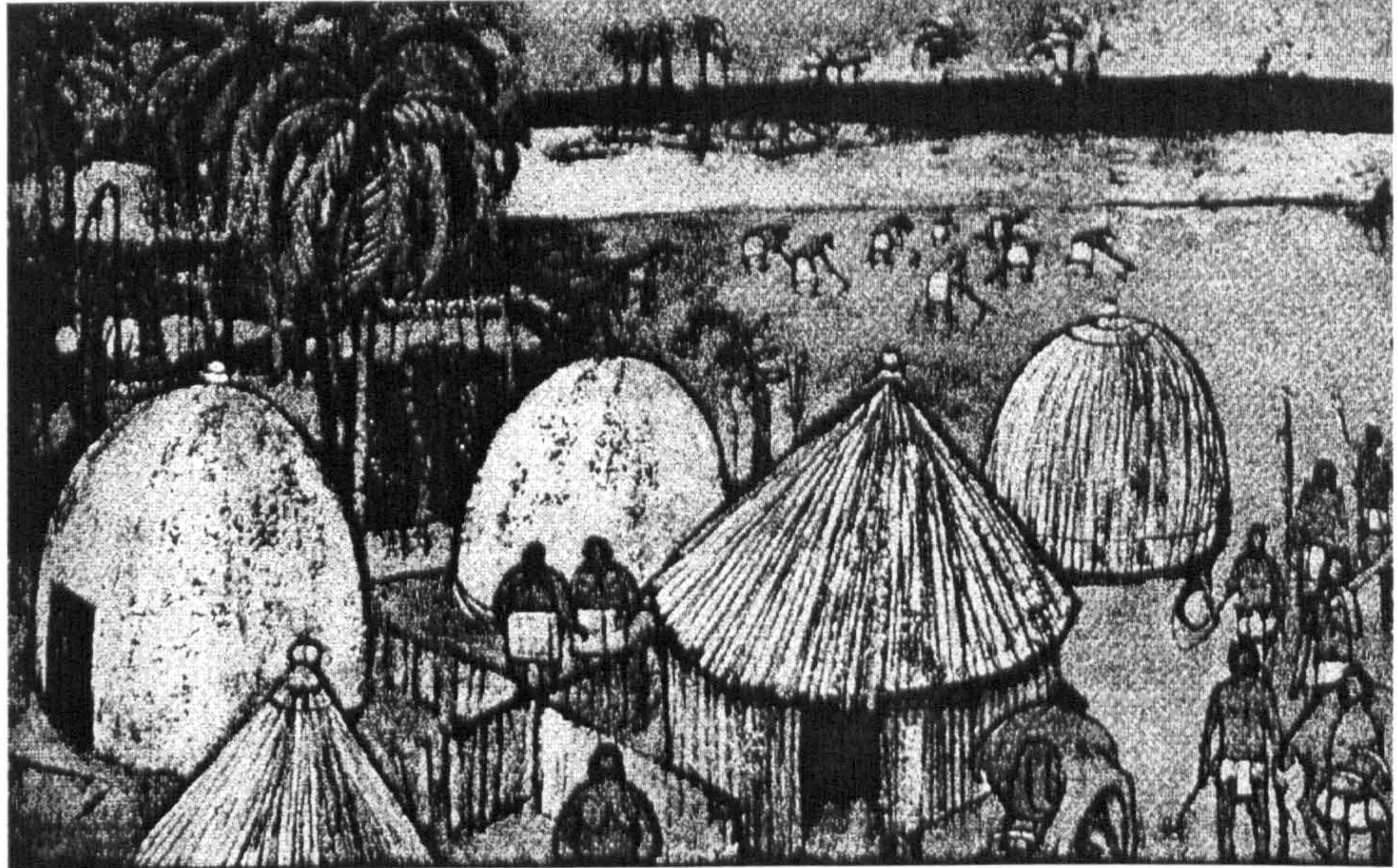
Mycenae great tholos



Knossos Palace of Mino: Evans, A. via Bell 1926

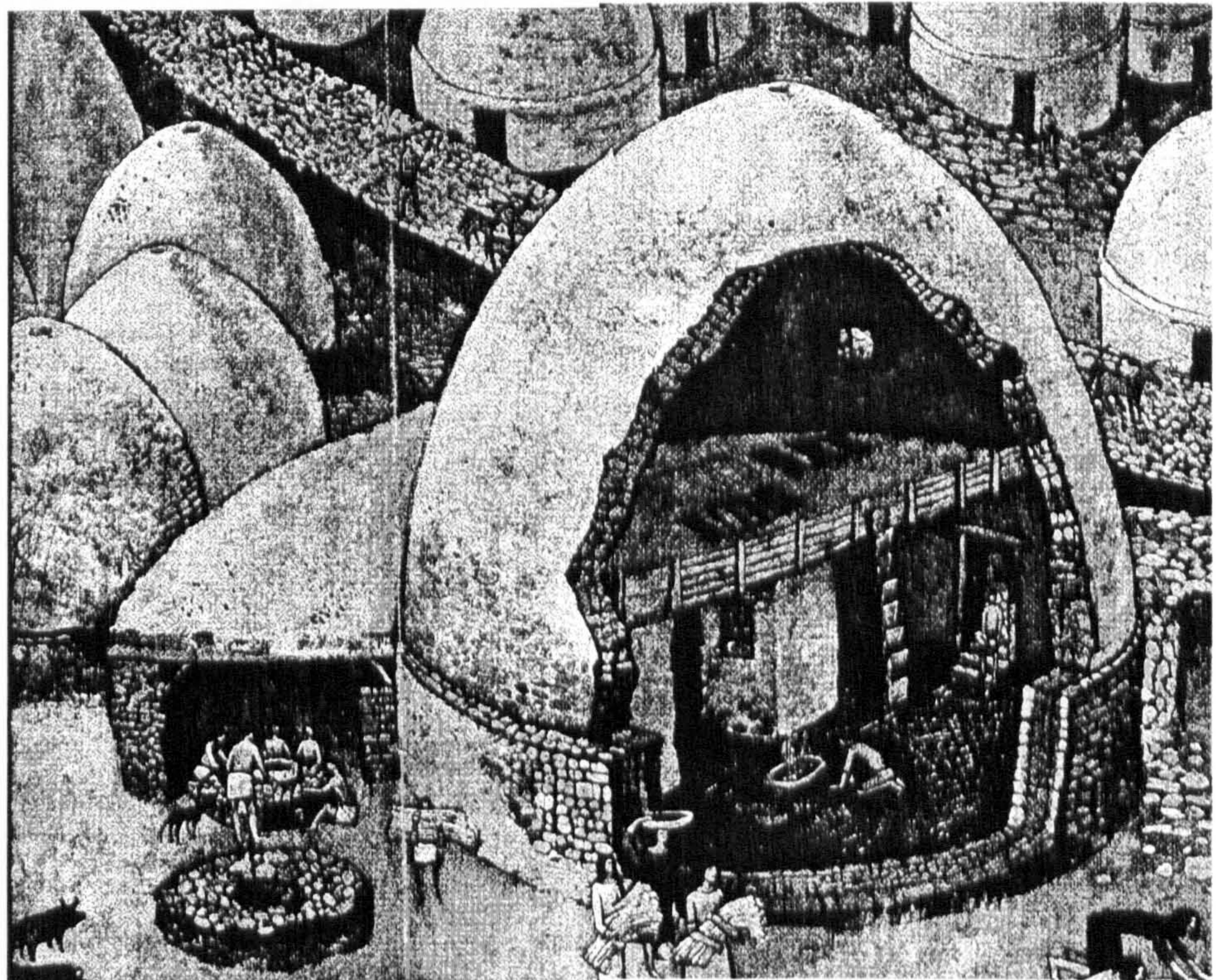
This large underground chamber preceded the first palace at Knossos, ie. before 2000BC. Its purpose was unknown at the time Bell wrote (Bell, E: Aegean architecture, London 1926. pp 30-31). Much effort must have been expended in excavating such a large tholoid form in solid rock, suggesting ritual purpose.

Tholos precedent?: Crete, Knossos



Piggott 1961 pp 101

In this Nilotic village from 3800BC most houses are circular. The chief's and the god's are rectangular. Some huts are beehive and mud coated. One at the centre is reed thatched and is perhaps an archetype for the Lathuresa tholos.

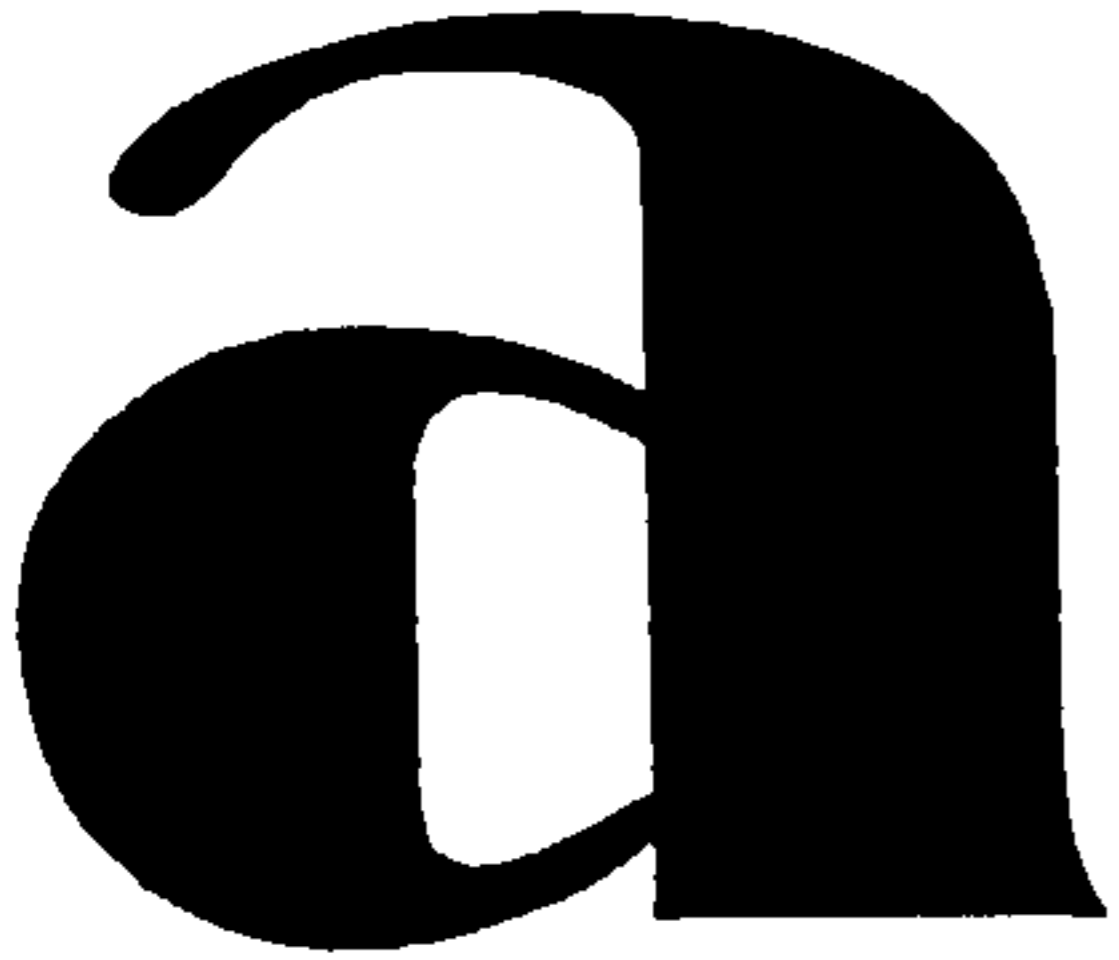


Khirokitia, Cyprus 5500BC Piggott 1961 pp 45

In this town the chief's hut reveals many facets later to appear encapsulated in the symbolism of tholoi - the rectangular extension, the central hearth, the nearby well, the lower wall as springer for the shell.

Archetypes of tholoi?

Comparative Tholoi 1



Headman's house in a large Neolithic settlement. Differs in size and in having a rectangular extension. The beehive portion is several times as large as its neighbours. Structure is mud brick on a limestone base covered with plaster. (see preceding ill.)

It dates from 2000 years later than Jericho city, 1000 years before the Halaf tholos, 2000 years before the founding of Eridu. It belongs to a permanently settled culture skilled in stonecraft and masonry, and enclosure farming.

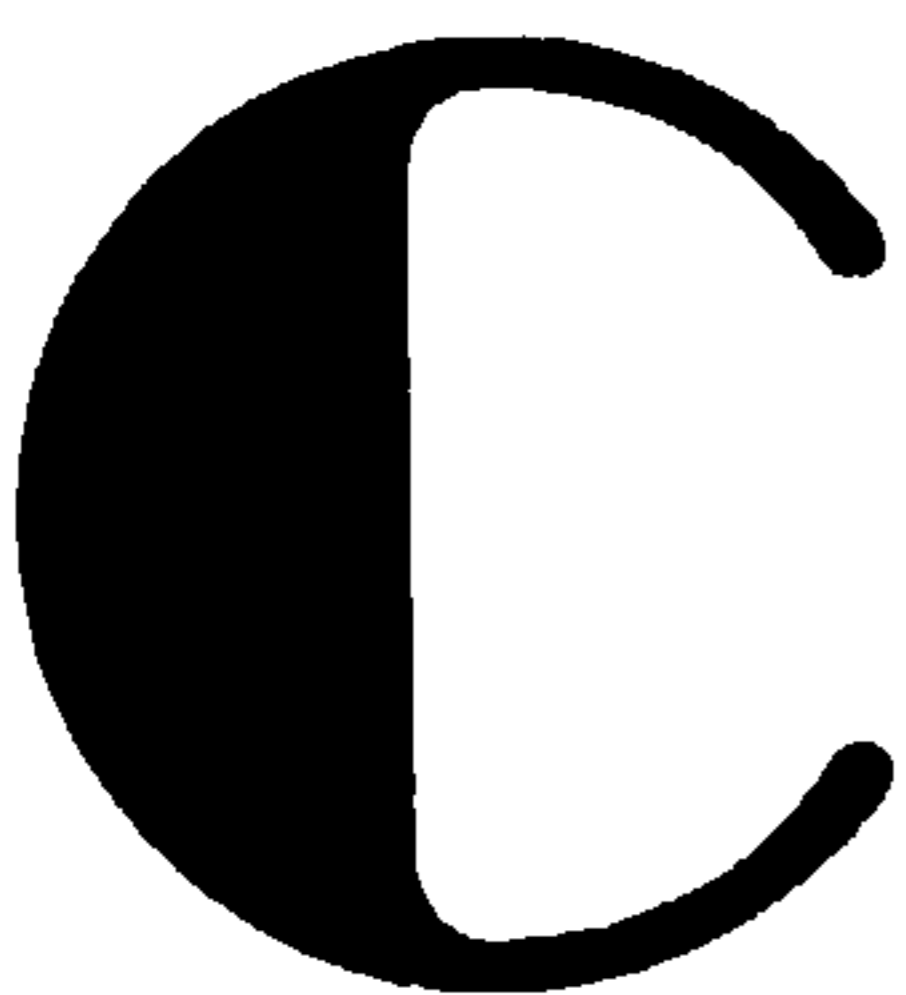
Opposite left is from northern Mesopotamia. It is a shrine. The rectilinear extension has become a passage, asymmetrical with aligned apertures leaving space to one side. The chamber entrance is converted to radial in its passage through the masonry.

It dates from 1000 years before the 'Ubaid urbanisation in an area traversed by Iranian and Greek migrations, is similar in form to the one from Messara, Crete, (right) over 2000 years later.

These forms share the dromos. In both it is a simplified form of labyrinth in that passage is controlled and non-axial. In the Cretan example (there are others) this characteristic is prominent.

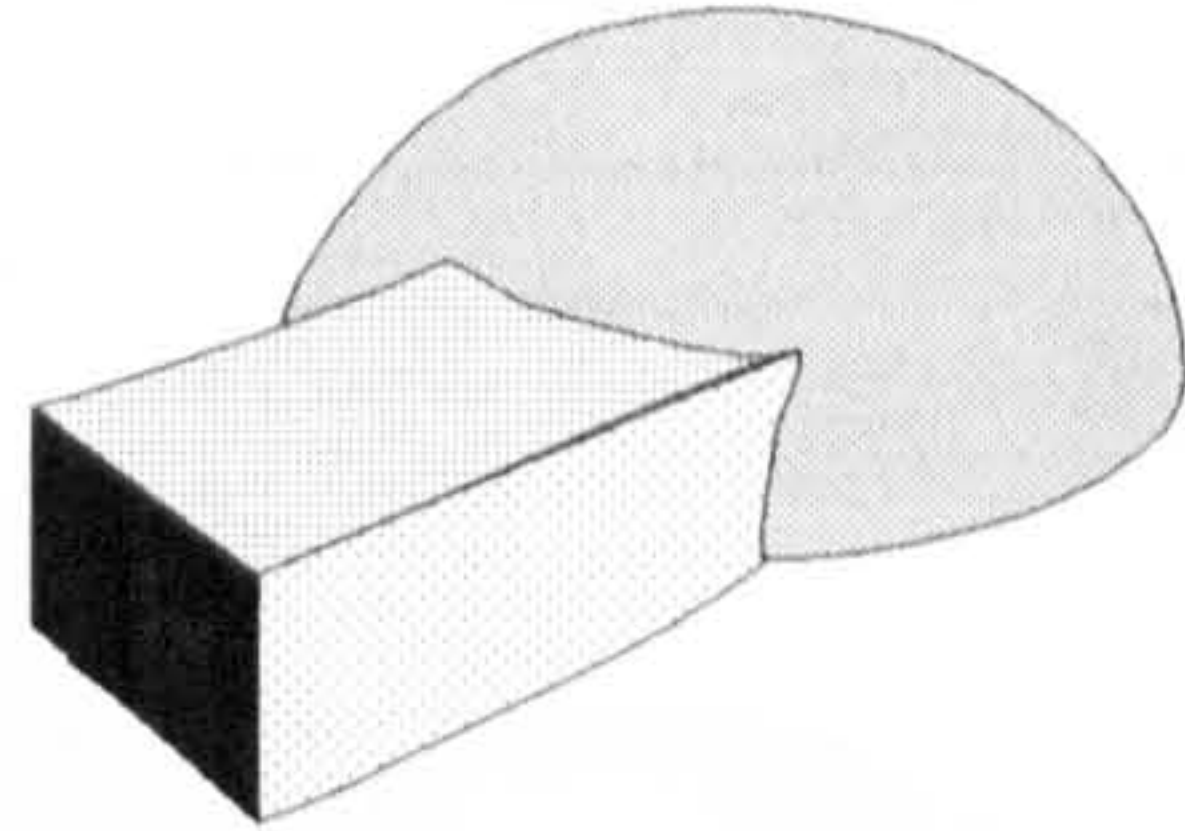
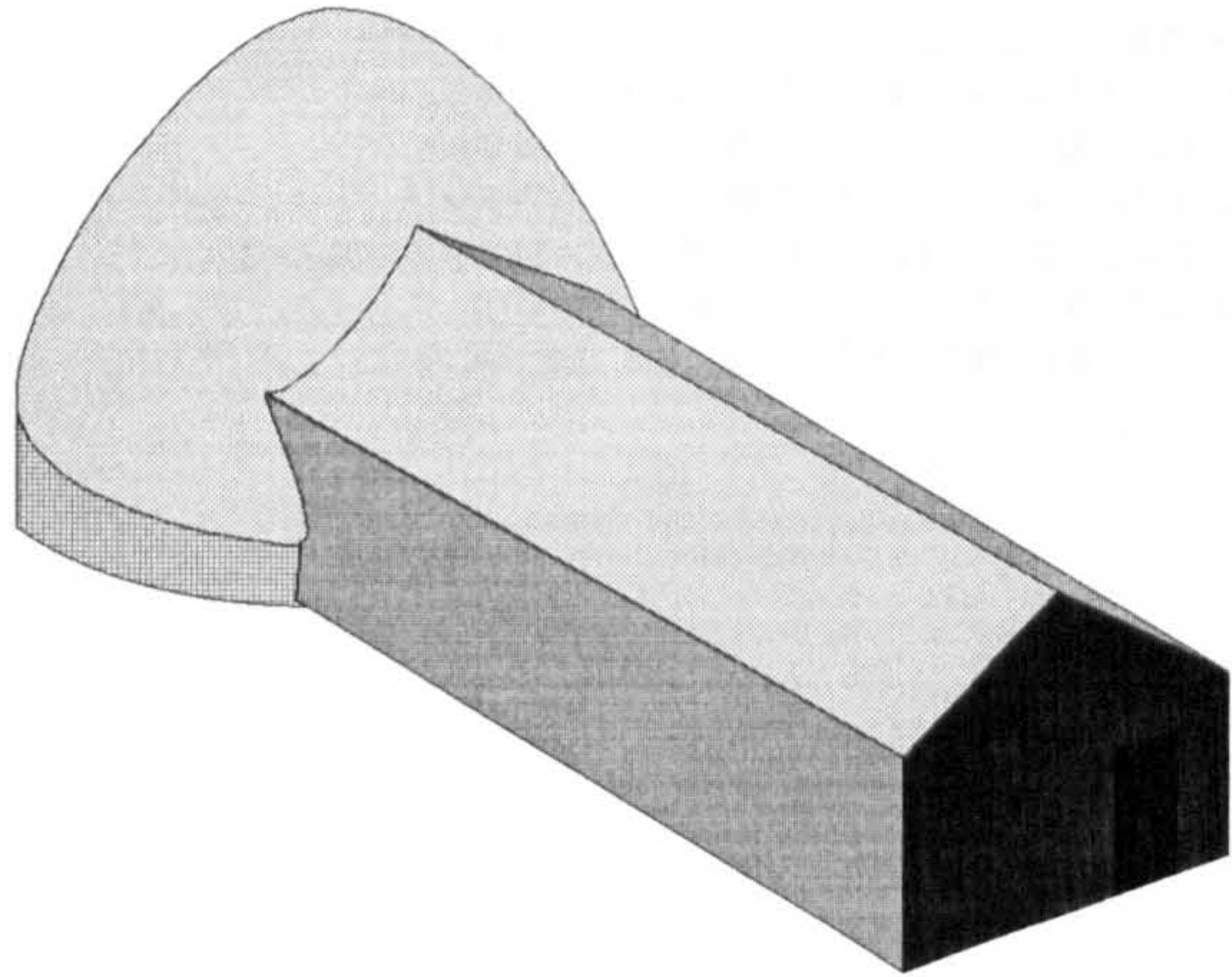
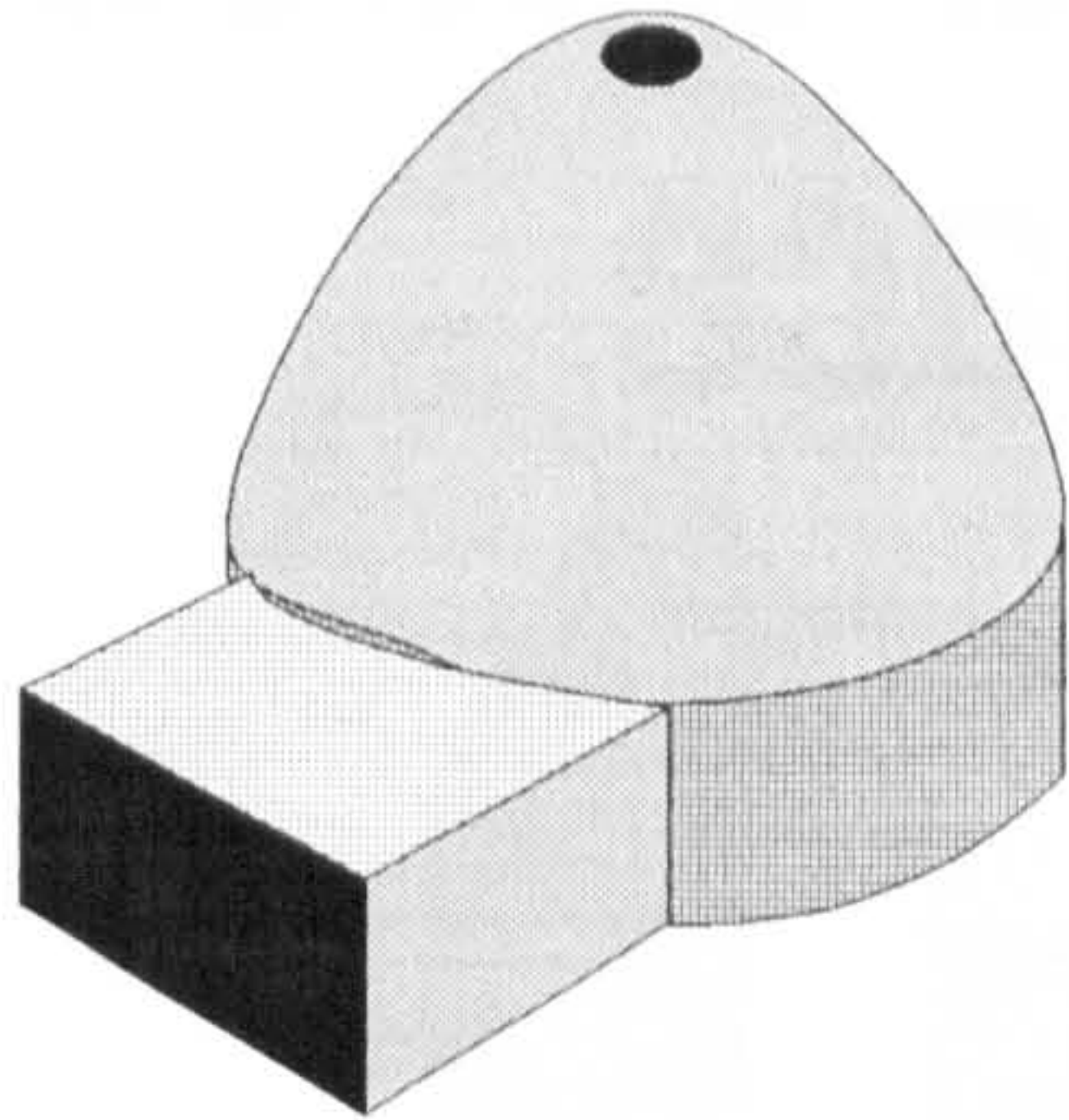
The cultural origins of Cretan tholoi are not stated in references ("Minoan" or Mycenaean). The first known Mycenaean Greek tholoi were buried under "earth mountains" (Treasury of Atreus, opposite right). They retained the beehive structure. Their dromos (not shown, see "Mycenae great tholos" above) was straight, but the portal was elaborated with labyrinth devices (Chapter 5 "Signs of death & wandering").

Lathuresa tholos (opposite right) echoes the external form of Mycenaean cores without a paraboloid shape. Rationalised into a cylinder with a conical roof it is not for burials; it is above ground. Its place in the settlement (see below "Tholos & setting:Lathruesa") can be interpreted as echoing the idea of the dromos in urban layout (shaded). Its position relative to external landscape retains echoes of precedents.



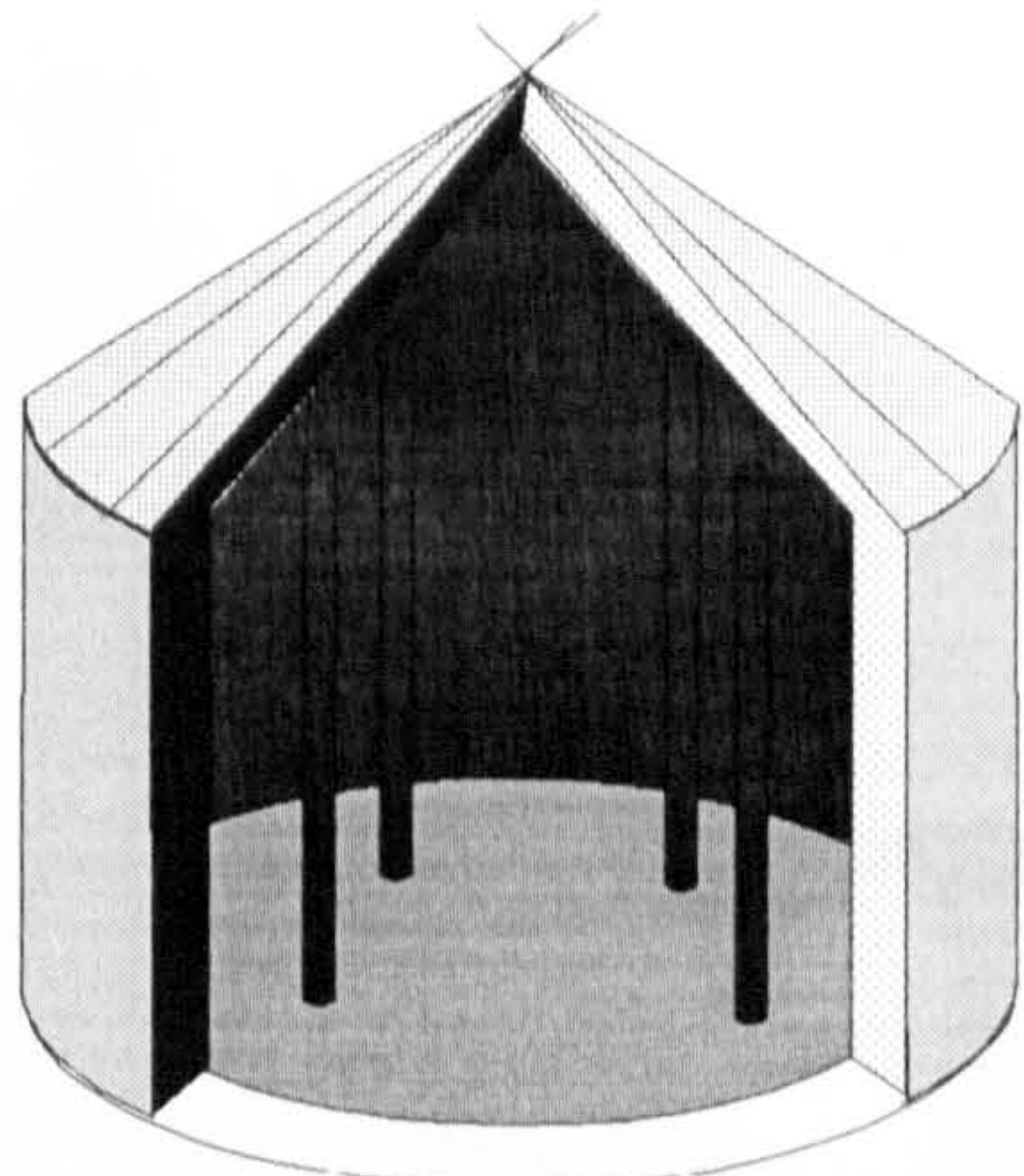
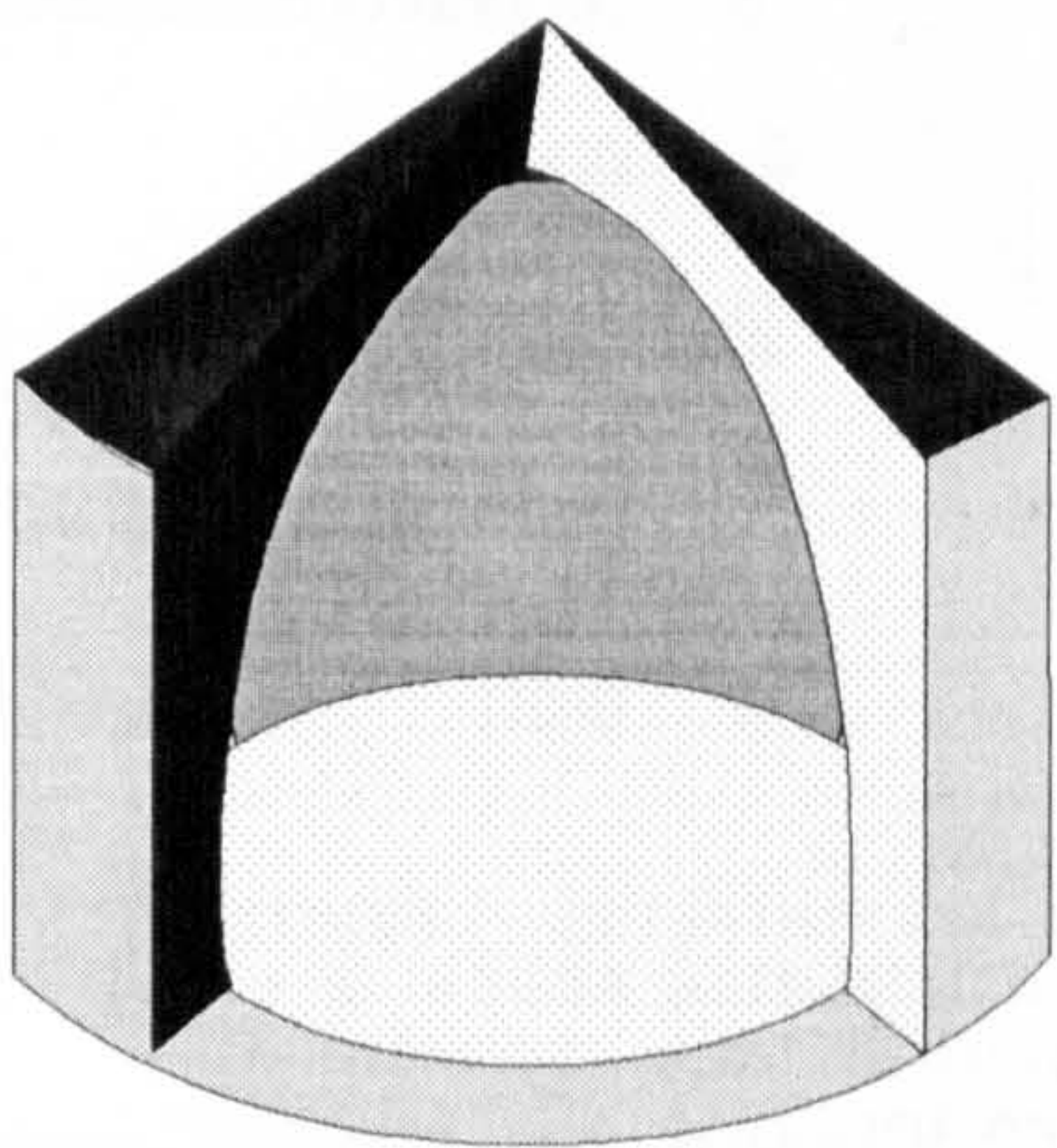
These drawings are approximately proportionally scaled

Khirokitia, Cyprus - ca 5500BC
Headman's "Beehive" dwelling in
settlement of approximately 1000



Arpachiyah, Mesopotamia: shrine
of Halaf culture, ca. 4500BC

Apesokari, Crete: tholos
ca. 2000BC



Mycenae, Tholos
ca.1400BC (core)

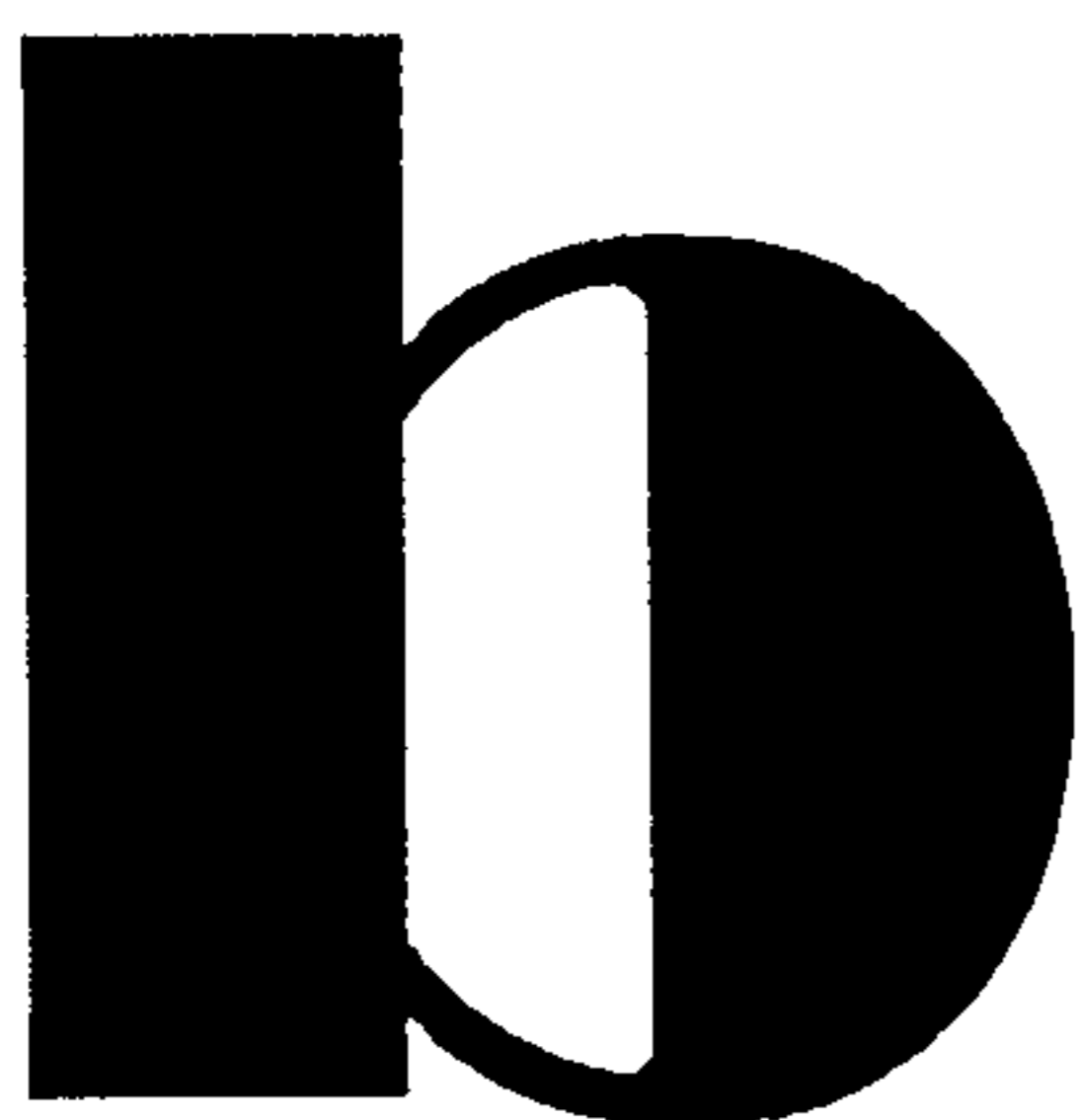
Lathuresa, Tholos
ca 500BC

Attributive Space

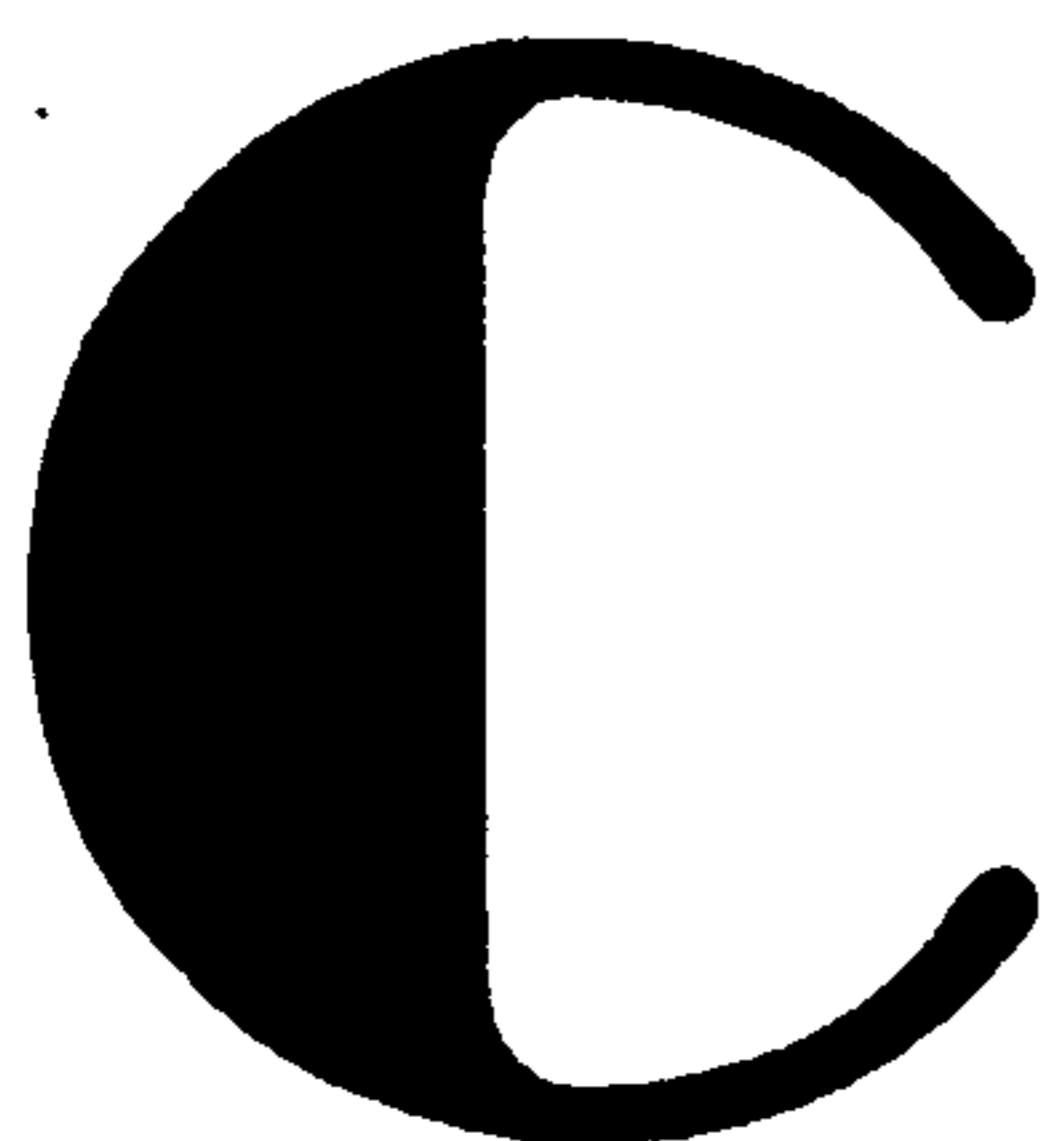


Diagram a is a schematic sketch a home in Guadix, Andalusia. It contains a tholoid chamber, an entrance the equivalent of a dromos. Dromos signifies approach, gradating privacy at an entrance. These are buried caves. They also occur in Anatolia.

"Beehive" dwellings were a familiar bronze age building form. They resemble the interior of tholoi (small sketch). It could be of corbelled flat stones.



Dromos, double doors, beehive chamber, earth mound, (apex marker) of Mycenaean tholoi match many components of the houses of Guadix. These tholoi are effectively inhumed palaces of archaic form. They return to the womb of the Great Goddess those whom she favoured. Chthonian space is attributed together with the celestial vault in the internal form, mountain in the external. Symbolic processes of the labyrinth of the womb and earth entrail are attributed to this space.



Lathuresa tholos has no remaining vestiges of labyrinth symbolism. Its cylinder form remained unique in Doric architecture. It is a body symbol, thought to combine female containment and the vertical male principle, a "hermaphrodite" form.

Key

1 stone crest

2 conical roof

3 peripteral colonnade

4 peripteros

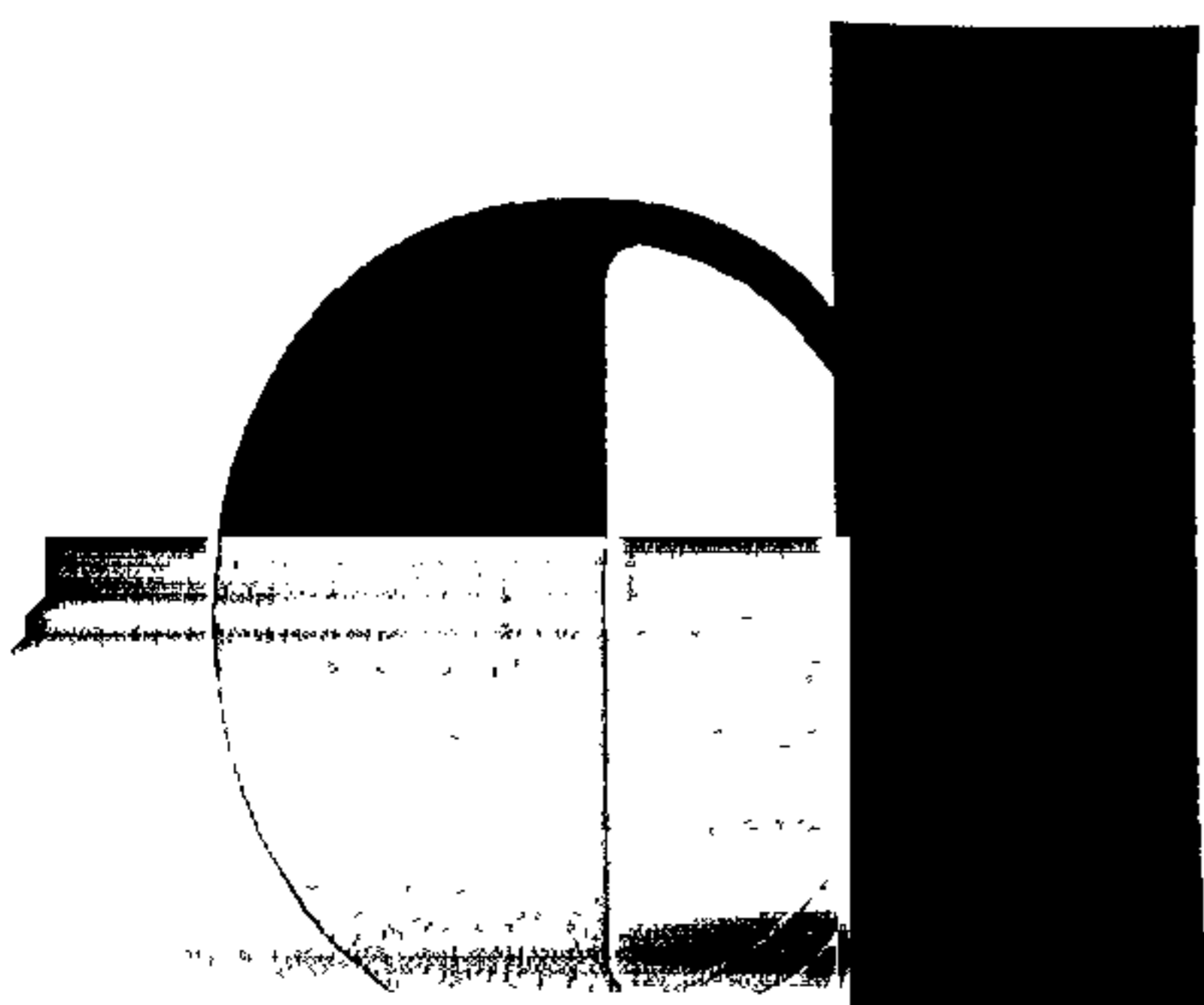
5 peripheral enclosure

6 colonnade

7 central space

8 platform and terrace

9 croft



Thymele's beauty was breathtaking. Labyrinth was reinstated in its Attributive space, a crypt accessed through a central hole. Special exchanges occur between building and environment in a complex of attributions.

Tholoi

DIAGRAM A

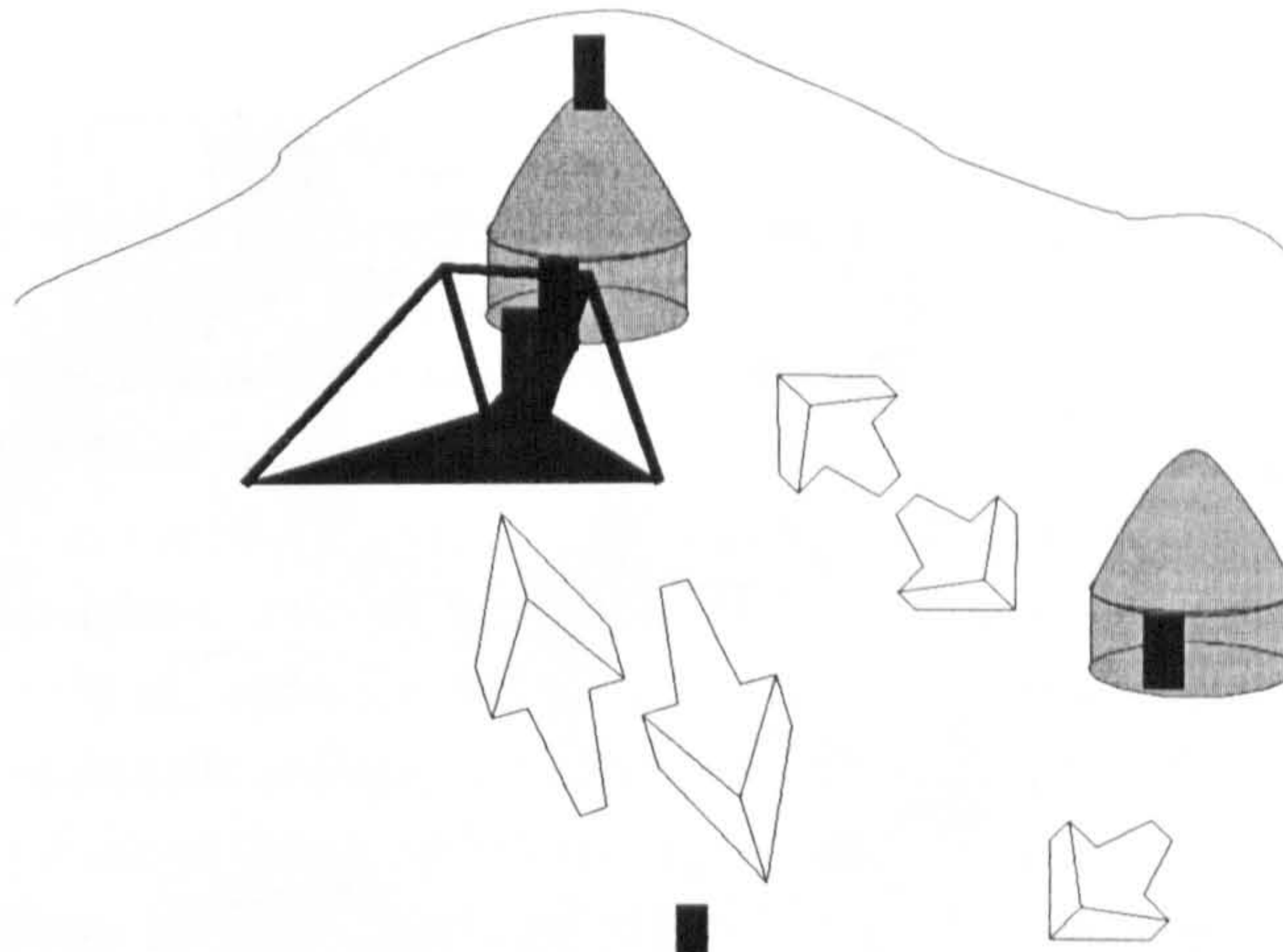


DIAGRAM B

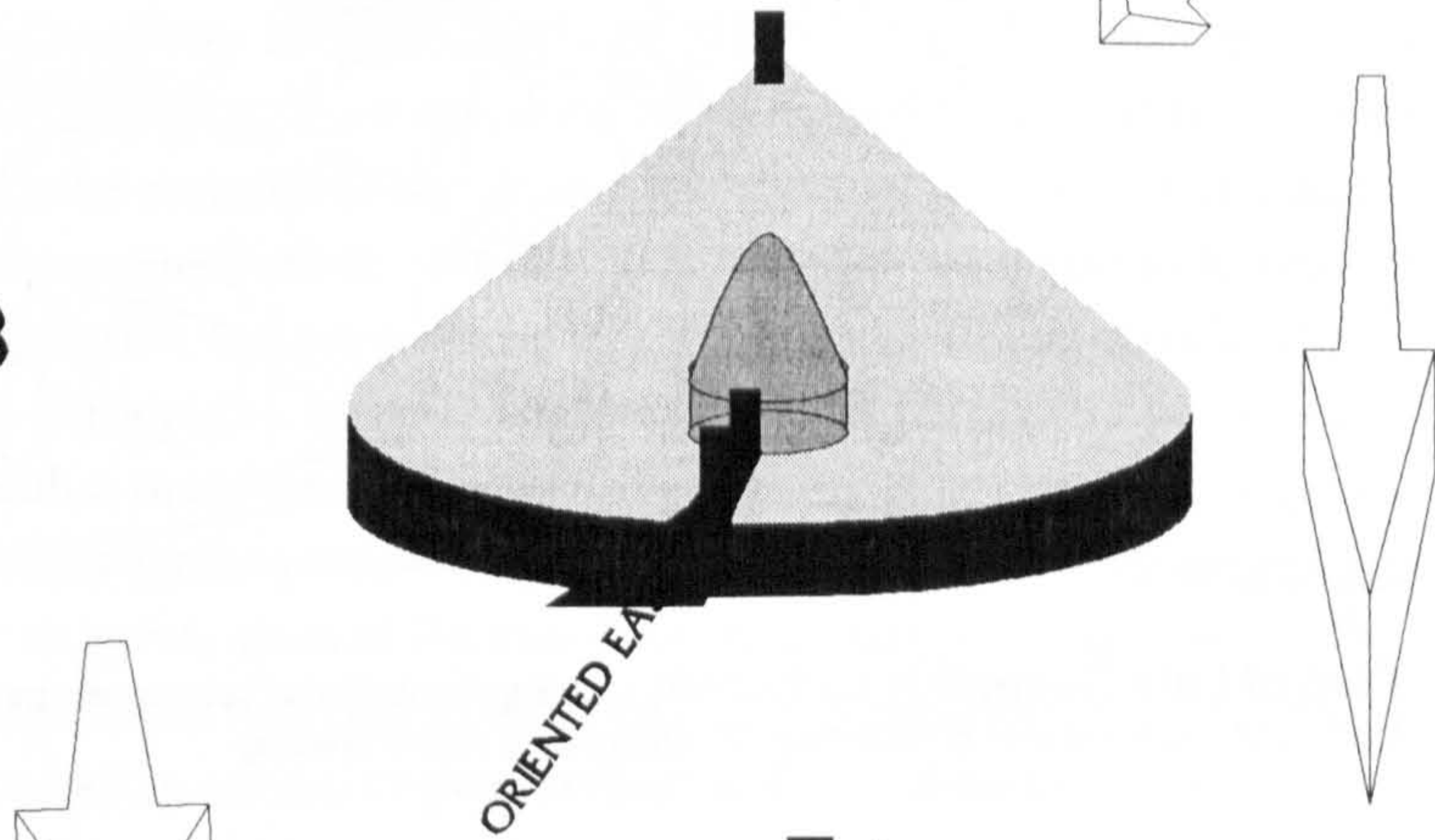


DIAGRAM C

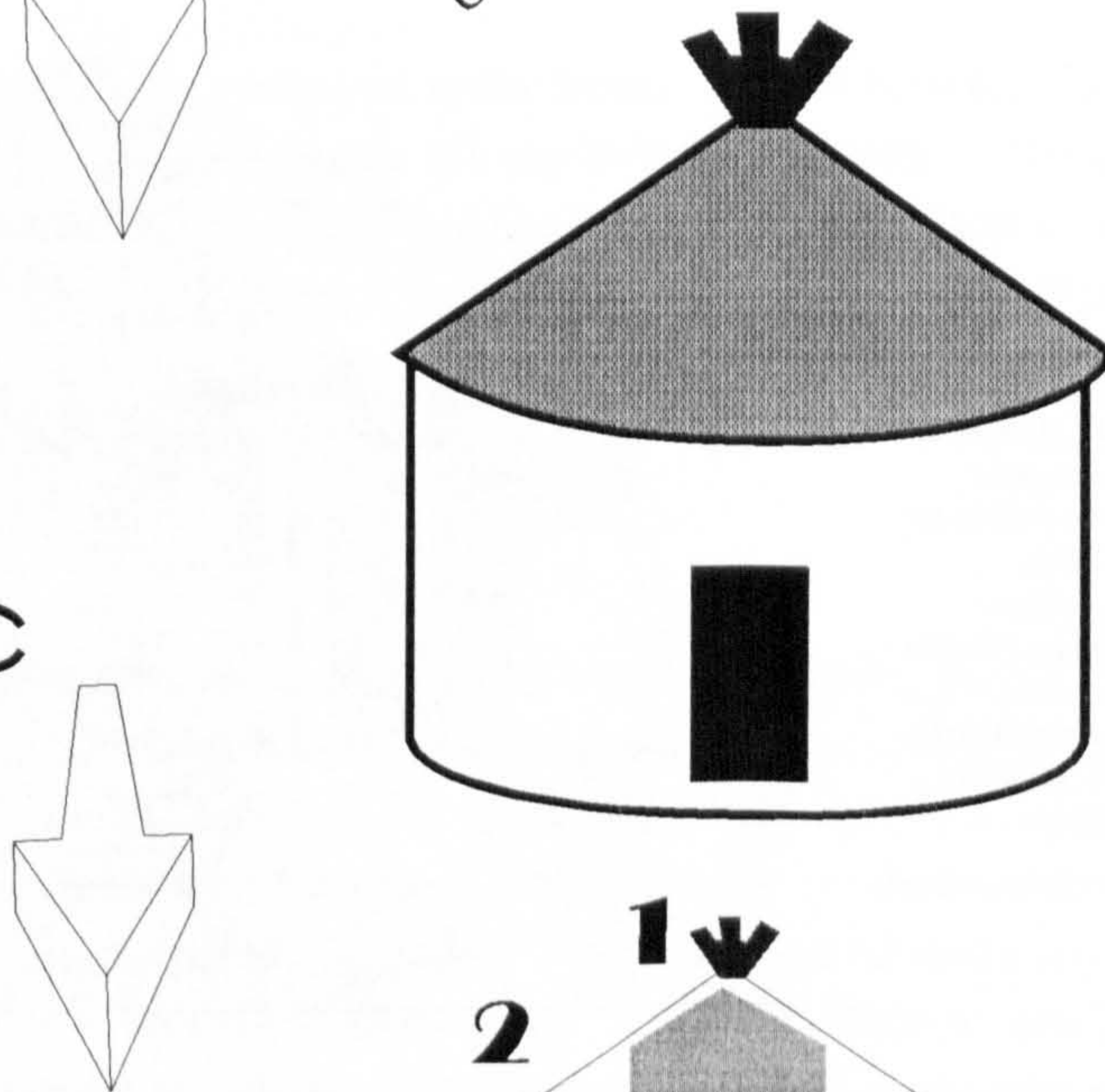
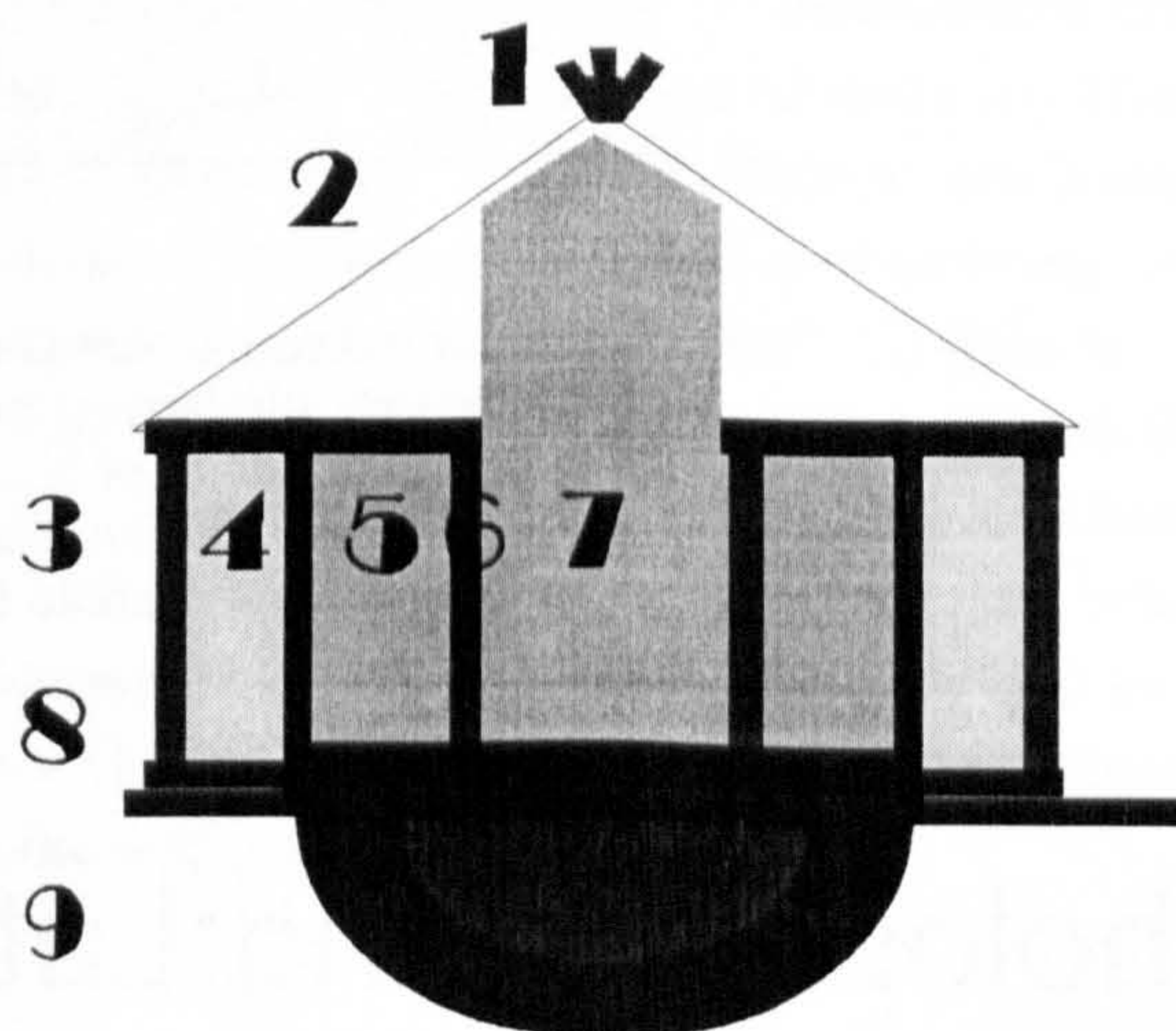
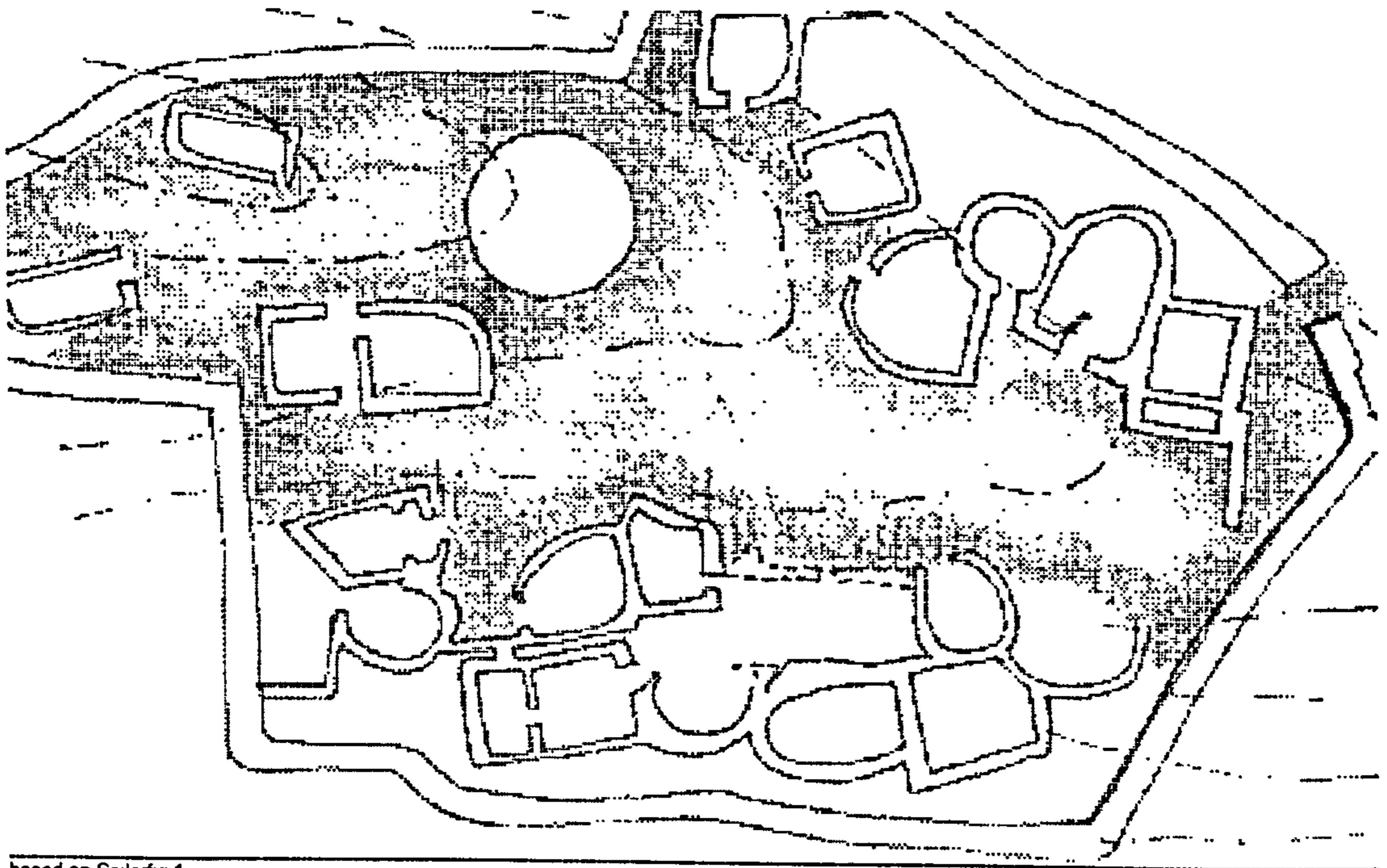


DIAGRAM D

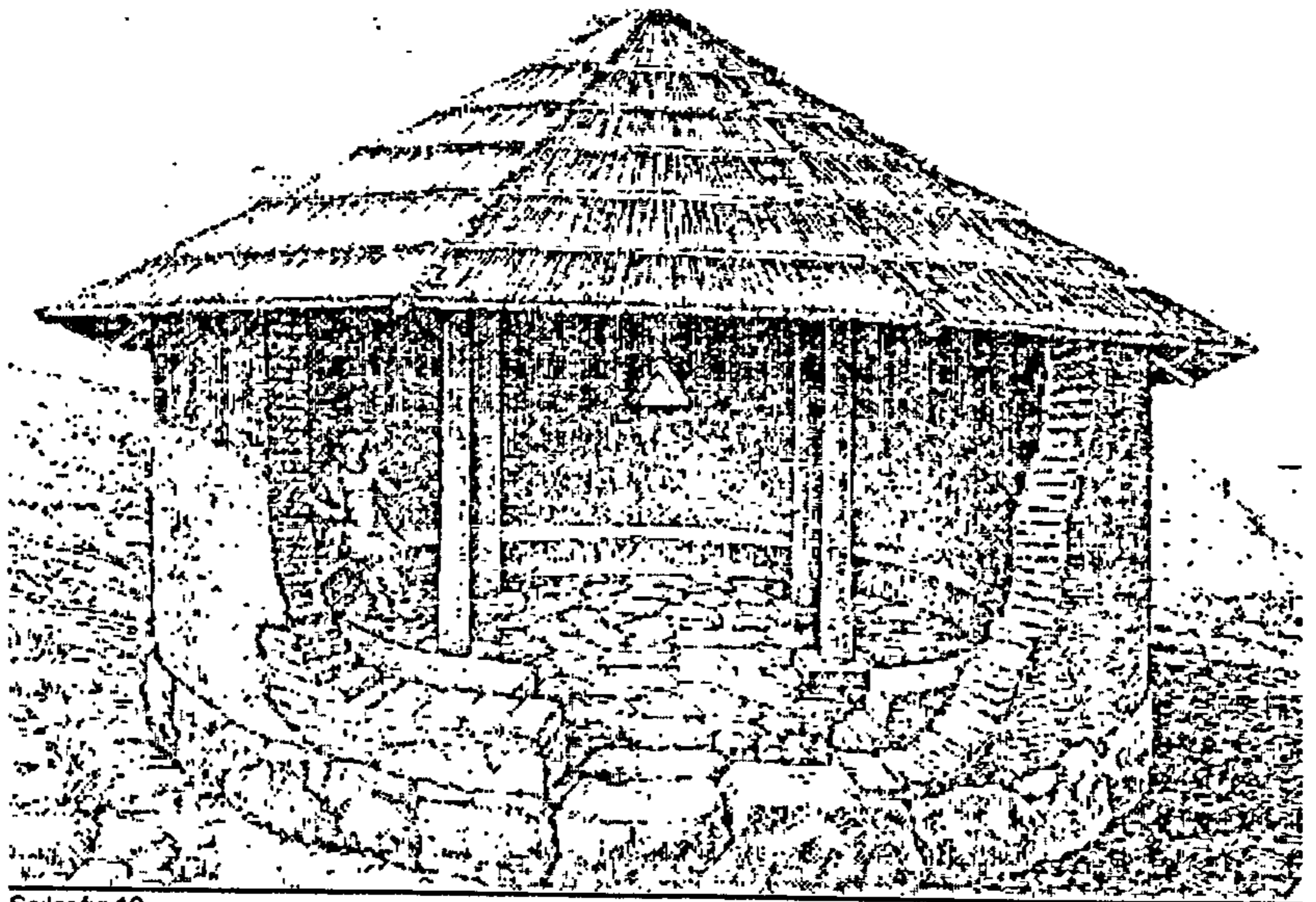




based on Seilerfig 1

Plan of Late Geometric Lathuresa: showing distribution of communal space leading to and surrounding the tholos; compression is darker shading

Archaeologist's reconstruction of the clay brick tholos of Lathuresa, Greek Late Geometric period. Roof is conjectural, but has to be either prismatic as shown or conical. A large building in a prominent position, it has to have been a signal to the outside as well as within the settlement (as a church).



Seiler fig 10

Lathuresa was a rich Greek trading town in the XVIIIc BC. The tholos was the largest building. Its position, form, and the graceful handling of space around it reveals established tenets applied to most later urban tholoi, and its symbolic importance to this early mercantile community.

Tholos & setting: Lathuresa

Landscape of the Womb.

One of the most mysterious Greek ritual buildings, tholos stands apart, a circular island in a visibly rectilinear world. One was as beautiful as the Parthenon, a lovely example of *metis* in architecture. Many consider it a Greek invention, but examples exist in the remote uplands of Mesopotamia deriving from late al'Ubaid times. All Greek temple architecture contains landscape references. It is a myth to think of Greek architecture as artifice opposed to landscape. By and large it draws into itself important understandings within Landscape and radiates them. This radiance is a quality we enjoy almost as much as the Greeks who devised it. We do not stand amazed in front of virtuosic immensity, as we might at Karnak or Memphis, but are seduced by visual pleasures and then held spellbound by an inner beauty which is not instantly perceived within those strong, elegant exteriors. It is this irradiating quality we recognise projected by the brilliant, luminously white, not to say numinous, areas of the Boscotrecase Oracle paintings. Is this the experience reflected in the wide, other-worldly eyes of ancient Sumerian statues or personalised in Pallas Athene's owl?

The tholos portrayed in the frescos is a late type resembling the choragic monument. Similar buildings punctuate Pompeian frescos depicting exotic oriental Landscapes. It was one of many diverse forms by the time of Octavian and Agrippa. Diversification came late in its evolution. For eight hundred years it retained astonishing consistency.

Tholos - what is it?

That question is not as simple as might seem. As used by Pausanias (late Hellenistic), its name is generic for round building. Any earlier linguistic connotations seem not to have survived. Until late Hellenistic and Roman practice, the uses of tholoi seems to have been restricted. Examples from late Classical and early Hellenistic times have significant names. At Athens, *Skias* means literally "shade" or "shades". That has several shades of meaning. At Epidauros, *Thymele* means "place of sacrifice". That too is ambivalent. Philip of Macedon used the form to establish dynastic credentials. At Samothrake, *Arsinoeion* was built where human sacrifice was to the Great Mother of the Gods was once practised [65]. Pre-Apollonian Delphi had a bronze tholos by that archetypal hero-craftsman Hephaistos, adorned with symbolic golden birds, dedicated to the same Great Goddess.

Mycenaean tholoi were inhumed palaces of kings, constructed of masonry, part underground, then buried under a conical mound [66]. The structure of their inner cell was corbelled with sufficient technical knowledge to resist the dead weight of earth. Their access passage, or dromos, was ornamented with designs common to nomadic tribes and Bronze Age exploration. These were the earliest identifiably Greek tholoi. Cruder predecessors existed in Crete near Phaistos. The earliest so far discovered is on a hilltop in northern Mesopotamia [69.2]. An interesting Cretan subterranean structure was found under the first palace at Knossos [67].

Rite rigidifies form. All ritual was deemed to have a need for accuracy to be effectual. Accuracy demands mnemosyne. Art structures information in a special way that lodges firmly in the brain.¹ Its importance derives in part from necessity. Minute differentiations were essential in navigating untracked areas and landscapes already signed during migrations. This kind of memory and sense of history are still thought to separate human beings from other animals.² Successful tribal groups might seek to preserve secrets of success and perpetuate it. Rites perform this function and bind its members. Buildings used for death ritual are known to preserve architectural forms long after their normal use has ceased or been superseded. One example picked out by Robert Mellaart is the charnel house type from Catal-Huyuk. This preserved reed structures set on stilts, complete with appropriate ornamentation through phases when the architecture of power was labyrinthine masonry grids. Similarly, temples preserve archaic architectural forms, and in the form symbolic non-architectural meaning. Thus tholos encapsulates not only ancient forms, but embeds signs which recall what the dead person stood for as representative of the tribe. It is not unreasonable to expect Landscape forms to follow similar patterns, as we have already noted in kanji above. We may seek one ancestor of the tholos in the early cylindrical domus characteristic of Mediterranean and Nilotic cultures [68](*Archetypes of tholo?*). One possibility for burying such structures in the Mycenaean tholos is conflation of cave and round house. Another is the general use in Neolithic Europe of mound burials and passage graves, all of which bear some resemblances. In Andalucia, Guadix has surviving houses which resemble buried tholoi [70].

1. We speak of "memorable images" or otherwise in critical assessment.

2. History, like *Istoria*, an ability for conceptual memory, for meaningful structuring of information gleaned out of a tribal past?

Lathuresa.

None of these really explain the sudden emergence of a perfectly evolved above-ground tholos in the Dorian province of Lathuresa [69] [71]. A cylindrical building thought to have had a conical timber framed roof, its masonry was mud brick, a very Mesopotamian kind of structure for a Greek building. This fact alone sets it apart from the accepted view of Dorian temple architecture as evolving from wooden prototypes. Lathuresa is a coastal province of Attica. It was a prosperous trading place. External surfaces were plastered in accordance with normal practice on mud brick. It would also have had a protective overhang from its roof. The building was quite large for its time, seven metres diameter. Around the interior of the external wall was a continuous bench, broken only by the entrance. Four timber columns set into carefully cut square limestone pads with a circular hollow provided intermediate support for the roof. They were arranged in a centred square.

The setting of this building was, like its architecture, perfectly evolved. All the problems associated with a cylindrical form in a rectilinear town plan had been resolved. Its siting was monumental, in a widening space on the town's main street where it met the edge of the settlement. This set it within a special place, whence it was seen against a panoramic landscape backdrop. Its prominence in the only monumental space in Lathuresa indicates a primary importance on a ceremonial way. Space from the town flowed around it. At the same time it was a focal point, an acute punctuation in the spatial dynamics which could not fail to impress. The cylindrical form is perfect for such a place, being both finite and indeterminate, shading into landscape in a way that rectilinear architecture cannot, even with a peripteros. It is significant that this kind of landscape-sensitive siting emerged here so clearly, and was continued throughout the history of the form. Such skill in form and siting in a prototype must presume precedent. Either it was an introduction by an incoming power, or it came with the original settlers. Its later association with shamanic powers might have some inferences, but still leaves large question marks. Perhaps there is significance in that its siting is very similar to the small Mesopotamian tholos. The circular burial area of Mycenae is also similarly sited in relation to the city, though it does not link into the circulation in quite the same monumental way.

An edge of settlement position supposes interface functions. It is obviously intended to be seen from outside, a sign to those

approaching. What it signals is not immediately apparent, cultural affiliations perhaps, like towers. The building at Lathuresa is already a type, prototype only in the sense that we are as yet unaware of others similar of its time, roughly contemporary with Homer.³ The Goddess shrines of Catal-Huyuk are quite different.⁴ Although they might have been intended to represent caves, they are rectilinear and formalised.

Son of Hera.

Delphi's early bronze tholos, which was supplanted only in the Classical period, was part of the central shrine dedicated to Hera, the Great Goddess.⁵ One of her earth signs was the vulva labyrinth. The sign was closely associated with human fertility, but also with animal fertility via the ritual hunt and shamanism. At Delphi her cult was supplanted by Apollo. Apollonian characteristics match those of shamanism fairly closely in their psychology, though they have become independent of the goddess.

"The strange figures representing flautists, harpists, and shawm-players from Early Bronze Age graves in the Greek islands, are reminiscent of shamans, the priests whose activities among certain peoples have been observed up to the present day. By means of magic charms and intoxication they exalt themselves to a visionary state in which they achieve mastery over divine powers. Afterwards they tell of journeys into the Other World from which they bring back both precious and sacred spoils."⁶

This is in effect a triumph. One might suppose that Apollo represented a take-over or inheritance of a cult by its priests. Twinning with Artemis also points in that direction, since that deity was oriental too, and held as one of her attributes Mistress of the Animals (or Lady of Wild Things), once possessed by the Anatolian Great Goddess. This gave her an additional attribute as patroness of totemic cult, which is shamanic. Delphi was a Mycenaean settlement and cult centre. Truths are largely inextricable. Dietrich points out that national cults like those of Athena and Artemis contained large, ancient and ossified elements of rite incomprehensible to a normally educated contemporary worshipper even in Homeric times. In response to this confusion, "etiological fabrication and myth-making were rife throughout historical times, in order to account for divine functions and cult practice which reached back into the second millennium BCE."⁷ Shades of Varro!

³. Its discovery is very recent; others may follow, as is the pattern once a type has been identified.

⁴. cf. *Mellaart, R: Catal-Huyuk*. London 1967. ca 5000BC.

⁵. *Graves 1955*. Follow the references indexed under Hephaistos, and a significant build up of tholos related myth will be found.

⁶. *Scheffold, K: Myth and legend in Greek art*. London 1966. pp 11.

⁷. *Dietrich, B. C: The origins of Greek religion*. New York 1974. pp 227.

Robert Graves interprets the name Hephaistos as he who shines by day.⁸ As a son of Hera, originally chthonian but metamorphosed into air, his Great Goddess connections are impeccable. His name is indubitably Apollonian, though he might have older origins since his name balances that of Athena, she who shines by night. This makes Athena and Hephaistos a parallel pair to Apollo and Artemis who hold similar symbolism. The working of bronze and precious metals, which Hephaistos represents, was, like the worship of the Great Goddess, a mystery. "The artist is given a special place in society, because their work is a spiritual triumph, a claim to greatness for the whole society."⁹ Hephaistos is the archetypal early Greek craftsman. The Cyclopes, we may recall, had a single "eye" which Graves interprets as a sacred concentric tattoo, a sun sign. It is therefore of no mean significance to our analysis that Hephaistos is credited with building a magnificent bronze underground tholos at the shrine of Hera, Delphi. He who shines by day, we find, encloses the chthonian world of darkness, the world of Goddess worship, and clothes it with terrible symbolic beauty. He seems to have made a habit of constructing special underground hideouts for gods and heroes on the run, since he was also deeply involved in the Boeotian Orion myth. In that, he built an underground chamber on Chios for Oenopeion, obviously another tholos.

Hera is also a primary calendric goddess for whom the stick alphabet was invented. As her son, Hephaistos should have some connection. We find it in the luxury yacht he built for Helios to sail the ocean stream back to the land of the East from his night near Colchis, where his horses pastured in the Isles of the Blessed. Shades of Shamash in Gilgamesh! Both Helios and Hephaistos were subject to the Moon Goddess, and Helios is mythically sacrificed to her as his own son Phaethon.¹⁰ Hera, as moon goddess, regulated ancestral clan cults, with which tholos is intimately connected. Nor can we omit Prometheus, whose sin was mainly against Hera, but whom Zeus was forced to victimise because he himself was once one of Hera's "divine children" or consorts. Prometheus, pro-metis or "for foresight", who gave humanity the control of fire, is therefore also an even earlier version of Hephaistos, a prototype saviour figure.¹¹ There are no civilising skills without fire. Both are masters of liberating magic. We know that from elsewhere as shamanism. If that small excursion perhaps leaves you breathless, it does indicate some small part of the complexity inherent in this unique architectural form. In particular it bonds the building firmly with

⁸. *Graves 1955*, 23.1 and vol. 2, pp 393.

⁹. *Langer, S.K: Feeling and Form*. London 1963

¹⁰. *Graves 1955*, 42.1,2.

¹¹. *Kofman, S: Comment s'en sortir?* Paris 1983.

concepts of autochthony, which were so important to Roman successions after Julius Caesar. It provides an early link with the tholos in the Boscotrecase frescos. Luxury caves.

Delphi.

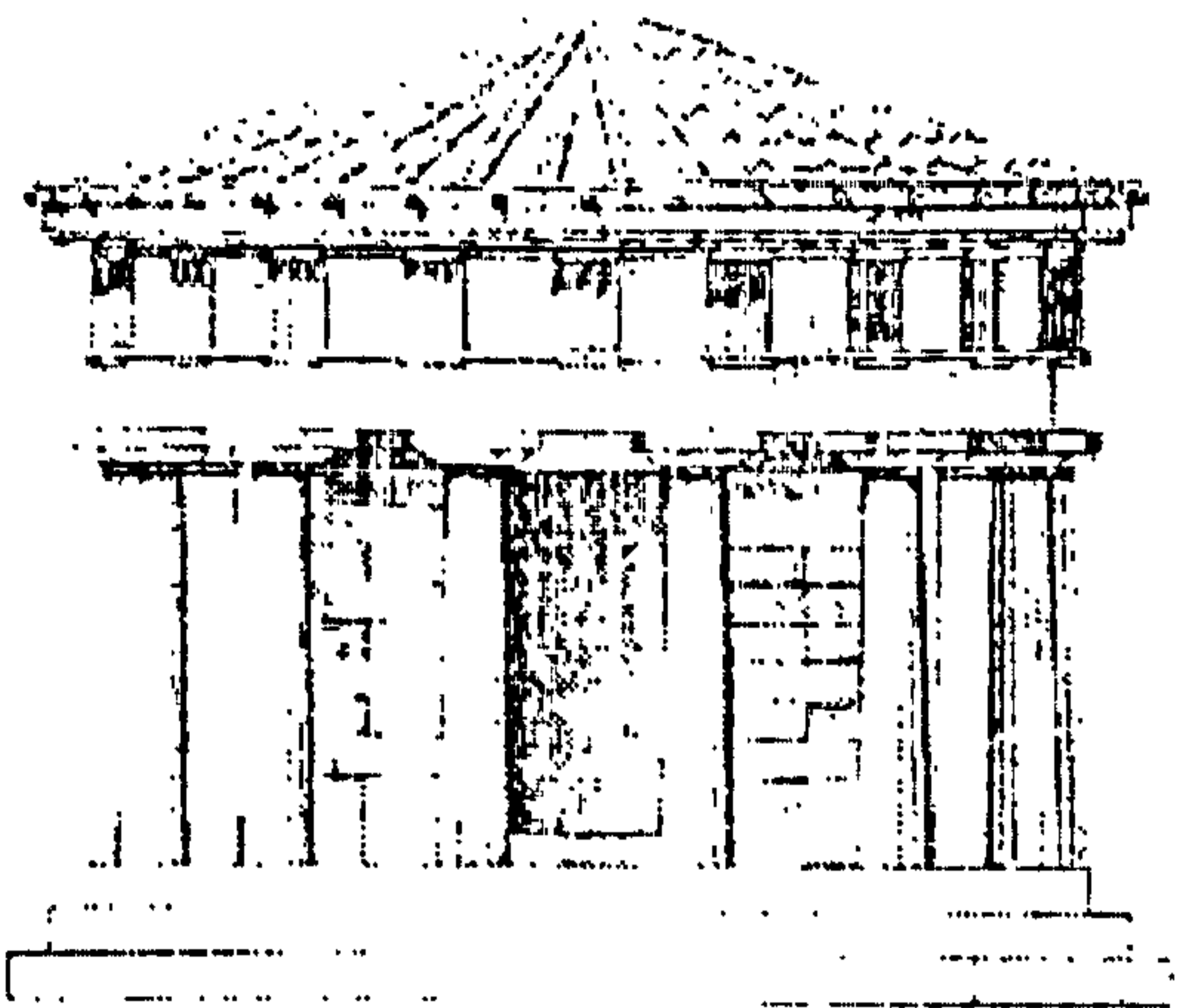
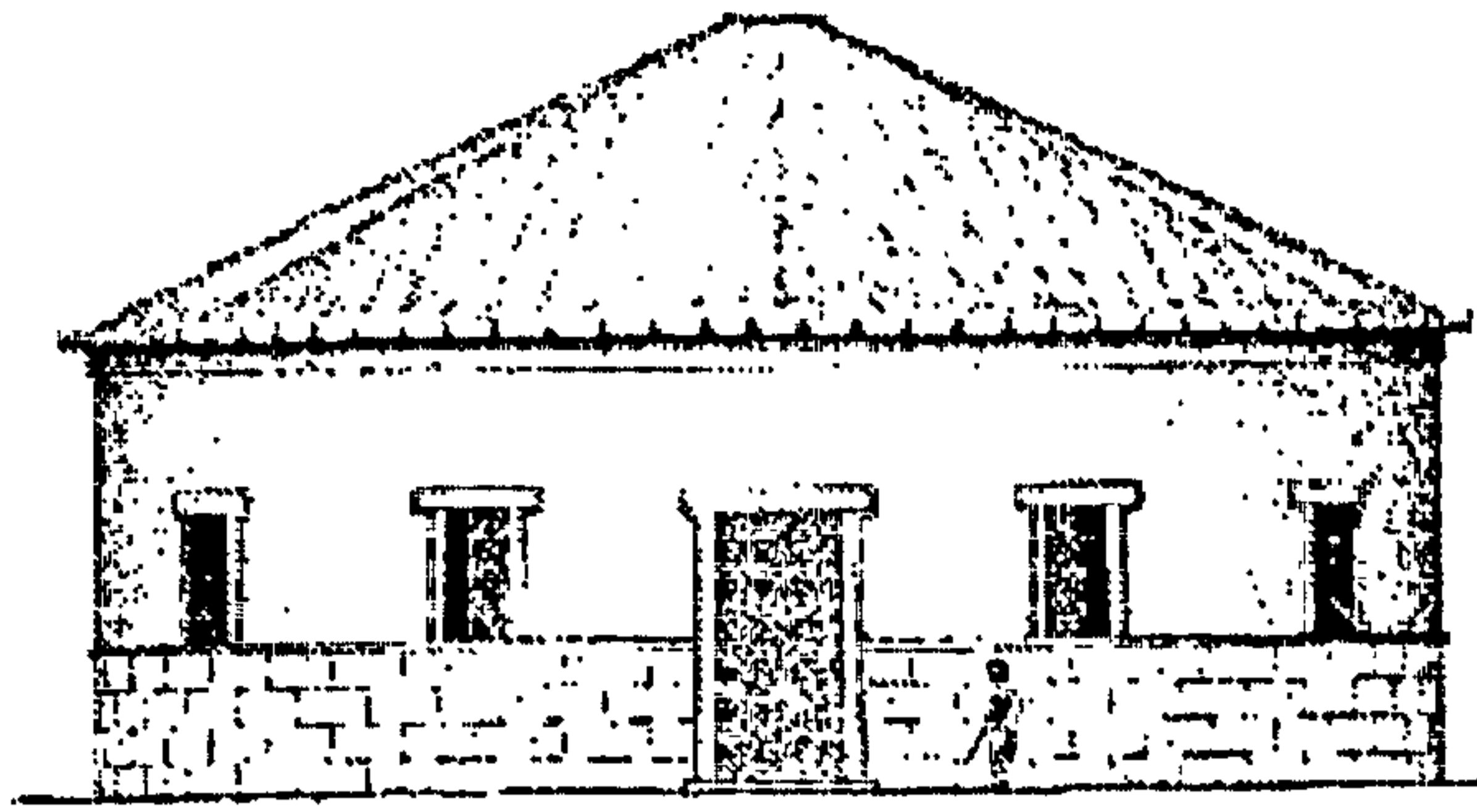
The Delphic oracle first belonged to Mother Earth, who appointed Daphnis as her prophetess; and Daphnis, seated on a tripod, drank in the fumes of prophecy, as the Pythian priestess still does ... some say that Apollo robbed the oracle from Mother Earth, after killing Python, and that his Hyperborean priests Pegasus and Agyeius established his worship there... At Delphi it is said that the first shrine was made of bees' wax and feathers; the second, of fern stalks twisted together; the third, of laurel boughs; that Hephaistos built the fourth of bronze, with golden song birds perched on the roof, but one day the earth engulfed it; and that the fifth, built of dressed stone, burned down in the year of the fifty-eighth Olympiad, and was replaced by the present shrine.¹²

We have already met Helius's luxury yacht made by Hephaistos. Now meet the luxury tholos [72]. A history of successive cultural waves is encapsulated in that potted history of the Delphic oracle. Of Cretan foundation, it signifies the presence of labrys. Labrys was a divination tool using the moon and planets. Its use keyed labyrinth. Robert Graves left the character of the bronze oracle open, but suggests it to have been a tholos of a hero incarnate in the python. Two kinds of bird are suggested for the symbols. Nightingales were oracular, wrynecks were love charms and rain inducers, fertility symbols, birds of the Goddess. A place of human or animal sacrifice, the name of the first priestess, Daphnis, means bloody one. It was also orgiastic, using chewed laurel leaves to attain trance. Chewed laurel leaves produce an effect of bleeding. Induced trance is essential to religions involving human sacrifice and oracular utterance. Graves's suggestions for the evolution of tholos differ from those of others. All are theories. His makes logical sense. African in origin, it migrated to Greece by way of Mesopotamia and Palestine.¹³

Delphi's last tholos was marble, its cylinder diffused by a Dorian peripteros deriving from Dorian grave architecture, bringing together two kinds of celebratory styles and creating something perfectly fused. Only one appears to have had difficulty spacing columns around the cylinder and that was burnt down. By that time perfection had been attained in bringing together the two forms.

¹². Graves 1955. 51.b.c.

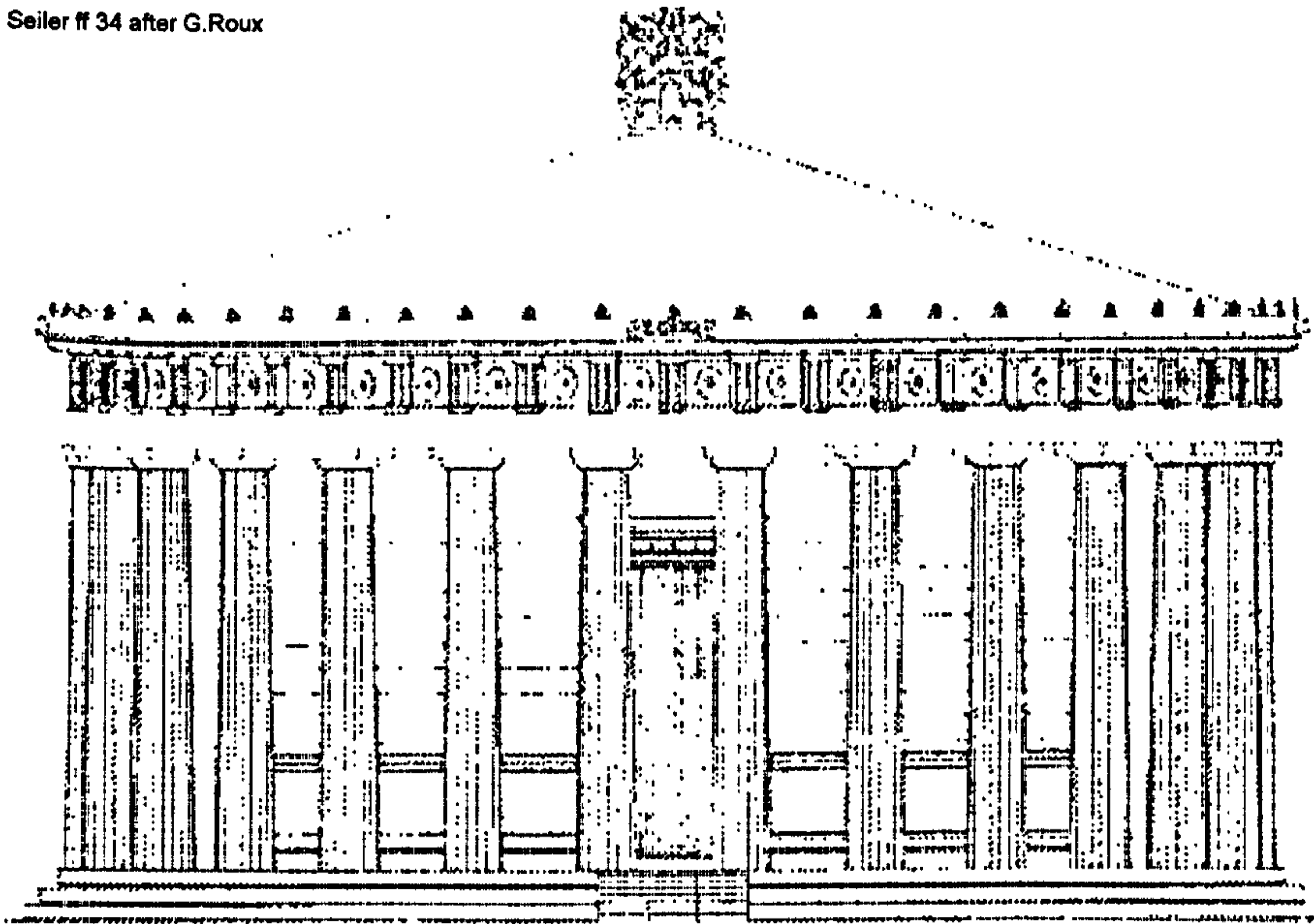
¹³. Graves 1955. 51.2. This seems borne out by information found during research and presented below.



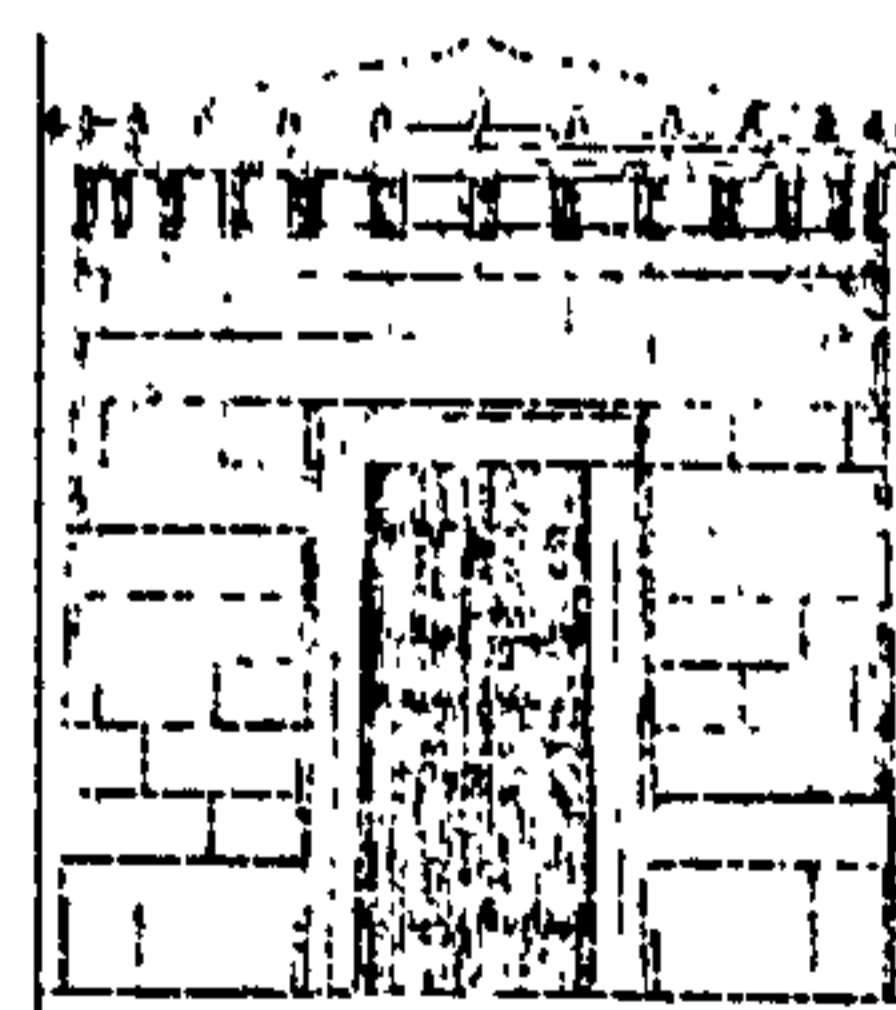
Above: Athens Skias
Right: Delphi Old tholos
Below: Epidavros Thymele

Seiler ff 22 after H Pomtow

Seiler ff 34 after G.Roux



Right: Paros
Far right: Termessos pseudomonopteros

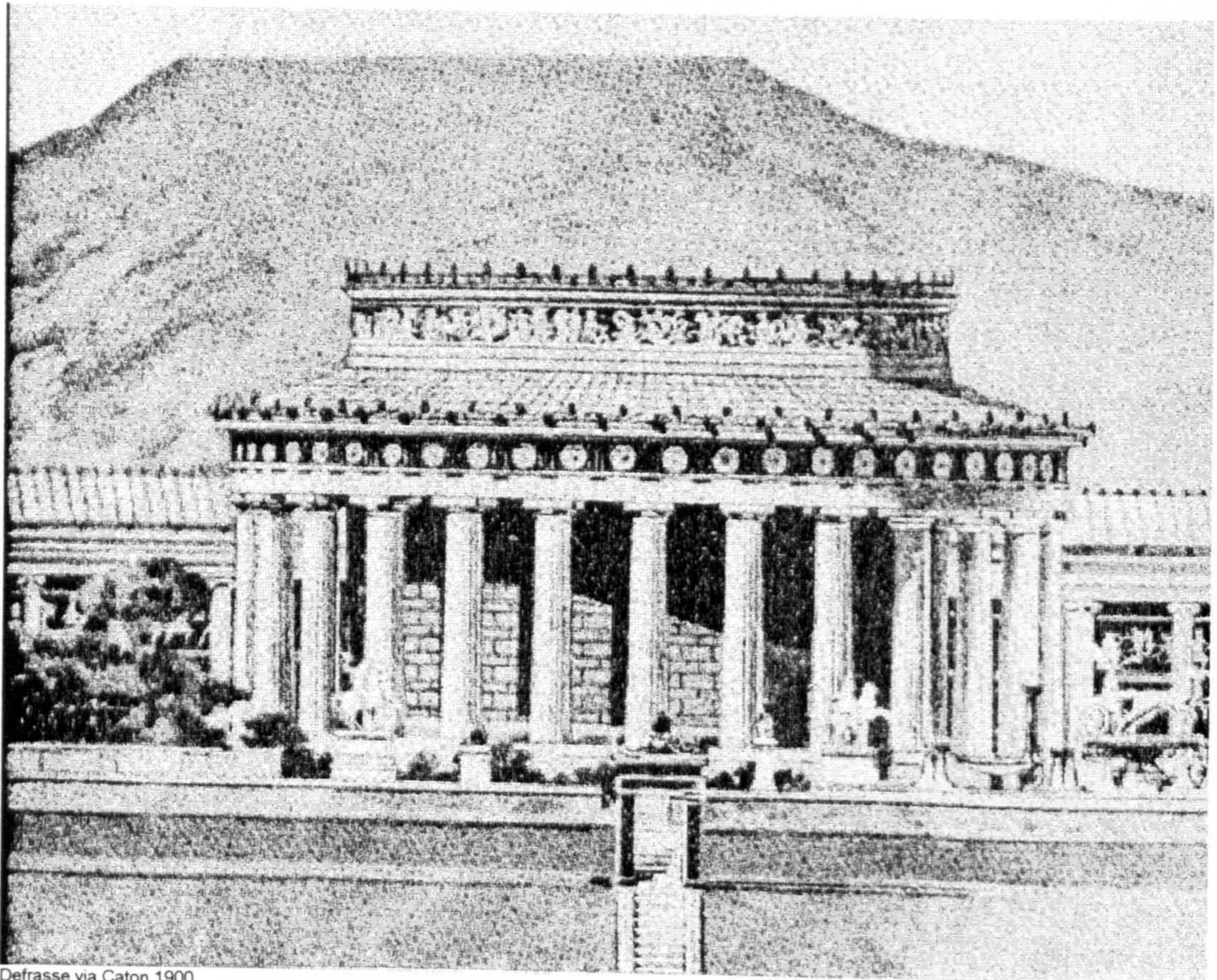


Seiler ff 41 after H.Fastje



Seiler ff 62 after Niemann

Tholoi: selected comparisons



Defrasse via Caton 1900

It is uncertain from this early reconstruction of Thymele how its author envisaged the roof form. The internal colonnade precludes an open roof inside the centre segment as shown. It would have been just possible to have had a circular peristyle open to the sky - sleeping under the stars - and it is also possible that this could have complemented the experience in the crypt. Most modern reconstructions opt for the cone. Taking the snake as a symbol of aperas, a metaphor of riverine space might also reinforce Defrasse's reconstruction, though the pythons are generally thought to have cured by licking the afflicted part of the body rather than demonstrating orientation. Ambivalences nevertheless remain in this context.

Thymele:an alternative

Thymele.

Thymele at Epidauros superficially loses the Hephaistos connection [72] [73]. Its setting is the Asklepeion in the Heraion [74]. Asklepeios means unceasingly gentle [75].¹⁴ Thymele differs significantly from other tholoi. Differences offer clues to origins and symbolism. Above ground it attains perfection in Dorian form. Reconstructions reveal a building as elegantly conceived and executed as the Parthenon. Building was commenced in the VcBC, and continued in fits and starts for a hundred years. There is no evidence of discontinuity in its architecture, reflecting a well established unwavering purpose. Epidauros was a Greek state where human sacrifice continued later than in Attica, an ideal environment for Asklepeios and near Lathuresa.¹⁵

Hephaistos appears again in the myth of Pelops, pursued by Zeus for assisting Prometheus, responsible for assisting humanity to godlike skills. Graves summarises the myth: "*Pelops drove on until he reached the western stream of Oceanus, where he was cleansed of blood guilt by Hephaistos.*"¹⁶ Hygiea and Asklepeios later shared the function. In accordance with the general principles of mythic characters, we might consider that Asklepeios was partly identified with Hephaistos, whose skills embraced everything from the perfection of metal-working to cleansing of blood guilt. Hephaistos also supported Achilles at Troy, another hero-myth figure whose name has similar connotations to Hephaistos' own, "bright king". The rise of Asklepeios was in general accord with the increasing popularity of skill heroes, and blossomed under Roman mysticism. He was superseded in Rome by what Toynbee snortingly regards as the rather wishy-washy Sarapis. Sarapis, an easy conquest for Christianity, was, he suggests, created to fill a vacuum in the enlarged Egyptian inspired section of the Roman pantheon, consort of Isis.¹⁷

The western stream of Oceanus is that section of current encircling the world which led to the Isles of the Blessed. We must return to Graves to find another association with Hephaistos. This time it is labyrinth.¹⁸ "*In Celtic myth the labyrinth came to mean the royal tomb; and that it also did among the early Greeks is suggested by its definition in the Etymologicum Magnum as 'a mountain cave', and by Eustathius as 'a subterranean cave'. Lars Porsena, the Etruscan made a labyrinth for his*

¹⁴. *Graves 1955*, pp 382.

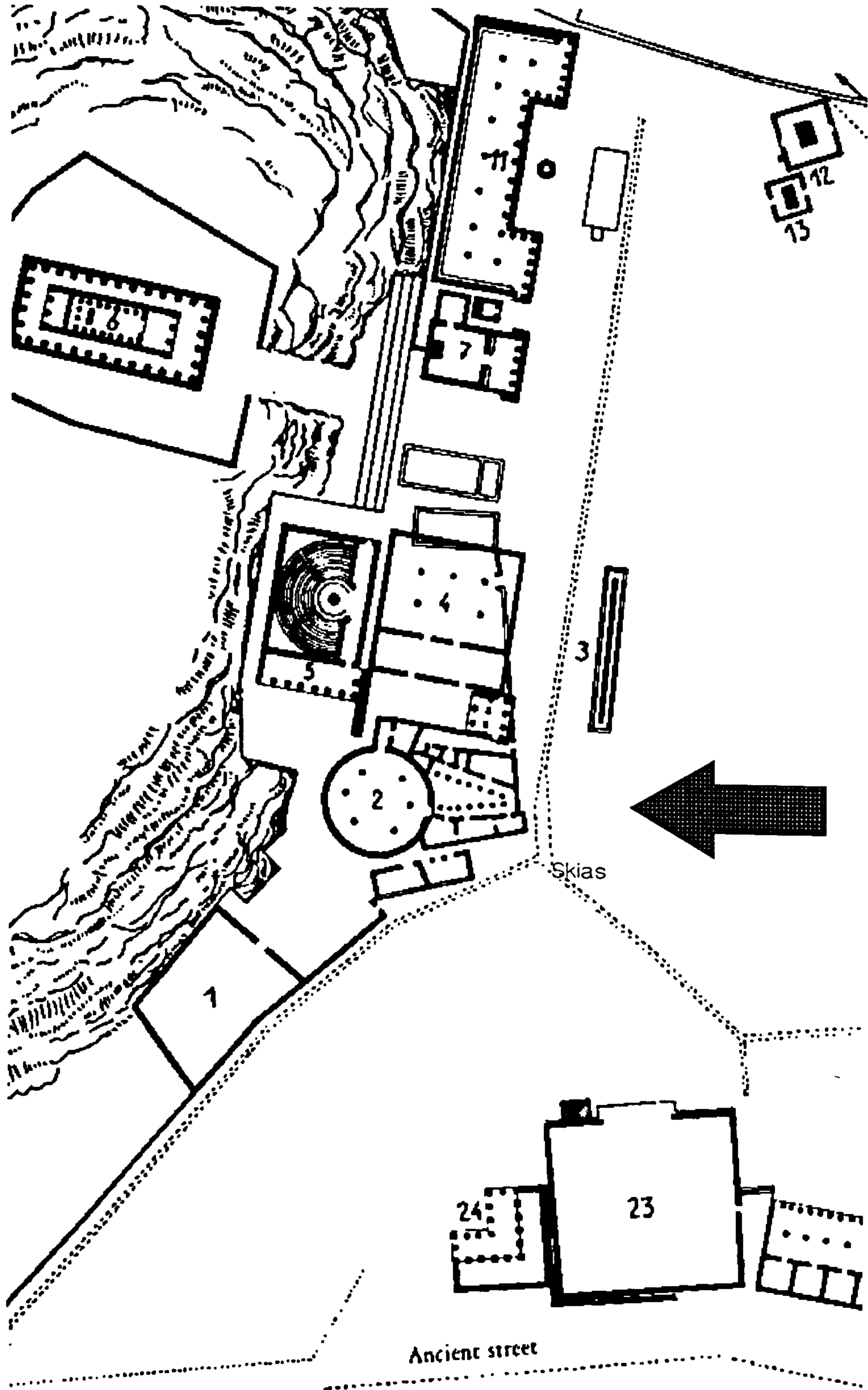
¹⁵. Though hundreds of years later than the dominance of that settlement.

¹⁶. *Graves 1955*, 109.m. This was the act deemed essential for deifying a triumphator following successful and bloody warfare in the cause of Augustan Rome.

¹⁷. *Toynbee, A: Mankind and Mother Earth*, Oxford 1976, pp 296.

¹⁸Part of or connected to Oceanus.

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Tholoi here and at Lathuresa approximate closely the position of a chieftain's or king's house in the settlement pattern. Do they represent an empty home or a home for the ancestral spirit of departed kings?

Tholos & setting: Skias, Athens

Statue of Asklepeios (Caton, R: Temples and ritual of Asklepeios. London 1900.



This statue presents Asklepeios in the pose of Herakles, that is, as hero. He does not have the fierce look that characterises the warrior hero, but is more Dionysiac. A large plinth designates status. His staff of Hermes is more like the club of Herakles. The pose separates him from the effeminacy of Dionysos or Apollo. His festivals incorporated athletic contests as well as elaborate ritual and theatre. The fact that he was suckled by a goat also links him with Herakles and nature deities.

Tholos:Asklepeios

*own tomb, and there were labyrinths in the Cyclopean i.e., pre-Hellenic, caves near Nauplia; on Samos and on Lemnos. To escape from the labyrinth is therefore to be reincarnate."*¹⁹

One essential difference between Thymele and all other discovered tholoi is that it possessed an underground chamber [76] [77]. At the centre of its floor, which was laid out with illusionistic geometry in polychrome marble, cut with exquisite care, was a dark hole. This is in effect the dynamic epicentre of the building's form. It led down into a pit laid out as a labyrinth. A possible ancestor of this aspect has been found at Tiryns [80].

Arsinoeion and Phillipeion.

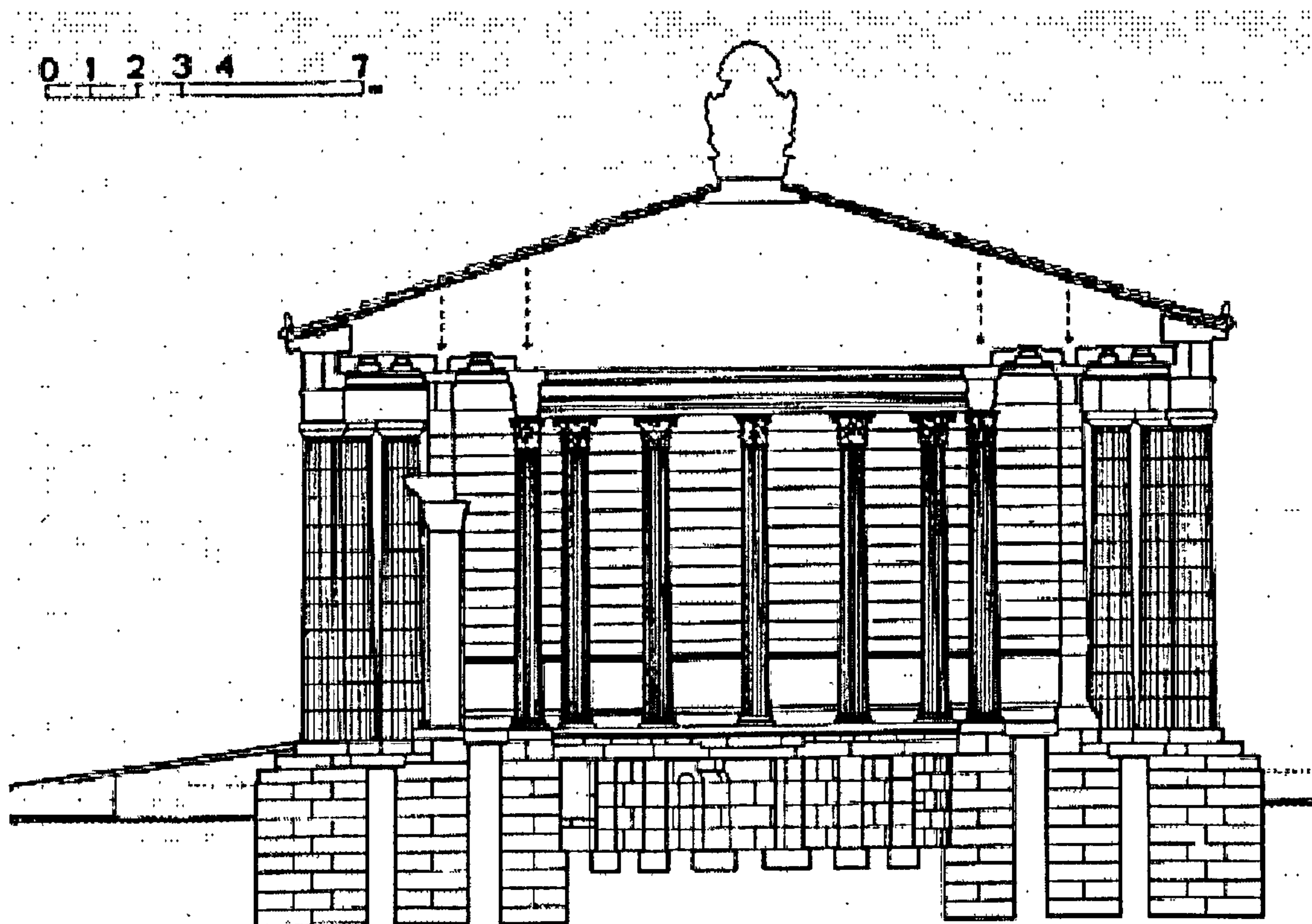
Tholoi were built after Thymele. Philip of Macedon, whose skills of rhetoric persuaded Greeks to accept him, entrenched his position by building a magnificent peripteral tholos at Olympia [78]. At Samothrake, an ancient centre for Eleusinian mysteries, the Arsinoeion [71] apotheosised the ancient form found at Lathuresa [71]. This was Hellenistic revival of Great Goddess cults whose ancient venue was caves. In both of these tholoi, on which enormous resources were expended revealing their importance, the interior ceased to be fully concentric. The dizzy dynamic was halted. Instead, still based on a similar principle, there was an exedra. In the Phillipeion this was set with statues of the Olympians and Phillip's ancestors. The psychology of the exedra differs. It insists on a static position being taken by the viewer, who then stands in awe at the spectacle. The viewer does not participate as in a processional along a line of images. Both of these structures extended the skills of contemporary architects in structural manipulation, with their large spans. From this we can see the importance of the type, for at each stage, constructional resources are maximised [72]. Athens' Skias is prominent [81].

Symbolic components in the architectural form.

Architecture is commemorations of ritual acts. Its existence implies desire for permanence. Resources involved in producing architecture were enormous then as now. Form in Greek ceremonial and ritual buildings embodies related spatial symbolism. Much relates to concepts of Landscape. At the basic level, a peripteral colonnade resembles a grove, and is also a metaphor of human assembly.²⁰ Most temples had non-urban settings, being part of rural precincts, great and small, around the greater of which

¹⁹ *Graves 1955*. 92.11

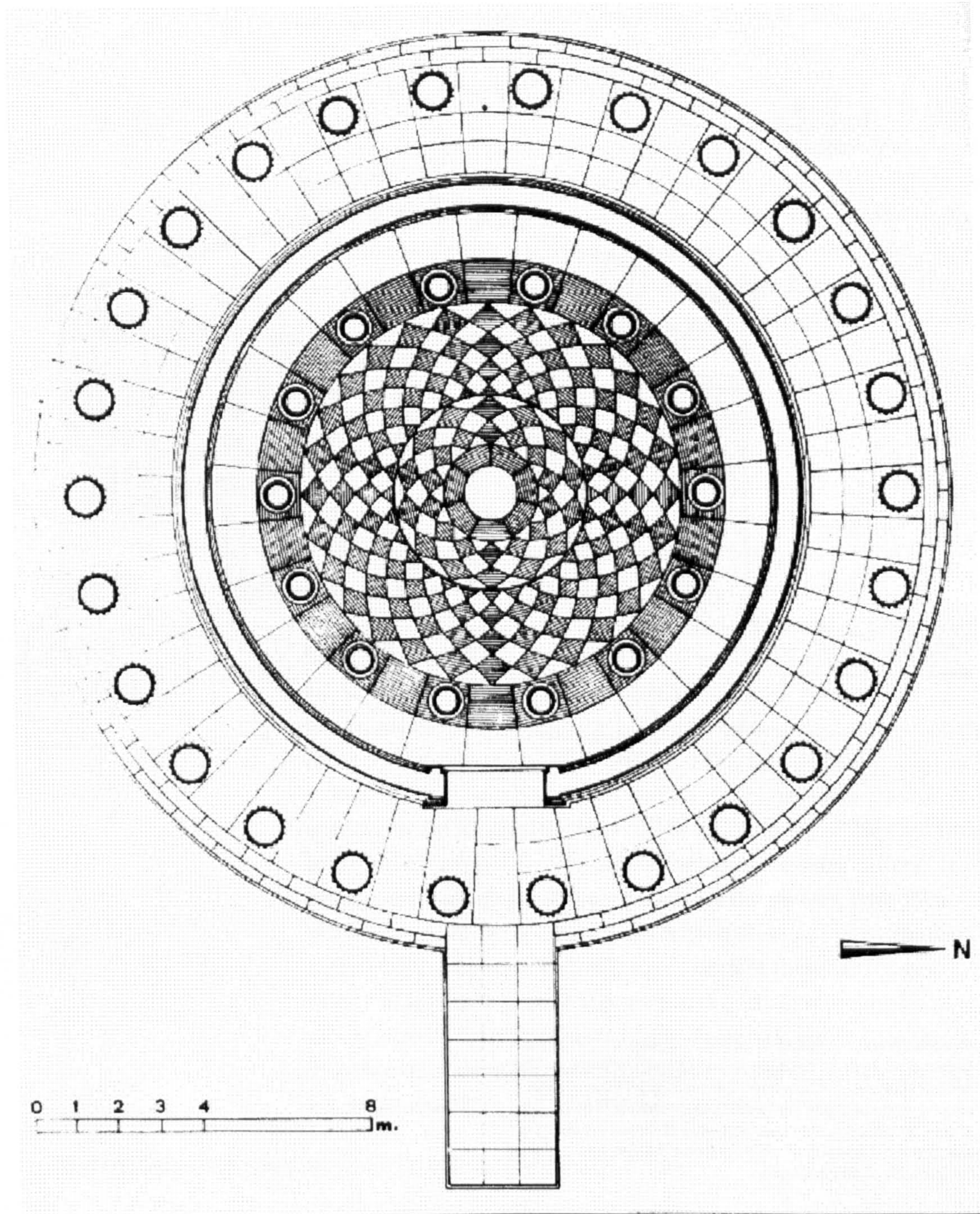
²⁰ See reference to tholos below. Vergil uses the simile of the cypress grove in this way for his Cyclopes episode in *Aeneid*.



Cross section Thymele Martin Greek architecture ff170

Reconstructed section of Thymele. It reveals details of the basement labyrinth, peripteros, and internal colonnade. The central space is controversial. Others suggest that it rose into the cone of the roof (Seiler:Die griechische Tholos). It shows an exceptionally beautiful work of Greek art on a par with the most famous of all, Parthenon. Its detailing matched the breadth of its conception.

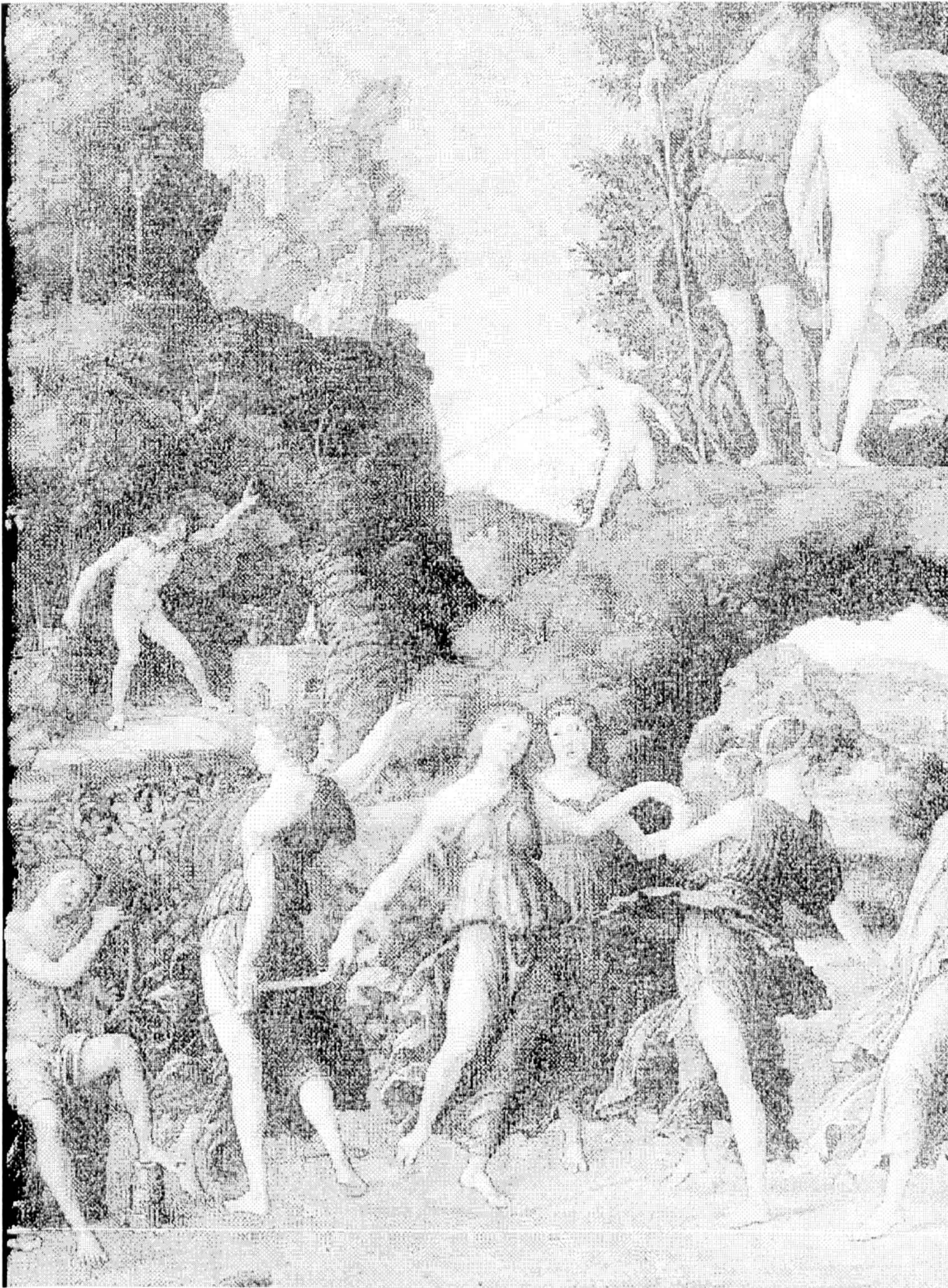
Tholos:Thymele section



Martin Greek architecture ff 170

Reconstruction plan of Thymeale showing clearly the concentric elements which partition space internally and externally.

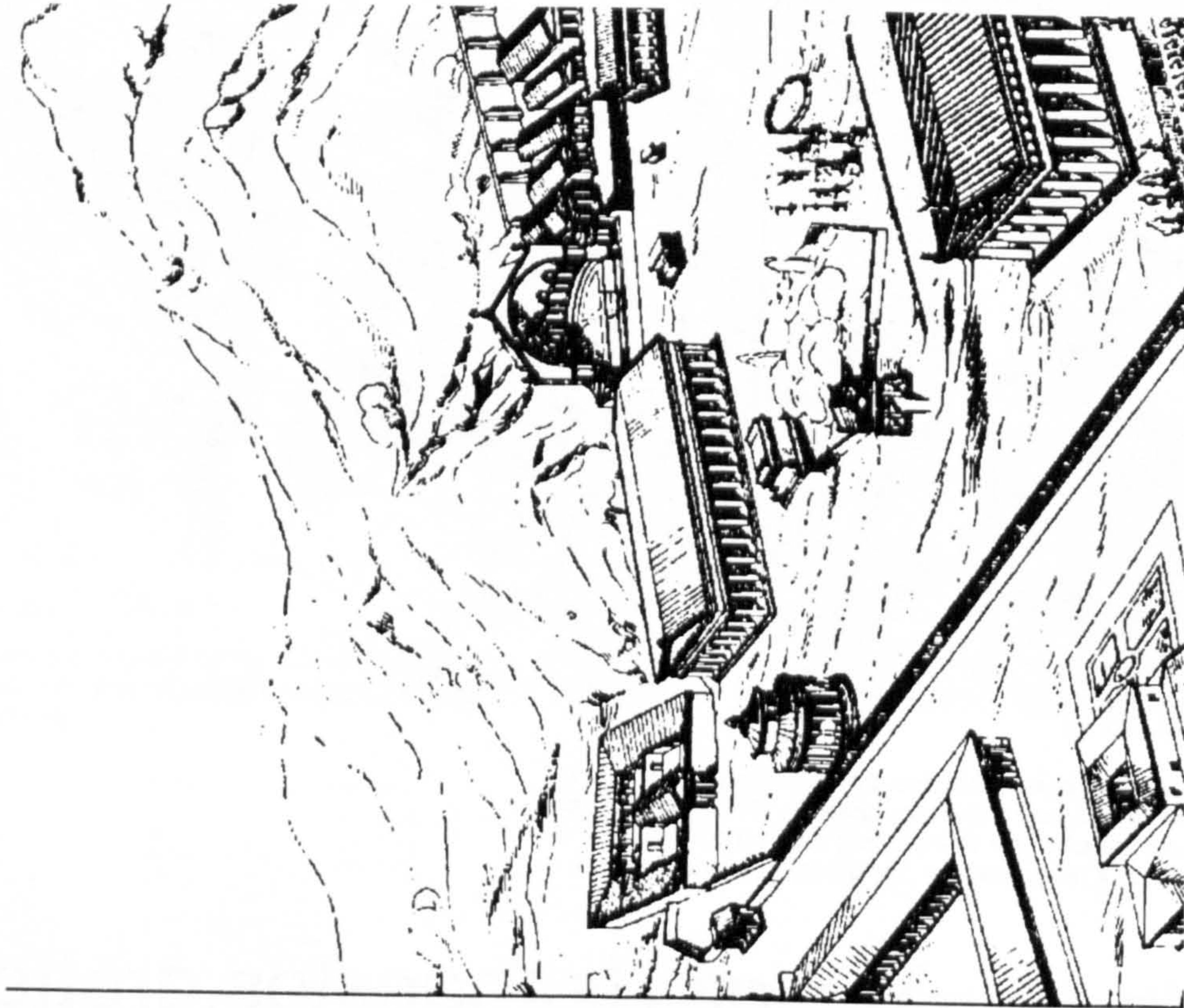
Tholos:Thymeale plan



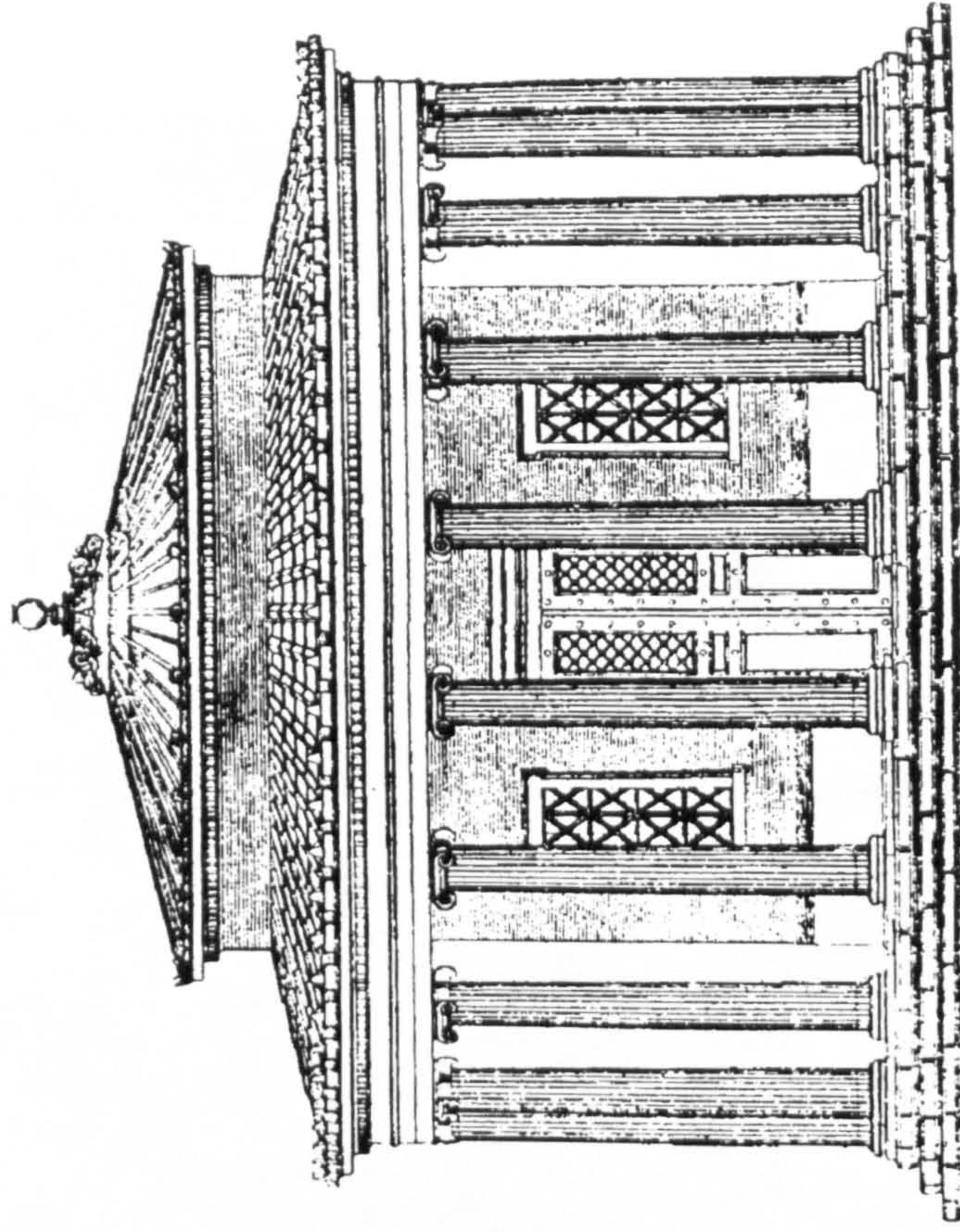
Mantegna Parnassus ff 107

Hephaestus has returned to Parnassus in Mantegna's painting. In his cave a small furnace burns; Eros has turned herald while Mars claims Venus. Apollo tunes his lyre. Parnassus is depicted in the manner of a triumphal arch, a rite of passage, the garden of Venus Aphrodite on its peak.

Tholos:Hephaestos,grotto.



Setting of the Philippeion Olympia (Benevolo ff 114)

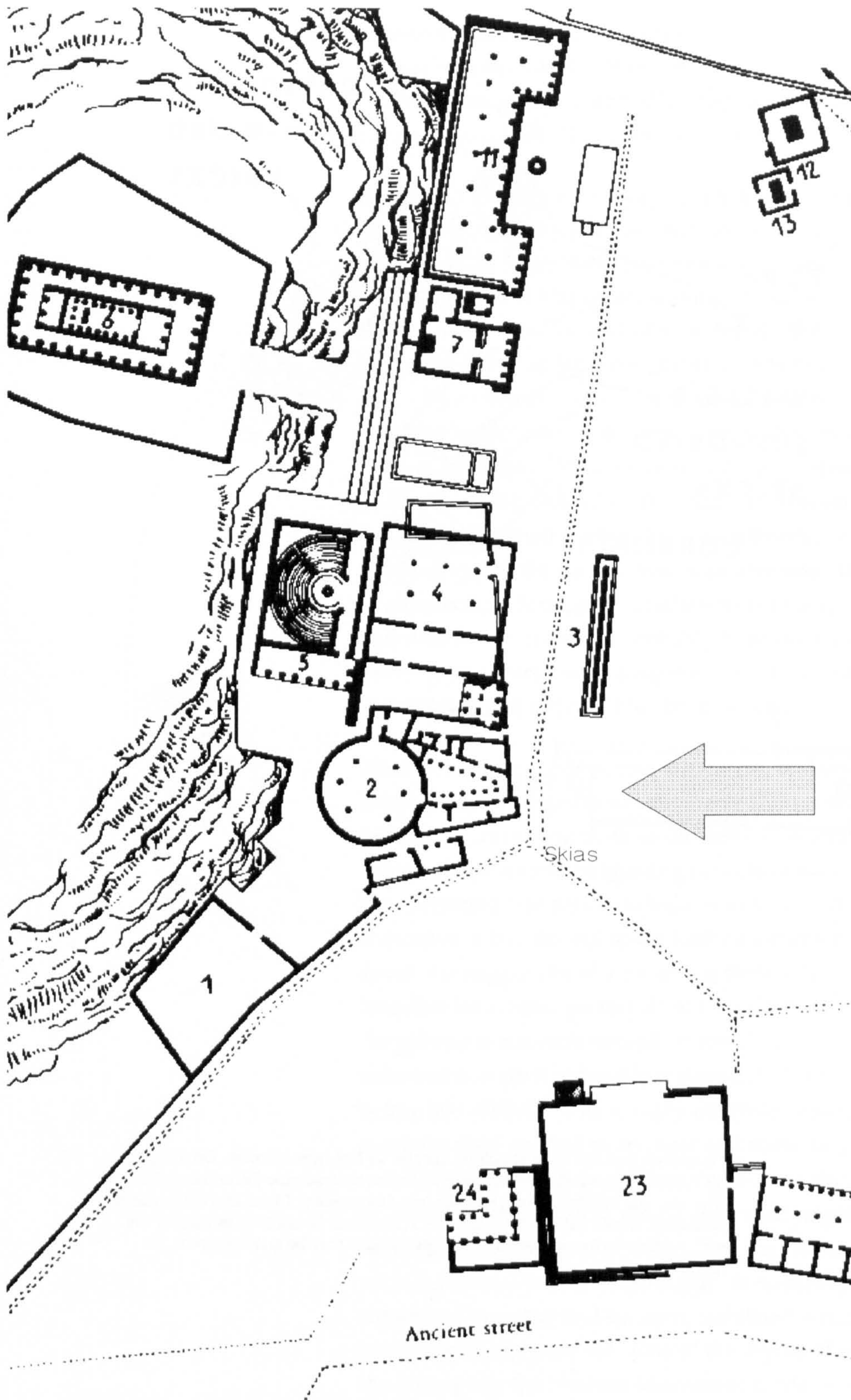


Philippeion elevation (Doerpfeld) via Onians ff 11

Philip of Macedon's 'gift' to Attic Greeks is an ancestral shrine placed at the heart of their Apollonian culture, a statement of autochthonous ancestry.

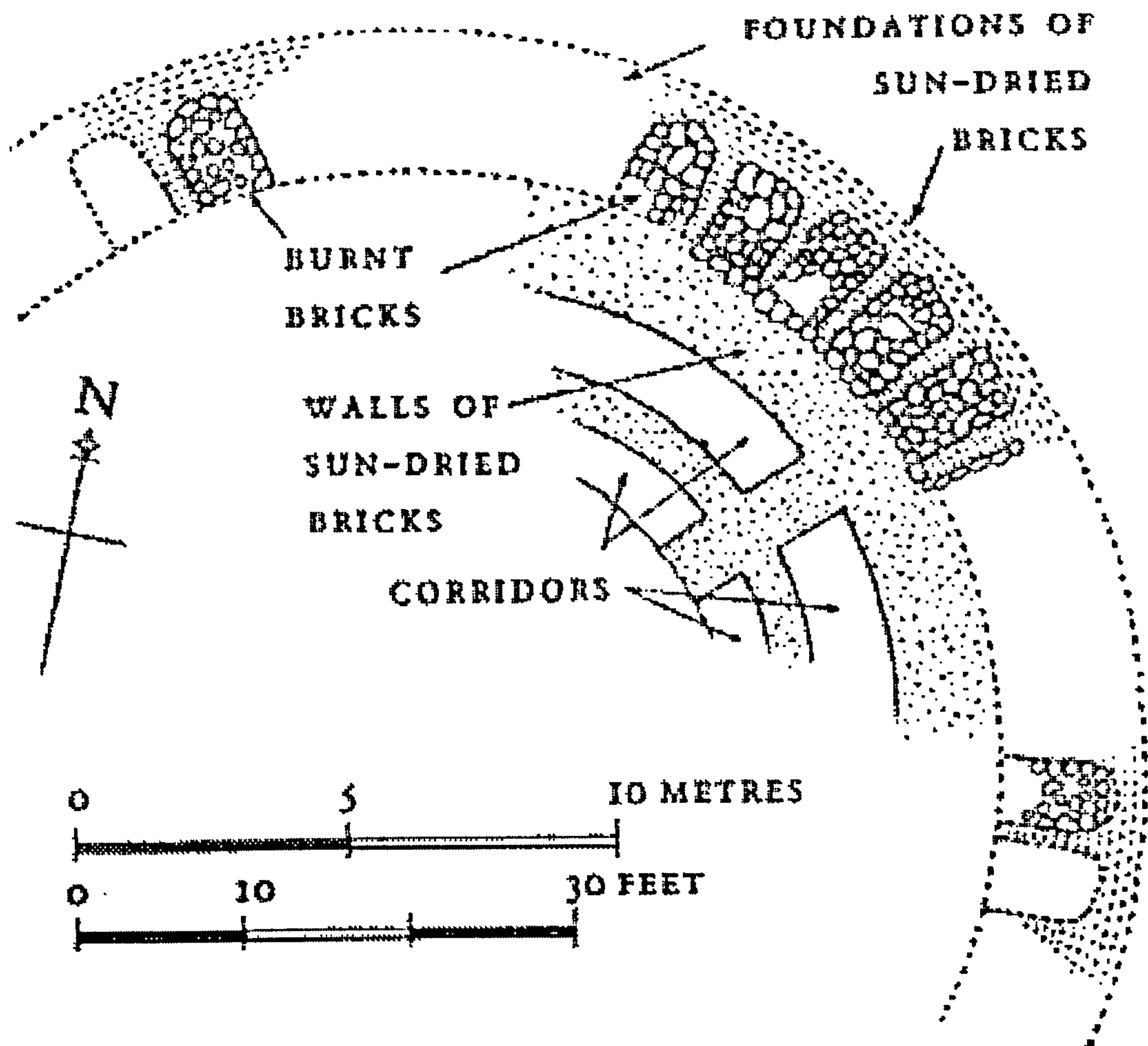
Tholos & setting: Philippeion, Olympia

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It is interesting to note how monumental tholoi retain their settlement edge setting, suggesting well established stereotypes

Tholos & setting: Skias, Athens



It is unlikely that this huge structure, diameter 91 feet, was a tholos. On this plan the foundations of walls can be seen which closely resemble the undercroft of Thymele. The building is from Helladic (pre-Mycenaean) Tiryns and fairly recently excavated. It does establish a precedent in mainland Greek architecture for the unique tholos feature of Thymele, though purpose may be quite different. Ca 1200BC.

Tholoi - Thymele's labyrinth?

ceremonial urban centres evolved. It is even possible that phenomena such as the Athenian acropolis evolved from priest king concepts, the king element being displaced over time. Alkinoos's palace precinct, an Olympian model, is an example of an older type.

A temple placed in a landscape, meticulously polychromed, or even whitened as we now see their remains, complements the wildness of the setting. It takes from its surroundings elements of wilderness which have gained cultural meaning. In sublimation it returns them, a cycle of taking and returning like that of the three hags, the Great Mother triad (or three graces as they became later). Doing so, the components of cosmos are re-united in a new and comprehensible way - the Greek way, with Grecian understanding of its order, logos. They are re-unified, a "portrait" of Hen. The means used will depend on the cult, the diversities of which reveal the richness of their explorations. Continuity, or perpetuation, is fundamental to the early Greek consciousness. It is fully expressed in architectural form, just as finiteness is clearly seen in their Latinisations.²¹ It derives probably from their status of colonisers, never quite secure, but willing the kind of stability which to the Romans seemed a fact of life - born to rule.

Thus colonnades, orders, roof structures, and the enclosed cella of a temple, extract proportional geometry from cosmic Landscape resonances, revealing them as universals. A temple podium raises it above common earth suggesting process space beneath. Colonnades rise, perfected tree trunks to hold aloft their "order". This is an architrave, a transitional space leading a cornice which enfolds space, the suggestion of a recurving surface like a vault, before it launches into iconic portrayals of the celestial world. The surface of the ground is not enumerated. It merely exists. Peripteral colonnades were structurally inessential. Their only structural task before 600 - 700AD, was to carry the entablature, itself only a symbolic shell applied to an inner and more ancient structure of the cella.²² All of these things Thymele had. At the apex of its roof was an ornate marble cresting whose structural origins might just have been the lashed poles of a timber cone, but whose symbolic flash was undoubtedly more meaningful. Structural precedent is given significant meaning and becomes stabilised through that meaning, not its structural purpose. One of the myths of modern times was the attempt by the Modern Movement to "de-mystify" classical architecture, depriving it of essential energy.²³

²¹. *Onians, J. Bearers of meaning*. London 1988. pp 49-50.

²². *Onians, J. Bearers of meaning*. London 1988.

²³. It is important and essential to balance to point out that this iconoclastic aspect of the modern movement was directed at meaningless classicism of the beaux Beaux-arts variety. The essential element of proportion and balance - metis - was as much a part of Modern architecture as it was of ancient. It is

Thymele made manifest the space beneath. It represented that space as a labyrinth and meant a cave. It was the labyrinth of death, a hero's tomb in a society where the hero was king. Hero was also saviour in various forms - Heracles, Poseidon, Asklepeios, and existed before Greece [82]. He had emerged from subjugation to the titanist represented in so many mythic deaths. His vital role as an ancestor, a founding ancestor, suddenly became important in the increasingly crowded world of dynastic greater Greece. He brought with him the ancestral space awarded through his own sacrifice. The sun, whose symbol was the bull subservient to the fertility of the Goddess, emerged from periodically enforced eclipse by the moon to take control. There is a line of thought linking the funerary urn with bucephalus, gradually transformed from pot to bronze and formalised. Similarly Thymele's sun disk floor, symbolic space which survived the ravages of Campanian villa fashions [83]. As a metaphor of hero's death, it has good logic within this background. But we diverge for the moment. The dark mysteries of the cave have yet to be explored.

The cave of the goddess - cave as portal.

To the scandal of the Hebraic mind and its Christian descendant, the Greeks, as they crossed their agoras, walked among the statues of Zeus and Aphrodite, of Athena, Artemis, and Apollo, Poseidon, and generations of artists vied with their predecessors to give those divine shapes clearer articulation. Yet this theology, poetic or sculptural, did not issue in dogma or wearying discussions of the nature of deity. It issued in history, drama, philosophy, and science. The great forms of Greek intellectual exploration are derived from its poetry which is specifically the articulation of divinity in action.²⁴

For poetry we can read also architecture, urban design, Landscape, and all their related details. Important social dynamics related to concepts of divinity transpose into all forms of Hellenistic social space. Divinity includes the darker aspects of existence. They are not shunned, even during the ascendancy of the Olympians, but are expressed as part of the completeness essential to metis. Thymele expresses the totality of this balance and seems to have been a culmination in its architectural evolution.

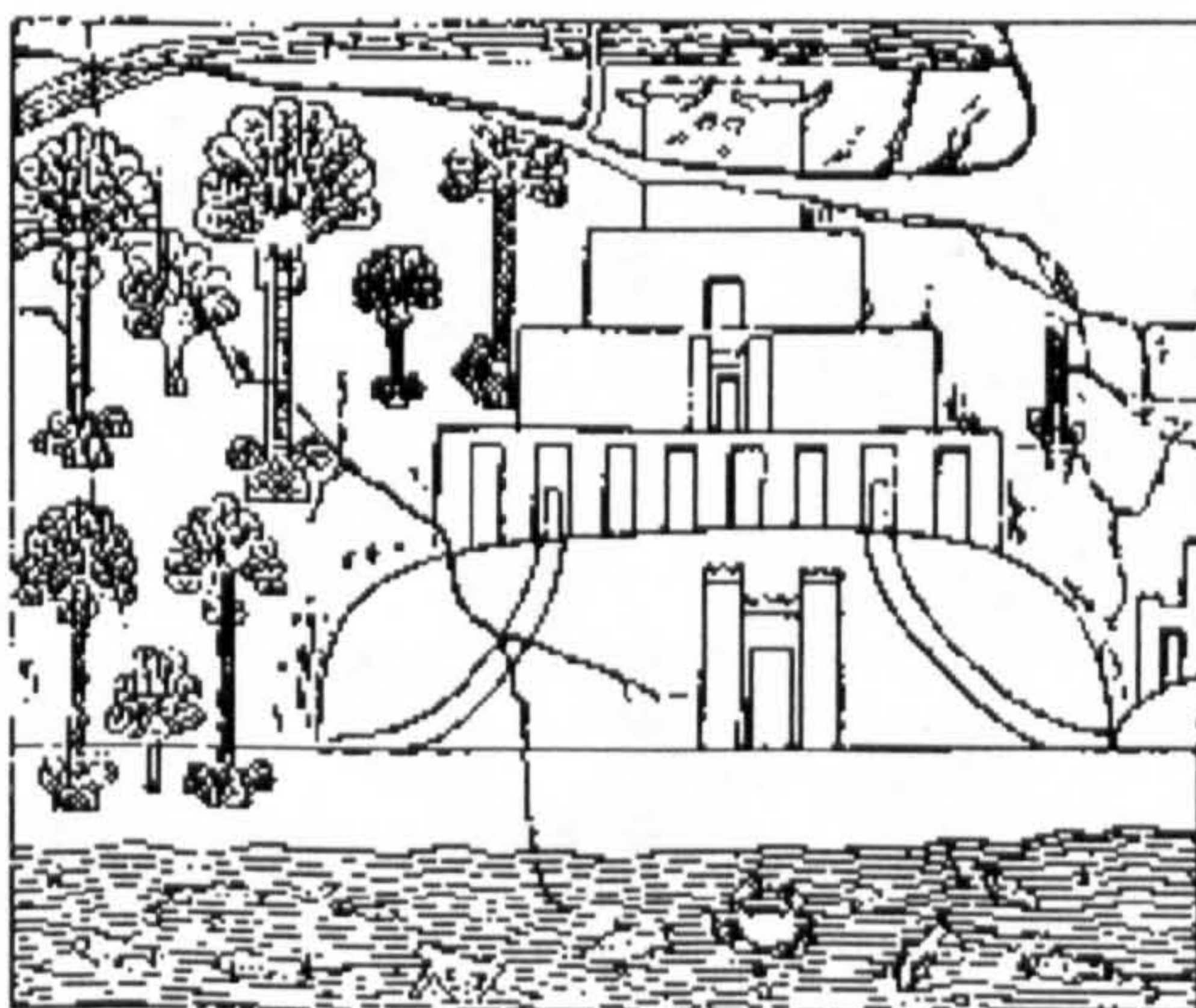
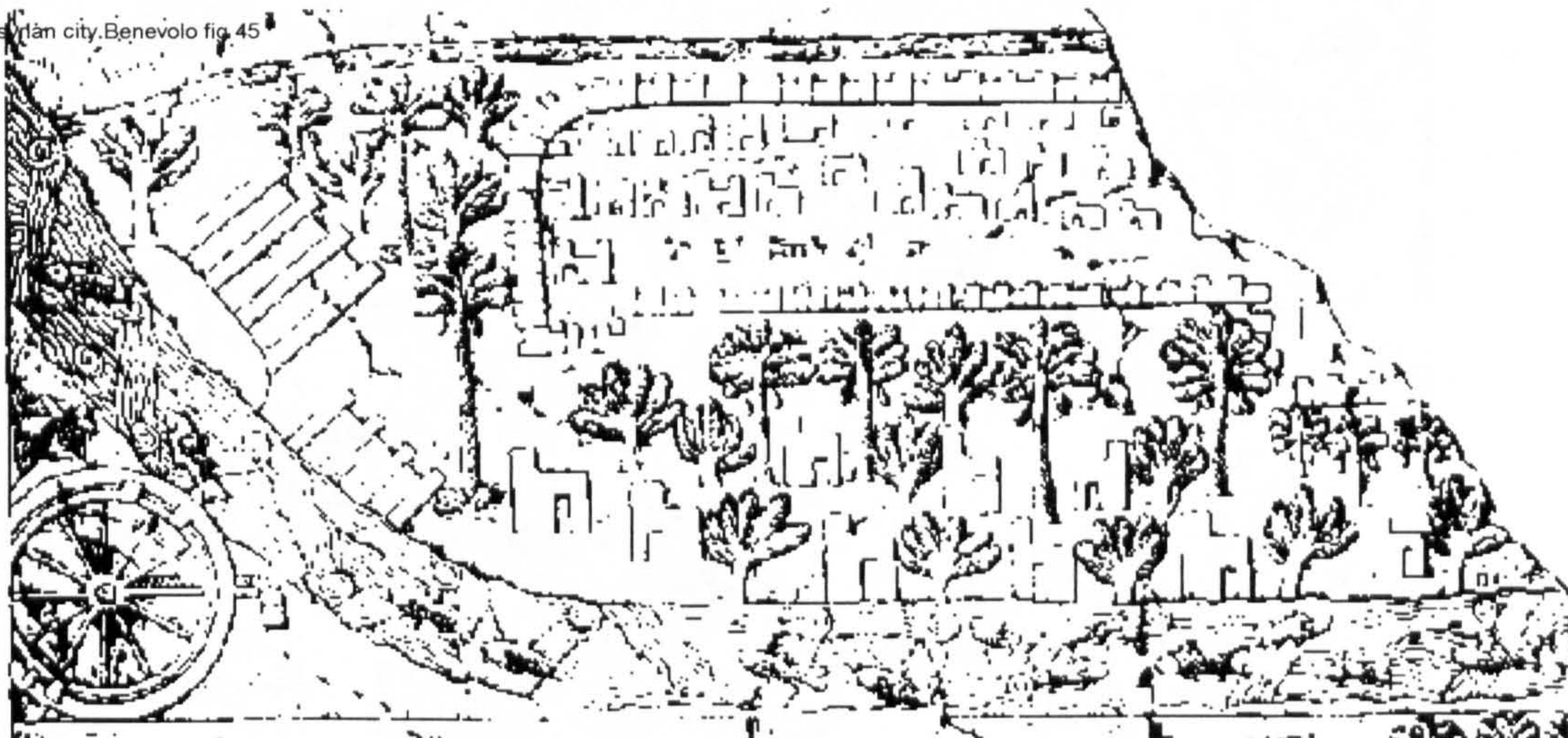
indicative of affective behaviour and reaction that the present phase of "Post-modernism" has reinstated with even greater emphasis an even less meaningful application of elements of classicism. The other pastiche of classicism advocated in other quarters does nothing to redress the balance, since it lacks an essentially constructive philosophy other than rhetorical historicism. One day we might regain *metis!*
²⁴. *Bennett, C: God as Form*. New York 1976. pp 2.

Mesopotamian "Palace of the Intestines", an image of inner space transferred to the oracular world inside the earth. Used for divining new towns, setting up rites of passage. In effect it is access to ancestral space like the principle function of a tholos like Thymele; such abstract attributive space is exclusively inhabited by power groups.



Sumer entrail labyrinth

Assyrian city. Benevolo fig. 45



Two Assyrian reliefs of cities for which the visceral labyrinth was a planning tool. This has possible implications on the presence of tholoi and their position in Greek Geometric period settlements. Each ancient city had its own portal giving access to the labyrinth implied by the 'mountain' at its epicentre.

Mundus, cave, portal, labyrinth & settlement



Apollo disk Roman mosaic Purce fig 16

Apollo sun disk floor

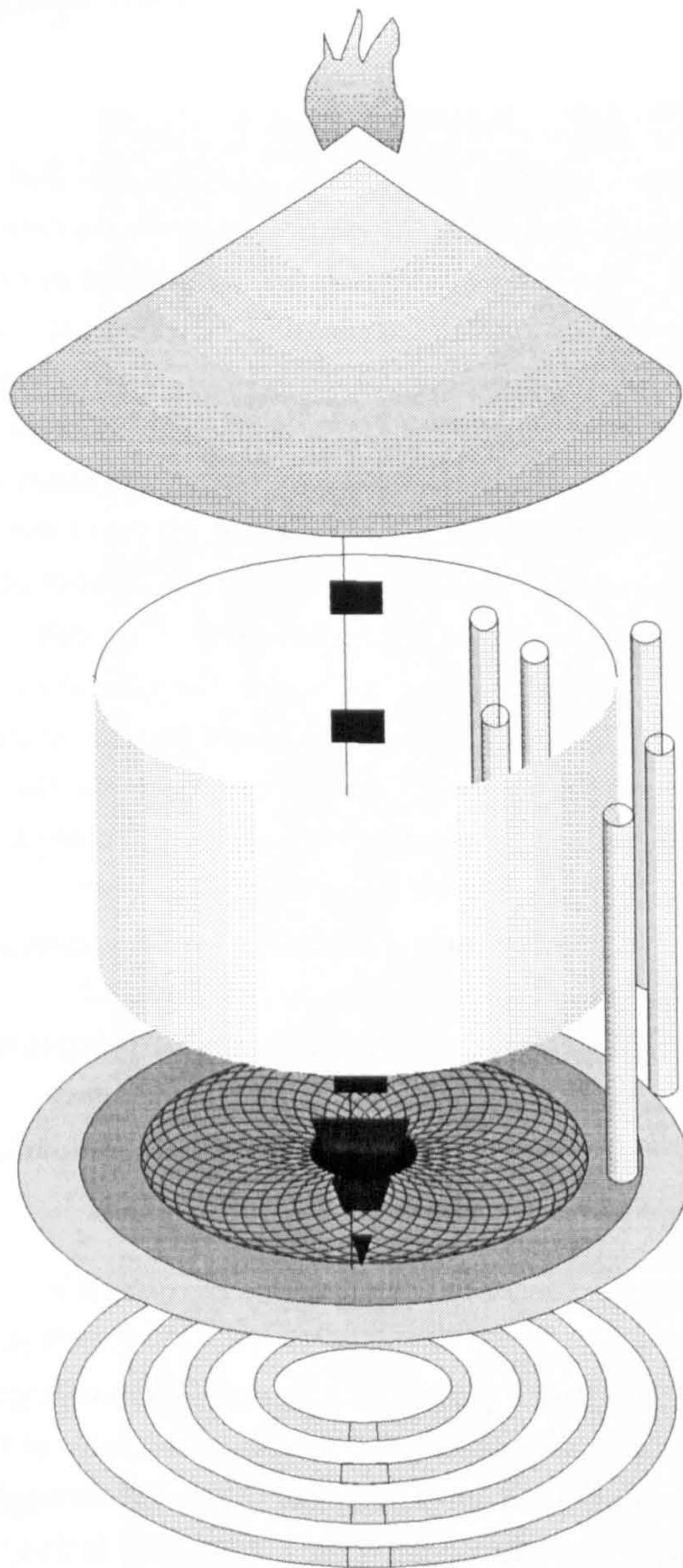
The skills of Asklepeios encompass those of Hephaistos and that portion of the mysteries enshrined in Hygiea, health. He represents a new kind of skilled hero-saviour, who had to be sacrificed as all sun-kings before him to be mythically acceptable. This time it was not by a titan but by Zeus (unless Zeus is considered a titan at this point). He represents a victory of light. However great his skills though, they cannot be allowed to destroy the balance, the cosmic metis of life and death. As Hephaistos had been an aspect of the rule of Hera, Asklepeios has as his partner Hygiea, an offshoot of Hera-Demeter. We therefore find in the architecture of his cult those signs which were part of Hephaistos' skills. They are the signs of bronze working. We have already met them as a feature of the Cyclopes, the one eye tattooed on their forehead giving rise to the legend. Concentric circles can be constructed only by the compass, which was part of the bronze workers' mysteries. Asklepeios inherited the tholos, which is the three dimensional sublimation in architecture of concentricity. Only Thymele has its labyrinth component stated. That also has Cyclopean ancestry. Asklepeios is part of ancestor worship inherent in Hephaistos.²⁵ Greek and Hellenistic religion also derived from Mazdaism (Zoroastrianism) the belief that stars were metals.

The tombs of kings are their key to the Isles of the Blessed, the Elysian Fields, and their guarantee of status "there". Labyrinth is a sign of that key [85]. Possession of the key was possession of high ancestry. Hades was the invisible world.²⁶ Spatially the Isles of the Blessed were initially antipodean, and access to them was through the earth. Gilgamesh's travail through the dark mountain is this journey. In this probably lies the sacred nature of caves noted by Dietrich:

The cave, by position or nature, was sacred in itself and did not acquire sanctity through human occupation The origin of this sanctity, and the sacred cave was not confined to Crete, can only be guessed at: one might suppose that the cave was the natural habitat of a Nature spirit like the Nymphs who in Greek mythology haunted such abodes. But the rich finds of cultic remains, which suggest that caves were the scene of different types of ritual, seem to indicate that the Greek idea was no more than a memory of a small part of more important and broader religious aspects. A quite

²⁵. Whose saviour status makes a clear precedent for the Judeo-Christian Jesus, in that he emerged from "there" to bring his skills to humanity.

²⁶. Its existence as a defined cosmic zone was not doubted. Invisibility was caused by absence of light, that is, no intelligence, emulated in this, and spatially, by the crypt of Thymele.



Flame - reference to Cyclopaean autochthony via Hephaistos as apotheosised metal smith.

Cone - male dynamic principle stating centrality/upward verticality

Peripteros - Dorian system, interchange between external landscapes & internal enclosed Landscapes; male shield; Ionic order = Man.

Drum - chthonic Landscape; female body of the earth/goddess;

Internal colonnade - early "Corinthian" order; the grove within, like those placed in temples of Athene; inner Landscape; semiotic boundary (see "Ritual Concentricities" fire rites.

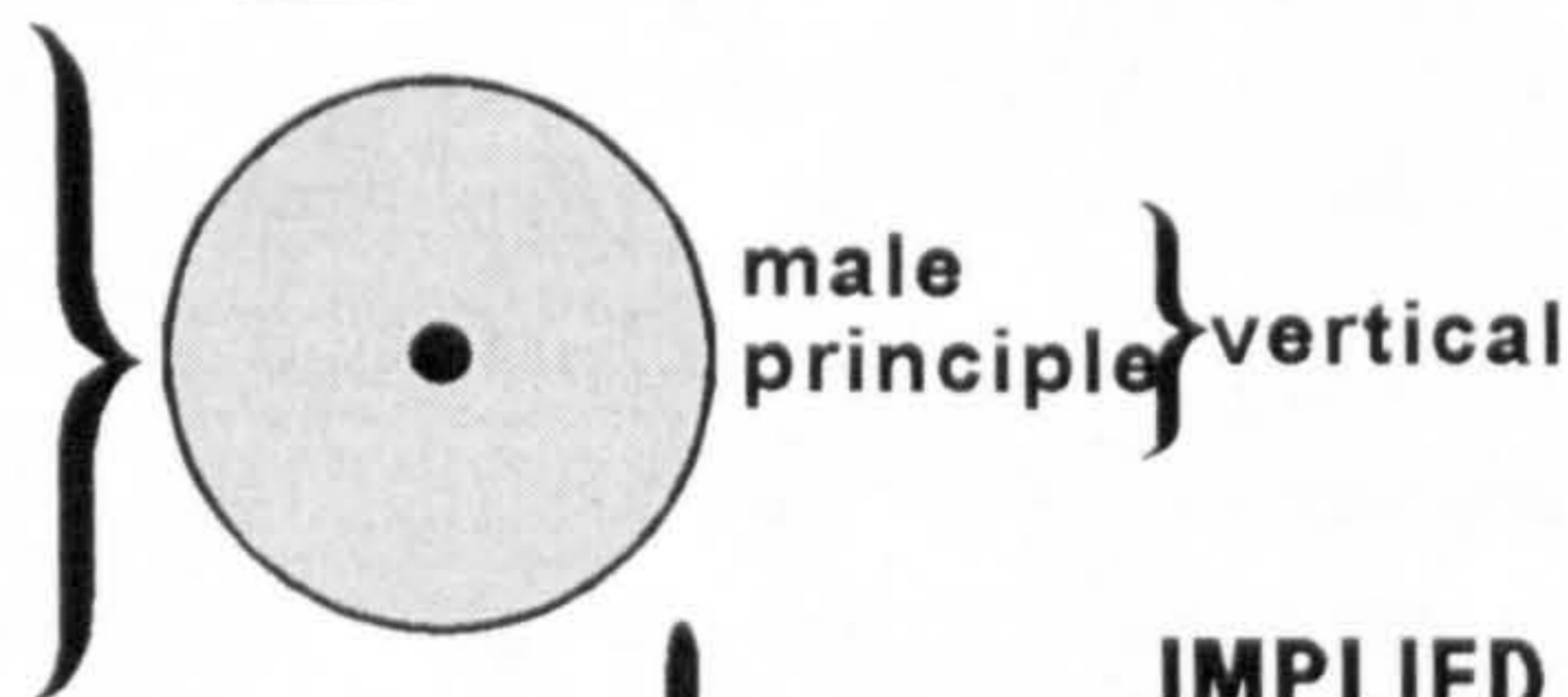
Floor plane - membrane of sacred earth surface; hymen of goddess; like painting the body, the patterns of rite are its signifiers; illusionistic pattern liquifies it.

Hole - mundus; the place of transmigrations between "here" & "there"; centrality of the templum; downward feminine into secret darkness.

Labyrinth - the space occupied by the ancestral spirits (daemons); apeiron where the guide is Hermes; totally internalised Landscape.

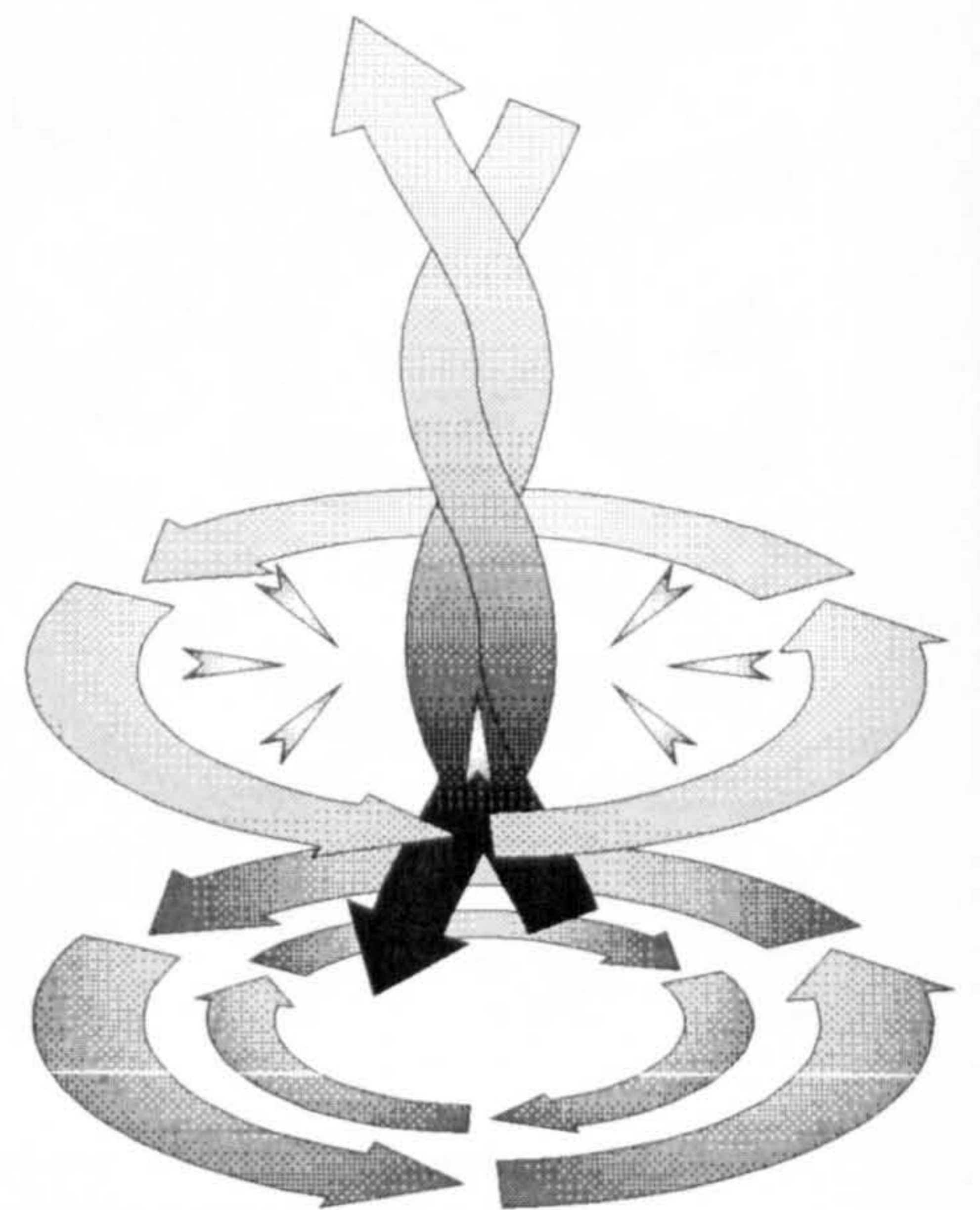
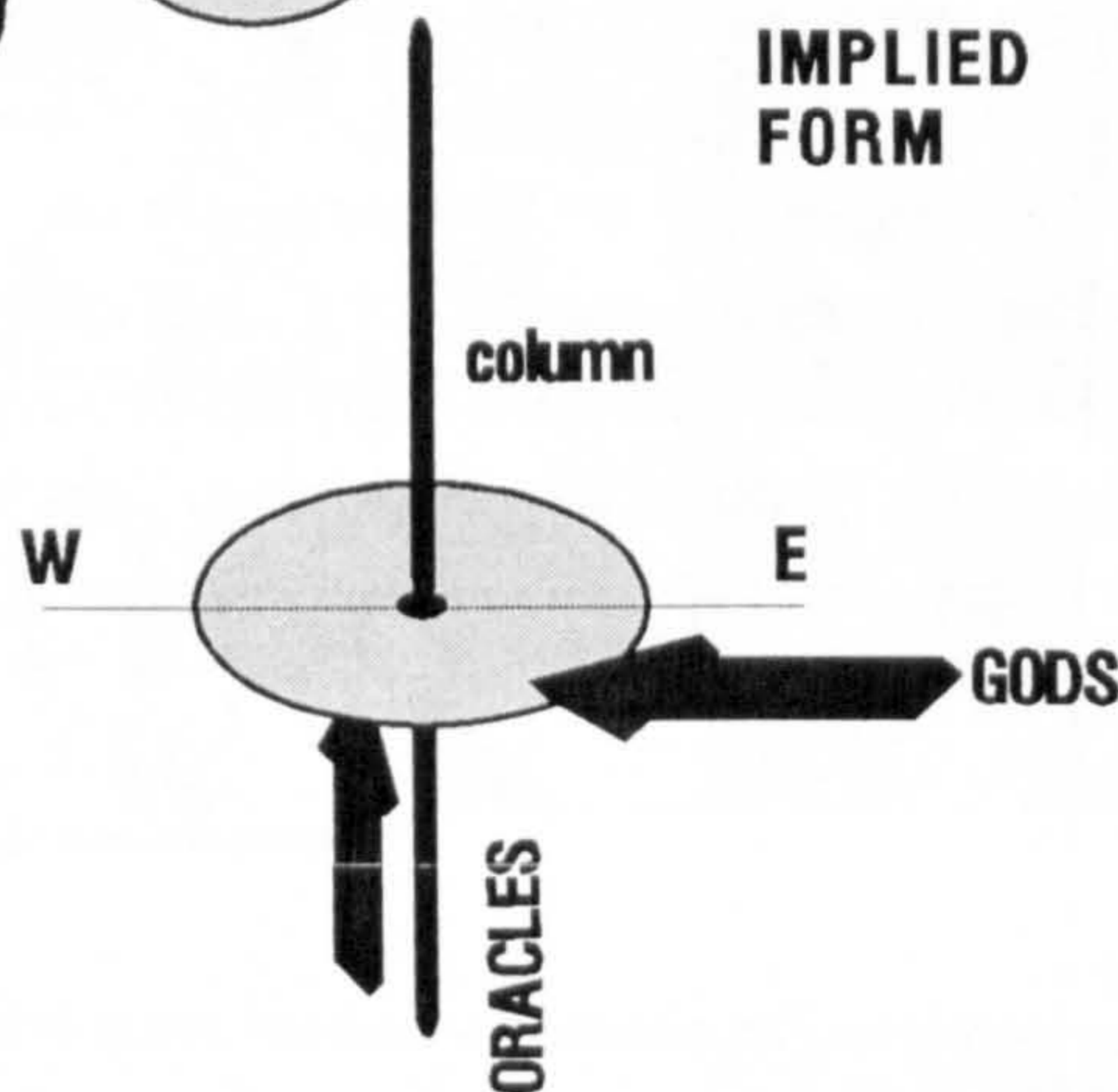
Initiate Space

dazes & hypnotises
trance inducing
central void
dark unknown, well
vertical hole



Signifying Space

dark labyrinth
of endless travel



IMPLIED DYNAMICS

Rykwert pp 149



Minotaur IVcBC



Apollo IIcBC



Poseidon IcBC

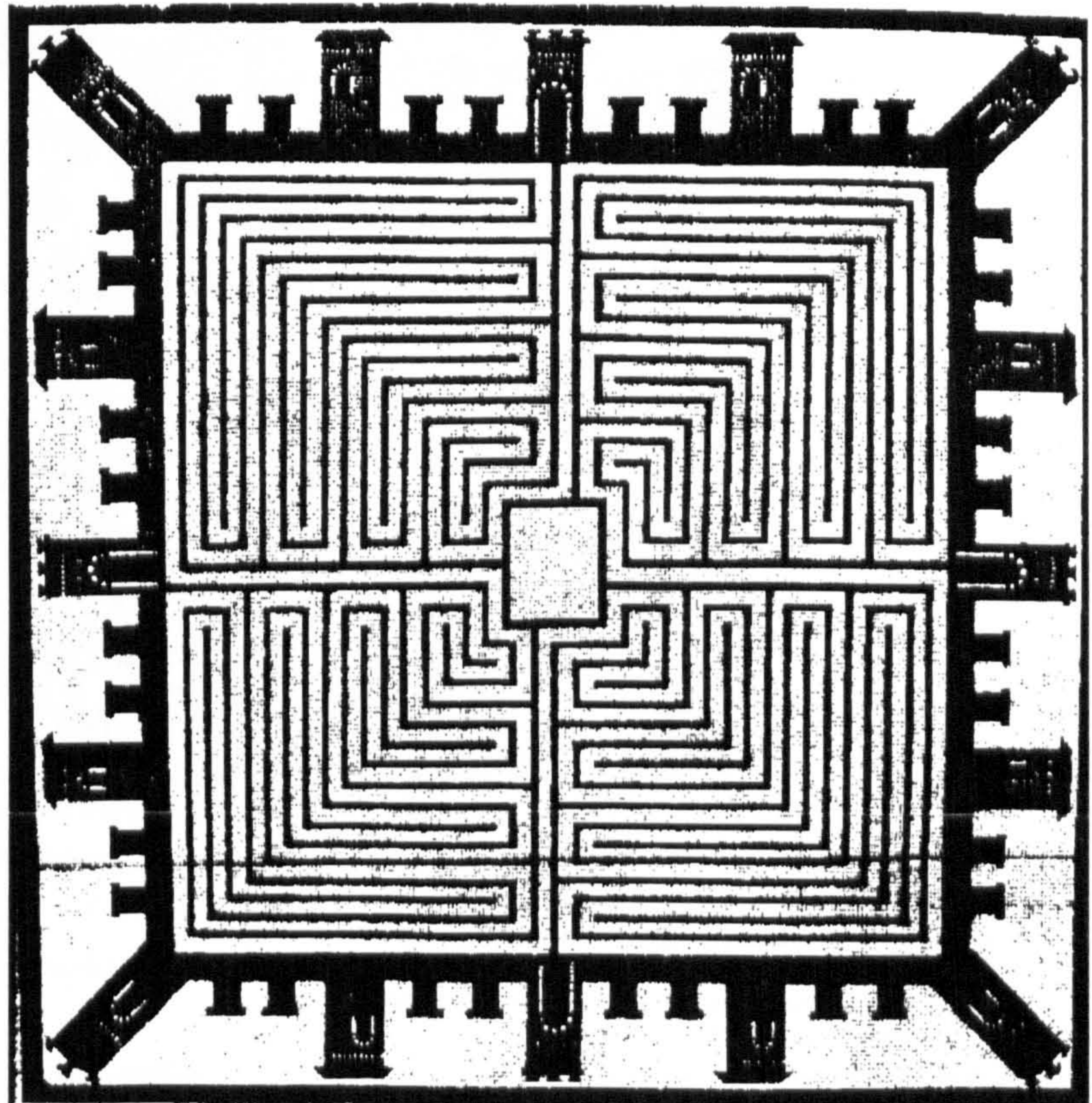


Athena IcBC

Minotaur is an urban labyrinth; Apollo's circular one might be either; Poseidon's must surely relate to aperas and apeiron, similar to Pan's; Pallas Athena's is again urban. All use templum as core, a fact acknowledged by Athena's owl (nous). There appears to be a process of generalisation, since that of the minotaur is quite quirky compared with the uniformity of the others

This Roman urban labyrinth is very complex but unelaborated by the kind of decorative curls which ensued and became knots

Rykwert pp 142



Roman floor mosaic of fortified labyrinth

The labyrinth component



Gothein fig 51

Symbolic images with these components occur on votive offerings in Cretan caves from early Minoan times. They depict a Goddess and Sacred king, and link the symbolism of tholos with that of cave, labyrinth & sacred tree, though it is convoluted.

Tholos and sacred tree

*general connection with Nature seems certain, yet to define in detail the features of such a nature cult is difficult ...*²⁷

He goes on to describe and analyse a votive tablet found in a cave [86]:

*A probable clue to the nature of the cult practised there comes from a Late Minoan 1 bronze votive tablet found in a cave and depicting on the right a worshipper, a tree in the centre, and on the left a pair of horns of consecration with a bough, which has a bird perched on the top, planted in the middle. The scene is fairly familiar from Minoan gems and shows, by its central position, the sacredness of the tree which was perhaps representative of a deity.*²⁸

This scene, he suggests, connects with stalagmitic goddess worship in these caves but admits that it is not open to proof. The tholos at Delphi, with its birds perched on the roof, being underground and ornate, might bear out his idea. It is undoubtedly early in origin, perhaps an archetype, being made by Hephaistos, was part of Minoan cult, and would represent the highest skills of the bronze worker, then ascendant, in the highest, politically most prominent place. Like Dietrich's theory, this is not open to proof, but adds some thoughts. It also makes sense of the subsequent importance of tholoi, and in particular the elaborate procedures of Thymele. Concentricity is also suggested by prominent stalagmites within a cave space. By way of explanation, if any is needed, Minoan goddess religions were aniconic and used these growths, set apart within low enclosures, as their focus in cave rituals. Votive offerings, by contrast, were images of some kind, either of the goddess or scenes such as that described by Dietrich. Here again is a sort of precedent for the central preserve of Lathuresa and Thymele.

Caves were the sites of two kinds of epiphany. Firstly goddesses "appeared" there. That is the symbolism of the birds on the branch in the votive plaque and probably the birds on Hephaistos' Delphic tholos. They were also places for the birth of the divine child, the child who was the consort of the nature goddess.²⁹ This idea is enshrined in the myth of Zeus, a deity modelled, like Alkinoos, on the ideal Homeric king.³⁰ Divine children were nurtured by the Great Goddess as earth mother and her fertility daemons, or nymphs. Their caves were very appropriate, as doors to the

²⁷. *Dietrich, B.C: The origins of Greek religion*. New York 1974. pp 81. Also *Frankfort, H: Before philosophy*. London 1949. pp 89. "In one of the ceremonies of kingship, the pharaoh encircled a field four times as a rite of conferring fertility upon the land. 'The Nile is at his service, and he opens its cavern to give life to Egypt.'"

²⁸. *Dietrich 1974*. pp 83

²⁹. Like Eros, the fruit and cause of love.

³⁰. *Seymour, T.D: Life in the Homeric age*. New York 1963. pp 78. *Lorimer, H.L: Homer and the monuments*. London 1950. States the Alkinoos episode is based on the legend of 1400BC Thebes.

underworld. They were an interface between the two spatial systems as conceived at the time. This too seems to have been a primary function of Thymele and almost certainly was of Delphi. Like caves, their hollows represent the body cavity of the goddess.

Later Pythagorean theory transferred the Isles of the Blessed, by all manner of analogy, to the sun and moon.³¹ His followers believed that the moon was ethereal, or Olympian earth, and that in the moon lay the Elysian fields to which these heroes went, in which ether the Renaissance found Orlando's wits. Platonism viewed this sublunary world as a dark cave where souls wandered awaiting the light.³² Concentric sun signs are, in this sense, points of arrival amongst signs of wandering [87] [88]. Sun was intelligence, the directive reason of the world, the location of logical centrality.³³ There is therefore a dichotomy within two prominent and important aspects of Greek religion, which was open to psychological exploitation.³⁴ The relationship between them is the logical dynamic of Thymele and probably also most other tholoi. At their base is the Landscape of death, their apex is the mount of transfiguration or transmigration [89]. Their aesthetics are skilfully gradated to make the descent in dream and darkness awesome and the morning radiant.³⁵ They are Landscapes of the inner mind made manifest. Subterranean tholoi of the Mycenaean type signify this dynamic by the passage with its elaborate wandering carvings [87]. The appurtenances of dead kings were placed at the epicentre above which the conical mound raised itself into the sky. Thymele was not a burial chamber, any more than Lathuresa was, but used ideologies and psychological transitions of such places to simulate death and resurrection and draw attention to the presence of the past.

In older religions the cave was a place of birth, procreation and death. In caves goddesses gave birth to sons, and in caves kings were sacrificed to their goddesses. Possession of such birthright was presented as a guarantee of immortality.³⁶ Hence the sacred nature of the Cyclopes. Their derivation from cave religions is well enshrined in myth, as is their dwelling in the outposts of Graeca magna, in Italy. Danae started the house of Argos from an indiscretion with Zeus who showered her with golden rain in an ancestral tholos. It represented claims to royal autochthony. We then have to ask apropos the Lathuresa tholos - not a cave but fully above ground and built on rock without chambers - whether

³¹. *Cumont, E. Afterlife in Roman paganism*. New York 1959. pp 79, 93, 96.

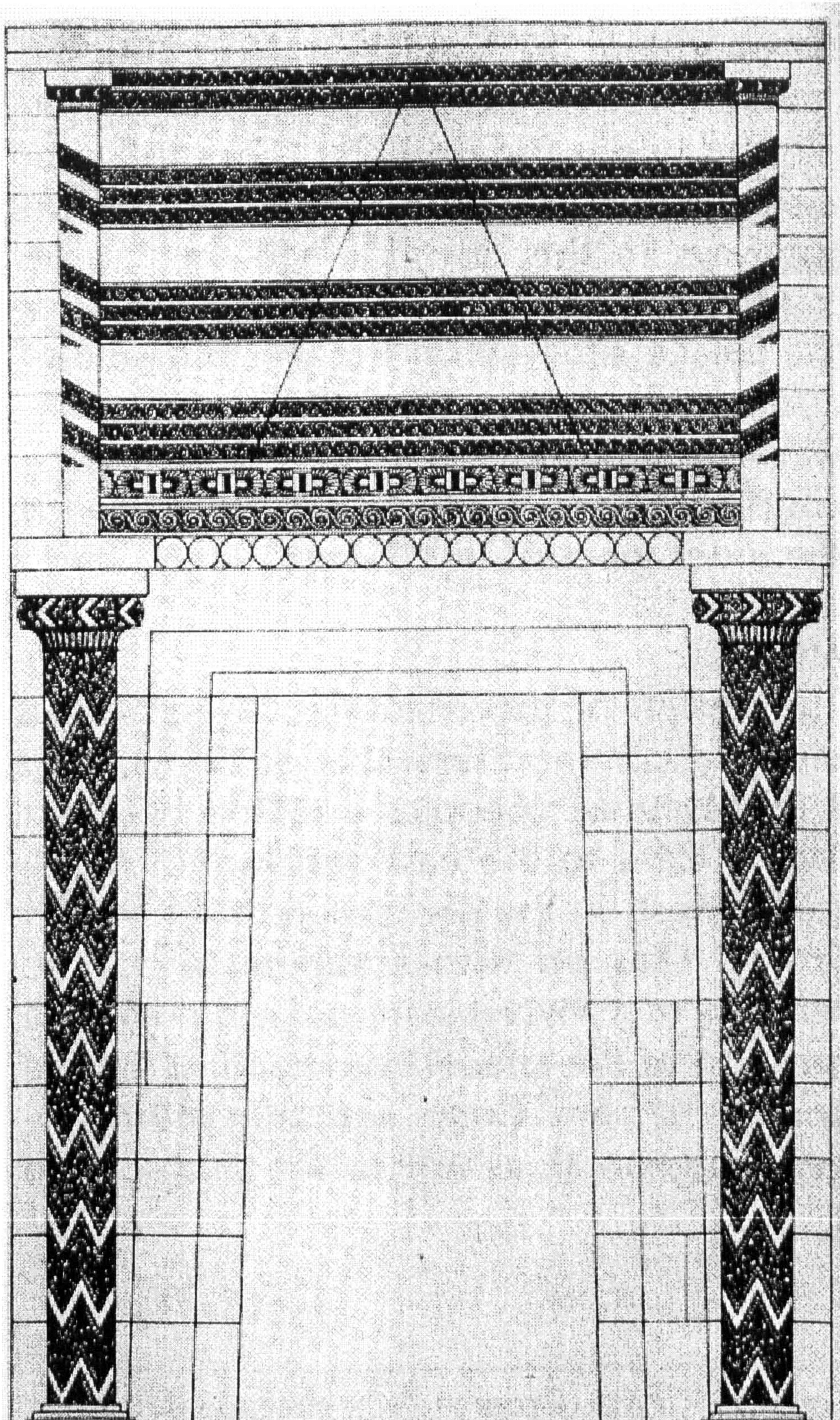
³². *Cumont 1959*. pp 99.

³³. *Cumont 1959*. pp 101.

³⁴. The word is not used in any pejorative sense.

³⁵. Aesthetics here in its proper sense of the poigic of perception.

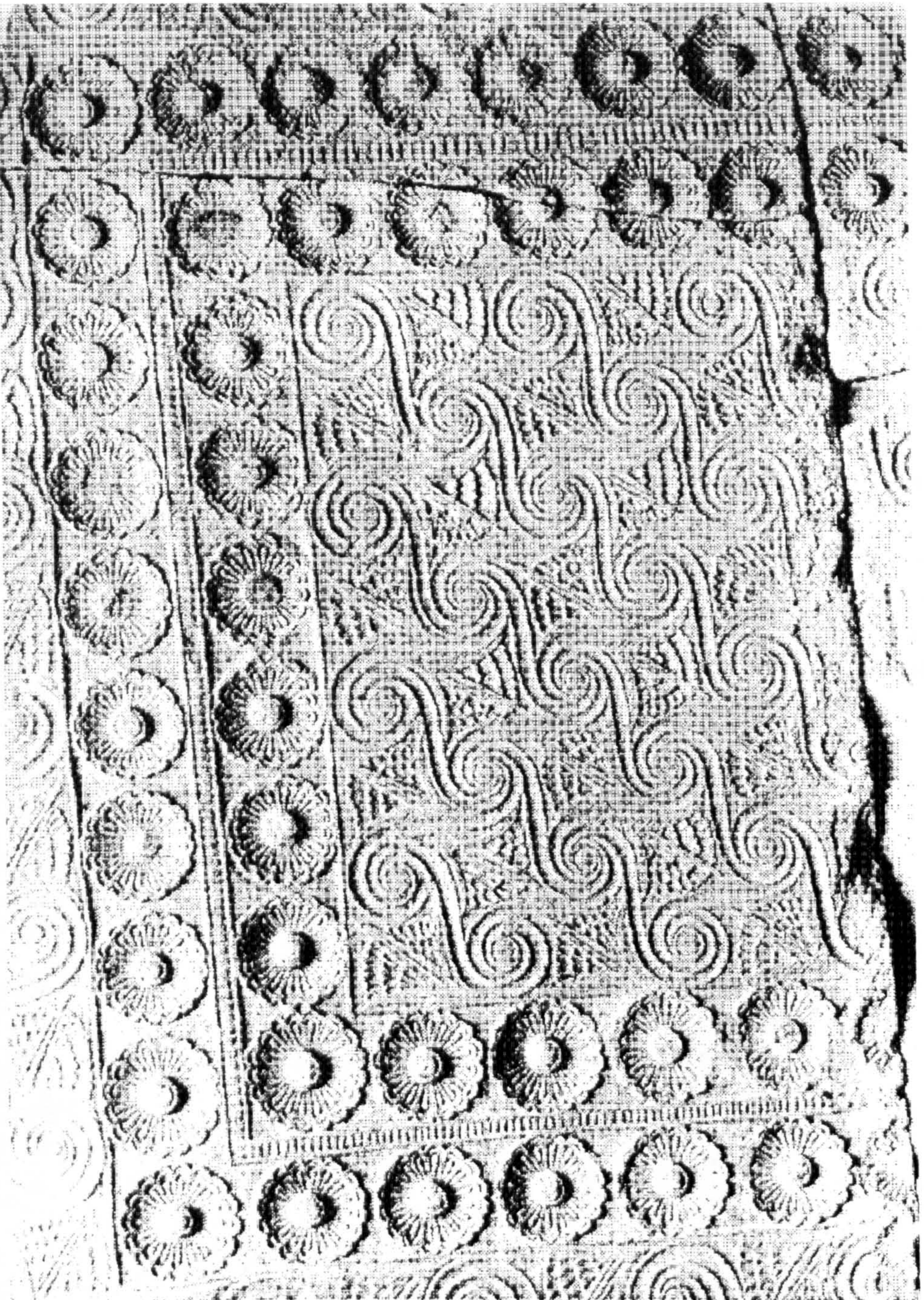
³⁶. *Cumont 1959*. pp 111.



Mycenae tholos, portal via Kossoff 1985

Similarity between the patterns on this portal and aboriginal Australian forms does not necessarily infer similar meanings. Their presence in this dromos though does suggest that they derive from ancestral devices which could well be signs of travel and orientation.

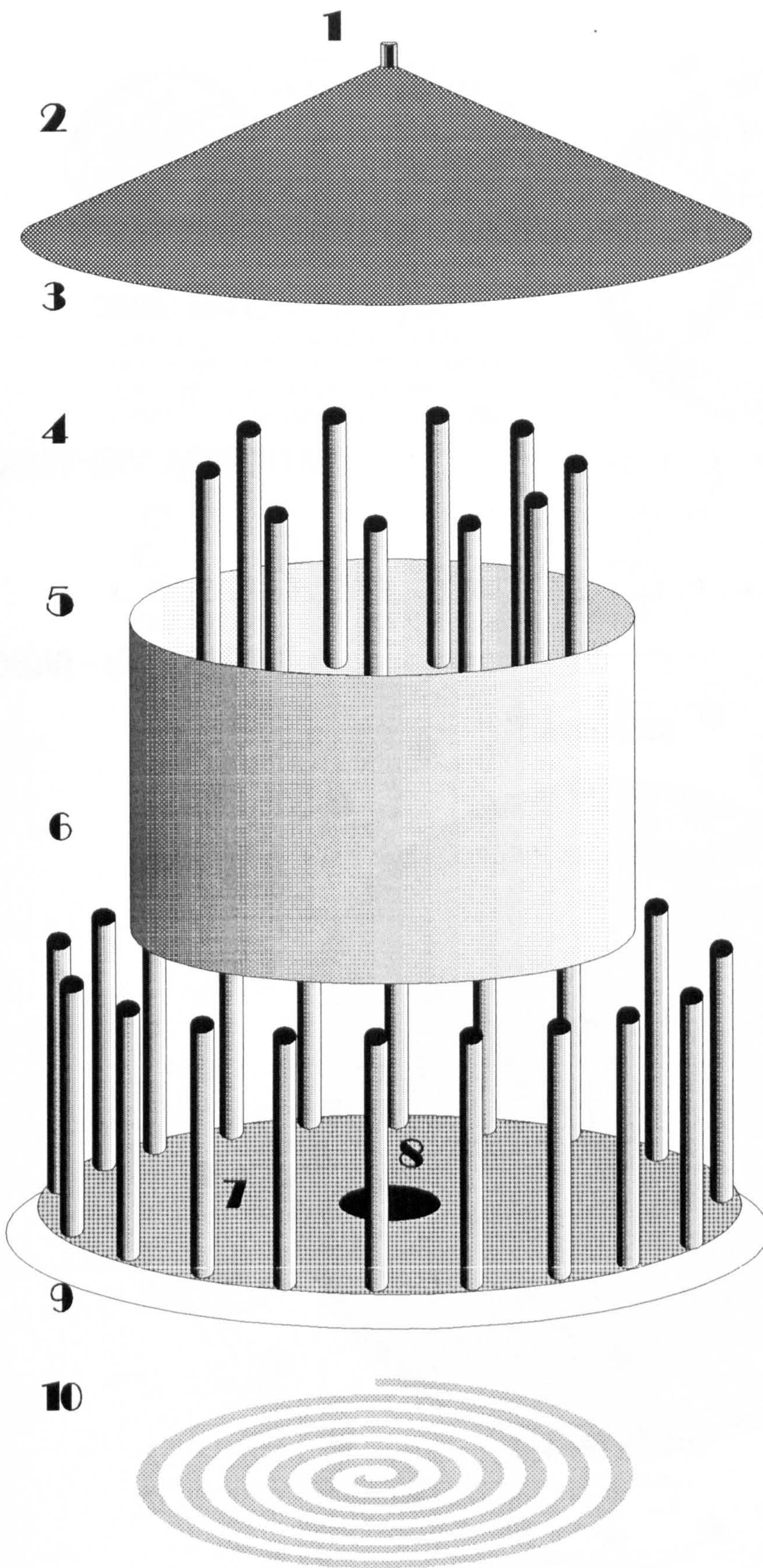
Signs of death & wandering



Lawrence Greek architecture # 61

Similar imagery to that of the doorway of the Great tholos at Mycenae is carved or moulded into the ceiling of this tholos at Orchomenus. The Ionian rosette is prominent, but the dominant pattern is undoubtedly the spiralling meander, here interspersed with a rather Egyptian looking papyrus or lotus form, ca 1300BC.

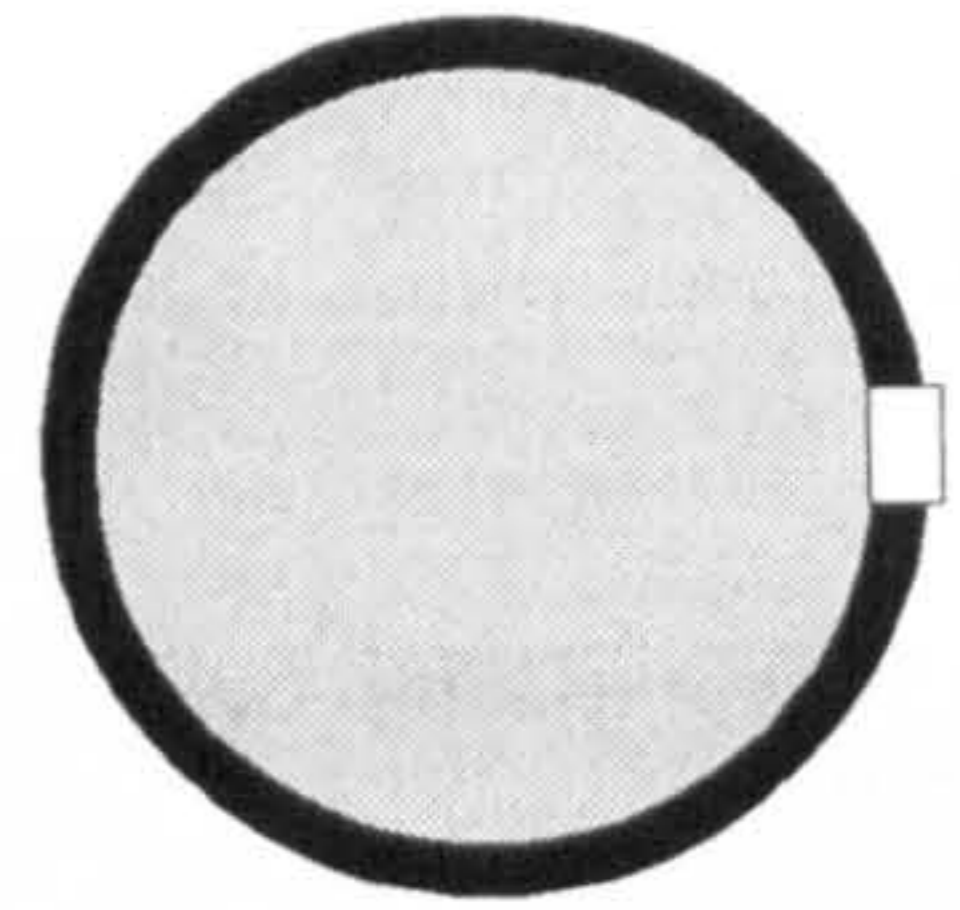
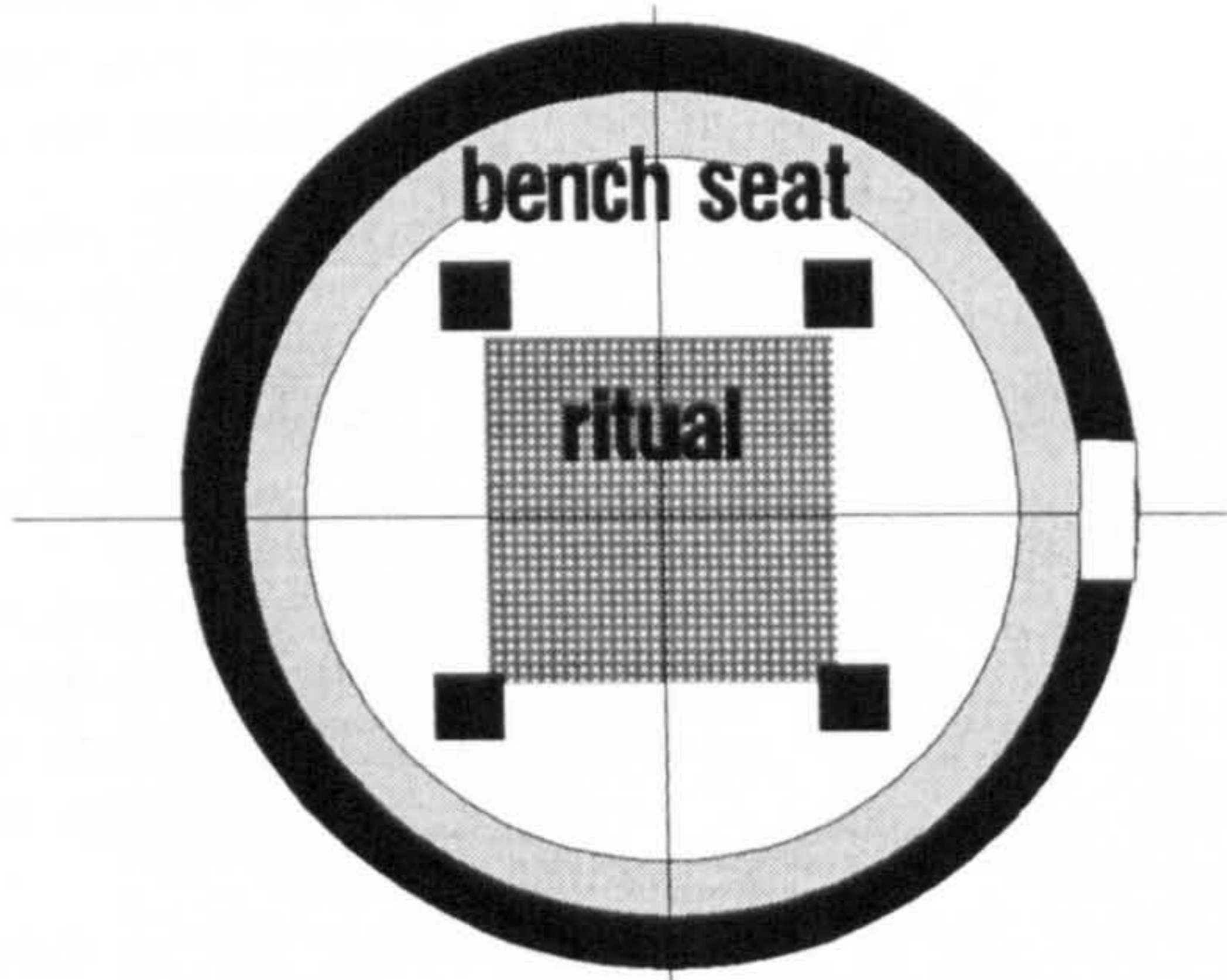
Tholoi - spaces for wanderer kings ?



- 1** finial: emblematic, cultural signing, connection with Apollonian ancestors
- 2** roof: earth mountain, goddess & male dynamic
- 3** eaves: spatial transitions, shield & shelter
- 4** inner colonnade: grove Apollonian, encircles the earth hole which is central to the design
- 5** cella: body, container, womb (relict goddess symbol); cyclical space; world apart - apart from world; return to source of life
- 6** outer peripteros: veil for body, gradation of space from Olympian to chthonian, culture-specific Dorian symbol, tomb-related, extends sacred space outwards into temenos, Doric order signs humans.
- 7** floor pattern: membrane, hymen of earth, Apollonian attributes (appropriations), passage & transition
- 8** hole: source, place of transitions, migration of energies, birth & death, death & rebirth
- 9** podium: raised level = sanctity, implies earth surface, signifies space beneath
- 10** labyrinth: landscape of death, there; wilderness, self-loss, entombment, womb & viscera, compressed infinity, ancient cultural power symbol

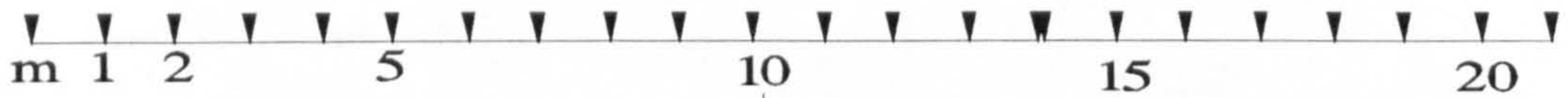
This diagram represents only the main components; the architecture consists of many more, each of which modulates the sense of the building. Every ornamented detail was a specific sign.

Thymele: Inner Space Capsule

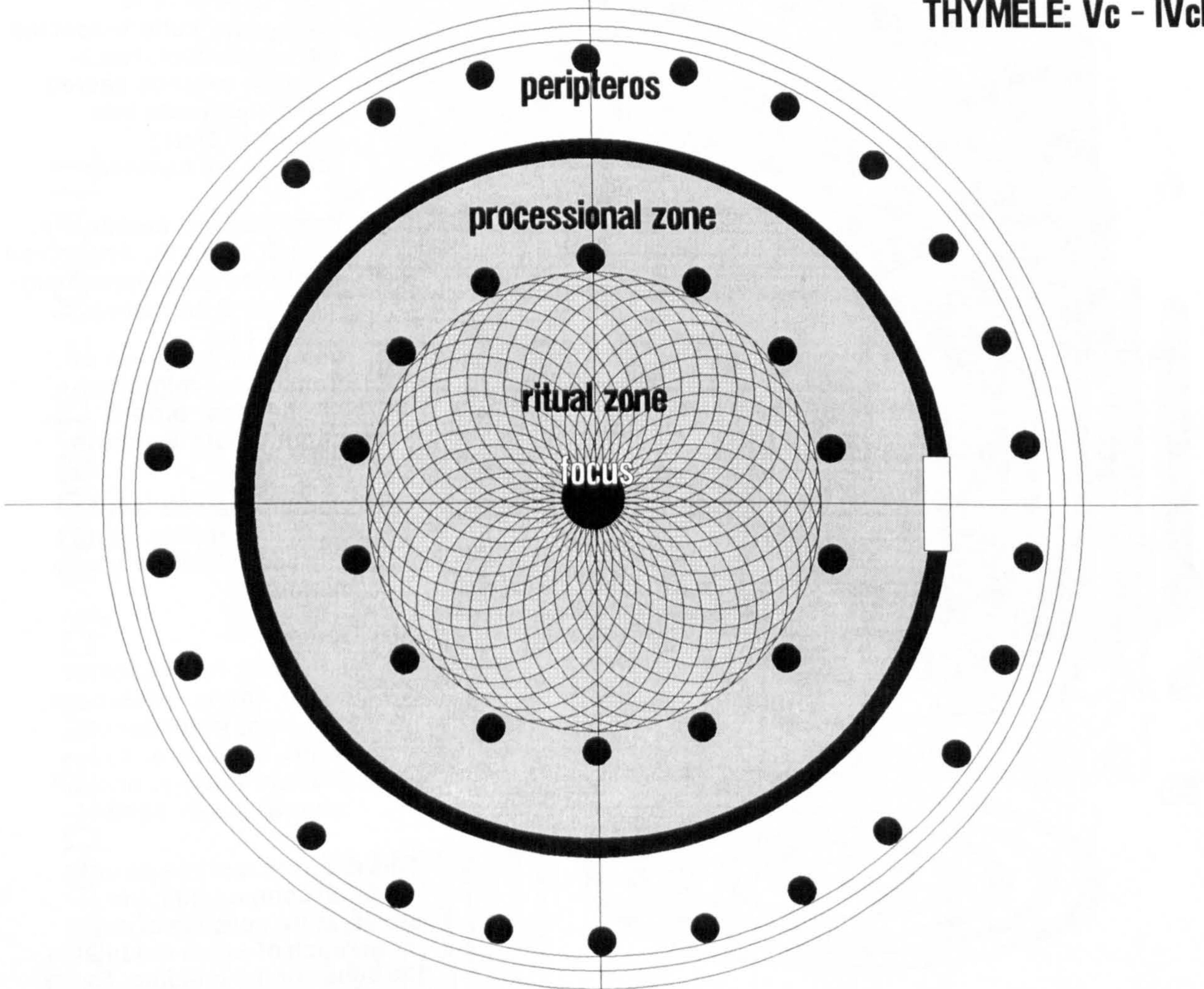


Paros : IVcBC

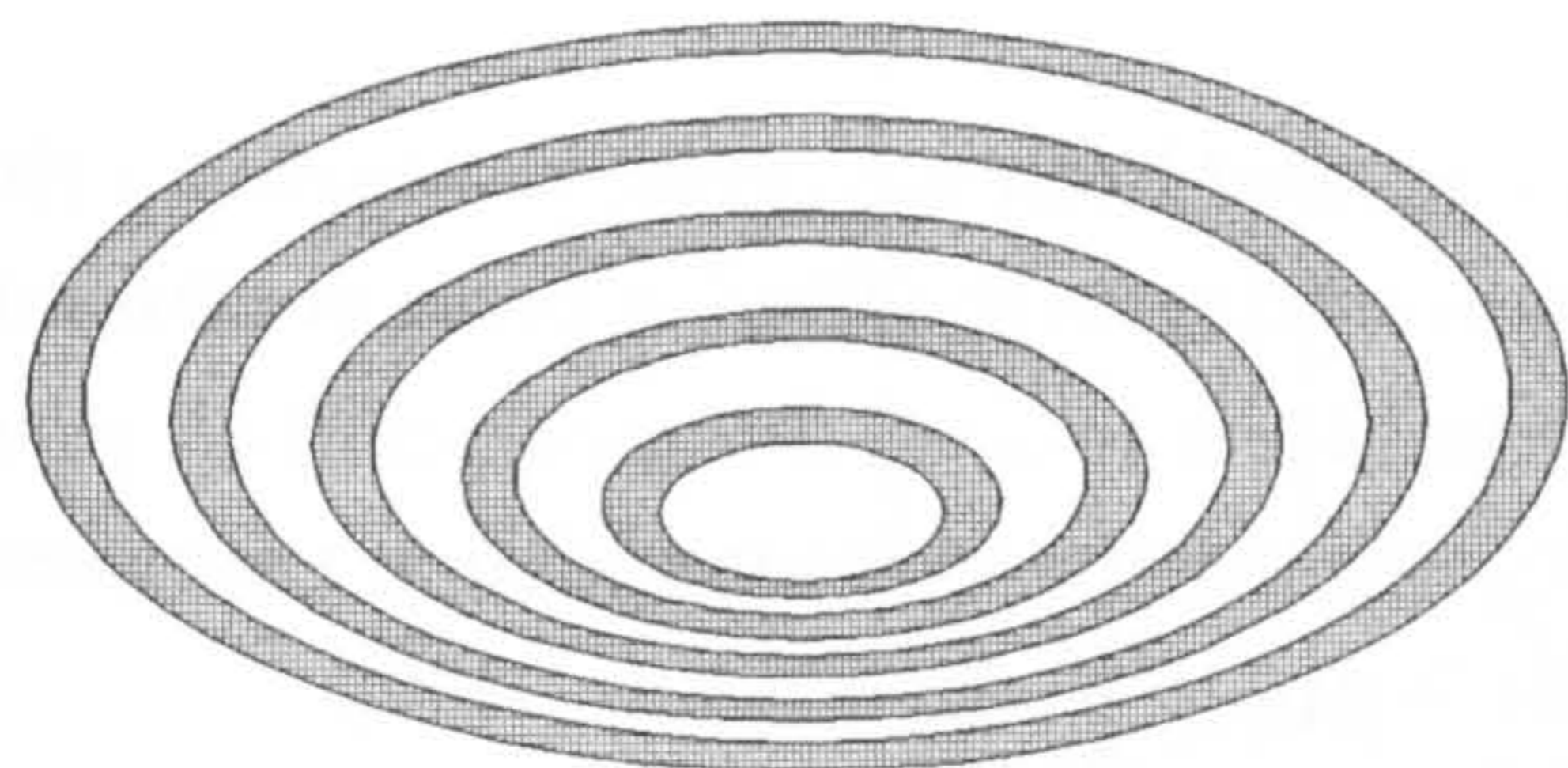
LATHURESA : VIIIc-VIIcBC



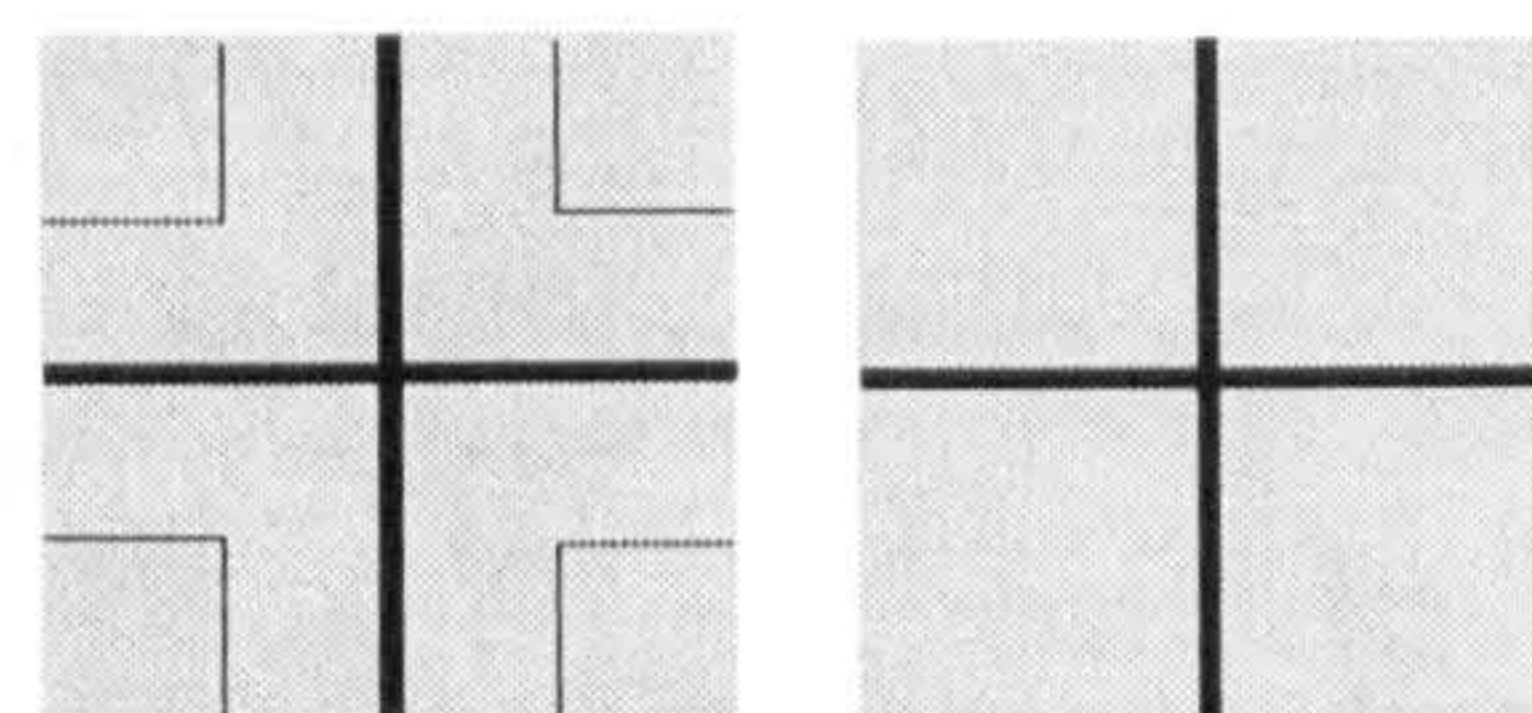
THYMELE: Vc - IVcBC



Tholoi: concentricities
spatial differentiations

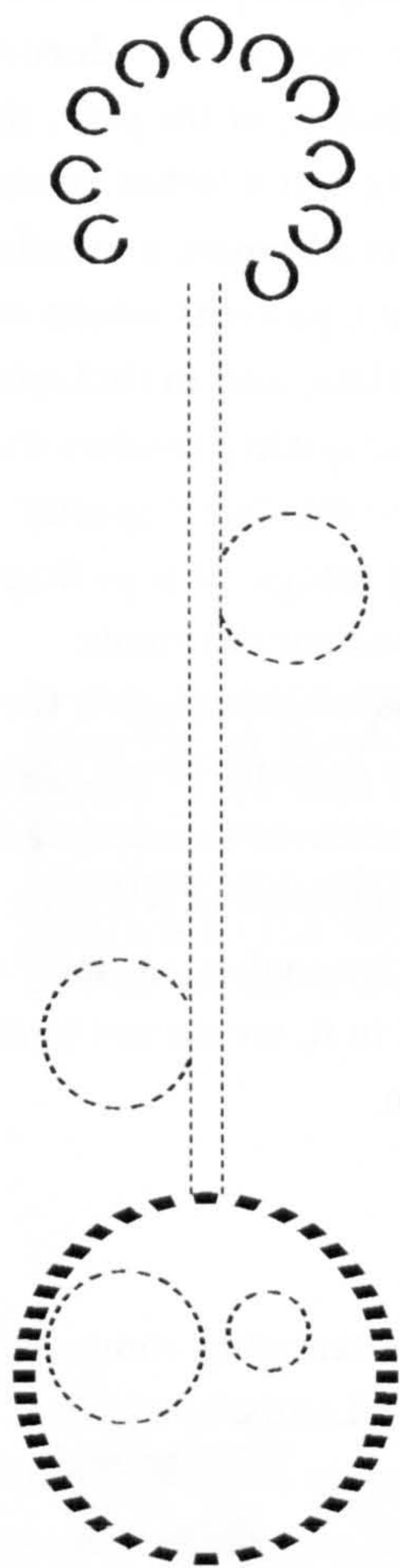


Australian shamanic ground painting, a pit which communicates with ancestral spirits through dance prostration (Halifax, J. Shaman. Lond 1982)



Templum types

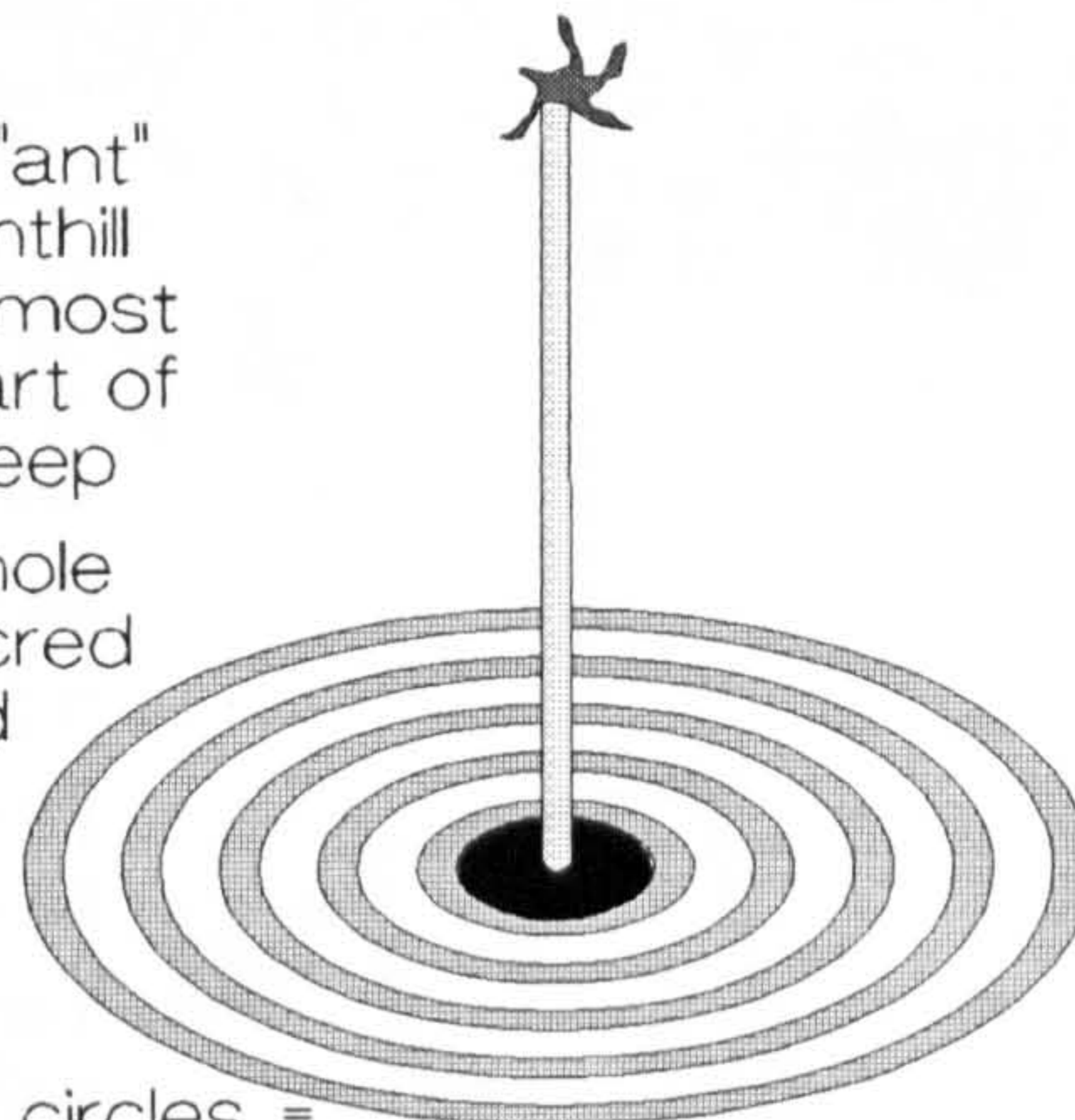
Australian rite of the flying ant. Simulates procreation and ancestral contacts. Watered hole is spirit place. Dancers crawl across concentric circles to enter the hole. (Guidoni 1982 pp 26 (text only)).



Linked spaces which resemble the Bit-akitu principle of wait followed by procession (= dance) and initiation (welcome/triumph) (Source Fraser, Primitive Settle. ff 16)

"baby"

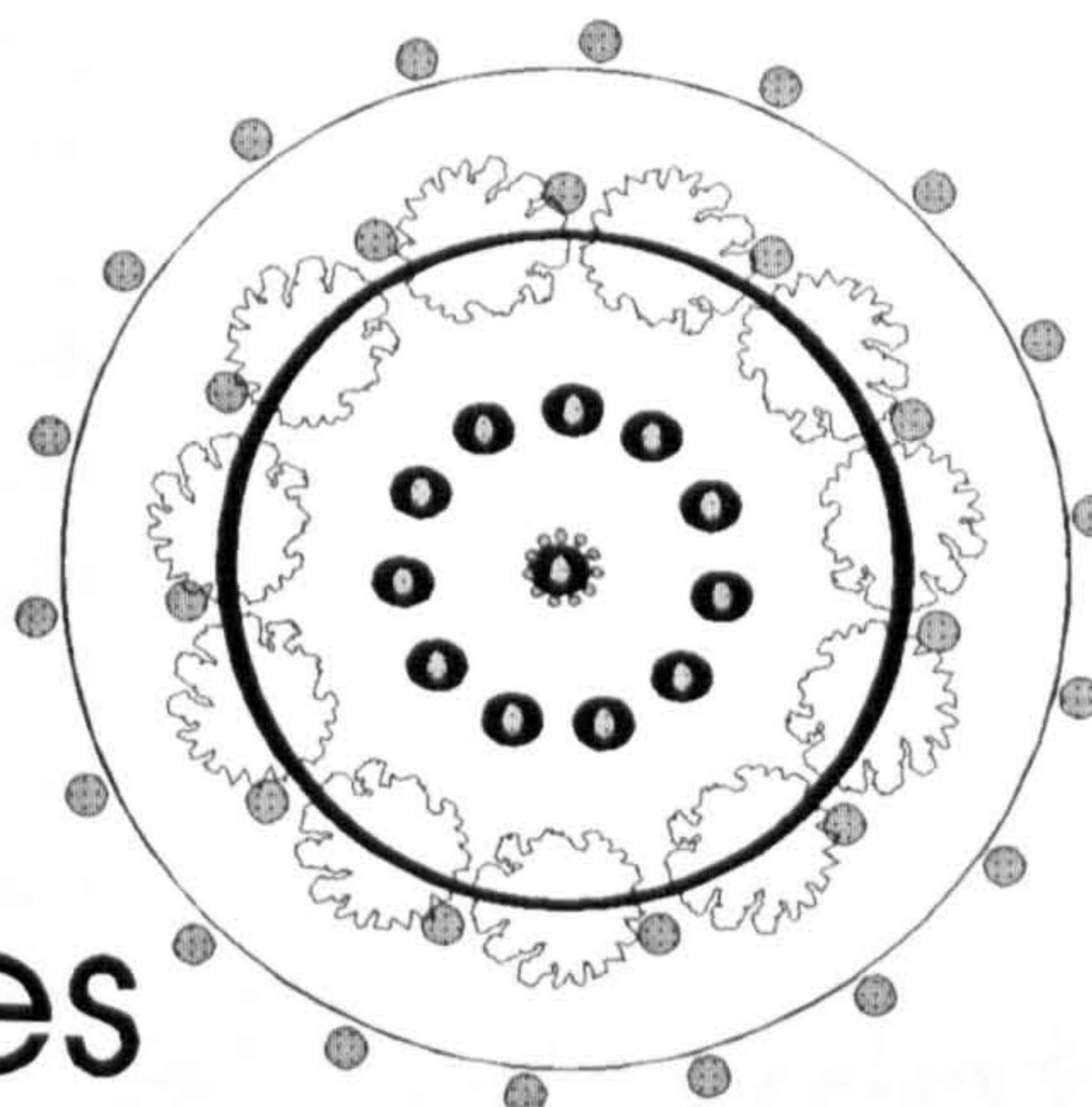
pole with "ant" spots = anthill links with most sacred part of hole, its deep watered hole made sacred with blood



concentric circles = degrees of distance (a measure of space and time)



A central fire enclosed by sticks; a ring of celebrants; an earthwork with a ring grove; outer circles of non-celebrant initiates (adapted from Rykwert 1976 pp 173) has striking associations with tholos form, particularly if linked with Hephaios (Vulcan = fire, metal forge)



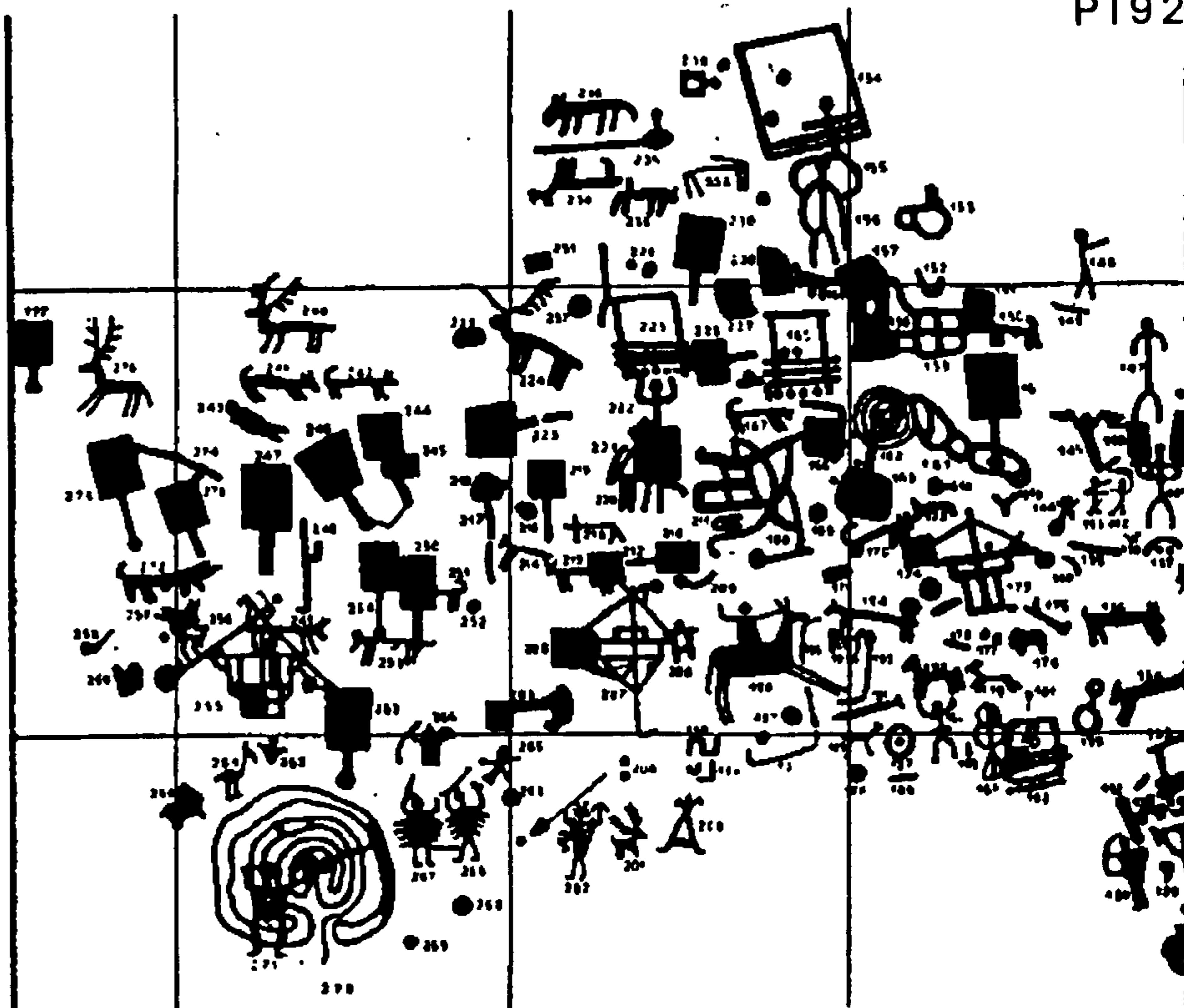
Ritual concentricities spatial consecrations

subterranean ancestor rites had been modified, producing a ritual **Attributive Space** empowered with the kind of force attributed to spiritualism. A cylindrical form focuses the energies of all present on to an epicentre. This epicentre was colonnaded at Lathuresa as it was at Thymele, permitting optical manipulation [90].

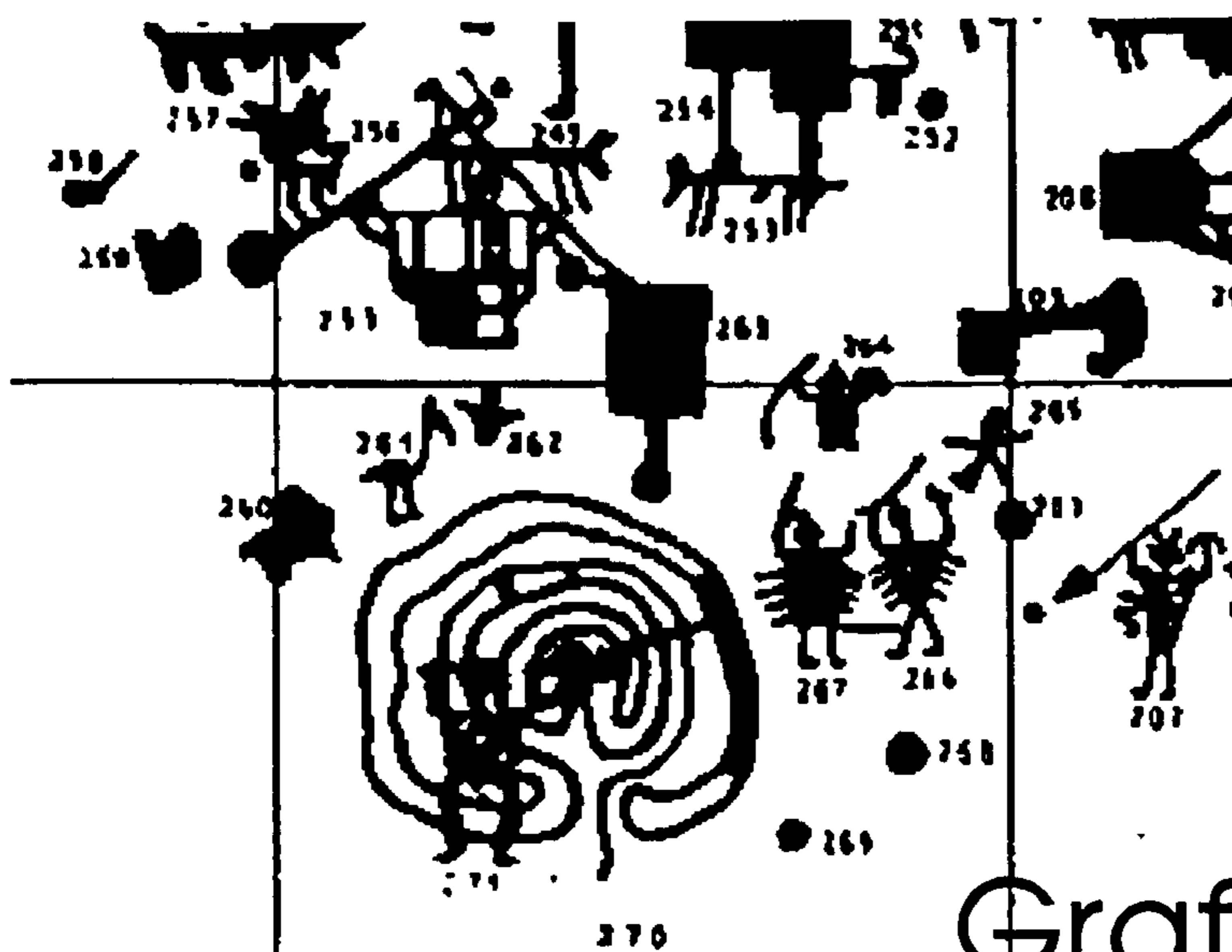
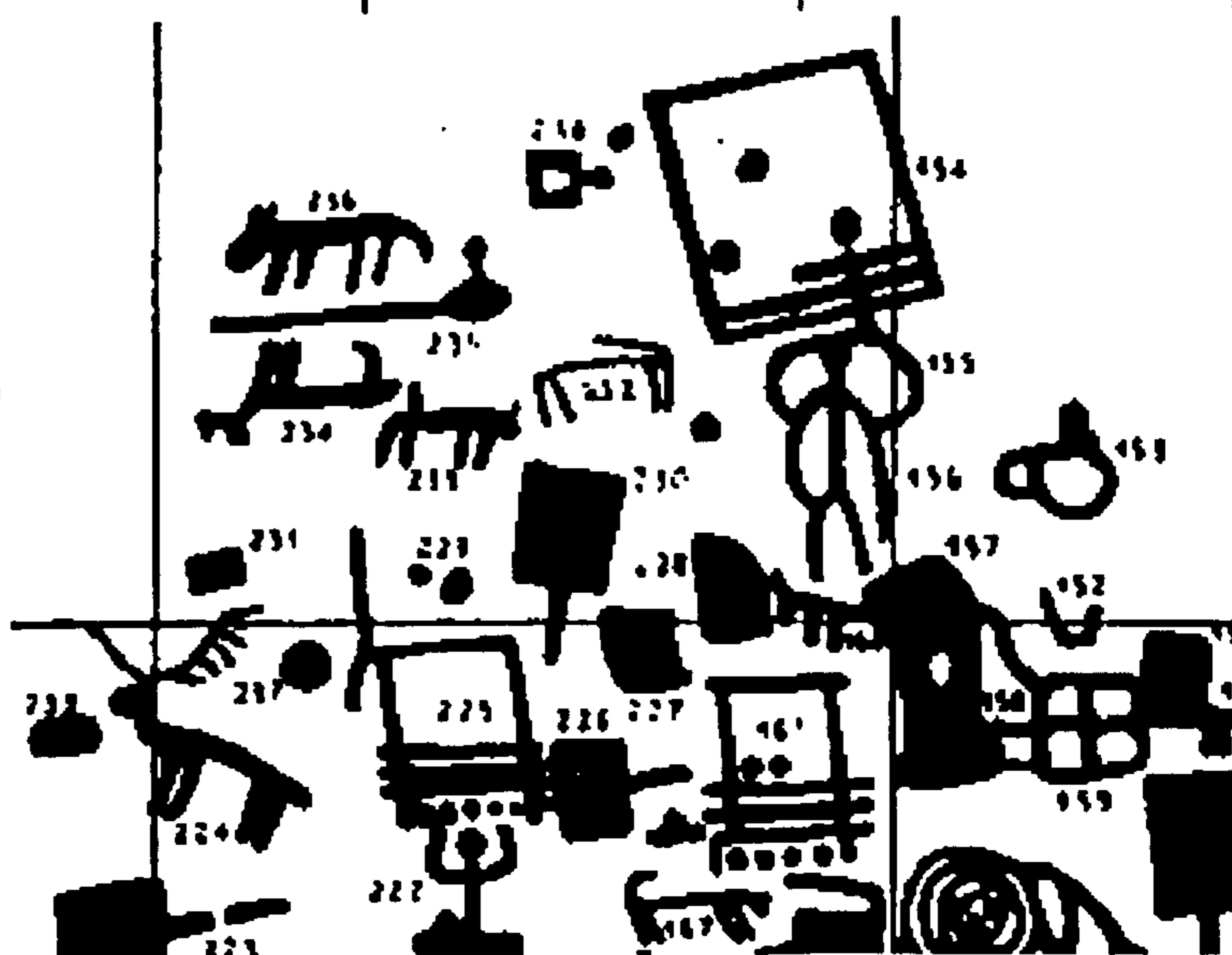
The form may be analysed in the following way [89]: The cylinder is the primary female component, a spatial abstraction of cave in its manifestation as the female body, the body of the goddess. The conical roof expresses the male principle, vertical dynamic. Capping with a "flame" is not dissimilar to the topping of a pole in the ant dance with a bloodroot plant [91]. The presence of that adornment at the apex perhaps signifies the absent structure of the pole, the vertical axis at the point of the cone, making of it another symbolic space. Set on its raised platform, the floor is a hymen, a membrane, which, at Thymele is set out with illusionistic patterns which negate its solidity. These patterns dissolve the surface, and in flickering light become insubstantial. Their astigmatic quality renders their position in space indefinite. At the centre of this "soft" spatial boundary is a hole, which represents many things. It is perhaps the vagina of the earth goddess, just as those ancient shamanic labyrinths were. Through it the spirits pass, and through it the suppliants pass into a nether world and are re-born, "born again Apollonians"! That is the tholos' representation of the surface of earth which theatre celebrates. Under the membrane is a dark labyrinth, whose symmetry and concentricity confuses utterly any relic of visual perception. What happened in it, we do not know, alas! It is the spatial abstraction of oblivion.

Concentricities.

The concentric nature of the tholos makes interesting comparison with surviving concepts of abstract space in Landscape [91]. Concentricity associated with ancestor worship and tribal power is still used in rites of settlement founding and planning where social structures are headed by tribal chiefs. Its medium is dance and chant, mainly dance with hypnotic accompaniment. It is a male domain. Once established, its semiotic tends to be inviolable. Geometric aspects signify centrality in the settlement, boundaries, distances, and tribal rights of passage through surrounding landscapes. They guide the originating tribe and protect their space from hostile intrusion. Like all semiotic devices, linguistic or verbal, they are arcane, identifying intruders or impostors who do not know its meanings. Aboriginal Australian social organisation in particular, used complex sign groups in a form of land management where different groups shared territorial rights in some form or



In this ancient cave drawing the labyrinth is involved in a crane dance. This was the dance of Theseus & Ariadne at Delos. The labyrinth occupies a position relative to the settlement similar to that of early Greek tholoi.



Graffiti labyrinths

other. This is the element in labyrinth which Ariadne subverts for Theseus.

Most are shamanic societies. Similarities exist to Anatolian hunt rites, and aspects of the vulva-labyrinth signs of those ancient practices are shared in their signs [92]. In these tribal signs centrality of the individual is supplanted by that of the tribe. This is also part of the significance of the templum. Signs are frequently concentric or spiral circles traced in earth. The Egyptian hieroglyph for city is circular. The multiplicity of lines in its crossing signifies many streets, an ordered urban labyrinth. To reach the centre of these circular earth platforms, which is either a water-hole or a pole in a watered hole, the dancer emulates a snake tracing a winding path to the centre and back again across its "ripple" boundaries. Great trouble is taken to construct the circles. They are not mere grubbings in earth. A sign of shaman influence if not domination is the representation of blood. Their geometry relates to divination, of seeking and finding underground, that is, pure water, and navigating using the sacred rod. Similar devices are used in graphic signs which mark itineraries, watercourses, water holes and sacred sites. Landscapes are constructed in miniature, in which heaps of earth represent rocks and hills and hollows water holes.

The sacred pole is an assertion of masculinity, not only in the direct sense of a vertical object, but in more abstract symbolism. Like the solitary column in Greek Landscapes it is a Jacob's ladder, the way between two "theres", subterranean and celestial. Much other symbolism is contained which is not directly relevant to the present discussion, but is to do with tribal well being. Extended to the level of a widespread culture this does not differ so very much from the purposes of an Asklepeion.

The territory marked out for the performance of this rite is not conceived in present time (real time in modern terminology). It is abstract historical space, the territory of the ancestors in the dream-time. Only the path across, which each participant has to follow, is in real time. Time is represented by spatial devices, and space by temporal passage. The water hole is the place where the greatest concentration of vital spirits congregates. These ancestral spirits have diverse powers connected with fertility and knowledge. The belief is that persons are linked to their place of conception, not their place of birth.³⁷ We can see this as an element in Greek ancestor myth too, in, for example the seduction of Danae in the tholos. Events are renewed by their ceremonies. Each ceremony repeats

³⁷. This indicates tribal fertility rites, probably resembling the Sumerian garden rites, associated with waterholes and orgiastic practices. The hole thus becomes a two way transfer place.

faithfully the legend of the hero ancestor's exploits. Special areas are set aside for the involvement of certain women. These spirits can pass into the uterus, or so it is believed. Ancient heroes, the ancestors, can produce present offspring through rite, renewing their presence and with it tribal power. This too can be read into the Greek myths where Zeus, the archetypal hero-king, goes around spreading his seed with great abandon amongst selected mortals. Again attention is drawn in context to the myth of Danae. The golden rain is often interpreted as water, but could as well refer to semen in a tribal ritual. Frazer and Graves draw attention to the custom of the king (chief) consummating every marriage before the groom in some Greek societies as of right. Is the elaborate psychodrama of the tholos a relic? Probably, when one considers that its presence was also connected with fertility in women in the presence of special powers.

In the rite of the flying ant, a pole is placed in a watered hole at the centre of concentric rings. The rings are of coloured down, red and white alternating. A tuft of bloodroot plant, signifying a baby at birth, is placed at the top of the pole, an inducement to the ancestral spirits to procreate. The sacred centre is entered in turn by the male dancers, an enactment of procreation, ending the dance. The pole marks the deepest, most sacred part of the hole. After the intensity of the dance of entry, the dance of return is for unwinding, for a return to normality. This centre too, is the specific place in the tribal territory which represents contact with the dream time. An equivalent in Middle Eastern mythologies is the Phoenician navel of the earth (Gaia) where Uranus died.³⁸

Pure water produced by the mystery of the divining rod, is as essential to the functioning of a city as it is to the efforts of Asklepeios and Hygiea. The divining rod can also trace invisible underground watercourses during periods of aridity, essential to survival and continuity. Somewhere in the interchange of rites of passage, there has surely been preservation of something more ancient even than the tholos. Divination and tribal centrality are equally part of the psychology of both cultures.

In South Africa, the "bushmen", for whom the chief's functions are the location of tribal food, water and choice of campsite, he chooses a suitable tree as its centre. Immediately adjacent is the sacred fire. Tribal power structures are reflected by the distance a family or person is situated from the tree. It is a concentric organisation. The tree is the power of nature, the fire represents the complementary power of human artifice. Its symbolic content is very close to that

³⁸. *Dietrich 1974*, pp 50.

embodied in Thymele. Hephaistos is the fire, and the Corinthian order of the internal colonnade is the tree. The first architecture was not buildings, but these Landscapes of manipulation.

Thymele is thought by some to have supported a sacred python in its concentricity. Asklepeios borrowed Hermes' symbol of the double helix snake and his labyrinth. Hermes' labyrinth was his spatial code. Labyrinth is an expression of aporia, providing a line which leads out of it, a key, a poros.³⁹ Possessing poros is possessing almost divine skills but not divinity, the ultimate metis. Daedalus and Hephaistos are one and the same mythic figure from different zones. Daedalus and labyrinth are virtually synonymous. It was Daedalus' tribal labyrinth which Ariadne subverted. The coiled python is an almost universal symbol of eternity and makes a circle.

Hephaistos-Daedalus-Asklepeios are all sacrificed in the pursuit of their skills, for Icarus is also a manifestation of Daedalus, and being of the moon goddess was brought down by his flaming sun tanist. Hephaistos suffered injury as well as similar indignity at the hands of the almighty usurper who threw him down from Olympus with such violence.⁴⁰ Despite all this, each made astonishing contributions to the culture we call Greek. As mythic figures they surpass even Achilles, and match their stable mate from the stud of Hera, Heracles in prowess. These are the figments which the poets created in the rise of Greekness to enshrine the qualities previously restricted to warriors. They also enshrine spatial methodologies which brought them to their greatness, the cultural space they inherited. To this their thinkers, poets using the new tool which became philosophy, gave form. From there it became encapsulated in the Landscape which we call architecture and was its greatness. Encapsulations in such Landscapes avoid problems inherent in linguistics.⁴¹

Dietrich writes:

Nothing can be gained by a fond belief in the original power of the Greeks to create from nothing a system of divinity and ritual with its attendant mythology what gave the Greek religion its strength was the ability ... to syncretise the beliefs of other peoples ... to shape such beliefs in fresh ways which resulted in the splendid form we find in the fifth century (BC).⁴²

³⁹. *Kofman, S: Comment s'en sortir?* Paris 1983.

⁴⁰. Daedalus as his own tanist Ikarus, Hephaistos, share this bolt-like fate, though one suffers injury rather than death, transitions from mortality to immortality.

⁴¹. *Broadbent, G: The deep structures of architecture.* Barcelona 1974. pp 126. "Any attempt to describe architecture in linguistic terms can only be achieved at the level of analogy, or more particularly, of metaphor ... buildings are not constructed from the elements of language ..."

⁴². *Dietrich, B.C: The origins of Greek mythology in the Mycenaean age.* New York 1974. pp 1.

Apollo, whose sanctuary Epidauros was, was an import. Even the name of the most sacred site, Olympus, is oriental, from Hurrian and Hittite languages (formed on Sumerian & Akkadian) meaning merely mountain.⁴³ Dietrich identifies many similar borrowings through linguistic analysis but cautions that the west never directly takes over oriental myth or epic. Greeks always "rendered more beautiful whatever they borrowed" (an interestingly partisan judgement of beauty). The process is familiar enough from the generic garden in Hebrew mythography.

Fragmentations.

Perhaps it started under late Hellenistic dynasties, but certainly by Roman times the group of functions of tholos which acted as its dynamo became detached from each other. It was perhaps partly as a result of the general popularisation and aggrandisement of religion under the empire. The mechanism of this could be seen in an exaggerated way in Poland during its subjection to totalitarian regimes. Religion tends to expand as an alternative and balance to political control.

"See how many steps lead up there to the high-raised temple of Quirinus! Once a single hearth was the brother's whole domain ... no one toiled to search out foreign gods, then, when the people hung on their inherited rites, trembling in awe."⁴⁴

Asklepeios' cult never lost its hold. Epidauros was so popular that it tenaciously survived savage Christian repressions until eventual Imperial suppression. It seems though that the complexity of thought required to comprehend Thymele was not to be repeated. On the other hand Thymele, judging from its structural remains, seems to have been unique. There was undoubtedly similar association with ancestor contact in other tholoi like Delphi, Thebes, Skias, Eritrea, and perhaps even the diminutive one at Paros - similar to that portrayed in the Oracle fresco. All were oracular, even the great Arsinoeion. It is doubtful that Philip considered his Olympian gift in quite that way. By Roman times we find the form separated into constituent parts. Hygiea had the pure water bit in the expansion of The Bath. Spring divination and the sacred stream went to another bit. Heroes' shrines seem to have been constructed in the model depicted in the Oracle fresco, and were considered oracular. They were not always a burial place, a reflection of Thymele's power, and were simple if elegant. Perhaps all tholoi were now thought equivalent and no longer needed elaborate

⁴³. *Dietrich 1974*, pp 45.

⁴⁴. *Propertius: Elegies*, 4.1.9-10, 17-18.

iconographical support in their details. It was sufficient to create a representative icon. Some elaborate tholoi were built in the provinces, notably Pergamon. Eventually their architecture came to be part of palace building, the emperor being assumed a hero, whence it readily adapted to aristocratic villas, which could also be palaces. The analogy is no different from naming Blenheim a palace, or extending the characteristics to Chatsworth. Which of its original uses were transferred during this attenuated process we can only surmise at present. The nymphaeum was certainly one of them, the temple of Venus another.

The belvedere, as it became, was a derivative of tholos. A peripteros without a cella it was the lavacrum domain of Aphrodite. Two routes lead from this back to the tholos. One is via Hera to the Great Goddess and cave ritual where trees within enclosures were part of the iconography. The other is via Hera to Hephaistos, who as a divine child was presumed born in a cave, and whose later consort was Aphrodite.⁴⁵ Consorts were often symbolically attached to "mothers", which identifies Aphrodite with aspects of Hera and This partnership must have something to do with the symbolism of the Delphic tholos (its birds). In return Hephaistos, and therefore perhaps Daedalus and Asklepeios and the whole labyrinthine concept, might provide an additional source for the concept of a formal "garden", an enclosure with a tree, which was the province of Aphrodite and her fertility goddess ancestors. Are we to expect that the Hellenistic tholos, such as Thymele, might have had as part of its precinctual space, a symbolic garden? The only real clue available is the planting scheme for the Hephaisteion, part of the Theseion at Athens. On the edge of the Acropolis, in the kind of position inhabited by tholoi, it is subjected to the panoramic backdrop across to Eleusis. It was enclosed within a grove whose proportions were carefully devised and controlled to enhance the peripteros of the magnificent temple and to proportion the surrounding space according to the relationship between it, its ceremonies, and the studied proportions of the architecture.

Along the way, Dionysos acquired a temple form which approximated that of tholoi of Asklepeios-Hephaistos-Hygia, sometimes cylindrical, sometimes polygonal. This we find in the Hellenistic work of Longus' quadripartite garden. But that was long after it had become absorbed into the palace along with the exedra. Dionysos' other temple is discussed in this context next.

⁴⁵. This is deconstructed to mean that the metal skills had been transferred from predominantly religious use to personal ornamentation.

The templum.

Constantinople's crowded spaces became conducive to symbolic compressions. Cloister is Landscape. Perhaps it is a garden. Like Roman Jupiter columns it is calendric pivoting about a centre. Its spatial devices give form to the festivals of days, weeks, and years.⁴⁶ Daily routine surrounds it. In the paradise arcade its occupants go about their meditative life. Central space is crossed only in procession. At its centre is a tholos or its substitute. It is focal, the presence of vertical forces, exchange between life, death and resurrection.

It also enabled the transition from hero to god; the process conferred apotheosis. This was the tholos painted in grandiloquent frescos of Second Style Pompeii, the space of conquered oriental potentates. The Lavacrum Agrippae conferred power over real space, however abstract, a different proposition from wall painting.

Column and tertastyle marked crossings in imperial routes. The principle embodied was also expressed in templum, a concept indigenous to Etruscans. The concept is set out by Joseph Rykwert in *The Idea of a Town*. It is an icon of mythic space. Like all myth it has secure basis in other aspects of reality. It celebrated human ingenuity, connecting orientation, centrality, and the transference of vertical forces between "there" below and "there" above. This derives from its association with mundus, the pit created at the centre of a sacred place (city), for which it stands symbolically.

Mundus was cave, interface between cosmic hemispheres [93]. Its symbolism resembles Thymele's labyrinth pit, with similar origins. Rykwert comments on the founding of Rome by digging a pit, and "*After whatever was to be deposited was put in, it was covered by a stone, and an altar was set beside it, and a fire lit on the altar ... this fire was the focus of the town.*"⁴⁷ There can be little doubt that common ground in tholos symbolism was ancestral unity, drawing attention to founding divination and establishing common semiotic. Templum stood for cosmic centre. Many of those contexts survive in other cultures (see Chapter 4 on *ta*).

Sumerian geometers laying out land for fields first discovered the principle. These geometers were part of a temple educated elite, a centralised urban power. The origins of quincuncial mysteries lie in

⁴⁶. This was extended by arcane Florentine churches into millennia in the XIVc. (*Gettings, F: The secret zodiac: the hidden art in Mediaeval astrology*, London 1987. A study S. Miniato al monte).

⁴⁷. Prometheus and Hephaistos associated with tholoi were ancestral fire bringers.

the identification of corners and power centre - "He who thinks and sustains the order of the universe."

Similar signs exist for city in Egyptian hieroglyphs. Its circular outer form is more related to the concept of mundus. The circle symbolises unity, primordia, the original chaos. It is less field like than the square, suggesting important differences in implied meaning. This is the main form of the templum. Like the Dogon serpent cosmogony sign, it is understood as a four-dimensional symbol.

Templum and Labyrinth.

Templum is a geometrical key to the symmetry of labyrinths. Crucial centrality and symmetry match that of labyrinth. Orientation rites, astronomical and astrological propitiousness draw together in this sign whose characteristics are those of most urban settlement in the ancient world. It is particularly associated with societies where labrys was used within historic and pre-historic Goddess cults [94].

Two symmetries arise. Mirror image is part of the geometry. Its space is here and there, and impassable. Symmetries make sense of densely structured wilderness, trackless environments, that is to say, *aperas*, part of the semiotic of primitive settlement rites.

Before Pythagoras was labrys ("double axe"). Labrys divines space and time, using the most famous of all geometric theorems. It is constructed of mirrored 3-4-5 triangles based on astronomical phenomena related to Hermes [95]. It set out sacred sites at the most propitious time, in the way set by rite in the most propitious place. It encapsulates a technology of space, symbolically associated with Delos' crane dance, incorporating templum. Lunar phases coincide with solar in nine year cycles, corresponding to phases of Mercury (Hermes). Nine year cycles are part of ancient Egyptian and Cretan fertility practices. Renewal of kingship was based on them. Renewal, effected by descent into the underground labyrinth, was preceded and followed by a grand processional round dance, a spiralling circle of locked dancers encircling the portable throne as it progressed, a triumph of renewable deification.

There is the concept of a human world and another, the world of the ancestors, whose sacred proportions mirror the existential world. Separation is infinitesimally small, the merest membrane, but access via the linearity of labyrinth is the longest possible distance between the two sides of the line. Ancient spatial powers are encapsulated

within templum, used by the Romans to set out their *colonia*, a fitting device for expansion of the world's greatest empire.

Hermes' planet is unique in that it "wanders" [95].⁴⁸ Its wandering pattern has spatial and temporal logic, tracing a numerological pattern of the linear labyrinth.⁴⁹ Hermes' activities are closely associated with the Argolid myths, with Jason and Perseus, a dynasty of explorative heroes whom we met in the Boscotrecase frescos. Perseus is a mythic ancestor portrayed possessing the skills of Zeus, Hermes and equivalent descent.

Meander labyrinths are a spiral form, keys to spatial understanding. Tautology is transformed into linearity, and linear space compressed. Space and time within their structure terminates at the starting point. It is the device of Pan. Types might be enclosed within circular or square outlines, probably originally possessing shades of meaning. Ancient spiral structures also have resonances in sacred geometry. At their centre too, is the basic templum and its implicit mundus, a male appropriation of feminine space. Concentricity marks verticality, the point from which access to The Garden might be gained [96].

Kanji ideograms contain their own special appropriations of two dimensional surface space but convert the whole of that surface into subject space. Cassirer propounds this kind of underlying quality in Western linguistics.⁵⁰ He asserts that spatial concepts can be reliably read from within languages, as well as from rite and artistic creations. He emphasises how written language has, as a male dominated structure, moved emphasis from balanced sensory stimuli and placed it with vision. Our tactile experience of space is subverted by the process. The body is our spatial model. Spatial distinctions built into vowel sounds derive from physical experience incorporated in devices from which we no longer experience it directly. Hamburg cites a black African language where back stands for behind, eye for in front, neck for above and stomach for within and centre. The implied centre is navel, focus of many sensibilities. This is sensory orientation. Before Aristotle (and some time after, for written Greek was unavailable to the young Plato) signs and symbols transmitted more of this bodily sense of space than the visual. Kanji signs more entire than the attenuation of Western word languages, instantaneous, a parallel rather than serial experience. To grasp these concepts of templum and labyrinth, mundus and tholos, we need to relinquish much acculturated visual

⁴⁸. Mercury.

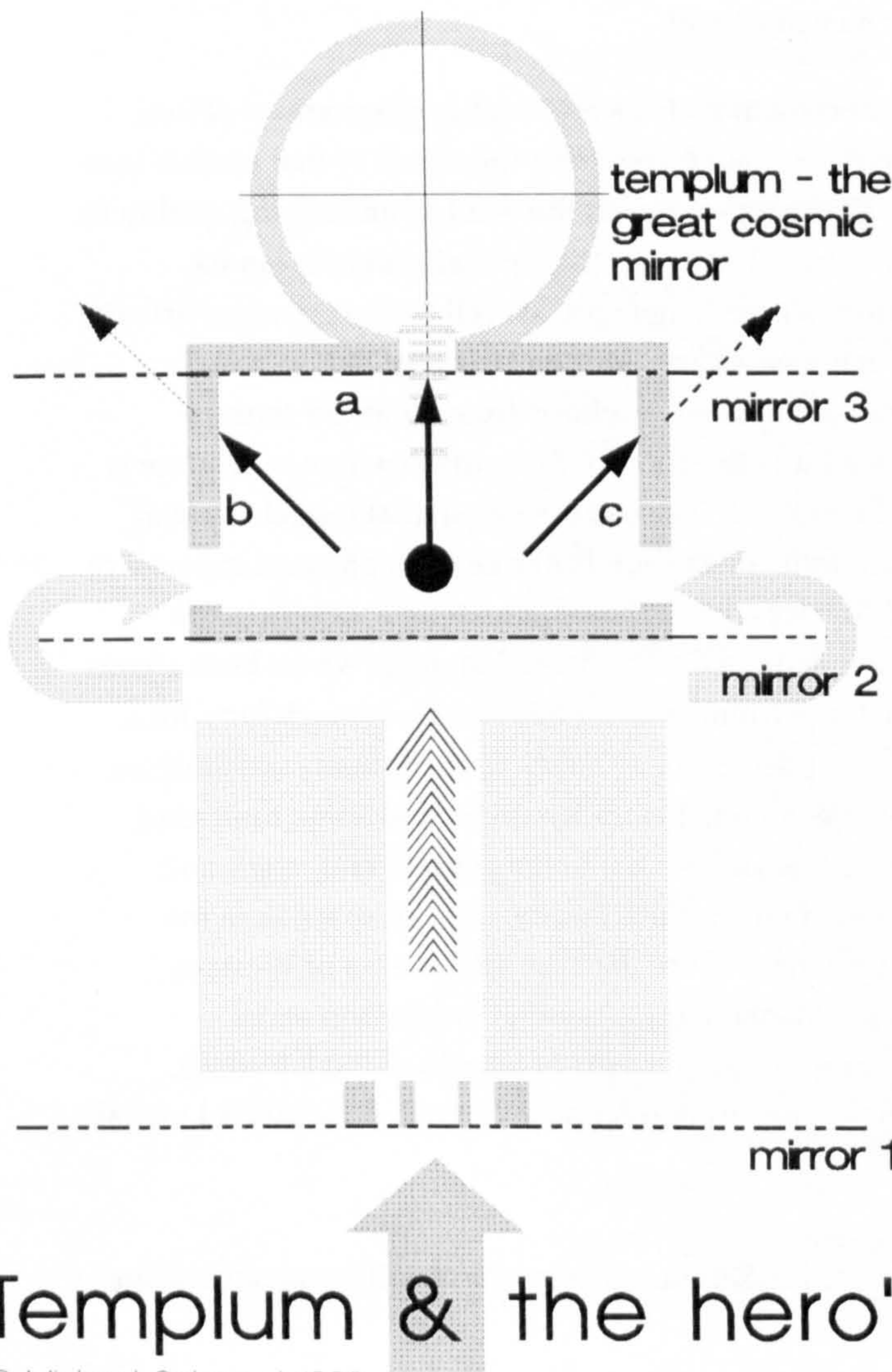
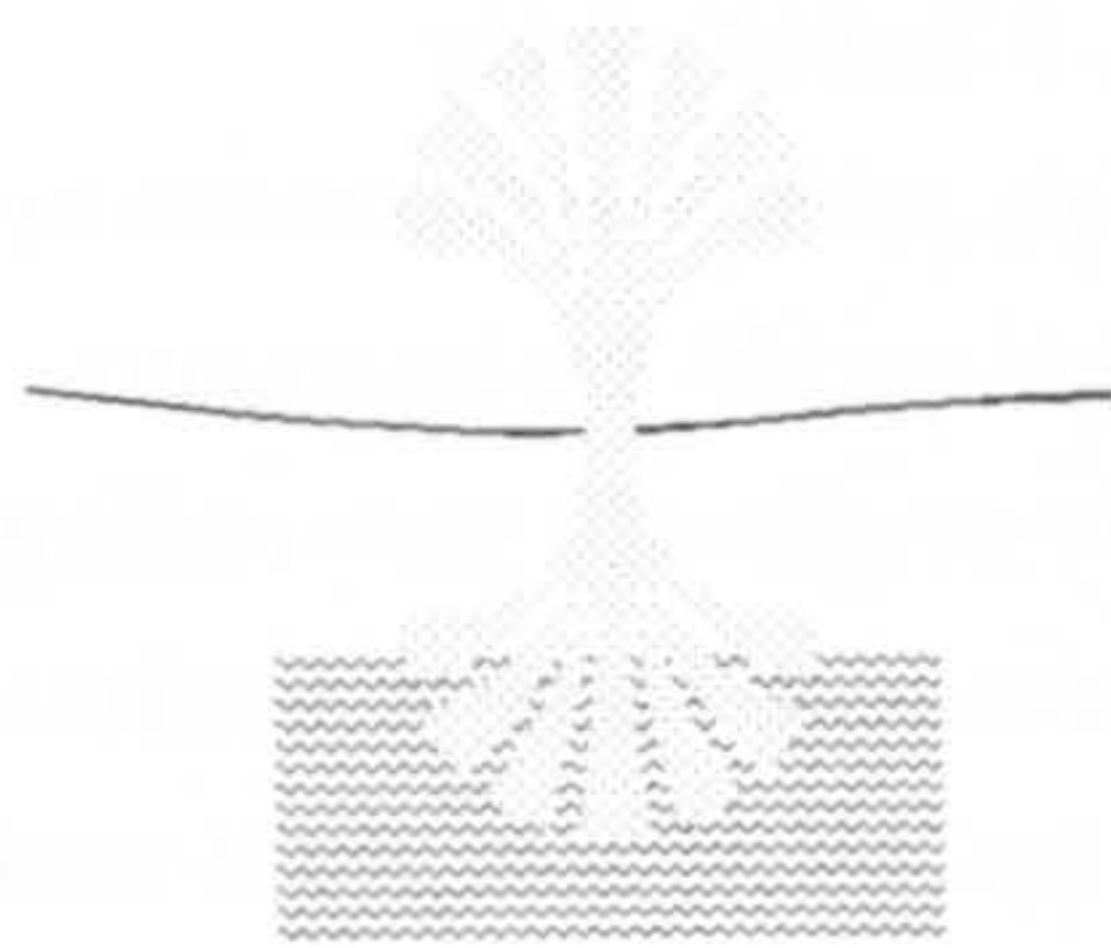
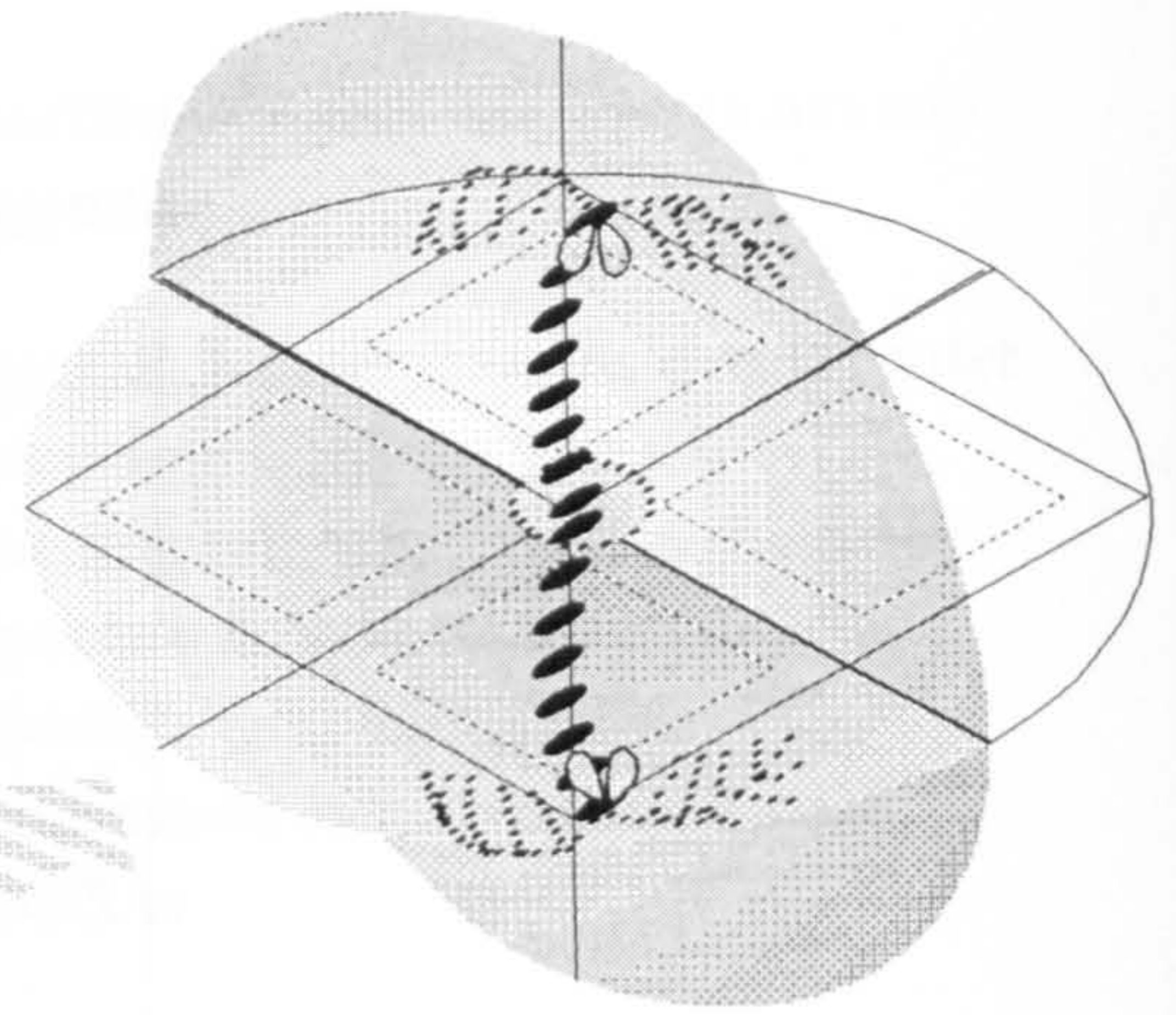
⁴⁹. *Lonegren, S: Labyrinths*. Glastonbury 1991. pp 86.

⁵⁰. The basis of this paragraph is largely: *Hamburg, C.H: Symbol and reality: studies in the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*. Hague 1956. pp 90-98.

Templum as garden is a cosmic mirror. The ground plane marks a membrane & one or other of the vertical planes likewise. The fountain (tholos) at the centre is THE place. Here the powers of earth are tapped & rise to the substantive world above.

Spatial transitions are codified in accordance with an approach to the palatium. This is inherent in the Romance of The Rose, for example. Entry into its precinct has to be gained by diligence & knowledge. Once within, the main activity centres on fountains whose presence motivates all subsequent dream state actions. At the centre space folds; it marks an end and a return; its fountains too mark transition and return.

The mirrored world replicates the substantive world. This meaning is inherent in Labrys, whose association with water and moon is part of this fountain illusionism.



The concept of mirror faces is applied to the processional of audience chambers. Akkadian and Assyrian kings held these in gardens. Gardens followed them on campaigns, and were therefore part of the ESSENTIAL trappings of power. Approach was controlled by an elaborate semiotic system (reinforced by force where necessary). The diagram below attempts a schema applied to a late Roman Imperial audience, based on Hellenised Assyrian ideas.

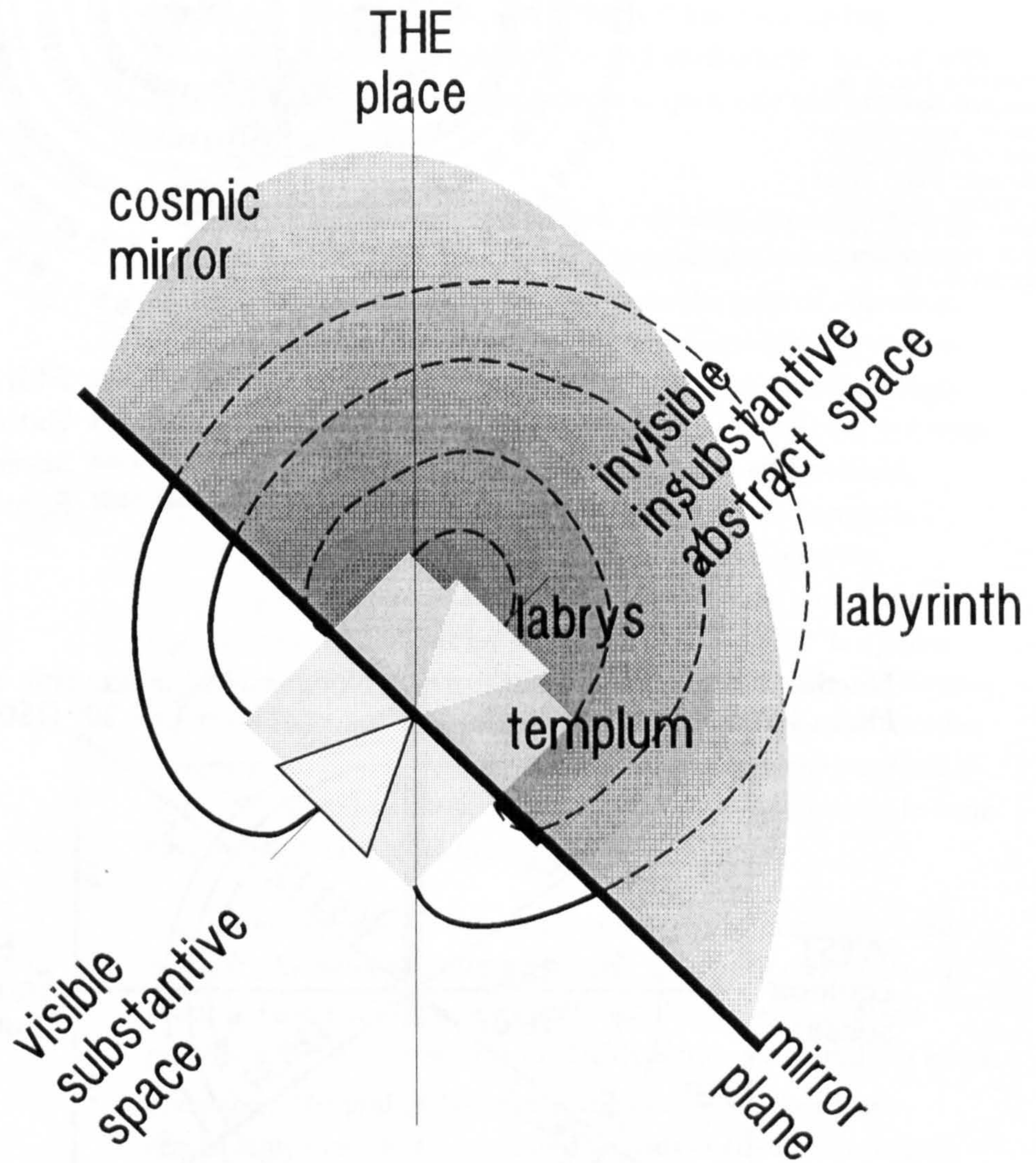
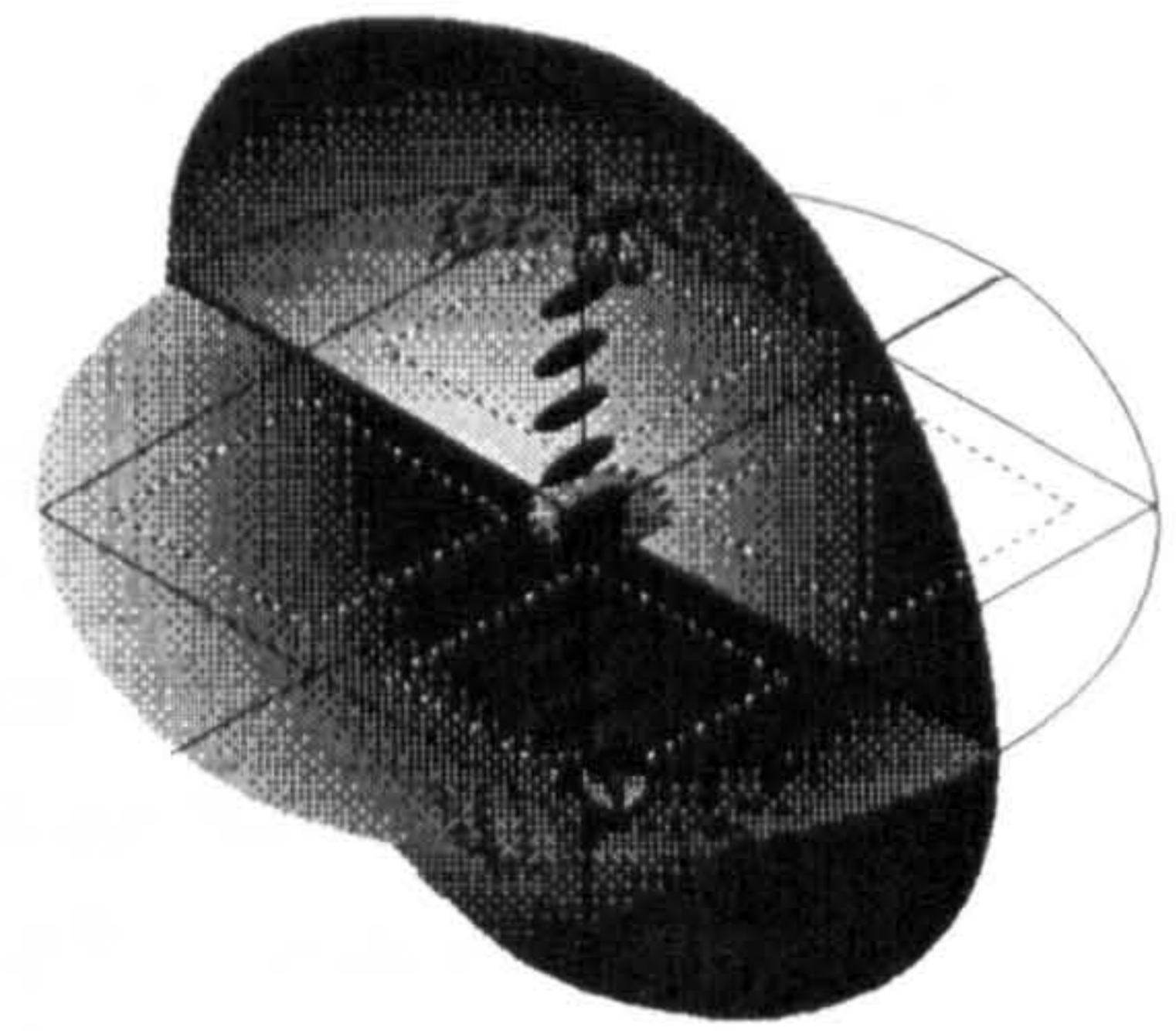
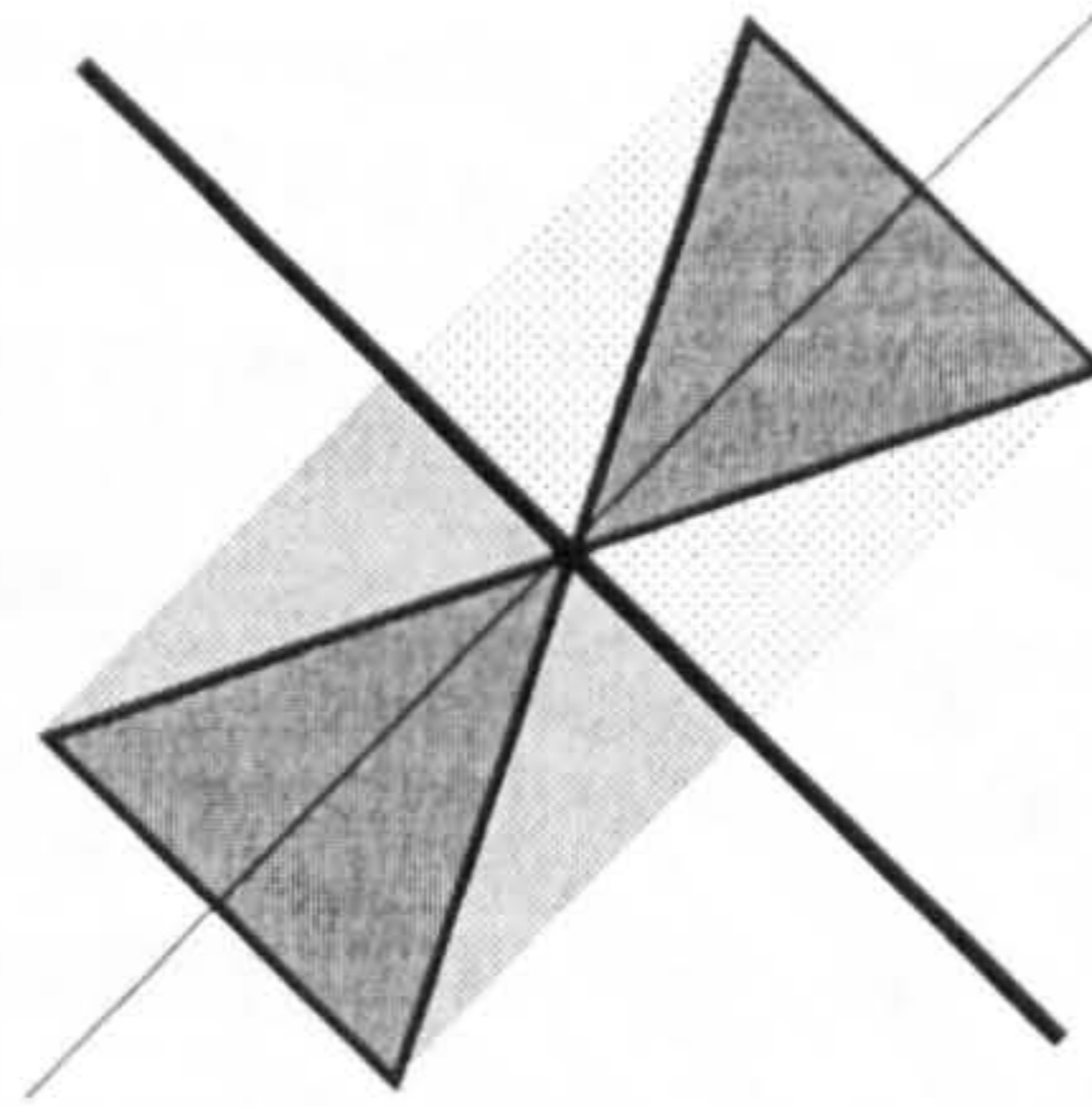
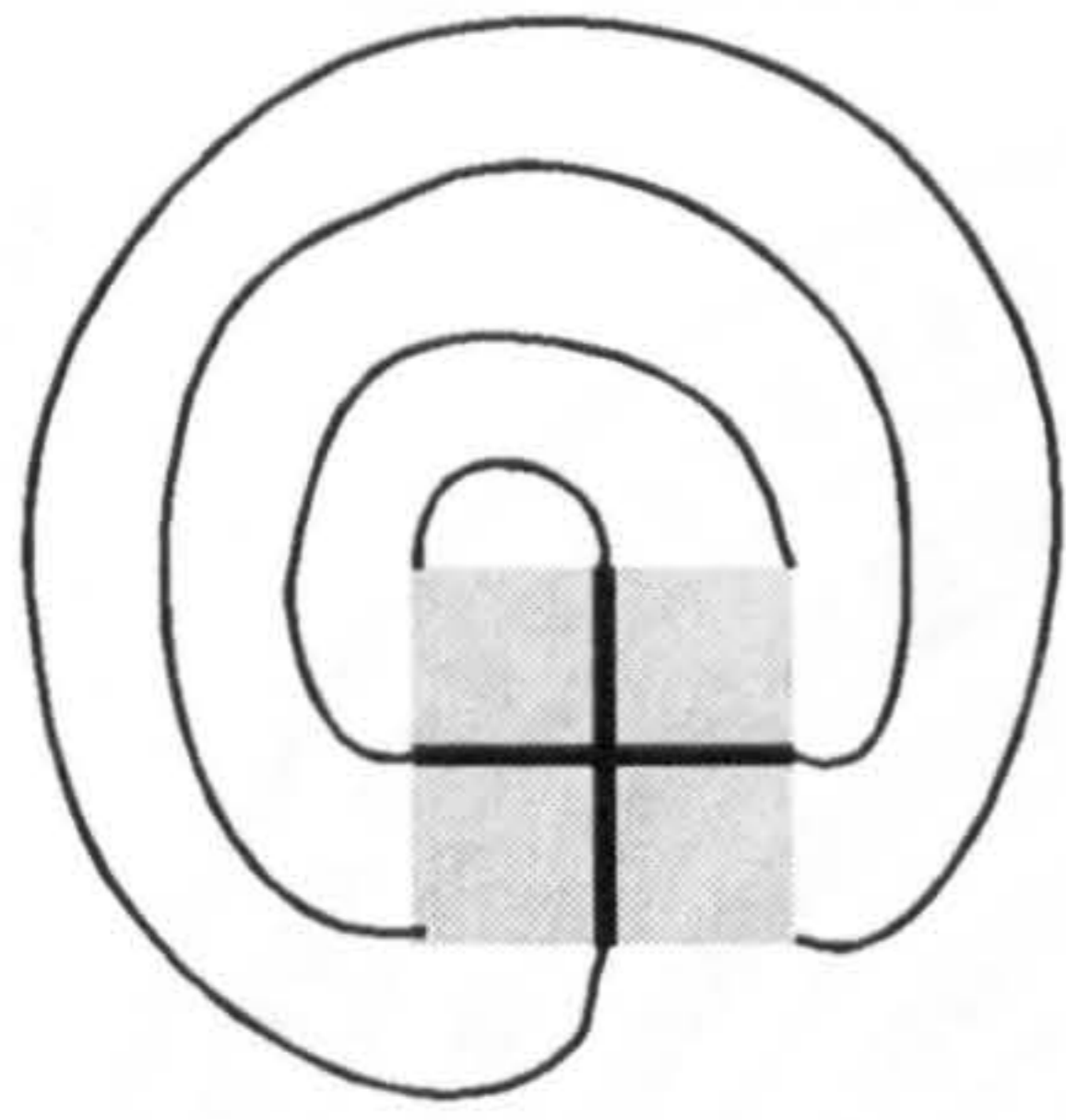
Templum is the great mirror, the presence chamber. Within it the emperor sits, fierce and unapproachable, beyond the reach of mortals. He is, in effect, a presence in the mirror, a being from Beyond, insubstantive space.

The first mirror is the arch. It might have a loggia above, like the gate of a great imperial city, whence the Presence might watch, in person or symbolically, the approach of an embassy or religious ceremony. Its architecture reflects the Imperial cosmos through architectural signs and symbols which refer to greater space. An arched vault, coffered and ornamented, even perhaps coloured, is the vault of heaven. A skyline loggia is the abode of the god king in celestial space.

A grove shelters assembled dignitaries. At its end, an architectural facade forms the second mirror. Roman architecture emphasised the centre, unlike the running continuity of Greek colonnades. It could therefore bifurcate the procession. Stairs might emphasise the point.

Ante-chambers might intervene at this stage. As in Renaissance palaces they would be decorated, their walls painted or sculpted, symbolic space representing ideological abstractions. Each would be a mirror of the state. The viewer would see 'into' them. Only when he reached the axis would he see beyond into the audience chamber through a carefully placed and ornamented doorway.

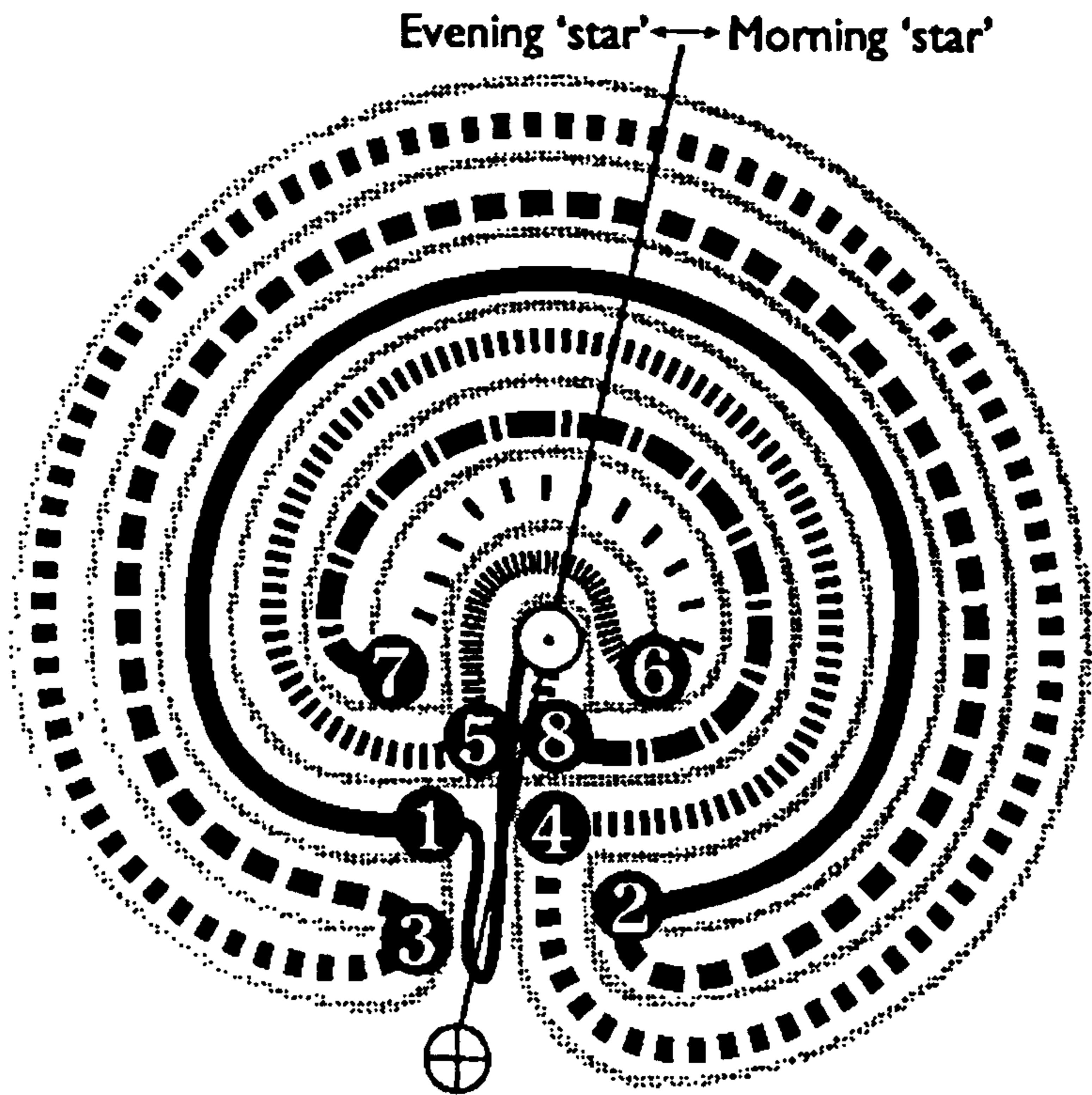
Templum & the hero's Garden Beyond



Templum, labrys, labyrinth,
mirror space & THE garden

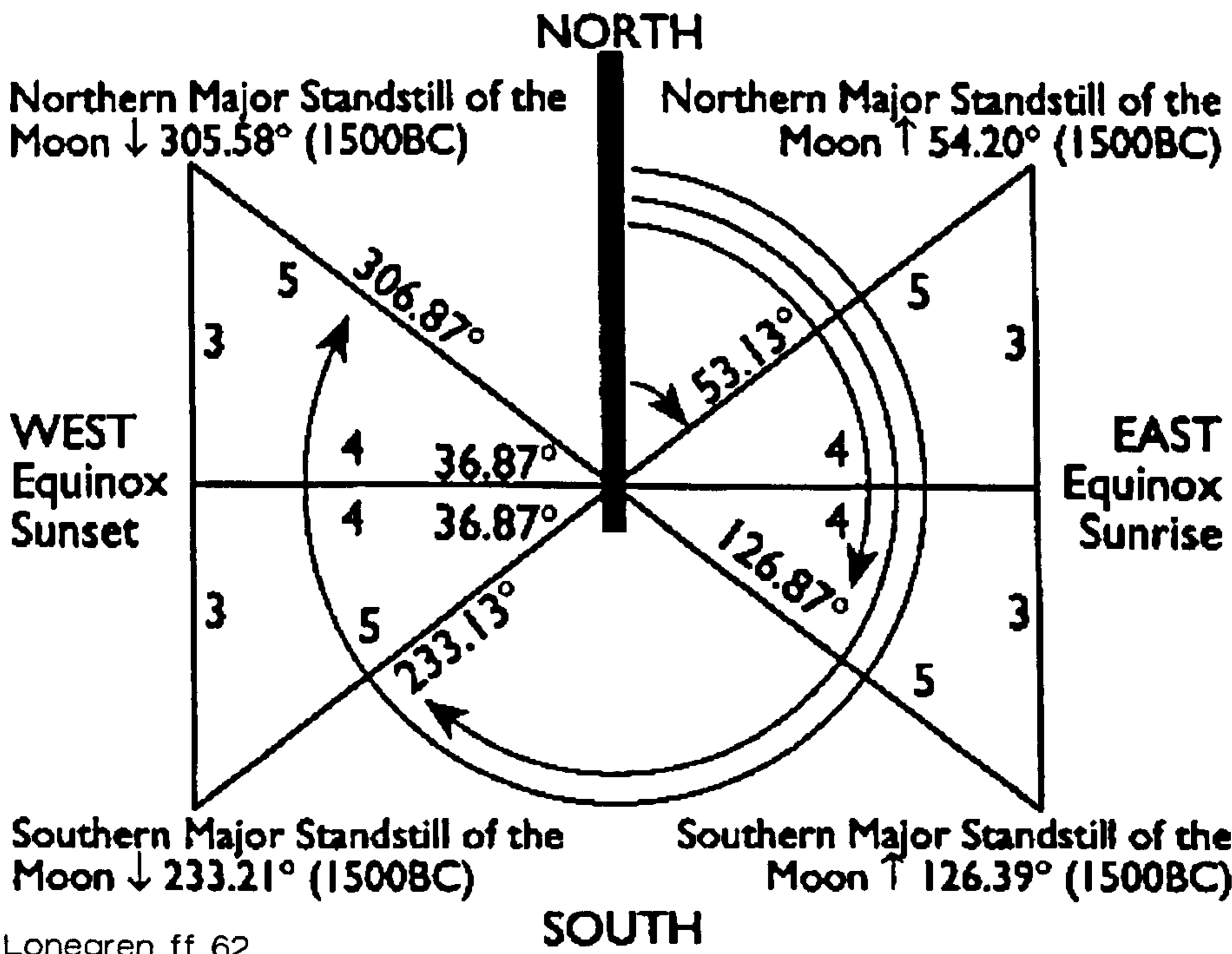
...a mirror darkly

Labyrinths have a mensural basis in ancient cosmology; some of it is quite abstruse, even now. It is these qualities which mark its potential for popular programming.



- First Path
- - - - -** Second Path
- · · · ·** Third Path
- |||||** Fourth Path
- |||||** Fifth Path
- |||||** Sixth Path
- |||||** Seventh Path
- |||||** Eighth Path

Lonegren ff 46




Lonegren ff 62

Cosmology, labrys, labyrinth

dominance and think parallel. It is more natural. Only then do its connotations fully reveal themselves and the various links become apparent.

Labyrinth and templum incorporate geographical routes, large and small, general and particular space-time distances. Ranges of meaning encapsulated within such simple "linguistic" signs requires them to have been fully assimilated, well conceived and grasped before condensation. Use of the templum by the Romans links "field" (ancient enclosures, set apart and bounded by ditches even in Sumerian practice from 4000 years before Rome), cosmos, knowledge, differentiation, and settlement into a confusing complexity of spatial appropriations and attributions. Loaded with Byzantine symbolism, Longus reduces empire, city and precinct to this prime symbol.⁵¹

Templum is "cut out space," selected, delimited, extracted and re-dedicated within a greater space.⁵² Linguistically *tem* is Greek for "cut out." Sacred space - on the page or on the ground - becomes objectified, beyond the control of individual centrality. It is space for god (e.g. in The Word) or variants, king, chief or hero. Kingly appropriation refers to soil, garden and forest. Extending it, *templa* is cosmic, referring to apportionments of divine effectiveness. Mythic space is encompassed by this symbol which transmits distance and distances it from the individual. It is a system conflating space and life values.⁵³ *"Actually it is the very character of expressive phenomena that they present 'sign and signified' in a fusion which knows of no difference between the picture and the pictured, between the sense-vehicle and the sense it carries. This peculiar type and direction of signification is misrepresented by the usual symbolic interpretations of myth ..."*⁵⁴ Templum ultimately connects urban foundations to their base in "field" or "sacred field", temenos.

Superimposing interred processes wipes existing messages; need and use acknowledge existing messages to wipe in creating "new" space.⁵⁵ Historical knowledge indicated the presence of other powers in that place beforehand. Fields were once sacred, set apart, inviolable. The grid of dykes embodied in  marked this, designating access in a way similar to grids of streets or canals in towns, wayleaves for summer grazing around the orchards of Sumer. Thus gradations, differentiations of social space, much the concern of XXc urban designers like Chermayeff, Tzigonis and

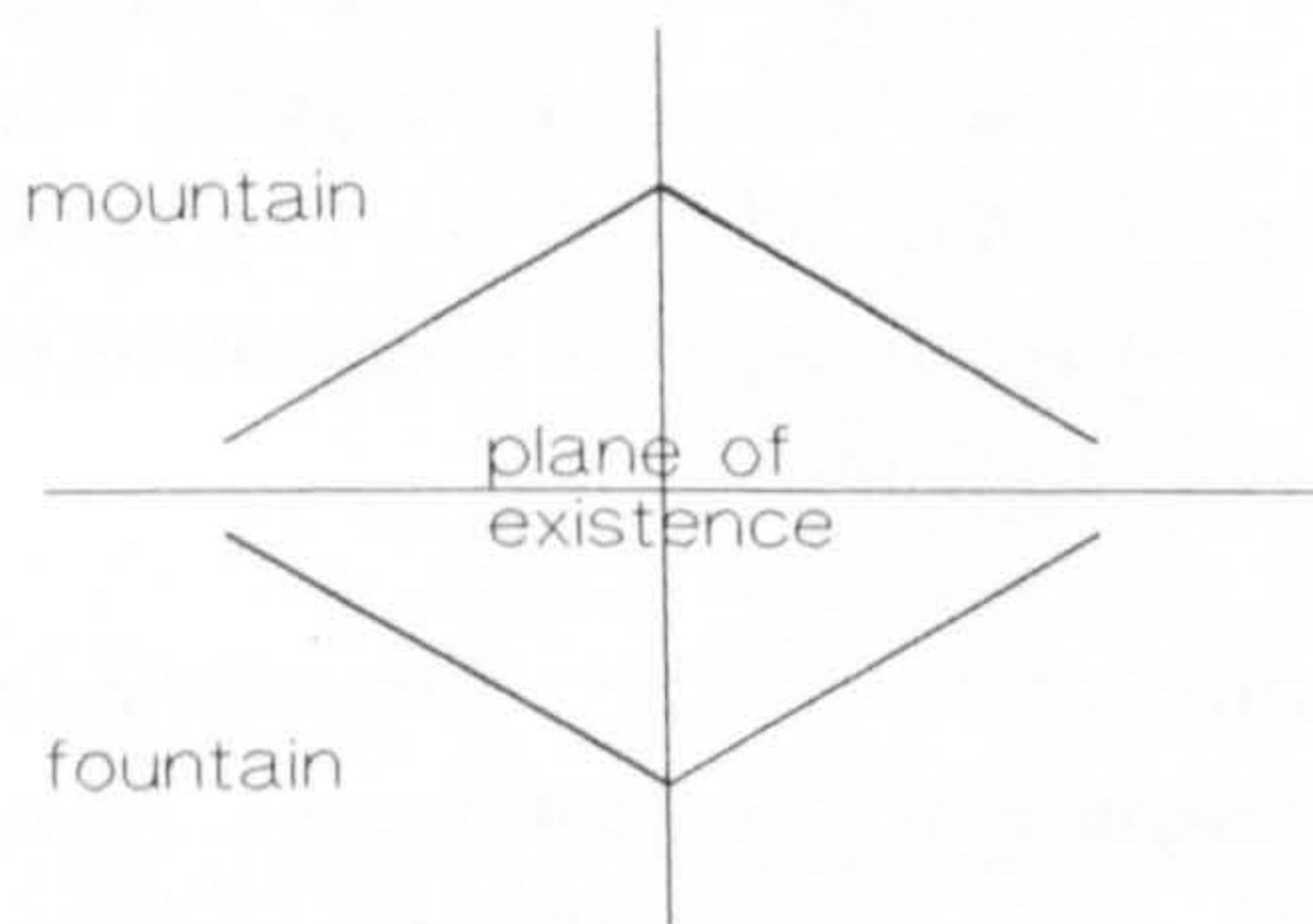
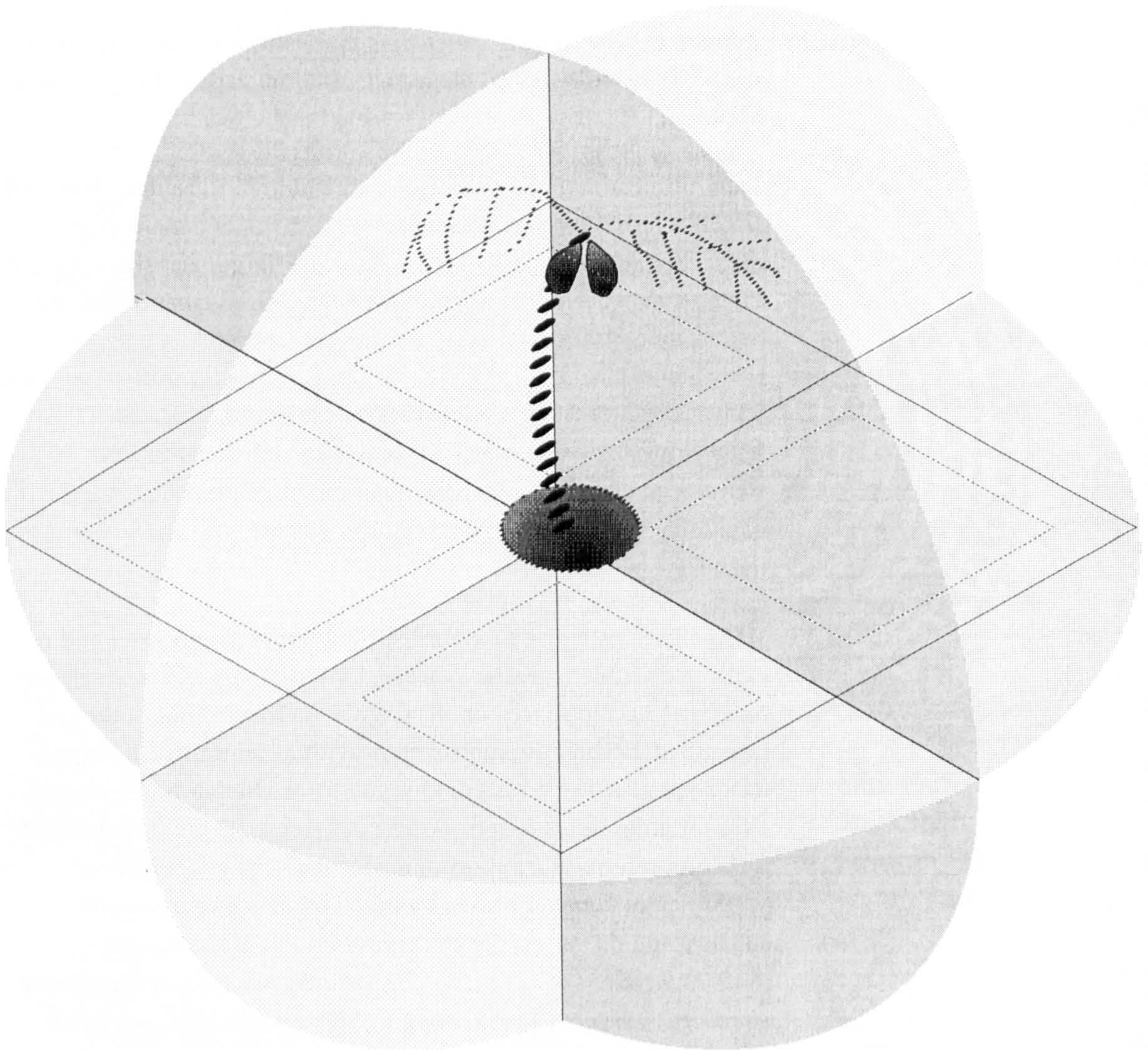
51. Lamon's garden in *Pastoralias*.

52. *Nlesen, N: Das Templum*. Leipzig 1869. (Page numbers not noted).

53. *Hamburg 1956*, pp 103.

54. *Hamburg 1956*, pp 65, quoting Cassirer: *Philosophie ...* III.85.

55. Space exists only as a function of movement. It is created and does not exist as a *prima facie* thing.



Conflation gives the underlying symbol iconographic power. It can be almost infinitely manipulated & does not differ in its basic ideas from the architecture of tholos, with which it also becomes conflated. The upward solidity of mountain is balanced by the downward fluidity of fountain.

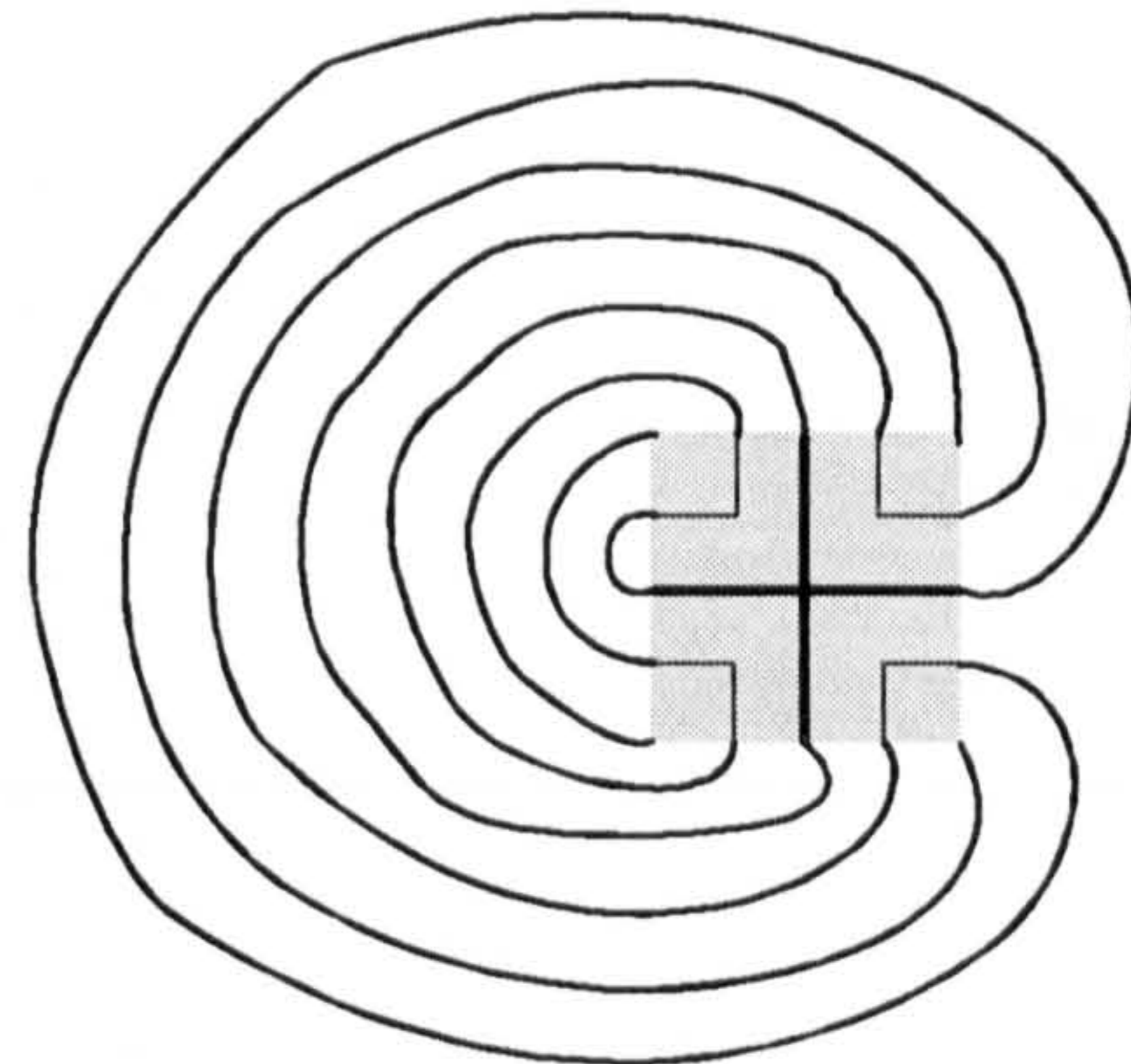
Quadripartite Landscapes are a complex stereotype. They have evolved and been added to by successive cultures for several millenia of civilisation. Social space was transformed into abstract space early and the abstractions continued to be subjected to ideological metamorphoses.

The main diagram shows a simple quartered garden set within the abstract space which it implies and which encompasses it, the templum. "I" is objectified. A garden has become THE garden. It is the prototype of the garden in the Hebrew testament of Genesis. The palm tree at the centre was a universal Middle Eastern symbol for the goddess (Ishtar) who controlled fertility, sexuality and death. The outline bears a striking resemblance to the Ionian rosette found also in the Passargadae of Cyrus.

Land fit only for heroes ... that other garden

Alexander, were also part of the concern of templum. It was systematised beyond humanity in Brahmanic cities whose layout fossilised caste distinctions based on historical sense and beliefs.⁵⁶ Hierarchies of events are located in space, setting out a centre which is a unitary co-ordinating power, distancing public from power. The question remains though, in using templum was labyrinth automatically implied? If it was, was it a kind of propitiatory semiotic of spatial theory, a way of uniting both sides of the mirror?

This is a diagram of the most frequently occurring labyrinth form. It has 7 circuits to the centre. They represent the unique 7 year cycle of the planet Mercury (Hermes). Is this what Longus implies with his garden of Dionysos? Is the crossed templum the heart of a landscape whose other elements, the pastoral space, that of Pan, are the labyrinth beyond its walls with a single entry?



Using templum to establish a town, with its inferred and obtuse labyrinth, signifies both town and hinterland. In countryside, the erection of solitary columns signified the continuity of templum. They were initially reserved for countryside (apart from Jupiter columns in the northern empire), signs of The Presence. Absence of columns meant absence of presence, no protection. Jupiter columns implanted imperial space into territories where Rome had little interest other than maintaining the security of its boundaries, hinting at the presence of templum. A column immediately signifies a zone of representational space. In the ruins of north African and Eastern cities and large towns columns are the most prominent archaeological remains, horizontal or vertical. Jupiter columns, executed by less skilled craftsmen, more stocky, isolated and more revered, survive in restored form, still asserting the supremacy of Jupiter over the remains of a Holy Roman Empire centuries later. Multiplicity of columns became the signature of Rome in its urban spaces.⁵⁷ Once reserved for sacred architecture they were applied profusely to colonnades and buildings, necessitating more concentration on the importance of detail for correct interpretation. Like templum they signified distance. Their orders codified approachability for different social status or

⁵⁶. Tzigonis and Chermayeff's *Community and Privacy*; Alexander's *Timeless Way of Building*, *Pattern Language*, and *New Approach to Urban Design*.

⁵⁷. *Onians, J: Bearers of Meaning*.

initiation. In a sense, they stood for the centre of templum, like the pole in the pit (mundus) of the ant dance or the absent column of the tholos. They were the most prolific sign of space attribution in the urban context and outside it.

Interlude:

Dusk to dusk.

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Dusk to Dawn.

*Awake, for morning in the bowl of night
Has flung the stone that puts the stars to flight.*

The tholos called Thymele was Dorian, a development of an ancient oriental form in a state neighbouring Geometric Lathuresa. Its use seem to have been more expansive than the tholos at Lathuresa, though perhaps more specialised. That tholos, it is suggested, was the venue of an exclusive brotherhood of hereditary elders, much as Athens' Skias.¹ We have already commented that Thymele resolved the duality of Pythagoreanism and Platonism. That it was successful, there can be little doubt. It might have taken a hundred hesitant years to build, but it survived and operated prosperously for six hundred. It was closed only by edict. Epidauros, a rural sanctuary in the northern Peloponnese, was a popular centre of the Hellenistic package tour trade which thrived under the Pax Romana. A wholly urbanised society caused Greeks some social trauma. Vergil depicts rural dispossessed and neglected, particularly pastoral. It was not a new phenomenon, for it arises in Sumerian poetry. Their condition was probably perpetuated by Aristotle's infamous comments.² Horace shrewdly suggests that the generalities of rural existence will under any circumstances infiltrate, take over, and inhabit the specificities of the city. The 'natural life' is the object.³ Horace, as commentator on the villa life, recognised the ailments of an urban society and its consequent sentimental constructs of Landscape. It was to these ills that the Asklepeion of Epidauros ministered.

At dusk, suppliants processed to Thymele across its temenos. The doors closed behind them once inside, and darkness fell. Deprived of external sensory stimuli, their inner world took over. They were probably mildly drugged, not unlike ancient Sumerians taking to their beer gardens. Not quite so drastic as early kings taking to their final beds complete with all their retinue! We can only guess at the detail, but during the hours of darkness they were subjected to hypnotic rites for which their environment was devised, sleeping only to dream, existing in the half world between one and the other which drugs induce. These rites took them through a symbolic death, in which no doubt the under floor labyrinth, sufficiently high to walk around in, was also a participant. Totally enclosed within a cylindrical womb-like environment whose visual orientation was vertical, despite horizontal proportions, one can imagine the intensity of the involvement. During darkness, using chanting,

¹. *Seller, F: Die griechische tholos*. Mainz 1986.

². *Aristotle: Politics* VII.10.

³. *Horace: Epistles*. I.10. Also *Cotterill, R: Sunt aliqua manes*; In *Post-structuralist classics*. London 1988. pp 229

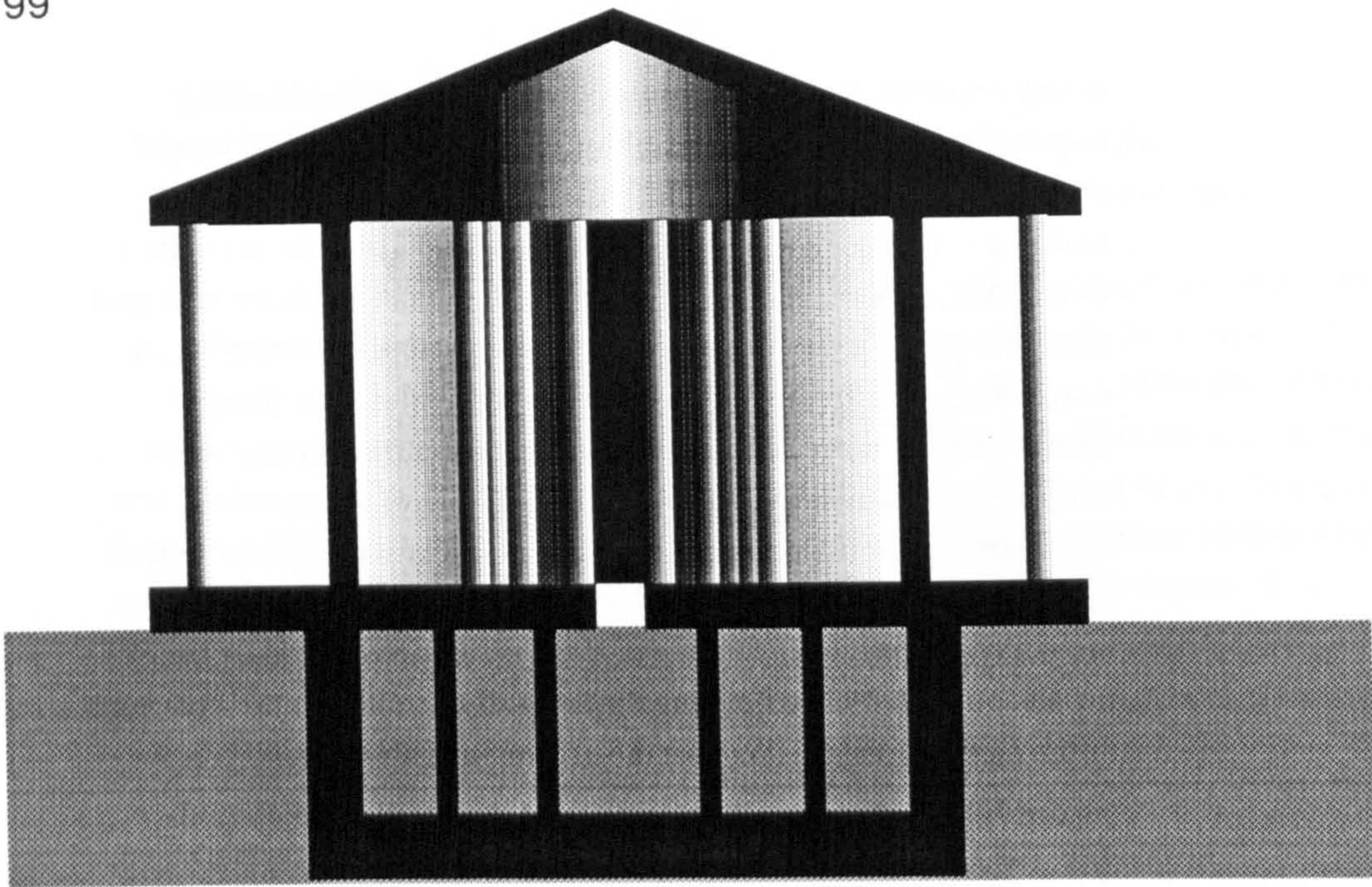
circular motion, the dimly lit interior focusing on the dazzling illusionistic floor with its central orifice, the hidden world would emerge and take over. Dream space seems strange and alien. In reality it is as close to us as any space can be. It is of us, no matter how induced. Dream is another labyrinth, whose entrance and goal, though separated, are in the closest possible spatial proximity. A mirror image, it presents us with our own Landscapes, images within us from our cultural upbringing since birth, perhaps even before. Physically impassable, this dream mirror space exists. It is our latent perception of space stripped of linear logic but having all the elements of reality. It is an essential part of our symmetry, our metis. Which is the true image of the world, the waking dream or the sleeping one? The sleeping dream presents us with the apeiron of the one, a primordial chaos; the waking dream has our superimposed sense of cosmic order. The labyrinth is a mirror. It presents an ultimate symmetry (Blake's fearful symmetry perhaps), a symmetry so perfect that it confuses linear visual logic. Understanding this gives power over dreams.

With sunrise, dreams disperse. Sunlight floods into the elevated central space through its clerestorey. The downward vertical dynamic of the night is replaced by an upward one, soaring towards the light. The hole in the floor becomes insignificant, it might even have been covered. All around, glow suffuses the internal colonnade with eloquent beauty. It is a new day. The suppliants, probably restricted to the outer area of the cella, look into a grove of beautifully wrought and sunlit coloured columns with delicate and elegant Corinthian capitals as they wake. They are led out in procession to the theatre and the feast. They are new people; they have undergone part of the psychodrama of dream therapy. Their minds are in a state of acute awareness. A new inner and outer environment starts with this procession in the stillness of dawn.

Procession is dance ritualised to its ultimate stateliness. It could be viewed perhaps as an icon of dance. This dawn procession following on a night of inner revelation would undoubtedly be as astutely stage managed as the dreams. For a start, it makes use of the sudden impact which open air and ephemeral light would have on dreamers, still only half awake, still filled with the aura and images of night [99] [100].

Space and time were both richly and skilfully exploited in the iconography of Dionysiac processions.⁴ They were sectionalised, each section marking a space time unit, and having allusions to an identifiable space time abstraction in the action and arrangements of

⁴. *Onians, J: Art and thought in the Hellenistic age*. London 1979. pp 156-158.

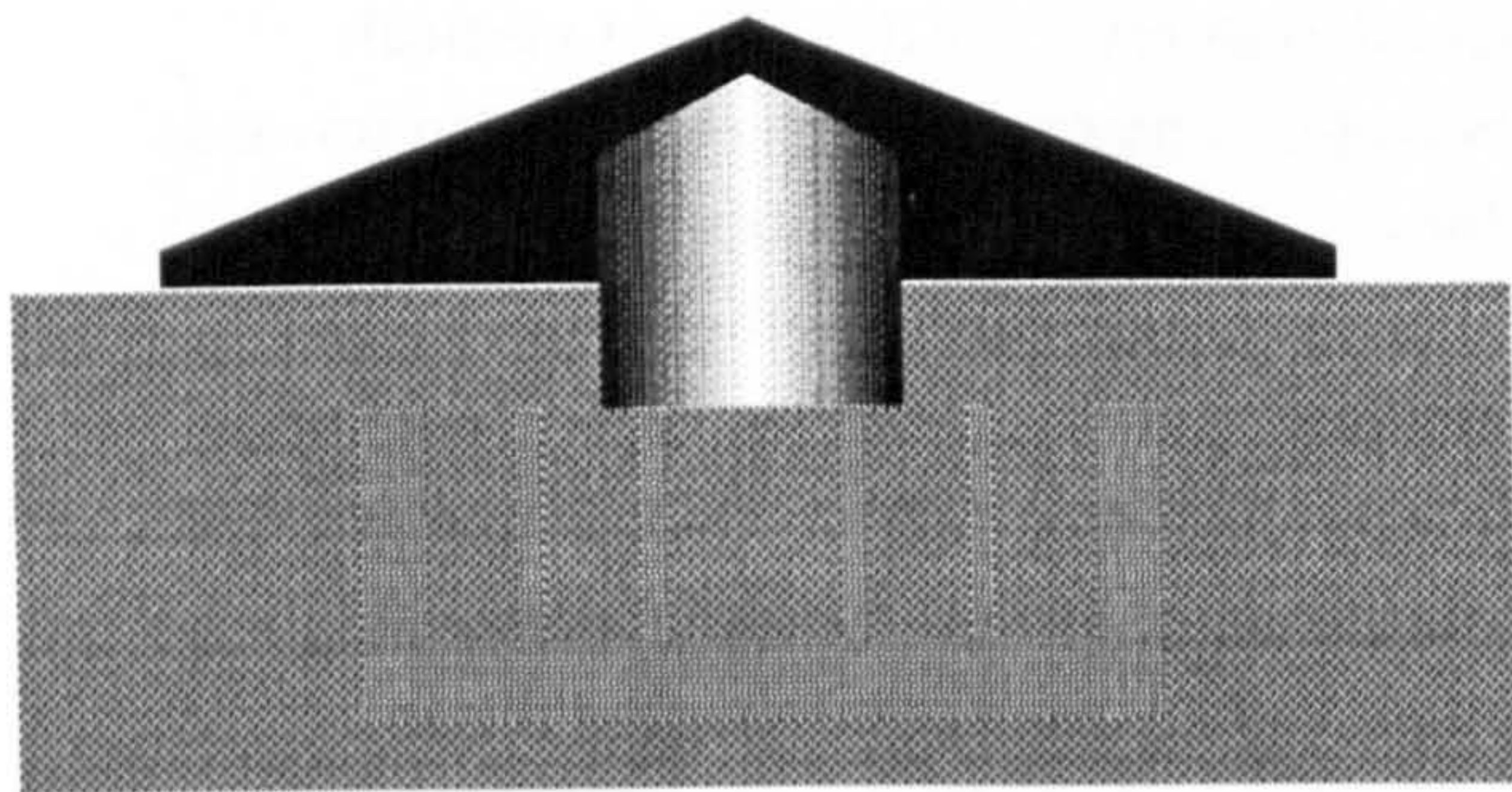


A

B

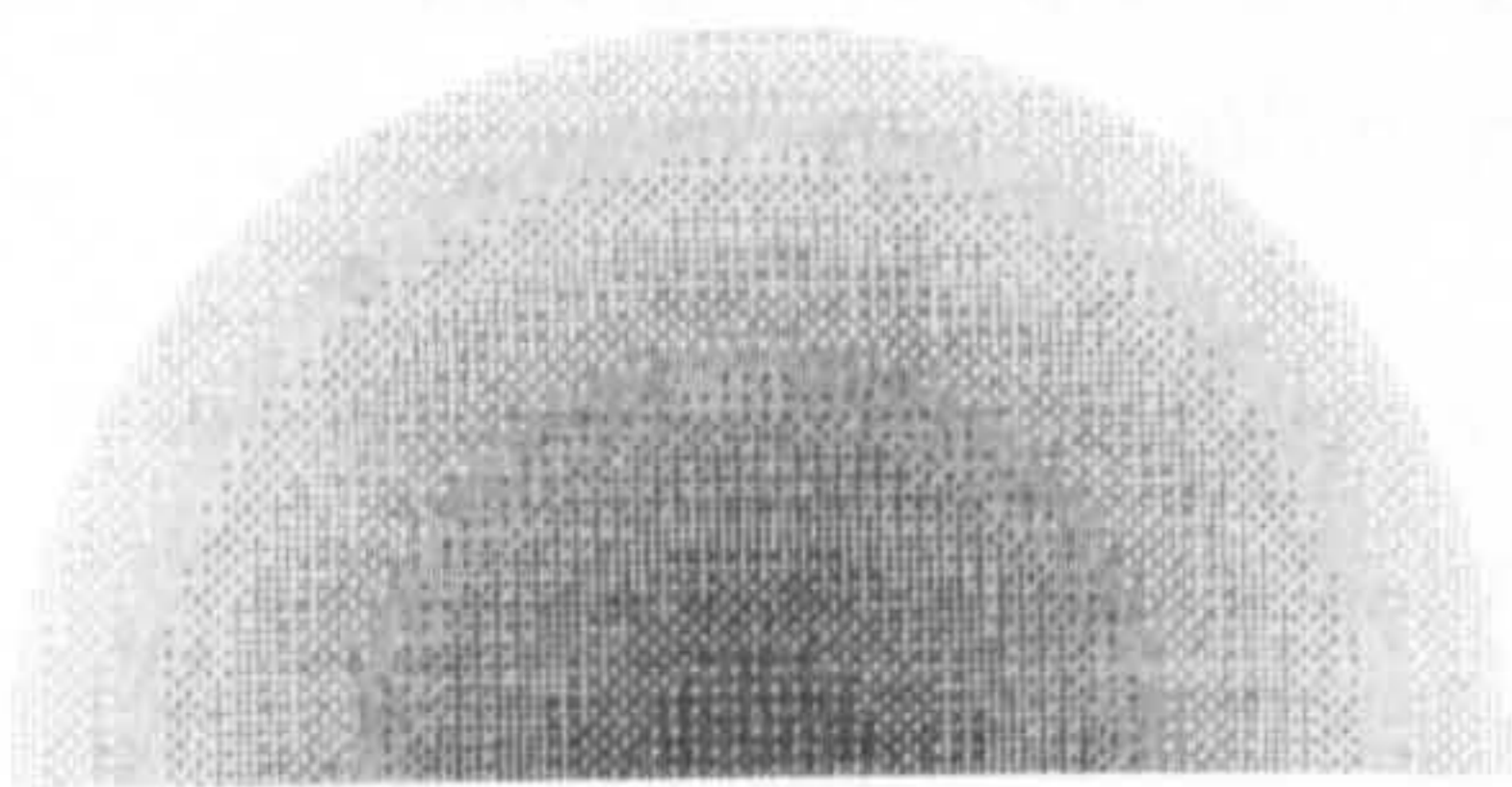
C

D

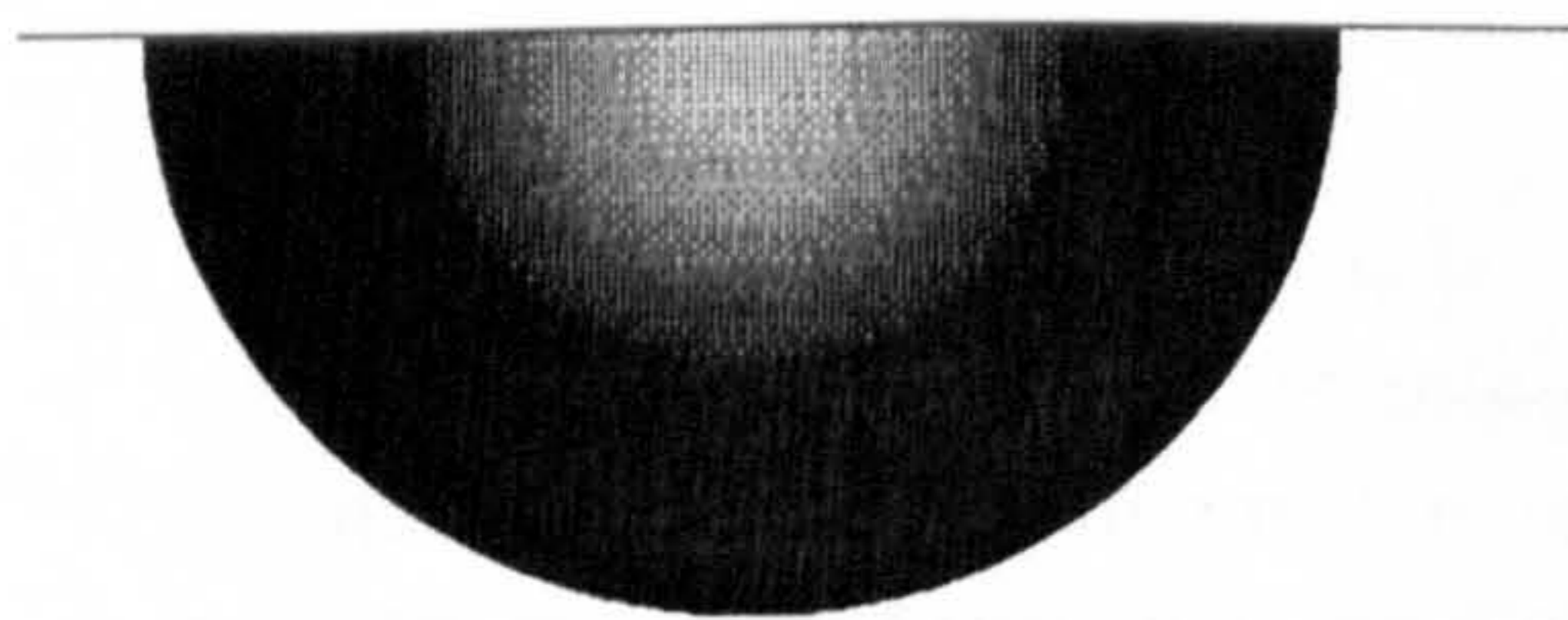


A

D



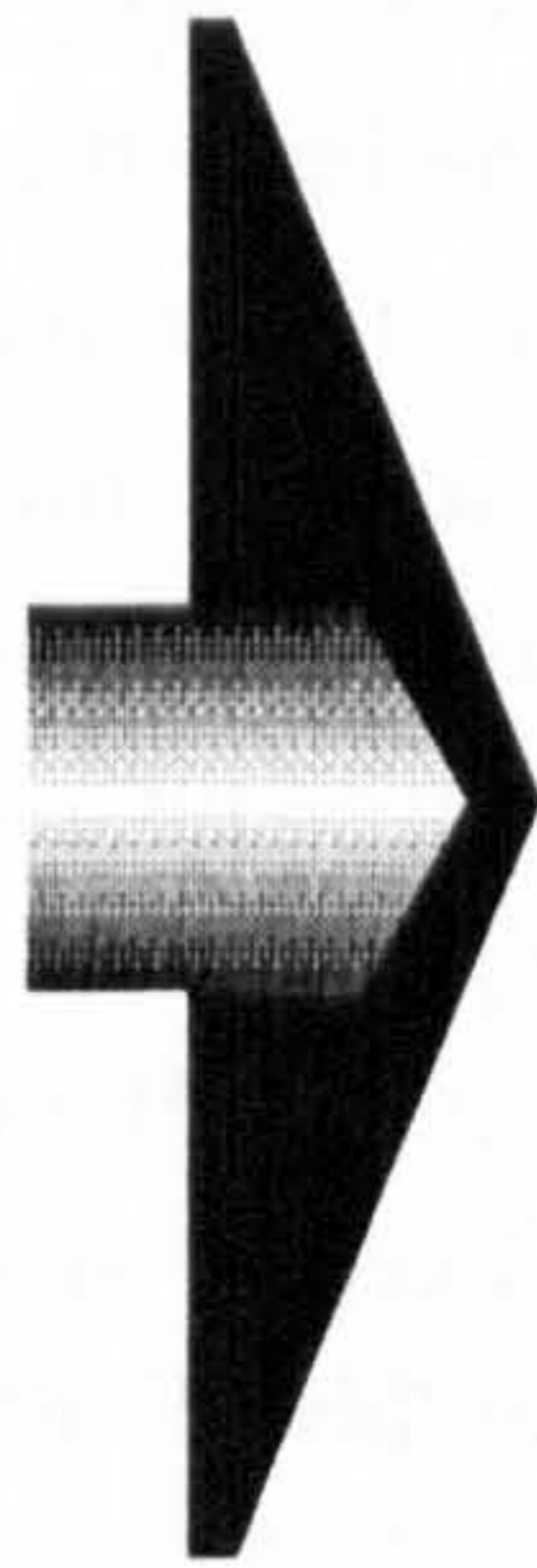
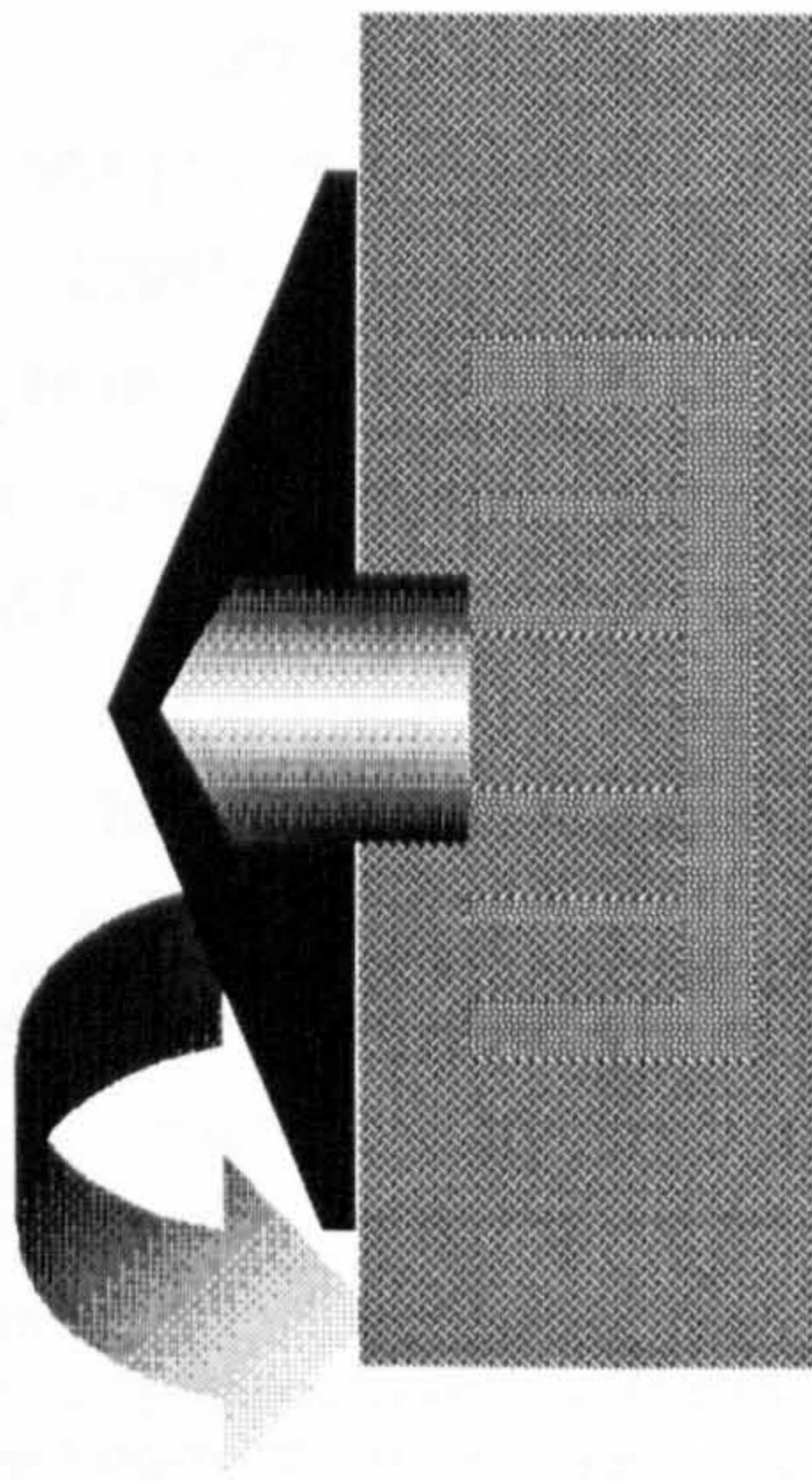
Intermediaries B



Tholoi manipulate Landscapes with sophistication. Mycenaean forms neither imply nor state the presence of intermediaries or the surface plane. Kosmos above & Kosmos below are represented. Later forms encapsulate Mycenaean ideas; repeat or imply space above & below; state an intermediary presence; surface is acknowledged.

- A....male principle of mountain cone from early tholoi; contains female hollow
- B....intermediary complex, develops & extends spatial symbolism of cylindrical "body" space
- C....surface presence stated by temenos platform; implied by presence of intermediary space
- D....chthonian space, goddess oriented

Tholos & Theatre - 1



The mountain is inverted

Tholoi conceal-reveal; their interior has no contact with their setting. Their setting is usually one of Landscape drama. Space remembered heightens the psychological response to each.

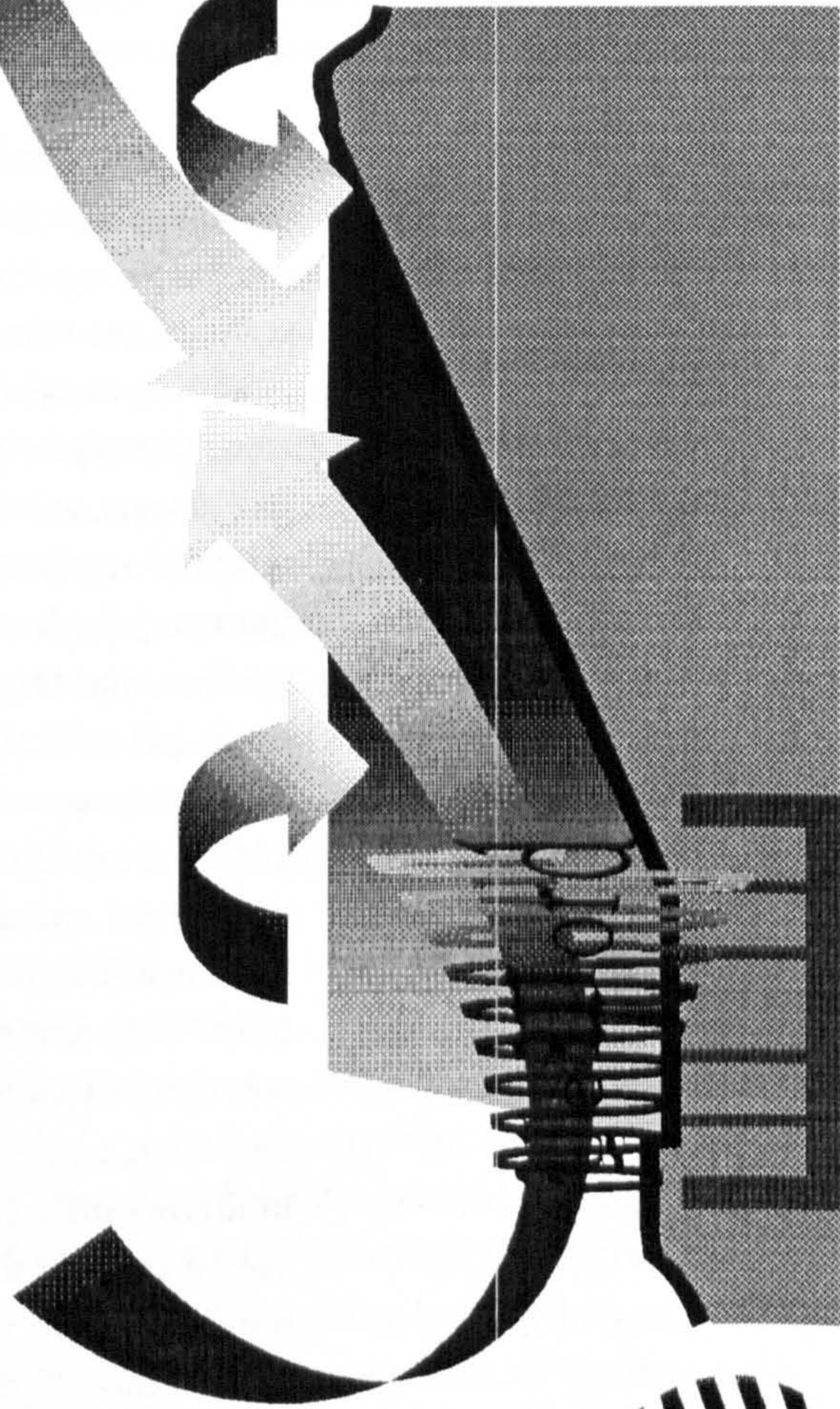
They give access to unseen space, the apairon of "there", the dark world of oblivion whose sign is implicit. It is a place of exchange, an interface. Over the womb of death and rebirth, where heroes were conceived, is the mound which both hides and reveals its presence.

Theatre is an upturned tholos. The inside of earth is revealed. They are polarities of form. Both are Landscapes encapsulated and sublimated in architecture, blurring the boundaries and defining them, mutual paradox.

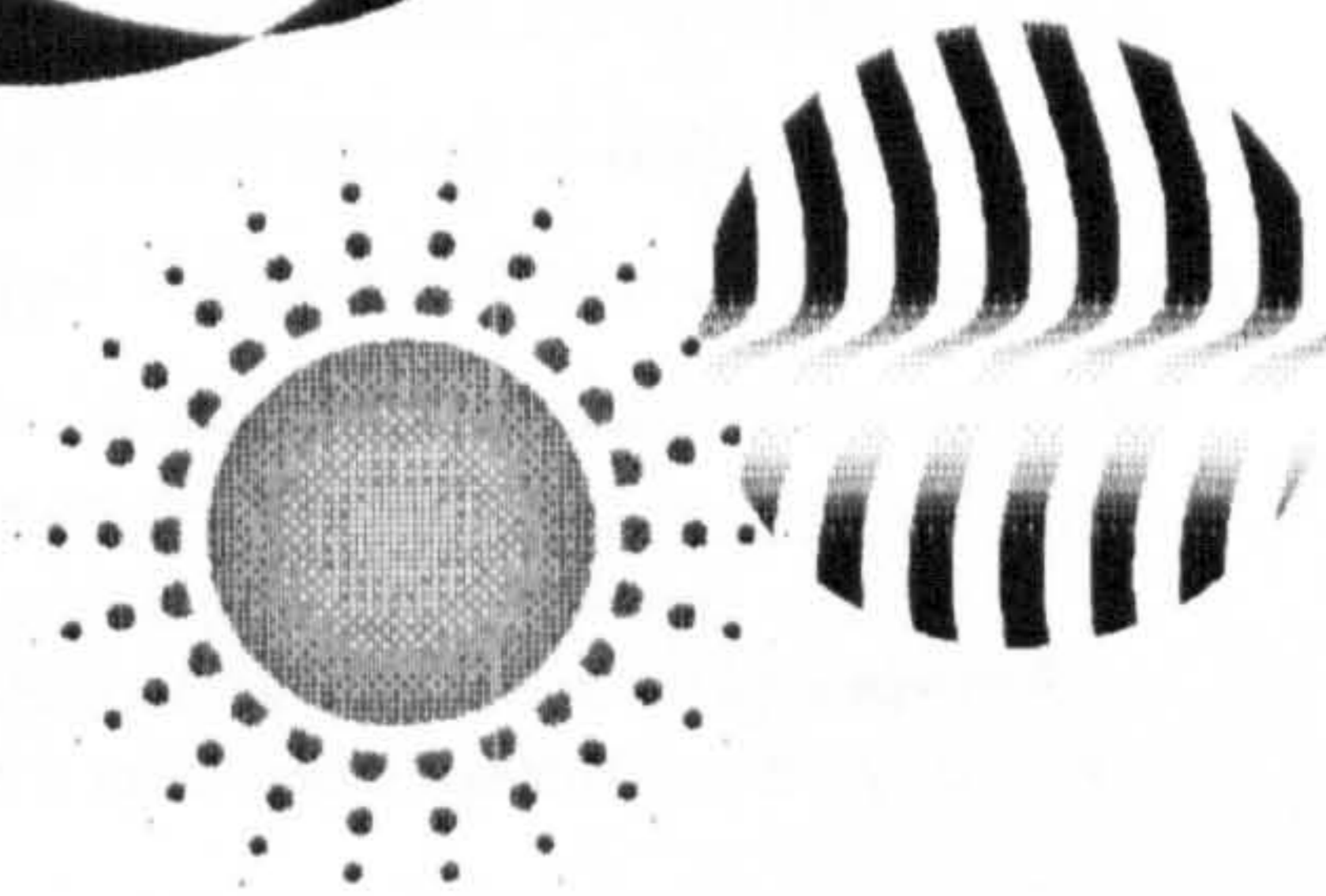


Theatre rejoices in the Olympian kosmos to which Dionysos persuaded Hephaistos to return. Hephaistos apotheosed Cyclopaean skills of metallurgy. An early cult venue was the tholos at Delphi. Tholoi grow into the bowels of the earth; theatre grows out of it, sculpting it for human expression. Its experience is open to every influence of surface and aerial ambience. Tholoi suppress the visual; theatre balances sensory activity.

Sunrise dramatises The Word from masks of past heroes, the chthonian world emerging from dark shadows made more intense by painful contrast. Mid-day heat accompanies satyr plays, and late afternoon light reveals in full frontal sordid detail the comedy of the human condition. It is a spatio-temporal Landscape of complex symbolic wealth. Vistas are not remembered but present, together with their phenomena of tempest and peace.



Implied labyrinth from which the deeds of heroes emerge through act & word, together with their Landscape



Theatre - a mundus of a mountainside

Tholos & Theatre 2

iconography. They commenced with the Morning Star and terminated with the Evening Star [100]. Iconography and rite reflected the seasonal changes attributed to Dionysos. His rite was an embodiment of dynastic imagery, setting the state in its proper order, comforting in the thought that everything was really under control. Its pattern closely matches the gradual state assumption of the originally democratic ceremony of the Bit-Akitu.⁵ The space between foci in a sanctuary were linear. Each statue was intended to be read in a complete hierarchical sequence. It is the opposite of an exedra, which forces a position in space on the onlooker and clarifies statuary to be seen in a group. It is a special spatial relationship which states symmetry and order. In effect it is a rite of passage. A civic procession presupposes an organised commencement and a goal. One stage of the healing initiation of self awareness is over; the next, which places it in the historical perspective of cultural awareness is about to begin.

Dawn to Dusk.

Backlit, long shadows reaching towards the onlookers, dimly perceived against the brilliance of a rising sun, grotesquely masked figures pace a ritual dance floor. From the masks ancient words resonate the responsive air, voices such as no man has [100]. Shadows cross and recross the space, their elongated movements tracing every heightened action of heroes in travail. Voices, god-like, unreal, as dis-attached as any Cheshire cat, stretch from the minimal architecture, seemingly not even an emission of the masked figures. Like Javanese shadow puppets, they seem several times life size in voice, form and action. Every action tells of heroism, of deeds yet to be performed. Gods move serenely among them, dispassionate, assisting here, encouraging there, meting out divine justice or injustice, their metis perfect, their every action precisely pre-judged and accurate. All around, sunrise presses into this hillside bowl the small noises of frogs, birds, dawn breezes in pine trees. Behind the measured actions, the sea metamorphoses from soft luminescence into a painfully brilliant surface hung between sky and earth, emphasising still further emotional and sensory intensity, hindering differentiation, forcing attention on the spoken word. The sacred space of the circle within which these superhuman beings move and from which they speak, rotates the action. A group of beings, choreographed, moves into the edges, tracing the circle in their agitated mutterings and cries. Momentarily they interrupt the intensity, their voices released briefly like the cries of onlookers

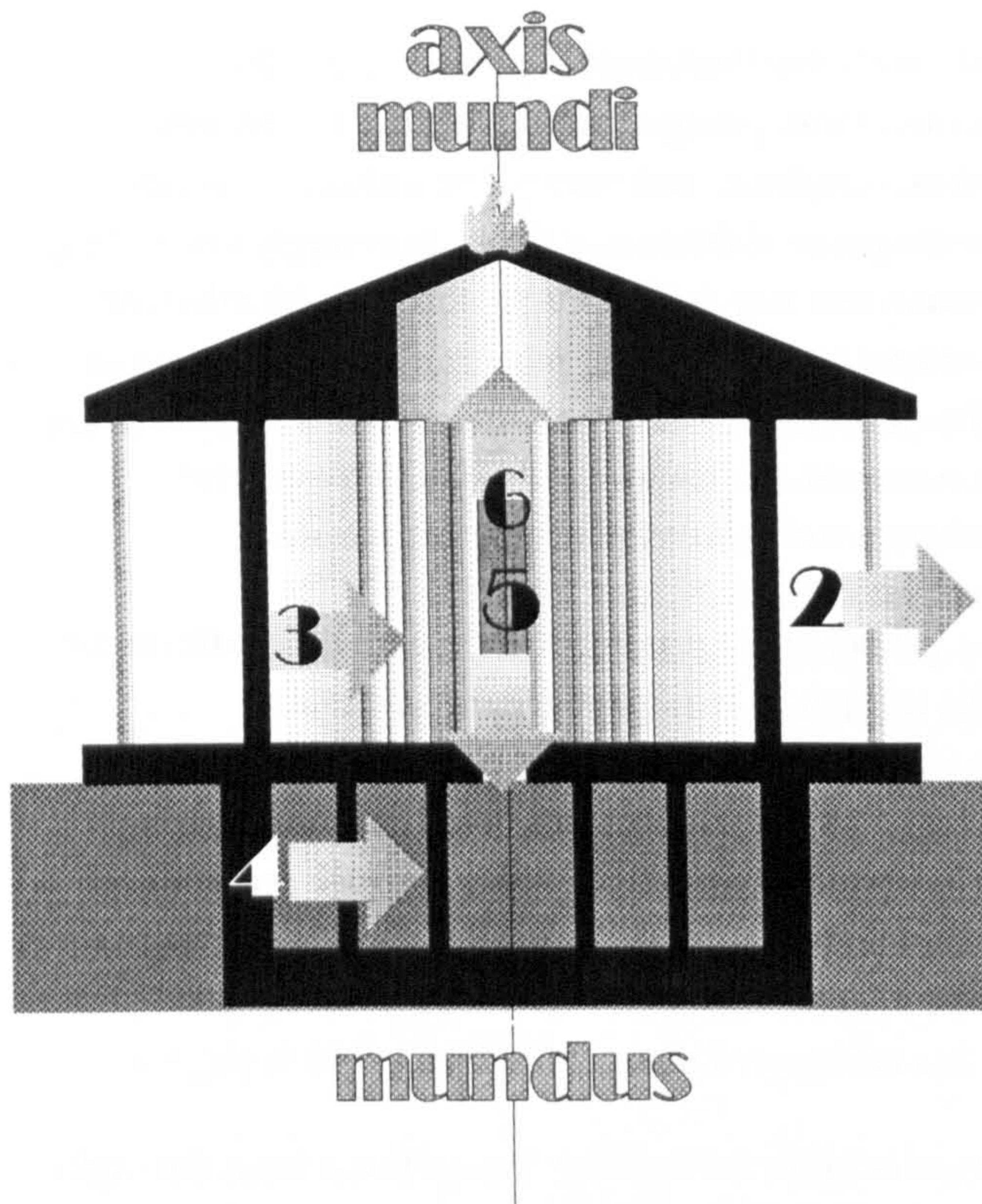
⁵. Various sources. The Bit-Akitu was the Akkadian temple garden outside the city. It was originally the place where kings waited to be invited into a free democratic city and the source of orgiastic ceremonies for a monogamous society. Two summers were celebrated in the same way, with mass processions between the city's ceremonial core and this communal Landscape. See below for developments.

agitated at the drama's most unbearable points, before the amphitheatre is once more plunged among tortured ancestors. Dramatic sacrifices, ecstatic - if temporary - re-unions are made around the altar the pivot of the sacred floor. Seemingly unavailing, despite superhuman heroism, failure bursts through the inherent fallibilities of persona, figures, voices, acts from the dream time of tribal history. The individual is less than the group. His failures are balanced by his successes, contributing ultimately to cultural success. His descendants are here, watching his actions.

Sacred space has gained new meaning, has become the platform for revelations [100] [101] [102]. It has undergone successive metamorphoses from battlefield to palace, palace to Olympus, Olympus to Hades. Abstract Landscapes invade the minds of the congregation. They have construed the space, each in accordance with his own inner Landscapes and acculturated imagery. Words from the mind of a poet have guided each through these spaces, but ultimately each has interpreted them in the manner of voyagers.

This first performance of the festival day brings those from the night of dreams face to face with the externalised magnitude legend affords ancient sufferings. A classical Greek tragedy is under way, the first enactment of external release in the continuation of the festival of Apollo-Asklepeios. This is a "temple" of Dionysos. Its circular epicentre, like that of Thymele, contains the essential drama. As it progresses the sun rises higher, the air becomes hotter, the physical stress more acute. This is no passive audience, as in a modern theatre. All are participants in a religious rite of the environment. Just as the point of unbearability is reached, the tribal ritual ceases climactically. This, when environment and fatigue combine in the denouement, is where landscapes of reality meet the abstractions of cultural and individual Landscapes.

From the segmental perfection of the inverted cone enclosing the platform, the crowd rises uncertainly, dispersing along and among the tiers, some in tears. The entrance and exit is beside the platform. None crosses the symbolic moat between them and the sacred dance floor from which their emotions have been raised and dashed in poetic sequences still unsurpassed in European literature. The grand metre of the word, spaced according to its syllables, has measured out the geometry of the cosmos which all the time has surrounded them in sky, changing shadow heights and the sounds of space. Dance measures have traced the perfection of its forms on the surface. Postures and transitions in the stylised movements of the actors have marked its presence in the air, theirs the shadows shortening with its passage in measured time. Modal music has

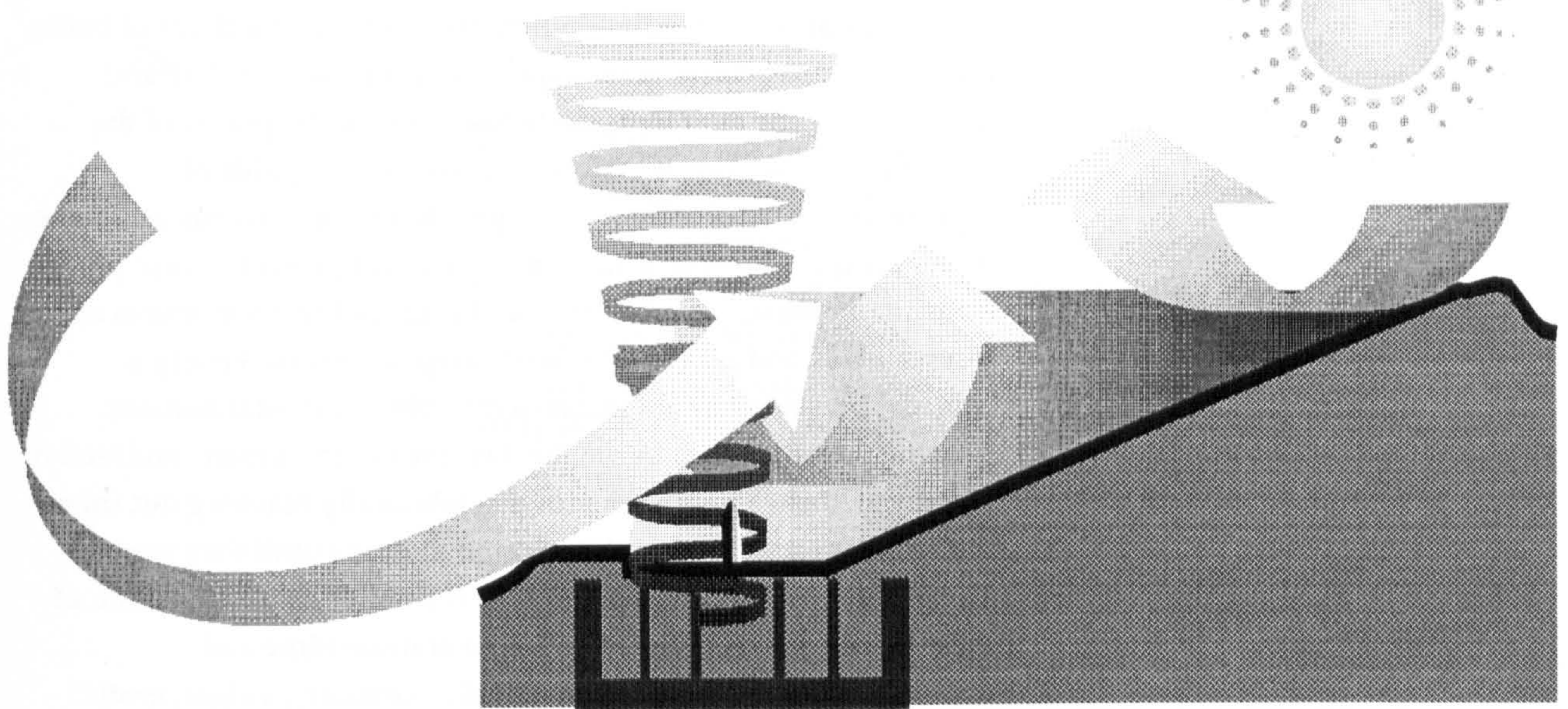


Tholos sections

Tholos is a cave, a fire temple, and the mundus

- 1 primordia was first differentiated by prising apart earth and sky; Thymele's form arises through prising apart the components of Mycenaean tholoi on the vertical axis
- 2 peripteroi appropriate external landscapes. Colonnading dissolves boundaries. Primordia is the circular form, infinite & defined. The peripteros is a landscape of transition for the cylindrical cella. Tholoi can be divided by the presence or absence of this feature. It could relate to male appropriation of female cults.
- 3 Thymele's peripteros was in the Ionic orders; its internal columns were Corinthian, an early use of that order. They create an internal grove, enclosed, apart. The floor draws a landscape of rite, from which they rise. The ceiling was coffered; perhaps it represented the vault of the sky. Like peripteral temples, cosmic transitions are encapsulated.
- 4 under the hymen floor is the dark labyrinth. It is a tactile environment where personal fears and phobias are projected & objectified by rite. It is a codified primordia, before separation of earth and sky.
- 5 inside cylindrical space is more difficult to define than its exterior. It is a horizon, giving a sense of breadth. Horizontal and vertical are projected as cosmic and dynamic. Descent into the mundus is into an undifferentiated apeiron without vision. It is a Landscape of death shared with ancestral (genetic?) spirits.
- 6 resurrection comes with the sun, Apollonian fire, on the vault. Cyclo-paeon smiths (Polyphemus) were ancestral and sacred. They were creatures of Prometheus, the first saviour deity (shamanic principle). Cave dwellers, they inhabited the landscape of death, enshrined here through the association of Hephaistos who harnessed Apollonian fire

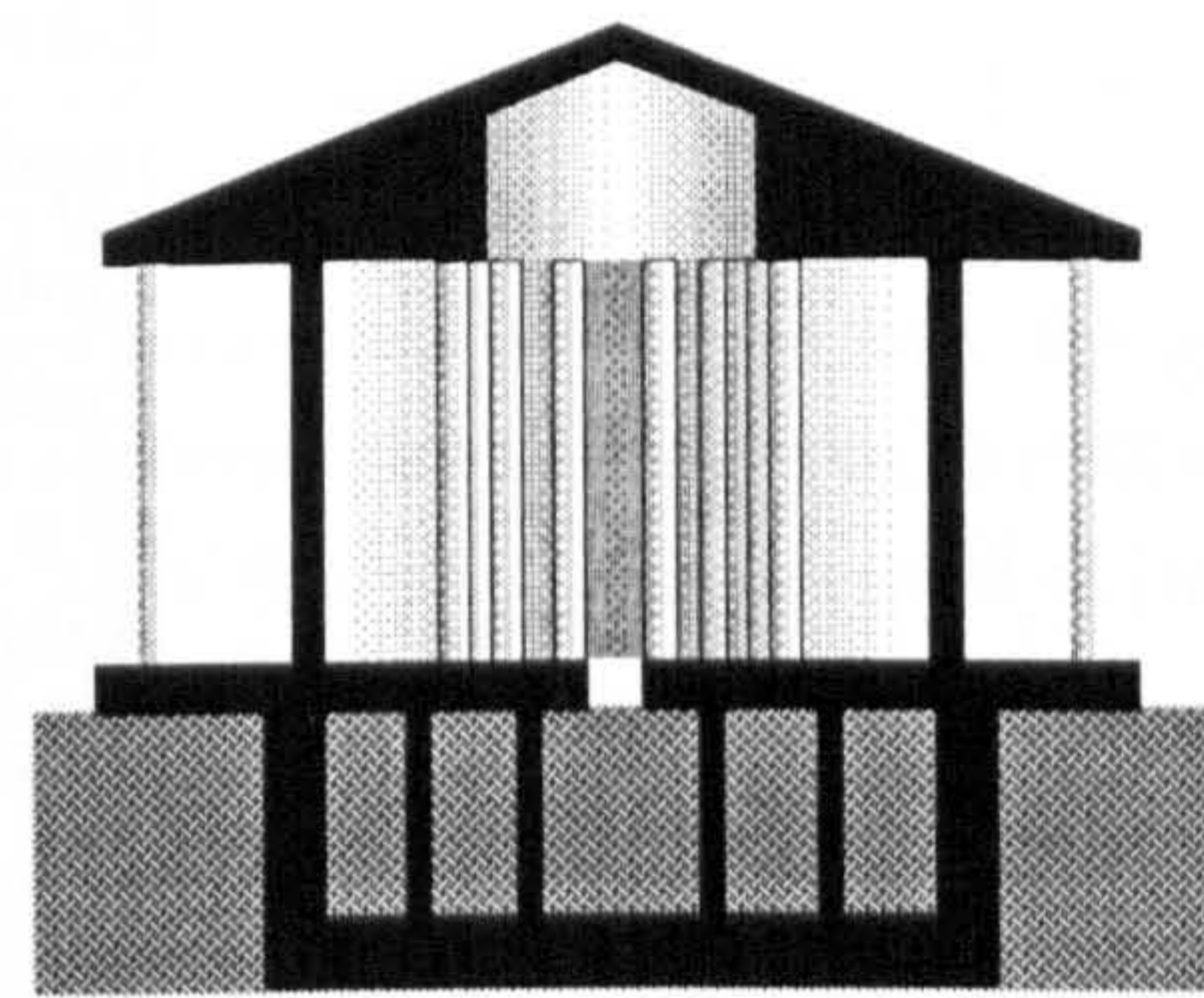
Tholos & Theatre 3 aspects of symbolic Landscape



Deities & Space: Dionysos was a relatively late Greek deity, an oriental. His space was that of settlement margins, that portion of Homer's garden occupied by vineyards. Hephaestus was more established in the tradition of sacred kings. His lineage was through Prometheus the saviour. Asklepeios represents an intellectual takeover of Hephaestus' power of human skill. Achaean tholoi were central to the planning of settlements. Dionysiac cult ultimately absorbed that of Hephaestus, returning it to Olympian space. There is thus a strong mythic relationship between later tholoi, like Thymele, and theatres.

Both theatre and tholos rely on particular landscape settings. Both cults were concerned with supporting the state. Where the tholos drove initiate participants to extreme introversion, theatre's concern was with mass catharsis. Heroes in the morning were confronted with their modern counterparts in the late afternoon, a controlled mockery of authority which released social tension in the controlled conditions of religious festival.

Landscape was appropriated on a cosmic scale. Absolute space became abstract, used in support of nepotistic systems which relied on the concept of ancestral rights. The landscape which the ancestors had colonised became the Landscape of the state. Autochthony encapsulated cosmos. Similar implications rest in the position of tholoi in early Attic cities (Lathuresa).



Tholoi compress space, sublimate the cave. The ritual purpose of Thymele was to heal through self-knowledge, driving group experience within the individual through the objectivity of rite. It was chthonian.

Open to the firmament, catharsis released energies to the Olympians. Attention was drawn to the presence of this immensity. At Epidaurus, an Attic state, the linkage of Thymele and theatre intensified ancestral ideologies and this spatial relationship first through deprivation, then through sublimation and release. Human significance was made central to cosmic space but placed in scale and rhythm within an open mundus.

Tholos & Theatre 4

shaped the air with it, as its rhythm gives form to the chaos of battle, its harmonic structures give shape and progression to time and aerial space. The altar in its circle has signified the power of the stalagmite in the cave of the goddess, aniconic, capable of representing whatever these actor-priests and their words can make it. As the day progresses, the same space will present a satyr play, horny and robust, the urban image of country life, its mixtures of forests, fields and glades filled with strap on anima. Finally a comedy, presented in full frontal light with full frontal humour. Like the tragedy which began the day, the urban human condition is portrayed. Instead of the shadows symbolically reaching out from the actor-priests, they lengthen behind like tails until they vanish. The progress of the day is marked by the unavoidable transition of these three parts from the high drama of dreamtime and dreamspace, to the knockdown of daily normality, vulgar, erotic, heroes made human. Cosmic forces shape the ceremonies of a vegetation god, just as they ever did.

Like the cave, this great art dish cut in the earth of the hillside is feminine space. An inverted mountain, it is yet as much part of mountain as any ancient cave shrines. Part of the Asklepeion at Epidauros, the precinct encompasses both. In the tholos vertical space is dominant. It is the shrine of ancestor heroes, those same people represented in the enactments of tragedy. More ancient, the tholos focuses like the cave. Tholos and theatre are spatial opposites. Tholos releases through dreams; theatre releases from dreams. Together, the process is complete. All aspects of space have been realised. The dark world has been revealed during the night. Its occupants have emerged in the dawn. They have been knocked down in a fantasy of ribald humour and then posed for the ridicule of carefully sized words in full, flat lighting which reveals all. The tholos is the cave; theatre blows off its top, revealing a hollow open to the Olympian cosmos. Modern theatres are descendants of tholoi, taking the psychodrama and enclosing it, driving it inwards to the souls of an audience more passive by far than an ancient congregation. The experiences are not comparable except where a theatre is constructed as Landscape and the players are you and I as we wander through its historical space time continuum.

Dionysos.

Like Hephaistos and Asklepeios, Dionysos is Promethian. Heracles, another vegetation deity, was his bosom pal. Like Hephaistos his union was with Demeter-Aphrodite, for Ariadne was an oriental priestess of Demeter and Demeter equates Hera and Rhea.⁶ This concept was enacted in Athens, where he "married" the queen, consummation and espousal being enacted at the ceremony.⁷ This replicates the ancient privilege of other Greek kings. His ancestry is more remote though. Let us briefly return to Siduri.

Gilgamesh emerges from his attenuated mountain passage on to a sunlit hillside. Mountain, for Babylonians, was a metaphor for Hades. It was emptiness, entrail Humbaba, the untrackable horror between earth and sky. The garden of the gods, Shamash's garden, in Greek literature the Isles of the Blessed or Elysium, stretches down the lower slopes of the far side as this mountainside reaches to the sea. For the Greeks, this was where the Westward current of Oceanus became transposed into the Eastward current of return. Gilgamesh has traversed through the earth to reach the resting place of the sun. At the gate, a veiled Siduri awaits him. She bars the gate through fear, because Gilgamesh appears like a murderer or robber. He does not have the outer semiotic of divinity. His dress of animal skins represents bestiality of human nature, one not cleansed or purified. He has not undergone the rites of the Bit-Akitu. Nor, it seems does he have the balance, but, true to form he gets his way through threats of physical violence, a symbolic equivalent of rape.⁸ The epic does not say whether he received the gift of Siduri, which was the laced ale, made with ivy and reinforced with hashish, which was the gift of easy death. If we recall, this was associated with the entirely voluntary euthanasia of early Sumerian kings. It occurred at a garden outside the city, just as the king had first been received at a garden outside the city and welcomed through its gates with music, dance and celebration. Asklepeian sanctuaries occupied this kind of position.⁹

Dionysos is an oriental Greek deity. His gift, earning his Hellenistic epithet of saviour, is creative release in dreams and sexuality

⁶. Demeter = Cretan Hera (or vice versa Hera = Attic Demeter).

⁷. *Fraser, J.G: The Golden Bough*. London 1922. pp 142

⁸. This must be an early form of allegory, for, in praising Gilgamesh, his historical character is also sabotaged effectively. The epic commences with comments about his impact on the female population of Uruk. Rape was one of the worst crimes in the Sumerian code. Its punishment was death. In one epic poem a gardener rapes Innana (Aphrodite) whilst she sleeps on the roadside near his garden, and the whole community is turned upside down. However, the urban tribe protects him, and he remains unpunished, probably because of his youth. In Gilgamesh, the implication is that he considers himself beyond such reprisal. He has mastery of the gods, which, after all, were created by an intelligentsia only as scapegoats for human fallibility.

⁹. *Berve, H & Gruben, G: Griechische Tempel und Heiligtümer*, tr. P. Waterhouse. Muenchen 1963. pp 63 -

through intoxication. Initially he was a vegetation god whose skill was beer. Wine came later, superimposed on an older technology. Two vines symbolise his garden, ivy and grape. Ritual intoxication associated with his cult is not that obtained from normal beer or wine, but an alcohol laced with hallucinatory herbal drugs, ivy among them. The idea in that differs little from the fertility and death garden of the Sumerian kings. His domain is hill- and mountainsides. His first theatre at Athens was a terrace in the Theseion, like Hephaistos, with a backdrop of cosmic proportions, a circular dance floor carefully laid flat in the natural slope, simple steps cut in the slope behind.¹⁰ Like Classical and Hellenistic tholoi, his sanctuaries tend to occupy Doric rather than Ionic site types.¹¹ Siduri's attributes have been elaborated more than a little, but her functions have been transferred largely intact. Dionysos' attributes also contain relics of that other ancient Cretan cave goddess, whose shrines were up mountainsides. He is a tree god, and depicted in herms in late Hellenistic times with his head sprouting branches.¹² The tree in Greek iconography was symbolic of male unity, the whole reflected in the vertical symmetry of all its parts. This unity is surely of the essence in the psychodrama of Epidauros. Its purpose was to reconcile the components of the persona disturbed by urban complexities with spatio-temporal ideas of One-ness, Hen. It was to re-establish psychological integrity. By implication this entailed knowing historical Landscapes as well as personal ones. The later quadripartite garden of the cloister, whose epicentre was a tholos or tholos substitute, had precisely this purpose and used similar means.¹³ It conflated and then compressed two aspects of cosmos served by this dual act at Epidauros into one deeply symbolic Landscape device.

¹⁰. *Richter, G.M.A: A Handbook of Greek art*. London 1959. Points out that doubt remains as to whether this was a Hephaistelon or Theselon. pp 383 fn.3 to Chapter 2.

¹¹. *Doxiadis, C.A: Architectural space in ancient Greece*. Cambridge Ma. 1936. pp 20. Ionians - feared infinity, lived in infinite space. Dorians - did not fear infinity, lived in finite space. Dorian routes traversed whole site and opened to the outside world. (Tholoi and theatres utilise scenic backdrops).

¹². *Onians 1979*, pp 387.

¹³. Fountain tholoi, tholoi monuments, trees were frequently present or implied as a meditational pivot. Trees derive from Dionysos and equated the concept of tholos in later antiquity as they formed one of its origins in ancient symbolism. Sometimes they were a column, and this has interesting connotations from the late empire. *Bauchhenss, G: Jupiteralgantsaulen*. Stuttgart 1976. "Maximus of Tyros, a Rhetor of antiquity and philosopher of the IIcAD complained in an extract about unusual god images, that the Celts indeed worshipped Zeus, but that their Zeuses were great oaks. It seems that as a tree honoured god, the Jupiter columns had a role in the affections of the people. The oak leaf foliage of the shaft of the column is a certain indicator of this, also the scaling of the other columns could be seen as a stylised bark ..." pp 17. tr. author. Jupiter columns signified the presence of Rome in the barbarian empire. The columns were erected locally but by order, dating largely from the time of Trajan. The conflation of tree and column states what is signified and understood by those who were born to the culture, making it clear to those who, by accident of politics, were drawn into it. It makes an interesting precedent for much Medieval practice, but also relates the column to the symbolism of Asklepeios and Dionysos. The column heads contained calendric information, laying bare the sequential and cyclical aspects of the Roman pantheon for the benefit of the alien cultures they served.

Thymele was contemporary with the great period of Orphism and Dionysiac cults, at the end of the classical period of the Vc and VIcBC. This was the period when Asklepeios supplemented Hephaistos in the Greek cosmogony. It was also the time of some of the greatest Greek architectural achievements. Theatrical performance was a religious festival. It was part of a seasonal cycle marking out the year. Like Heracles, Dionysos was a vegetation deity, whereas Hephaistos and Asklepeios represented the apotheosis of special human skills. Dionysos, through his intoxication, assumed the status of father of poetry and drama whose inspirational skills arise through dreams. His space is that of intermediary between the ancestors and the present. In other words, the Dionysiac system draws out the spectre of the past from beneath the earth. It is revealed as part of an ongoing natural sequence and one component in a composite cosmos which holds time past, time present, and time future. It lacks an orderly tidiness imparted by the Roman psyche, containing as it does an acceptance of chaos. Novalis' comment about the presence of chaos shining though the order of art is more pertinent to Greeks than Romans. That presence imparts drive and conviction. Its realisation is undoubtedly part of the symbolic enactments of the tholos.

It is unlikely that participants in Dionysiac festivals just arrived and seated themselves in the theatre. At Epidauros they almost certainly processed, a ritual of connective space which probably also incorporated its own acts. Procession and ceremony were (and are) an essential part of festivals. During Hellenistic times architectural sanctuary Landscapes assumed increasing importance. Concern for the articulation of the relationship between architectural Landscape and that of outer spaces is revealed by the treatment of the Hephaisteion on the Acropolis. Alexander's campaign architecture - he doesn't seem to have had much time to create the more permanent kind yet changed its course - experiments with natural form in its semiotic. Asklepeios' crime was to try and halt the natural cycle by preventing the death of a sacred king at the hands of the tanist. Dionysos presents the natural cycle in the fullness of its human manifestation.

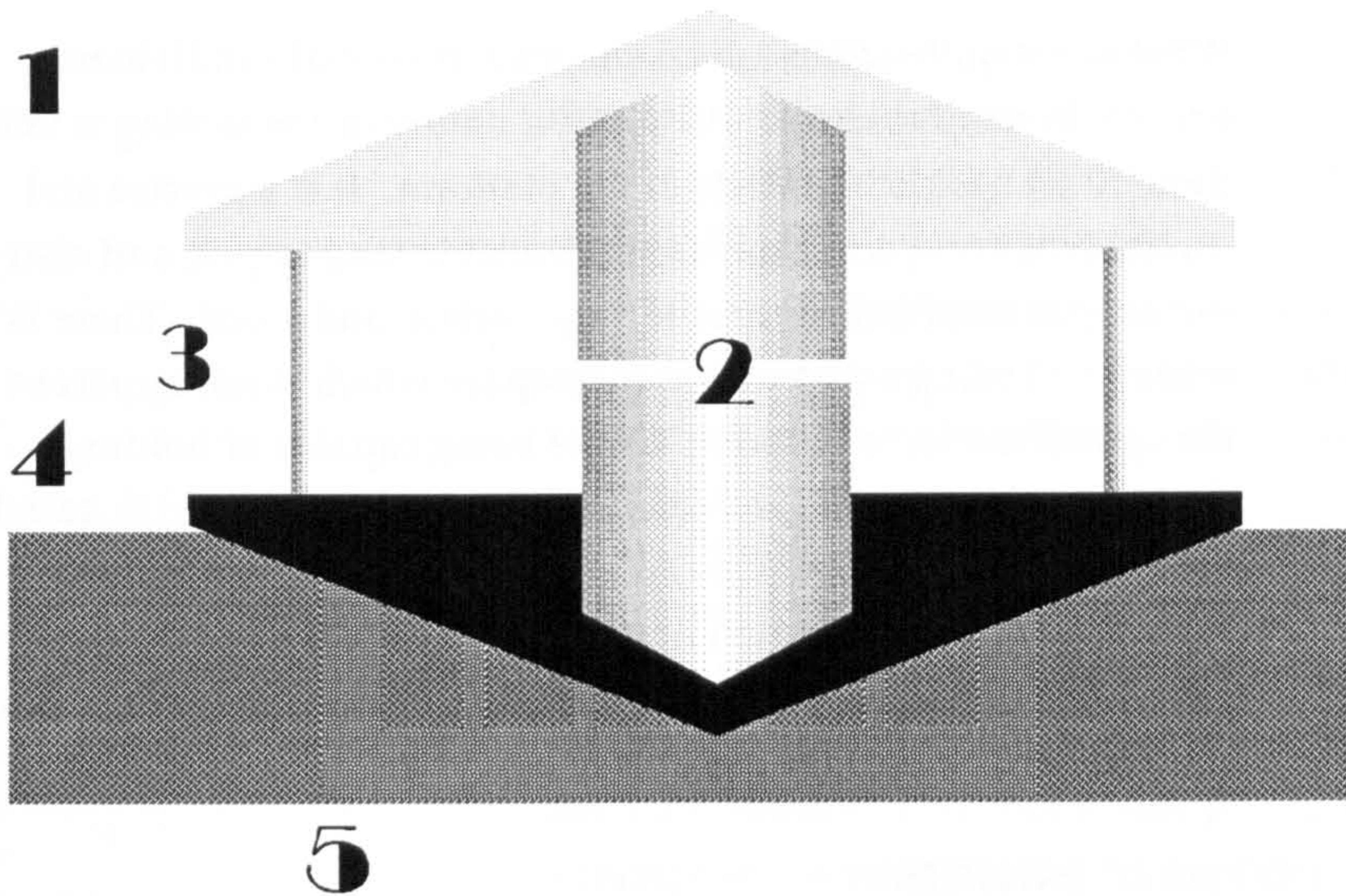
Signifying form.

Tholos contains a vertical, predominantly downward powered Orphic dynamic. Its circular plan is generally broad and spacious though, and signifies spatial equality inside. Its concentric subdivision of the circle differentiates inner functions. Early use of the Corinthian order for its interior colonnade is reminiscent of the practice of introducing a grove into temples of Athena for specific

festivals, a larger scale Adonis Garden. Theatre has a vertical dynamic implied in its use but is also fundamentally horizontal in form. Unlike the tholos it does not drive inwards, but draws out into the light forces which inhabit the other components of the cosmos, "there". Horizontal and extrovert, its main function is mass catharsis, upward powered but ultimately to maintain satisfaction with status quo. Tholos ceremonies exclude almost totally all aspects of external environment. Light is implied by withdrawal and return. Smell is manipulated by incense smoke. The mind is deceived by direct manipulation into disbelieving itself by detaching it from normality [103]. All the influences of nature participate in the enactments of the theatre. Dawn, sunrise, the sights, sounds, smells, all the sensations, from the dawn chorus of frogs behind the tragedy of the morning to the depiction of the frogs against the comedy of the evening, every random cosmic event marks out and spaces the passage of the day. Satyr plays accompany the period which marks the elegiac pastoral in the poetic tradition, the afternoon otium, a sensual time. Wind and rain, possibly even tempest, might fill the bowl along with the word. There is no escape from primordial powers in the theatre of antiquity. The rite of passage for our suppliants at the Asklepeion is from the chthonian world to the Olympian. Later theatres gained more elaborate architectural enclosure under the Roman custom of emphasising finiteness. Here, its skene was the merest suggestion of public architecture, the presence of the power, no more. In a Roman theatre it was more broadly stated.

Both of these forms are Landscapes in architecture. Tholoi react with their surroundings through their peripteros and the cone roof form, especially when the latter has its "flame" finial - a relic of Hephaistos. This same cone roof probably held similar symbolic messages to those infused into the XVc Florentine dome by Brunelleschi. Though their landscapes are inner, and completely self contained, they rely on a concept of deprivation. Any such concept depends on knowledge of having, and if one is unaware of having ever possessed access to a thing or quality, one cannot be aware of having it removed. However, there is a state of "taking things for granted" which is a blunting of awareness of the vital forces of nature. The deprivation of the tholos experience and its substitution of abstractions is devised to re-stimulate that awareness, a particular kind of healing.

Setting it in tandem with theatre is inspired. We have already seen how theatre uses every available element of natural space in conjunction with its own social and abstract spaces. The contrast is equally evident in the forms. The open bowl of a theatre is obvious.



Notional diagram of cosmic garden

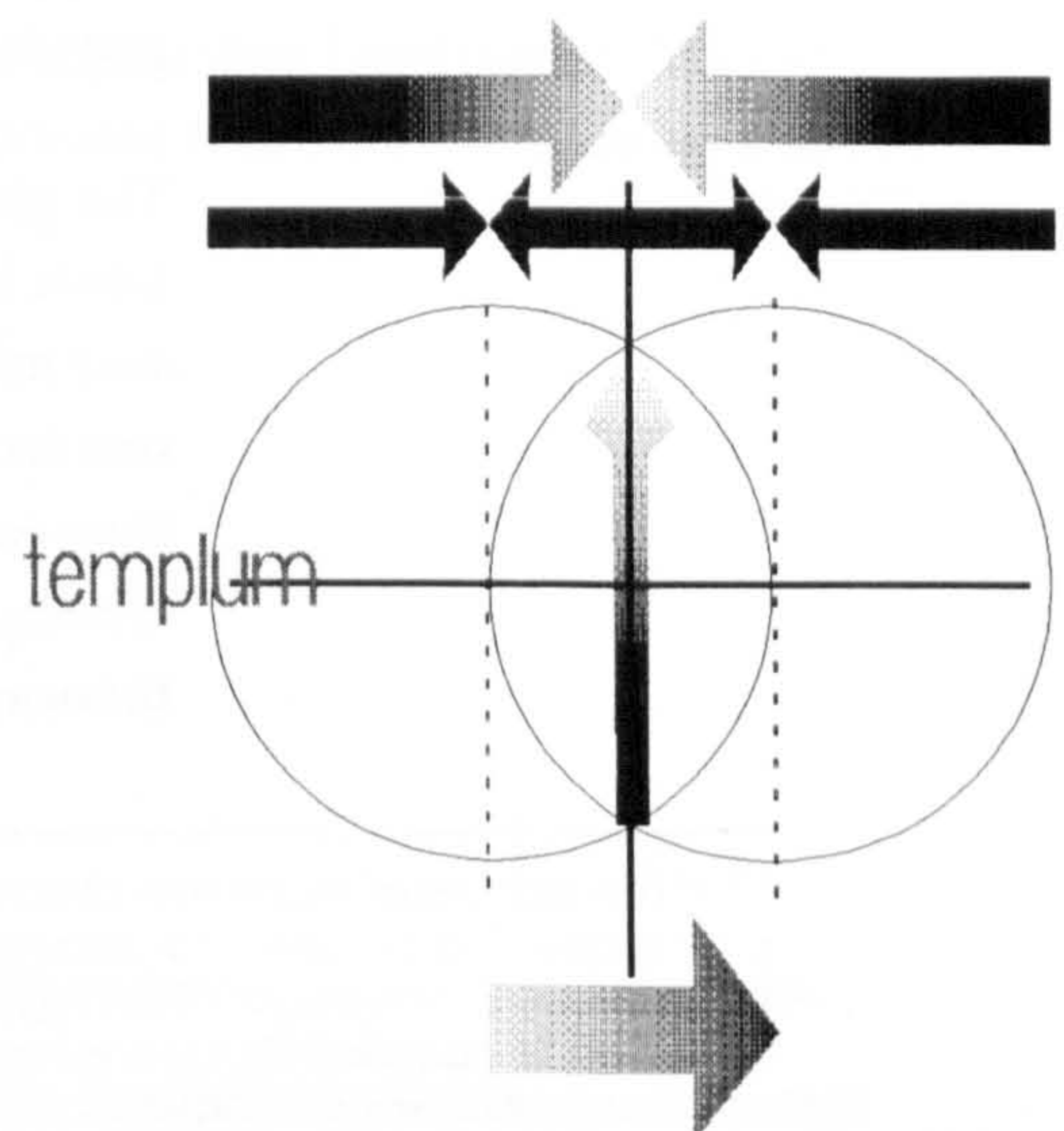
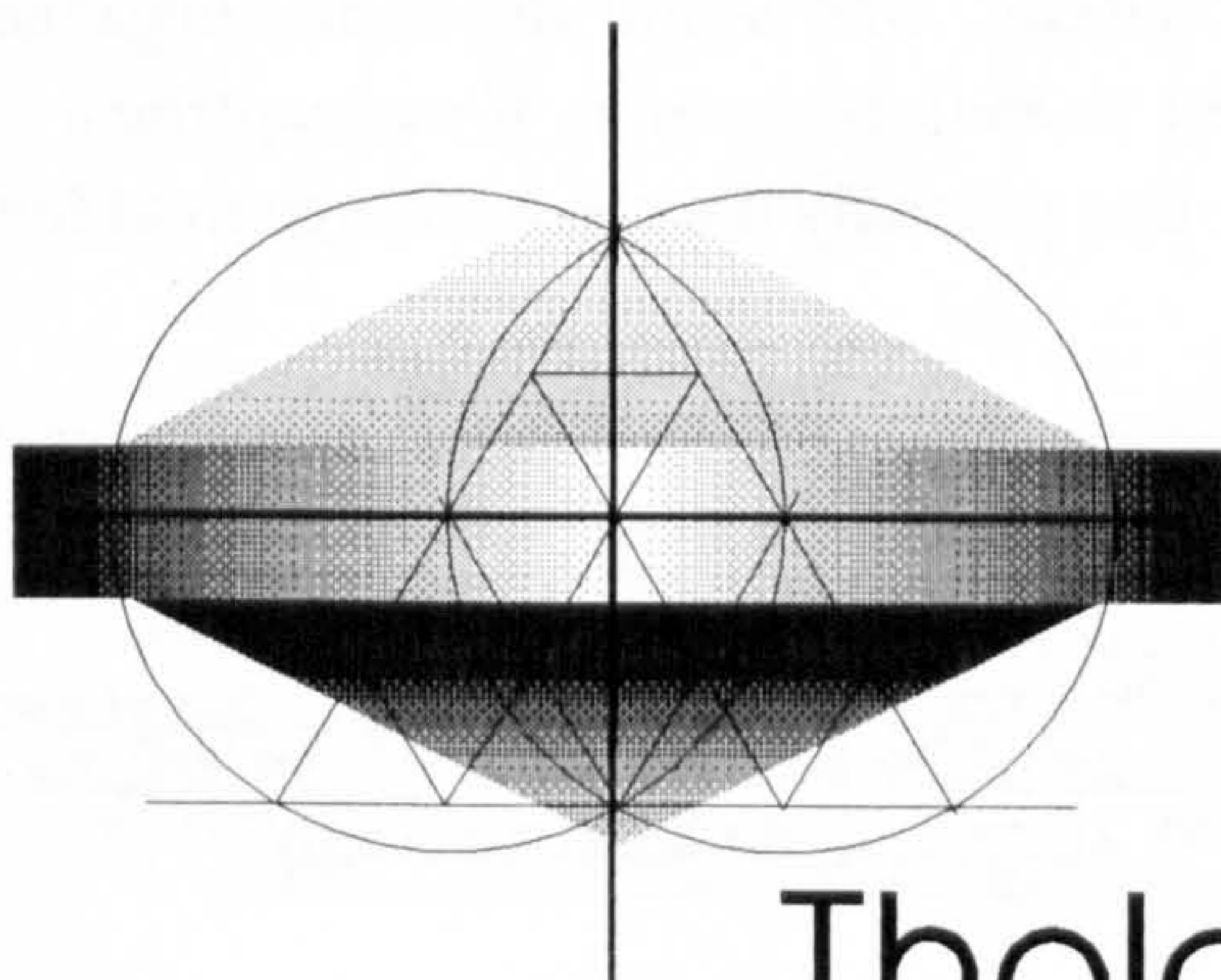
- 1 mountain & celestial vault
- 2 vertical forces transmitted via tholos variant. "The living body is present as a place of transition between the depths and the surface" (Lefebvre)
- 3 paradise colonnade like internal colonnade of tholos and sublimated sacred grove
- 4 basin of inverted mountain
- 5 labyrinth beneath, an aperas of rivers

This is probably the scheme for Lamon's garden in Longus' Lesbos. For Lesbos read Arkadia. Its similarities with the same principles inherent in the conflated tholos and theatre are inescapable.

A Byzantine twist of meaning into the type of Christian ideology found in de Meun's garden of Reason changes only the surface not the concept, allowing direct transfer to cloister and the Mediaeval paradise.

From this, it is but a short step to the ideas and form of Vignola's Villa Lante in Mannerist Italy (XVIc). de Meun's ideas of Christian humanism are reflected by Boccaccio, amongst others, and are closely related to the latter's equation of Arkadia and Christendom.

The primal act represented by the Vesica piscis is inherent in this concept of garden. It should not be viewed as two-dimensional but in its mythic multi-dimensional entirety. It is a process incorporating four dimensional space. The triadic forms which it generates are therefore pyramidal. Such powerful symbolism is a prime target for claims to autochthony inherent in the idea "garden".



Tholos, theatre, garden

What is not quite so obvious is the way its spatial subdivisions balance in natural space. The exedral nature of the seating is very directly set against the circle of the platform. It is a precise and careful balancing act in the use of available landscapes, and also in the projection of Landscapes through action and word. There is a sense of its being a part of real time-space which is not apparent in the cylindrical form of tholoi, and of being capable of holding dreamtime. Where the architecture of theatre is filled with aerial normality when the festivals are over, that it is part and parcel of the surface, in fact a celebration of the surface, tholoi have the dynamic power of a drilling rig. The outside is always excluded, other than as a memory. It is a negation of surface.

Rites and ceremonies of passage.

The procession between tholos and theatre at Epidauros has echoes of other more ancient practices from Sumer.¹⁴ In that ancient society monogamy was almost absolute. Twice annually though, the mores gave way to mass celebrations. In those early days, there were two springs a year. This has been accounted for climatically. It seems that the garden outside the city which represented all gardens of the community was used to welcome the seasons as well as new kings. The idea of removing the orgiastic ceremonies from the crowded city itself, linking the ceremonial city with it by a ceremonial way, remained part of this civilisation until banned by Cyrus. It was gradually withdrawn from the general populace with each repressive regime, eventually being reserved solely for the emperor's visits. Finally it was restricted to the imperial city before its demise. As a symbolic organisation of space it had, and has, successors. In the early days of kingship, when they ruled by invitation, it was the rule to be escorted through the city gate by the populace. This was observed later as a ritual form, a formality.

The garden outside the city was a specially Landscaped temple. Lante is a Renaissance version of a similar idea [103]. Its irrigation was more abundant than normal. In common with eastern practice one would expect a cleansing of kings after battle or travel before they entered as guests of the city. One would also expect organised fertility rites to have access to abundant water. If we leapfrog a thousand years or so, we find precisely the same arrangement for

¹⁴. It has echoes of much else besides, but parallels are being restricted here for the sake of some control over scope. The processional also has influential overtones derived from the Egyptian practice of renewing kingship every nine years, when orgiastic processions accompanied the pharaoh to the labyrinth, where he remained to couple with the priestesses of the sun or moon before his resurrection was the stimulus for another grand processional dance. Its form was of the spiralling snake. *Kramer, S.N.: History begins at Sumer.* London 1958. *Helzel, A.: The Gilgamesh epic and Old Testament parallels.* London 1946. *Kramer, S.N.: The Sumerians: their history, culture and character.* London 1963. *Kramer, S.N.: Sumerian mythology.* London 1961.

Roman emperors or returning victorious generals. It was the triumph, subject of one of Mantegna's most impressive Renaissance paintings. The hero would stay outside the city overnight in a special villa in the Campus martia where he would be lavishly entertained. In the morning, he was led out and met by a procession which accompanied him through the Porta triumphalis, the official ceremonial gateway into Rome, into the via sacra.

As one would expect from Rome, it was an elaborated progress, but contained many significant Landscape derivatives. The gateway had two flanking towers joined with an elaborated archway. Sited just outside the traditional boundary of the ancient city, it adjoined the Villa Publica. This was a state palace with a garden. From it the Triumphator was met at the Triumphal gate. From there he made sacrifice in the Porticum Divorum. This was a large open space, rectangular, colonnaded on both sides, and planted with groves of trees. The celebrant passed through this space in procession, making sacrifice again at a temple of Fortuna. This had a large exedra resembling Syrian tycheia.¹⁵ On its platform there was a baldachin containing the sacred fire. This derives from the portable campaign architecture of the Persians, which also included gardens and groves. Prominent in the sacred way beyond this, was a fountain tholos. There he would ritually cleanse himself, an act associated with imperial apotheosis. This was a royal rite, and the water came from the sacred stream Petronia.¹⁶ There would seem to be relics of those ancient divination and settlement foundation practices in this use of tholos, as well as the civic celebrations of Bit-Akitu. Many commentators have pointed out the transference of imperial rite into that of the Christian Roman church. It is a rite of passage, symbolic of preparation for deification, for the emperor's Egyptian manifestation as earthly presence of god. It recurs in one of the most famous of all Mannerist Italian Landscapes. We can even find survivals of less elaborated forms through the medium of structural anthropology.¹⁷

¹⁵. A temple of Fortuna in a different system, which resembled the heroon exedral spaces of Hellenistic Greece.

¹⁶. Most of this commentary has been derived from *Baldwin Smith, E: Architectural symbolism of Imperial Roma and the Middle Ages*. Princeton 1956. pp 26 - 28. There is much more usefully analytical comment in those pages.

¹⁷. *Fraser, J: Village planning in the primitive world*. ff 16 e.g.

Chapter Six:

Brief tours

*I really do think with my pen, because my head often knows
nothing about what my hand is writing. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, Personal
notes 1931)*

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Marzeggno: vices & the Garden of Virtu

It might at first seem contrived, even perverse, to place these two landscapes together. Lante, restrained and contained, seems to be a view of Renaissance space filtering Christian ideologies. Literary content is sublimated throughout, subjugated to architectonic perfection. Bomarzo is often portrayed as stridently heretical and anarchical, altogether another imagery. Both are landscapes of the spirit, of "innerstanding".¹ Works of philosophy, both have complex programmes which seek to encompass and express unity, the metaphysical One. Lante's spiritual intensity is constrained, but there is no more high-spirited oeuvre surviving from Mannerism than Orsini's "Sacro-bosco". It is set among crags in an upland crowded with the remains of the ancient Etruscan civilisation from which it draws inspiration. Bomarzo's personality is nationalistic, energetic and exuberant, visionary in its personification and exploration of myth. Ironies and mocking anarchical humour abound, belly laughter confounding perceived truths. Giovanni Boccaccio uses similar humour to conceal barbed anti-clerical satire, setting a resounding model. We should not ignore Sansovino's comparison with Sannazaro's *Arkadia*; a product of high Renaissance thought [overleaf]. Contemporary thought must have found sound Renaissance principles to have made the connection - or perhaps Sannazaro presaged Mannerism!

Spatial iconography in these two landscapes is more condensed and cohesive than the overt megalomania of Ippolyte d'Este's *Tivoli*, more intense than Medici's equally megalomaniac, pretty Pratolino as depicted by Utens, or the extravagant simplicity of Aldobrandini's costly Frascati *Belvedere*.² They share other virtues; *Belvedere* is obviously derived from Lante's genre, Pratolino from Bomarzo's. By accident or design, Lante and Bomarzo form an intellectual polarity.³ Lante, as befits a prince cardinal, takes its inherent messages seriously. Self-consciously beautiful, its dualities are eloquent, resolved in doctrinaire Albertian symmetry as espoused by the Neo-Renaissance. There is no more prospect of occupants being subverted from the ideal and perfected human duty to love only the Hebrew god than there is of dragons emerging from its fountains or grottoes.⁴ Both are concerned with those ethics and moralities found in the work of Mantegna, each in its own way [105].

Lante is fitted wall to wall with establishment ideology against which, much of the time, Orsini indulges his wry, vibrant humour. Its boschetto, a gestural *Arkadia*, contains little hint of darker functions once concealed in real Arkadian sacred groves. Ancient classicism is (or rather was) carefully marginalised into a distant Golden Age - once upon a time before Demeter replaced acorn with corn. Sadly, fountains, mazes, bowers, have long since disappeared, leaving a denuded rather than spare iconography with a compositional balance quite different from the original. Most of the careful ambiguities employed by humanism have been lost. Space here in Cardinal Gambara's Elysium is ideological, its semiotic lines as carefully drawn as in Uccello's Medici victory, as at Bomarzo.⁵ Gambara assumed the Renaissance harmony between Christianity and Classicism. Both are, as this type of landscape has ever been, rich men's princely pleasures, conceits, with derivation in the psychological space afforded to wealthy men by Octavian's political device of the *Princeps*.⁶

¹. Innerstanding is used in arcane circles, eg. alchemy, to name the truly initiate understanding of the concept of wholeness, of the Aristotelian hen. For a clear exposition needing no esoteric knowledge try *de Rola, S.K.: Alchemy, the secret art*. London 1973. pp 14-16. There is more discussion below.

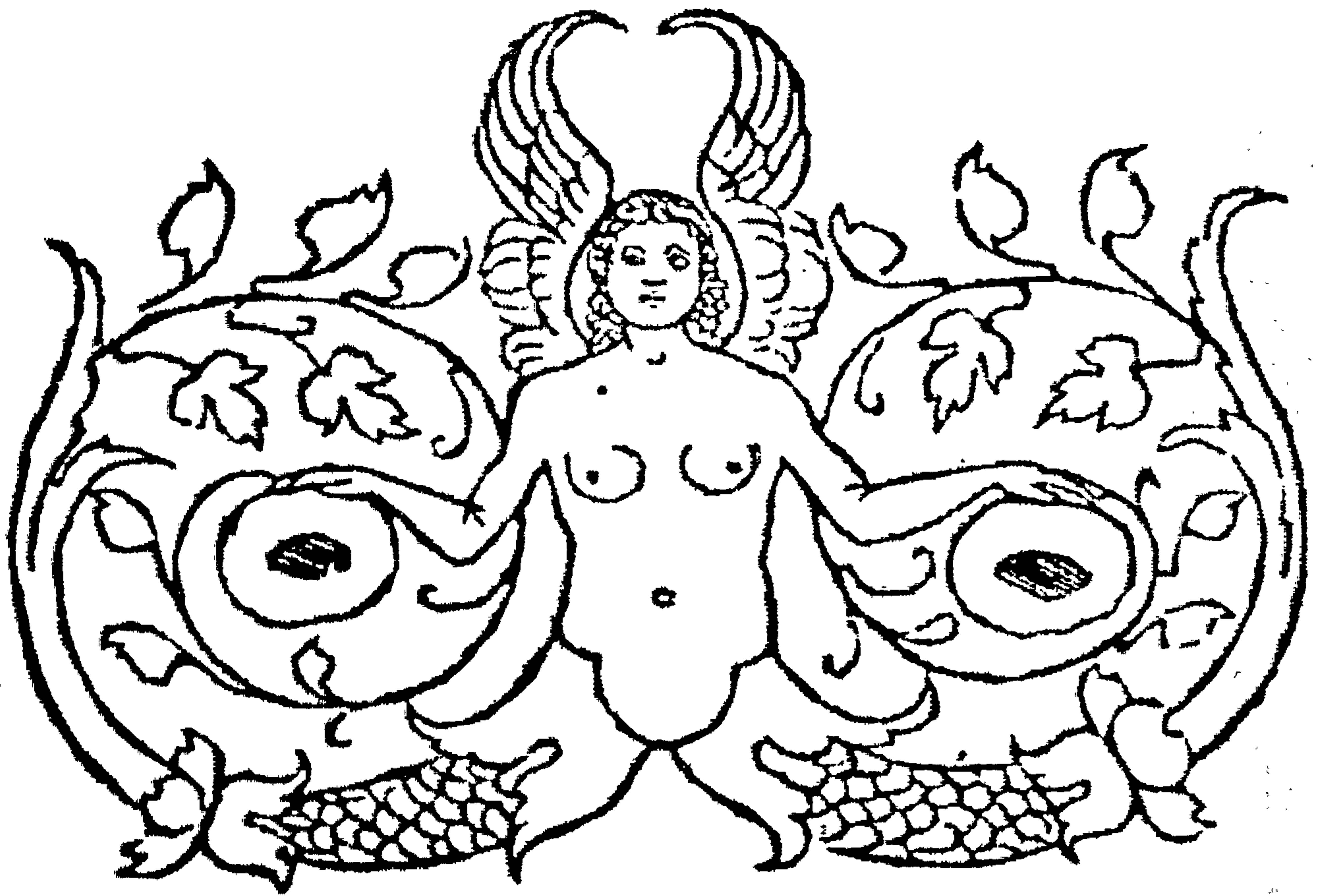
². d'Este at Tivoli is a magnificent display of personal power and iconographic appropriation, and of course has had greater attention and state funds lavished on it than Bomarzo, ensuring the survival of more features. In economy and intensity of expression, Lante and Bomarzo are unrivalled in their closely knit iconographic unity. Ironically, it was Aldobrandini who was sent to take over the Ferrarese estates on the death of Lucrezia Borgia, marking the end of an energetic dissidence.

³. The dual nature of nature, of image and mirror image where the mirror represents the symmetry of the labyrinth by its inversion or contrast.

⁴. This does not mean the dragons of fairy tale but the symbolic ones of alchemy and iconography.

⁵. The battle of San Romano; see Chapter 1.

⁶. In establishing the strange concept of emperor that he did, Octavian enmeshed the contemporary plutocracy in the scheme. With its absolutism concealed, this entitled the upper classes to a greater share in the ritual. The concept of the triumph was replicated a thousand times in the design of the villas of this class. Eventually



ALL'ILLVSTRIS S.
SIGNOR VICINO
ORSINO
MIO SIGNO'RE.

One was toiled over as a life work; the other was the (illegitimate?) child of an architectural genius. One has an air of Mediaeval scholasticism couched in a Renaissance mould; the other has Alberti's pursuit of vigour but uses many devices arising from Mediaeval icons. "Do not judge what you are able to do until you have first tried; and if you did not do well trying, you will do better next time".⁷

Pages from a personal notebook.

Bosky Bomarzo.

It is quite a long journey out of Rome to Bomarzo. Professor Nylander's generous loan of Bredekamp's two volume biography of the garden with Wolfram Janzer's moody photographs whets the appetite. The steady progress of the express 'bus through the rolling Tuscan landscape northwards is itself a pleasure. By the middle of the day one is deposited on the cross roads at the head of Bomarzo's main street among the strong stone vernacular buildings of an agricultural community. Without the aid of the plan from the book finding the garden might have been difficult. The walk down the street to the castle is full of interest, crowded with that same stone building which speaks of enduring strength and continuing usefulness. Every so often a view would present itself, squeezed between bronze stonework but once through infinitely expansive. Clustered buildings glow on distant scarps beyond the richly textured and coloured agricultural landscape, at its resurgent peak in May. Near the castle the street narrows into finely labyrinthine passages under the bulky walls. A helpful sign points the traveller in the general direction of the "Parco di Mostri", and one takes a small road over the ridge of the crag out of the shadow into a sunlit valley.

Below spreads a small scale agricultural landscape, olives, fields, some vineyards, hemmed in by a dark ridge under whose brow edge Orsini's mysteriously sacrificial grove beckons. In the afternoon sunshine the walk pleases, through a utilitarian landscape out of which crags erupt, abrupt and unexpected, with their tufts of olive scrub and wild trees. Gradually the ridge takes over the sky. One enters the valley of shadows. Crossing the car park there are few visitors - two German number plates, one Scandinavian, one English, and a Roman coach. Information in the shop and ticket bureau is scant. One prefers to remember Bredekamp's plan where necessary but mainly to maintain that essential to all good exploration, a free mind.

its symbolism came to be the very fabric of their rich architecture, exemplified in Nero's Domus aurea, Piazza Armeria and Hadrian's Tivoli, as well as those of Campagna.

⁷. Alberti. *Opere volgare*. I:19 (via *Gadol, J.: Leon Battista Alberti* pp225).

Lakeside idyll.

The lake is startling for an Italian garden of the XVIc. It is large and sits there with perturbing naturalness. Expectancy caused by preconceptions built from too much reading and numerous visits to more conventional and conventual prelate palaces is disturbed. It has about it that shimmer and sheen in a landscape of grove and glade that is reminiscent of more gentle savagery in the English shires only much later to find a home in Tuscany. Can it really be true, one asks? Has it been meddled with? But Janzer's careful plans reveal all. Indeed one sees here, at the outset of Vicino Orsini's bosco evidence of a genuine humanist pragmatic mind that does not seek to grind nature into Neo-Platonic constrictions excusing the failure of reality to match ideologies. Not far to the left is the sound of a rushing stream as it tumbles into the lake. The face of an exotic creature in golden stone lurks in the deep shadow of heavily tree clad slopes. It has no relict context here, a novelty, it seems an eye catcher divorced from former companions. Up the grassy slope overlooking the lakeside, trees in their pretty coloured spring foliage bring to mind an English nineteenth century evocation of the Romantic style, not very convincingly.

Which way does one go? No use asking the sphinxes. They are lost too according to Bredekamp [106]. The bosco is least dense at this point on the lakeside. One turns naturally right, away from the fantastic grimace, towards the hidden action. Scattered sculptures along the way suggest the kind of promenade one learned to expect from Stourhead or Castle Howard, slightly decayed statues of sphinxes, stone benches, finely carved pedimented arches toppled in the grassy slope. Down a small bank and the path enters trees, alders mainly, past a tumble-down tower, then suddenly and unexpectedly one comes upon Psyche [107].

Psyche on the hill.

She is so beautiful here among the trees in her small glade, this statue, so lovingly hewn from one of those lumpy rocks heaving up from the fields. There is a stillness and expectancy in the presence of this sleeping nymph who holds the erotic key to our dreams. Her neo-mythic status at the hands of Apuleius was well earned, a precious capsule of dreams which express the core of Isis-Serapis cults with their Epicurean-Asklepeian foundation. Were this a real being one would be repulsed by the bulk of the creature before one. Her young sculptor has transmitted feelings through the stone which transcend its mass. There is access to the spirit within those

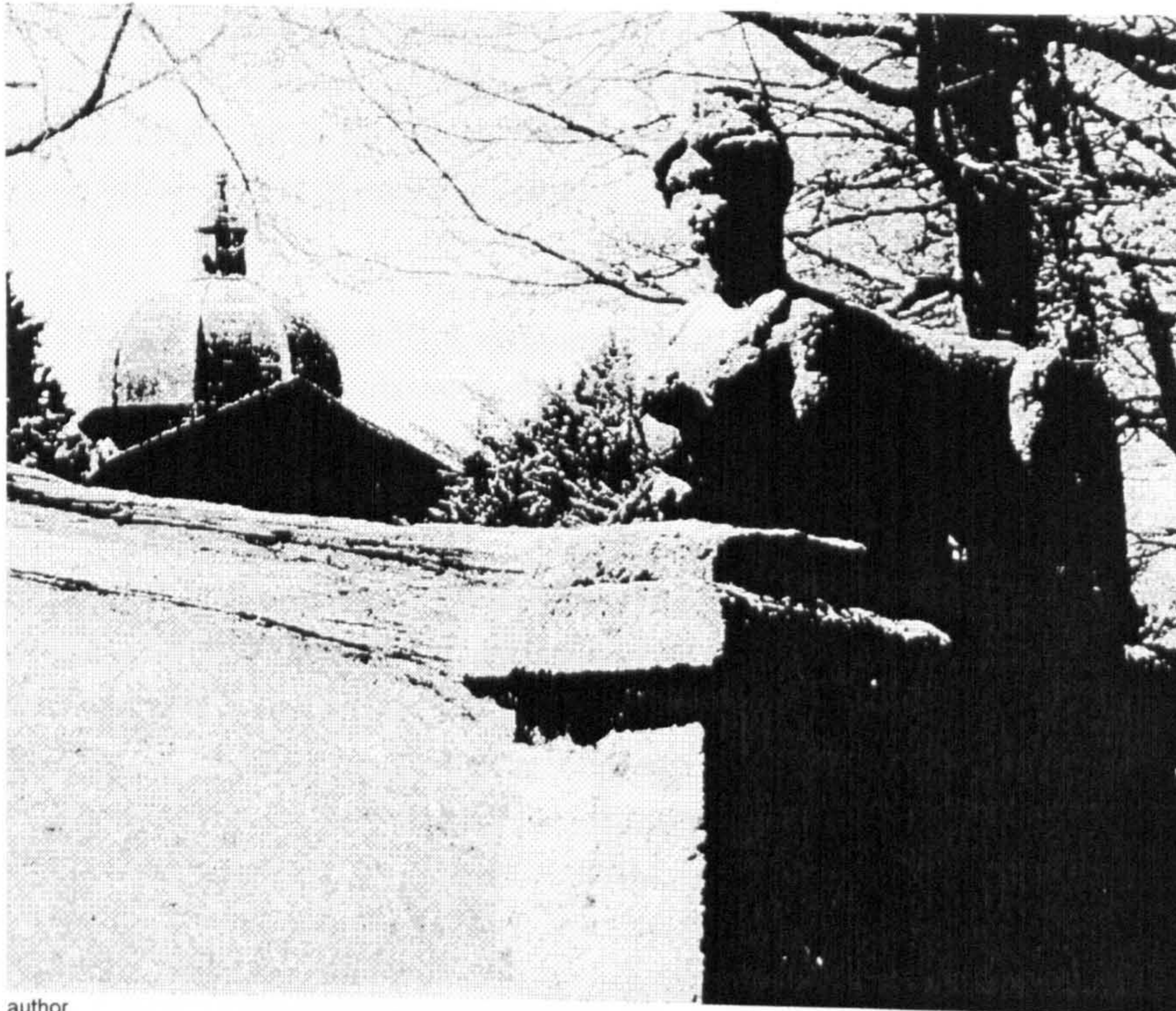
still, anatomically inept limbs. Minutes of contemplation absorb unvoiced feelings before one becomes aware of the scene, the leaning tower house among still collapsing ruins. There is much to see, limited time, and no Ariadne appears to transpose the secrets of this labyrinth.

Sadness reigns on the theatre terrace. Pieces of mordant carving lie around. Edges lack balustrades, their communication with space beyond. The small temple is a scant relic. A grinning sun mask, seen in place on a Janzer photograph taken only two years before, lies on the ground where it has crashed. Alas poor Phaeton. There is little time to dream it back to life, arduously, piecemeal. A long vista opens through the trees along the river bank, a river more heard than seen below to one's left. Past the temple the bank swells out, constricting the passage opposite a large bath carved with noble dolphins. This is most surely Dionysos' boat. No ordinary boat, for filled with water on a hot summer day, its gay companions babbling jets, one could readily sit at its helm and enjoy the Bacchic presence in its dappled shade. Just around a corner a carved recess crumbles, set behind one of the most organic sedilia ever seen. It is a very companionable corner. Temptation is to sit here and wile away the whole afternoon in dreams, not just minutes [108].

The long walk.

The riverside axis, the only long axial feature in the whole garden, continues its sequence of events. Phallic "trees" erupt on rock at the side of the path along with stump columns. Passing between them one is ejected into the remains of a circular space, once a basin. At its centre Hippogriff looks the worse for wear [109]. The river is closer here, its presence felt in the sound of a trickling cascade, the perfume of balsam and humidity. Beyond the circle, a gigantic turtle majestically carries the Medici world on its back ambling complacently towards the almost concealed mouth lying in wait in the ravine [110]. Imagination begins its work, the mouth to hiss and spout water; the trickle over the dam becomes a roar and water fills the space with turbulent presences; behind, in the circle, the stone basin splashes from many jets, accompanied by tambourines, words, eternal song of the comely ladies, half human half immortal who once stepped its round.

This is a terminus. The steps to river level are not passable to view the *Ketos* in a more menacing perspective. This was a fun corner. Behind it two huge anthropomorphic bedrock sculptures are engaged in strangely sexual wrestling. No neo-classical bowdlerised Greek image this.

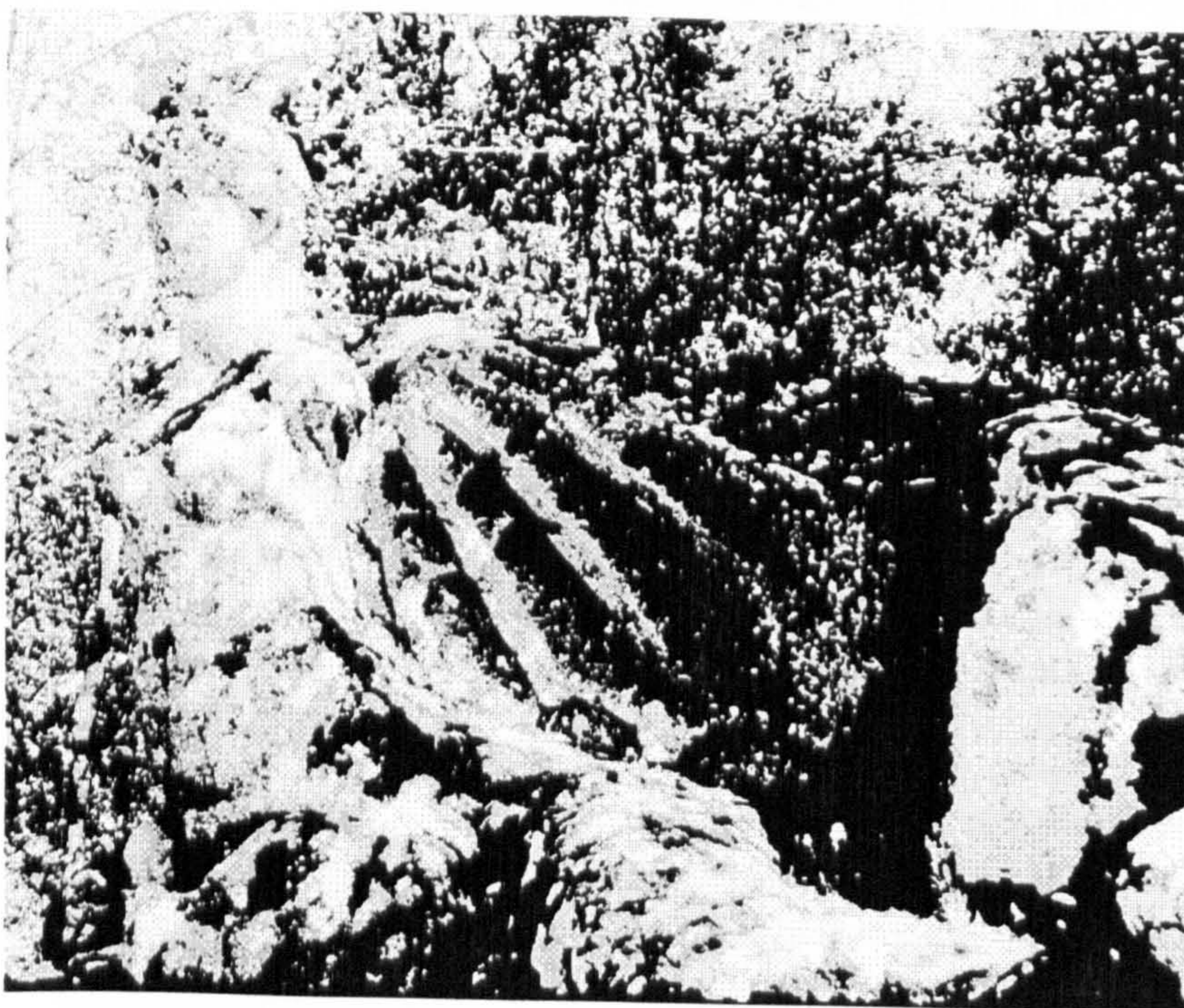


author

"No use asking the sphinx the way, she's lost too" Many of the free-standing statuary groups have been moved around the Landscape, confusing the programme and its hidden meanings.

Displaced person

author



Despite mutilation, bedrock sculpture is less mutible. Chimaera here faces Echidna in a duality reminiscent of Mantegna's two chimaeras. Between them the symbolic lions indicate that Orsini intends process allegory. Attention has been drawn to Boccaccio, but Mantegna's rescue of foolish humanity is also probable. We should expect multiple layers from an alchemist!

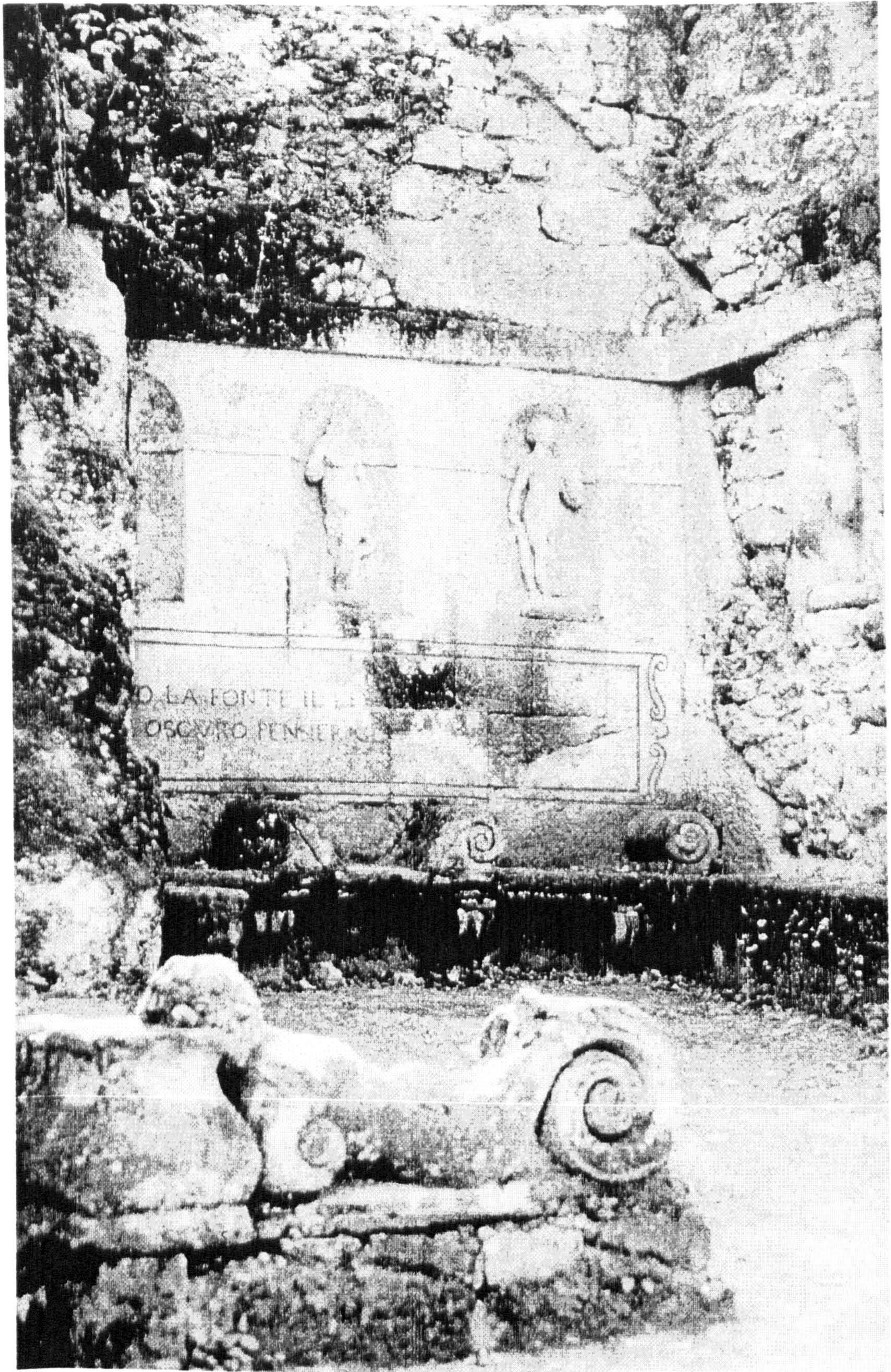
Fixed phenomena



author

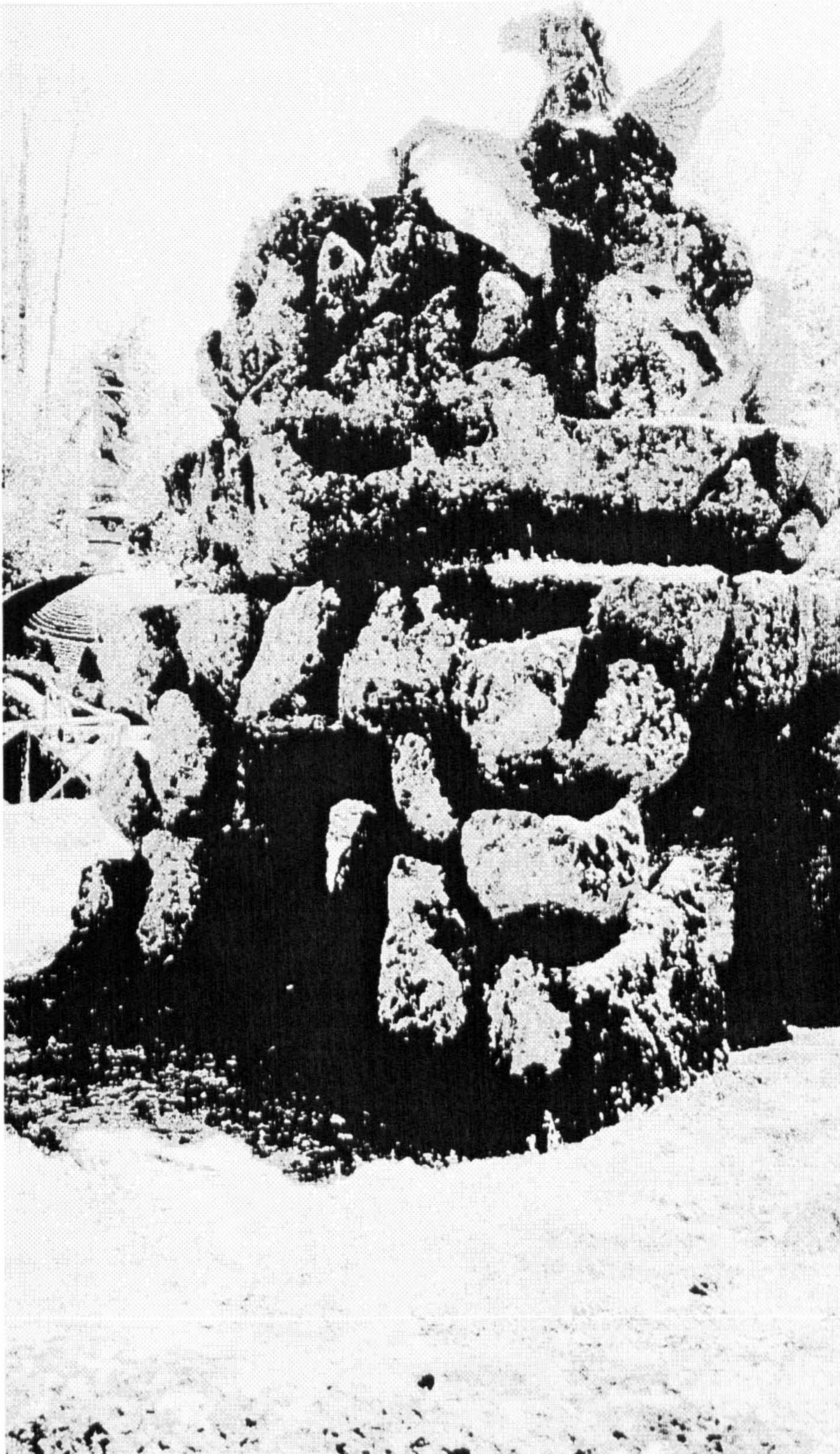
Psyche (foreground), herself a Landscape, overlooks wild hillsides beyond the Sacro-bosco beneath which its lushness is heightened. This contrast seems a considered use of external landscape, drawing attention to symbolic Landscapes inherent in Apuleius's pseudo-mth and extensive vistas beyond the densely structure boschetto.

Psyche-Saphos & external space



author

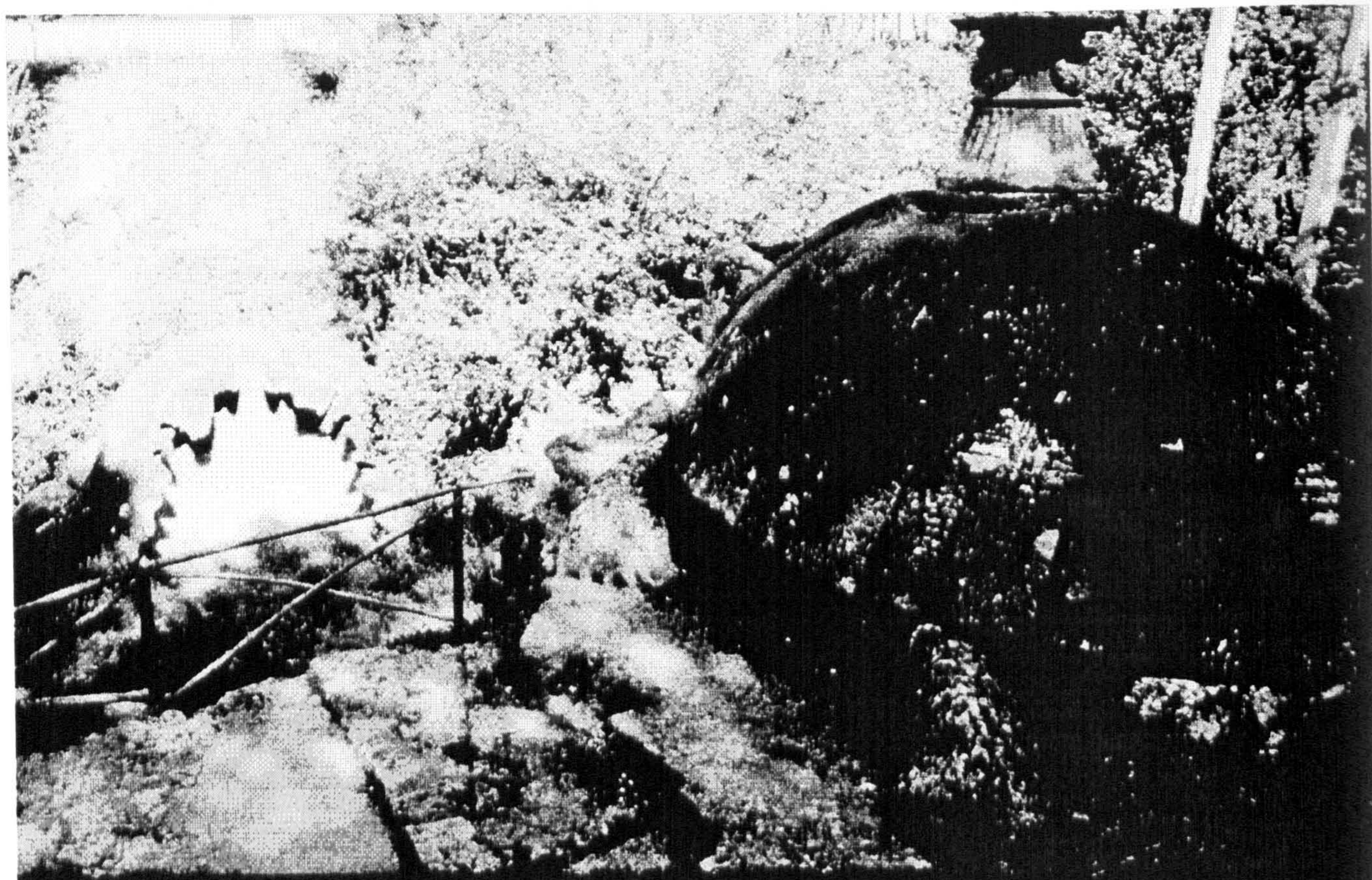
Ninfeo



Bereft of his beautiful & gifted companions, a forlorn Pegasus presides over the waterless shallow dish on his Olympus. This Pegasus pre-dates that of the villa d'Este by several years, but has similar meanings. Its implied spaces are those of Arkadia, together with their associated meanings through Boccaccio & other Renaissance iconographers.

author

Helicon & Arkadia



author

Orsini's irrepressible sense of humour almost always has a dark and serious side, and this joke with Tyche Fortuna on her tortoise/turtle is no exception (see PI127 - 129)

Festina lente!



author

Lion and dragon signify process allegory at several levels, much embodied in alchemical imagery; they are male & female symbols.

Sulphur & Mercury

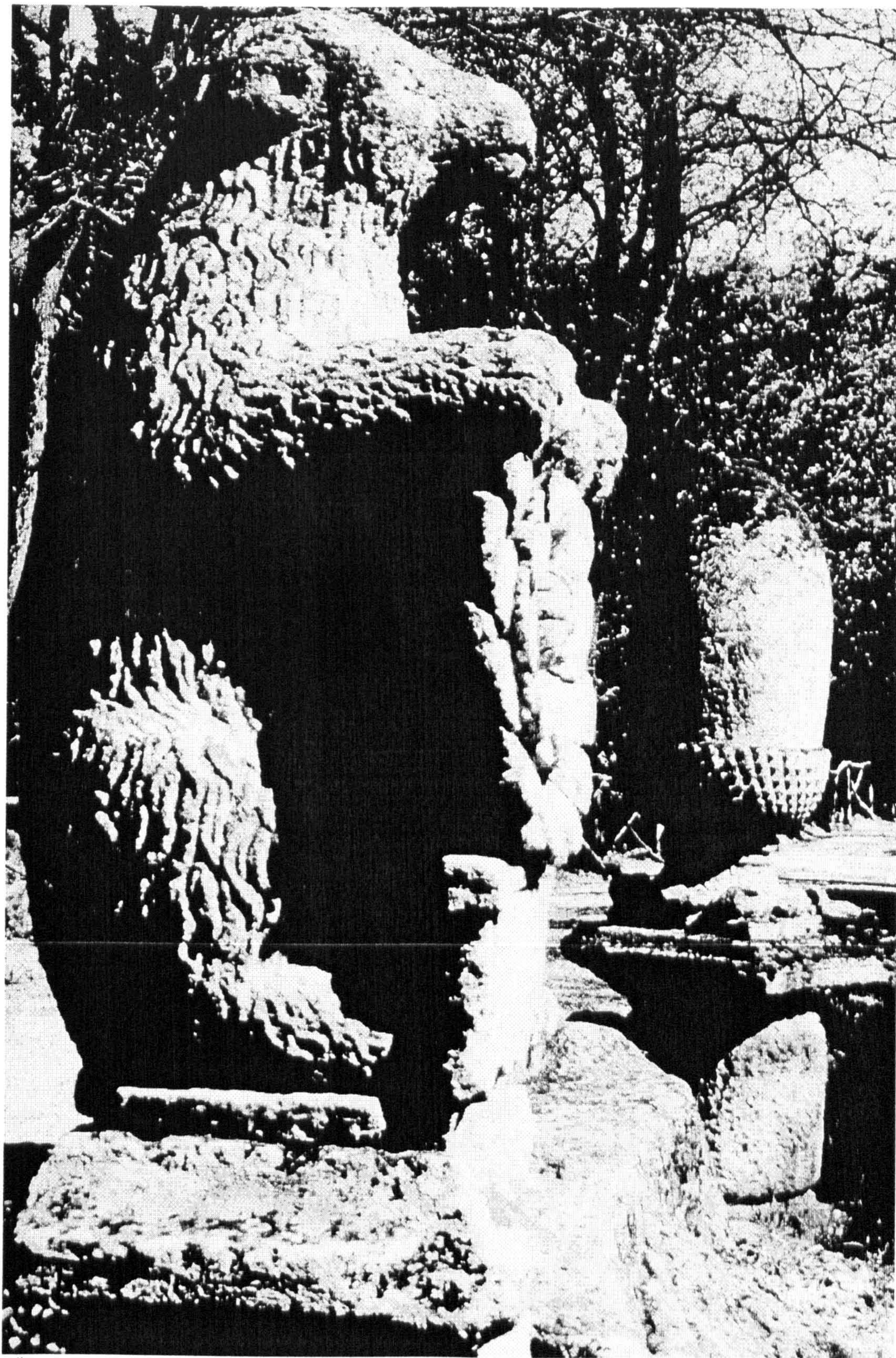
Bredenkamp's two weighty volumes are not really field guides, so one is forced to think, or failing that to try and remember things read. Steps are retraced for the pleasure of re-iteration, a mixture of intense joy and masochism resulting. This is because the elemental creative energy is still present; facing the ruins through which it struggles is a punishment. A ruinous garden, far more than ruined architecture, is a contradiction in terms.

A world of wits.

The leaning tower regained, halting to contemplate the theatre of Psyche yet again, access is gained behind it to stairs leading up to the terrace of urns. What a strange place in which to find Roland's wits! Oddly, the huge statue of Demeter does not immediately impose itself. There is a feeling that the rectangle within the urns was once a basin of water. From here, the castle can be seen on its distant crag, a view managing to hold its own in competition with three huge bedrock sculpture groups. Indeed, the density of imagery at this juncture is at its height. One is assailed by one startling image after another. Poseidon reigns where water once poured from the earth, a riot the equivalent of Trevi. His bevy is guarded by a gigantic fish inset against the bank, a hollow whose shape suggests many modern villa swimming pools set between him and the urns. Just to the side of Poseidon's proscenium theatre, allegory is hidden by drama as a huge winged dragon fights to protect its young from attack by a pair of lions [111]. Face to face in another image of strife an elephant under an oriental tower rolls a centurion in its trunk under the grimacing encouragement of a mask cut in the rock face.⁸

A rare emptiness beyond these separates a single ornate giant urn and a singularly ugly sheep. From the corner of this emptiness an endless flight of steps cuts deep into the platform over whose edge huge acorns and pine cones peer [113]. The stairway, heralded by a giant urn which thinks itself a Bacchante, adds an unusual ceremonial note into this most unceremonial of ceremonies. Uneven through collapse of the substructure, the stairway has the strength and grandeur of vernacular buildings in the village. Almost as soon as one begins to climb, it is apparent that it is not one long flight. The shorter stretch quickly deposits one behind a monumentally still female statue of grey stone at the epicentre of an exedra. She gazes steadfastly out over a realm bounded and enclosed by acorns and pine cones. Fifty metres away an equally steadfast gaze is returned by two bears - a pun on Orsini (who called himself bearkin!)? - who

⁸. The tower has Sassanian crenellations.



author

The Orsini

guard that exit [112]. The Orsini versus Persephone! - alliance, liaison or adversaries? An elegant realm and not unduly overlooked, it commands excellent views. Here is where spring arrives and departs, one of the many clues to ancient landscape meaning in myth in this demonstrative grove, the demesne of Persephone, an energy interface between decay and renewal where individual life and death are subservient to eternity. Persephone's place!

By now the density of imagery overwhelms. The mind stops decoding and interpreting. Two bears grin as they enact a portal, and Persephone's place gives way to a smaller antechamber of ancient erotic pleasures gone awry. Seraptic nymphs with voluptuous faces like real people, not stereotypes, enfold another exedra within their scaly tails, sandwiching a family of lions held enthralled by their charms. At this point the question of the original planting occurs. Amidst all the natural regeneration from four hundred years how does one begin to find the shapes of orchards, of pine and cyprus groves in this closet of alder, birch, acacia and rowan?

Persephone's Place.

A turn at the end - there is only one exit now (and is Persephone on her earthly visit or presiding over Hades? What is the function of Cerberus here, to protect access to the temple or the realm of Persephone?) - a long flight of steps arrives at the temple. In the dense shadow cast by brilliant sunlight from a cloudless sky without any haze, it is a slightly grim building seen from this angle. It towers over the head of the steps. One senses that this is probably intended to be taken in the opposite direction, approaching first the elegance and proportional eloquence of its elaborately symbolic pro-naos. Or does its author really want us to feel the utter desolation of its turned back? [114]

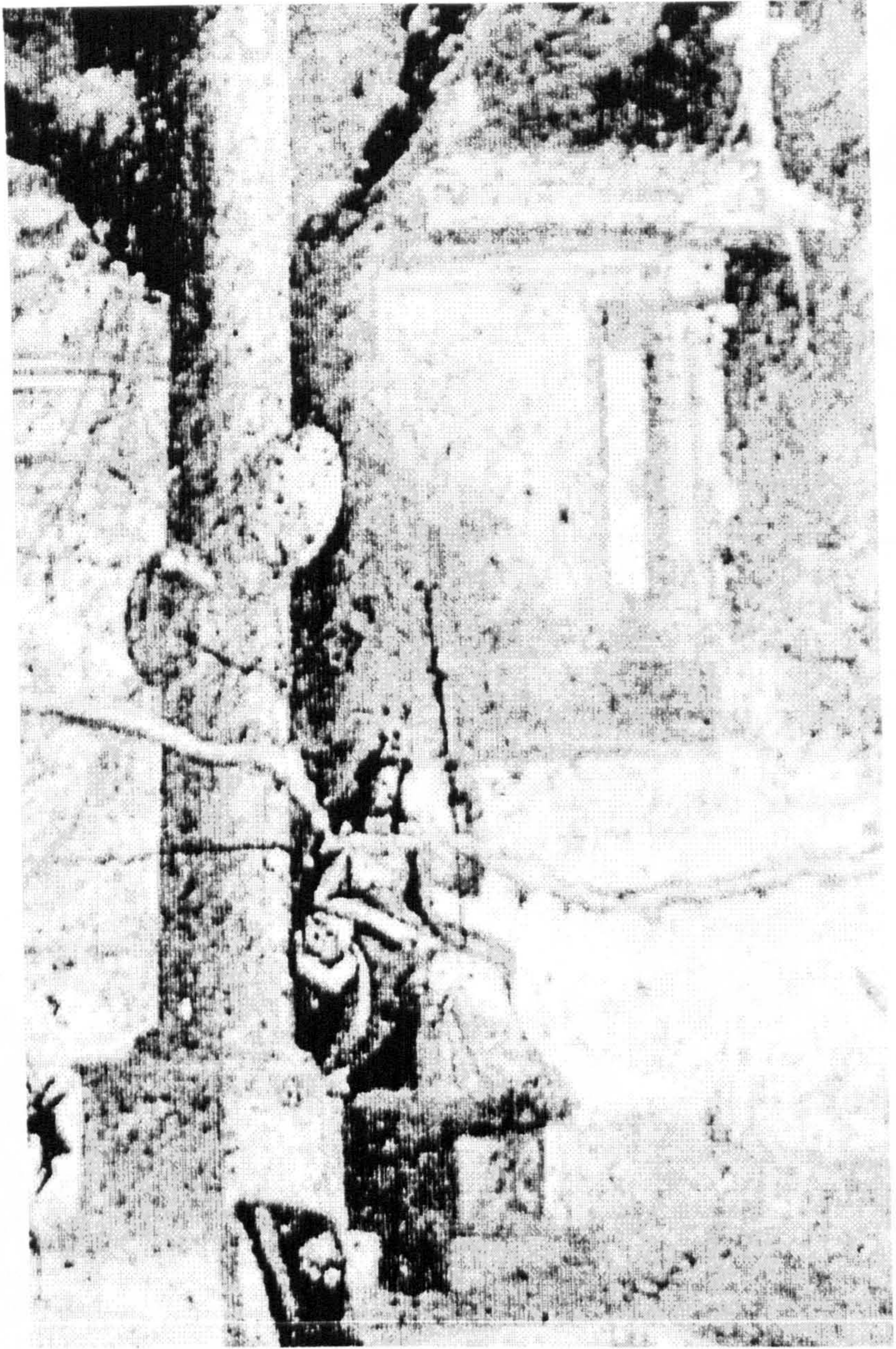
Walking the sward away from the compressions within these architectural statements, some not apparent during a first visit, carefully carved rock outcrops like ancient altars beckon across the lake towards the castle. But time is short. It is closing time. Retracing one's steps beside the lake, the grove is silent. The cars have left the car park. The sunlight has a distinct slant, flattening the facades on the opposite side of the valley into a vivid stage set from Serlio or Inigo Jones. This traveller has a history of overstaying his welcome in historic gardens, anxious curators in hot pursuit. There is just time to catch the last 'bus back to Rome and - hopefully - a good meal in the city. It is a lovely walk back across

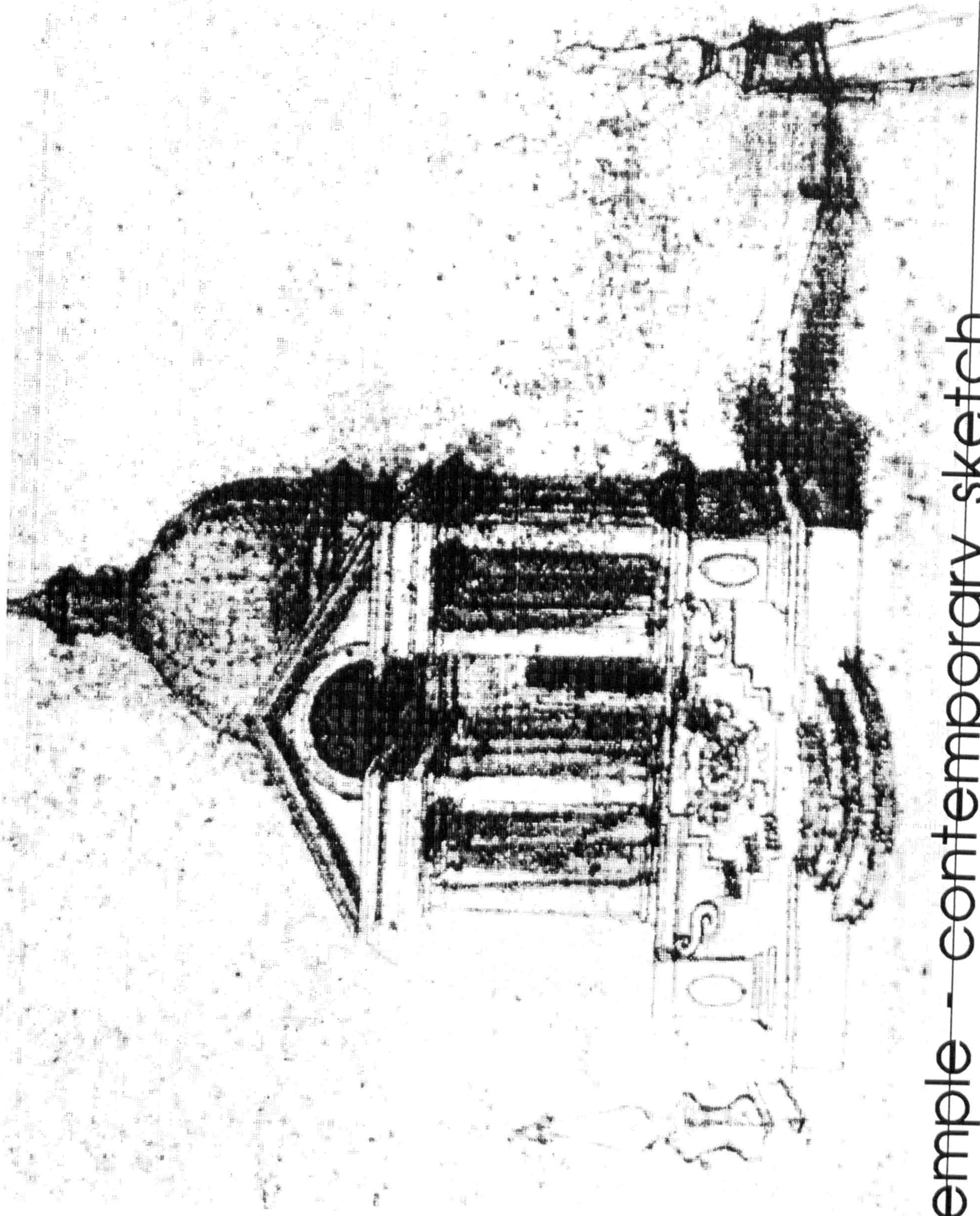


author

Persephone presides, still, monumental and impassive, over her domain enclosed by the fertility symbols acorn and pine cone. She represents a stage in the descent from the temple to the landscapes of death, a stage in the winding spiral of Dante's epic journey. Formalised geometry and stereotype head emphasise monumental detachment in a very powerful image on the stairway.

Persephone





Temple - contemporary sketch



author

Gambara's personal symbol, the crayfish, starts the stream of life from the base of the lavacrum. Caprarola's masterly cascade has been surpassed by Vignola in this symbolic fusion of form, function, and inner meanings. Once attained, it becomes something that cannot be repeated. The signification of space from which water is drawn is stated by the use of the spiral forms, which are also those of water and of creatures that live in it. The lavacrum is the symbol of deification.

Crayfish in paradise

the valley and up the slope to the town. Leaving the influence of the shadows, the lane passes the hillside chapel behind the houses in suffused and fragrant warmth, eventually coming to the crossroads. Opportunities abound for backward glances into the magical world the XVIc left behind. Stark outcrops in this utilitarian landscape remind one forcibly of the immense labour and determination involved in hand chiselling such rock into statuary - no "Black & Deckers" then. A full moon emerging from the clear blue April sky looks on to the lake still glimmering in its shadowy hollow below youthful newly coloured trees.

Crayfish in Paradise?

A modern visitor enters the domain of the Villa Lante through the park gate. The arched stone triumphal gateway with its filigree ironwork which terminates the long axis linking castle square and distant mountain has no part in the modern processional. It is a piece of transparent wall. It gives this weary traveller, walking from Viterbo, a tantalising glimpse of the re-vitalising paradise to come before entering the park to wait for the guides to open a wicket adjacent to the Gambara casino. Apart from Helicon, cut deep into the park surface and tended by a small company of straggling pines, an air of neglect and loss pervades[116]. Were it not for that glimpse through the gate of heaven, there would be some misgiving and apprehension about that hung garden locked away in secret, secured from a modern society to whom nothing is set apart, nothing special or sacred. Only a faintly discernible feeling, a tincture of some energy, suggests that here, this bosco was once part of the great universal dynamo of Italy's re-awakening.

It is therefore with some awe, after the guide's shout has recalled one from deep reverie over a decadent fountain where imagination was re-building its erstwhile setting, that one enters that hallowed lower parterre, seen so many times in illustration, against the shadowy bulk of the Gambara casino. Dark stone radiates warmth absorbed during a fine April morning. Aslant the gravel its shadow marks the path whose perimeter is the perfection of the square parterre. That decadent air of the park is dispelled, the spirit uplifted as the geometric sense of the composition permeates one's being. Barco this may once have been, but there is no hunting here, other perhaps than the Snark. Wandering along crisp gravel, having negotiated some very limited concessions from the guide to look at things more carefully and spend time taking photographs, one comes suddenly on the axis. Looking each way, down to the fountain - its water sparse now, thin trickles only - up the long rising shadowy scene opposite, its spatial limpidity is overwhelming. It is



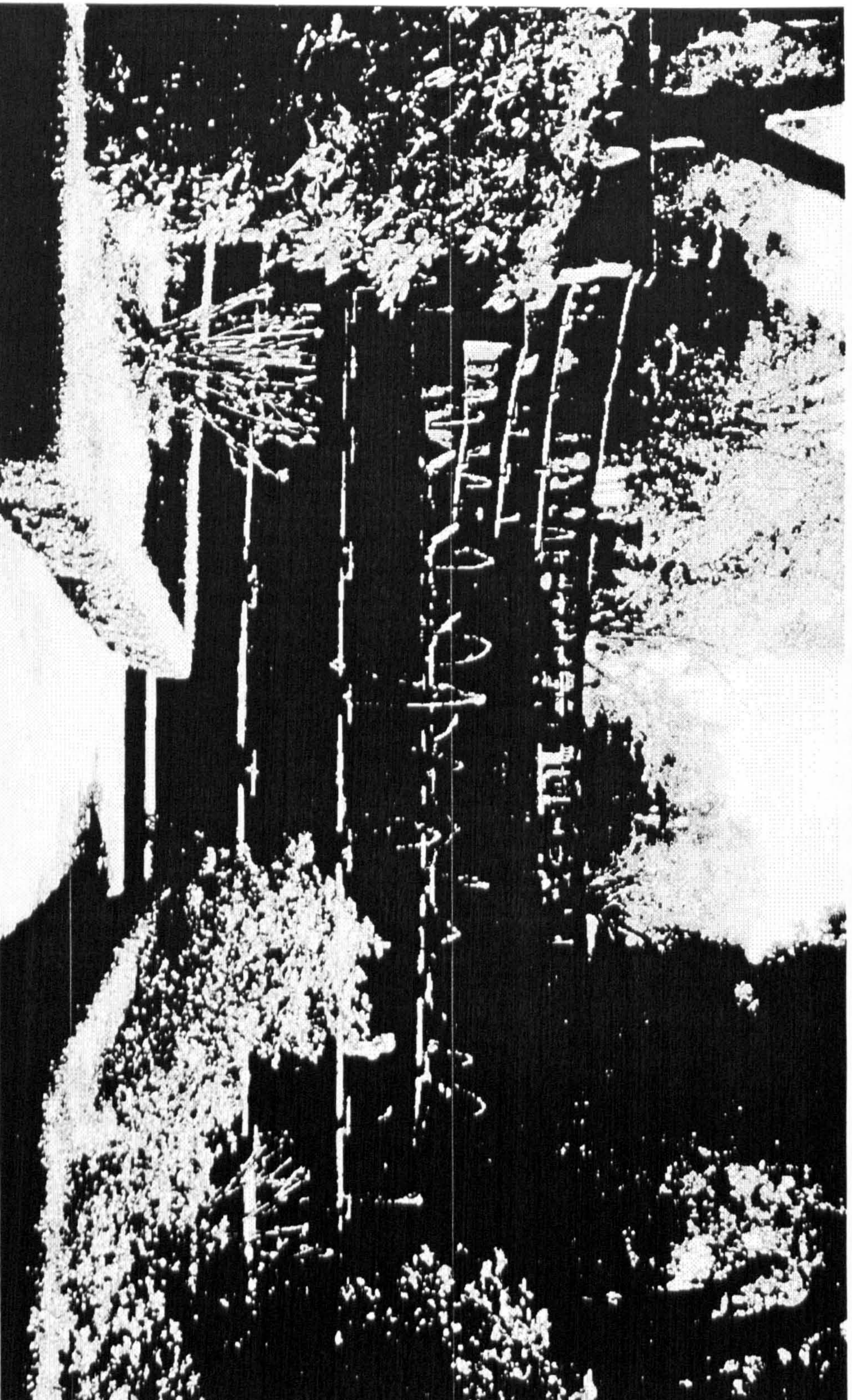
shadowy scene opposite, its spatial limpidity is overwhelming. It is most surely a dream preserved with sufficient care, despite fading and frayed corners, to enter even the modern uninitiate soul. At first one succumbs, but not for long, to that reductivist modernism which allows visual sense to dominate. But soon the warmth, the fragrance of box foliage, the gentle trickling of water from the fountains take over in the mind, extending beyond the present reality. There is the sound of abundance. Imagination has taken over again. Dry Eroses in their little stone barques splash and spray fresh jets into a still air whose soft music fills the foreground against the drenching sounds of the three youths. All illusion really, but so delicious and easily attained.

The guide waits a little anxiously. At this time of the year, a late Easter holiday, the visitors are all Italian and very orderly. There is time for hurried photographs before the spice of the box parterre, curling in its broderie, is replaced by a cooler redolence on the path up the inclined bank between the pavilions. Squeezing each end of this bank the pavilions are introverted. There is seemingly no spatial interchange between them and their landscape. No internal space is visible.

Elite elan.

Like most people, one walks in an orderly fashion up the bifurcating path between box hedges and heraldic planting, once a theatrical bank, then when the guide is engaged in a long discussion, crosses to the steps in the shadow of the new casino, descending them, walks across to the original casino and up the other flight, just to get the different feel. It is quite different. One senses the energy of these timeless walls, their mass, their balancing act with the open expansive qualities of the space below, with the compression of that above. The anticipation is greater. The group has disappeared, but the sound of voices from inside Montalto's casino betrays their presence. For that digression one receives a lecture, gentle but firm. However halting one's Italian, it is understood that this is Italy and not anarchical England. But rapport is made, and the next diversion from the tour is a little easier. However, one longs for time here in this suspension of space-time, to contemplate the richness of available ingested experience. One envies Cardinals Gambara and Montalto this privilege, four hundred years ago, of being able to determine how their meditation on immortality should balance in this majestic eternity of water, trees and stone.

Surprise attends the tour of Carlo Maderno's Montalto casino. Its cuboid bulk, readily apparent from outside pervades the inside too.



author

Modern fussy planting crowds the feet and creates a claustrophobic atmosphere where in the original the surface plane seems to have made clear statements about the proportions and spaces. The gracious and spacious beauty of the exedral fountain is lost by it, together with Vignola's symbolic space handling.

Lante's lights

Cube and square impose their order, making of it a regal pavilion. This stern geometry is subverted by an infinite arabesque of Hellenistic grotesques and fabled frescos. Without the broad illusionistic trompe l'oeil of villas such as Falconieri's triclinia rooms, Villa Rufina, at Frascati, this Hellenistic and Roman device, with its suggestion of entwined boughs from Lamon's garden, lifts and aerates wall space to such a degree that solid masonry dissolves, opening into bowers. It feels like a garden pavilion, though solidly a palace, perfect antidote to the religious spaces of Viterbo's cloistered and claustrophobic cathedral with its gaudy reliquaries. Unfortunately but perhaps sensibly, it was not possible for this casual visitor to explore spatial exchanges between the ground floor loggia and the parterre garden. One exits the casino again facing into the light. The shadowy terrace wall fractures itself against a backlit brilliance of flickering platans and the many-shaded nuances of urns and water, stone surfaces faceted and fragmented, desolidified to the point of insubstantiality by subtlety of form and intricate beauty in carving [117].

Lights on the water.

This terrace from which the casinos are entered replicates the circular form of the parterre centrepiece in an elaborate exedral fountain on the main axis, the Fountain of Lanterns. Half is scooped out of the terrace above and transposed - a favourite geometrical device of Lutyens' this - pyramidal, on to the lower level.⁹ Here is spatial symbolism. Hung about with aged, decrepit platanus, gnarled and bent forms lend an unintentional note of the poetic Picturesque, throw into contrast the purity of the fountain's concentric geometry. Modern planting at their base jars momentarily, but imagination once again fills out the meagre dribbling water into hissing and splashing jets, the static semicircular canals of the exedra into plashing sheening falls, before being distracted by a rare view into the park. In the mind's I, grisled platanus are once again young and fresh with vigorously twining interlaced boughs.

Here, despite modern intrusions into its harmonies, one becomes aware of acute interlocking of geometry in the whole scheme. Stairs, balustrades, loggias, those solidly cubic casinos with their elegantly fragile watchtowers of royal welcome, all gell on this platform. Other spatial senses than the visual take over, developing so richly a feeling of vertical exchange and interplay, a stage set that is not a

⁹. The form conjoins the concepts of the pit and the mountain. Its concentricity is reminiscent of the circular garden in Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia*. It matches quite closely depictions of Inferno and the Holy City/Mountain in Botticelli's illustrations to Dante (see below).



stage set but, like original Dionysiac drama, an opening of barriers between heaven and earth to admit human awareness [100]. That gasp of realisation lasts for years.

Despite the fact that the guide is becoming a little exasperated with this errant member of his flock, one tries to ascend the stairways of the Fountain of Lanterns with some ceremony, a long, satisfying rise with its changing perspectives of the water, and those sounds of its plashing, amplified by the imagination, deepening as they are reflected back, changing tonality with changes in direction. On the upper flight, after turning to meet it, the curved balustrade imperceptibly transmutes itself from skyline into waistline, and the curving exedra gradually unfolds each theatrical step of water. If geometric realisation has been the gift of the casino terrace, turning now to walk around this most elegant balustrading in the flickering light peculiar to the spring pallor of platanus leaves, the gift of this terrace is revealed. It is that of late Renaissance mastery of perspective. Through the gap in the balustrade on the axis, the curve of this beautiful fountain suddenly embraces the circle of fountain in the great parterre. Circle sits within circle within circle, and from it rises Montalto's quartet of triumphant youth, splashing, plashing and glittering in the full sunlight of the bright parterre.

Keeping in line.

The eye cannot wander outwards any more than it could in a Renaissance garden painting. Its gaze is directed, released only beyond, down the axis and over the wall with its triumphal arch to the ochrous roofs of the town. Each casino's pyramid of tiles threatens visual release sideways, only to have it recaptured by the perky cupolas making their royal transition between earth and sky. The gentle sounds of water rippling through Table Fountain, [118] behind it the more active gurgle of the catena, the flickering light, the perfumes of spring tree blossom, a babble of human voices, rather distantly, birds in their afternoon quietness, twittering swallows, and one could well be in some Hellenistic Elysium. Here the proportional management of the space and the perspective control put themselves together, and the mind can enjoy those esoteric pleasures at the same time as the body enjoys all sensations which the Renaissance so accurately balanced.

This terrace is interfered with by fussy detail from later amendments. The mind picks up their disturbances, but in its enjoyment shrugs them off, allowing the imagination to eliminate them, replacing them with gentle groves of uniform young trees in their prime. One leans on the table, but no gardener alas turns on

the vestment-wetting jets at its base. Only the stream flows gently through the trough between its wide stone rims and the eye watches as appetising dishes of viands slowly pass on its gentle current from end to end for all the world like some small water triclinium in ancient Herculaneum. Then one has to turn and face the stern gaze of the River Gods themselves, together with the admonishment of the guide on his return journey with the flock. Pleading once more gains concessions, and, ceremonially one greets these gentle earth giants in their repose, a whole lake of water impounded in their semicircular enceinte only twelve metres wide. Behind them the catena pours out its rushing, joyous, glittering backlit sheen of water from a basin. Imagination continues to function on quantities and adjusts the sounds and sensations accordingly. The sullen trickle of water from the urns is transformed into the urgent veil of luminous liquid it should be, and the gaze wanders from detail to detail, filling in sign sequences from the innumerable repetitions and variations of this garden, which anticipates the Austro-Hungarian musical tradition's emphasis on variation form by three hundred years.

Concessions gently won must be used wisely, so reluctantly one tears oneself away from this spectacle, once more ascending behind the home of the river gods on to a terrace whose spaces have been constricted. The rill no longer runs through a broad meadow of grove, and after looking up its rippling glittering stream, the water made to turn and swirl by the skilled artifice of the mason and hydraulic engineer, one walks slowly and sadly alongside its mirth, knowing that this glimpse of sublimity is about to end. At its head stone benches surround the altogether smaller, concentrated dolphin fountain, its few straggly platanus shading the temple of the nymphs between which the Sumerian deluge pours over the edge of the world from under dense shrubs and becomes the waters of paradise in an instant. There is sadness at this point. Time has not, after all, proved eternal, and no longer can one engage the delights of the boschetto from this elevation. One has taken much time making of the experience a processional, and now the steps have to be retraced with some urgency, reversing the original sense. The guide, anxious but impeccably polite, smiles, apologises that he has to follow a set routine, says "Come again", and one hands him a tip for his tolerance and sheer good manners. Once outside the wicket one can only stand beside the magnificence of Pegasus, survivor of the original boschetto, look deep into that particular dark shade peculiar to holm oaks and reflect on ones ascent and ejection from Parnassus.

Orderl Orderl

What of the architecture? It is all one. No distinction is made here between landscape and architecture. Casinos, pavilions, palazzettos or temples, loggiettas, gateways, all are part of one of the most complete evocations of the Europeanised Hellenistic cosmos ever created, a masterpiece of infinite subtlety, its gentle allegoria concealed beneath a surface of elegant simplicity.

After this experience the town seems an anti-climax. Its streets are explored. But this is a public holiday. Although travel on the 'buses is free, their frequency and duration is uncertain. It is a long return walk to Viterbo, so the cafe is sought. Enquiries reveal that the 'bus stop is there - where else? - and a leisurely coffee and baguette leave time to contemplate also the profound common sense of the bishops of Viterbo in migrating from the castello nearby to their paradise on the mountain. Slowly the picture completes itself, town and paradise in their sequences, the mountain rising behind, invisible from within the garden with its modern overgrown trees. The yellow 'bus arrives, almost full of smiling, happy noisy people on their feast day outing, a cheerful driver. Some of the party from the garden run out from another bar, brandishing drinks, pile on, smile greetings, and pass noisily down. At one's halting Italian, there is a sudden silence, nudges, smiles, and one realises how enclosed this part of Italy can still be out of season.

Chapter Seven:

Boccaccio's Place.

What seek you, foolish boy, among these laurels, plucking now these, now those? Do you not know, bold fellow, that to violate this grove is sacrilege unless, conscious of merit, Juno has granted the wished-for leaves?

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Mantegna Virtus combusta detail

The two "conducted tours" were written long before this particular research was started. As immediate responses they reveal differences between the two landscapes quite clearly. Lante generates an infatuation without any sense of its hidden programmes. It gives a feeling of understanding, even though that later proves illusory and incomplete. Bomarzo presents a challenge. There is a large seduction component to engage the attention, but barriers rebuff until a fair understanding of hidden messages is attained, or at least an awareness of the complexity of their presence. This was intentional. It was "written" for intelligentsia. We should look carefully at Mantegna's *Virtus combusta* and its associative process allegory.

Topography

Overall Bomarzo's castle feels Mediaeval rather than Renaissance despite "modernisations".¹ This is also true of the sacro-bosco. Its geometry, however, as we find it, would have been inconceivable for Boccaccio, fitted as it is around topographical and geological features.² To the south west a valley secluded from the town is overlooked by the castle [119]. A line of crags marks its southern and western edges. It merges with the distant wide plain, but not before its windings have pointed up verdant hillsides set with russet-roofed farms amongst serried vineyards. Expansive views extend down the valley - lovely wide rolling Tuscan countryside - over the plain below to other hill towns perched on the distant ridge. Orsini's sacrificial grove occupies the head of this tributary valley, above the flatter area once the mediaeval garden. Two streams emerge from the foot of the crags, their sources wide apart, and meet at the lower corner of the boschetto before plunging away to the plain below. One could not imagine a more Romantic site, Romantic in the sense later characterised by English XVIIIc aesthetes.

It is a classical siting. The grove occupies land unsuitable for agriculture, on the margins of an orchard garden between level uplands and cultivated valley slopes. It corresponds fairly closely to the scheme presented in Lamon's garden on Longus' Lesbos.³ Accord with the general scheme of the Boscotrecase frescos is also present, but it is subverted in part by the presence of grain cultivation on Tuscan uplands occupying the zone portrayed as wilderness in those paintings.

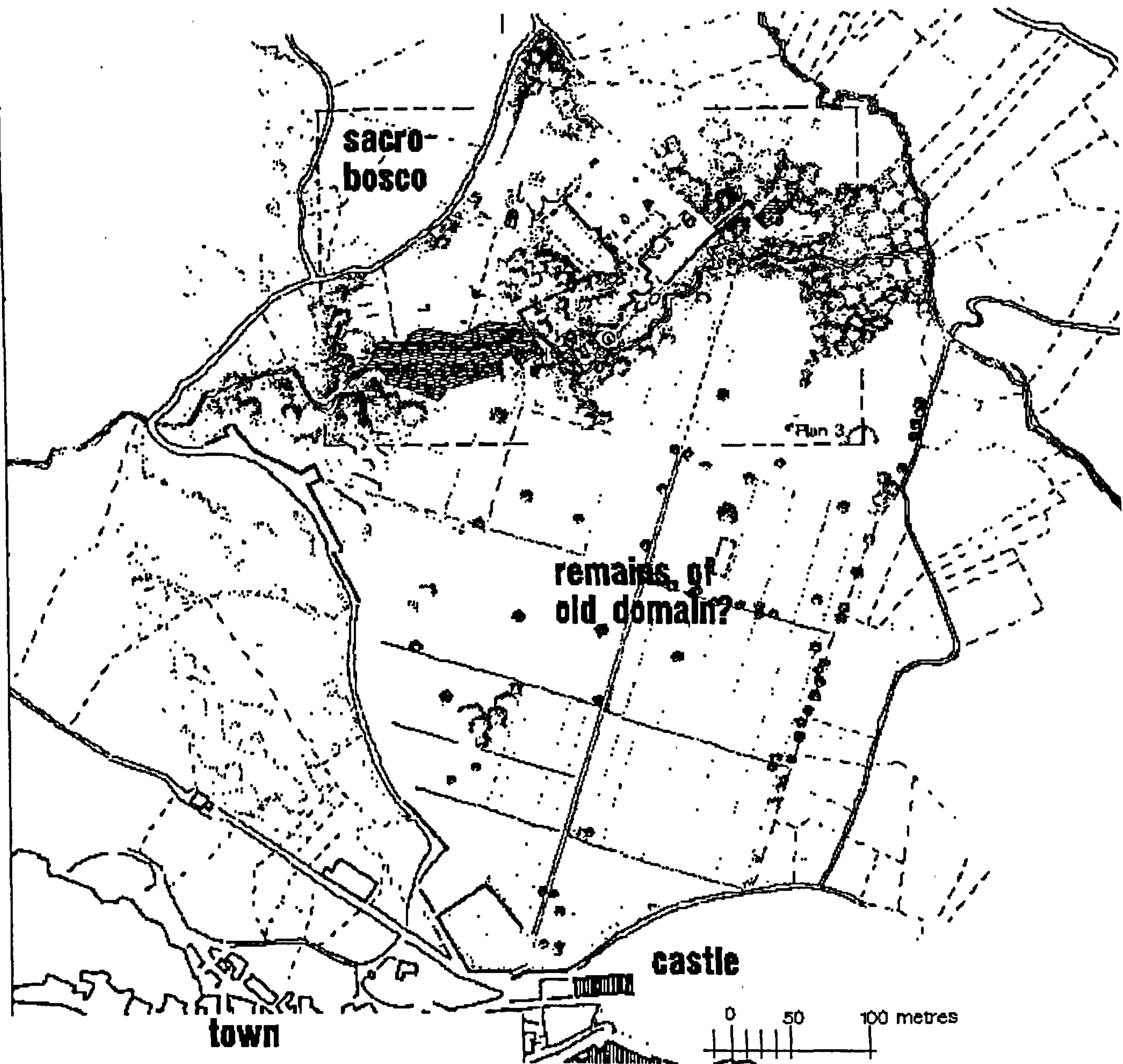
Circulation, topography and form.

Landscape layers to the topography. Plateaux fit snugly into natural contours [120]. Geometric imposition is minimal by comparison with contemporary Italian gardens. Discernible in the core, it disperses before reaching boundaries set by natural features, streams and a rock edge [121]. Assertion of ideological space is thus gentle but thorough. Contour plans are not available, but the grove appears as though shaped on a mound. Vertical space structures iconographic progressions. Its progression climbs, commencing at the bottom and terminating at the top. Orsini uses this rather as

1. Orsini was charged in his father's will with completing the modernisation of the castle.

2. It is the position of the boschetto that seems Mediaeval, since both that and the garden it once extended are remote from the architecture of the castle.

3. See analysis above on the agrarian arrangement of Greek islands in antiquity.



Bomarzo plan entire

This plan shows most of the Landscape area between the castle of Bomarzo and the crags. The straight line path running across the valley probably marks the original axis of a large garden mentioned in Orsini's letters. Two streams form boundaries of the Sacro-bosco, though its precise extent remains unknown. Large outcrops of rocks push out of the older garden area in their natural state.

Bomarzo:Landscape plan

reservoir?
lake

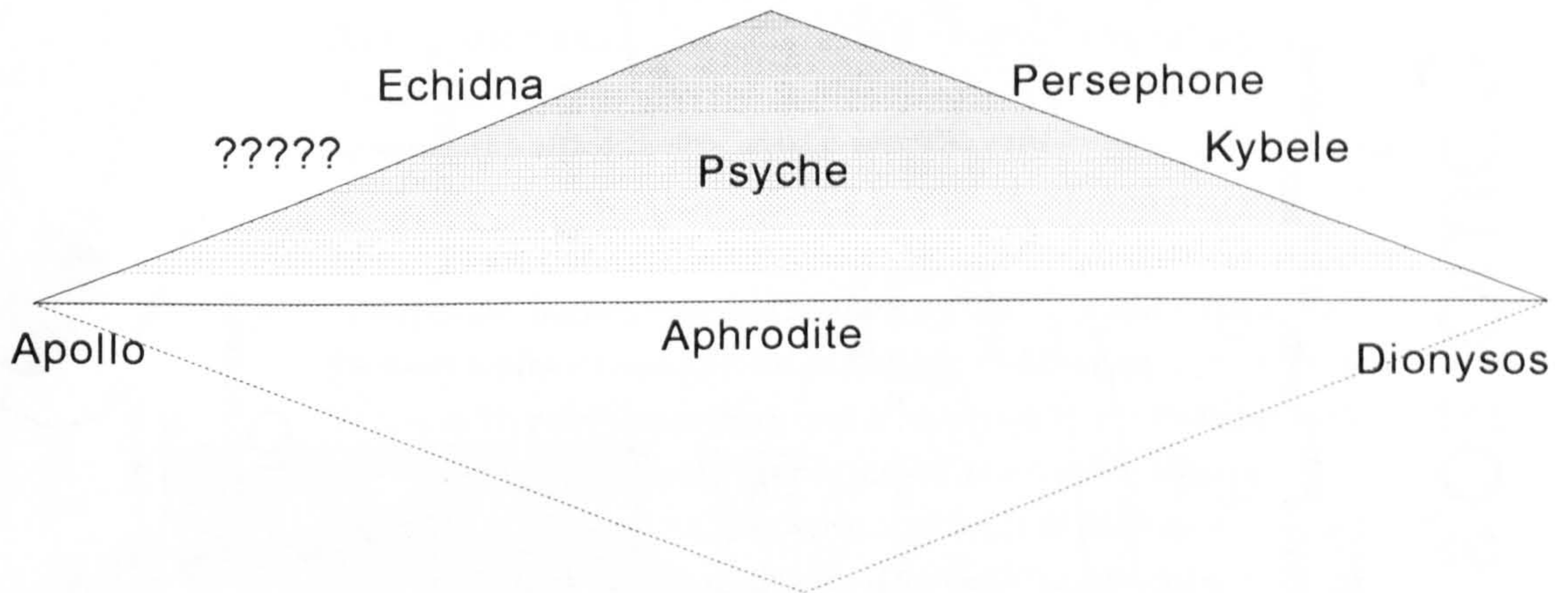
Temple
Persephone
Moon
theatre
pool

Parnassus

Bomarzo's landscape is devised in layers which join practicalities and abstractions. Its main purpose is as a water garden, since everything is designed around hydraulic necessities. It has been suggested that a reservoir was added to take water to Persephone's Place from the smaller stream.

Layering at Bomarzo

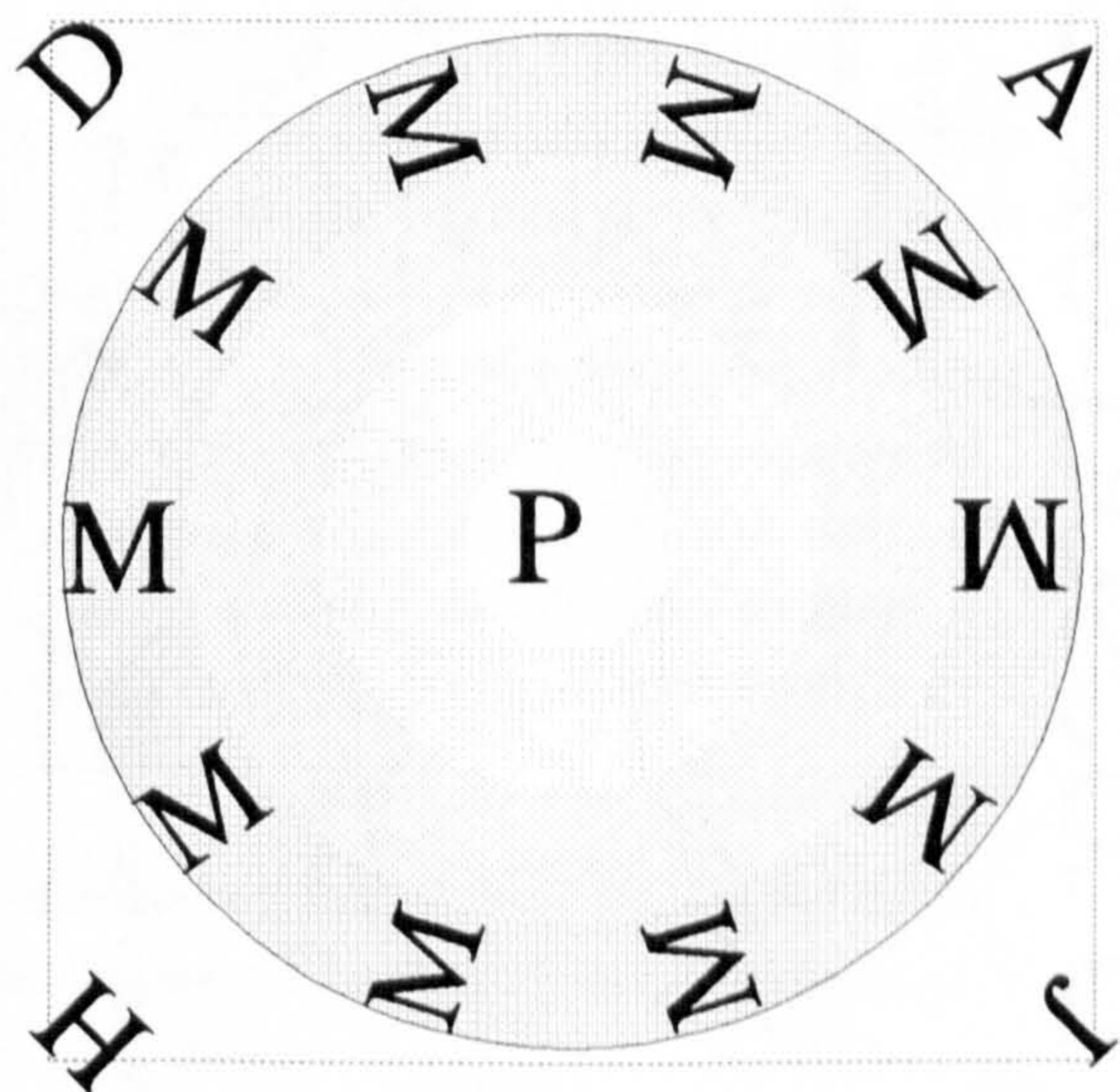
Hermes
/ Pan



Helicon

- A = Apollo
- D = Dionysos
- H = Hermes
- J = Jupiter/Zeus
- M = Muses (10?)

Helicon is inhabited in Bomarzo by ten sciences masquerading as muses driven by an Arkadian quartet.



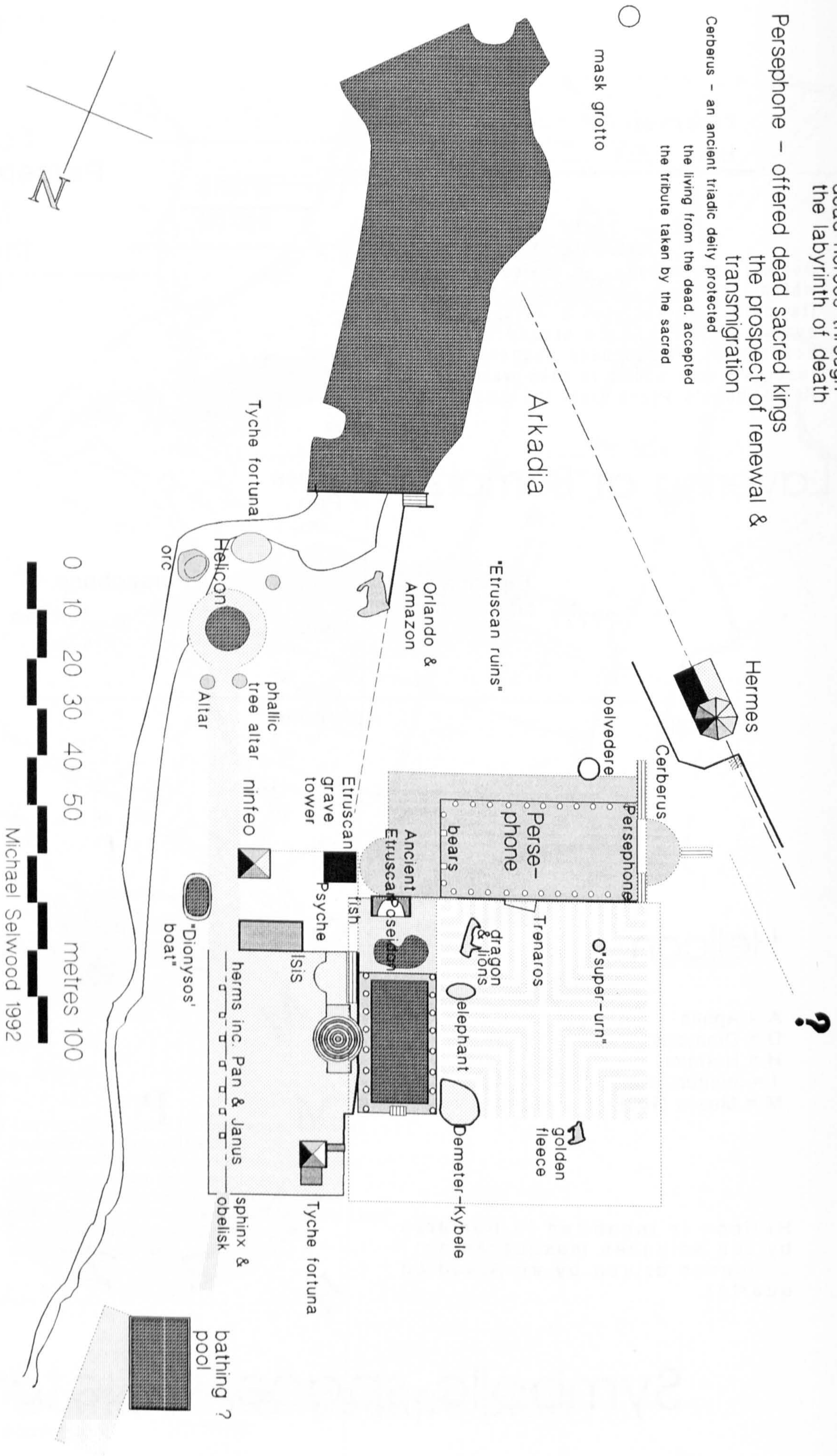
Symbolic space structures

Hermes – guides the spirits of
dead heroes through
the labyrinth of death

Persephone – offered dead sacred kings
the prospect of renewal &
transmigration

Cerberus – an ancient triadic deity protected
the living from the dead; accepted
the tribute taken by the sacred

○
mask grotto



P1121

Bommarzo's Sacro-bosco: a plan

literature uses layers of allegorical meanings. Circulation links between layers are not always clear now. Nor is the logic complete enough to establish concentrations of tree planting in the original design with much security. The lowest layer deals with Epicurean Arkadian ideologies. It is Orphic, at one end Apollonian and at the other Dionysiac. The whole of this layer, which is axial, aligns with the main stream.

Theatre and beyond.

At the Dionysiac end, on a level but approached from the confluence of streams by a zig-zag ramp, is a small theatral space. Above its walls a levelled plain supports wide-ranging iconographic sculptural clusters. Out of a corner of this plain rises the only extant monumental stairway in the composition [122]. Less monumental steps connect theatre and plateau beside the leaning tower. At the theatre, stairs and a path once linked it with the "crag" on which Psyche languishes. Theatre is identified as a place of exchange between the space of this world and "the other", like its counterpart the tholos. Psyche is strategically placed at an intermediate level. Above Psyche an exedra terminates this end of the plateau ruled by Persephone, harbouring and shaped by Echidna and Chimaera, (serpent women from ancient mythology who occupy the temple of Venus in Hypnerotomachia), and a family of lions. Persephone's place is geometric, nicely proportioned as a double square, symmetrical about both axes with an exedra at each end. Cut into the slope, its pavement is dished. The Echidna exedra is slightly offset.

The axial exedra opposite features Cerberus and Persephone, monumental, grave, ritual rather than emotive and fearsome. From here the grand stairway continues to the topmost grove where is the temple. Overlooking Persephone's place a stone pulpit or belvedere perches on the edge of the summit. Its presence signifies something to look down into, that is to say, patterns or a view appropriate to the vantage of gods. We are reminded of Mantegna's viewpoint into his *Garden of Virtue*, whose bosky paradise arcades, in a similar setting, frame a vista of rolling Tuscan landscapes with thrusting rocky outcrops.

Beautiful and arcane, meticulously detailed, the temple is set on the summit of a slight saddle. Raised on a podium, its architecture encodes hermeneutic symbolic space.⁴ The area it overlooks is broad, grassy now, a long glade with relict evidence of

⁴. *Bredenkamp 1986*. Vol. 2 fig 108.



proportioning, sweeping gently eastwards down to the lake. Its setting is too English XVIIIc to be convincing.

Landscape Themes.

Bomarzo has a complex of themes. They knit laterally and vertically like the patterns of a Kaffe Fassett garment, space as interlocked as in good painting. Being allegorical each theme gives access to others hidden beneath like the physical layers. Ideas about history, about language, philosophy, literature, science, art and politics blend.⁵ It would not be in the nature of a Renaissance design to omit reflections on *natura*, both in relation to human feelings and what we call nature. Bomarzo is no exception.

Despite small area, natural land forms and events are used with beauty and contrast. This is obviously the work of one accustomed to outdoor life, its practicalities as well as remoter pleasures idealised in pastoral poetry. Orsini's personal letters refer to delight and pleasure in his fruits and blossom, in the sacro-bosco and in the main garden. He writes of sounds and smells, of innumerable birds singing in them and of his ornamental captive fowl, of the "good life". Latterly he became obsessed with the grove to the exclusion of the garden. Following its completion, shortly before his death, he lost interest. Passive enjoyment failed him psychologically where previous active involvement had lifted his spirit when it flagged.

What we see is a shadow or skeleton of the original. Perhaps this heightens our awareness of land form in the composition, its relative importance. There can be little doubt though that it stimulated Orsini's imagination and was formative in his planning. The circulation is acutely sensitive to topographical modulation, access from one layer to another being effected through many twists and turns whose logic is that of Arkadia. The site is perfect for the central iconographic themes, inverted space - mountain, pit, Parnassus and Inferno [123].

The Old Garden.

The grove retains little logical spatial link to the castle. The intervening formal garden has gone, replaced by fragmented cultivation. There is still a good walk across the valley to enter it. Wandering in the environs, one senses that the main stream was not always quite the finite boundary it is now, and indeed this is borne

⁵. Indeed, we might see a piece of deliciously malicious wit in the application of a Pythagorean's epitaph: "Praiseworthy is the man who made an enigma from two letters, a light to the intelligent and underworld to the unintelligent." Alcaeus of Messene; stele.

out. As in the Boscotrecase frescos and in myth, it is a semiotic boundary between two worlds. The relict presence of the original garden between castle and boschetto is not obvious. The stream remains a dominant feature manipulated with care and economy. Water gathers in an unusually large lake, a feature in its own right and reservoir for fountains, cascades, and pools on several of the plateaux. Below its dam the river cascades, rushing away into a ravine. It is accompanied by the only real axis, passing the theatre terrace of the garden before meeting its tributary at the northern corner. Because of this, it must be considered a kind of thematic baseline.

Mundus operandi and the charm of Orpheus.

Imagery is polarised at each end of the long river axis. By the cascade Fortune rides a huge turtle ambling complacently towards a horrible fate waiting in the rapids; will she be pitched headlong into the mouth of the *ketos* amidst ribald laughter? [110]⁶ This is part of Orsini's foundation of oppositions, of space stretched by mythic and cultic meaning.⁷ Helicon's celebrants nearby are totally disinterested. Self-absorbed, detached from this drama, they encircle and circle an introverted energy source struck from a mountain, as Pegasus was born from the head of Medusa, and Iranians depict the sacred lake on a mountaintop [56]. At the Dionysiac end a concentration of mythic elements around the theatre and ninfeo coincides with architectural interchange between levels. A ninfeo, a temple grotto of Isis-Aphrodite, fountains, partly surround the small circular theatre, itself once a fountain. The skyline, originally diffused by ornamented balustrading to the next layer, is now a bare horizontal line.⁸ The moonscape of urns towers over it.⁹ Orsini's emblematic leaning tower signals the end of the axis, once sealed by sphinxes asking those who entered by the ramp to decide if so many meraviglie could be encountered through deception or only through art.¹⁰ Much is Orphic imagery. So, now we have to turn to Sansovino's advice, and explore with Sannazaro.

⁶. Ketos - a sea monster, sometimes referred to as Orc; see Andromeda in the Boscotrecase frescos chapter above. Fortune on a turtle is a pun on the Hellenistic image group, Venus placing her foot on a tortoise. The original teaches that women should remain at home and be chary of speech. (*Seznec, J.: La survivance des dieux antiques*. London 1940. tr. B.F. Sessions. pp 101). Is this wishful thinking about Fortuna? Or is it comment about the differing role of women? The image occurs in Medici Iconography.

⁷. The principle of the long axis: Tyche/Fortuna opposes Cybele, Apollo opposes Dionysos, Youth (Dionysos) opposes age (Hermes), each pair at opposite ends of a geometric line.

⁸. The significance of an ornate skyline is that it engages vertical space. It modulates and "stitches" a structure to sky rather than making a clear demarcation.

⁹. In Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Roland's wits are found during a voyage to the moon. Selene the moon goddess is a form of Cybele, mistress of Pan (his only significant female conquest). These huge urns would contrast with smaller elements on a balustrade, causing some perspective disorientation.

¹⁰. "Io sto tuttavia intorno al mio boschetto per vedere s'ello posso far vedere maraviglioso a Lei come a molti balordi che vi vengono, ma questo non averra, perche la maraviglia nasciando da l'ignorantia non puo cadere in Lei;" Letter to Alessandro Farnese, 22.4.1561. *Bredenkamp 1986 Vol. II*. pp 16.



author

Helicon may once have enjoyed a more prominent riverside. the stream may have been dammed to give the ketos drama. It remains a beautiful setting for one of Bomarzo's most elegant set pieces - the TEN muses (sciences) and the four Arkadians of Parnassus in attendance.

Helicon's relics



Orpheus mosaic Roman ND

Orpheus is shamanic. He has power over animals, a shaman function in ritual hunt. He is depicted as effeminate, shamans being bi-sexual. He entered the world of the dead to rescue people (Eurydice). His responsibility was developments in many Greek arts through Dionysiac rite. His lyre produced the first sound which banished apeiron; in making it, he starts life and starts it on the path to death. Here he sits, like Cybele in the frescos, beneath a sacred tree surrounded by charmed animals.

The charm of Orpheus

*Oh marvellous handiwork of almighty God! The earth that I thought was solid, encloses in its womb so great a hollowness!*¹¹

Orsini, from a Neapolitan dynasty, was much taken with Etruscan culture.¹² Both represent Greek rather than Italic temperament. Bomarzo is full of holes through which imaginative passages and transitions might be made between "here" and "there". Its topography may be viewed as a skin which conceals the space below, a precarious concept giving rise to many ancient "phenomena"! Etruscan cities were founded with great ceremony, which the Romans adopted, if not in fact, then certainly in converting fact into myth. Rome, according to myth, was founded over a *mundus*. We can see this concept as a linguistic root - mound, mouth - a word that can glue meanings together. *Mundus* (see Tholoi above) is *tholos*. In its Etruscan form it is a *tholos* constructed for ritual purposes connected with, but not necessarily involving, burial of a dead hero. We have already traced parts of an elaborately symbolised landscape content. This is demonstrably retained in the concept of *mundus*.

Roman superstition greatly feared the presence of the dead among the living, a fear paradoxically inherited by Christianity. The *mundus* had to be opened for calendric ceremony. On the days it was open, normal life was prohibited for fear of spirit contamination. This whole idea was re-discovered by the Renaissance. They were infatuated by it. Il Filarete (Antonio Averulino) described lengthy ceremonies based on it for founding an ideal city, Sforzinda, in his *Treatise on architecture* presented to Piero de Medici in 1465. There can be little doubt that Orsini had access to this.¹³ There are resemblances between his temple and an illustration for a grand building for Sforzinda by Il Filarete in that treatise.¹⁴ Similar ceremonies were used to found churches of the time.¹⁵ That would certainly appeal to Boccaccian tendencies in Orsini's humour! The implication behind all of these superstitious rites was the ancient idea of a hollow earth-mountain, a spatial concept encapsulated in tholoi [101] [102].

Sannazaro uses it to the full, as we shall see. A watery place, it is also a parallel world where the ancients co-exist in a complex spatio-temporal contortion, part of the earth's resource reservoir tapped by the Oepheus concept [124]. From it oracles issued and oracular

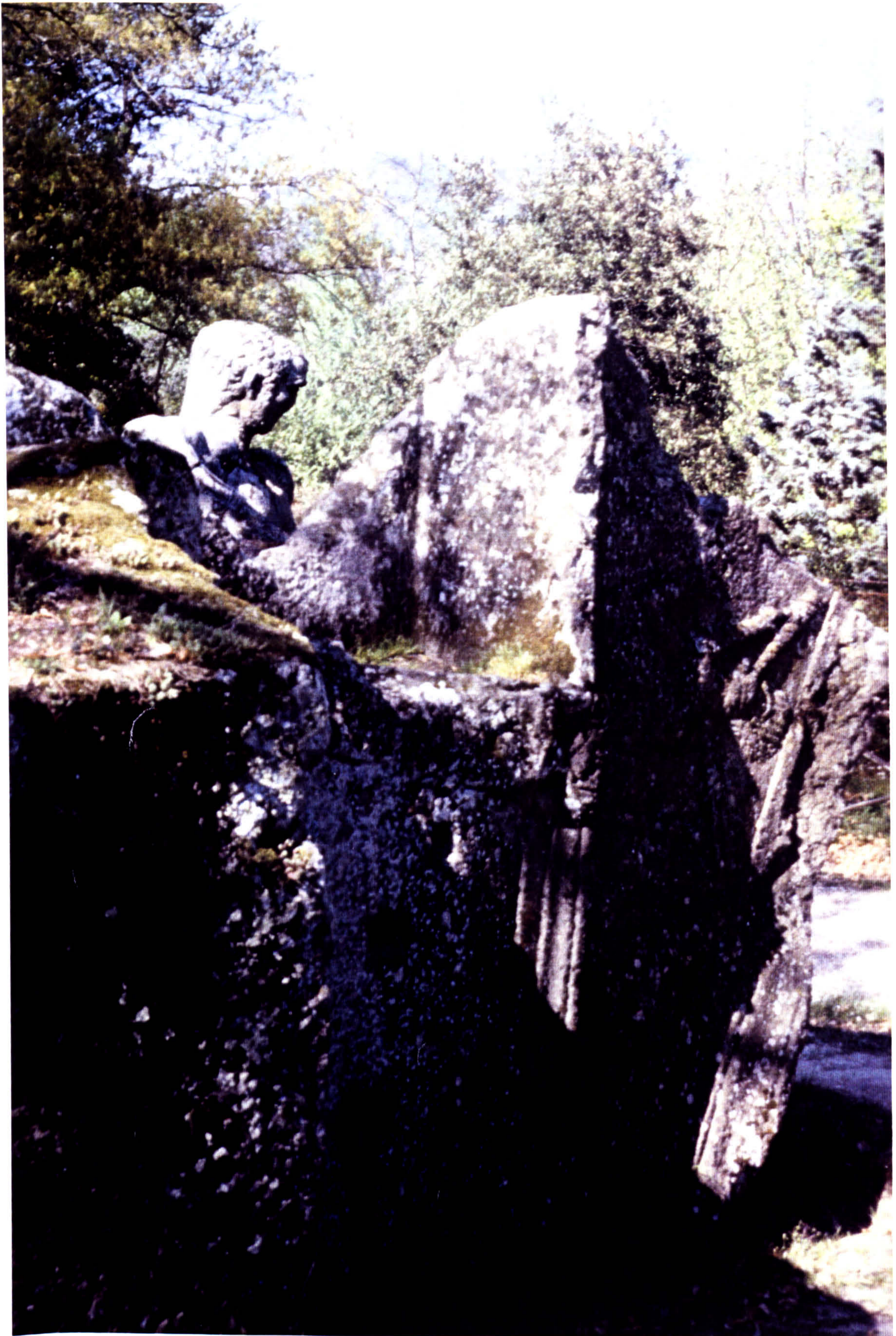
11. Ergasto in *Sannazaro - Nash, Arkadia*, Ch 12 pp 136.

12. Not a really "local" dynasty their possessions extended from Campania to Tuscany by the time of Boccaccio.

13. He was deeply interested in architecture; he was brought up in the Medici household and educated with them.

14. via *Bergin & Speake's Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance*. London 1987. pp 160.

15. *Rykwert 1976*. pp 199.



"then how thrown rocks"



author

"..take on the shapes of men"

springs or rivers. Tholos demonstrates the connections. Sannazaro takes us for a walk through it:

But from the river nearby, without my perceiving how, all at once there presented herself before me a young damsel most beautiful of feature, and in her walk and her gestures truly divine, whose garment was of a cloth most subtly thin and so lustrous that, except that I saw it was soft, I would have said for certain that it was of crystal; with a strange coil of hair, on which she bore a green garland, and in her hand a vase of whitest marble. This creature coming towards me and saying to me - "Follow my steps, for I am the nymph of this region" - implanted in me so much of veneration, and at the same time of fear, that struck with astonishment I set myself to follow her: and being arrived at the river's brim, suddenly I saw the waters shrinking back on the one side and the other, and making a way for her through their midst: a thing truly strange to see, horrifying to consider, fantastic and perhaps incredible to hear." but quietly giving me courage she took me by the hand and guiding me in most loving fashion she led me into the river; whence following her without even wetting my feet I perceived myself utterly surrounded by the waters, not otherwise than if walking in a narrow valley I had seen looming over me two steep banks or two lowering mountains. At last we came to the cavern whence all that water issued; and from that one then to another whose vaulted walls, as I seemed to apprehend, were all made of rough pumice stones; amid which in many places could be seen hanging drops of congealed crystal, and a number of sea shells placed about the walls for ornament; and the earthen floor all covered with a tiny and thick growing verdure, with most handsome seats on all sides, and pillars of translucent glass that held up the low-pitched roof.¹⁶

This is the one aspect of the world that *mundus* was thought to access. The mound of Bomarzo, we are laughingly led to believe, hosts under its skin a world of spirits and heroes. Orsini lets the cat out of the bag! All the Roman fears emerge to do battle over the surface.

Ovidian Space.

Elegance and finesse in Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses* hides environmental and metaphysical truths these myths once compressed into images which the Greek citizen could grasp. One of the paradoxes in the Graeco-Roman relationship was that of religion. Hellenistic Greece was pragmatic and essentially Epicurean. Attic myths were based on internal logic that was not

¹⁶. *Sannazaro, Arkadia* tr. R.Nash. Ch. 12 pp 135.

really religious, and religions had only the authority they could persuade people to give them. Roman culture lacked myths. When they were conquered, culturally speaking, by the Greeks, the great myths were absorbed but much modified to cope with a mysticism alien to their core meanings. Inner logic tended to be obscured by the surface, and by the word, which to the Roman was also the law. Particularly during Octavian's Princeps, religion received the full backing of the state and permeated almost every aspect of Roman society. Orsini's Epicurean scholarship picked up this essential difference, and he seems to have taken it to heart. All of his iconography in some way lays bare the conceptual spaces and powers for which humanity had created either god forms or abstractions. Not only is it erudite, but it is also a deeply thought out exploration. Like his literary models, the result can be lots of fun, but with a disturbing twist if explored.

Space implicit in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* ensue in his programme. The concealed space, the hollow earth, "there", presents itself to "here" in protrusive outcrops of rock sculpted by imaginative fantasy into forms appropriate to the powers which inhabit it [125] [126].

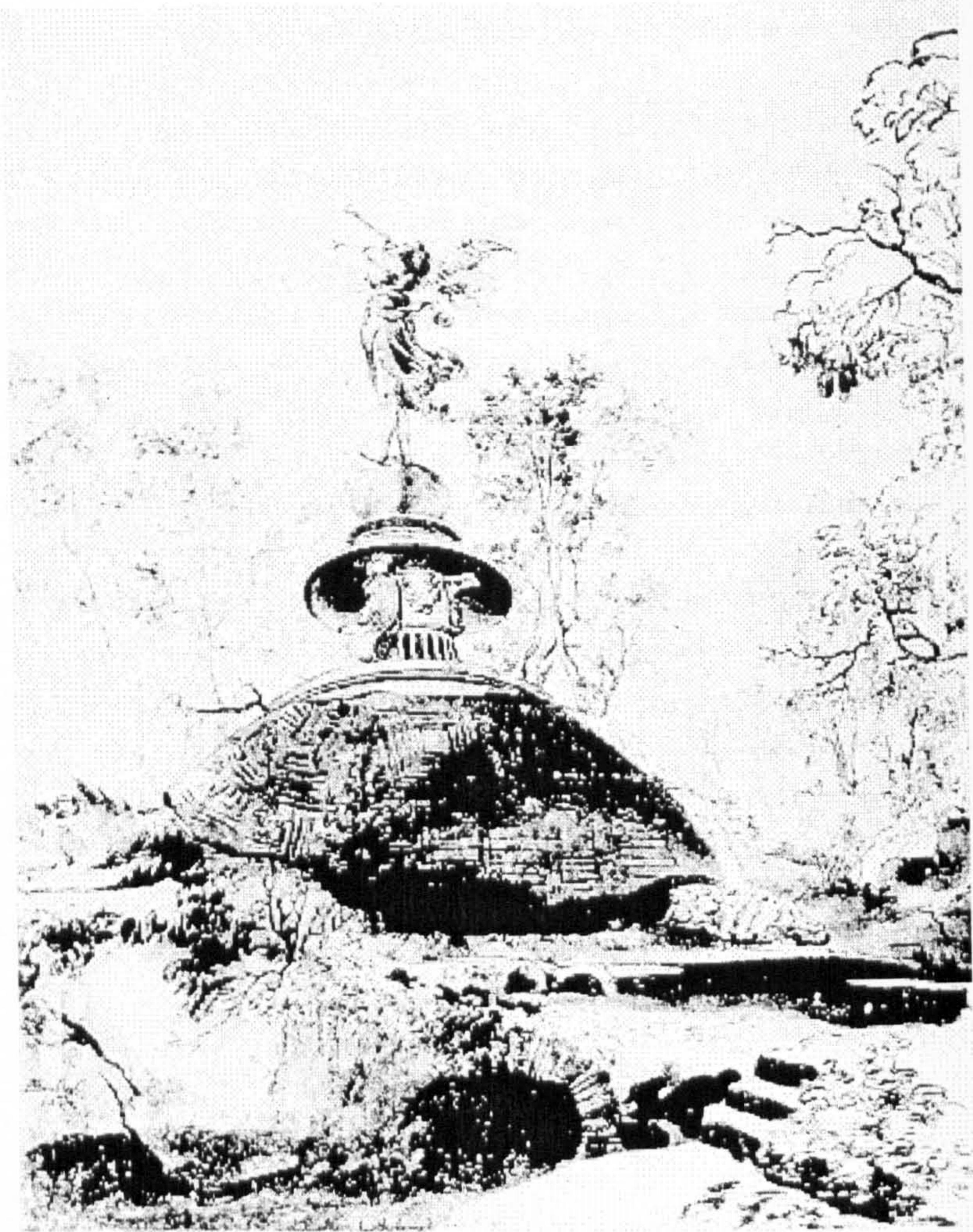
*Then how thrown rocks take on the shapes of men, the giants'
madness which did think it slight to place Olympus on Pindarus'
peak or Pelion on Ossa;*¹⁷

From holes in the earth - caves, springs and grottoes, all with shared symbolism - voices emerge from "there" to captivate mystical humanity. First though, one has to find Arkadia, like Sannazaro's lovesick Neapolitan aristocrat before he can return to "here" from his melancholic madness "there". Arkadia is also "there", particularly to the Theocritan tradition. He imagines himself a prince among Arkadian shepherds who represent idealised quintessential Greek values, descendant of a city's founder. Only from within this free, literary Arkadia can he gain access to that space beneath his city which is its roots, its *mundus*. A nymph, a Polia model, has to guide him, not initially through a grotto as one might expect, but first directly into a river which parts as miraculously as the Red Sea.¹⁸ Tyche-Fortuna is strongly implied in this episode. Sannazaro, a member of the 'failed' Neapolitan aristocracy lauded by Boccaccio, the lost hopes of Renaissance Italy, makes this underground trip to ancient Pompeii, Greek in origin, a final means of exorcising the sickness required of unrequited love in Mediaeval romance. Expanded use of the same device occurs in Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia*, whose closing lines were linked with Bomarzo in

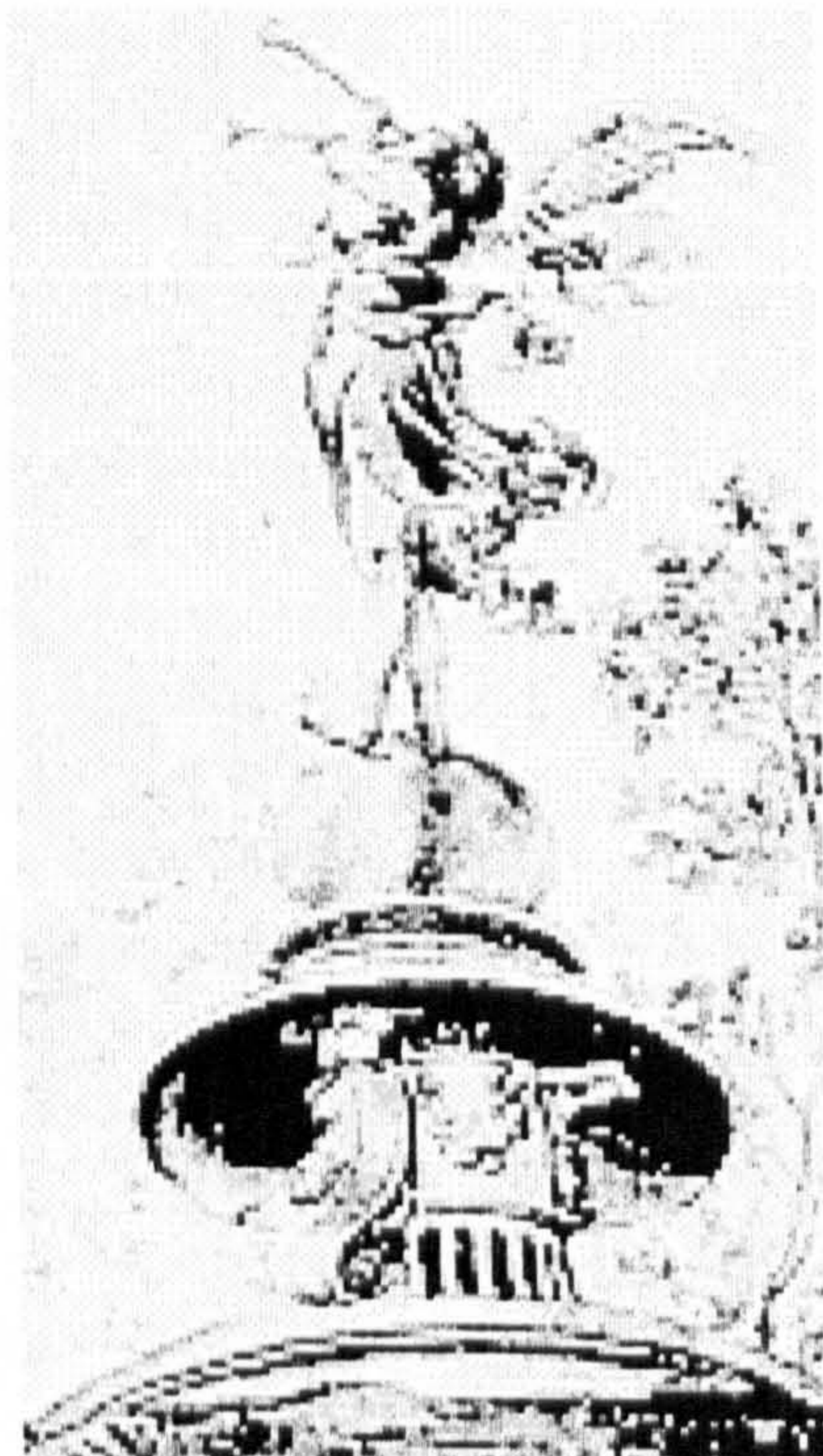
¹⁷. Boccaccio, G: *Eclogues* XI.78 - 81.

¹⁸. Polia is Polliphili's ideal partner and guide in Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia*.

Breenbergh's pen sketch of Bomarzo's Fortuna dating from 1625. The trees would be at least 50 years old. The Sacro-bosco was owned by the Lante. Few illustrations survive of the Landscape. This is a lovely example, an ironic comment on Tyche and triumphalism - Festina lente. Its spatial connotations suggest high energy (Tyche as bacchante) and long distances travelled slowly.



Tyche as an ecstatic wanton, uncaring of the fate that awaits her in the chasm, rides the Orsinis arms.

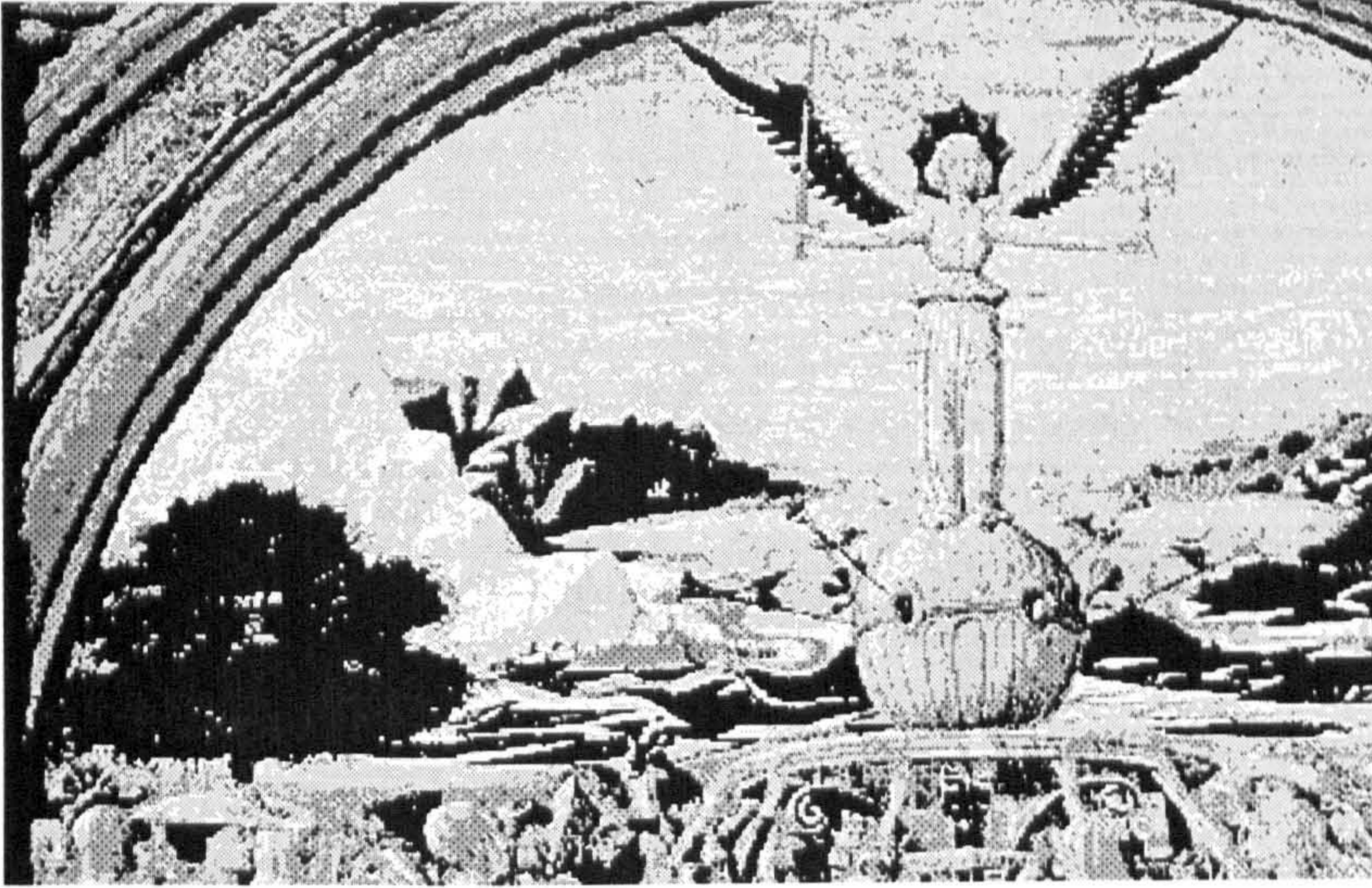


Fortune attends Columbus' triumphal entry into the Americas on a turtle in this contemporary print.



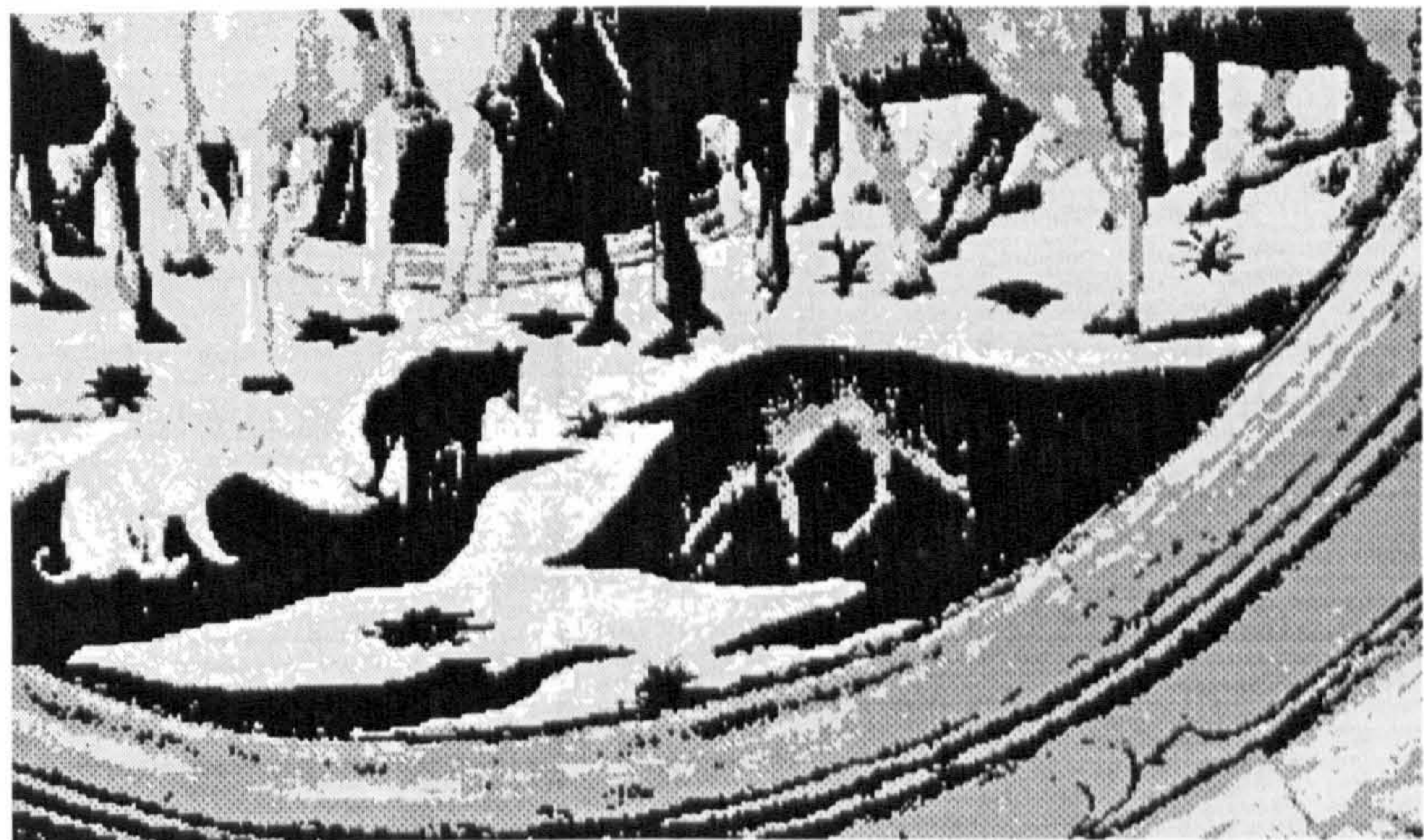
Bomarzo:Fortuna

p



In this painting on a Florentine ceremonial plate, Tyche rides a ball atop a fountain, her formal stance and the bleak landscape behind hide ironies revealed when we look at the borrom of the painting (below)

There are parallels between this portrayal of Fame approaching the dogs of war and a chasm and that of the statue of Tyche riding her turtle the orc at Bomarzo. The orc's mouth has similar symbolism to this hidden hole in the earth and, of course, to Trenaros, Boccaccio's name for the entrance to Hades' landscape. It also hides the third dog!



Fame's fate



Octavian Denarius ca 31BC statue of Octavian



Octavian denarius ca 31BC Tyche victoria



denarius with triumphal statue of Octavian ca 31BC



Victoria with standards & wreath



Antefix Victoria with trophies & capricorns

In all these images the globe stands for sole p[ower]; its ancient meaning of hen is attributed political space. Depictions of classicising statues of Octavian alternate with those of Tyche-Fortuna or Victoria in keeping the globe underfoot. Comparison with Bomarzo's Tyche as bacchante will reveal the irony of the latter in the mode of portrayal

Imperial Augustan images of Tyche

chapter one above.¹⁹ Perhaps Ergasto saw our frescos, for he describes an ancient city "whose towers and houses and theatres and temples could be seen almost entire", but neither Orsini nor Sannazaro could have done so [127 - 130].

The grotto, when they reach it proves to be a work of most wonderful artifice, nature imitating art. In effect it is a ninfeo that might have come from some great baroque garden, but one whose spaces generate strange uses developed from female tasks in an imagined Greek aristocratic society. It is a palace, encased in Orphic imagery. The scene undoubtedly derives from symbolic Landscape concepts centred on Sannazaro's experiences with the Neapolitan court in its various venues. It reinforces characteristic dynamic intercourse and powers the grotto held in the contemporary imagination.

Rivers of space.

Once in Pompeii, the beautiful (she has to be beautiful for Ergasto is noble) nymph assumes he can find his own way, and leaves him:

Thus by degrees we began to see the little ripples of Sebeto (Ergasto's home river); the Nymph, perceiving that I was rejoicing at this, sent forth a great sigh and turning to me all filled with pity she said: "Now you can make your own way by yourself" - and having said this she disappeared, nor did she reveal herself to my eyes again. I remained in that solitude all fearful and sad, and seeing myself without my guide I would hardly have had the courage to move a step, except that I saw before my eyes my beloved little river. After a brief space drawing near to it, I walked along searching eagerly with my eyes if one might be able to see the source from which that water rose; for at every step its current seemed to be increasing and acquiring still greater impetus. So taking my way along a hidden channel I wandered hither and thither until, arrived at last at a cave hollowed out in the stern rock-face, I found the venerable God sitting on the ground, with his left side leaning upon a stone urn that was pouring forth water; which (already in great plenty enough) he made the more with that which he was continually adding as it rained down from his face, his hair, and the bristles of his dripping beard²⁰

Boccaccio is particularly fond of the use of barbed humour. Sannazaro, even in such melancholic moments, is obviously not averse to emulating his model. One has to laugh outright at the broad cultural joke at the expense of urban society in a rural setting

¹⁹. Boccaccio may have been stimulated in this by his hero, Dante.

²⁰. *Sannazaro* - Nash CH 12 pp 138-9.

(all pastoral poetry). Without his stereotype of a river god, poor lost Ergasto cannot recognise the substance of what he sees! The god's task is useless, gilding the lily (and does Sannazaro suggest Epicurean implications here?). He compounds the joke, extending the watery image into excessive visual hyperbole. Similar humour seems very much part of the programme of Bomarzo, an extension of similar techniques used by Boccaccio to avert criticism.²¹

Poros and Eros: the landscape of love.

Bomarzo's manipulation of space uses a vocabulary of orientation, disorientation and re-orientation based on literary, mythopoeic and art theory sources. Deceits are achieved through the shaping of space and the use of ancient Greek concepts which coalesce spatial forms and their human consequences. Many are survivals embedded within conscious knowledge like alchemy, whose images are based on process allegory [130]. River space, prominent as a key baseline for the iconography, had special qualities linked with both settlement and migration incorporated into ancient Greek language and philosophy. Rivers were liquid paths, a paradox. The word *poros* used for the impact of this natural phenomenon on human perception accrued a wealth of obtuse meanings distinguishing it from tracks: something that cannot be traced in advance; something that can and usually will be obliterated after it is used (that is to say that its details are always shifting and cannot be tracked in the same way as broken twigs and bent leaves along other tracks can, philosophically inconstant signs); something which must be traced anew each time it is used; something that is self-renewing when parts are removed (suggesting abundance); something achieved in an unprecedented fashion (inventive inspiration).²² It also means "making visible the various directions of space". It contains remarkable and useful paradoxes for the newly emergent linguistics of ancient Greece. However hilarious Sannazaro's river god, he makes a point. He marks a place which becomes universally identifiable by his presence within a widespread cultural tradition. His is the place, an identifiable topographical or metaphorical point where the river - symbolically at least - is perceived to rise from its previous existence "there". It thus "makes visible the various directions of space" by differentiating between "here" and "there" as well as between "this direction" and "that direction", whilst constantly renewing itself - to excess in Sannazaro's delicious tongue-in-cheek image. At the same time it states and maintains

²¹ . For example, Boccaccio averts intervention from the inquisitors by claiming that the antics of his licentious friars and prelates are merely idle prattle to entertain the women. The whole of Boccaccio's *Eclogues* are politically inspired; the same is true of Sannazaro's *Arkadia*.

²² . *Kofman, S: Comment s'en sortir*. Paris 1983.



de alchemia Leiden Kossowski ff 35



Rosarium philosophorum St. Gallen Klossowski ff 41

Orsini was a philosopher and poet, but also fascinated by the science of his time, the Secret Art, Alchemy. It uses structures similar to myth to present processes. The count was a close friend of the powerful alchemist Drouet.

Above: coupling of the king and queen in the lake matches episodes in Boiardo (Morgana's landscapes). This represents the central event of the First Work.

Left: Judgment of Paris represents the end of the first work.

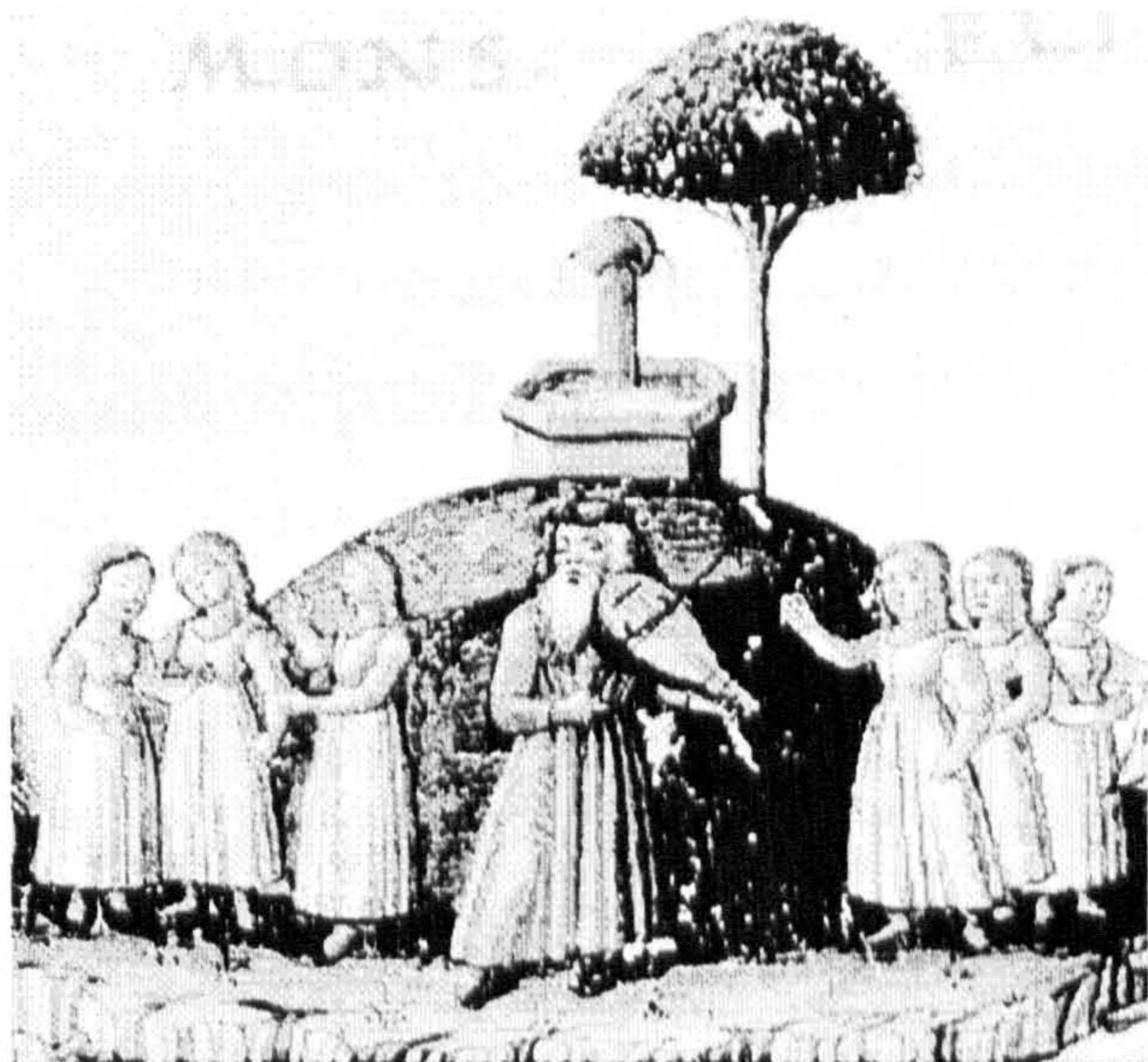
Bomarzo's central first work was the lake; the temple of Aphrodite the end of that phase.

Left: female principle destroys & creates. Muses create sirens destroy. Parallel is in the "Ancient Etruscans" overseeing the end of the first work and the temple of Aphrodite. Chemical processes are characterised, dealing with Mercury (temple).

Below: Mons elicon, with nine muses, Apollo, tree of life and twin fountains, no Pegasus. though.



We cannot be certain yet whether Orsini points to alchemical presences in literature or to the parallels to Greek myth in the Secret Art, or whether he is playing a deep personal game of layered process allegories to create an independent programme.



Bomarzo's allegories

their essential spatial and temporal continuity in both Bomarzo and Lante [131] [132] [133].

Bomarzo's river god is no less than a resplendent Pluto a creation arising out of the words of poetic imagery [134].

*Plutarcus sits beside his swarthy spouse
upon a boulder shaded with black boughs
and with a dark sheep's hide.²³*

Most of Orsini's sculptures have a two dimensional counterpart.²⁴ Pluto does not "make" Bomarzo's river; it has already been swallowed by the *ketos* to rescue Deucalion's threatened Arkadia. He causes a new sequence of water with different but parallel iconography to emerge from a dark hillside side by side with the portal to "his" space beneath Persephone's place, Trenaros.²⁵ Rivers equate with serpents in ancient myth imageries dealing with *poros*, *aporia*, and *apeiron*.²⁶ Serpent women were fays, a female equivalent of the spirits of heroes - heroes were always male and supposed to inhabit one of the celestial spheres and were held to possess prophetic powers. The fays inhabited regions of earth and the other world, vehicles for oracle. Every aristocratic family had at least one in its ancestry! They were creatures of *aporia*. A complicated conception of spatial connections and continuity is implicit in this machinery. If heroes in their celestial orbit were a source of oracular information, and oracles always issued through chthonic forces, the resultant spatial image is not too far removed from that presented by Einstein's relativity theories!²⁷ Conversely, Aeneas had to enter Trenaros to meet his father in Elysium. Something of this emerges in the organisation of Bomarzo's Parnassus and Trenaros, both overseen by his fays, his "ancient Etruscans".²⁸

²³. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogues*. X.109 - 110.

²⁴. Practicalities alone would suggest this use of printed image. It would otherwise be quite difficult to instruct a young sculptor in one's aim.

²⁵. Position and sequence suggest the interpretation that Persephone is on her earthly visit and not presiding over Plutarcus's kingdom.

²⁶. Defined by Kofman as hostile and boundless territory impossible to cross securely from end to end. It extends both to space and to philosophy and religion. Primordial chaos, oceans, vast tracts of desert or jungle - places where the signs are either too sparse, too fickle, or too dense for human perception to make coherent. Its chief characteristic is *aporia* - being without tracks - but implied in *apeiron* is the presence of a cosmic engine which functions by this virtue of *aporia*. *Poros* is a specific kind of track, the most characteristic of which is a stream, river, or current. They cannot be stabilised, that is to say, they change from one moment to another. *Aporia* is therefore the state of being even without this minimal guidance. *Apeiron* is therefore an expression of an extreme state with far greater emphasis to ancient Greeks than could possibly be imagined by a twentieth century which maps the universe and directs machinery by invisible rays across years of space.

²⁷. That of a universe where time and space curve continuously and seamlessly.

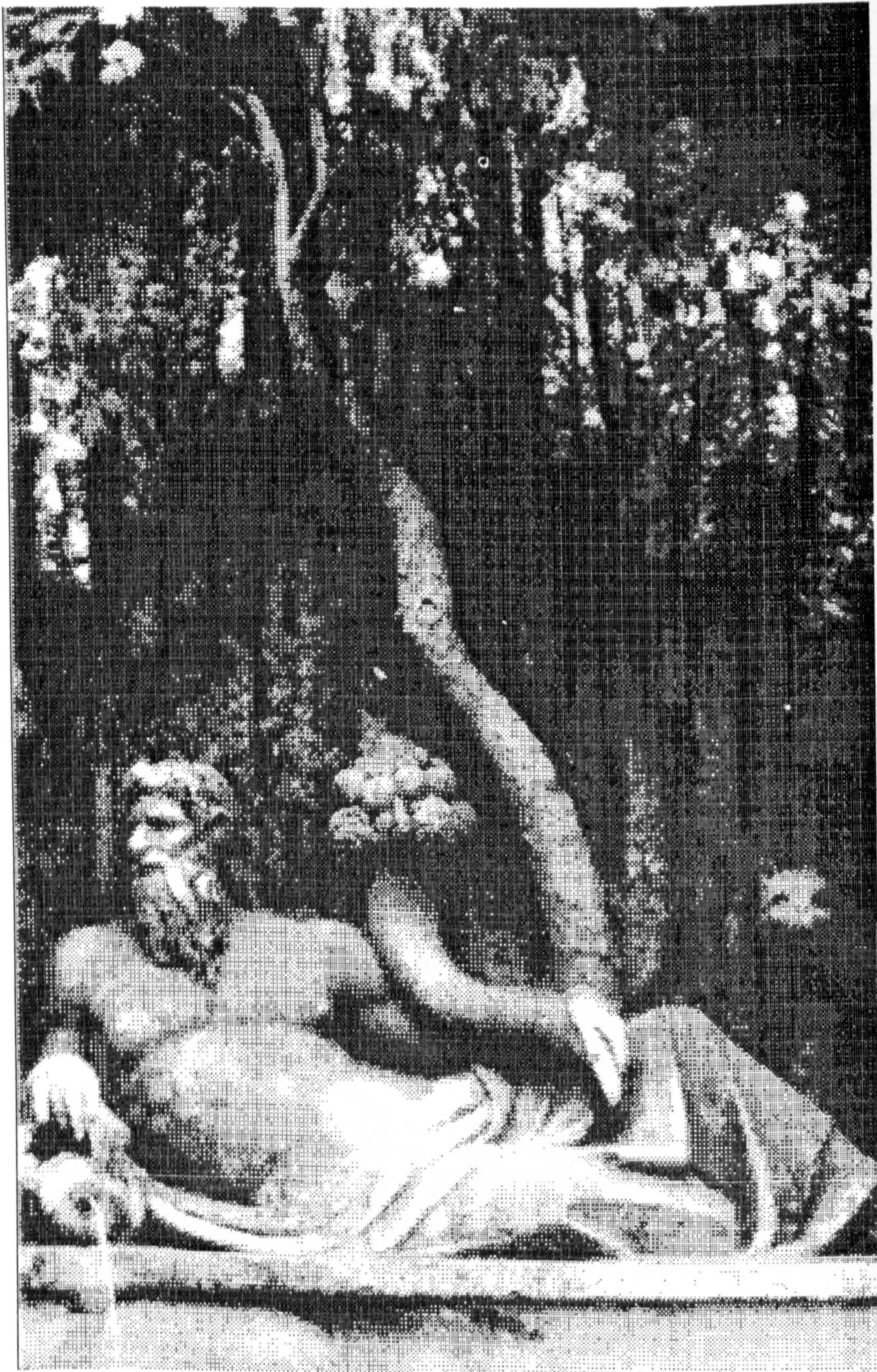
²⁸. These Etruscans are manifestations of the Phoenician and Syrian goddess Astarte or Atagartis, who was sometimes represented in the form of fish-tailed women. Lucian of Samasata writes in the IlcBC "..... Dekerte (Astarte) in Phoenicia, a strange sight! It is a woman for half its length, but from the thighs to the tips of the feet a fish's tail stretches out ... they consider a fish something sacred." Quoted from Martin, L.H: *Hellenistic Religions*. Oxford 1987. pp 82. The presence of Atagartis fits well into Orsini's programme, since a primary function of hers (as all Eleusinian derivatives) was to overcome the capricious rule of Tyche.



Morton, H.V. The waters of Rome. London 1966 pp116

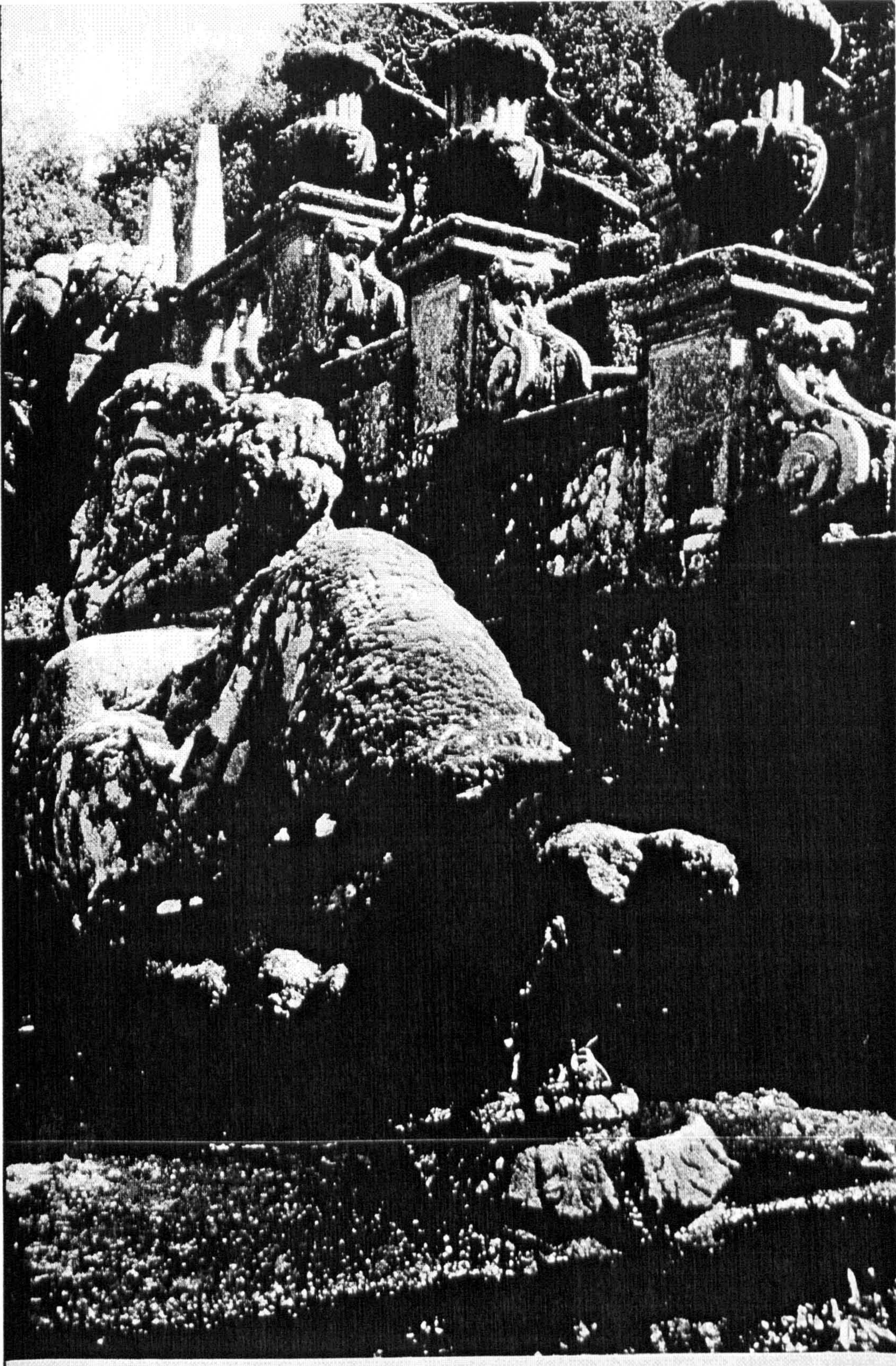
A prototype river god! One of Rome's popular and famous "speaking statues"; called Il babuino, it is one of the ancient city's survivals, a statue of Silenus. Silenus is often associated with urinating putti or putti pouring in the wine in Hellenistic statuary. Part of a mostra of the Acqua Vergine, this must surely be one of the sources for the image of the river god, including Sannazaro's. It was credited with satirical oracular comment on contemporary politics, a sure target for Orsini's wit. The statue does not spout water, but presides over its basin. Several threads are available for Landscape allegory: Epicurean ideologies, Dionysiac oracular powers, inspiration in divine intoxication, earth and oracle, stream of consciousness, prolific liquidity. In vino veritas!

Silenus as river god, Il Babuino



Was this how Pluto appeared at Bomarzo?

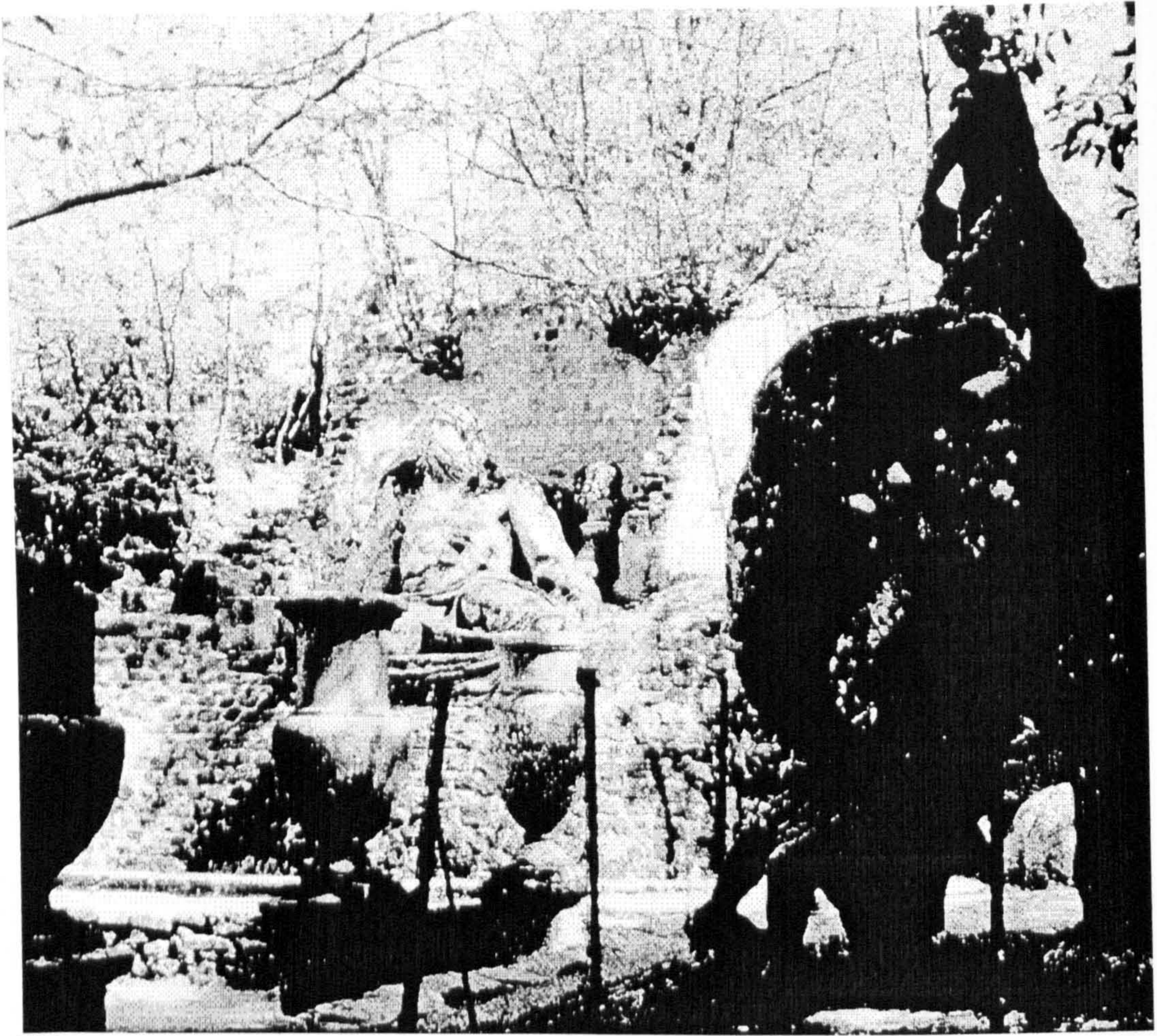
A mostra of the Aqua Felice 1588



Author

Sannazaro's river god and Bomarzo's Pluto are reflected in Lante's pair of river gods in a magnificent set piece fountain. Impeccable sense of proportion keeps its sense

Lante's river gods



author

Poseidon/Pluto, king of the underworld, was a water carrier. In an age when mostra which terminated the great Roman aqueducts were a source of political frustration, this fountain demonstrates (mostrare). It was obviously architecturally elaborate, the king of sea and underworld surrounded by his creatures in a ninfeo-like structure. The bedrock ketos remains. The kidney shaped hollow between Pluto and the urns is so uncharacteristic that it was probably gouged out by a powerful jet persisting from this monster for many years after the Landscape became neglected. The most likely form for this water garden is that of a euripe, a canal, since the width of the mostra and the distance between the urns match precisely. This would also accord with the idea of a metallic surface for the moon where the field of giant urns containing dead hero's wits was discovered by Ariosto (*Orlando furioso*). Elephant's intestines stood for the bowels of the earth.

Pluto, underworld & river gods



Pluto's unruly kingdom in the plain of Ares

Original in colour

There is a Renaissance stereotype, used directly in neither of the landscapes under discussion. It might therefore seem irrelevant, except that it indicates an understanding of Greek spatial concepts and skill at incorporating their conflation into symbol. This is the riverine labyrinth, used by Botticelli to illustrate Dante's *Purgatorio*. It is a remarkable compression, in which labyrinth as river flows from the circumference to the centre, thereby incorporating the concept of tholos (giving access to chthonic space), poros (a constantly renewing stream), and aporia (a space which disorients through changes of direction), and probably much more besides. In this sense labyrinth can be seen to give logic to ultimately illogical space.

Boscotrecase's frescos conceal and reveal the mundus which tholos signifies. It gives them moral tone. Comfortable and comforting symbols perform this double task of allegory, particularly strong in the "Oracle" painting. The river of crystalline water (a prevalent Renaissance literary and landscape image) is a semiotic barrier separating "here" and "there". A gentle and lovely marble tholos with its russet capping is set on the mound, retiring behind more immediately awe-inspiring deities. Tholos is the presence of the mundus here.

Rivers, like snakes and entrails, wind wilfully. There is a relevant significance in the juxtaposition of Orsini's elephant and Pluto at Bomarzo [134]. Elephants' entrails symbolised "there", the insides of the earth. Orsini views his opening of the mundus and revelation of its terrifying contents a "fellow of infinite jest". For Yorick and Boccaccio, each his own fool, the jests are barbed truths in prattle. Paradox pervades conflicts, as in Pluto displaying the source of life, strife being perceived in the Renaissance as productive of life's other essential, air. Persephone is still; Pluto is not. Returning to poros, eros is the product of poros and penia, plenty and penury, another life-essential force well celebrated at Bomarzo.

Eros is rough and squalid, and has no shoes, nor a house to dwell in; he is always plotting against the fair and good. He is virile, enterprising, strong, a mighty hunter, always weaving some intrigue, keen in the pursuit of wisdom, fertile in resources, a philosopher at all times, terrible as an enchanter, sorcerer, sophist ... But that which is always flowing in is always flowing out, and so he is never in want and never in wealth.²⁹

Such is the landscape of eros, whose full analysis in the context of Bomarzo would be another work. However, river as poros in a key

²⁹. *Plato, Discourses 203d.*

position where spatial disposition and programme are so fully interlocked, is significant enough to indicate the extent of its meaning here.

Savage is love, the surest plague of youth.

Alas! he's fallen. Bring fresh water boys,³⁰

Ninferno and a Rage of Lions.

The imagery of this statue group is complex. Orlando has a woman, upside down, pressing her legs wide apart, whilst he apparently gazes at her genitals.³¹ For associations we must again impute Boccaccio where, in *Decameron* (III.10) the hermit seduces the young girl in his grotto. Boccaccio, like Shakespeare, characterises the vagina as *Ninferno*, a neat corruption of inferno, meaning hell, and *ninfa*, nymph. Implicit in that corruption, part of an obtuse train in its meaning, is the impossibility of reconciling polarities, fire and water. This conflict of fire and water has other manifestations in Bomarzo's grove, and indeed in its spatial organisation. The demands made by the lusty young girl, Alibech, on the fortunate and unfortunate hermit, whose fasting deprives him of sexual energy, eventually come to be compared to a lion's voracious mouth.³² One commentator draws attention to St. Peter's warning about the devil. "*Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*"³³ From this we can find links between Orlando's strange wrestling and later scenes in the garden involving lions, which also present the polarities of fire and water. Similar imagery inhabits lion's mouth fountains, and Alberti's predecessor to the Trevi is a particularly splendid example (see below). However our present concern is with spatiality, and this image of Orlando peering into his "hell", obsession with which is his madness, is most certainly part of its complex symbolism [135 - 138].³⁴ Another relevant Boccaccio source is from *Pantheon, Eclogue X*: "*Then how thrown rocks take on the shapes of men, the giants' madness which did think it slight to place Olympus on Pindarus' peak or Pelion on Ossa*" (lines 78-80).³⁵ The idea is also central to Apuleius's

³⁰. *Boccaccio Eclogues*, I.136-138.

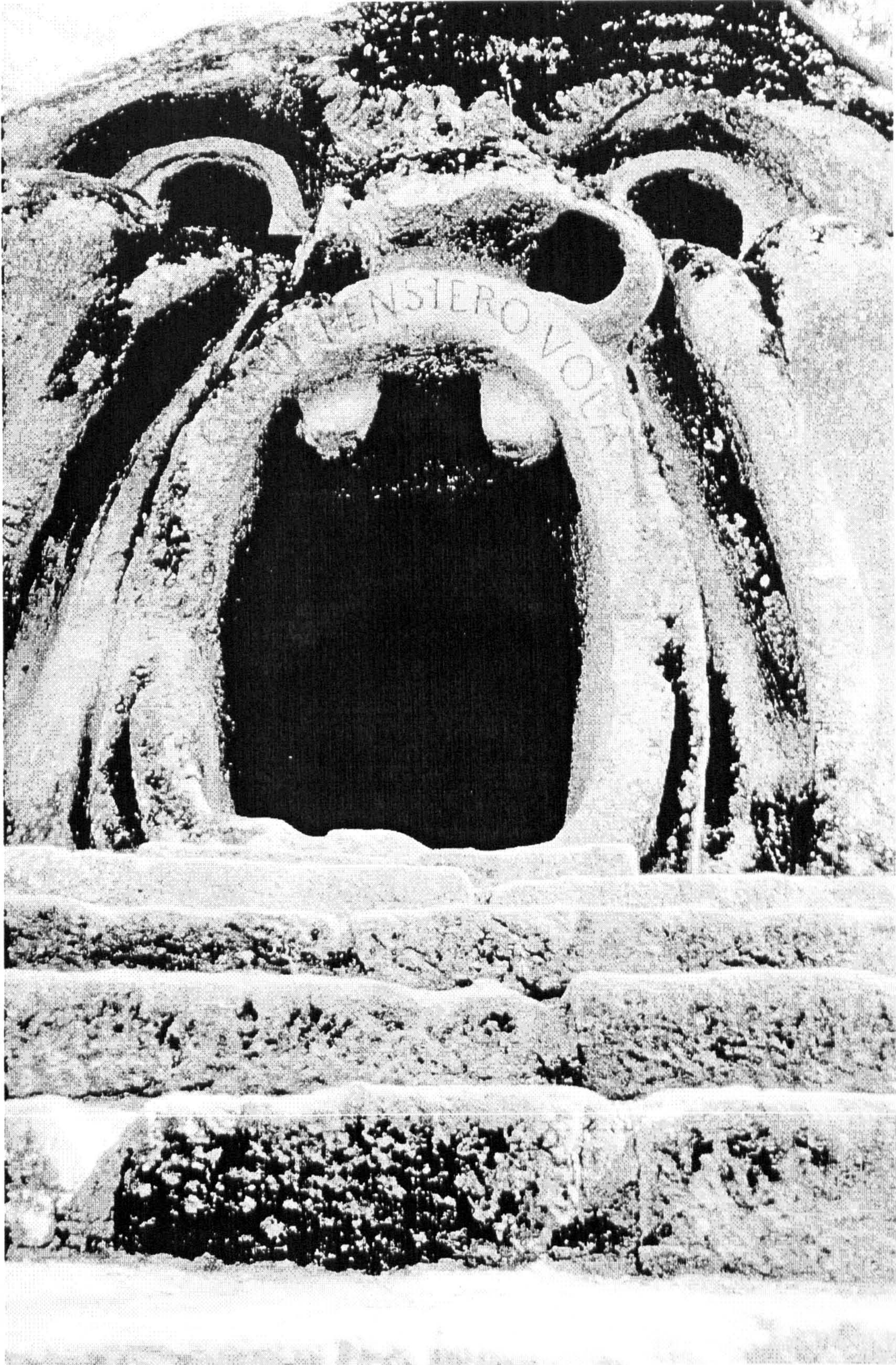
³¹. This fact is not immediately obvious in the grove; the author is indebted to the expertise of Janzer's photography in revealing adequate detail to make the connection with Boccaccio. This is one of the key images which join Boccaccio's work to Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*. Another is Pluto overseeing the terrace of the moonscape sandwiched between himself and the "forest of Cybele" (Berecinthian).

³². The dual concept of positive and negative, like the hermit's predicament, seems a particular focus of Renaissance humour, and one suspects its presence in Orsini's *Sacro-bosco*, considering his wit. Decoding needs perhaps to be quite detailed to uncover it fully, though the idea reflects the general timbre.

³³. Cullileanain, Cormac O': Religion and the clergy in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Roma 1984. pp 223. I Peter 5.8.

³⁴. At Bomarzo this is Trenaros with savage and intricate sub-themes, elaborate subterranean connections between devouring and emitting mouths.

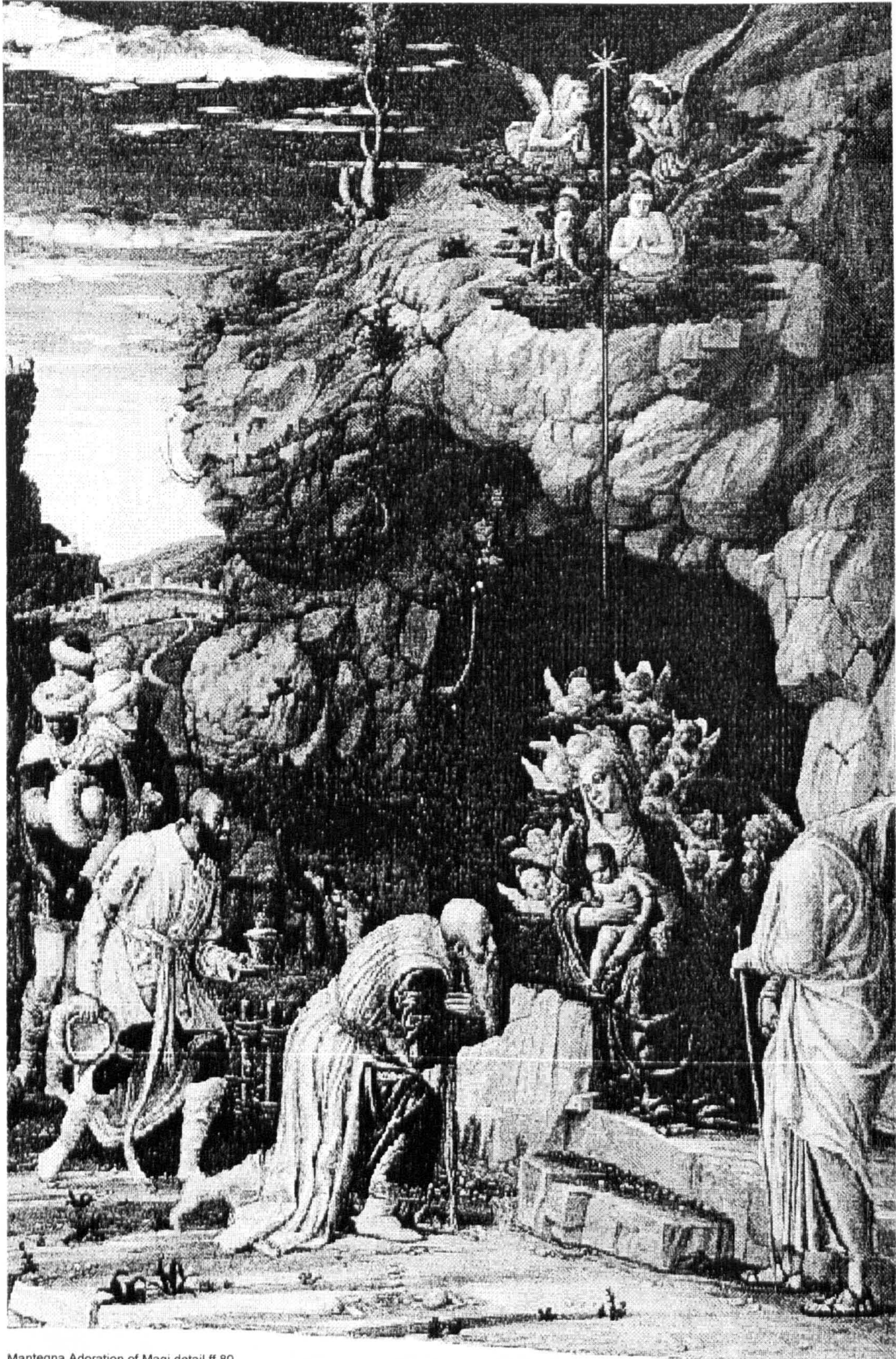
³⁵. Allegorical imagery from Isis worship, which was the main recipient of Ptolemaic and Roman conflation, form the basis of most alchemical symbols, the inherent process allegory being used to encapsulate and signify physical processes.



author

Mouth implies viscera, bowels of the earth, the labyrinth. From it emerge Pluto and Persephone and abundant water.

Trenaros: mouth of the labyrinth



Mantegna Adoration of Magi detail ff 80

Mantegna's virtuous adoration adds fire to the satire in the grotto cartoons and the anti-cleric theme.

Bomarzo:trenaros theme

Orlando (Boiardo and Ariosto) suffered from a madness of virulent desire. This had been characterised by Boccaccio and Petrarch as "ninferno", a witty conflation of ninfa and inferno. At Bomarzo Orlando gazes into his particular ninferno in the statue group near Helicon. Hercules and Orlando are conflated in this Amazonian contest.

Guerra's sketch of the Mask grotto (below), which arises from Boccaccio's Trenaros in the Eclogues, leads into other contemporary interpretations of this visceral theme (bottom and right). They are self-explanatory, and relate to current feelings over Rome, mendicants, and the curia.

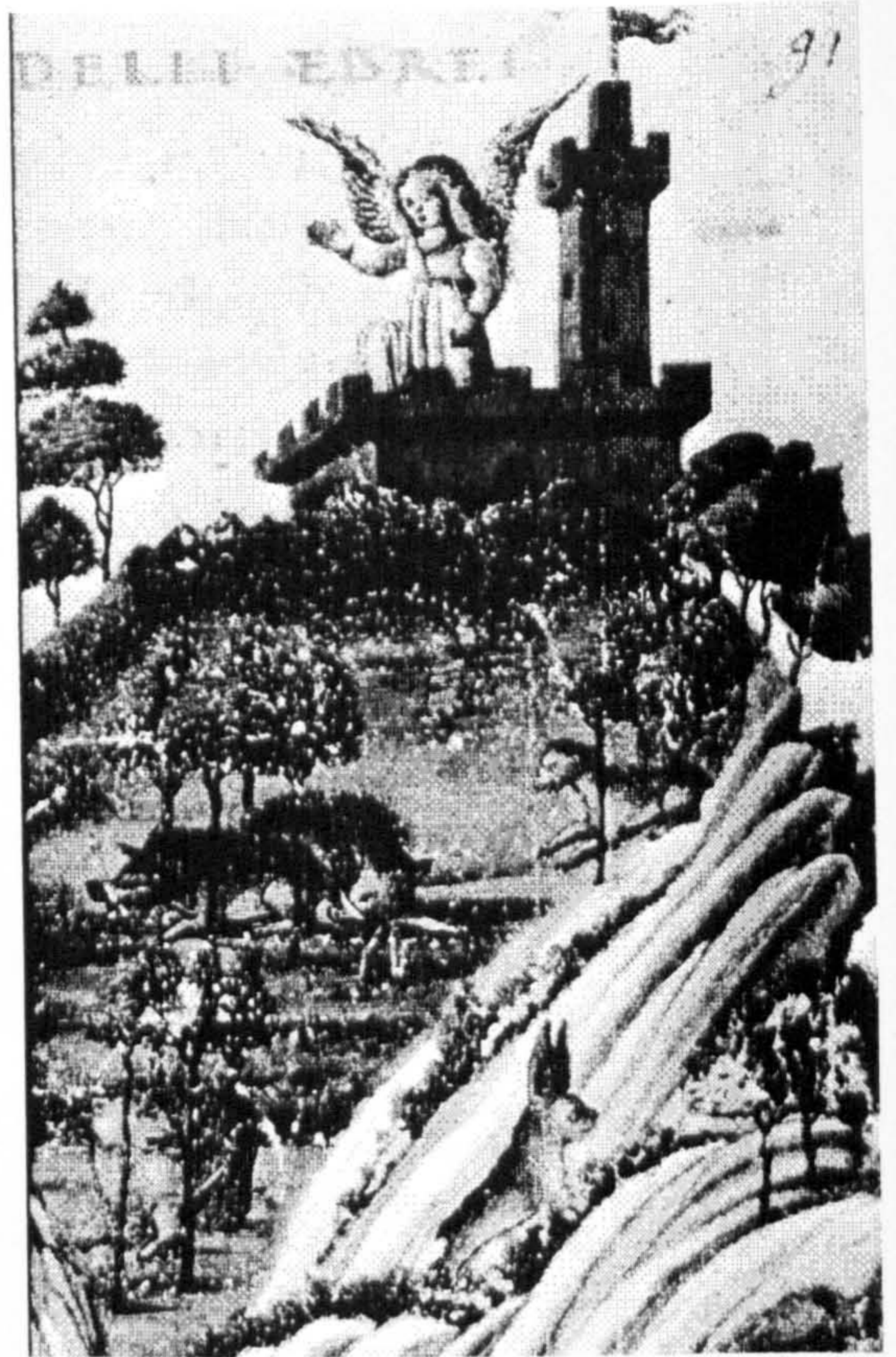


An essential constituent of this series of visual associations is the concept of mundus, a hole in the earth into which death is interred and from which oracles issue. It is linked to both templum and tholos. Guerra has depicted Orsini and friend (fiend?) enjoying their feast of the dead.



Ninferno!

Alchemy used process allegory to encapsulate physics. This allegory uses the same principles as those of the Boscotrecase frescos. An image triggers knowledge of events. Here the sacred mountain and city (top) symbolise production of life force in the earth (tholos) by the old man coupling with the old woman in its bowels (below). These are Trenaros and the mouth grotto. Bottom. Beware for thy adversarya mystic quote links with the production of Mercury (the temple at Bomarzo). Bottom right: the hermaphrodite calms and unites lion and dragon, full of numerology.



Nicola degli agli 1480



Rosarium philosophorum XVIc



Rosarium philosophorum XVIc

Trenaros & alchemy

Metamorphosis whose Isis-Serapis themes dominate the theatrical area of Bomarzo on the same axis. For Psyche read Saphos, and any conflicts are resolved by Pan's Arkadian wisdom in Boccaccio just as they are in Apuleius:

*Pan's dearest daughter, Saphos, stays upon
the heights of Nysa (Parnassus) dwelling by the brim
of the gorgonean spring (Helicon).³⁶*

Water issues by oracular pre-destiny - a knowledge, however mythic, of how things worked - through the slaying of the Gorgon, from the cavernous earth mountain, hollow space inhabited by beautiful creatures with godlike powers. No ordinary water this, for it carries divine inspiration, the wisdom of poets.

Least obvious of these vertical exchanges of space is the temple, a hermeneutic tholos indirectly dedicated to Hermes, father of Pan, god of the labyrinth, herald of the gods, and as messenger, the great navigator of primordia, an able guide for the human spirit on its last journey. He is an intermediary between "here" and "there". Ancient significances as well as Christian symbolism developed from them unite *mundus*, word and water, in tholos, an exquisite architectural celebration of the union.

The presence of such complex dialogues seems daunting, but none, not even the Etruscan tower tomb, is a negative symbol or expression of one-way energies. Like all labyrinths, whether intellectual or spatial, a key slots everything into place, for labyrinth is not of itself chaos, but a way of naming it.³⁷ Etruscans celebrated death. Each dialogue in the boschetto indicates the presence of other space, energies beyond, beneath and above the surface; and then Orsini laughs at them, as Sannazaro laughs at his conventional river god, deep and meaningful mockery of trivialised popular iconography. How he would have laughed over the suggestions Stephen Switzer, for example, makes for statuary in the English XVIIc-XVIIIc formal garden.

Falerina's garden functions in a similar manner. It is an earth interface, an ornate place devised to concentrate energies exchanged between the upper- and the underworld. Nightmarish dreams from pre-historic cult emerge to destroy heroes. This goddess-vulva spawns images of female violence and duplicity - fountains which prematurely consume life when convention has it that they should give it or gently withdraw its spirit; dragons, symbolic of hymen

³⁶. Boccaccio, G: *Eclogues*. XII.100 - 102

³⁷. see also *Spatial abstractions* below.

and virginity, creatures of Pallas Athene, which attack;³⁸ macho giants sometimes interpreted as Amazons, that is female and supposedly passive (though Boccaccio gives the lie to that myth!). Calculatingly perverse, it is inverted ostensibly to rally allegiance against the Ottoman aggressor and Islam. Reactive violence from its sole inhabitant and creator, a distorted love-hate object, far exceeds the infringements that give rise to it, typifying a European view of punishments meted by Islamic justice. Allegory here conveniently covers and uncovers pointed reference to similar behaviour on the part of the papacy.

This grove addresses important questions about the nature of Landscape and the landscape of Nature. The spirit of questioning inspired by Epicurus sets many puzzles in its imagery. Is it a prototype or an isolated event in history? Did some echoes of its skilful manipulation of ideas current in Sannazaro's *Arkadia* leak out before its darkness and lodge in the European consciousness? Or was it really a creation outside its time, unlamented, incomprehensible other than to the few? It received recognition from prominent humanists like Alessandro Farnese and Francesco Sansovino; even Annibal Caro eventually came to admit the validity of its internal meanings. Gambarara, friend of Fulvio Orsini, responded in kind, losing his stipend for his pains, which must have pleased him little since it stopped progress on the work of enhancing his bit of Vatican real estate.

The Rose Garden.

The Italian world of Boccaccio's time saw the pope at Avignon, in captivity under foreign domination yet still seeking dominion over Italian states through agents, secret and normal. This pervades the obtuse content of his work. Boccaccio uses Guillaume's device of Narcissus' garden, the revelation of self love as ultimately destructive, to mock the seriousness and earnestness of the religious quest for Eden which preoccupied his contemporaries.³⁹ Like any cult space, Landscape is a locus where any distinctions between reality and imagination are deliberately blurred. The axis mundi, a device which communicates between "here" and "there" joins also other aspects of reality, "within" and "without", dream and daily material necessity. One of Boccaccio's chief sources of ironic humour is the normal human failures in the process. Unlike northern theorists, he avoids being judgmental. Gardens in Italian

³⁸. *Hieroglyphica*, via Seznec, M: *La survivance des dieux antiques*. London 1940. tr. B.F. Sessions. pp 101 fn. "Why is that animal a companion to the goddess? Because it has the custody of things: thus it protects the sacred woods and the temples. Unmarried girls should be guarded with ever-watchful care: Love lays his snares everywhere."

³⁹. *Mazzotta, G: The world at play in Boccaccio's Decameron*. Princeton 1986. pp 109-110.

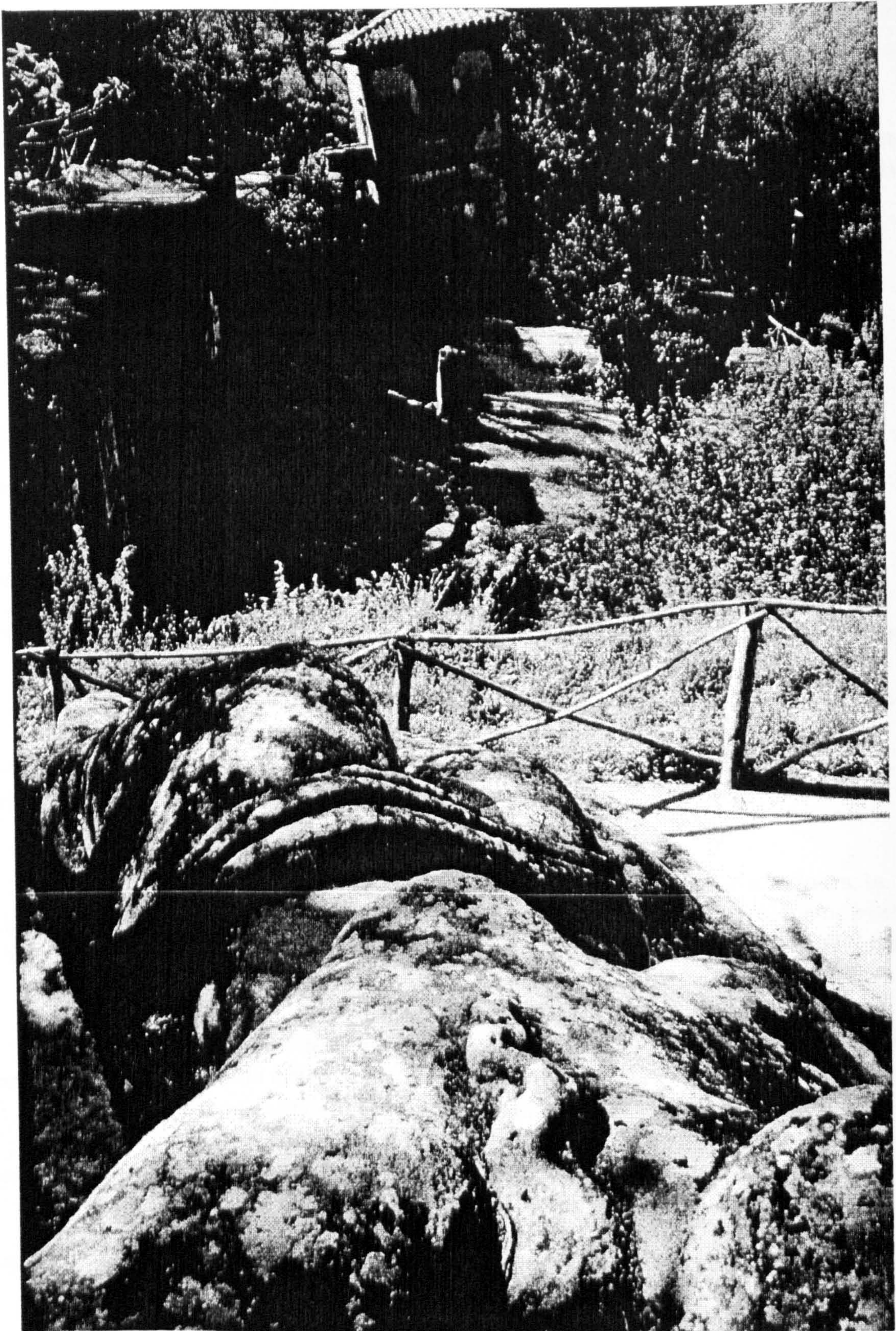
literature exploit this fully. It is sometimes difficult to know which engenders which. Great energy is exchanged between wordy imagination and Landscape. Bomarzo is intense in this respect. Like Boccaccio's gardens from *Decameron*, or his Arkadian landscapes from the *Eclogues*, it obstructs biblical concepts of paradise and in doing so reveals uncertainties as well as parallels in both cultic environments, Edenic Paradise and Arkadia.

Unusually for its time, the remains of the sacro-bosco hold no apparent direct quotes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. That exclusion is more than compensated for though. No other landscape blurs distinctions between reality and imagination more, is more Ovidian. His young sculptor-architect, Simone Moschino, laboriously cut mythic forms from rock where it thrust from the earth.⁴⁰ This act, quite abnormal in context, goes to the foundation of Ovid's themes. Did those original rock formations poking through the skin suggest the subjects, causing form to arise from earth? [139] Ovid used Greek myths, most of which metamorphose landscapes into imaginative forms and events expressive of its perceived forces, as entertainment; Orsini transposes Ovid's elegant and witty Roman words back into deed. He assumes the role of primary creator, of poet-necromancer-in-chief, egged on by Boccaccio. But, like Apuleius he is also commentator, and Apuleius too derived from Ovid. At Bomarzo Orsini has constructed above ground an iconography giving mythic outline to powers whose parameters are beyond the reach of our twentieth century logic. Some incorporate known scientific elements. He has gone Greek, filled with an enthusiasm which fired the Renaissance, taking learning and art away from its Latin formulations and Romanised constraints.⁴¹ Forces are pressed into animate images, deriving a certain cultural universality. A scientific presence is recognised within the mythic spaces produced. At a glance the complete assemblage seems to invent a personal philosophy derived from private learning and experience. Decoding dispels that. They are bones of the earth, born of the earth forms they inhabited historically, fulcrums for their dynamic forces. Mythic metamorphosis from elements of earth directs the forces. Thus the vertical - the dynamic principle - is expressed by both extrusions and holes, and, like tholoi, extrusions which express holes and are the *axis mundi*.

Pythagorean geometry via Alberti or Ghiberti (there is good reason to think the latter), is the philosophical formwork of the core and

⁴⁰. Francesco Moschino, sculptor & architect, son of Francesco, sculptor & architect - executed "The apotheosis of Alessandro Farnese" for the Palazzo Farnese, Rome; fountains for the Pantheon, 1572 - 75; works at Caprarola; Porta della Cittadella, Parma. *Bredenkamp 1986* under appropriate index references.

⁴¹. This language switch may be viewed as deliberate anti-curla reformation, for the lingua franca of the church was precisely that language of constraint and resistance to change.



author

Saphos on the shore of Nysa, Psyche on the hillside over the templum palatium of Eros; not either, but both, skilfully layered together, like the whole programme of Bomarzo, a three dimensional jigsaw puzzle of allegory.

Psyche-Saphos



This image of universal motherhood is carved on the Demeter-Cybele fountain. With it, the sculptor and iconographer make reference to Arkadian myth. This particular myth deals with the infancy of Zeus, the chairman of the Olympians. His conceptual space is the whole of air. As such, it was previously the domain of Hera. But he was nurtured by a half goat in a mountain cave. Caves were the shrines of Demeter, the Cretan form of Hera. Imagery is built up which reveals scholarly knowledge of early conceptual space and its close association with autochthony. Bomarzo opens this world of entombed heroes which is both mundus and tholos.

Amalthea, the goat girl (Jantzer)

Bomarzo's Demeter-Cybele, the Boscotrecase fresco goddess similarly posed, has all the massive firmness appropriate to the spatial concept she embodies. As earth goddess, she was also the Great Mother of the Gods. Orsini might not have been aware of tholos forms, but it is this feeling which the cylindrical cella of Greek above ground tholoi invoked. They were the container of the womb. Orsini makes a fountain of his statuesque figure, which is another principle embodied in tholoi. Here the constructive forces of the underworld emerge to nourish life.



Demeter & Amalthea

limit of its formal orthodoxy. Pythagoras lived in southern Italy where his cult was subject constant repressions and revivals throughout antiquity. We are reminded that this part of Italy still supported co-existent Arabic, Greek, and Latin traditions through the Renaissance. This is not as impossible as it might seem since, contrary to popular belief and traditional teaching in Landscape design, all have common origins in Hellenistic ideas, particularly Landscape design. Not only do they have common origins, but common imagery, and were often profoundly interactive. This seems to be a sub-theme in Orsini's sacro-bosco.

Displacement of elements within the topography is in part dictated by the positions of rock eruptions, requiring from Orsini ingenuity and skill in weaving a programme around them and forcing him to consider earth forms. It seems, though, likely that he knew the piece of land intimately before he started, and that programme and Landscape emerged together in his imagination in the manner of all true inspiration. How else could the continuity have been so well sustained over such a long period. Nothing is out of place.⁴²

Feminine force.

Cybele reclines, serene and recumbent in Bomarzo, the "swarthy spouse" [140]. Complacent, sensual, patient, eternal, the Great Mother of the Gods is surrounded and supported by babies, by nymphs and ever-randy satyrs. A fountain sculpture or source, she is very much THE mother figure. Her evocation is a celebration of the round, the cycle of death and renewal, of the sexuality whose energy lay at the centre of Hellenistic beliefs and which Orsini highlights. These are permanent values. She retains a Latin mother image, but there can be no doubt about her portrayal as Cybele-Meter-Gaia, the Great Mother of the Gods and erotic source. Is there an autobiographical note, mother and wife? She keeps a smilingly watchful eye on the mask grotto, Orsini's interpretation of Boccaccio's *Trenaros*, at the centre of the bosco, and its adjoining semiotic battlefields [135].⁴³ "At the centre stands the cave, *Trenaros*, unseen by Phoebus, into which we're led, prohibited the sky."⁴⁴ At her lap, Amaltheia, nursemaid to Zeus in his Cretan cave, looks out at us so seductively [140]. With such a nursemaid who could be surprised at Zeus's omnivorous sexuality! It is young inspired sculpture. Spatial compression places together this sequential world

⁴². Bredekamp suggests that the temple is a departure, but its themes and oblique references fit accurately into the Boccaccio programme (which Bredekamp ignores) in detail and overall pyramidal structure.

⁴³. The plan reveals how Orsini aligns the cave so as to accord very precisely with the attributes Boccaccio states. So that it never gets sunlight, it is turned slightly from the general face of the plateau to align due north.

⁴⁴. Boccaccio, G: Eclogues. X.76-78.

of action between Arkadia and Crete. Amaltheia's status as nursemaid underlines Kybele's as mother of Zeus. Again we are reminded that Orsini suffered in a manner similar to the Medici origins of Romeo and Juliet, (Lorenzo), and that he was brought up with the Medici family, and ask if this youthful Amaltheia is another portrait.⁴⁵ This is Falerina's garden re-assembled and put straight, no longer a Renaissance political view of Arabic values or even XIVc Italian ones. Common Hellenistic heritage is hinted at more indirectly than by the overt appropriation of a Persian *paradeisos* like Lante's hung garden.

A pair of dragons, one a fledgling perhaps, fight off an apparently savage attack from a pair of lions (Is it the other way? [141] The dragons look defensive). Are the dragons of Falerina's domain? Or are they defending virginity against the predatory lions of masculinity? Given mythic allegorical dimensions, elemental forces, water and fire, sulphur and mercury, stand petrified in perpetual conflict, this time expressed without human madness. As an allegorical group this has divergent pathology capable of many interpretations. Ariosto's "moonscape", whose surface was as burnished steel, akin to solidified water in appearance, is not far away. Orsini's scholarly Epicurean colouration makes for more complexity. The dominant literary source for this part of the plateau is undoubtedly Boccaccio, but his imagery is united with that of Apeleius' wit, Boiardo's and Ariosto's *Orlando* epics. To bring the elements into concordance it is necessary to view associations through Pan, particularly the Pan, Cybele, Dionysos link, and the Pan-Selene myths, and alchemy.⁴⁶ The moon goddess lives on the tip of the earth mountain, near the sacred lake; goats are her animal; she brings rainwater, was seduced by Pan (which means he obtained her attributes), and on the moon Ariosto found Orlando's lost wits in a giant urn, bigger than all the rest.

Other mythic quests are woven intricately together in this esoteric manner. Wrestling Orlando associates remotely with Helicon, which forges links with the *Argonautica*. From this we are reminded of the Argolid attempts at political affiliation with aboriginal Arkadia, a status of considerable importance in the Pan-Hellenic world. As we observed in the Boscotrecase frescos, Argolid claims embody the myth of Perseus and a mass of political appropriations

⁴⁵. Romeo & Juliet originates in a Medici-Sforza episode, which migrated to Mantua before Shakespeare eventually settled it in Verona. Orsini had a passionate youthful love which was similarly ill fated by the death of the girl.

⁴⁶. *Borgeaud, P. Recherches sur le dieu Pan*. Paris 1979. tr. K. Atlass & J. Redfield, Chicago 1988. pp 170-171. "Plutarch classes together the orgia sacred to Pan, Meter, and Dionysos esoteric and ecstatic rites particularly linked to a feminine kind of religiosity." Pan seduced Selene, the moon, with a sheepskin, which probably indicates the particular mythic space which Pan appropriated and which Artemis (a brand of Selene) continued to share. Further space time ramifications are discussed below.



Embattled beasts



by early mythographers. From that comes Galatea, "fairer than a well-watered garden", according to Ovid, and thereby linked with Selene through oriental Greek themes. Falerina's savagely feminist garden is oriental and a strange kind of *mundus* sign. The whole scheme is a grand ironic series of "miraculous" epiphanies.

Myth represents the Argolid dynasty as conquerors of space, of *apeiron*, and deemed by Athenians to be responsible for founding the Persian monarchies. A substitute for direct conquest it expanded their mythical zone of influence. Implied is a politically expedient Greek claim, but also a kind of imputation of upstart. This might suit Orsini's ecumenical and anti-war messages as well as his philosopher's historical disposition and reading of contemporary politics. For Boccaccio, Argus, an ancient king of the geographical Arkadia, was a variable hero, depending on context, and Boccaccio is undoubtedly the predominant inspiration for Bomarzo's *sacro-bosco*.⁴⁷ Etruscan civilisation has links with the literary *Arkadia* in its southern Italic Greek, pre-Roman manifestation. To Athenians Arkadia was "there", never "here". However, this concentrated imagery accesses encoded space which not only incorporates the moon and intervening Platonic spheres as portrayed by Boiardo, but the whole of Pelopponesian Arkadia and Oriental Phrygian Greece.⁴⁸

Ramifications within similar themes render the lions in their two sculptural epiphanies associated with various serpents, open to historical, cosmic, and human interpretations [142]. Voluptas, human love, involves aggression and loss as well as gain. Serpents symbolise riverine forms. Their character is intermediate between outright *aperas* and a recognisable route, *poros*, an indeterminate route. Deities, or powers, with mixed human and bestial forms are almost always oriental imports containing encoded erotic themes. Of one thing we can be quite certain. In this work, meaning woven with the skill of Arabesques is always complex and accessible obliquely or obtusely at many levels.

Embattled lions on the "quest" plateau are part of cosmic semiotic demarcation. In the exedra - a tholos related architecture for the contemplation of eternity in death, a heroon - near, but not of, Persephone's place, they are tamed by the feminine water powers, the Echidna, half woman, half serpent, and Chimaera.⁴⁹ Taming is

⁴⁷. Robert of Naples (hero) in III,IV; in X Hesiod.

⁴⁸. This is a very complex association. Returning to *Borgeaud* pp 170, he quotes Plutarch as noting that the Parian marble refers to the invention of the Phrygian mode and its particular application to the rites of Pan and Dionysos. The Phrygian mode is a set of harmonic proportions whose effect is erotic.

⁴⁹. Looking down a bend in the labyrinth, we find this linked to the Memphis theme, where the first Arkadian ruler founded Memphis and was worshipped there as Serapis, the serpent god. *Borgeaud, P: Recherches sur le dieu Pan*. Paris 1979. tr. Chicago 1988. pp 7

symbolised by the presence of young and their seated pose. Near the Etruscan tower grave iconographically grouped with it, not with Persephone, this little scene immediately calls to mind Boccaccio's "*the great Etruscan tamed some time ago ... the Italian lion.*"⁵⁰ This is in direct opposition to the raging lions, who appear to be attacking both the dragon and its young. Echidna and Chimaera have portrait faces, not stereotypes like Persephone or Plutarcus, hinting at biographical content. Bredekamp suggests Orsini's second wife, a Roman courtesan who found rural life irksomely dull and tried to fill it with clients. Nevertheless some of their form is derived from Mannerism's Etruscan stereotypes, and we are expected to read nationalism similar to that represented by literary Arkadia into the iconography.

Sacro bosco, monte sacri, via sacra.

Profound Landscapes often make statements which revolve around themes present in the Boscotrecase frescos.⁵¹ Bomarzo is unique in its time. In every detail it has something original to say, something not stated previously in the art of Landscape. Philosophy's task, to seek new relevant metaphors to replace outworn and outmoded ones, is taken up boldly, hence the originality of its content and expression.⁵² We can observe in his creation that Orsini was a liberal of his time, harnessing qualities thought typically individualistic, a combination of historical research and inventiveness, to egalitarian messages.⁵³ It is thinking from within. Both Landscapes, Bomarzo and Lante, approach concepts of sacred grove, sacred way and sacred mountain, popular themes of the century [143 [144] [145]].⁵⁴ In reality they are parts of one concept frequently fused. More than garden, even in the Hebrew sense, they are landscapes created with aesthetic and cultic intention in some form. Sacri monti suggest an adaptation of themes such as Delphi and Olympus to Christian ideologies and usually incorporate a via sacra or penitential way. One can sense their relationship too with the *mundus* with its inherent rite and ceremony, and with other forms of mountain tomb in the ancient Middle East.

⁵⁰. There are several codes for this interpretation; the best is the serpent women as Etruscan symbolic art forms.

⁵¹. This results partly from the prevalence of Classicism throughout the Western tradition, even in those ideologies which seek to unseat it. They also occur in Chinese and Japanese systems, themselves different, suggesting common roots somewhere during evolution, not necessarily mimesis in design, but in the underlying ceremonials.

⁵². Something that can be viewed as a definition of truth. Some might question Orsini's questions, but viewed in the true spirit of the times, before the counter reformation, they are all valid. Even more so in view of the tridentine proscription on printed books at the time; the situation was far more severe than the problems over Salman Rushdie in our own time.

⁵³. *Argan, G.C: The Renaissance City*. New York 1969. pp 25. This author applies them to Brunelleschi for his free thinking avoidance of hierarchical processes.

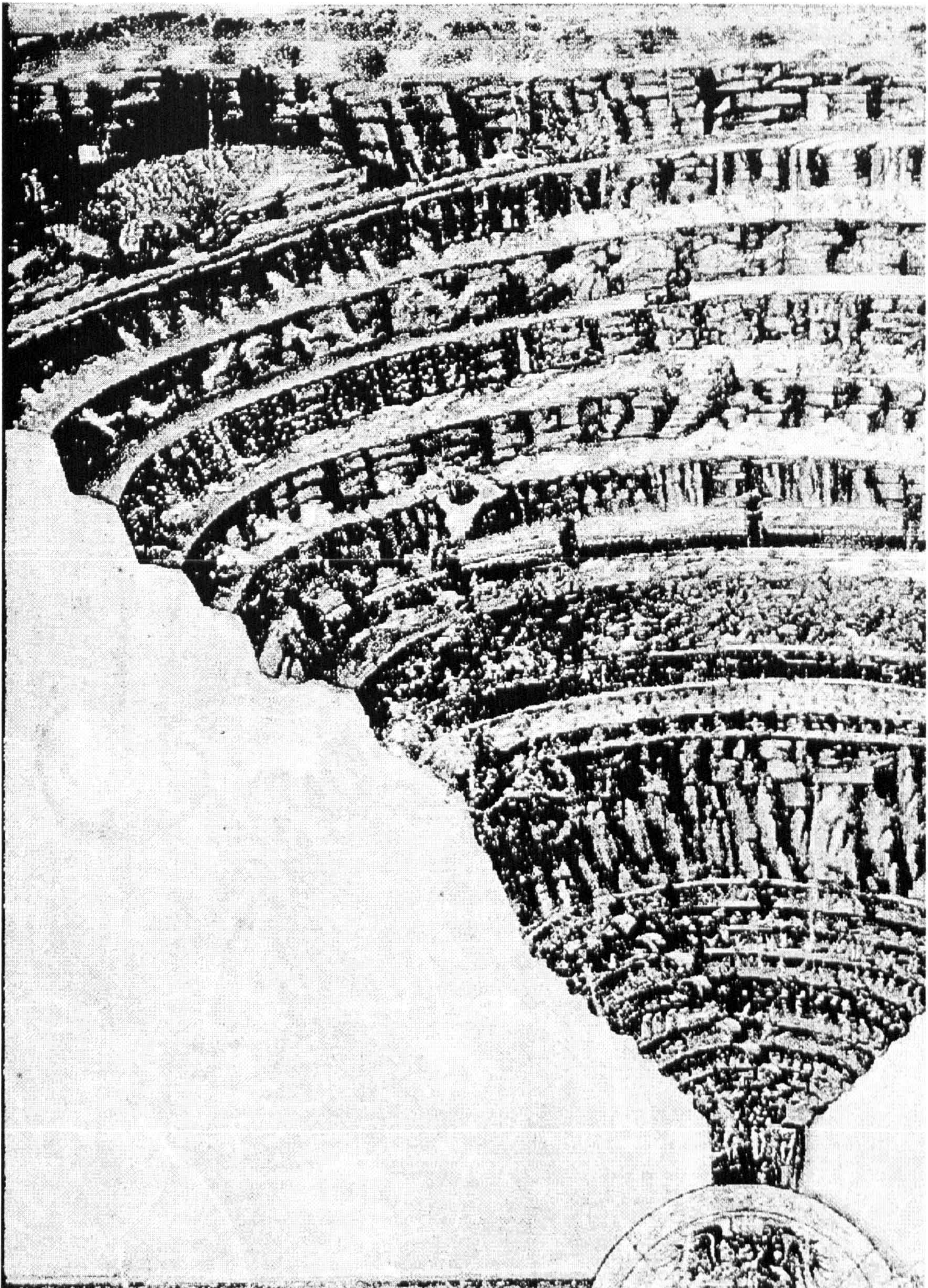
⁵⁴. *Cochrane, E: Italy 1530 - 1630*. London 1988. pp 113.



Domenico di Michelino Dante & the Heavenly City (Clark 1969 ff 55 detail)

Orsini's references to Florence's duomo could well have had this kind of context in mind. Florence is depicted as the sacred city with its sacred mountain in the background and the entrance to hell just off the detail to the bottom left. It reflects the overall spatial organisation of Bomarzo.

Monte-sacri, sacred cities



Botticelli for Dante Inferno XVIc

Dante Alighieri inverts sacred mountain for his inferno, a spatial manipulation captured here by the genius of Botticelli. Similar spatial concepts underlie Mantegna's garden with its strife between vices and virtue.

Inferno & sacred mountain



Evidence of the survival of the concept revealed by the Urartu dish into the Renaissance is presented by this Roman mosaic from S. Maria Maggiore in Rome. Transmission was probably via Byzantine scholars, though sacred lakes of this kind were well known to Roman citizens. Dedicated to Astarte (a form of Isis-Aphrodite) they were well frequented centres for tourism offering thoroughly erotic festivals. The cult is related to that enshrined in the Perseus myth. This mosaic, conflates sacred mountain, Eden and the imagery of the Sumerian water goddess, but also depicts a sacred palatinate city with corner towers, a castellum based on the templum at the edge of the world sea. This does not differ in fundamentals from the spatial imagery of *Gilgamesh*.

Sacred mountain, sacred lake, city, palatium-templum

Had Boccaccio attained the excellence he deemed to have been denied him through his unsuitable education, landscape design might have been the poorer.⁵⁵ As it was, his work, though brilliant, was not so unassailable that several admirers could not develop his ideas. Much is made of the influence of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia* on Bomarzo and other great Italian programmatic Landscapes.⁵⁶ Careful reading of Boccaccio's *Eclogues* and *Decameron* reveals conceptual Landscapes and space which permeate Colonna's work. Couched in a language alien to the twentieth century, their implied realities are reflected at Bomarzo. But Bomarzo owes only small debts to Colonna's work. Its main source of iconographic reference is Boccaccio. A complete reading of Boccaccio's sequence leaves an after-image of real landscapes of the Arno and Campania despite obvious literary derivation and other spatio-temporal myth.⁵⁷ Boccaccio gives his Arkadia contemporary relevance by creating word images which can be imagined as places but are simultaneously abstract, suspending disbelief and avoiding any descriptions. This gives his works multiple layers of meaning, which Orsini fully grasps and weaves into his own programme. Thus, what seems to be one thing is almost always another.

Sannazaro? Boccaccio!

Having started this work with reference to Sannazaro, you might be forgiven for pondering on the increasing reference to Boccaccio. Sansovino's dedication recognises common characteristics present at Bomarzo and in *Arkadia*. Sannazaro was more open than many in his borrowings from Boccaccio, and it is the presence of Boccaccio's imagery in Orsini's work which Sansovino recognised as Sannazaro's Arkadian Landscapes. Stylistically as well as in content, the poetic passages in *Arkadia* are closely modelled on Boccaccio's [146].

Boccaccio was a writer bound to attract Orsini. He was another poet of the pastoral, a free dissident who had turned away from patronage, a man with Neapolitan connections and Etruscan leanings.⁵⁸ The slight taint of personal failure was common to both.

⁵⁵. He complained about being made to undertake studies in business for which he felt he had no aptitude; in doing so, he said that these had prevented him from becoming a great poet by delaying tutelage until too late.

⁵⁶. Notably *Kretzulesco-Quaranta, M.* In *Les Jardins du Songe*. *Hypnerotomachia* presents a strife between love and death. This theme is stated in the polarities of Persephone's place in the manner of alchemical process (process allegory) - Orsini (the bears) allied with seductive wenches (ancient Etruscan) and the subdued lions, versus Persephone and Cerberus.

⁵⁷. Boccaccio was writing before the return of the papacy to Rome and engaged in its incomprehensible and misguided repressions, hence an ecumenical spread regarded later with some suspicion.

⁵⁸. Of secondary interest, Boccaccio also had dealings with the Orsini, having turned down an offer of employment with Niccolò Orsini in 1371. "... for my old age accustomed to liberty does not allow me now to

*What seek you, foolish boy, among these laurels, plucking now these, now those?
Do you not know, bold fellow, that to violate this grove is sacrilege unless,
conscious of merit, Juno has granted the wished-for leaves?*

1. The black watchdog leaps up and guards the hall. He coaxes with his tail the one who enters, but with his bite assails the one who tries to leave ... From there you see groves, forests, streams, and lakes ...

2. Happy that the snow and ice have passed, the shepherds play old love songs on their reeds

What praises, Pan, shall I sing you? You boys, now strip for wrestling and lead on our fathers' games

3. At the centre stands the cave Trenzardos, unseen by Phoebus, into which we're led, prohibited the sky.

4. Nor were there any better woods in Italy for breeding lions, mild or fierce with anger

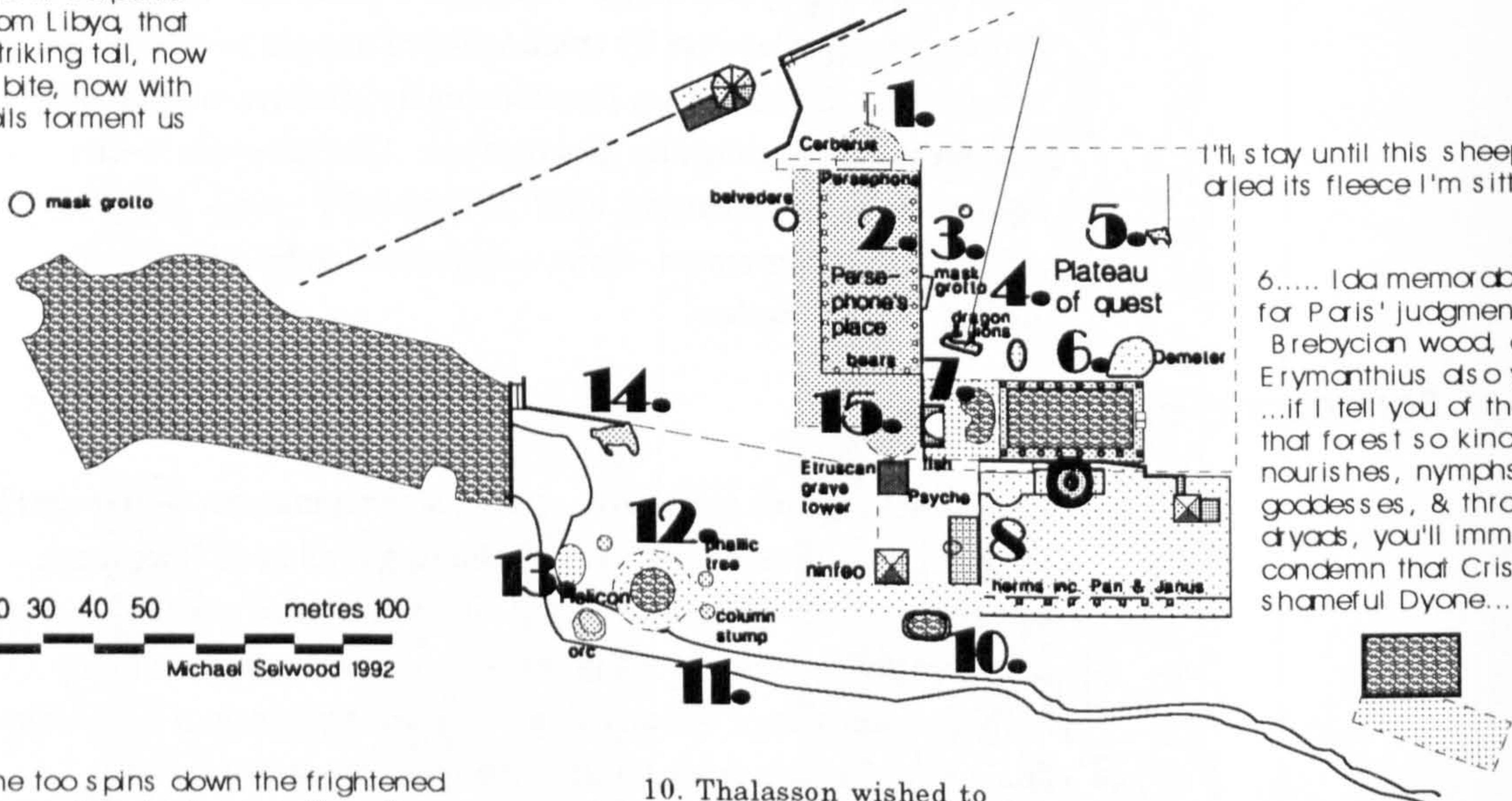
5... the tricking of a blind old man by pious Saphronis when with skins imposed she made a goat appear to be a lamb

15. The great Etruscan tamed some time ago... Italian lions

... it is a savage place unpeepable of serpents ... pests from Libya, that now with striking tail, now with sharp bite, now with knotting coils torment us sorely

I'll stay until this sheep has dried its fleece I'm sitting...

6..... Ida memorable to girls for Paris' judgment, the Brebycian wood, and Erymanthus also yielded. ...if I tell you of the girls that forest so kindly nourishes, nymphs, goddesses, & thronging dryads, you'll immediately condemn that Crisis and shameful Dyone...



0 10 20 30 40 50 metres 100
Michael Selwood 1992

13. fortune too spins down the frightened men whom earlier she favoured happily.

14. Then how thrown rocks take on the shapes of men, the giants' madness which did think it slight to place Olympus on Pindarus' peak

12. To you, Phoebus, father supreme we pray ... Phorba, build with living turf for us some altars near the water ... and then bring Idumenean palms

11..... Why should I mention the clear streams winding leisurely through grasses, the springs, fresh lakes, and caves artlessly hidden by limestone?

10. Thalasson wished to teach no one but me to yoke the dolphins....

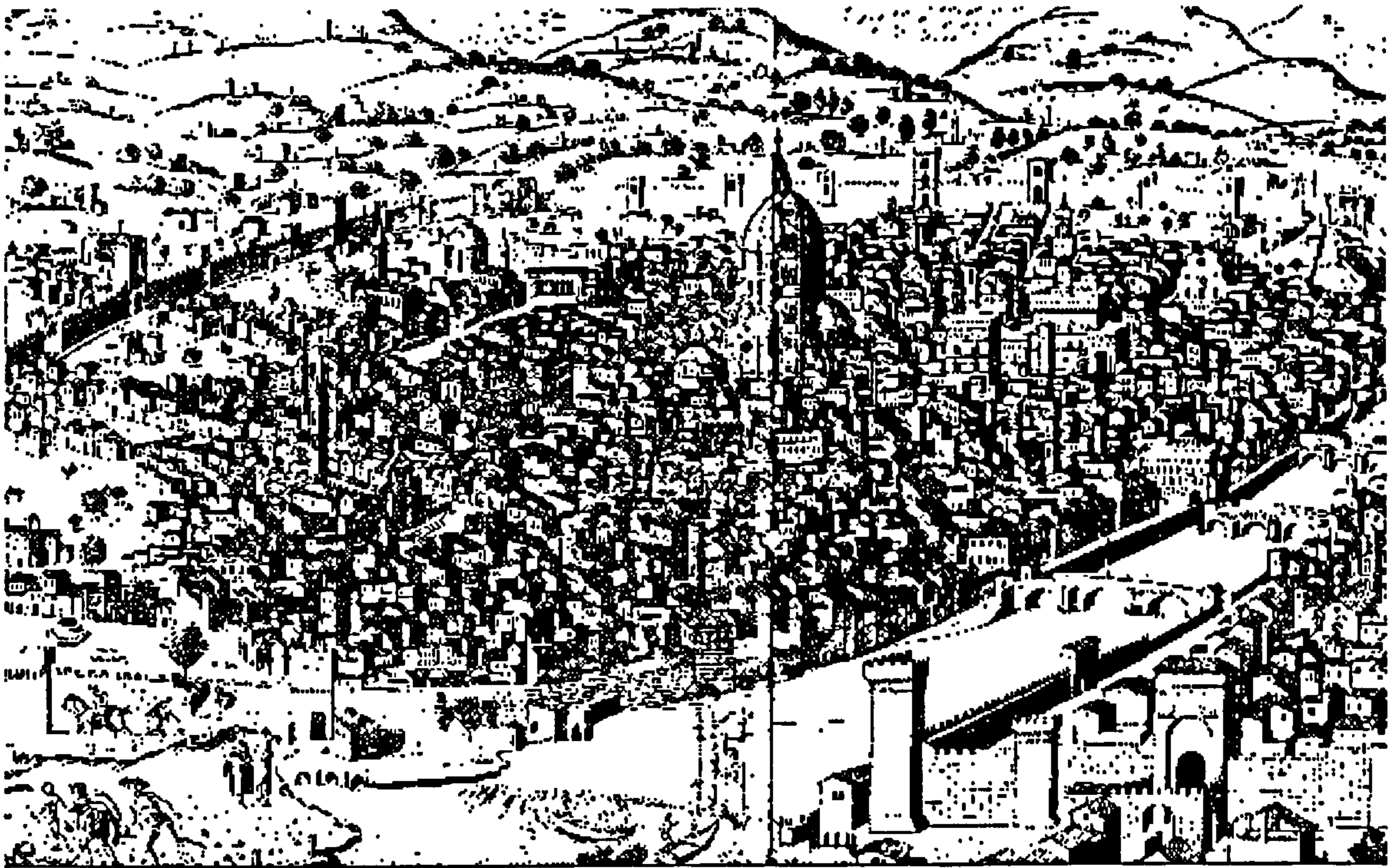
7. Plutarcus sits beside his swarthy spouse upon a boulder shaded with black boughs

8. Savage is love, the surest plague of youth. Alas! he's fallen. Bring fresh water boys ...

9. Pan's dearest daughter, Saphos stays upon the heights of Nysa, dwelling by the brim of the gorgonean spring

All the quotes on this drawing are taken from J.L. Smarr's translation of Giovanni Boccaccio's Eclogues.

Boccaccio's place *You speak of marvels, and I think that wood you mention is the gods' own sacred dwelling*



Argan ff 38

Above. XVc Florence dominated by the new duomo. Its name, Dome, indicates the significance this structure held. It has been described as an umbrella for the new age city, a symbol of the celestial vault. Orsini used this as his model for the tempietto at Bomarzo



Burckhardt ff 56

Bomarzo's temple, Florence's duomo

A writer of Pastoral Eclogues himself, it would be unthinkable that Orsini had not read Boccaccio, despite his reservations about the use of Latin. The structure and venue of the *Eclogues* is that of a sacred mountain, but not one of the fashionable Franciscan conceits. They start with youthful herdsmen whose dominating influence is Dyone, representing dynamic erotic passion, pass through Crisis, love of wealth, and end in a spiritual pilgrimage of age which symbolises the last journey of the soul and its memories. This is the spatial and metaphorical structure of Bomarzo. The mount form, as well as suggesting the presence of a *mundus* beneath, reduces in spread towards its summit, like ageing, a near if not perfect fit for the themes. Bomarzo's imagery gradually reduces in quantity and dynamism but increases in density, culminating in a temple domed like Brunelleschi's Santa Fiore.⁵⁹ "... *vedi la coppola del mio tempo qual me riescie non men nel suo grado proportionata ch' all' apparita de Firenze quella di S.^{ta} Maria del Fiore, ma giungendo al boschetto trovai la loggia delle mi fontane che va a terra*" says Orsini, in a personal letter [147].⁶⁰ All of its lower plateaux are abundantly watery, youthful landscapes, like Boccaccio's early eclogues, and deal with the humours of life. Rising, it becomes more serene, less disturbed by this sound and movement, these, like smells, being both parts of a range of emotive symbols within the conventions of Renaissance literature. We observed it in Orlando's entry into Falerina's domain, in the stereotype Boccaccian recitation of the fields of May. Boccaccio's final *Eclogues* receive a ringing confirmation in the pattern of Orsini's otium at Bomarzo:

*I am content with little. By Pan's gift
the sylvan ivy berries offer food,⁶¹
the streams give drinks, the oaks give cooling shade,
a heap of leaves gives rest, if other things
are lacking, and a burr infested fleece
offers a cover for my weakened body.
To these is added sweet, great liberty,
which, although late, has looked at last upon
an artless man.⁶²*

Themes from the Boscotrecase frescos unite in this conception, which is autobiographical for both Boccaccio and Orsini. They undoubtedly contain meditations on the progress of life and belief

take on a yoke. A little patch of land is my home, but with slender victuals it suffices me." From J.L.Smarr's translation of the *Eclogues*, pp 263.

⁵⁹. Argan discusses at length the impact of Brunelleschi's dome, its symbolic spatial aspects, its suggestion of umbrella-like spatial infinities, and its appropriation of sky space. *Argan, G.C: The Renaissance City*. New York 1969. pp 25.

⁶⁰. Letter to A. Farnese. 9.10.1565. via *Bredenkamp 1986 Vol. II*. pp 18.

⁶¹. A hallucinogenic, ultimately poisonous, berry, used in most ancient Dionysiac rites by infusion into beer. See above in Sumerian rites where it was used to enter a final "dreamtime".

⁶². *Boccaccio Eclogues* XVI.130-138. It echoes themes in Horace and Ovid.

expressed through the medium of Landscape. To do this requires a concept "*Landscape*". At this stage it is difficult to see any cyclical structure in Bomarzo's programme. It seems finite, a route that begins with the fantasies of the unknown, the sphinxes, and proceeds until it terminates at the temple which also encapsulates the mysteries of Memphis. Parnassus is where Psyche rests, favourite daughter of Pan, king of this aboriginal homeland re-invented by Boccaccio's words and Orsini's Landscape, intermediary between the landscapes of life and those of death.⁶³ The Boscotrecase frescos too, are linear in their narrative. They follow a progression of beliefs from myth through logos to stasis, coming to rest in a world brought to peace by the ingenuity of inventive human mysticism. Where the frescos discretely imply those things which cannot be spoken, Orsini reaches in and drags some of them outside. Here is a man braver than Orlando. Without Orlando's rage he brings out the phantasmagoria, sets them in the mythic spaces of his dreams and confronts them [148]. In the same way we can find the Apuleius layer [149] [150] and the Romance of the Rose [151].

Parco di mostri?

Prominent in the frescos' *via sacra* is the water whose limpidity occupies the foreground of "Oracle", the central painting. Nothing similar appears in the companion paintings from the same room, and it is therefore crucial to the symmetry of the trilogy. The semiotic space it occupies lies between the immediate landscape of the villa, signified by the presence of Priapus,

*Oh ruddy lord of gardens, you for whom
the fair acanthus and white privet used
to rise from the green mound,⁶⁴*

and the sacred way extending into a hazy hilly beyond.

Rocks project into the water, as at Bomarzo. Arkadian Landscapes insinuate everywhere.⁶⁵ Orsini replaces the leaning shepherd of the frescos with Helicon, but resemblances remain. Sacred waters were pure sources; fresh water within rocky shores is cleaner. Hence their special status of sanctity (having the protection of sanctions)

⁶³. *Seznec, J: La survivance des dieux antiques*. London 1940. tr. B.F. Sessions. pp 121 fn points out that the pseudo-myth of Psyche was to achieve exceptional importance in the humanism and art of the Renaissance. In other words, it was a mainstream image of the time.

⁶⁴. *Boccaccio Eclogues* V.94 -

⁶⁵. Once again, one looks to alchemical symbols for imagery, finding many stereotypes used in contemporary painting.

6. Ceres - "One day she noticed a temple on the top of a steep hill ... her heart full of love & hope,(she) reached the temple with some difficulty, after climbing ridge after ridge & found it heaped with votive gifts"

6. Hermes - "brother from Arkady" temple

9. Styx - "The dreadful waters of the Styx burst out from half way up an enormously tall, steep, slippery belvedere precipice; cascaded down into a narrow conduit ... & flowed unseen into the gorge below."

1. Fortuna - "... ornamental pillars at the four corners surmounted by winged victories. The figures were extraordinarily lifelike, each hovering palm branch in hand on outspread wings, her dewy feet so lightly poised on a motionless globe that you would never have guessed they were carved from the same block of stone - they seemed to be on the point of soaring off again.

2. Ninfeo - "Behind the goddess was a cavern, its entrance carpeted in moss, fallen leaves and brushwood, with shrubs and creepers growing here and there; the back was a highly polished slab which mirrored her shoulders; and under the lip hung apples and grapes, ripe for eating, so exquisitely carved that you fancied yourself in mid-August"

3. Venus (Pamphila) - "She is a well-known witch and said to be a past-mistress of every sort of necromancy: so much so that merely by breathing on twigs, stones and so on, she can transfer the light, the starry sky, to the dark depths of hell and thus restore the reign of primal Chaos ... binds with the unbreakable fetters of lust; but whenever she meets with resistance her rage and hatred are so violent that she thinks nothing of petrifying her victim on the spot, or transforming him to a wild beast"

4. Psyche - "... lay motionless on the ground followed him with her eyes & moaning bitterly.... she climbed up the bank of a river that followed close by & flung herself into the water.... the kindly river washed her ashore with a gentle wave & laid her high and dry on the flowery turf."

5. Pan - "... the goat-legged country god, happened to be sitting near by, caressing the mountain nymph Echo & teaching her to repeat all sorts of pretty songs!"

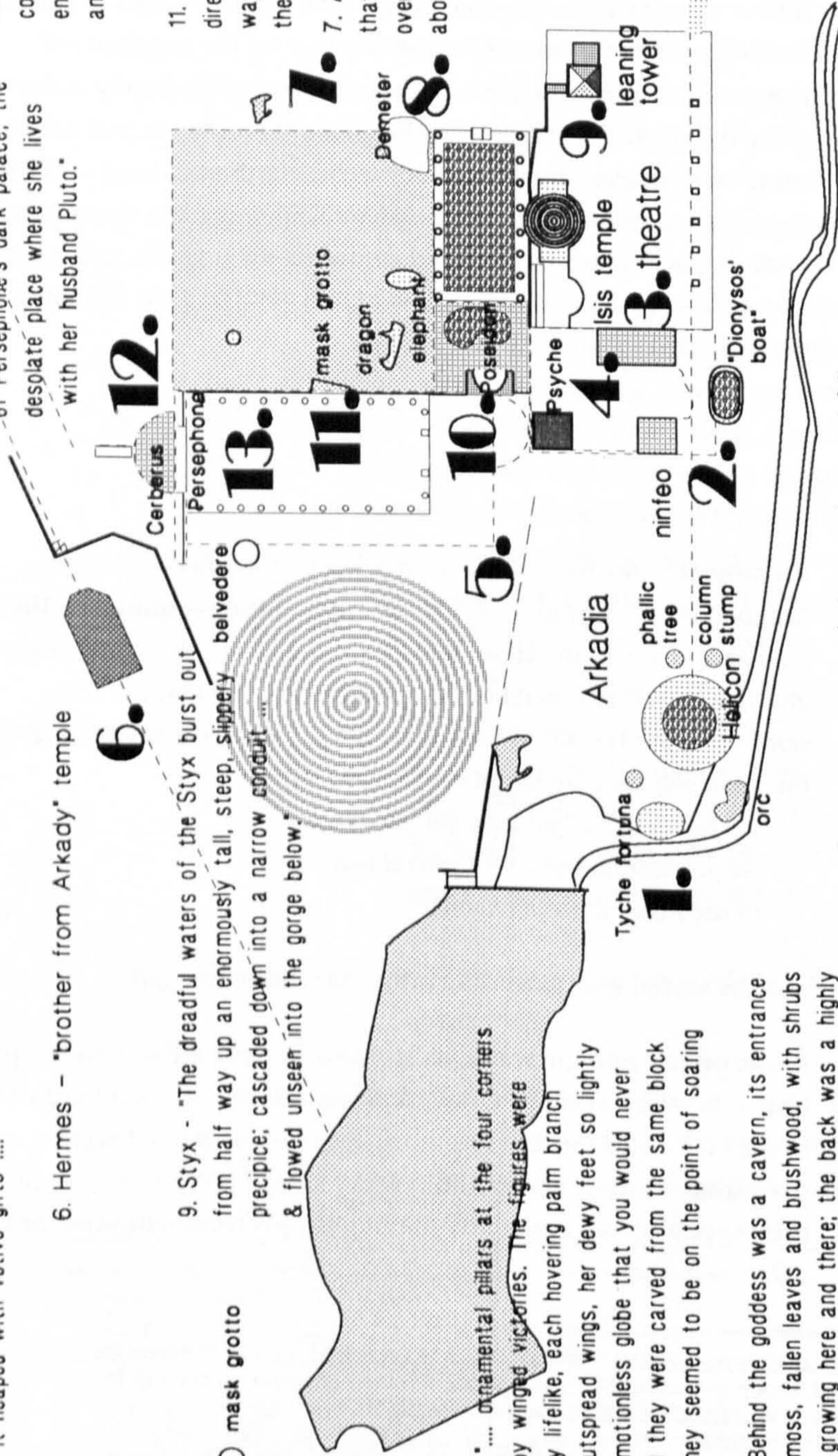
12. Cerberus - "They are for you to give to Cerberus, the huge, fierce, formidable hound with three heads on three necks, all barking in unison, who terrifies the dead; though of course the dead have no need to be frightened by him because they are only shadows and he can't injure shadows."

11. Trensaros - "Go there at once and ask to be directed to Taenarus, which is rather an out of the way place to find... Once you get there you'll find the ventilation holes of the underworld."

7. Ares - "Do you see the grove fringing the bank of that stream over there, with fruit bushes hanging low over the water? Shining golden sheep are wandering about in it, without a shepherd to look after them ..."

8. "... she saw below her in the valley another beautiful temple in the middle of a dark sacred grove."

9. Tower - "She went at once to a high tower ... but the tower suddenly broke into human speech"



0 10 20 30 40 50 100 metres

8 - "I am afraid of being betrayed, for Lechery has risen so high ... reigns everywhere: her powers never cease growing; Chastity is not safe even in abbey or cloister." (ll 3601-1)

"The heavenly influences also make the stars appear to be dragons and sparks flying thro' the air and falling down from the heavens, as foolish people think ... " (ll 18915-)

mask grotto

12- "But now let us talk of the beautiful things that are enclosed in this lovely park... no heart could conceive nor mouth of man tell of the great beauty and worth of the things that are contained in that place, the lovely games, the great joys... that the carolers who dwell in that enclosure experience....." (ll 2059 - 20599)

3 - "The garden was a completely straight, regular square, as long as it was wide (cf. Longus) ... there was no tree which might bear fruit of which there were not one or two in the garden ... Know then that these trees were spread out as they should be; one was placed at a distance of more than five or six fathoms from the other (ll 1323 -)

2 - "These people of whom I tell were formed into a carol, & a lady called Joy was singing to them.... you would have seen the carol move and the company dance daintily, executing many a fine farandole and many a lovely turn.... (ll 727 -)

1 - "I went off then, straight to the right, by a little path full of fennel and mint, and I found Diversion nearby when I penetrated to a secluded space where he was... with people so fair that ... I did not know where people so beautiful could have come from ... No man born ever saw such beautiful people." (ll 712-)

10- "The shepherd who keeps the flock in this beautiful park is not stupid... he would not allow any black animal to enter... so much does it please him to keep the white ones separate...." (ll 20243 - 20335)

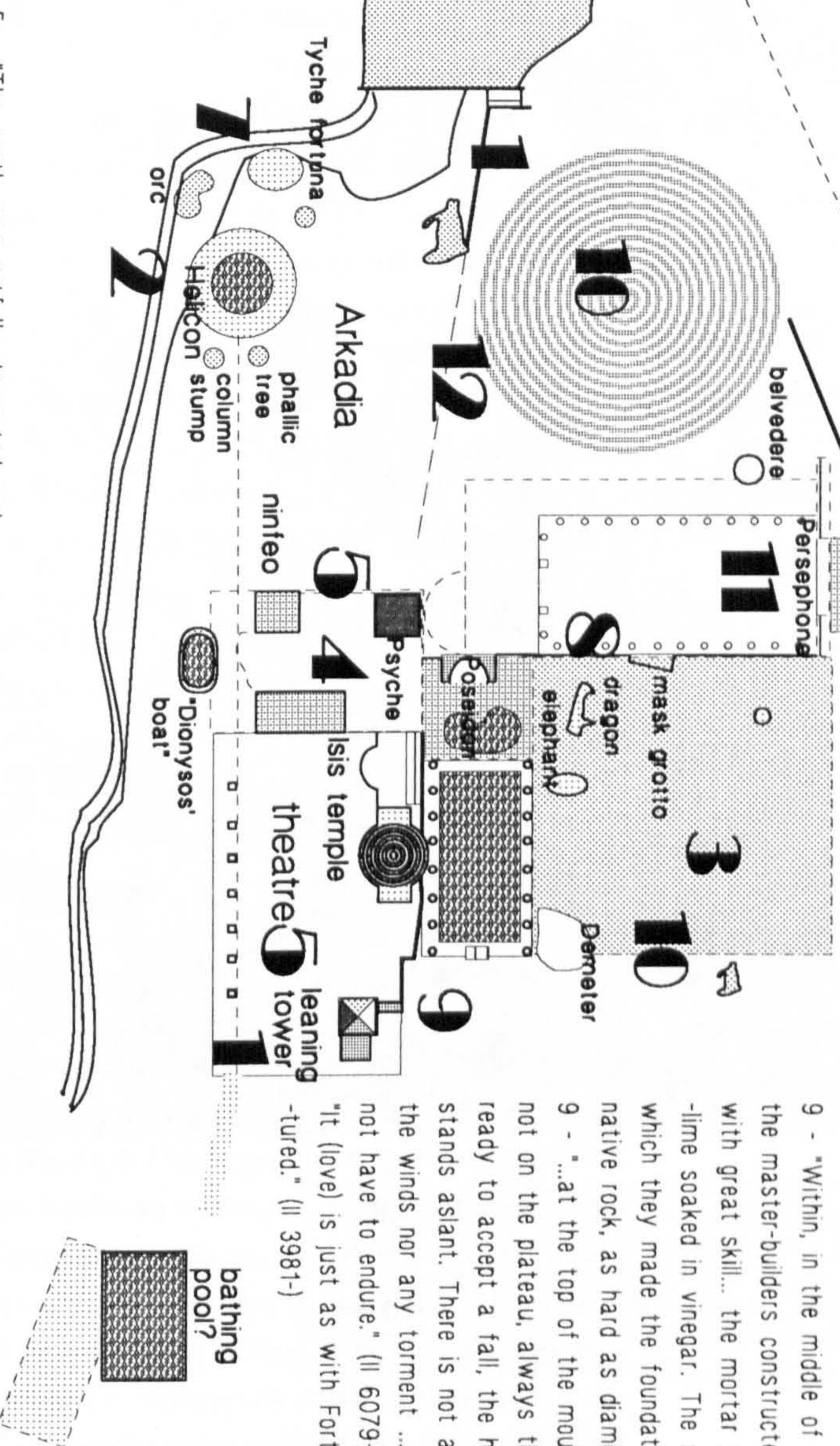
11- "For when Cerberus's nurse Atropos wants to use her power... there is no human practice that can keep her from consuming everything... divine things are not subject to death." (ll 20349 - 20369)

6 - "At last I arrived at a very good spot, when I found a fountain under a pine... Nature with consummate skill, had placed the fountain under the pine within a marble stone, and in the stone, on the border of the upper side, had cut small letters saying that there the fair Narcissus died." (ll 1425 -) (Narcissus and Psyche have polarities)

9 - "Within, in the middle of the enclosure, the master-builders constructed a tower with great skill... the mortar made of quick-lime soaked in vinegar. The stone from which they made the foundation was the native rock, as hard as diamond." (ll 3833-)

9 - "...at the top of the mountain, on the slope, not on the plateau, always threatening ruin & ready to accept a fall, the house of Fortune stands aslant. There is not a single storm of the winds nor any torment ... this house does not have to endure." (ll 6079-)

"It (love) is just as with Fortune ... who is so tortured." (ll 3981-)



5 - "The earth was artfully decorated and painted with flowers of various colours and sweetest perfumes." (ll 1410)

7 - "The river runs so pleasantly, with such a murmuring, that it thrums and strums and sounds sweeter than a drum or tambourine." (ll 5999)

4 - "Along the brooks and the banks of the clear lively fountains, sprang the thick, short grass. There one could couch his mistress as on a feather bed, for the earth was sweet and moist on account of the fountains, since as much grass as possible grew there." (ll 1385-)

(quotes from Romance of the Rose ca 1275 (Darberg))

P1150 The Rose at Bommarzo

0 10 20 30 40 50 metres 100

within the Hellenistic system.⁶⁶ Without the power of kings or theocracy, gods lack protective muscle, having only a fifty percent chance of success. Princeps and emperor were invested with appropriate godly powers. In every Roman city, fountains were sacred. Increasing adornment and elaboration of nymphaea created precedents for the castella of aqueducts. Agrippa's fame, adequate enough as a commander, was further enhanced by his energetic engineering programmes, providing abundant pure water for Octavian's new world city. Ensuing lavish public parks featuring their success ensured good public relations, something at which Octavian, and presumably also Agrippa, excelled.

Bomarzo's lake was one of the early features of Orsini's sacro bosco, second only to the theatre. It was part of the first flush generated by his marriage to Julia Farnese:

*Then the gift of Phytias fair Liquoris
was wed to me, and under me grandchildren
still kept the folds of Argus, which the ancient
Chalcidians from Cumae placed among
clear lakes and in a valley full of sheep;
no pasture was superior while it flourished.⁶⁷*

It demanded lavish expenditure of personal and financial resources, causing Orsini painful physical injury. Unique in its time, it evidences imaginative inventiveness and intention to create a spectacular water garden. The stream was made to tumble resounding into the lake at its head. It froths and foams out over the other dam, where the *ketos* attempts to drink it all, at the northern end. From there it is sent hissing away along the boundary between Arkadia and the older garden. Lake and stream create a distinct semiotic boundary there between castle garden and sacro-bosco, making of the latter a transition into another world, "there".

At the time of Bomarzo's grove, starting a little before, reconstruction of Rome's major aqueducts was under consideration. A task of the curia, it was slow and dilatory, much talked about. Alberti's Trevi with three huge lion mouths, each capable of holding several grown men, had long been demolished and was still awaiting replacement. Another hundred and fifty years were to elapse before the one we see now. Agrippa's Aqua Vergine had remained the city's only source of clean water other than Tiber since late antiquity. It was, and is, traditional in Rome that the castellum of each aqueduct was a showpiece, a mostra. This no doubt derived from the similar but rather more purposeful programme of Octavian

⁶⁶. Which was largely without "laws" in the Roman sense.

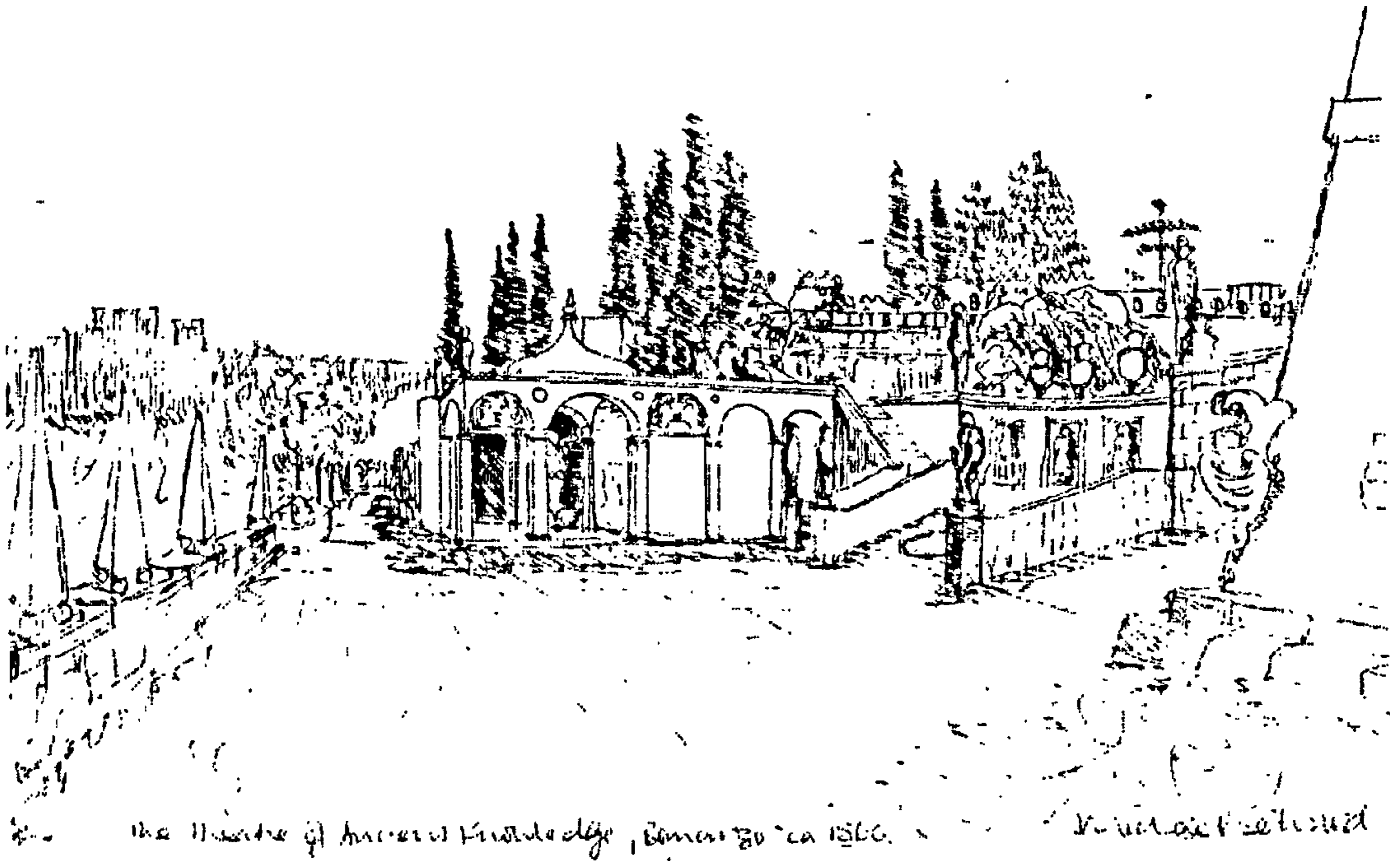
⁶⁷. *Boccaccio Eclogues* IV. 53-55. Chalcidians are Neapolitans in Boccaccio's code.



author

Sleeping Psyche denotes a semiotic and spatial boundary between spatial systems. Her pseudo-myth involves transitions between love and death, deaths in love, and like Orlando epics, madness and desire. Her position at Bomarzo is pivotal between the theatre of love and the ancient Etruscan death harpies, between the axis of Parnassus and that of Hermes-Persephone. She therefore exists in a perpetual state of transitional space, despite Apuleius' "happy ending".

Psyche's place



author

Reconstruction based on a photograph. Left is the wall of the river terrace with obelisks. There should be a row of herms in front of it. The Dionysos dolphin tub marks the Helicon axis. Opposite the temple of Isis-Aphrodite has an ogee roof; stairways lead from the theatre to Psyche on a terrace above. These would have been balustraded, perhaps with water runs in the rail. Above is the terrace of giant urns; there would probably have been fountain urns on a balustrade at its edge to heighten the contrast in scale. Acorns and pine cones bounding Persephone's place can just be seen behind, the belvedere on the skyline. To the left of the drawing the castle is silhouetted. Cypress trees grow in the Etruscan funerary area, and far fewer trees than natural regeneration has donated to the Landscape today. The reconstruction is not complete.

Bomarzo theatre reconstruction

and Agrippa. Alberti's lion mouths gushing huge quantities of water over a swimming pool sized basin replaced more ancient ruins, the original nymphaeum of Agrippa's Aqua Virgo, now known as Aqua Vergine Antica, whose headwaters rise between Rome and Tivoli. His imagery revealed understanding of symbolic purpose. This was the last functioning ancient aqueduct, the only aqueduct into the city, one of the scandals of Renaissance Rome. Jacopo della Porta was concurrently completing the Vergine castellum in Piazza Colonna, not surprisingly a column. All this activity, however desultory, coupled with the prospect of new aqueducts, must have been a topic of some substance. Ultimately it enriched the aristocracy - curia and secular alike - enabling profitable development of the hills.⁶⁸ Thus the hero of the moment was likely to be the hydraulic engineer.

Fountain mostri were an obligatory platform for political reference and inflated allegory, demonstrating the arrival of pure water. If we look carefully at Orsini's features, the most significant are those arranged for water. Starting with the lake, unique in its time and even after the construction of d'Este's Tivoli palace still unique in its form, we find assertively naturalistic use of a watercourse.⁶⁹ His Helicon was once a magnificent circular basin on whose rim danced seductive marble Muses enjoyed by Arkadian deities.⁷⁰ (There is a possibility that this whole zone encodes another spatial categorisation (fn 63). This may well be closely linked to what Bredekamp calls "Aztec mask", which carries the sphere of prima causa (apeiron), whose Orsini arms proclaim authorship!) [152]. It lies beyond "Oceanus". Pluto, whose Renaissance characterisation

⁶⁸. A period of energetic map-making following Alberti's development of a system, there is a remarkable plan of Rome by N. Beatrizet, from 1557, which grasps this concept clearly. (*Argan, G.C.: The Renaissance City*. New York 1969, ff 70).

⁶⁹. Tivoli also pays homage to Rome's projected aqueducts with its elaborate Little Rome fountain set piece. Ippolyte d'Este, the Farnese's great rival, makes sufficient play for people to think his own garden is the source of Rome's water. What power!

⁷⁰. Illustrated in a lovely drawing by Bartholomaeus Breenbergh (In Berlin-Dahlem Staatliche Museum), more clearly and prosaically in a sketch by Giovanni Guerra (Albertina, Vienna). Both are illustrated in Bredekamp Vol. II, figs 53, 55. However, Guerra shows ten; it would be unthinkable for Orsini to make an error. Either they have been supplemented for arcane reasons (which is remote), or they have been converted into the ten sciences - the seven liberal arts with Astrology, Philosophy, and Theology, which seems probable (cf. Seznec, J: *La survivance des dieux antiques*. London 1940. tr. B.F. Sessions. pp 137. He is discussing Mantegna's Tarocchi, a series of fifty mythological figures in five groups, a possible source. The groups are The conditions of man, Apollo and the nine muses, the ten sciences, the three cosmic principles, the ethical principles, the ten firmaments. The Mantegna figures bear a resemblance to the statues of the Guerra drawing). Another similar source of greater antiquity is in de Lorris and de Meun: *Romance of the Rose*. In the garden of the Rose, ten carolers are Courtesy, Diversion, Joy, Eros, Wealth, Generosity, Openness, Idleness, Youth, Knight. Carol or querole is the ancient sinister round dance of the labyrinth and of time, death and renewal. (ll 727 -; see also illustration to this work "There was a Rose..."). On the external face of the wall of the garden of The Rose, were ten figures representing polarities of these: Hatred, Felony, Villainy (having a peasant nature), Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, Sorrow, Old Age, Pope-Holliness, Poverty (ll 139 - 462). The number has been obviously construed. There is a strong likelihood that Orsini was creating a dynamic overlay of ideas in the manner of myth and allegory by conflating several references.



was Providencia, supervises water heroics just above the theatre, right beside the Ariosto's lunar Landscape - moon, "there".⁷¹

The ninfeo had its wave-form triclinium / sedilia and its boat / bath, a Dionysiac fountain with dolphins [153] [154].

Thalasson wished

*to teach no one but me to yoke the dolphins
and drive great whales with reins, me whom he often
saw vanquish by hand the sounding tritons
and conquer Phorcus' daughters.*⁷²

The theatral area was also embellished with water, a central jet, its "wings", and sprays from the parapet above. The Poseidon (Pluto or Plutarcus (Boccaccio)) group was a spectacular water display. One could hardly imagine the giant fish or *ketos* between this and Psyche to have been dry.⁷³ Some kind of link feature should be suspected. The rectangle within the giant urns was probably also a still water basin to simulate Ariosto's "steely" moonscape, perhaps inspired by the canopus of Villa Adriana.⁷⁴ Cybele (Demeter in Bredekamp), Pluto's swarthy spouse, the Great Mother of the Gods, the first sanctioned oriental cult in Rome and subject of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, was a fountain sculpture, a possessor of *mundi* in ancient cities and those of antiquity (as Ceres).⁷⁵ This goddess complex, once universalised under Hellenism, became the antithesis of Tyche/Fortuna.⁷⁶ Water eventually found its way to the large rectangular (bathing?) pool at the "old" entrance then back to the stream. Just how extensive the complete use of water was remains obscure, (Nobody appears to have divined the conduits). but each fountain is a group, not individual jet, demanding quantities of water in the manner of an aqueduct's *mostra* or *castellum*. Thus we had, though no longer have, a *barco di mostri*, not only of *mundus* monsters, but of waters. *Barco* was hunting parkland, and the idea of hunting watery *mostri* is great fun, compatible with *sacro-bosco*, as Xenophon, whose Artemis sanctuary is a game sanctuary,

⁷¹. *Seznec, J.: La survivance des dieux antiques*. London 1940. tr. B.F. Sessions. pp 94 & fn 50. On pp 182, there is a clue to the presence of the 'Orcs', from *Orcus*, the realm of the dead, and a confusion in a mediaeval manuscript which shows Pluto holding a jar, like a river god, which is *orca*. These derive from access to Arabic manuscripts.

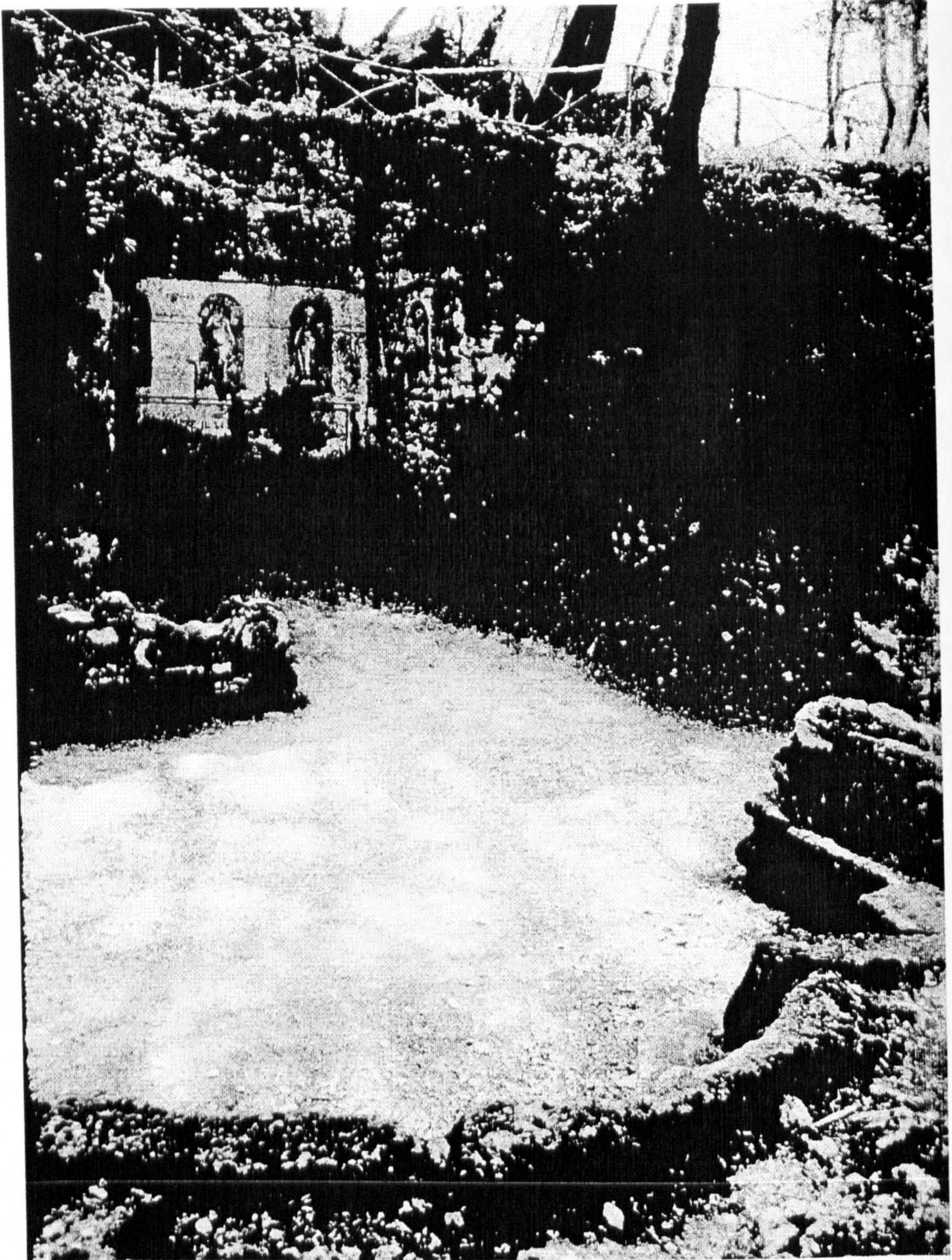
⁷². *Boccaccio Eclogues* XIII.99-101.

⁷³. The kidney shaped depression shown on the plan is almost precisely the kind of scour pattern that would be produced by an uncontrolled overrun from a powerful waterspout like the mouth of the giant fish. The most likely scenario for this position is that the *ketos* spouted onto the spillway of a cascade, which make iconographic sense.

⁷⁴. The use of a reflective surface here would be especially beautiful. The majestic stasis of the giant urns in their mathematical progression would be enhanced by their reflections. From the leaning tower, Plutarcus would also be reflected in its surface, a magnificently illusory complex of imagery.

⁷⁵. These goddess complexes are problematical and confusing. By Roman Antiquity oriental and western Greek had been assimilated as Demeter = Ceres = Isis = Astarte = Cybele = Meter = Tyche Agathe = Atagartis = Aphrodite(?) = Selene. This was a fruitful source of allegory, especially in view of the exotic rites associated with them. *Martin, L.H.: Hellenistic Religions*. Oxford 1987. Relevant headings Eleusis, The Mysteries of Isis, The Universal Goddess, The Great Mother of the Gods.

⁷⁶. *Martin, L.H.: Hellenistic Religions*. Oxford 1987. pp 84.



author

Sedilia in the foreground are cut from bedrock. Their axis, at a slight angle to the large axis they interrupt, was probably dictated by the grain of the rock and angle of a cleft, but is fortuitous and used to advantage. It is difficult from this ruinous state to envisage the form the wall to the ninfeo might have taken. Only the remains of its vault springing remain visible in the rear wall. It would undoubtedly have contained fountains linked to the bathtub of Dionysos adjacent. Without the facade of the ninfeo the reason for the sedilias' shape remains obscure for the present. Space is re-directed and comfortable.

Sedilia and ninfeo



"Thalasson wished to teach no one but me to yoke the dolphin" (Boccaccio). Orsini's bathing boat with paired dolphins at bow and stern probably also has embedded reference to the myth of Dionysos' voyage. The myth parallels Homer's grove of Circe. Contemporary parallels were rife for Orsini's aware and vivid mind. The only other Greek deity with a boat was the sun god, made by Hephaestos, originator of Delphi's tholos.

Thalasson & Dionysos

demonstrated. A second dam was thought to have been constructed to bring water to the higher, Persephone, level.⁷⁷ In this case it would most likely be to the exedra of the Etruscan serapic women who seem to have tamed and contained the roaring lions of *Ninferno* by making them fertile. It might be iconographically logical to have water here, meeting these serene, quietened symbols of the conflict of fire and water.

Living waters, livid rocks.

A widely held modern view is that the iconographic programme and general mood of Bomarzo is one of embittered pessimism. Intervening XIXc "Gothick Imagination" and a mutually exclusive parallel cosmetic Neo-classicism presenting classical and gothic as polarities, which they are not, colours this view. This label is unjust and fallible. Balance derives from underlying symmetry as in Boccaccio's *Eclogues*, a zeitgeist which mingle disappointments and delights in a realistic programme. Like Falerina's compressed Landscapes Bomarzo interprets ancient emblematic concepts of grove, tapping the integrated unity of *mundus*. Interface between an Olympian world of air and the chthonic world of the Great Mother of the Gods, it is a place where humanity can experience concentration of their forces. Vertical energies which represent the human and male component are generated, giving focus and harnessing primordia. Unlike Falerina's garden, Orsini's sacro-bosco is not destructive in its iconography. It is life-affirming. Abundant water always emerges with the "monsters". Perhaps Salvador Dali's enjoyment of its robust dreams hints at its original energy.

Subterranean waters.

Orsini raises subterranean waters to . Their metaphor is The Word, mouth grottoes, the oracular mundus. Either that, or he signifies transition into "there".

*Weep, sacred hill, thick shadowed and dark;
and you, ye hollow caves and grotts obscure,
make your clamour, come to weep with us.⁷⁸*

sings Arkadian Ergasto; water spurts from hillside, ninfeo and from its axial fountain plateaux. The most famous mouth is the grimacing mask grotto, arid and male, an outsize theatrical tragedy mask whose resonant cavity de-personalises the voice and amplifies it to

⁷⁷. *Bredenkamp 1986*, pp ??

⁷⁸. Sannazaro - Nash, *Eclogue 11* ll 4-6.

heroic or fearful proportions, the voice of Pan (Longus). It is a nice twist to place an element essential to the concept of daimons (heroes in their afterlife) into a satiric (or is it mock heroic?) scene. Its humour parallels Sannazaro's river god. Boccaccio's Trenaros, Orsini faithfully sets it, precisely oriented, at the geometric centre of the grove. The programmatic content is devious and layered [135 - 138] [155].

One can still sit, prince-like, on a bench in the mouth of the "Aztec" mask, crowned with the Orsini insignia. The Etruscan burial tower has its "grave" at its foot, a doubly symbolic vertical dimension. Nearby, a rock carved with artistry impersonates the remains of an Etruscan temple grave [156]. Not far away from it, another gaping mouth of a stone ketos once swallowed the stream even as it tumbled, foaming, into the heart of this Theocritan mythic land beneath Helicon, where once the muses danced [157]. Is this the opening of the hole to drain Deucalion's flood?⁷⁹ Even the bulk of Cybele, image of earth itself, carved from rock rooted in the earth as the most ancient goddess whose sign was the vulva-labyrinth - can be interpreted in this way. Here earth and water unite; all men, and even the gods are born from a cavity filled with fluid, and this must surely be part of that pre-historic earth sign, referred to again in the gigantic Roland "wrestling" with his Ninferno.

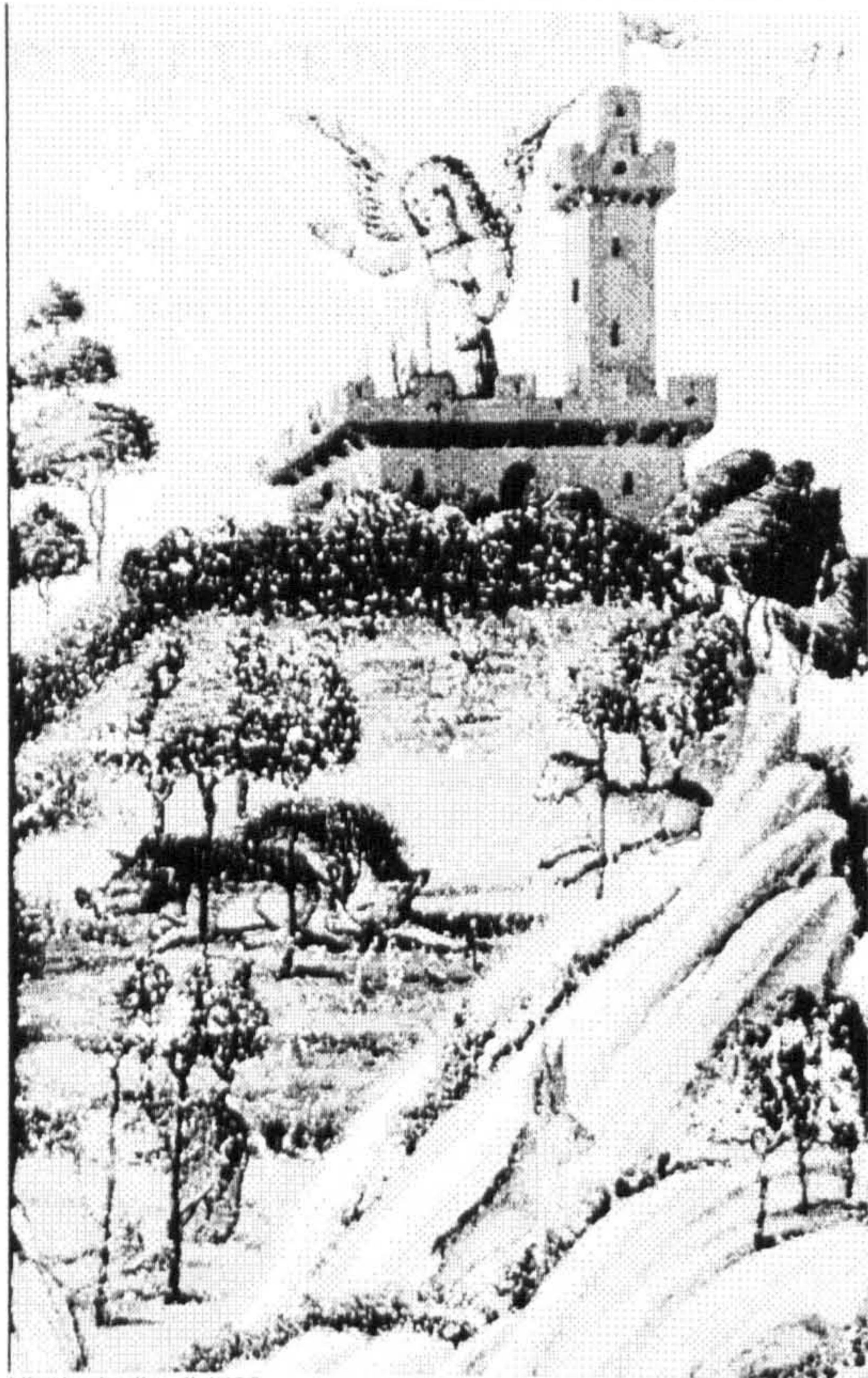
Oaken faces.

It is never easy to get back from the object to the activity that produced and created it. It is the only way however, to illuminate the object's nature, or, if you will, the object's relationship to nature, and reconstitute the process of its genesis and the development of its meaning. All other ways can succeed only in producing an abstract object - a model.⁸⁰

It is impossible to climb into Boccaccio's mind, don his life and see the Arkadia of his *Eclogues* as he saw it. Even if we knew its precise location (assuming it had one) and went to live in it, our reality would differ. Time-space produces illusions of objectivity, as does history. History is what we (or the person writing it) want(ed) to see of the past and is never objective. Religions strive to stabilise the process selectively in their favour. We should not be seduced into believing that Boccaccio's words and the obtuse meaning underlying them record any actual place. Apart from anything else, we might find such a record, which a geographer could attempt but not attain,

⁷⁹. *de Lorris & de Meun: Romance of the Rose*. tr. C. Dahlberg. Princeton 1971. ll 17629 - 17650. "Our great mother is the earth, and the rocks, if I dare name them, are certainly her bones. We must throw them behind us to revivify our line. Just as he said, so they did, and men sprang up from the rocks that Deucalion threw with good aim, and from Pyrrha's rocks sprang women in body and soul... they never sought another father, and the hardihood of rock will never fail to appear in their race."

⁸⁰. Lefebvre, H: *Production de L'espace*. Paris 1984. pp 113.



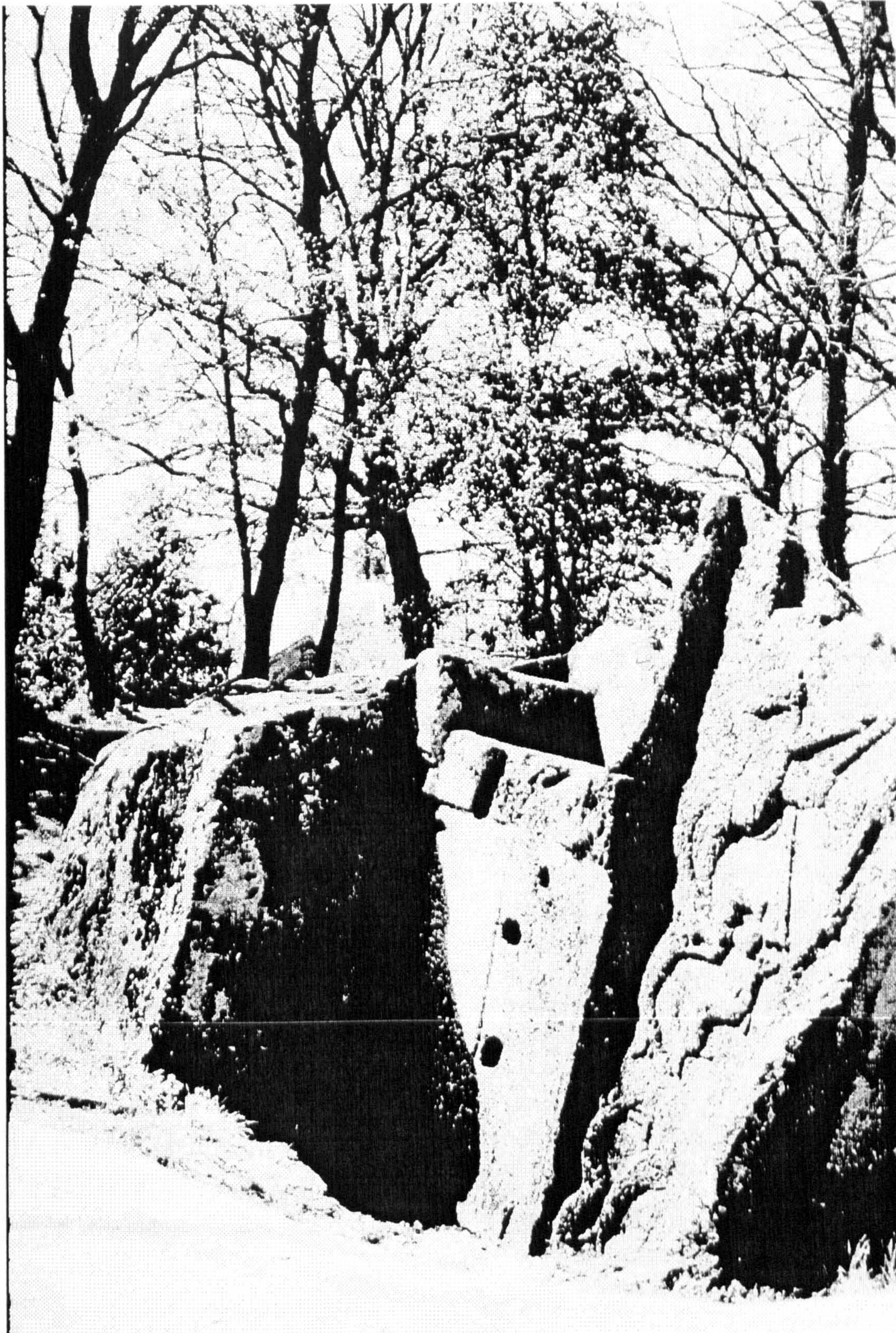
Nicola degli agli 1480

Bomarzo is layered like allegory, which is also like alchemical symbols, the science of the Renaissance. The sacred city placed atop the sacred mountain symbolises production of life force in the earth brought about by the coupling of the old man with the old woman - the ancestors (tholoi) in its bowels. These are part of the Trenaros theme



The old man and woman appear at the mouth of the cave which resembles Orsini's most famous component, which also has steps raising it above common ground. Above it is a spring Landscape which might come from Boiardo, the Landscape of Persephone, whose terrace overlies Trenaros. From it Pluto pours waters beside a Landscape of strife and triumph.

Trenaros & alchemy



author

"Etruscan" grave architecture affiliates space from several sources, nationalistic, cultural, and cosmic systems of "here" and "there". They build up complex associations, matching the Orsini bears which guard the exedra of the Ancient Etruscan from the world of Persephone.

"Etruscan" graves



I ORDINE DEL FONTE CABALINO DI BVONMARTIO
 CONTIENE OLTRE ALLE MUSE NELLI QVATRO ANGOLI FVOR
 DEL GIRO FIGVRA DI GIOVE APOLO BACCO E MERCVRIO

..... the muses danced

rather dull. His is a Landscape composed of conventionalised codified literary precedent, impressions, and moods. A geographer's reconstruction would have an incomplete set of abstract signs, like modern urban design. Influences that shaped obtuse images in Boiardo, notably Saracenic, are subdued or absent in Boccaccio. The codified geometry of the high Renaissance had not yet arrived. By its nature, pastoral poetry is conservative, if dissident. The Landscapes, however naturalistic they might appear, are not natural even though they may appear more so than Falerina's grove. Their reality is of the inner mind, as are the codified responses of the poetic inhabitants.

Boccaccio's concept of Arkadia probably had especial connotations for Orsini. It was a special place politically as well as a Shangri-La. Without defined boundaries long after neighbouring states had staked theirs, it retained a unique status in the Peloponnese. Its populace had "... no part in the game of conflict and migrations of which Greek historiography is so fond. Autochthonous or from elsewhere, but before the moon, the Arkadians never separate themselves from the place where they made their temporal appearance they are consequently equivocal beings, at once in time and timeless."⁸¹ In this sense it would seem to symbolise his own intentions for stability and roots, perhaps even dynastic autochthony. Octavian's Rome was well aware of this, employing emotive iconography which made connections clear [158].

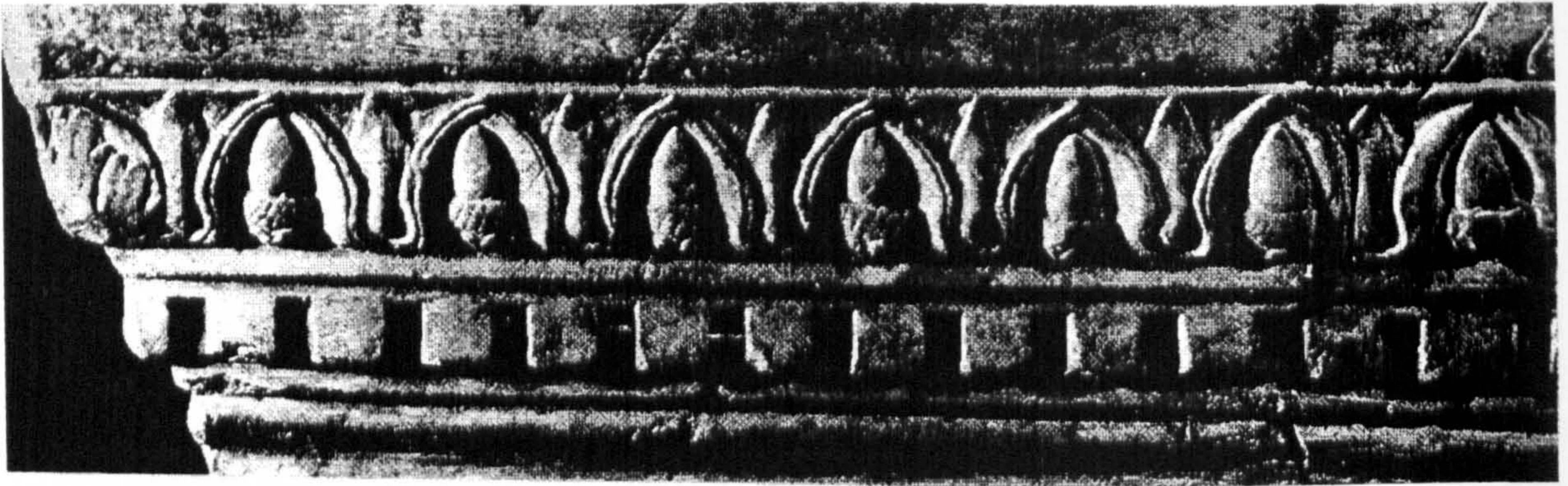
The code to Orsini's sacro-bosco is donated in typically oblique manner through riddling statements. An inscription on the belvedere advises that Memphis and other wonders the world already possesses pale beside the sacro-bosco, which seeks only to be itself [159] [160].⁸² One of the most complex of Boccaccio's Eclogues is the eleventh, *Pantheon*. It concentrates the process set out in his influential *Genealogy* into poetic metaphor, fusing the Classical system and the Hebrew:

*he made up for the sterile ears of grain
or drew his hunger weakened friends to Memphis,
and then the grandsons' bitter servitude
decreed by gods*⁸³

⁸¹. *Borgeaud 1979*. pp 9.

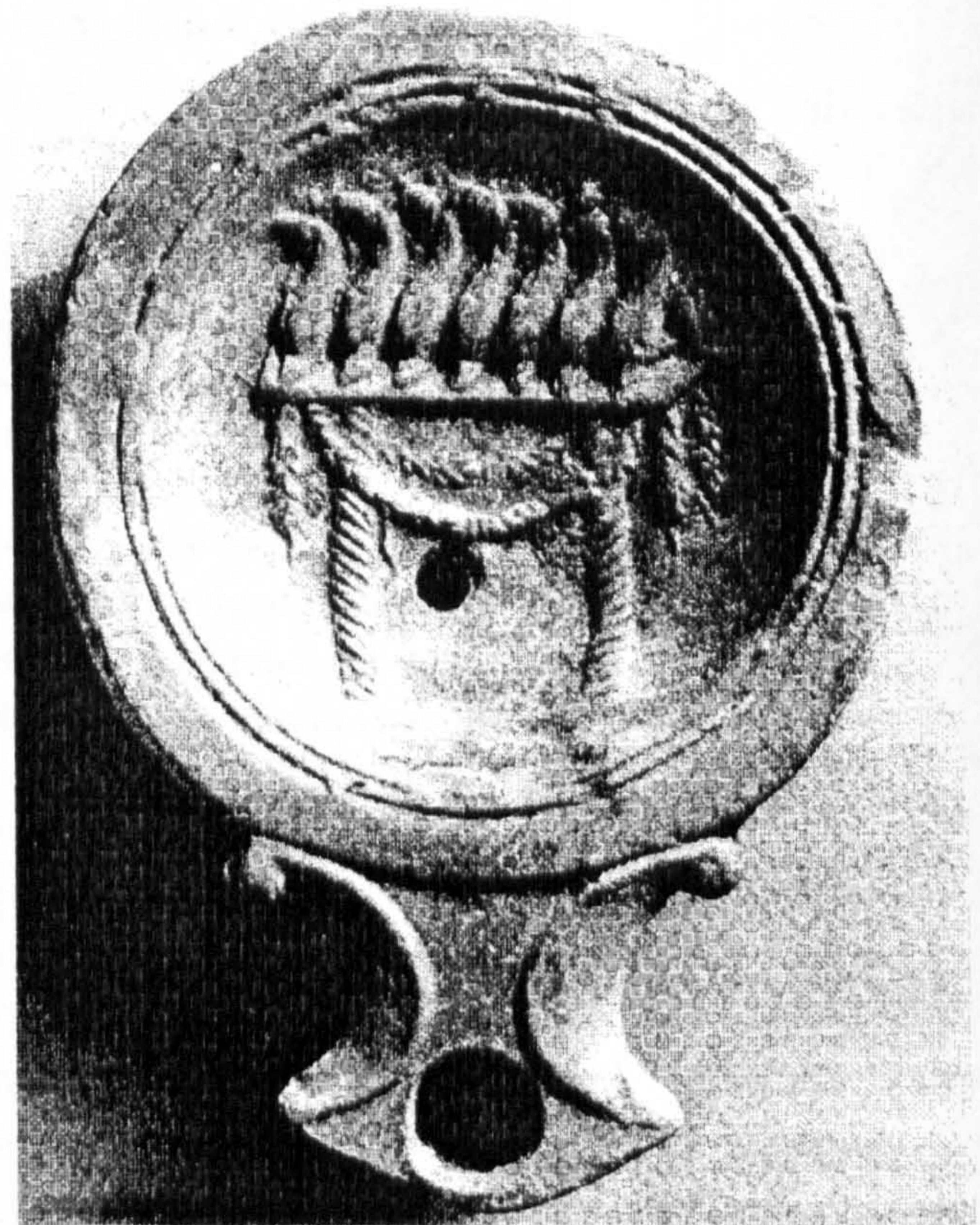
⁸². The presence of this inscription supports the idea that it was probably the starting point of the programme, giving an Olympian's view. This would make logic of the descent into the various underworlds and subliminal environments of the lower plateaux culminating in a return through Parnassus. It is doubtful if the programme was that simple thought!

⁸³. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogues* XI.99. It is of significance to Orsini's programme that this key reference also overlaps the important Christian one of the flight into Egypt. Egypt is presented, one feels, through history, as a tolerant haven for positive dissidence, a refuge.



Zanker ff 78

Lares were one of the main imperial cults revived by Octavian. They were concerned with fertility, and he was a head officiate. On their altar was this frieze of acorns, one of the associated symbols of fertility as at Bomarzo.



Representation of Agrippa's fountain of dolphins from the Circus Maximus. Swags of victory and plenty hang from its table, which seems to be supported by palm-like columns. "Harnessing the dolphins" from Boccaccio is a theme at both Bomarzo and Lante, and Lante in particular relishes use of iconography from early imperial pageantry.

Zanker ff 56

Augustan symbols-Bomarzo & Lante



author

A belvedere occupies the topmost plateau level with the temple. It overlooks all the terraces. Natural regeneration has screened them. Its original purpose is diffused by this. It might have been intended to look into a laurel maze set on the Persephone plateau, though this does not appear in Guerra's sketch (the only surviving early illustration but from many years after Orsini's death). It would also bring the Hermes temple into a meaningful relationship with the wide rolling Tuscan landscapes and the wilderness of crags towards which Psyche looks (were she awake!).

Belvedere

CEDAN ET MEMPHI E OGNI ALTRA MERAVIGLIA
CH HEBBE GIA MONDO IN PREGIO AL SACRO BOSCHO
CHE SOL SE STRESSO ET NVEL ALTRO SOMIGLIA



Belvedere

occurs in mid-stream in this Eclogue. There seems little other reason for Orsini to mention Memphis specifically, since, unlike Gambara, he erects no pyramids, though he uses many obelisks. Boccaccio is referring to Apis, king of Apidanaean Arkadians who lived before the moon.⁸⁴ "King Apis took himself over to Egypt, where he founded Memphis and was later honoured under the name Serapis."⁸⁵ With Serapis we re-make connecton with transmigration and tholoi. Return to Boccaccio's *Eclogues* is via the Argolid dynasty. "Sole prince of all was Argus, a shepherd granted to embrace all things."⁸⁶ Argolid princes appropriated Arkadian aboriginal status through the Dryopes, the "oaken faced ones." Other ideas which Boccaccio develops in the same poem also occur in the grove and at Lante. This hints that the reasons for the particular spatial abstractions he employs, the "naturalistic" pastoral Landscapes are ideologically derived from Boccaccio.⁸⁷ Perhaps he saw these shapes latent in the land he had available.

Learning with Landscape with Learning.

No logic can be attached to this Landscape without erudition, endearing it neither to the majority of modern landscape architects (who tend to like their plant fodder untrammelled by complex ideologies (other than remnants of the Picturesque perhaps!)) nor to the casual visitor. The latter was deliberate. It is not instantly pretty like Lante, whose inner meanings are, in the touristic sense, unnecessary. The organisation of its plateaux is quite different from Lante's neat linear structure of precisely ordered symmetry on a single axis, similar in this respect to most gardens of its time. Lante presents and modulates surface; Bomarzo goes for the forces its shapes signify. It has no precedents other than literary ones, though fragmentary painted Roman sacred landscapes were known from the Domus Aurea, villa Adriana, and Palestrina (the model for Colonna's dream). It is self avowedly aimed at intelligentsia. Dare one quote yet again from Boccaccio! Caliope sings the first lines of Saphos, so named "*because the whole discourse of the eclogue is about this Saphos, whom I understand as representing poetry because Sappho, a certain girl of Lesbos, was the most worthy of poetry in her era.*"⁸⁸ Caliope means "of good balance", giving the opening lines symbolic weight, reflecting on Orsini's intentions, which are also stated with more certainty elsewhere:

What seek you, foolish boy, among these laurels,

⁸⁴. These are the famous acorn eaters.

⁸⁵. *Borgeaud 1979*. pp 7, quoting Aristippus.

⁸⁶. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogues* IV.49

⁸⁷. The *Genealogy* provides the background; the *Eclogues* the Imagery.

⁸⁸. *Smarr, J.L: Boccaccio Eclogues*. New York 1987. pp 244.

*plucking now these, now those? Do you not know,
bold fellow, that to violate this grove
is sacrilege unless, conscious of merit,
Juno before has granted the wished-for leaves?"⁸⁹*

Here most surely is a guide to the initiating mood of the sacro-bosco - tongue in cheek? perhaps! It has a saucy lightness of inuendo repeated a few lines later - "*Then is this grove sacred to Apollo, lovely maiden?*" Shades of Philetas!

Natural and abstract space.

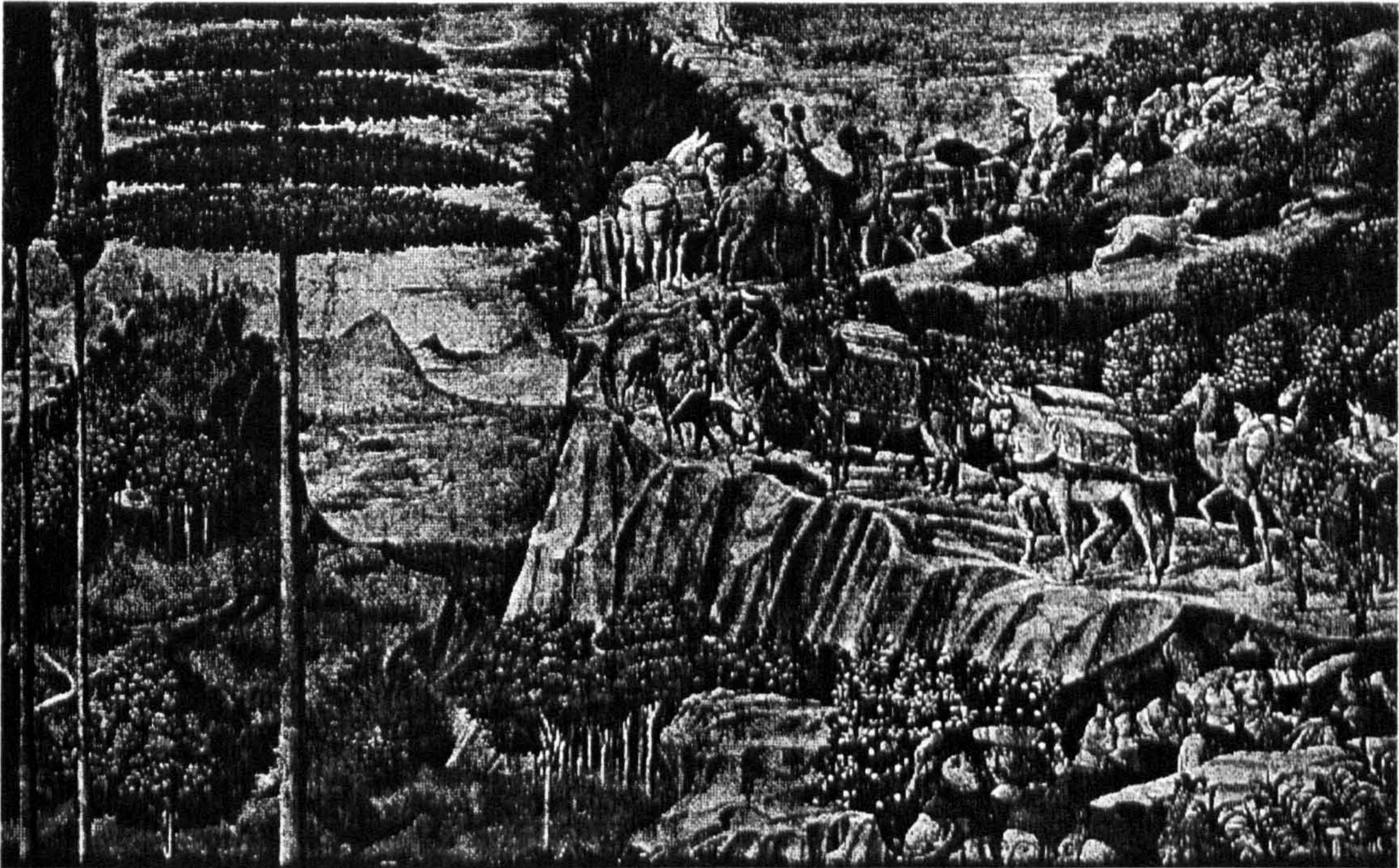
It might be possible to have a naturalistic garden; a natural grove occurs only in poetry. A natural garden occurs only as metaphor. Such places might have no identifiable tensions, that is relict pockets designated as Wilderness where no cultivation was applied, set within a similar matrix. The moment such a place is named it becomes another kind of space, set apart, political and ideological and therefore subject to abstraction. Such is Arkadia (Arkadia to Boccaccio signified another abstraction, "Christendom" as opposed to Islam), a wholly abstract idea to which a kind of "anti-geometry" applied.⁹⁰ Use of its supposed characteristics is therefore semiotic, a political alliance whose ideas lie outside the space. Has Orsini genuinely tried to be naturalistic? Has he created something which he really considers is just being itself, and which he believes unique for that property alone?⁹¹ This has essential truth in contemporary terms. Nevertheless it remains appropriated ideological space, converted from a previous incarnation to approximate the impact the literary imagery of Boccaccio and Dante had on Orsini's visionary senses. That is no judgement, but draws attention to widely differing concepts of "natural". Is Orsini in fact being disingenuous in the manner of Boccaccio in *Decameron*, and making a wry disclaimer? It is doubtful if Boccaccio ever considered his Landscapes in any way natural in our contemporary sense of that word (assuming yours is similar to mine!).

Orsini would certainly have been familiar with Gozzoli's masterpiece in the Medici chapel at Florence [161]. It depicts a magnificent procession winding through an Arkadian landscape. Cliffs and ravines mark the domain of the Virgin (Artemis), inhabited by huntsmen, dogs and game, the male principle of

⁸⁹. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogues*. XII.1-4.

⁹⁰. That is, the opposite of Islam, which was all geometry, all signified space in a Hellenistic sense.

⁹¹. Orsini would have been very familiar with Benozzo Gozzoli's masterpiece in the Medici chapel at Florence, *The procession of the Magi*, mentioned in Chapter 1 above. This depicts the holy land, i.e. Christendom, as one vast hunting park, Arkadia, populated by familiar faces. It has singularly similar internal tensions to those of Boccaccio's Eclogues, where the participants are depicted in a vast processional pageant. There are trees similar to those in the Breenbergh drawings and paintings of Bomarzo, with long trunks and mop heads. This is a live and hilly landscape with a Bomarzo castle on a distant crag.



A procession winds through Arkadia, a triumph in a rural setting. In this way an ancient form is Christianised via Roman imperial pomp which focused on its urban climax. Bomarzo takes up this rural form, probably from Boccaccio as well as the murals by Gozzoli (Medici chapel 1459). For Arkadia read Christendom, the enlightened world, the human homeland - Arkadia = autochthony. This image contrasts starkly with Boiardo's gismo landscapes which invert it. Illustration is a detail only.

Pastoral triumphs

dynamic intrusion symbolised by Actaeon, now unharmed. This has similar internal political tensions to Boccaccio's *Eclogues*. As in the latter, real contemporary personages are depicted as participants in this great ceremonial progress. It is their "assumption" as humanists, in the same sense as the assumption of the Virgin, into the ranks of the faithful. Their landscape is at one and the same time Arkadia, the Holy Land, and all Christendom, a triumphal deification to match that of any emperor.

Earth's surface was not a major philosophical consideration for the centuries preceding Nietzsche. It does not seem to have been explored as a membrane. Primary attention was focused on space beneath and space above and the dynamic interchange their polarities induced. This is true of Boccaccio and Dante, and must have some bearing on Bomarzo. Part of the latter's abstraction is the conversion of surface into abstract space representing above and below precisely in accordance with that contemporary focus. In this way he is rationalist, denying the presence of the body whilst simultaneously seeking its due status through Epicurean ideas. He does give it greater attention than contemporaries, even Lante.

The presence of the square.

Alberti divided his philosophical system of architecture into three components which replaced the six rhetorical categories of Vitruvius. They were intended to enable the true imitation of nature through nature's intelligible reason. This demanded new definitions in visual geometry, removing some of its Mediaeval hermeneutic deadload. These definitions are in part attributable to re-appraisal of Vitruvius whose ideas were also responsible for the mediaeval symbolic approach. The ideated part of architecture (and for architecture read also Landscape), that which emanates purely from the mind, he saw as being governed by *concinnitas*, a just disposition of parts to the whole. This was beauty, identifiable with truth. He organised it within three conceptual categories so arranged that they defined and delimited the imaginative production of space. Number was to be so devised that nothing could be added or taken away; measure that nothing could be diminished or enlarged; arrangement so that nothing could be differently placed. Alberti's concentration focused on number. For measure he turned to Pythagorean practice with its base of harmonic geometry. This he saw as nature's system of order, that is, nature's implied underlying order. He contradicts Vitruvius's derivation of proportion in classical orders as based on means rather than human measurements.⁹² For urban external space, conceived in two

⁹². *Gadol, J. L.B. Alberti*, pp 116

dimensions, he recommended primarily the perfect square (1:1). After that follow fifths (2:3), fourths (3:4), octaves (1:2), and tones (8:9).⁹³ He referred to the use of these in spatial design as "music".⁹⁴ This restricted range is exploited with varying degrees of success by most Renaissance Landscapes. None match Bomarzo and Lante.

A complex of square proportions inhabits the core of Bomarzo. Unlike Lante their presence seems obfuscated, concealed somehow.⁹⁵ Its range of influence is unclear. Orsini's tempietto, which he appears to have designed himself, demonstrates well enough that he had sufficient knowledge of proportional systems and finite geometry to use them effectively. In view of the persistently oblique nature of his imagery, it would not be undisciplined to seek specific intentions in his particular use of due proportion. It is in a sense a denial of the absolutism of Alberti's ideology. Were it altogether absent we might deem lack of interest. As it is, it occupies significant positions connected with illusion and disorientation. What seems implied is that rationalisation of paradisaical Landscapes is illusory. Perhaps, it says, it is present, but don't look, it disappears just when you think you have found it! Alberti, true humanist that he was, used the motto *Quid tum?*, What next? Orsini says what now? The geometry matches other imagery well, dissolving into the site as organically as it emerges. Like the templum within the classical labyrinth, concealed it is concealed-revealed. This is an important aspect of the form of Bomarzo's Sacro-bosco in its setting.

Many of the functions associated with harmonic structures in music are present, essential to dynamic impetus, urgency and feeling of impending arrival. This differs from the densely architectural use to which it is put at Lante. In an oblique sense, Orsini buries the templum within the labyrinth in the manner of classical Greece. The original womb labyrinth symbolised feminine space. The appearance of the templum at its heart reveals male conquest of this space, either by force, or by love. Labyrinths may have had their origin in early defences; Maiden Castle in Dorset (UK) has one. These were the castles of female religions like that of Cybele. The templum is penetration of this fortress by an imposition of finite order. The myth of Venus and Adonis enacts one symbolic aspect of the concept. From this myth emerges the Adonis garden, and we should perhaps ask if this is the origin of the templum as garden. It represents death and the simultaneous conquest of death and the goddess in love. It is still a cyclical celebration in parts of the world.

⁹³. *Alberti L.B: de re aedificatoria*. Bk. 9, Ch. 5,6,7. A lengthy exposition.

⁹⁴. In an autographed letter quoted in *Gadol, J: Leon Battista Alberti* pp 112 footnotes.

⁹⁵. The impression grows though, that this is due to despoliation and loss rather than intention.

Once fixed within the labyrinth form it becomes its controller, its code, its generator, entry and certain goal. The earlier sign is subtly altered, amending the labyrinth, proportioning it and concealing its own presence there.

There is evidence to suggest that Orsini might have used Ghiberti's treatise on architecture in preference to Alberti's absolutism. Ghiberti assembled a history of depictional space, placing early models alongside modern Renaissance ones. The templum which is the pinnacle of the grove looks very like a Ghiberti drawing for a building in Sforzinda.

Orsini went to great pains to modify natural contours. Earth moving was not then the relatively relaxed operation it is now. Much physical effort was needed, for example, to cut and fill the theatre and build its retaining walls. The construction of the Isis-Aphrodite temple beneath the Apollo mask and the ninfeo would have been arduous and time consuming.⁹⁶ Behind such effort, as in the construction of the lake, is firm belief in essential meanings beyond the surface. In effect it is removal of natural space, the pre-existing space of the surface, and substitution with abstract space. In Orsini's mind, this must have been an implied process within Boccaccio's concepts, just as Sansovino saw in it quintessential Sannazaro.

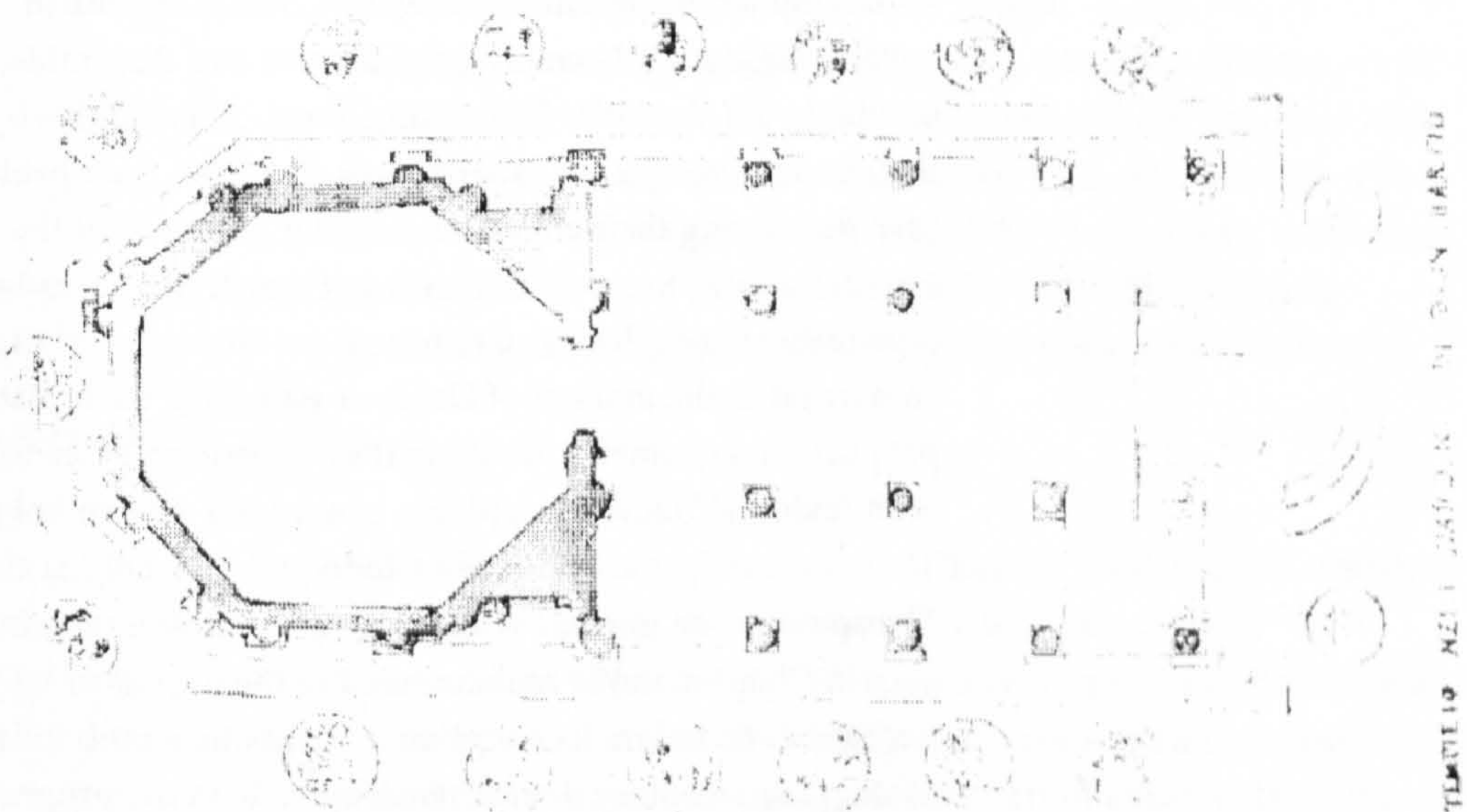
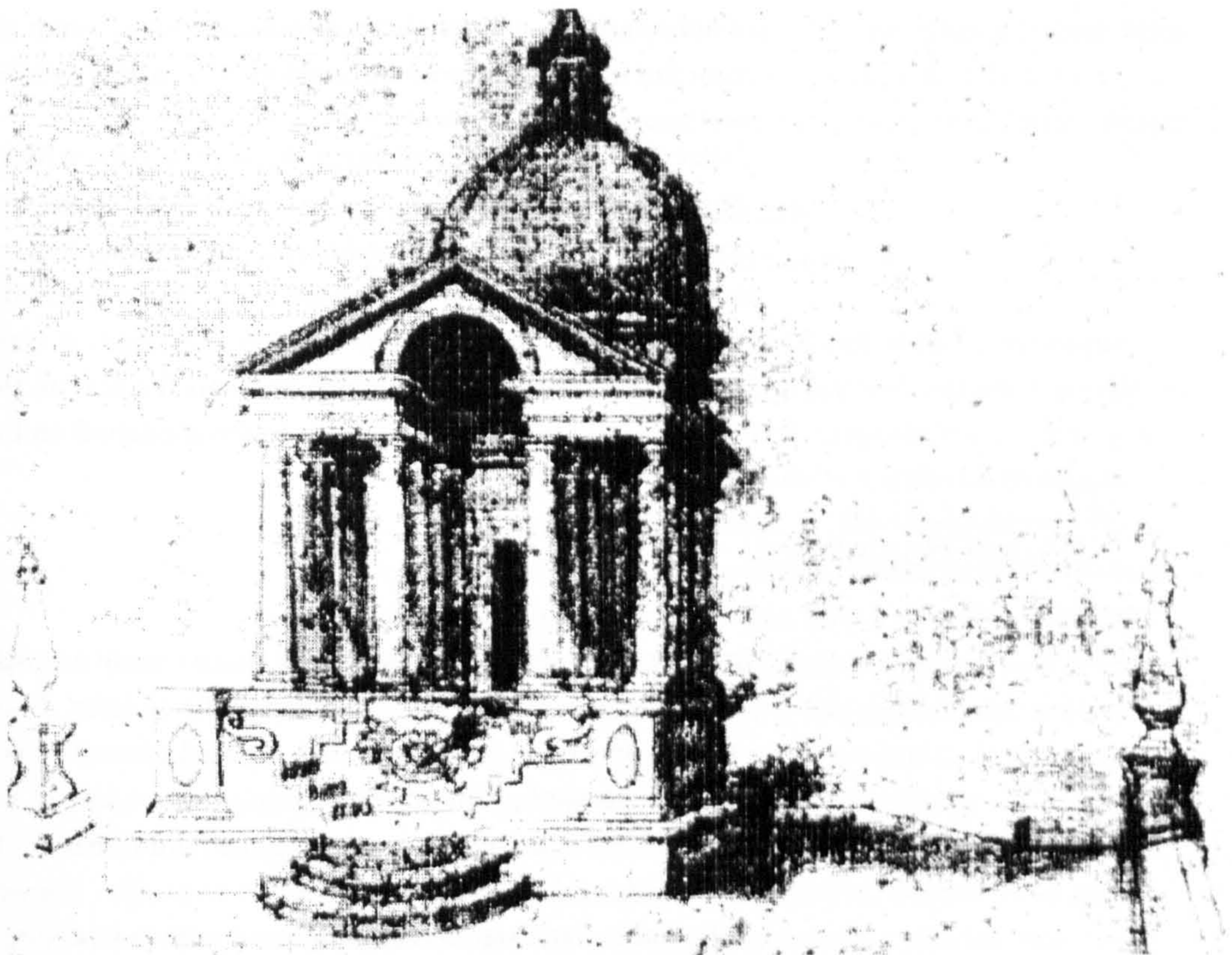
Transcendental space.

The temple takes to itself many aspects of transcendental space. Its pro-naos is supposedly modelled on Alberti's Sant' Andrea, which has the form of a triumphal arch, a vault of heaven in the symbolic architecture of Antiquity. Its main body is octagonal, a Renaissance church form which rationalised and avoided the detailed didactic symbolism of Mediaeval space. Bredekamp draws attention to similarities with the vestibule of the palazzo Farnese in Rome which appropriates similar imagery.⁹⁷ Another famous example is the stacked loggias on the cathedral-like facade of the Palazzo Ducale at Urbino. Undoubtedly the pro-naos of the temple was intended to face a particular open space, for the lower steps are semicircular, disseminating and drawing in circulation, deriving discipline from freedom. A drawing by Giovanni Battista Montano shows it set within a low wall ornamented with fancy obelisks like funerary monuments set on pedestals [162].⁹⁸ The same drawing has a shadowy background of large deciduous trees with a strange cluster

⁹⁶. Several of the bedrock sculptures would require excavation of surrounding earth to realise their final form.

⁹⁷. *Bredekamp 1986*. Vol. 2 fig 94. He also compares it with S. Lorenzo in Vineis, by Raffaello da Montelupo, 1556 - 1566, and the Church of the Coronation of Sabbionetta from the XVIIc, much later. fig 105.

⁹⁸. *Bredekamp 1986*. Vol. 2. fig 103.



Hermes' temple corresponds to the city on the mountain of the alchemical process. Its position and purpose remains consistent with that of the rain goddess in ancient mythography though abstracted by philosophy and political attributions.

Transcendental space

of only partly decipherable architectural forms. From the temple, as from the leaning tower and belvedere, the castle is visible.

Other meaning is obtained again through reference to programmatic structure. We have mentioned its arch form, its calendric progression linked to human life span elsewhere, and again return to Boccaccio. His final *Eclogue*, number XVI, is entitled *Aggelos*, The Messenger.⁹⁹ The temple's dedication to Hermes is amplified further by this association, which also sets the seal on the concept of sacred mount within that of sacro-bosco modelled on Boccaccio's progression.

Dream battlefields.

Lante escapes into wholly idealised space whose origins are inherent in the accreted iconographic density of the cloister. Bomarzo is outdoor space but also formalised. Spatial dispositions sometimes reflect aspects of geometry as they might be observed within the conventions of an officer appraising the field of battle. Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* [see above] comes to mind. Zones are flagged with emblematic statements countered with subversive emblematic statements, whose surface has been fabricated to appear friendly but conceals an "enemy" within;¹⁰⁰ empty Trojan horses decoy resources with laughter, sometimes hollow, sometimes real mirth. Falerina's garden uses knightly emblems to deceive and dissemble, and refers obliquely to labyrinth. Calculating, it subverts knights by inverting their codes. Its task is to seduce paladins from their professional role, destroying their effectiveness. Her garden is of the enemy, oriental, exotic, Saracen, but it cannot match this sacro-bosco for ingenuity or complexity. Orsini sets out landscape platforms somewhat in the manner of Uccello's painting. Each plateau uses proportional geometry, defining it as a patrician place to contrast with "external" landscape, places of encoded artifice not nature. They then make a meeting place for equals, part of his stated ethos. The spatial code implied within Uccello's painting remains intact as seen in Chapter 1. We are reminded of the origins of labyrinth, perhaps even before its adoption as symbolic womb for the Great Mother, as a military device. Each episode in the programme is part of a *hypnerotomachia* (a dream of strife and love, strife in love), a battlefield of spatial contacts and conflicts where, as in the classical labyrinth, the outcome (goal) is immediately adjacent to but obscured from, the start. Psyche overcomes problems of despair and human and super-human envy by dreaming her way to erotic

⁹⁹. Dedicated to Donato degli Albanzani (1326 - 1411), friend of Boccaccio and Petrarch, translator of Boccaccio for the d'Este court, and is described by Boccaccio as "announcer and leader for the preceding ones ..." *Smarr, J.L.: tr. Boccaccio Eclogues*. New York 1987. pp 260.

¹⁰⁰. For example, the Ilon Imagery and ninferno.

fulfilment.¹⁰¹ Immediately adjacent on the Persephone terrace lions guard (or are they guarded by?) more ancient monsters than Psyche's sisters, Babylonian creatures unearthed from distant dream worlds.

*Nor were there any better woods in Italy
for breeding lions, mild or fierce with anger,¹⁰²*

Ever wakeful Cerberus guards entry and exit of its Dante-esque inhabitants with relish. Not far away, a Roman centurion is relieved of his mobility by an animal whose bowels symbolise earth's own entrails, set between a grimacing maw which is the earth mouth Trenaros, and Cybele, mother of the gods, the virgin (Mary).¹⁰³ Mythic time and mythic space, themselves dream imagery, co-exist as in Colonna's dream sequence. Is this how a chivalric battlefield seemed, at least the knightly part of it, before firearms scattered its illusion of pageant? Was life and death this emblematic, a dense mosaic of space lacking transitional narrative logic? Is this part of the ancient epic hero image, the conquest of instantly metamorphosing space-time, another apeiron for which Greek warriors danced? The creatures encountered, horrific or seductive, employ just this quality, codifying semiotic boundaries, not territorial ones. Each group brings co-existent space into the programme, filling it like the trackless and intractable unity of an apeiron of density - battle, thicket, or jungle? Is this why the hunting park and the magnificent garden, (singular gardens made for kings and therefore for gods), are likewise the province of king and priest-king, of priest and shaman before them, consorts of the Mother of the Gods (like Pluto), in that they too recreate wholeness, the dense and varied environment of the One? The unifying element in this is the goddess Cybele in various manifestations.

Frayed at the edges

Accepted Renaissance ideology was that the fundamental structure of space, not merely its representation, was perspective.¹⁰⁴ Manipulation of perspective is as notably restrained in Bomarzo as it is omnipotent at Lante. If deliberate, this could be a manifestation of Mannerism. Alternatively, it could be part of anti-architectural or anti-Islamic feeling. The resulting effect is more akin to Netherlandish ideologies. Joan Gadol points out that Flemish painters, who dominated Mannerism, sought natural phenomena

¹⁰¹. Which is also a characteristic of Lesbian Sappho, whom Orsini conflates with Psyche via Boccaccio's divine Saphos (Eclogue XII).

¹⁰². Boccaccio, G: *Eclogues*. V - Chalcidia's lament.

¹⁰³. Arrived at by successive confluences of Virgin.

¹⁰⁴. See Argan, G.C: *The Renaissance City*. New York 1969. pp 21.

quite differently.¹⁰⁵ They did not seek humanist rationale (under the guise of *natura*) in geometric perspective, rather in spatial phenomena depicted with uniform sharpness. Architectural space in their paintings is never consummately relaxed like that of late Donatello. It always tightly enfolds figures. This reflects the early Renaissance imagery of Dante, Mantegan and Boccaccio from whom Orsini derives much sense [163].

Where Orsini does use perspective it is telling. The rectangle of giant urns is one place. This foreground of outsize landscape objects alters perception of the space, disorienting it, a clever illusionist trick to create the exotic and unknown, as is the adjacent leaning tower. Another telling play is the apparently endless flight of steps up to the temple. A rather large Psyche/Saphos lying at our feet causes us to make considerable adjustment in distancing objects behind.¹⁰⁶ These spatial games are familiar to us; in Orsini's time their impact would have been greater.

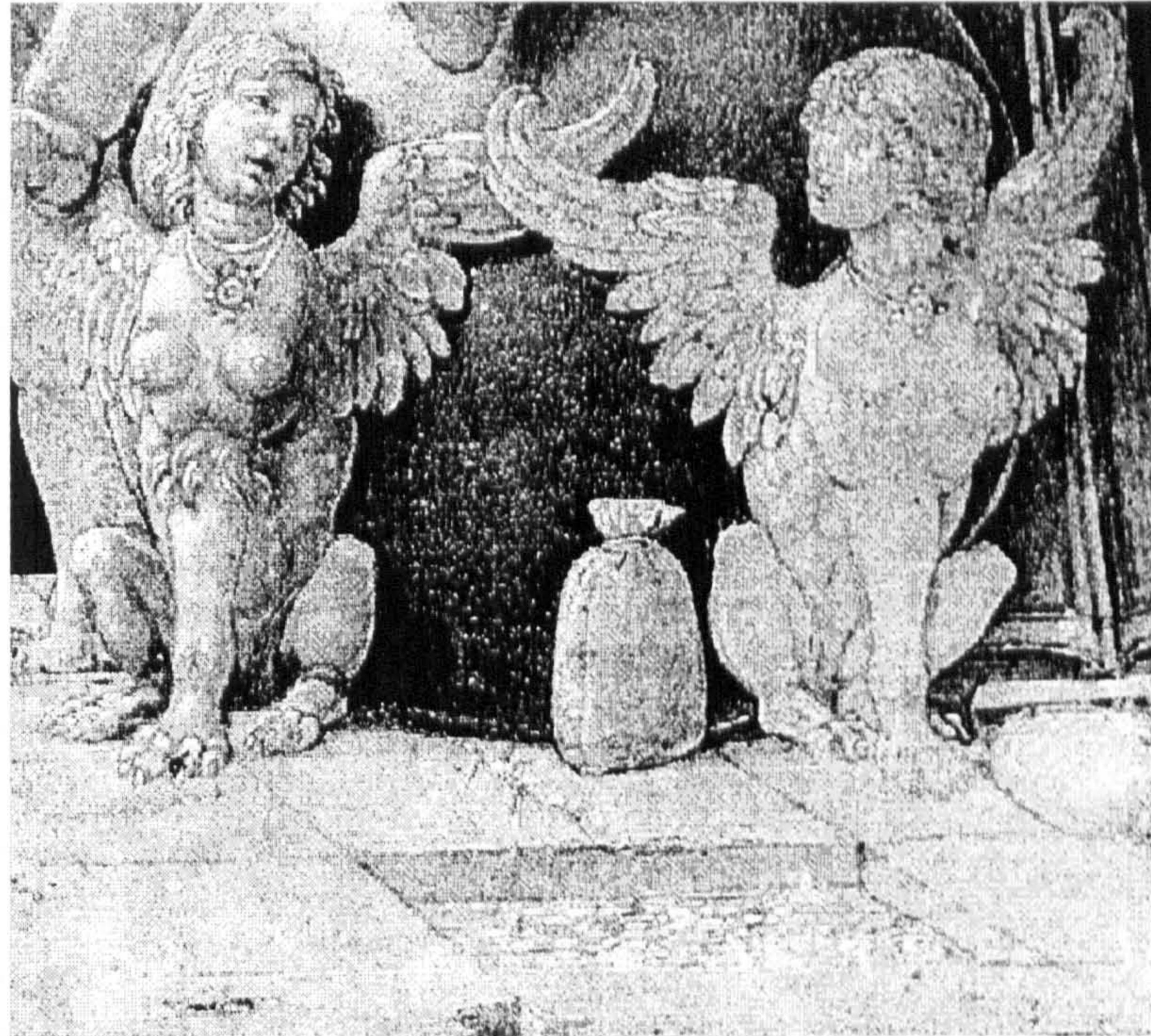
Bomarzo's ordering of space seems almost Taoist now. Lante, mathematical and Confucian, abstract space, derives from exerting encoded male determinist will over random natural order. Bomarzo develops an unusually (in Italian Renaissance terms) physical relationship with land form.¹⁰⁷ The order it imposes is responsive. It appropriates "natural" space, and in that sense is, like any other grove or garden no matter how naturalistically construed, an impostor. The more "naturalistic" the greater the deception. Yet it responds in parts to the presence of natural or Absolute space and its forces, its tao, in its original form. This emerges from relaxed arrangement, with few axes, disguised as in competent painting and following apparently natural contours. Of course we do not really know the original natural condition of the land in detail. Orsini is mute on the topic in his published letters but some reconstruction is possible (see plan below).

Bomarzo's overall impression of scale is larger than its physical dimensions. Component groups though, condense space. Each cluster ensures close contact with huge figurative sculptures. We are pressed into their drama, like the figures in Flemish painting in

¹⁰⁵. *Gadol, J. Leon Battista Alberti*. Chicago 1969. pp 65. Ms Gadol characterises Italian Renaissance painting as having *chiaroscuro* because of perspective.

¹⁰⁶. Lorenzo Ghiberti's (1378-1455) Third Commentary, deals with accepted notions of perception, with which Orsini appears to play: "Bodies therefore, which are orderly and continuous in relation to the distances of visible objects, are in the majority of cases parts of the ground The most important of these, the size of which is certified by the visual faculty, is that which is at the feet: since the magnitude of that part, which is at the feet, is understood by the visual sense and by the distinguishing faculty, and the visual sense certifies it by the measurement of the body of man." Quoted from *White, J. The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space*. London 1957. pp 128. Ghiberti is quoting Alhazen.

¹⁰⁷. The coincidence is strong, in that the principle of the classical Chinese garden contrasts Confucian rationalised architectural space with the tao of its landscape in just the way Lante does.



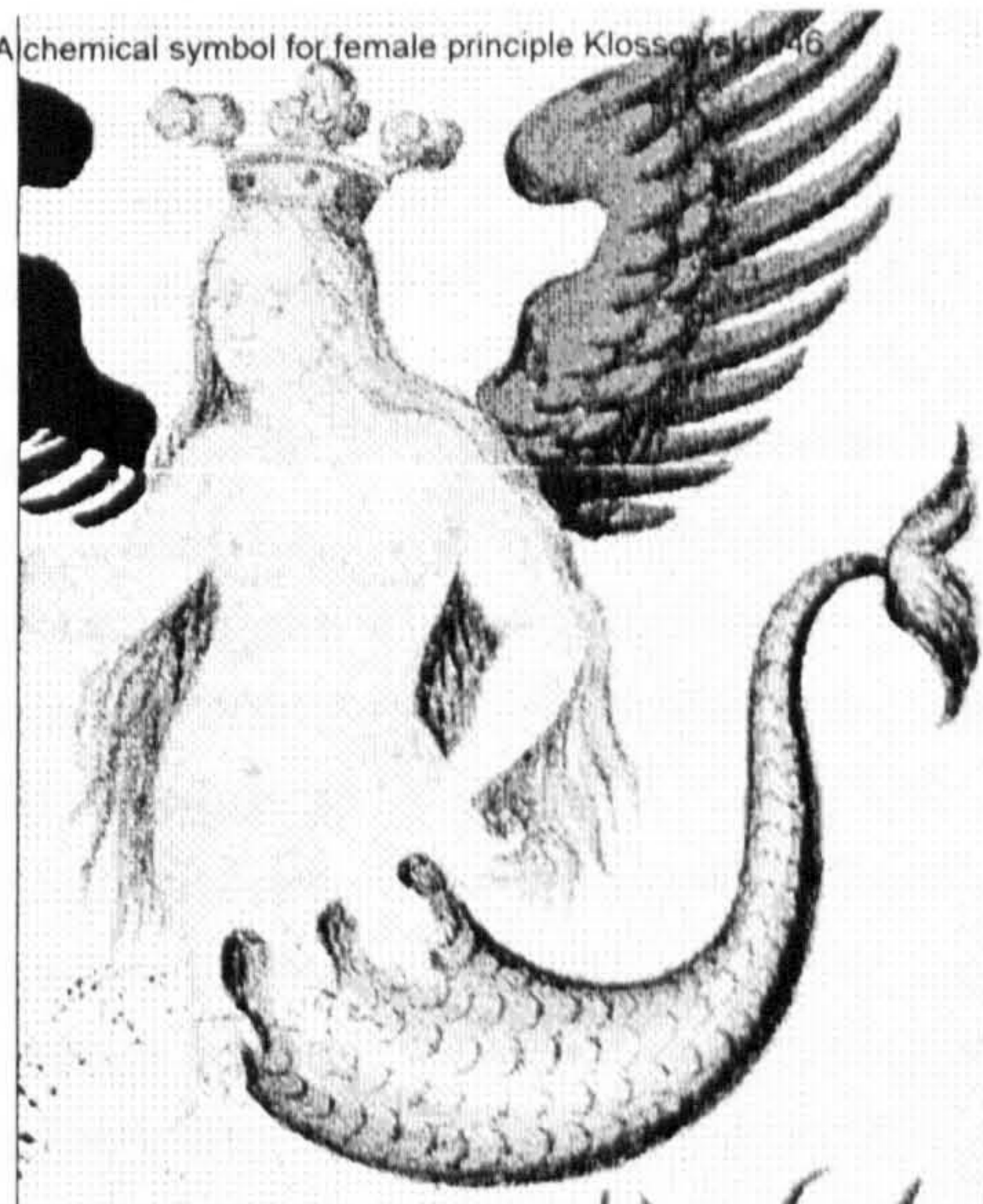
Mantegna Virtus combusta detail

Top. Mantegna: Virtus combusta (detail).

Right. Allegorical sign for polarities of female principle.

Mantegna's drawing is full of the personages who participate in Bomarzo's theatricals. This detail has obvious similarities to the Ancient Etruscan group in the exedra. Also present are Pan, happily piping as people tumble into an architectural abyss, Hermes helping them up out of it. By placing together the Echidna and Chimaera, Orsini draws attention to the cause of the fall, commenting on Mantegna's dense allegorical programme in Abstract three-dimensional space and also the processes within such process allegory. Using this principle throughout the Landscape reveals the mechanism of its densely structured programme, which must have taken many hours of skilled and clever scholarship. The wit and humour involved leavens it, raising it above the pomposity of the villa d'Este.

Alchemical symbol for female principle Klossowski 1946



Bomarzo's allegory mechanisms

their symbolic settings. Part of Mannerist ideology is, of course, an insistence on release from the responsibilities of Renaissance philosophical rationale and a demand for the privilege of artistic autonomy. Mannerism's success in the Netherlands could have been due to the failure of Alberti's system to penetrate their conventions dealing with spatial expressivity rather than an ability to "move" graciously in it. There are hints of this sympathy in Orsini's iconographic programme.

External vistas.

Sannazaro, in the footsteps of Boccaccio, rejuvenates the latter's eclogue tradition. Alternating prose and rhymed form, his *Arkadia* has poetic shepherd episodes interspersed with scenic prose Landscapes, exaggerating Vergil's conventions into major principles. Bomarzo escapes the conventional confines of Renaissance forms by adopting a similar organisational scheme. It uses sequences of large scale set pieces and poetic transitions, interspersed with greater Landscape episodes which set the psychological scene, the semiotic of homeland or ritual passage. Much of its character though, remains either Mediaeval or northern European.

Unlike any other Renaissance landscape, indeed so unlike that it raised especial comment from Sansovino, Bomarzo consciously used external countryside in the form of vistas, both near and distant, for its own ends. Points in the scheme draw attention to the presence of the wide fertile valley to the north and its distant horizon of mountains. This is sometimes done in a picturesque way. Elsewhere, the bounding crags of the bosco's own ravine impose on its space. In a sense sculptures carved in-situ from bedrock metamorphose landscape as do Ovid's witty, sardonic adaptations of myth. Nature is landscape; myth is a means of understanding its forces, dynamic and spatial; mythic space is therefore human meaning in the equation, exploited to the full by Ovid and Orsini, resulting in Landscape. In its own time the sculpture groups would not have been obfuscated within densely overgrown bosky. They would therefore have been presented at times against vistas, and would also have been seen from outside framed within, even rising over, young foliage and crags, quite a different perspective! Quite impressive! - especially polychromed. Etruscan burial architecture, always landscape related, nationalistic in context, reinforces the scale.¹⁰⁸ For nationalistic read Romantic. The same element is present in the Boscotrecase frescos. It is obvious that Orsini experienced a sense of deep attachment to Campanian and Etruscan culture.

¹⁰⁸. Such "architecture" seeks to integrate landscape and Landscapes.

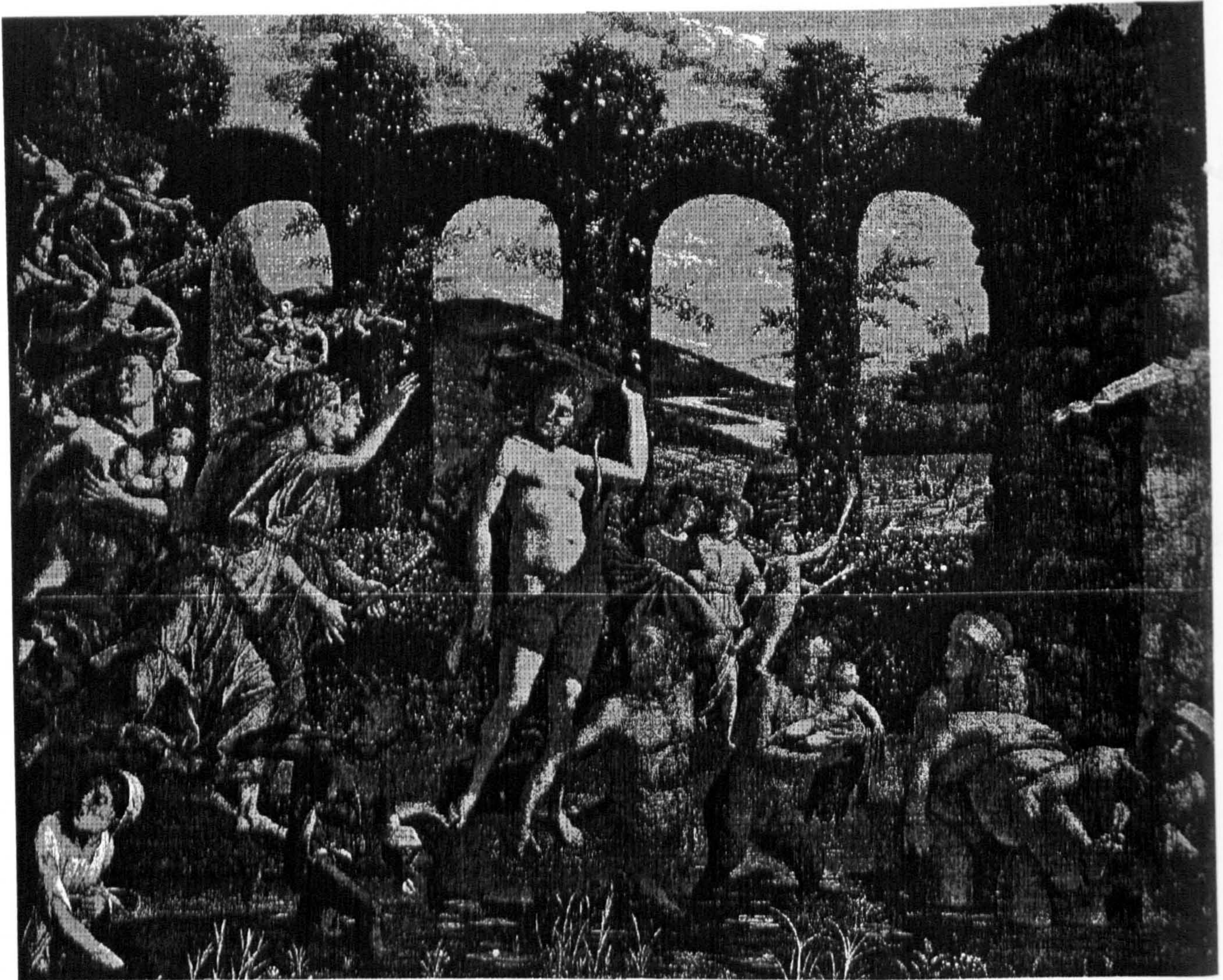
Bomarzo's feminine space

Bomarzo's apparent predominance is feminine space, the space of Cybele, Isis-Aphrodite, Psyche, Persephone, Dragons, Echidna, Chimaera, mouth grottoes, the circular concentric theatre and ship of Dionysos (a "feminine" deity). Forms like the strange double banquette, a kind of triclinium, outside the ninfeo, the large free-form cleansing lake, symbolic of the goddess, also suggest it. Overall though, it appears to be an ebullient Odyssey, a male romp through female space. Political space is enmeshed into earth textures. Didacticism derives from Renaissance concepts of poet as cultural guardian and educator.

Feminine space is geometrically "irrational", physical and tactile in its emphasis. It features duodecimal systems. Where portrayed as balanced it is positive. A conventional Renaissance curia-based male misogynist view depicts it as unbalanced (despite improvements in the status of women generally). Perhaps Alberti has this to answer for as well!¹⁰⁹ A Falerina or Armida gives rise to Landscape whose tao is essentially destructive of male rationale (which also destroys masculinity). Feminine space is not confined within rationalising geometric abstractions. It is the space of Isis/Artemis, a goddess antithetical to the male world, the edges of wilderness, hostile to intruding Actaeons. Isis/Aphrodite, whose purpose was to pleasure men, has a male geometric Landscape, a rationalised formal garden.¹¹⁰ Mantegna's *Garden of virtue* seems to distinguish between them and reconcile the distinctions [164]. Bomarzo's manipulation of complex morphology, river valleys, crags and saddles often suggests those blurred distinctions between reality and illusion, between the finiteness of the square and the infinity of the circle, that its programme explores. Compared with Lante, it has more freedom in this respect. Core geometry dissolves before it meets the surrounding pastoral environment, which suggests transitional phases of that upland wilderness characterised as special to Artemis, the matrix, Absolute space. It is the background in Boscotrecase's "Oracle" frescos. Masculinity is therefore balanced, revealing the essential sanity of Renaissance

¹⁰⁹. *Della famiglia* has extensive passages on the male educational role in marriage which seem laughable or insulting to us, even set beside their contemporary background.

¹¹⁰. Ficino's theory of permutations has direct relevance in the organising of Bomarzo's spaces. This uses triads of deities to develop oppositions and qualities. They are central to Botticelli's cyclical paintings. These he organises into groups of nine after Plotinus's *Enneads*. Significantly, the same group used by Botticelli, Mercury (Hermes) Venus (Aphrodite) and Apollo occupy focal positions at Bomarzo, forming in their disposition a triangle whose apex is Mercury (the temple). Edgar Wind discusses the idea with great sensitivity, relating it to the prevalence of cyclical paintings in Renaissance art. He suggests that a knowledge of all possible permutations is necessary to derive the full sense from one, since they are interactive. The Aphrodite, Hermes, Apollo triad produces ideal humanity, a perfect fusion of soul and mind. *Wind, E: Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*. Oxford 1980. pp 128 - 131.



Mantegna Pallas chasing the vices from the garden of virtue ff 136

Mantegna's depiction of the garden of virtue is complex in its allegory. It depicts feminine space, the garden, fulfilling the original purpose of the garden of Aphrodite, but being usurped rather righteously by Pallas Athene, the Virgin. It would seem that this painting could form part of the stimulant for Bomarzo, since in his many layered allegory, similarly complex, he reinstates the ancient occupants - Cybele, Pan-Centaur, Silenus et al, all of which we have encountered in this discussion. The Mantegna humour is close to Orsini's, like the vigorous action. Significantly too in this painting (not shown in this detail) Mantegna also depicts the cave in the rock face into which he sends Christ in his Descent into Limbo series. Detail analysis reveals many such extensions into Attributive space which is not revealed by the surface.

Mantegna & Orsini at play

doctrine. However, the kind of classification we use is devised by male oriented linguistics. Space is therefore unavoidably classified according to masculine order where language is used. Orsini's grove, consciously or sub-consciously, places the key within the labyrinth as much in its sculptures as its form [165] [166].

Sacred Grove and the export-import business.

You speak of marvels, and I think that wood you mention is the gods' own sacred dwelling.

Bomarzo is all sacro-bosco. Lante's surviving outer Landscape is a container for something set apart. Bomarzo was a new Landscape concept, the powers of more ancient groves its dynamo. Naming it "Sacro-bosco", Orsini draws attention to roots in those ancient Hellenistic progenitors. *Lucus sublucido*, it is the grove of shades as well as shade.¹¹¹ Referred to affectionately in the diminutive "mio boschetto" there were deeper things in mind than welcome summer covers, for hunting barco it is, the hunt of life and death, part in earnest.

There is a set of paintings by the Belgian surreal painter Magritte of which the most famous is the pipe - "Ceci n'est pas une pipe". For a time "naming" caught his imagination, resulting in Orsini like side-swipes at abstract painting. In one sequence he paints abstract shapes against slightly differing "wall" backgrounds. All shapes are similar frame-like distortions of circles. Into each he inserts names as disparate as "forest" and "sad woman". The nett effect is to dissolve image and background, to tease and confuse. Feminine iconography modulates within framed space that is male. This game Orsini plays successfully. Few things are what they seem, and naming in the inscriptions stretches reality beyond limits of place.

In view of Orsini's known Epicurean sympathies we should expect ironies.¹¹² Spatial dispositions draw attention to well-considered departures from conventional contemporary ideas proper to layout. Part of la Maniera's axioms, even more is it part of free-thinking, of research and inventiveness. There is a sense of urgency, energy and intensity about its interpretation of the themes of sacred mountain, sacred way, fountain of life, and quest, all the restlessness of the late Renaissance and the throes of Mannerism. This seems obsessive, but is a hallmark of most creativity. Four hundred years have elapsed, and Bomarzo still does not receive due recognition as the masterpiece of Mannerist art it undoubtedly is. In part this arose

¹¹¹. The name occurs in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* with this implication.

¹¹². Epicurus was agnostic bordering on atheistic, truly sceptic; the sacred grove was the dwelling of deities, often in clusters, protected by the powers afforded to these collective creations by believers.

author
 Bomarzo is deliberately anti-monumental in the sense of excluding pomp and ceremony. It contains samples and ideas from a humorous and often upside-down inside-out world of imagination and knowledge. "There are no princes here" refers as much to the ideology of the imagery as to the social usage in Orsini's own time. Feminine space abounds, often private images attached to objective space culled from mythography, as in these portraits



author



author

Some commentators consider the stereotype chimaera and echidna to possess personalised portrait faces, probably of Orsini's later women. Despite mutilation, Chimaera (above) and Echidna (left) do not seem stereotype faces. Perhaps we may surmise that his last partner, the young local girl, is Echidna, his second wife Chimaera.



author

A benign ancient Etruscan looks youthful and seductive, but remains safely behind the wire. Ancient and contemporary space is fused with these images which place recognisable features on ritual forms. Bedrock carving of this quality requires both exceptional skill and exceptional energy. One cannot be certain if the arms were broken during carving - which seems unlikely, or during the centuries of neglect and falling trees. Images of sexual power, they also relate to arcane symbolism and concepts of mundus. Orsini was well versed in ancient wisdom via alchemy as well as literature.

Ancient Etruscan

from embarrassment and slight, in part to changed cultural politics, followed by neglect.

Attributive space again?

We discussed earlier a concept labelled Attributive Space. A recap might be helpful in view of the amount of intervening material. It is quite important to the understanding of Bomarzo. Attributive Space focuses on particular imports to programme space. Roman civic space was densely programmed. Inescapable codified signs related to uses and constraints. Imported signs may have limited physical dimensions, appearing as iconographic objects - sculpture, capitals, even a particular plant - each with its own umbra.¹¹³ It is a device of Hellenistic and Roman precincts. Several things happen:

- ▣ The icon has a known or imagined place of origin. In an erudite, teasing Landscape like Bomarzo, that might also have to be teased from the programme's codes. Once recognised, an imaginative leap occurs in the illuminated mind, contained within insights, between the space occupied and the place of origin. This expands the umbra to some kind of ideated space joining the two places, where the object is and its original home;¹¹⁴
- ▣ the object usually has a built-in spatial reference. e.g. Persephone migrates between "there" beneath, the mundus, and "here", a generalised here, bringing with her a sense of open air and expansiveness, taking it away again when she returns to "there". This uses two or three kinds of abstract space - a cultic space, an internal educated space, and an experienced environmental one. To play this, one has to know myths and meanings and recognise amendments;
- ▣ any iconographic object brings with it an imposition, an external domination which is superimposed on pre-existing

¹¹³. Umbra as in shade via umbrella, that is, its permitted zone and its zone of influence. The concept is eloquently discussed in connection with Brunelleschi's dome of S. Maria del Fiore: "Brunelleschi did not limit himself to dealing with the problem which seemed insurmountable to his contemporaries - that of vaulting a space of such huge diameter that traditional techniques were rendered useless. The need to construct such a vast dome had already been created in the first part of the XIVc when Giotto built a campanile beside the unfinished cathedral..... an insignia of a city renowned for the technical perfection of its artists and craftsmen. For this reason it rose up huge and isolated ... visible from every part of the city and marking its centre. The symbolic and urbanistic importance ... was not lost on Brunelleschi, but, with the sense of history which is implicit in humanist culture, he also realised that the current values of his city were no longer those Giotto exalted with his campanile. Florence ... was a financial power, a historical-political entity..... A tall, linear construction like Giotto's tower could mark the centre of a working community ... but it could not represent the new historical reality of a city with cultural and political prestige, dominating vast territories. Hence it was necessary to construct a new form in order to express a new reality, and to give it a scale that would surpass the now outdated symbolism of the campanile. Alberti ... pointed out the new ideological value expressed by the dome and praised it for its vastness which enable it to cover "with its shadow" not only the Florentine people but also "all the Tuscan peoples." and much more of direct relevance to the concept of shadow, umbra. *Argan, G.C.: The Renaissance City*. New York 1969. pp 24-25.

¹¹⁴. We do not need to be analytically conscious of this process; its impact will most often be subliminal.

power within the space, i.e. a reference to other space(s) related to its symbolism. This makes political space, abstract space which perhaps engenders areas of strife or unity, a feeling of alienation or alliance, which might be related to previous incarnations of its umbra or not. This concept is enshrined in the rites accompanying Etruscan use of the *templum* and formation of the *mundus* in founding a settlement. The new space then has different attributes and allegiances; deities are always "there" until brought "here";

☞ the umbra of each of these spaces interact. So do their implied and imagined abstractions of space, and this can be codified in the programme.

The combined result of these is a particularly intense memory map which fuses into our existence with Landscape (paintings or architecture). The concept gains density, differentiation from the mundane; it is the mechanism of the minimalised meditational cloister garden and concepts of paradise from which it derives. The space is "there", always somewhere else in the mind of the human occupant until brought "here" by special ideation. In the cloister garden it was theoretically doctrinal, but Boccaccio opens the lid on such nonsense!

Orsini depicts processes compressed within allegorical icons. The fight between dragons and lions has layered meanings, one of which is the conflict between fire and water consequences. This was thought to be the source of air. The group draws attention to the firmament in this way, to infinities above the enclosure, which are underlined by reflective water surfaces nearby, set before a vista. The opposite occurs quickly. We are almost immediately confronted with paradoxical conflicts. Aerial space is contrasted with imprisonment in *Trenaros*, both with a kind of chthonic balancing act in the Plutarcian water spectacle.¹¹⁵

He also makes more specific associations, using obelisks, which transcend space and time, attaining considerable "distance". Turtles are finite beings which need ocean and can navigate *apeiron*, Helicon needs Parnassus from whose bowels it draws the *poros* of energy as water [167]. Allowing these images their appropriate umbra, Orsini expands physical space, introducing abstract space integral to his programme. Abstract space and physical space become inseparable. Since the programme also makes erudite references to literary works concerned with space, like *Aeneid* and Boccaccio's *Pantheon*, their

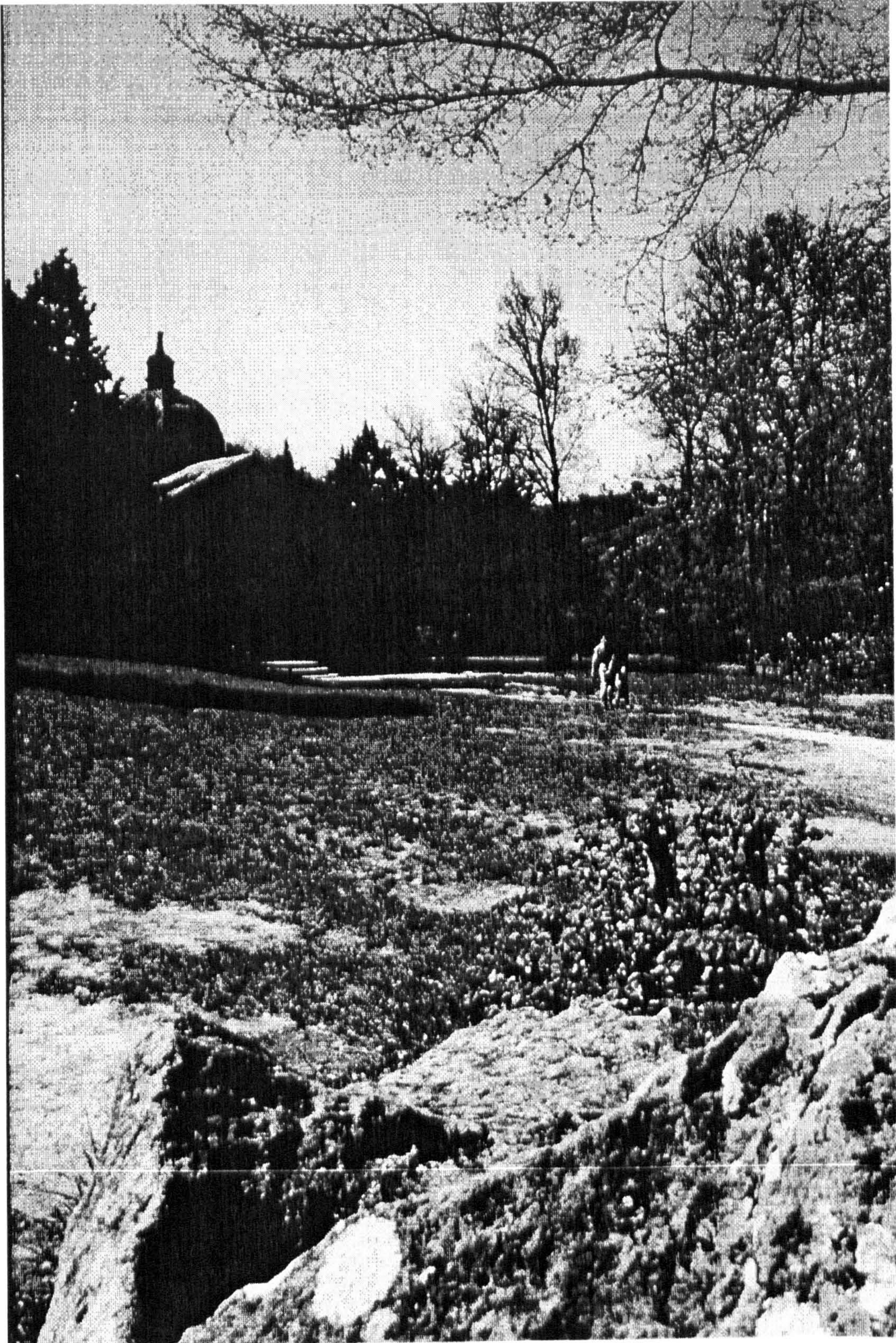
¹¹⁵. Seznec, J: *La survivance des dieux antiques*. London 1940. tr. B.F.Sessions. pp 196, ff 80. In this mediaeval illustration, Pluto and Proserpine are shown seated harmoniously in a fantastic bird's mouth grotto, in front of which a three headed hound, looking more like a three headed lion, crouches and snarls. In the foreground is a pool.



author

Decapitated, mutilated, a sorrowful Fortuna reinforces Orsini's message, her bacchic ecstasy ended, the majestic tortoise still facing the enemy in the chasm. Time and space take on monumental proportions with imagery like this, whose patient construction matches the survival.

Tyche and the tortoise



author

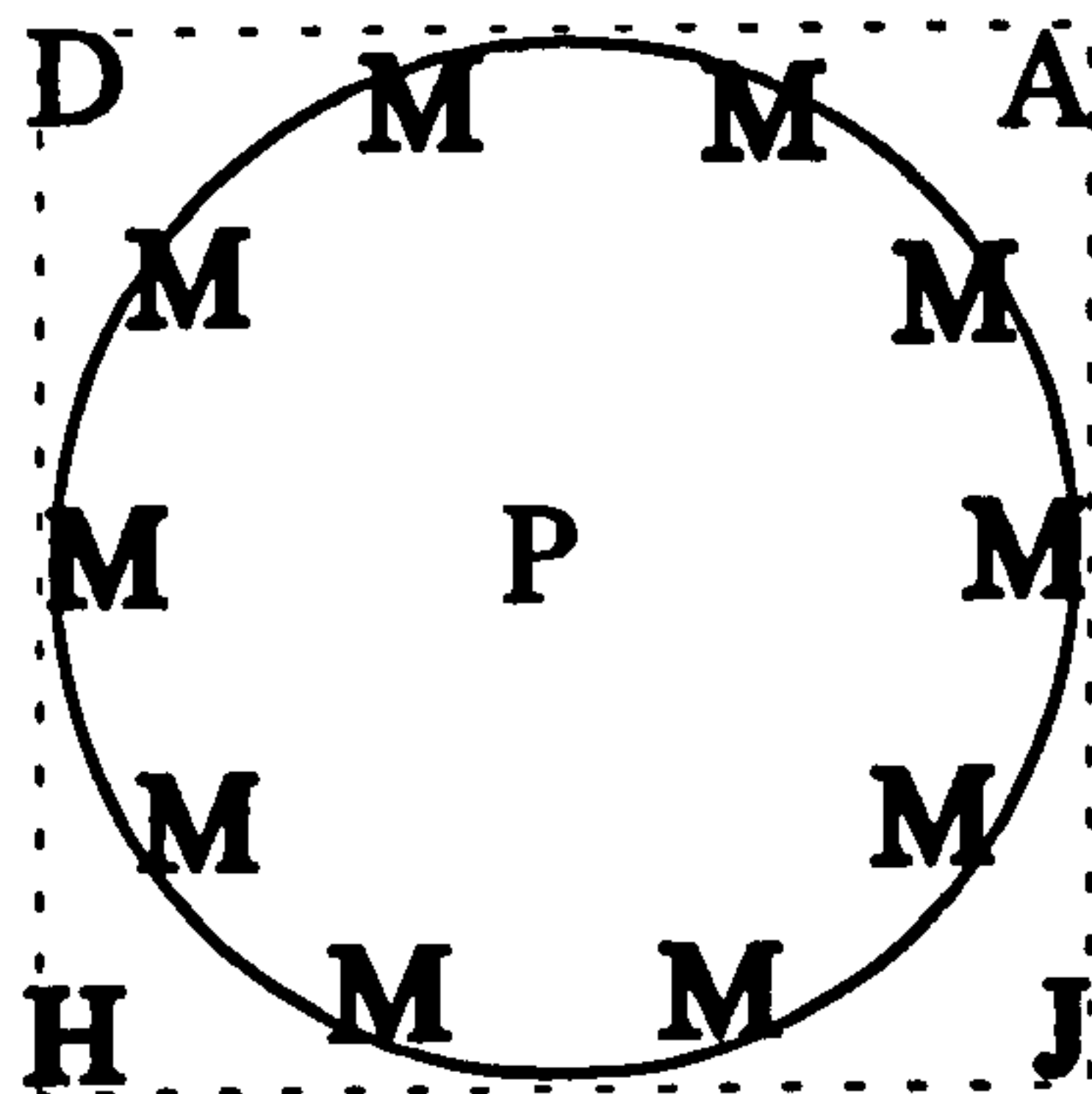
"... some altars near the water". The silhouette of the temple overlooks a grassy plain which slopes down to the lake. In it rock outcrops are carved into abstract forms which probably stood for altars, rather like the "Etruscan ruins".

... some altars near the water



- ideated spaces are also adopted and appropriated and enrich the abstractions.

Meditational depth beyond pretty pictures in the Boscotrecase frescos is acquired because they use devices which extend oblique cosmic space, *harmonia mundi*. One is sacred proportion. This Lante does to an inordinate degree, establishing itself as a polarity to Bomarzo. The device is used by Orsini, closely associated with his cosmic references - the "Quests" plateau, Persephone's place, Helicon and the theatre, the ancient Etruscan. Helicon is a good example. It has hallmarks of a (skittish?) aside on Alberti's attempts at squaring the circle (see illustration). As plain geometry it is an elaborated quincunx, whose geometry and numerology are significant to Renaissance imagery. Applied to a fountain in a group with such concentrated iconography more implications can be expected. Pegasus presides over its dynamic centre. Birth from the Gorgon's head has special significance. Gorgon was Death Artemis. Her "destruction" created Helicon, a perpetual inspirational spring presided over by her "brother", Apollo. Artemis as a moon deity is quintessentially a mountain icon, a theme the quincunx develops here. It is in effect the same significant space as the tholos in the centre of a quadripartite garden. The sketch below is after a drawing by Giovanni Guerra, executed in 1598.¹¹⁶ It shows a veritable dynamo [see also 120]. Pegasus was a jet fountain on a hill of rocks. Around him water tumbled into the huge stone dish on whose edge the muses trod their round. At each corner of an implied square were gods relevant to inspiration and transitions between "here" and "there".¹¹⁷ Breenbergh's evocative painting of it from 1644 reveals an eloquent and beautiful fountain group shaded by a richly mixed grove in slanting sunlight [127].¹¹⁸



¹¹⁶. *Bredenkamp 1986*, II, ff 55.

¹¹⁷. Bredenkamp draws attention to similarities between this complete corner of the boschetto and the allegorical imagery of a relief by Andrea di Ambrogio Briosco Riccio (1470-1532) which depicts a palm tree behind Pegasus in the act of pawing the spring, fame in the guise of a trumpeting angel riding a sphere with its upper hemisphere quartered and two books under it, and on the right the angel of death as a winged skeleton. Orsini's Fame rides a turtle; he has a carved stone tree (a way of attaining the perpetually dead tree like the one behind Riccio's death), and Pegasus is supported by all the panoply of Parnassus with its waters of life.

¹¹⁸. *Ibid* ff. 53.

P - Pegasus; M - Muses; A - Apollo; D - Dionysos; H - Hermes; J - Jove.

*You, Phorba, build with living turf for us
some altars near the waters, and with laurel
and ivy wreaths and myrtle crown them all;
and then bring Idumenaean palms, and after
lead in the snowy sheep for sacrifice
and do it all aright¹¹⁹. [168]*

Orsini plays the numbers game, adding always to the complexity of spatial coding and the density of its imagery.¹²⁰ This is a beautiful and terrible (as in "the sublime") mandala, with complexities capable of extensive psychological manipulation as a meditational device - like the labyrinthine forms that both Landscape and mandala represent. He seems to have considered it in this way. It is certainly no horror comic. That idea reflects erosions of subtlety by the twentieth century populist mind, Orsini's humour aside. The humour is also to be enjoyed, like the inset puzzles and puns - very Shakespearean!

Panic Stations

Pan is king here, crowned with an urn! [169]¹²¹ Arkadia, "where hunting had not been reduced to the level of a sport," was not Arkadia without the presence of its first king.¹²² Spatial and programmatic concepts in this sacro-bosco are metaphors for a particular pastoral Landscape. Apuleius's inventive *Metamorphoses* centres around Isis-Aphrodite and Serapis worship with Epicurean elements. Inside, the pseudo-myth of Cupid and Psyche uses many spatial aspects of this Landscape to establish boundaries in social space. Psyche languishes on crags above and outside the templum-palatium of Eros. Rejected by Venus, she is a rank outsider, excluded other than by the whim of Eros.¹²³ Marginal landscape symbolises her status. Pan, lord of "marginal" territory, becomes her mentor.¹²⁴ Psyche's exists in dreamspace. Like battlefields or

¹¹⁹. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogues*, VI.49-54.

¹²⁰. The coding of this is also probably linked with the sequence of the Boccaccio *Eclogues*.

¹²¹. Of his Eclogue XI, Boccaccio wrote: "... It is called Pantheon from 'pan', which is 'all', and 'theos' which is 'god', because its discourse is about all things divine." From *Boccaccio, G: Eclogues* tr. J.L. Smarr, pp 236.

¹²². *Borgeaud 1979*, pp 4. "Selene belong to the same spatio-temporal environment. Porphyry tells us that they had a joint cult in Arkadia."

¹²³. Whim, the aperas of love as an outflow of the original apeiron, cosmic unity.

¹²⁴. Imagine Pan's space this way: a computer drawing is not like drawing on paper or a surface. It is built up of layers which exist only in abstract space summoned up by harmonic resonances. The base layer starts everything, and is present wherever it is not covered by superimposed images which mask it. Templum space (or abstract space appropriated by humans for their favourite deities) is "cut out" of this. Cut out is a kind of superimposition involving removals (see Chapter 8). Human space (or social and abstract space like settlements and fields work similarly. Pan's space then appears interstitial as these appropriations increase, but its underlying concept remains one of primordia - the original order, and underlies everything. This is the platform on which Bomarzo is built; hence the retorts from Lante.

dreamtime, it is a landscape of discontinuous logic. No narrative joins together the episodes of a dream. Space mutates spontaneously between exedral death protected from adversaries through the Ancient Etruscans' taming and a palatium-theatrum of the most intense passion. Another wilderness, it is the *apeiron* within. Pan's landscape is the verge of primordia, the whole of the matrix, or Mater, of all. Not "cut out", outside any templum, it is the unknown, trackless and intractable, where the unexpected is encountered in outside and inside space.

Pan, frightened by unfamiliar sudden noises that unexpectedly invade the particular stillness of uninhabited landscape, the realm of nature, experiences panic. The landscape outside is also the Landscape within, areas of consciousness untouched by linguistic and visual linearities, as convoluted as the brain itself or labyrinth. He is the invention of a people to whom background noise is an alien concept. Noise, when it invades their space, creating psychic awareness of its vastness and emptiness, is meaningful in terms of human perception, survival aesthetics. They are the antithesis of urbanised, a people for whom space is plentiful and for whom straying far afield is reaching into space thinly colonised by their own species, wilderness. It is thickly inhabited by innumerable others of every kind, not to mention psychotic adversarial lions.

Sudden noise causes the mind to race about uncontrolled, a physical sensation of flight even within the brain. It is the same sensation as battles, love or dreams. Indeed, the panic of dreamspace is that of untracked inner Landscapes, primal fear. A panic stricken person (or animal) runs, rushes hither and thither, following confused re-orientations of the mind, as a hind from the hunt. This plentiful unknown space is for intrepid explorers, travellers of the intellect or tribal kings whose shamans donate the gift of divination. "The centre designates He who thinks and sustains the order of the universe ... the power of the wise man to conceive and conserve the order of nature." A wilderness is essential to the operation of human wisdom, whose evolution has pursued this end.

In this way the concept of *apeiron* and *aperas* applied to the realm of intellect attracted philosophical signification early in the development of Greek. A spatial name becomes abstract linguistic space. Characteristics of the wilderness realm on the edges after humanity has cut out its innumerable templum spaces, suggest obliquely but clearly that its king has a different wisdom. Hence the paradox, the apparent contradiction that primal Pan is an ultimate source of wisdom and the inspiration for learned poetry. His shaman inspired knowledge rescues "his" people, fellow Arkadians,

like Chloe and Psyche. At the same time, he is alarmed by the strange invasive noises of humanity in his wilderness. Wisdom gained from one unstructured landscape can give to Psyche the means of navigation in another. It has more subtlety than Longus's episode, where his antics are used to frighten an urbanised mob. At the same time the apparent lack of structure in abject fear is seen as part of the process of self-preservation. He is surely one of the most complex creations of the Greek pantheon, and has Landscapes to match, nowhere better envisaged than this of Bomarzo. What games enactments might have provided for the count and his friends!

Many glosses on Pan were available to Orsini. He uses all of these characteristics to re-create Arkadia, starting from spatial implications and working through them to psychological ones. When Apuleius wrote, Pan had attained the kernel of universalities later afforded in generous measure by Renaissance mythographers. His genesis and attributes had drawn into the net of Greek male cult those final aspects of the Great Mother of the Gods not already distributed in fragments elsewhere among innumerable masculine specialists. Judaic creation of the single male god was the final shift to date. Borgeaud's comment about hunting is significant. Selene, who is also Artemis, and therefore co-habits this particular Landscape with Pan, was, as moon goddess, the mistress of pure water as well as mistress of the animals. An ecologically sound perception of natural relationships is encapsulated in mythic form, only much later explained incompletely by analytical science.

Selene (Hera-Demeter) and Pan shared common Arkadian cult.¹²⁵ Like Orpheus, Pan masters animals.¹²⁶ Pan seduced Artemis in her Selene form, which means he, a sacred king, gained supremacy over Hera. Each embodies significant aspects of a particular ecology. Forest, crags, mountains made unique contributions to ancient Greek economy. Minoan wealth rested substantially on timber cash crops. Ecological systems are codified in the Pantheon: strong timber from uplands for building ships; a pastoral protein reservoir; rainfall and pure water. All are essential. Orsini has an understanding of this in Bomarzo, supplementing Boccaccio's allegorical portrayals by direct readings from available classics and their scholiasts. As king of Arkadia, the ultimate aboriginal homeland, Pan was greater than Zeus. And Orsini ... ? Is he having yet another joke at the expense of the curia? Keep on peeling!

¹²⁵ Borgeaud 1979, pp 7. *Pan and

¹²⁶ A shamanic property, and surely the half animal half human form of Pan has some derivation from the intermediary nature of the shaman who danced with the animals during the ritual hunt? It is a duality, essentially a semiotic boundary between otherwise conflicting spatial systems within one compass.

Symbol of everything he represented was, of course, the labyrinth, the irrational which could not be solved by linear logic, only by intuition and divine inspiration. The sign 'labyrinth' is a sign naming One, primordia. It incorporates human presence in the identity of its centre and linear decoding, cosmic order in the superimposition of the templum. The presence of the templum in the heart of labyrinth represents rational abstract space implanted within sensitive singularity, space appropriated by male humans for their petty squabbling gods in the body of the goddess.¹²⁷ The qualities are symbolised more clearly if we look at an Indian sacred site, say Mysore. There the Hindu temples sit in a bowl of water, whilst the Jain monuments stand in lofty male aridity on the overlooking mountain tops. Again, there is no judgmental intention in the comment. Male equates aridity, female moist fertility.

The importance of Pan's attributes to human anima is acknowledged by Apuleius in the wholly positive nature of his association with Psyche. It is sharply contrasted with the petty social backbiting of Venus-Aphrodite and the furtiveness of her "son", Eros. In his Greek epiphany he is the son of Hermes, another god of the labyrinth, another consort of Hera. Together father and "son" were instrumental in ensuring the continued existence of Zeus - they were saviours, enabling him to defeat Typhon, last of the Gigantomachia, earlier, less finitely differentiated powers of primordia. From there it is an easy step to the Renaissance, when Boccaccio, amongst others, firmly identified Pan with God and Christ, and thus, Arkadia with the promised land and Christendom.¹²⁸

By the High Renaissance this strange half savage deity had acquired the attributes of the Judeo-Christian God, bound to appeal to Orsini's nose for paradox and a fruitful source for political allegory.¹²⁹ He had also become conflated with Priapus and Silvanus in the process. The significance of this should not be ignored. It indicates a shrinkage of space, for Priapus was the ruddy lord of gardens of antiquity. Where in the Boscotrecase frescos he had marked the boundary between Landscape and landscape he was now identified with Pan, lord of natural space. Inherent and implied is the concept of the whole world as Landscape, therefore cosmic order largely under human control. It marks the demise of natural space. The Judeo-Christian view of Landscape is as God's garden and incorporates a special environment, wilderness, whose stillness and richness engender in humanity the facility of fertile meditation. The landscape matrix is

127. As an Implant it both takes out and adds to; it is a process, an exchange.

128. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogue X*, Vallis opaca, ll 150.

129. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogue XII*, Saphos, ll 41.

now Landscape. His conflation with Sylvanus, an Arkadian, echoes the aristocratic Mediaeval concept of "forest" perhaps, as a venue for specific conservation related to rite and privilege, the almighty on the side of the mighty.

Pan appears in Ripa and other iconographic manuals with these attributes. He is part of a triad, more populist in Renaissance iconography than in ancient classical times, Pan, Meter (Hera/Demeter /Cybele), Dionysos. The only hint of his existence at Lante is in the outermost edges of the boschetto (where his associations are presented without their significant meanings), but his space pervades Bomarzo, and indeed is Bomarzo. Fulvio Orsini, Bishop of Spoleto, a kinsman, mythographer and iconographer, devised Villa Lante's programme. Known to Orsini, he roused some chagrin that he had been visiting Lante and failed to call at Bomarzo. Programmatic and iconographic skills and humanist leanings obviously ran in the family! Theocritus, Vergil, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Sannazaro, all used allegory in the pastoral eclogue with its carefully modelled Arkadia to attack anomalous systems which sought to restrict individual freedom of thought and action (of the aristocracy and cognoscenti). In the case of the last three it was often the curia, but also to lament the sad and catastrophic collapse of the Neapolitan state and demise of native kings. It is perhaps not so surprising that Orsini harbours similar intentions, creating an exemplary Arkadia whose free space is inhabited by irony, paradox, and even privilege. Pan's domain is therefore Arkadia standing for "free world" and Christendom. The temple, iconographically attributable to Hermes, is the apex, for this deity special to the occult was born on the summit of Arkadian Cyllene. Psyche sleeps on Nysa (Parnassus). Thus related Arkadian cults present in Bomarzo share the same sign of the labyrinth (and sacred mountain). For each it is a principle of motion, one for navigation in assisting humans negotiate cosmic primordia, the Landscape between "here" and "there", and being professional messenger and herald, one for sheer survival through understanding the relict natural space of "here", and one for the obscure and obtuse shifts of dream space.

Many references throughout the iconography imply or state the presence of Pan and labyrinth in the sacro-bosco. Pausanias tells us that Arkadia is the land of the giants, or gigantias and the setting of the gigantomachia. The gigantomachia was important propaganda material to the expanding Roman empire penetrating Europe. It educated barbarians in their new system, being instated in major settlements on a Jupiter column. These solitary columns placed in significantly prominent positions were carved with a standardised iconography which was both calendric and an exposition of a state

hierarchy of protective deities (quite capable of wreaking havoc to establish order). Orsini's gigantomachia takes a more erotic form.

Pan, as one would expect from a labyrinthine deity, is also time, having conquered the moon whose domain was calendric, and time and space are eternally locked, even in modern science. This is another attribute of labyrinth, for the longest possible time, like the longest possible route, is compressed in the smallest possible space.

Bomarzo's tempietto is dedicated to Hermes. Its iconographic programme revolves around arcane meanings attached to that god's role in the cosmic scheme linking sun, moon, and astrological divination. Arcane Florentine "dissident" churches like S. Miniato al Monte model this. Hermes' primary attribute as messenger is that of navigation, in turn the skill of ancient heroes who piloted Greek migrations to successful sites, the skill mocked in *Odyssey*, with help from Tyche. His planet, Mercury, traces a path among the fixed stars in its "irrational" orbital variations that, it is said closely resembles the classical labyrinth.¹³⁰ Hermes is central in the Theseus and Perseus myths.¹³¹ Like Dionysos, he derives from elements in pre-Olympian goddess worship. Pan shares, even dominates, this labyrinth space which is Arkadian, aboriginal, before corn. Hermes' guide through all this space - he didn't manage it under his own intellect (it's touches like this which endear the various Middle Eastern pantheons) - was three nymphs, so like the three Graces as to appear inseparable, recording the cyclical nature of his task and the space which encompassed it.¹³²

Cybele-Demeter, too, has Greek Arkadian origins, part of a triad involving Pan and Dionysos. Amaltheia, satyrs, and a host of other creatures symbolic of fecundity attend her on the statue base. They are her Arkadian attendants, aboriginal presences from upland forest spaces when they were still strange to humanity. More importantly perhaps in context, they also suit Orsini's Epicurean leanings, representing a concept of Greek freedom and celebration of life. Arkadia's freedom is further enlarged.

The tempietto is raised at the high point of the bosco's topography. In that position it should stand for goal as all sacri-monti. In this most allegorical of landscapes where prevalent transitions are between subsurface and surface forces this temple, at the apex,

¹³⁰. *Lonegren, S. Labyrinths*. Glastonbury 1991. pp 85-86.

¹³¹. Because he is "older" than Zeus, instrumental in ensuring survival of the latter, he is therefore "more autochthonous" than the Olympians' chairman.

¹³². *Borgeaud 1979*. pp 249. Interestingly, though an aside, it also presumes a feminine role which is quite different from the norm, also present in Homeric epic, which, assuming the correctness of the present model for comparative religion, implies functions transferred from earlier cults. Similar cults relating to the moon as mistress of the animals were the basis of shamanism which plays such a vital role in this development.

represents transitions between subsurface and celestial powers. It does so with oblique reference to that most earthly of celestial symbols, Hermes' labyrinth. Its approach is via sequences of death and rebirth which make reference to soldiering skills, symbolised in the trials of Orlando. Elements reflect the *via sacra* symbols in the Boscotrecase "*Oracle*" room frescos. Similar codified transitions move from the domain of Priapus via water to those of Dionysos and ultimately Parnassus. In this there are strong overlaps between Bomarzo and Lante. The frescos, already discussed in some detail, have no atmosphere of uncertainty in their landscape portrayal. Rather the opposite; there is overwhelming complacency. In this aspect, Lante relates to them. The kind of landscape, which is not countryside in any way, portrayed in those Sophist or Stoic images is that of Bomarzo, filled with signs. They depict a combination of *via sacra* and *sacri-monti* with a monumental serenity contradicted by Bomarzo's laughter. The surface image might be that of Bomarzo but the underlying geometry is decidedly that of Lante. Direct transpositions of Pythagorean mythic space emerge through Neo-Platonic eyes. On their surface though, an attenuated path, a way, even a "Way" wants to twist and wind through hills and woods, not countryside. They are not quite the labyrinth of binary choices that Bomarzo is, where decisions made on the moment determine the sequence of experience and resulting psychology. In this way too the choice of entry point into Orsini's bosco makes the choice of progress.

Friends.

For all his skills, Orsini ultimately gained no acclaim from his military campaigns, any more than he appears to have done from his artistic talents.¹³³ Early prowess which earned him friendships was overshadowed by the unfortunate incident at Montefortini. Better than most, he knew that human skill did not always triumph over fickle Tyche. Gambarara was cardinal bishop of Viterbo, prince of the church, kinsman of the enviably rich and powerful Farnese. His serene axial garden expresses psychological security. Orsini's Arkadian labyrinth is a landscape of privacy, the most secret coiled kind of space. Changes of direction, lack of axis suggest fate, Tyche Fortuna on a tortoise. Philosophical *apeiron* permits Orsini to retire into a world assailable only by sympathetic minds able to decode its closely enmeshed threads. It is a Landscape of pacific dissent, a characteristic of Boccaccio's and Sannazaro's elegant elegiac pastoralism. There is a similar sense of spatial infinity. Orsini

¹³³. Before the campaigns he arbitrated in a dispute between the design factions engaged on St. Peter's; during the campaigns he ranked equal among the leaders with Conti and Madruzzo, a cardinal who went to war. via *Bredenkamp* 1986.

supported Farnese ambitions with little personal gain but much personal loss. The politics of this are reflected in the chosen landscape forms.

One of the salient features of Epicurean doctrine which distinguishes it from Christianity is its emphasis on friendship. Orsini valued his friendships highly. Despite anti-curia feelings, his staunchest friends were prominent members of that curious elite, Alessandro Farnese, Cristoforo Madruzzo, Fulvio Orsini, and the ambivalent Drouet. In this connection we again turn to Boccaccio, not the Eclogues this time, but that most fatalistic and non-pastoral of all garden images, the setting of *Decameron*. This locus amoenus is already Paradise, "there", an ambiguous escape from plague (which significantly had oriental sources).

Echoes of Boccaccio's novella of Tito and Gisippo emerge. Inquisitors branded dissident members of the aristocracy, against whom they had little power, not simply heretic, but specifically Epicurean.¹³⁴ Boccaccio introduces to his story a specific Epicurean, intentionally anachronistic, the teacher of Tito and Gisippo. The two protagonists are Augustan Romans; their teacher, Aristippus, lived in the VcBC. Boccaccio's story is densely allegorical. It explores elements of selfishness and sacrifice entailed in close friendships. Friendship is more important than marriage. The debts of friendship are repayed when Tito is freed by the power of his friend's elegant rhetoric, and marries the sister of that same friend. There are biographical parallels in the Farnese-Orsini relationship. Farnese and Madruzzo used political pressure to free Orsini from his Netherlands prison. Farnese supported Orsini after the Montefortini disgrace, assisting him financially and politically. Orsini married Farnese's sister, Giulia. If there is an etymological play in the title "sacro bosco" - sacred grove-sacrificial grove (Thymele, place of sacrifice) - the Orsini-Farnese-Madrruzzo friendship offers likely scenarios from which to match the Boccaccio theme (Drouet was a friend of later life). In the Montefortini episode he had apparently volunteered for a thankless task, perhaps in return for his extraction from Namur through Farnese's intervention. Perhaps too, there is more than passim reference to his marriage with Julia Farnese.

*in una cosa sola me par haver piu anni che Nestorre, perche me son
resoluto, che Epicuro fu un galant' homo, ma Dio volesse et basta;
et con questo li baso le mani.*¹³⁵

¹³⁴. The luxury implied obviously made this a "dirty word" in the popular mind, thus trying to raise sympathetic resonances among the populace and rouse support for repressions.

¹³⁵. Letter to Alessandro Farnese. 6.9.1558. via *Bredenkamp & Janzer 1986*. Vol. 1 pp 15.

Orsini says that he considers Epicurus to have been a thorough gentleman. Cicero refers to ideal friendship as *Natura* in *De amicitia*. Boccaccio contradicts that assessment. He says it arises through acculturation and education. Mediaeval tradition portrayed Aristippus as archetypal hedonist. His Epicureanism was stressed by Cicero in *De finibus*. St. Augustine was briefly preoccupied with his supposed beliefs in his analysis of Socrates, of whom Aristippus was a disciple. There is a dialectic link here between Bomarzo and Lante. In response to Orsini's outright espousal of Epicurean principles, posed or real, Lante takes St. Augustine's *City of God*, a seminal orthodox work, and transposes it into an architecture of Landscape. This, in effect, espouses the supposed doctrine of Aristippus's companion Socratic disciple, Antisthenes. Aristippus, said Augustine, made delight of the body the chief good; Antisthenes, he says, made the chief good the delight of the mind.¹³⁶ Together they attained metis. Boccaccio considers friendship a goal of philosophy. The metaphor develops further in philosophical manner by naming the woman central to this triangular theme Sofronia. Sofronia has etymological connection with *sophrosyne*. *Sophrosyne* means "soundness of mind", which draws together the polarities inherent in his elaborate play with sophism in the actions of the friends.¹³⁷ Boccaccio proceeds with a paradox, for Sofronia is no blue-stocking frump, for all her name, but an exotic and seductive woman of great beauty stimulating the elemental force of concupiscence. In this way, he approaches classical Greek morality which sought unity of body and mind, the healing of Asklepeios. Parallels exist between this novella and the three friends other than in the persona and name of Sofronia. Alessandro Farnese and Cristoforo Madruzzo were both the equivalent of Antisthenes. Cardinal Gambara certainly seemed to think he was. Orsini perhaps considered himself an Aristippus, but from our position of hindsight, it is obvious that he was really both! It would seem that his garden was truly an attempt to create a garden of Epicurus, not in the populist image as represented by critics of more mystical bent, but in its leanings towards Tao.

Hagla trlada.

A major feature of Bomarzo's programme is the occurrence of triadic allegory expressed as form. Apollo, Hermes and Dionysos, three gods pretending to Arkadian autochthony, occupy positions which define spatial and semiotic boundaries. Pan, Cybele-Demeter, and Dionysos dominate the core. Cybele is also manifest

¹³⁶. *Mazzotta, G: The world at play in Boccaccio's Decameron*. Princeton 1986. pp 256-257.

¹³⁷. Significantly too, in context, Sophia is the feminine principle in gnostic myth.

in Persephone and Isis-Aphrodite. The myth of the abduction of Persephone by Hades symbolises continuity of space. After despairing wanderings - an apeiron - Demeter is united with Persephone and Zeus, Persephone's father, and reconciled with their new son-in-law, Hades. Hades has been accepted as chthonian space representative in the Olympian system. The four represent union of three cosmic spaces, a fusion of triad and tetrad.

The theme is as prominent in Renaissance literature and philosophy as in Bomarzo's. Orsini's programme is avowedly devoted to initiates, preferably free-thinking philosophical ones. Lante, as we have seen, superficially follows tridentine doctrine with its Augustinian echoes. Like Boccaccio's novellas (though obviously not in subject matter!) it has a pleasing and acceptable storyline, albeit visual, but still manages to communicate abstruse matters to initiates with consummate skill, smirking behind the hand. This gloss is undoubtedly a secret of its overwhelming success, for the distinguished French chronicler Montaigne reveals no hint of any knowledge of the programme. The conscious and emphatic placement of Augustinian perfection, the paradise, is a reference to his influential *City of God*. Setting it within the boschetto ensures that its message about Classicism is unavoidable. This is not the world of Pan as Christendom, but the urbanised nature of Christianity (certainly Mediaeval Christianity) presented in its crystalline form dominating any other histories. It responds there to Orsini's more diffuse, but controlled, anarchical interpretations of Boccaccio's Arkadia as Christendom in the Eclogues.¹³⁸

The general timbre of Vicino Orsini's letters to his friends, frequently critical of current politics, is not embittered, pessimistic, or overtly aggressive. His handling of obvious social awkwardness arising out of the failings of his second marriage is one of enlightened sadness. This does give rise to some bitterness because he obviously made considerable adjustments to his wife's nymphomania. His happiness with a young local girl and the children she had by him is tender. A typically Italian, though not uncritical, love of children floods out of the letters. He calls his eldest son, killed in battle, bestial "in a way that could bring dishonour," but asks for advice on how to deal with it and requests that a friend take care of his welfare during distant campaigns.

This Landscape must, in its time, have ranked with its source of inspiration, Boccaccio's *Eclogues*, for a man of Sansovino's eminence to have given a standing ovation in the masterwork of one of

¹³⁸. Boccaccio is not his only source, as other commentators demonstrate, but is the gel which makes the sacro-bosco into a cohesive programme spatially. Anarchy should not be interpreted here as judgmental comment but as anarchy with responsibility, ultimate democracy and personal freedom.

Boccaccio's most famous admirers. Lante's intensity is no less, but represents contrasts and similarities that make the a paradoxical conjunction. Savagery in the grove, the supposedly dark imagery, these are platitudes, conventions to disguise bafflement. They make a storyline without too much effort. Truths are complex, like the man.

Chapter Eight.

Lante: virtuous vision.

For this kind of proportion is not form, as people used to think, but rather the disposition of matter to receive form. And if it is then accepted that this disposition of matter is the same thing as a harmony in the composition [that is the composition of matter with form], it follows that when the disposition of matter to receive a form is present, then so is form;¹

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¹. *Aquinas: Commentarium in Aristotelis Librum De Anima*. via *Eco, U: The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*. Harvard 1988. pp 84.



Topography.

Villa Lante's Landscape perhaps has a more Vitruvian position than Bomarzo. This is because the whole complex is conscious design, the only pre-existing constraint being the position of the land. Space has been organised in such a way that it appears to conform to ancient wisdom, even to the extent of re-designing the town. Once a hunting park, or *barco*, it was the property of the Vatican for the use of the bishops of Viterbo. The original bishops' palace was the castle around which Bagnaia clusters, a fortress somewhat similar to Bomarzo. Between castle and *barco* would once have been vineyards, orchards perhaps, and rough common grazing, a typically Mediaeval arrangement, less enlightened than Bomarzo, which had acquired an earlier garden though more aloof from the town. XVIc drawings show rough ground up to the gates of the *boschetto*, then new. The creation of the Villa Lante Landscape confers on its small town a classical feel. It lies uphill of the town. Above town and villa the ground continues to rise, culminating in the limestone massif of Monte S. Angelo to the south. Long before that, the twin casinos of the villa rise, architectural peaks, from what was once an edge of the park. Owned by the Vatican, castle and *barco* provided for the amusement of its bishops of Viterbo, supporting their worldly substance if not their worldly sustenance. Looking from the bridge that carries the road from Viterbo over the ravine, the park rises visibly above vineyards and grazing land, the paradise and palazzini set on a shoulder, grey among the dark oaks [170].

The complex nestles between settlement edge and the realm of Artemis, a perfect position for a hunting park. A vivid painting by Velasquez in the National Gallery, London, illustrates this well.² In its middle ground is an oval or nearly circular arena enclosed by a sailcloth fence, its floor well trampled to smooth earth. Courtiers, hangers-on, and peasants, all enjoying their leisure, occupy the foreground. Trees surround the arena but within it there are only a few stumps. Behind the arena, like the seating banks of classical theatres, rises a hilly wilderness. Vegetation on its hillocky slopes consists mainly of cork oaks and scrub with many naked patches. Huntsmen ride through it, obviously rounding up game to drive game into the arena for the king's sport. A similar Roman courtly hunt is described by David Coffin:

In the morning preceding the day of the hunt, the professional huntsmen would scout for a good location where game was plentiful. This would be a wooded area, which would be surrounded

². Velasquez. Philip hunting wild boar.

*by strips of sailcloth watched by the local peasants and members of the Swiss guard, leaving a wide exit open toward the hunting field ... The guards peasants, and dogs would then drive the game, usually boars, stags, and wild goats, and rabbits, out into the hunting field for the first carnage of wild animals. Then the falcons would be released to strike the smaller game and birds.*³

The pope watched this one-sided entertainment from a good vantage point. Hunts were festivals and enjoyed ceremonial feasting. They involved considerable expenditure, both in the feasting and in the permanent features needed to support the activity. David Coffin describes one near Rome:

*" ... a large and dazzling company of hunters, their equipage glittering with gold and jewels, set out from Rome towards the coast. Count Girolamo Riario, nephew of pope Sixtus IV, was entertaining duke Ernst of Saxony with a great hunt ... the area near the river was flat, covered with thickets, but nearby were wooded hillocks, all forming a superb refuge for game As Gherardi relates, the spectacle of the Count's hunt was so splendid that much of the Roman citizenry trailed the hunters to enjoy the sport. After chasing and capturing numerous stags and roebucks, the hunting party gathered in the meadow at the Fonti della Magliana for an open air banquet as climax to their sport."*⁴

Coffin goes on to discuss the curia's predilection for this proscribed sport. Hunting was a substitute for warfare, had been so even from the time of Sumer's temporarily employed kings whose energy needed to be controlled when off duty.⁵ Hunting reserves were as large as 9,000 acres in antiquity. Varro described one in Laurentum which had dining table and couches on a hillock - a triclinium - from which guests at the hunt observed the game.⁶ Ceremonial aspects and the popularity of the hunt were destroyed by the advent of firearms, as were the conventions of chivalric warfare, and this was probably partly responsible for hunting parks like Lante being converted to a different kind of battlefield, one of ideological space.

Theatre and triumph.

The topography of Lante is ideal for such a barco, a dished arena at the head of a valley above the town's vineyards, which descends into a ravine whose cliffs were Bagnaia's defences [171]. Uphill to the south was the wooded wilderness of mountainside. A pleasant ride separated barco from palace, a chance for spectacle. The

³. *Coffin 1979*. pp 125.

⁴. *Coffin 1979*. pp 111. quoting J.Gherardi, *Il diario roman di Jacopo Gherardi*.

⁵. *Coffin 1979*. pp 122. for the Medici hunting, not the Sumerian.

⁶. *Coffin 1979*. pp 123.

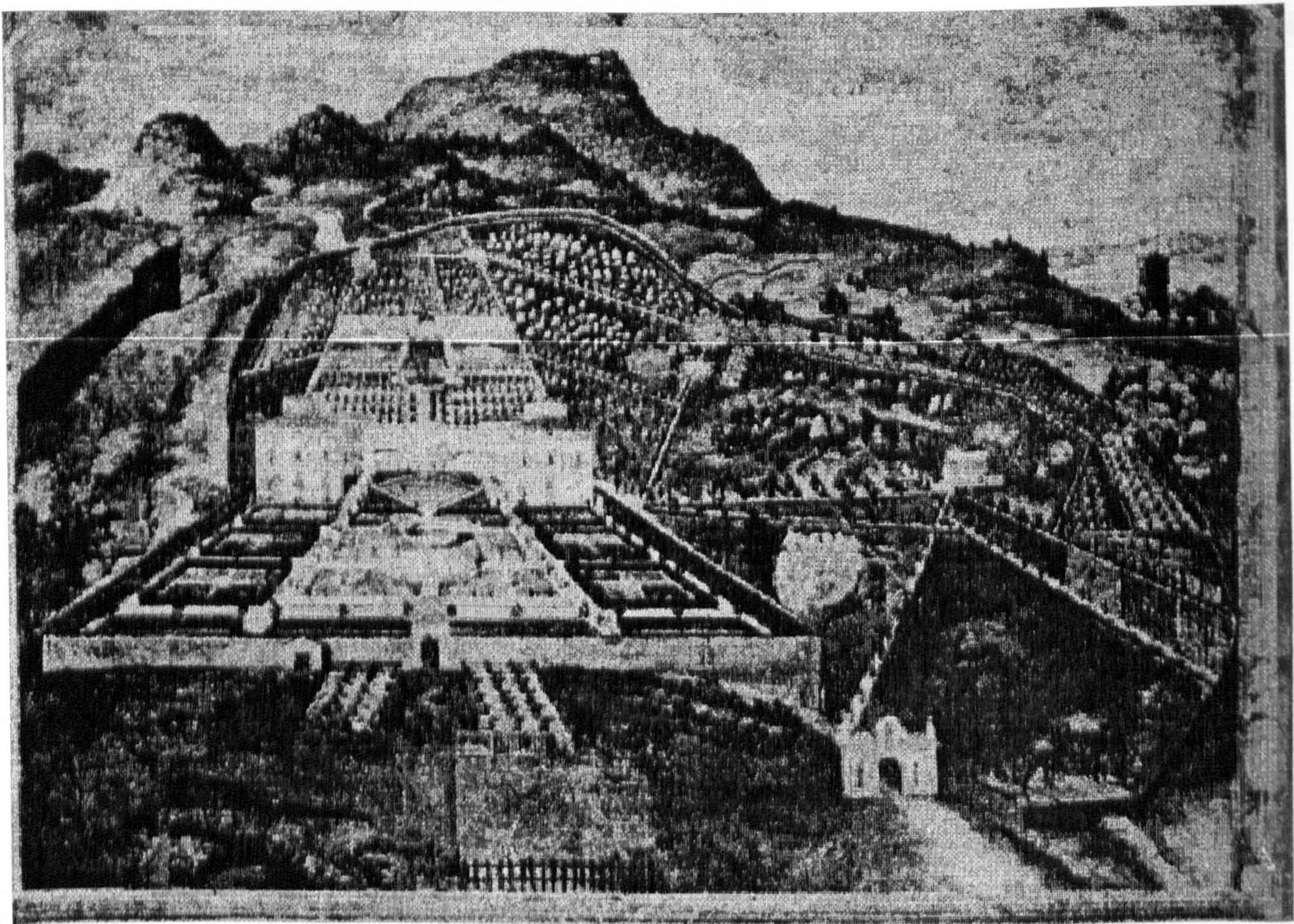
eastern boundary of the arena raises itself into a slight ridge before toppling into a deep valley, forming a ravine to this boundary of the town, crossed now by the railway viaduct as the line dodges into and out of tunnels. Vignola's garden is hung along this ridge. The "natural" axis of the site is down its centre, the dip of the valley and the line of water, with the older hunting lodge placed near to it. Nowhere within the park does the ground slope steeply. All is moderation. Holm oaks distinguish it ecologically from the cork oak scrub of Velasquez's hunting ground.

Cardinal Gambara was either averse to a hunting curia or the practice had already become unfashionable, for, almost immediately on his appointment as bishop of Viterbo, he set about converting the barco into Landscape [172]. The complete Landscape is quite massive in area, several times as large as Bomarzo. Most of this area is occupied by the boschetto (still called barco). The formal paradise is about the same size as Bomarzo's sacro-bosco, but stacked "vertically" rather than in the manner of a wide based "triangle" of the latter. Seen from the vantage point of a god, this produces some feeling of spatial constriction and containment. Paradise and boschetto have a special topographical relationship which can only be explained in terms of abstract ideas, not as a logical outcome of land forms. The "river" for example, is total artifice, unlike Bomarzo's manipulations of natural landscape.

Town and Country.

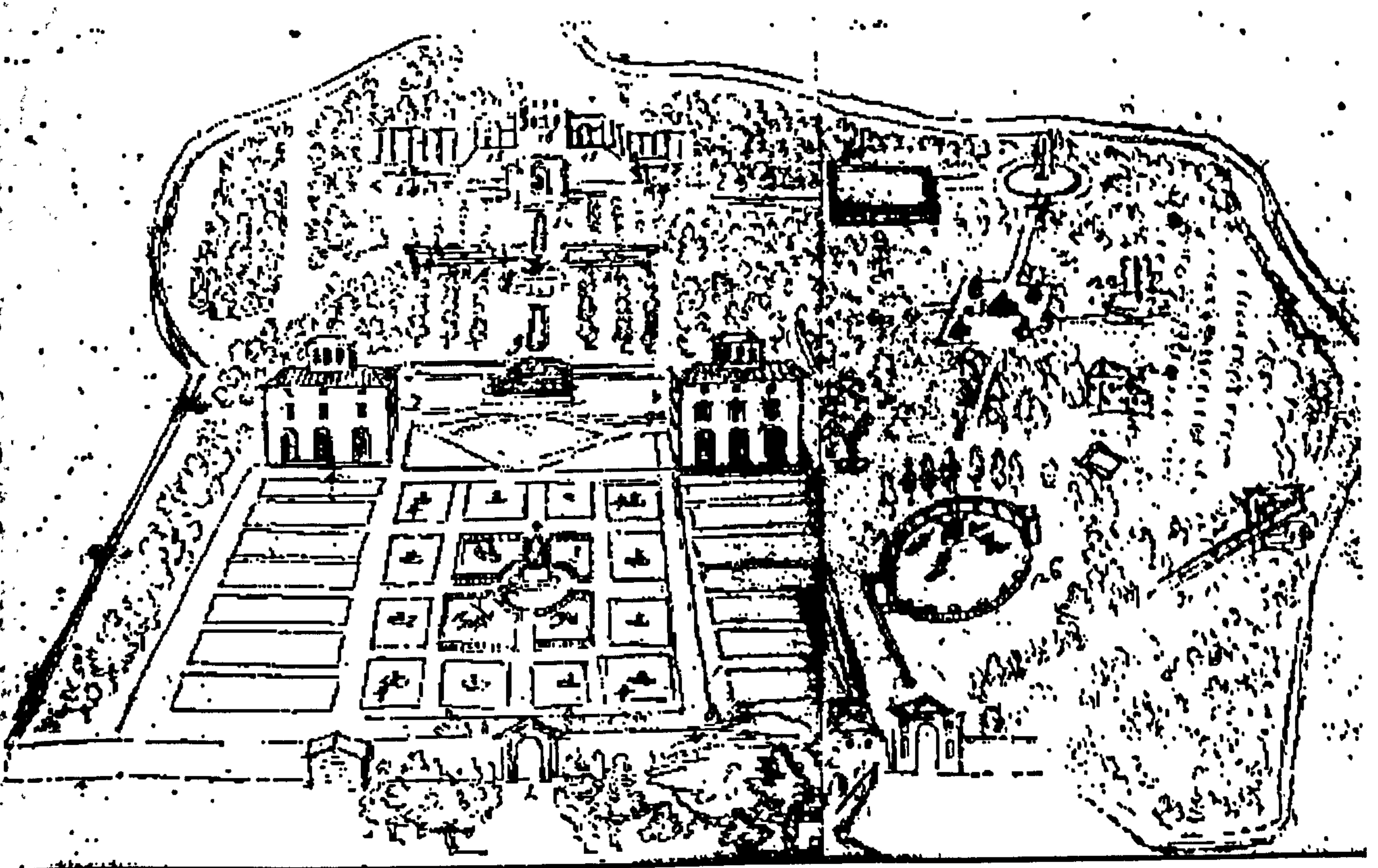
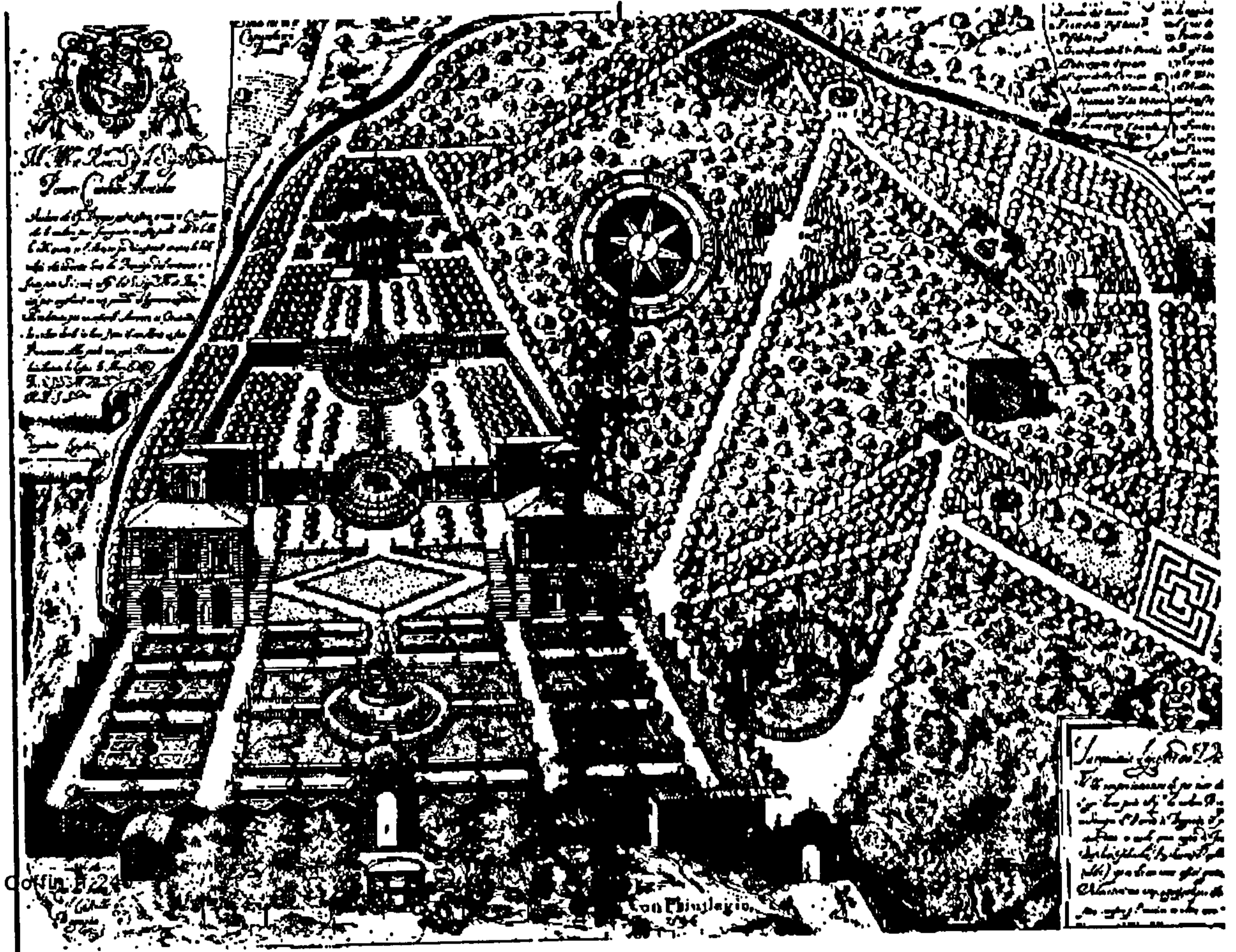
Lante's paradise is pure urban design. The fortified hill town of Bagnaia, grander than Bomarzo if less spectacular, lodges on a precipitous craggy promontory. From Viterbo it is approached from the west across a ravine headed by Villa Lante's boschetto. Less straggly than Bomarzo, the town clusters around a square outside the castle gate. This again is due to Renaissance planning. From the square (which is square) a typically Renaissance crow's foot arrangement of streets rises towards the gates of the villa. They do not form a pure axis. Along these streets, stucco replaces the stone finish of the older quarters. Outside the villa gates is now a small formal place, a facade of houses facing an elegant but solid wall. Neither wall nor space are large or particularly monumental. The visitor comes upon them unceremoniously, with no transitions. A fresco of the Villa in the Gambara palazzina shows open ground here, with an ante-space of small formal groves reminiscent of the French tradition [171]. These perform similar symbolic functions to the arched vestibule of an Alberti church or the pro-naos of Bomarzo's temple. The fresco reveals a well trodden path to the park gate. The axial one is not. Another drawing, by Guerra, shows

PI171



Lante's layouts

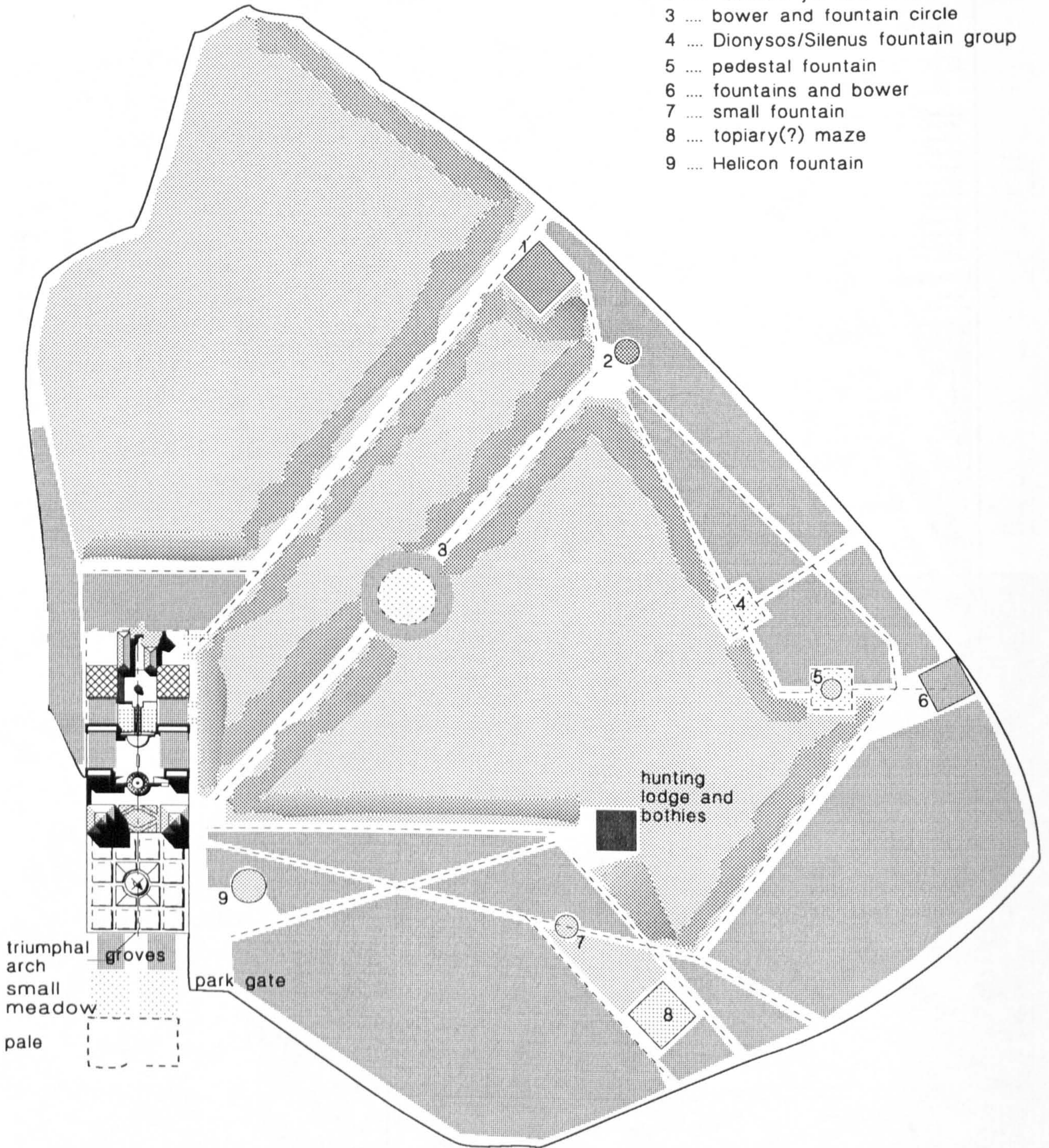
Top: Catasto 1573
Bottom: Fresco Lante (source Coffin)



Top: engraving 1596
Bottom: Guerra

Lante 1596

- 1 reservoir
- 2 fountain jet and basin
- 3 bower and fountain circle
- 4 Dionysos/Silenus fountain group
- 5 pedestal fountain
- 6 fountains and bower
- 7 small fountain
- 8 topiary(?) maze
- 9 Helicon fountain



Villa Lante entire landscape based on 1596 engraving over modern survey map

Michael Selwood 1992

similar small groves at the axial gate preceded by a palisaded enclosure [172]. A magnificent engraving by Tarquinio Ligustri dating from 1596 shows the ceremonial gates on the axis opened and a coach set astride the way, half within the shade of a grove of twelve trees [172].⁷ Again, the foreground is open and rough. The accompanying plan reconstructing the whole site is based on these three sources, which, it has been suggested, derive from another earlier plan [173]. The information they contain has been applied to the outline of a modern survey (the equivalent of an Ordnance Survey plan).

In some ways the positioning of the paradise, or hung garden, on the spur lacks logic (more later). It hangs together though, when viewed on a plan which shows the old town, its Renaissance extension, hung gardens and boschetto. Through this association it gains spatial logic as a piece of continuous urban design. We can see the way in which the built up area of the town extends logically up the slopes following this spur of Monte. S. Angelo. It reveals a design purpose. Town and bishop are united, or is it re-united by a little distancing! From it follow the spatial linkage of the town square, built with the town extension, and the sense of the slightly cranked crow's foot. Rather strangely though, this crow's foot looks amateurish, lacking the urban perspective logic of Rome's Piazza del Popolo trident. Its vistas lead nowhere but it looks good on plan and would enable a person standing at the gates of the villa to see simultaneously into three parts of the town square.

Urban artifice.

Human ingenuity in artifice prevails to the exclusion of anything we would call Nature at Bagnaia, though time has softened its rigour. At a glance the Landscape fits more with the site's delineation than its topography. Nature's seemingly rigid geometric interior space, that of cosmic order appears to have been imposed upon it. That is a XXc viewpoint. To the XVIc it was drawn from within. Benevolo comments on its spatial confinement, regarding it as symptomatic of Renaissance limitations [174].

*At Bagnaia the combined environment is composed of three elements ... dominated by a symmetrical axis that ends in the densely wooded hill. Renaissance architecture was only capable of achieving a partial transformation of the environment.*⁸

⁷. These are illustrated in *Coffin 1979* where fig. 222 is the fresco; fig. 229 is the Guerra; fig. 240 is the Ligustri.

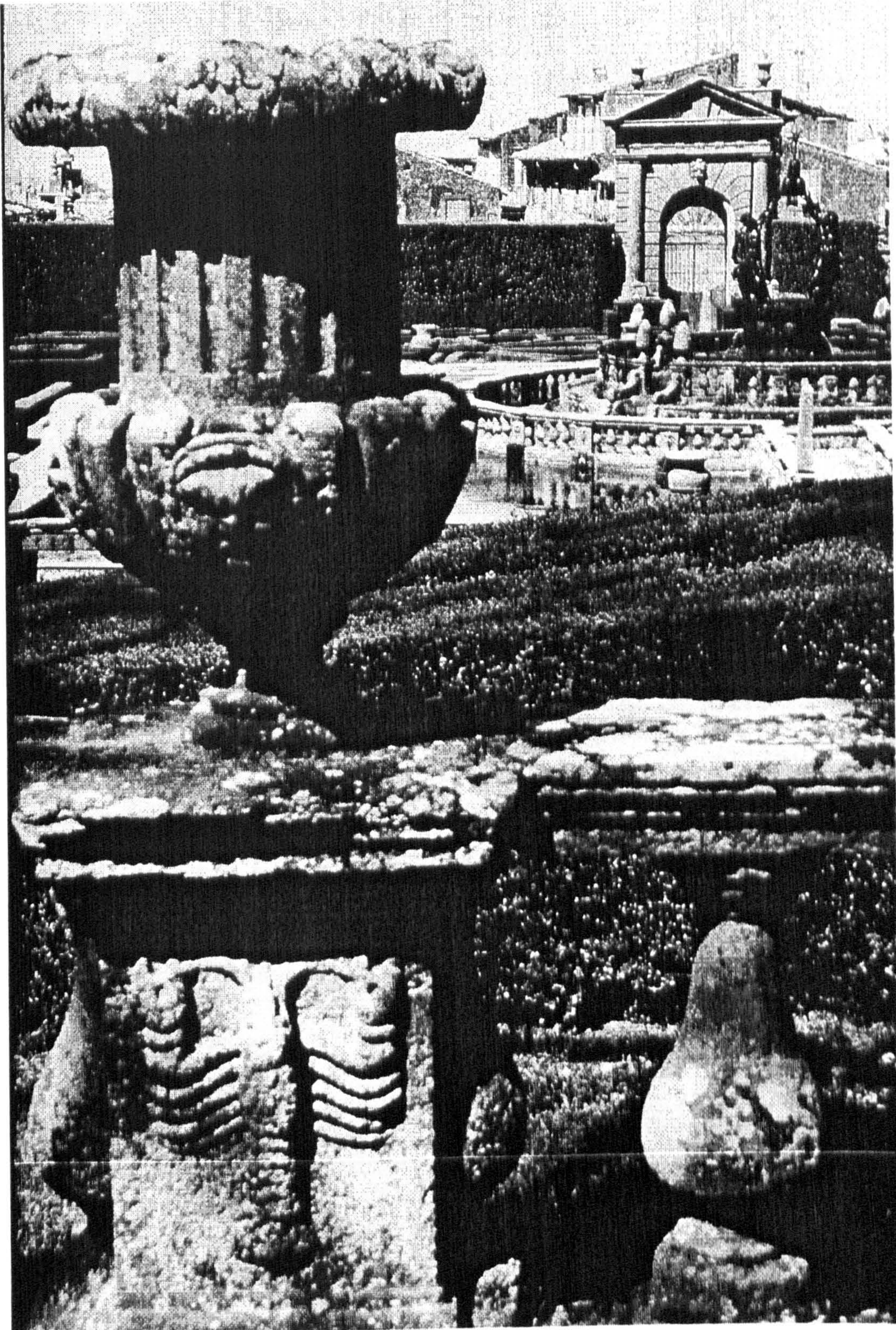
⁸. *Benevolo, L.: The history of the city.* London 1980. pp 599.



de' Predis Garden of Youth and Venus 1470

City and garden are one in this Renaissance painting, which also seeks countryside beyond. Finite boundaries define the surface which changes abruptly to urban paving at the entrances. Parallels with Lante are inescapable, even to the fountain's phial (opposite).

Landscape within



author

Fine strong form and proportion characterise Lante. Montalto's fountain, which replaced a pyramid, resembles that in the de' Predis opposite. Behind it the triumphal arch terminates the garden's processional axis and marks significant boundary between town and Landscape.

Lante's platforms

This is only a partial truth. What is visible is only part of the transformation of the environment. Implied and well understood by educated contemporaries is a merger of secular and sacred space which blurs their differences. Contact is made with cosmic-Edenic ideas once held apart from towns by Mediaeval constraints and reactive ideologies. Where the town of Bagnaia was formerly joined with the mountain by the Bishop of Viterbo's hunting park, his *barco*, the creation of the Villa Lante makes of the total a fusion of town and sacred mountain. They are unified by urban geometry with the villa as lynchpin and town as logical conclusion. A completely new kind of thing results; a large piece of topography and its spatial disparities have been fabricated into this town perched on its crag, space soaring out over the plain beyond the axis (and emphasised from within the paradise), hung from a mountain. In this manner, the landscape is completely transformed, every element becoming part of a now conceptualised Landscape. The idea was to flourish in the Italian baroque, reaching an apotheosis with Aldobrandini's Belvedere at Frascati. There it is handled with greater facility, the design encapsulating many layers of the idea within a solution of elegant but deceptive simplicity. Wandering Warriors, Triumphs and Regal Epiphanies.

Curia's Processions.

One level removed from this cosmic conception, but still part of it, is the processional created from the town square, something new and grander than the rather sudden approach to the castle gate. An opportunity for enhancing the magnificent spectacle of arriving dignitaries, it modifies the status of the town and of the bishops its lords. Most of the spaces created are modest enough, vernacular more than architecture, but contain the necessary signs. Instead of the tiny market place outside the castle gate there is the stasis of a geometrically square plaza, monumental, set astride the highway. Within this carriages could circle complete with entourage, before taking one or all of the crowfoot streets to the villa. It is a ceremonial change of direction, giving ample opportunity to announce arrival, and it states the new axis at the outset. From within the villa, the continuity of the same axis is implied by the presence of the mountain, the villa perceived to be at its foot pivotal in marking the transition from one to the other [175]. The Boscotrecase frescos state part of this sequence. The other part is implied, and revolves around the concept of *triumph* applied to villa development, specially evolved for the annual holiday of the Roman senate.

Much is ideated space, space without any existence outside the mind, even at this broad level and, like Bomarzo, incomprehensible without cognoscenti knowledge. Villa Lante is both urban and rural space and neither. Its presence gradates a scheme of "Nature" from mountain to town. The Mediaeval city or town had become a secular institution. Gone was the continuity of Roman Imperial cities whose Hellenistic derivations made them cities of a god, though the practice was remembered in the dedication of patron saints. Rome had just had some of its status restored. Bagnaia is an example of classical revival of an idea that was to reach epic proportions in the Neo-Renaissance and Baroque and was already foreshadowed by the Alberti-inspired layout of Ferrara.

Landscape gradations.

Boscotrecase's Hellenistic frescos leave their abstract space largely concealed. Villa Lante's Landscape uses it as surface, a statement of principle, dominating and supplanting a previous countryside of barco and mountain. In some measure this reflects edicts of the Council of Trent which emphasised Thomist theory.⁹ Aquinas dealt thoroughly with attributes of beauty and its relationship with form and placed beauty "on a very rarefied metaphysical level".¹⁰ *"For in whatever thing we find two, one of which is the complement of the other, the proportion of one of them to the other is as the proportion of potentiality to act; for nothing is completed except by its proper act...."* might sum up the conscious layout of Lante [176].¹¹ Some semblance to the generalised scheme of the "Oracle" fresco is reached by the gradated sequence of symbolic spaces - human urban, domus Landscape (Priapus), sacred grove (deliberately artificial here), productive semi-wilderness (Artemis), beyond it, crags.

Space in motion.

The boschetto, virtually derelict now in terms of its XVIc design, stretches across the top of the town's protective ravine, a shallow bowl at its head.¹² It enfolds an old hunting lodge. From there, it

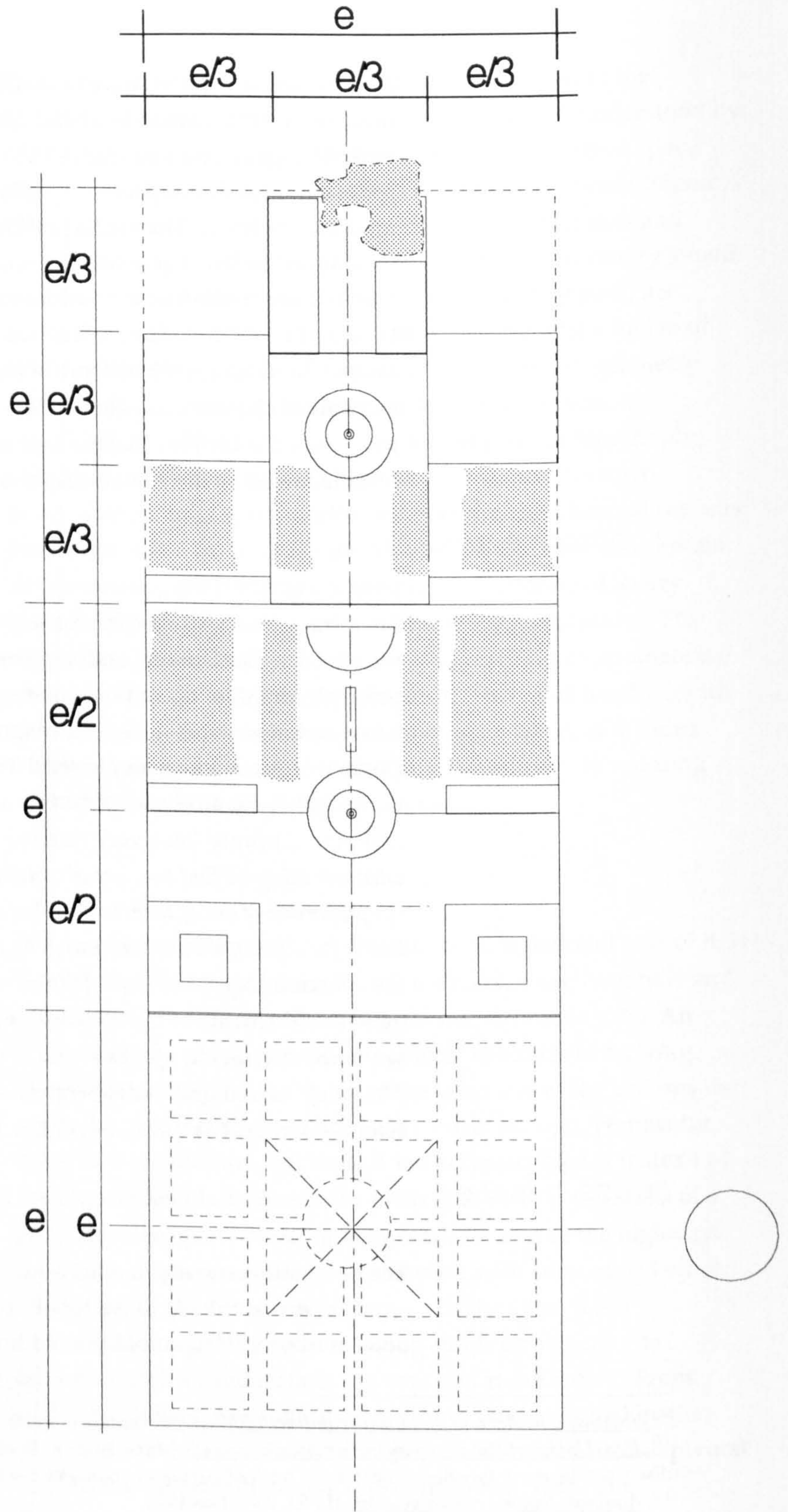
⁹. *Wittkower, R: Art and architecture in Italy 1600 - 1750*. Harmondsworth 1958. pp 22-24.

¹⁰. *Eco, U: Il problema estetico in Tommaso d'Aquino*. Milan 1970. tr. Bredin 1988. pp 85. This work discusses the many theories present in the work of Aquinas in considerable detail.

¹¹. *Aquinas: Summa contra gentiles*. II., 53, 2 via Eco 1970.

¹². This is a prime example at an internationally significant level of how loss of sense in a programme can inadvertently first bend, then destroy the essential logic within conservation. At Lante the paradise has been miraculously preserved, then painstakingly restored, but the boschetto, essential to its programme, has been ignored. The result is an introverted garden, totally at odds with its original status as a climax in a poetic dialogue, of which the two elements constituted a definition of One. Further conservation work is likely to eliminate the last traces of the dialogue if the kind of planting which has been done in the terraces is carried over into the boschetto.

PI176



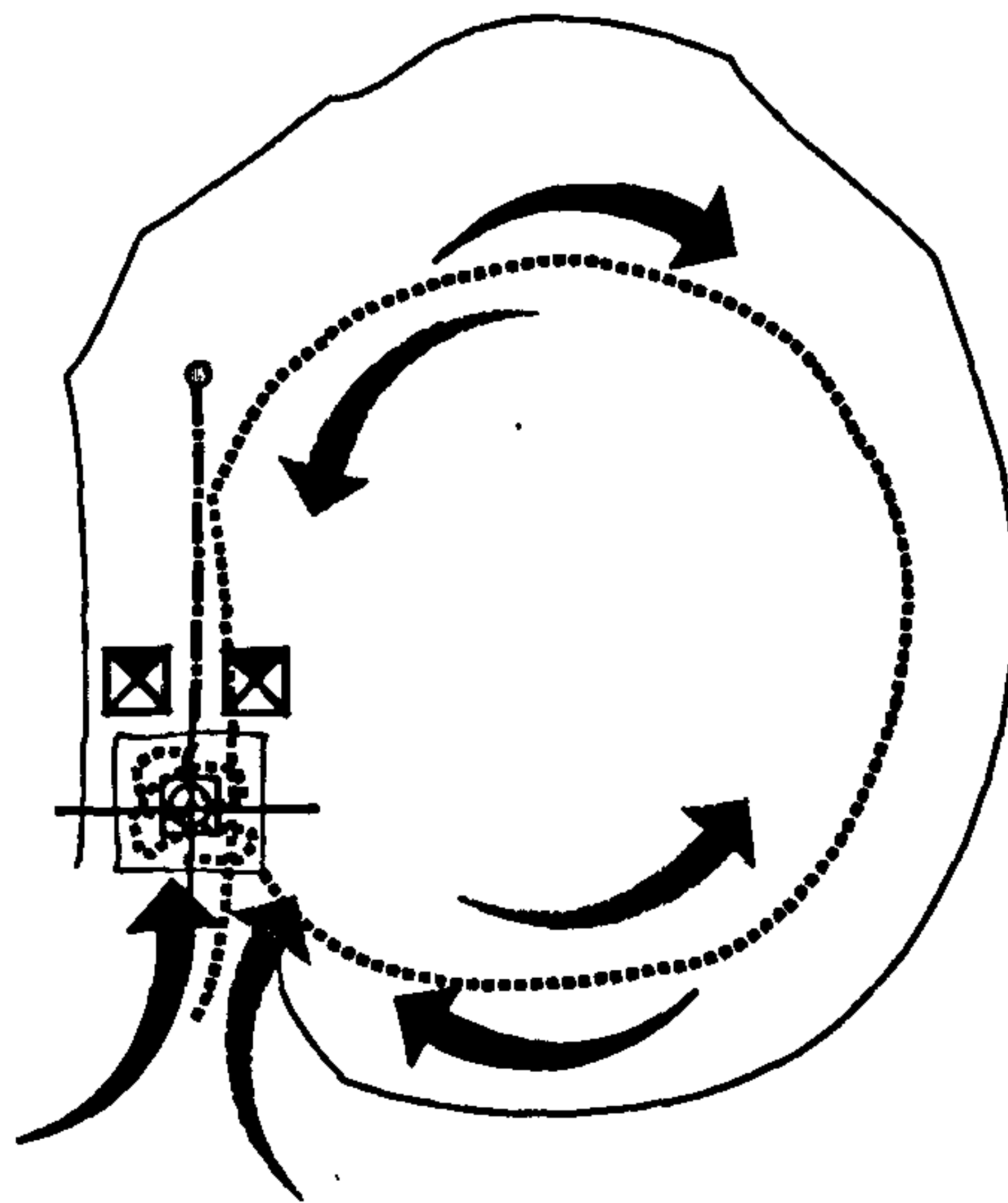
Villa Lante formal garden
basic spatial proportions

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80
meters

Michael Selwood 1992

coils around up the slopes, its trees eventually generating a backdrop to paradise and casinos. It is all publicly visible, open, grey stone among dark oaks half way up a mountain ridge, from the town's approaches on the Viterbo road [169].

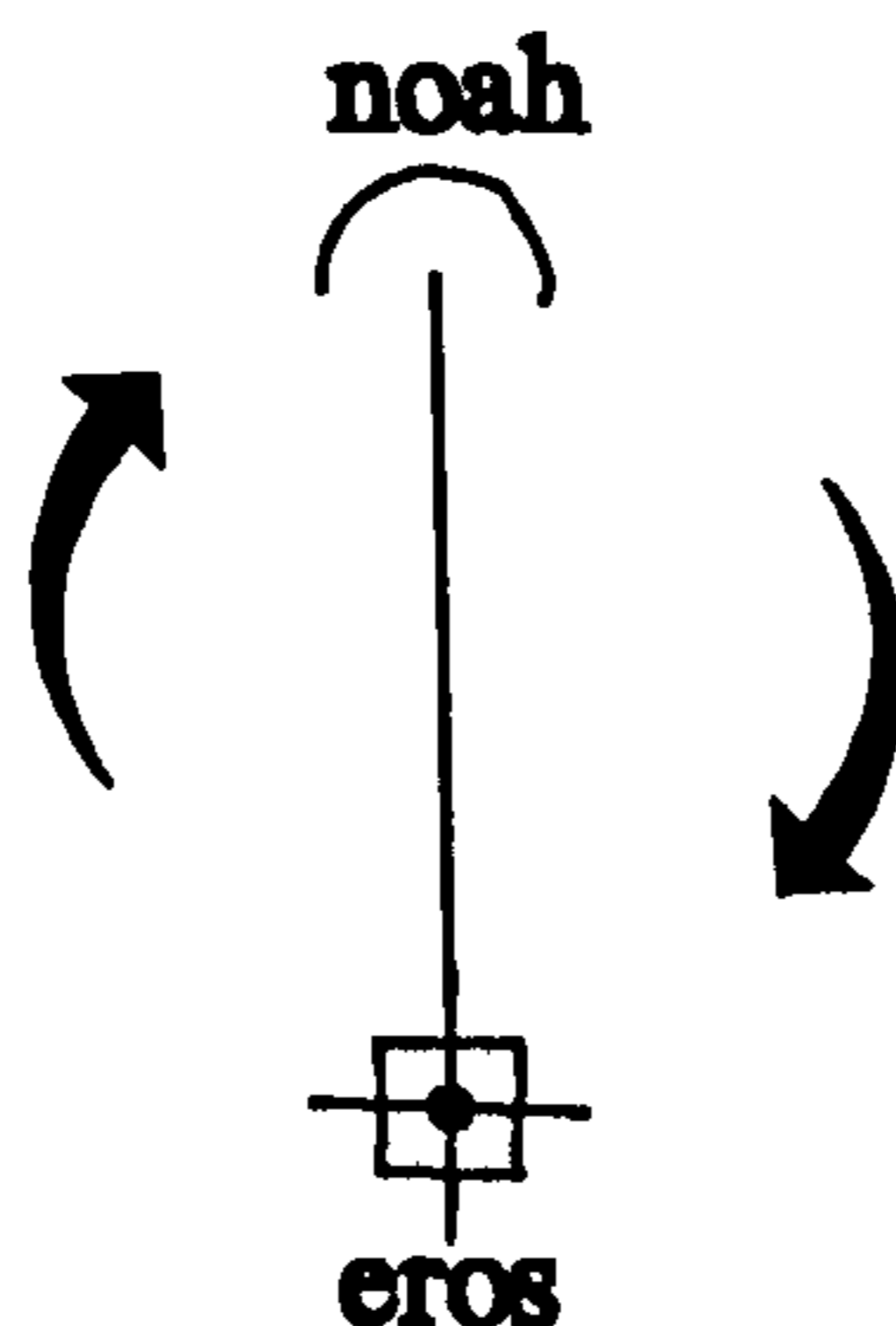
The single axis of the paradise rises from the meeting of the crow foot roads. It unifies them. The new space ascends, compressed between the casinos to one side of the park. Bomarzo is horizontally layered and in a sense scattered. This distinguishes it from terracing as exemplified by Lante's paradise. Each Lante terrace is geometrically finite [176]. Although they use natural contours, they impose human presence under the guise of the divine. At the bottom is a square garden whose parterres and fountain are wholly symmetrical and flat. The casinos are placed on a transitional zone between this and the next level. Each terrace is positioned central to the single axis, a wholly artificial stream, presenting rigidly regulated steps through which symmetrical stairways rise with comfort and ease. Each stairway establishes a direction for the transitional space it designates. Some turn away from the feature they accompany on the journey upwards, but of course, face it when descending. None occupies axial space, yet each comments on that axis, parallel to it, opposed to it, or confirming it.



Lante: schematic plan; do we follow a solar or lunar cycle?

Placement of the axial garden alerts us to the significance of its boschetto. Access into the boschetto in the vicinity of Diluvia, the cascade at the head, would not have been present if a single linear procession each way was the intention. Interpretation is dependent

upon interplay.¹³ At one point only within the precise terraces are we permitted an outlook into the boschetto. We must decide whether to follow a solar clockwise order or a lunar anti-clockwise one. Do we enter via the boschetto anti-clockwise. Or do we rise up the formal axis and then enter the boschetto, for which we have been suitably pre-conditioned, in an orthodox, clockwise turn? The lunar cycle, the anti-clockwise, is that of the chthonian world; the solar is of the Platonic Apollonian world adopted by the Roman Christian church wholeheartedly in late antiquity. Alternatives like this alert us to the presence of humanist ideology inside its allegory. They represent the obverse and reverse, as on a coin, of a single complex object.



Stairs between levels are symmetrically duplicated throughout the garden. This alone suggests two-way interpretation in a design displaying such consummate skill. Avoiding axial stairs inhibits their dominance of the scheme and ensures the primacy of water. Indirectly this places the human occupants in the same position. In the clockwise direction we first encounter templum as labyrinth with a central fountain as in a quartered cloister. A flower garden, which this originally was before its broderie conversion, was the "natural" habitat of Eros, spirit of regeneration, driven will, birth and rebirth, especially in Hellenistic and Roman antiquity¹⁴. The

¹³. *Coffin, D.R.: The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome*. Princeton 1979. pp 358 - discuss the iconographical programme of Lante. He suggests that the main perambulation is from the Diluvia downwards "..... the theme of The Golden Age in the garden and park at Bagnaia demanded a continuous narrative route, but this path could be followed in either direction. By entering the complex through the large gate into the park at the right of the formal garden one proceeded through the narrative chronologically from the primitive Golden Age the civilisation of man's mechanical and fine arts. To read the iconographical programme from the entrance gateway into the formal garden to the park is, on the other hand, the classical idea of the return to the Golden Age. Obviously the first route is meant to be the major one." The scheme presented here has equal logic and avoids the problems as well as permitting greater depth of interpretation in accordance with Mannerist practice.

¹⁴. This concept of Eros as a representative of apeiron - apparent chaos - is well established by Boccaccio, especially in the allegorical novelle of the *Decameron* whose action is all placed in gardens as well as many of the individual stories. The symbolism is explained in the allegory of the Rose. Eros possesses two groups of five arrows. One group is of gold, representing Beauty, Simplicity, Openness, Company, Fair-seeming; the other group is black, representing polarities of these: Pride, Villainy, Shame, Despair, New-thought (*de Lorris & de Meun, Romance of the Rose*, ll 907 -). Five is the shape of the quincunx, whose ambivalent geometry and

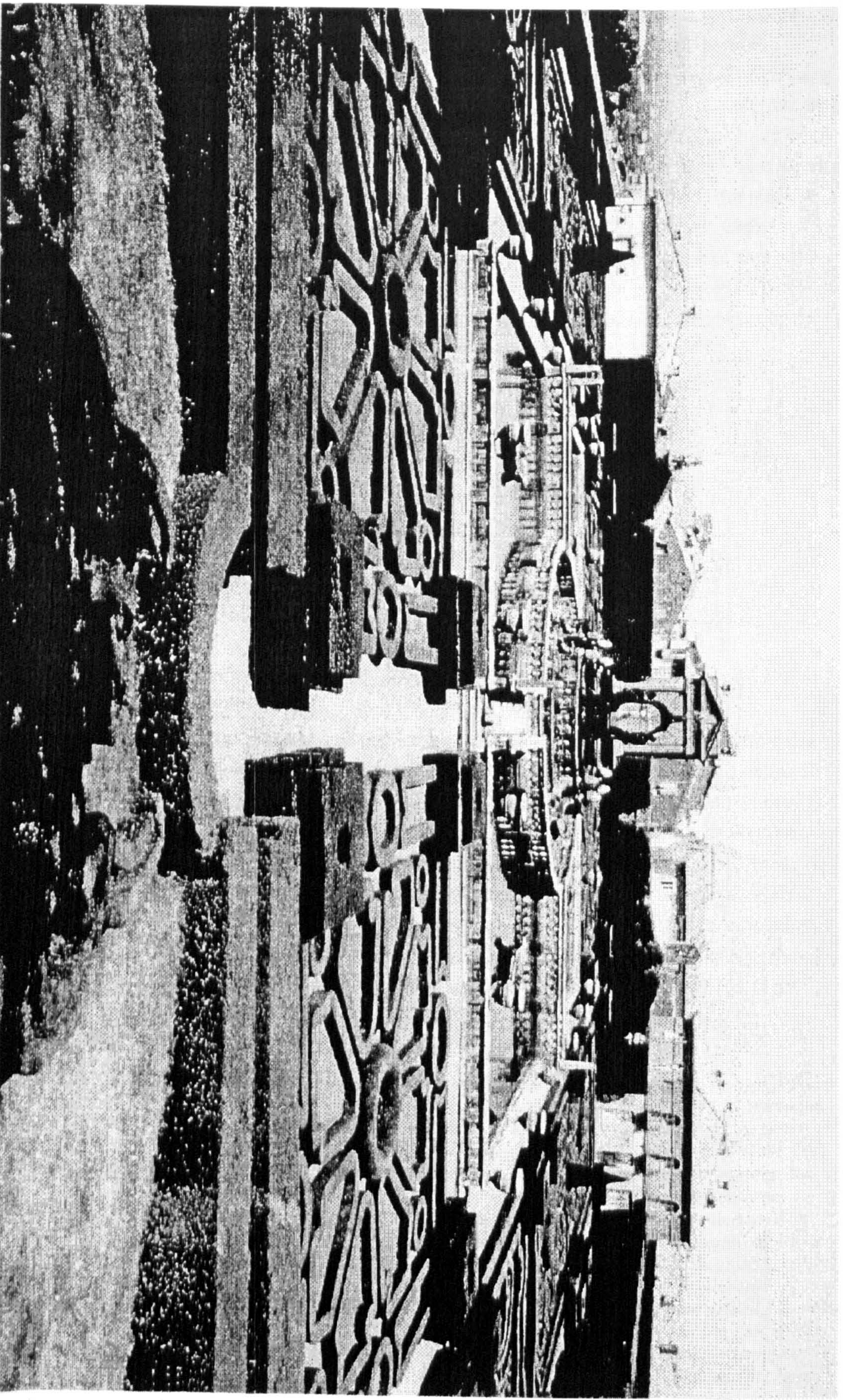
inescapability of this force, however intentions might try to make it otherwise, is the topic of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, which commences with "there" as a garden of unrequited love and continues with endless catalogues of solutions taken by those who tried renouncing its pleasures. Perhaps there are replies here. The cycle is completed by re-entering the cloister flower garden from the boschetto.

Fountain in this form is also tholos [177] [178]. They are interchangeable, having the same roots in pre-history and antiquity, and continuous symbolism through late Empire into Mediaeval practice. This templum therefore recalls both birth and death. It is the place of exchange, the *axis mundi*. Where the water enters at the head of the axis is not really the source in this sense, but a presence. Its name Diluvia, Flood, recalls the rebirth of the world in both classical Arkadian and Judaic terms. That myth is also one of taking, for all that was not accommodated on the Ark was deemed to have perished. At each end of the axis then, are references to death and rebirth, each different. Diluvia is a hole constructed through "rocks", like the one which released Deucalion's flood.¹⁵ The templum represented cyclical rejuvenation of cosmic energy, a remote process beyond human control, which is governed by and governs love and death. Diluvia as Noah is a myth of human salvation through mature wisdom based on piously simple belief, not so much a paradox as a contradiction in the twentieth century, and also ingenuity. God has only to proclaim the concept of Ark for Noah to realise it. As Deucalion it is both piety and intellect. "... forest beasts and every kind of cattle all sunk together underneath the water, and in a frail boat pious Deucalion transported safely with the seeds of things ..." narrates Boccaccio.¹⁶ These are the qualifications for entry into paradise. It forms a part of Arkadian characterisation in Longus, Sannazaro, and in Boccaccio. In Sannazaro it is gently, but ironically, mocked. Such paradoxical polarities would intrigue a Mannerist architect and Farnese cardinal. The world engine runs by the energy of the reproductive cycle, but survives potentially inexplicable and destructive natural forces through divine intervention via human wisdom in simple faith, a direct *istoria*?

symbolic number represent primordial chaos and centrality, another polarity, and of course, the templum, together with its references to mundus.

¹⁵. Important spatial inferences are embedded in this idea. If, as we suspect, Lante and Bomarzo are in dialogue, and Bomarzo uncovers the mundus from Etruscan history, Fulvio Orsini at Lante could be countering his imagery with the course of Deucalion's flood after its release into the subterranean world. Thus courses arising out of virtuous conduct among the people of the Golden Age of Greece gives them access to Christian imagery, and a Christian Arkadia is the Elysium of Deucalion's people. It needs only the same spatial inversions as Bomarzo, though with carefully polarised imagery.

¹⁶. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogues XI.75-77*. This boat Orsini seems to represent as Dionysos', drawing a nice parallel in saviour gods.

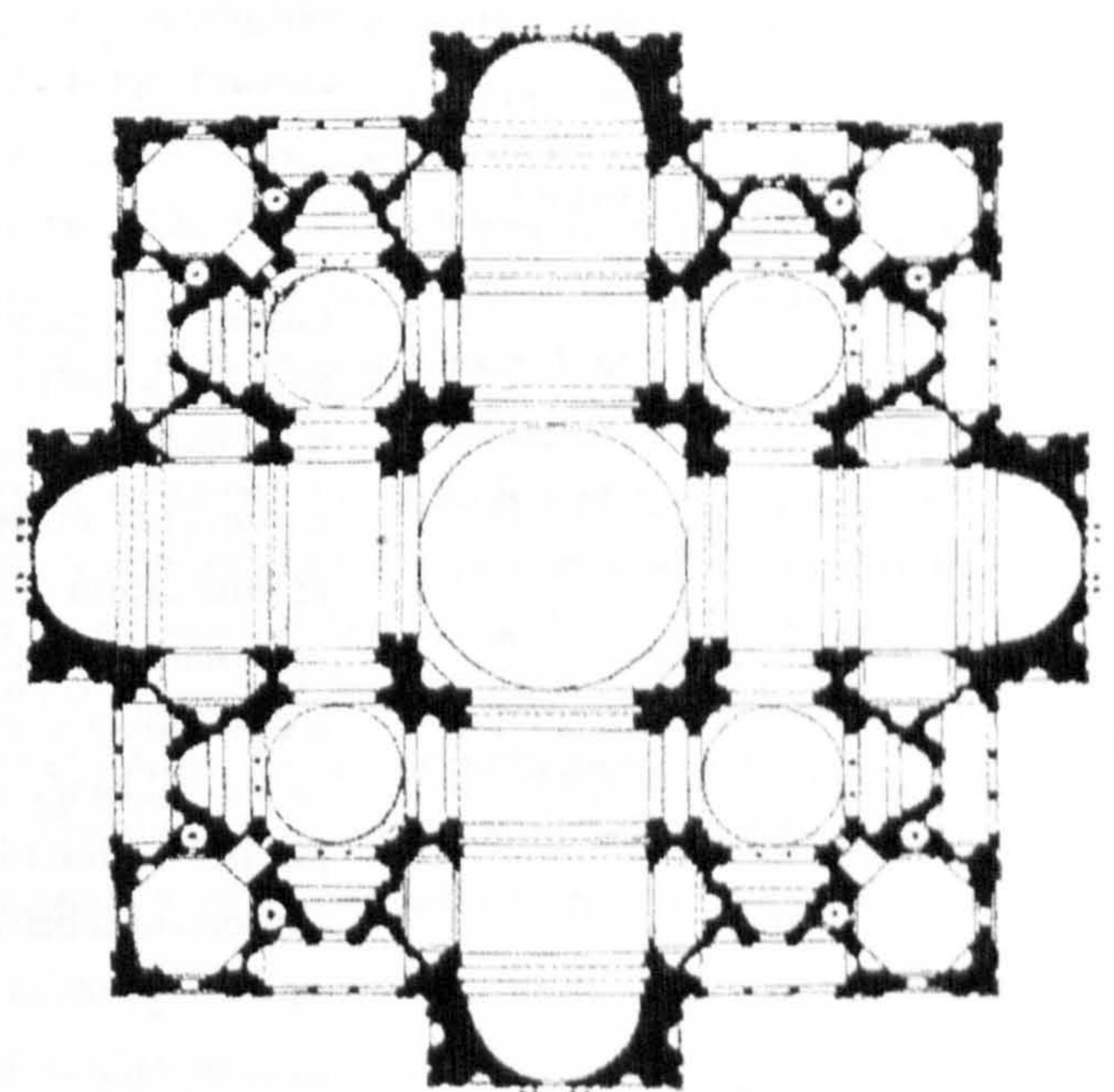
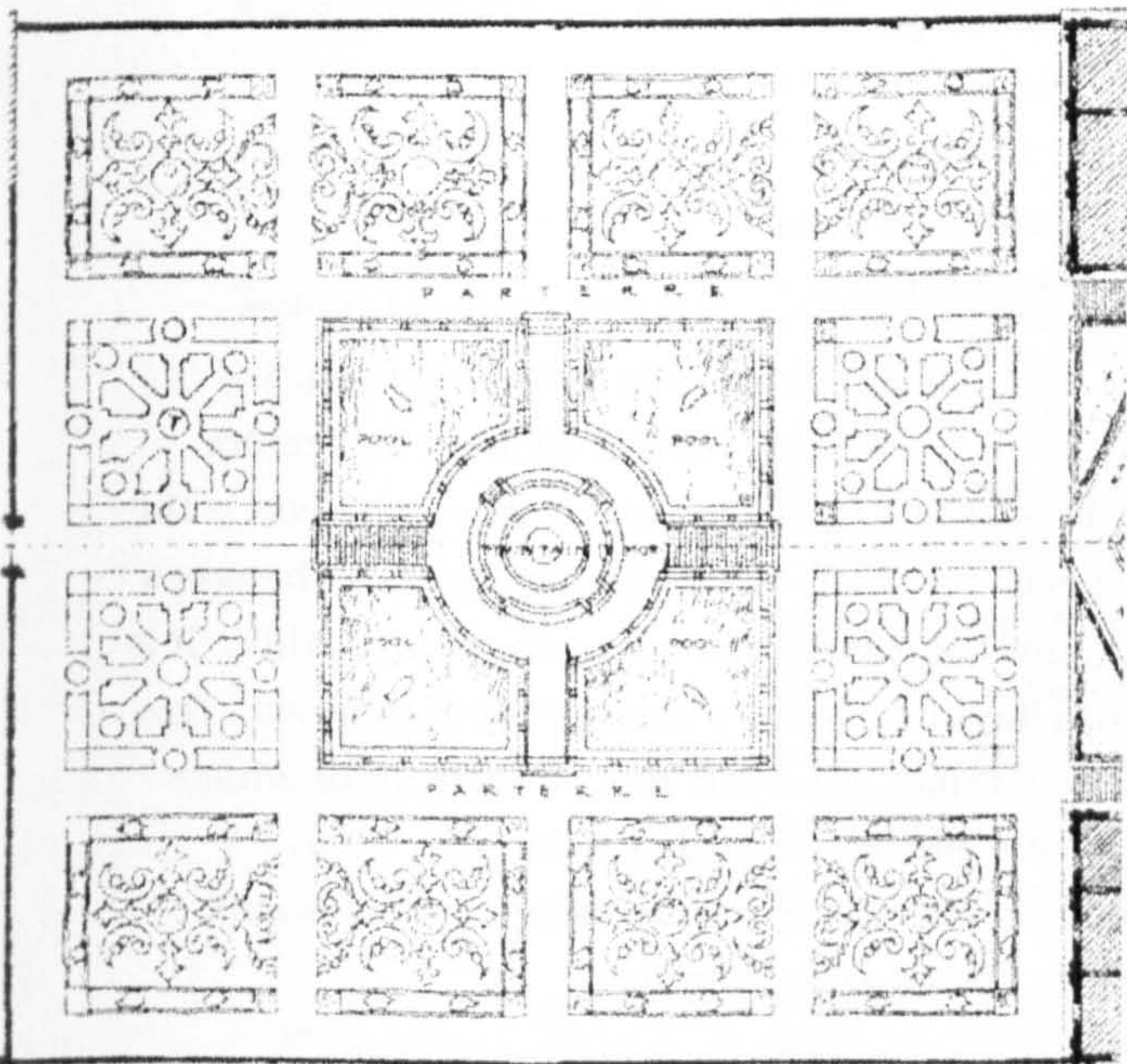
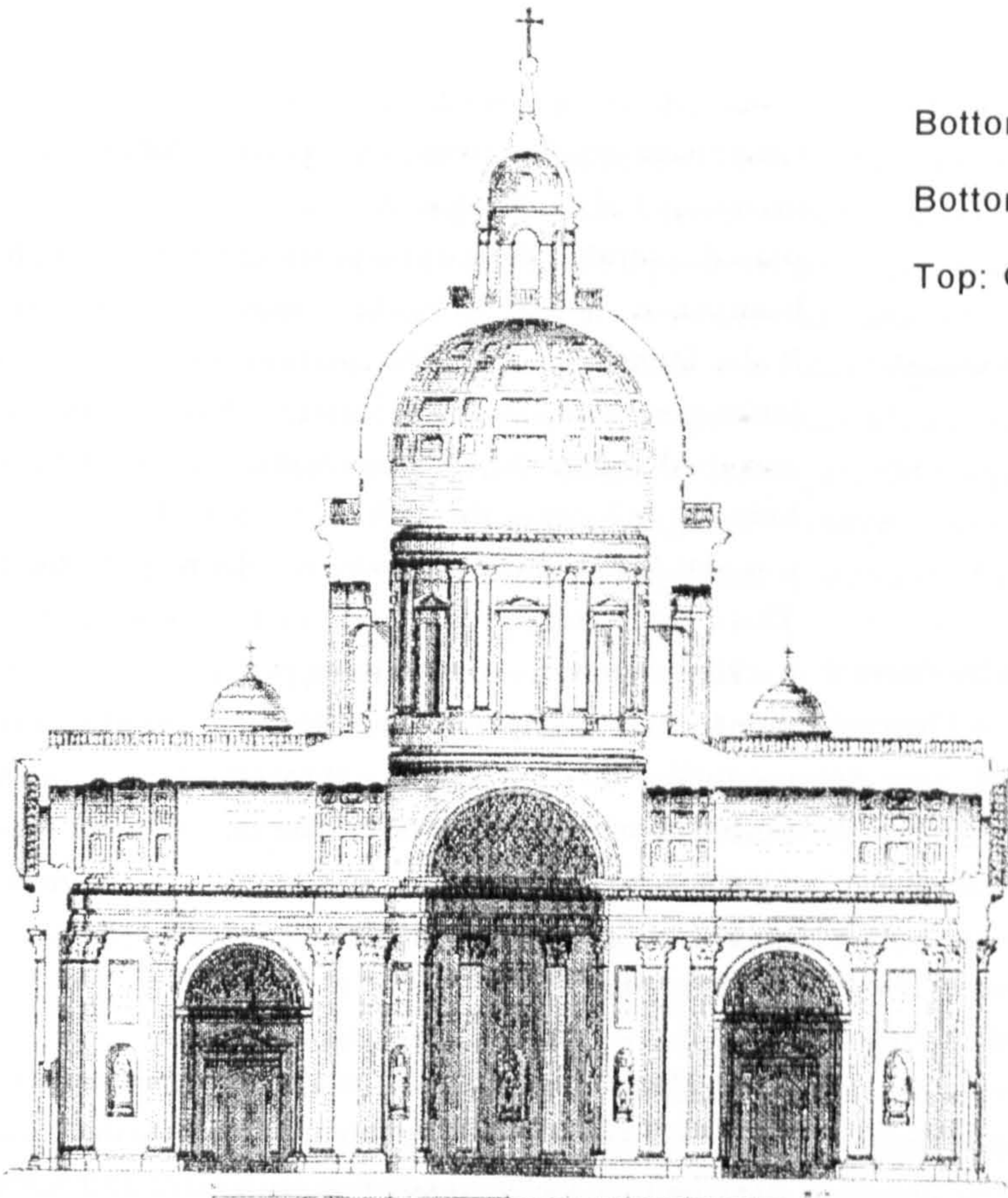


author

Competition exists between the parterre patterns and the fountain. The significance of the original layout was in its emphatic repetition of the templum form (P1171), though this is better than the French broderie it replaced.

Lante's paradise templum

Bottom left: parterre Lante
(Triggs)
Bottom right: S. Peter's
(Bramante)
Top: Genoese church
(Burckhardt)



Landscapes of templum

Other iconographic consequences arise from the position and orientation of Lante's paradise in its park. Had the paradise been placed centrally, the natural position for a stream, it would have been wholly embraced by the humanist classical emblem of Arkadia. It also follows the sun. The sun moves behind the north-south axis looking upwards from the parterre. Neo-Platonic metaphysics, absorbed and modified by Mediaeval scholiast philosophy, viewed humanity's journey through the garden of earthly delights as a rise towards the radiance that was initially responsible for its existence. This conveniently provides excuse for the aesthetic beauty of playful backlit water and an underlying pious Franciscan suggestion of monte-sacri pilgrimage. The latter is assisted by the shadowy mountainside rising gently but massively over the main axis, more visible then than now.¹⁷ Like Bomarzo's "Sacro-bosco", whose name's retort to "monte-sacri" shouldn't be ignored, Lante is on a north facing slope quite high up behind a hill town. Templum is also mountain.

One of the more significant reasons for the position on the eastern boundary is the biblical reference to the garden east of Eden. Arkadia then becomes equated with Eden and Renaissance connotations meaning Christendom. The doctrinal simplicity in this space is, however, rippled by the iconography of the boschetto's original fountains and features, all of which are Arkadian in the classical sense [173].

City of God.

Lante's association of cloister garden with twin casinos invokes another set of ideas from late antiquity. The cloister garden, as we have seen, has as its focus a powerful vertical element that refers, however remotely, to the same forces as tholos. Its symbolism is the identification of a special place where interchange operates between chthonian (underground) and aerial powers, a divine(d) spring. It is a dynamic process, in linguistic terms a verb rather than noun. This centre takes the form of tholos, fountain, tree, or well, all of which are fully interchangeable and also regarded as kinetic. Two important fabrications of abstract space involving tholos variants and templum in urban design arise from this.

At the height of Roman imperial power, the emperor was himself either god, or, holder of earthly powers accorded to God. Octavian set the trend with his peculiarly selective orientalisising and

¹⁷. Monti-sacri were a XVc craze started by a Franciscan in Lombardy following a Holy Land pilgrimage in 1477-1478. See *Cochrane, E: Italy 1530-1630*. London 1988. pp 113.

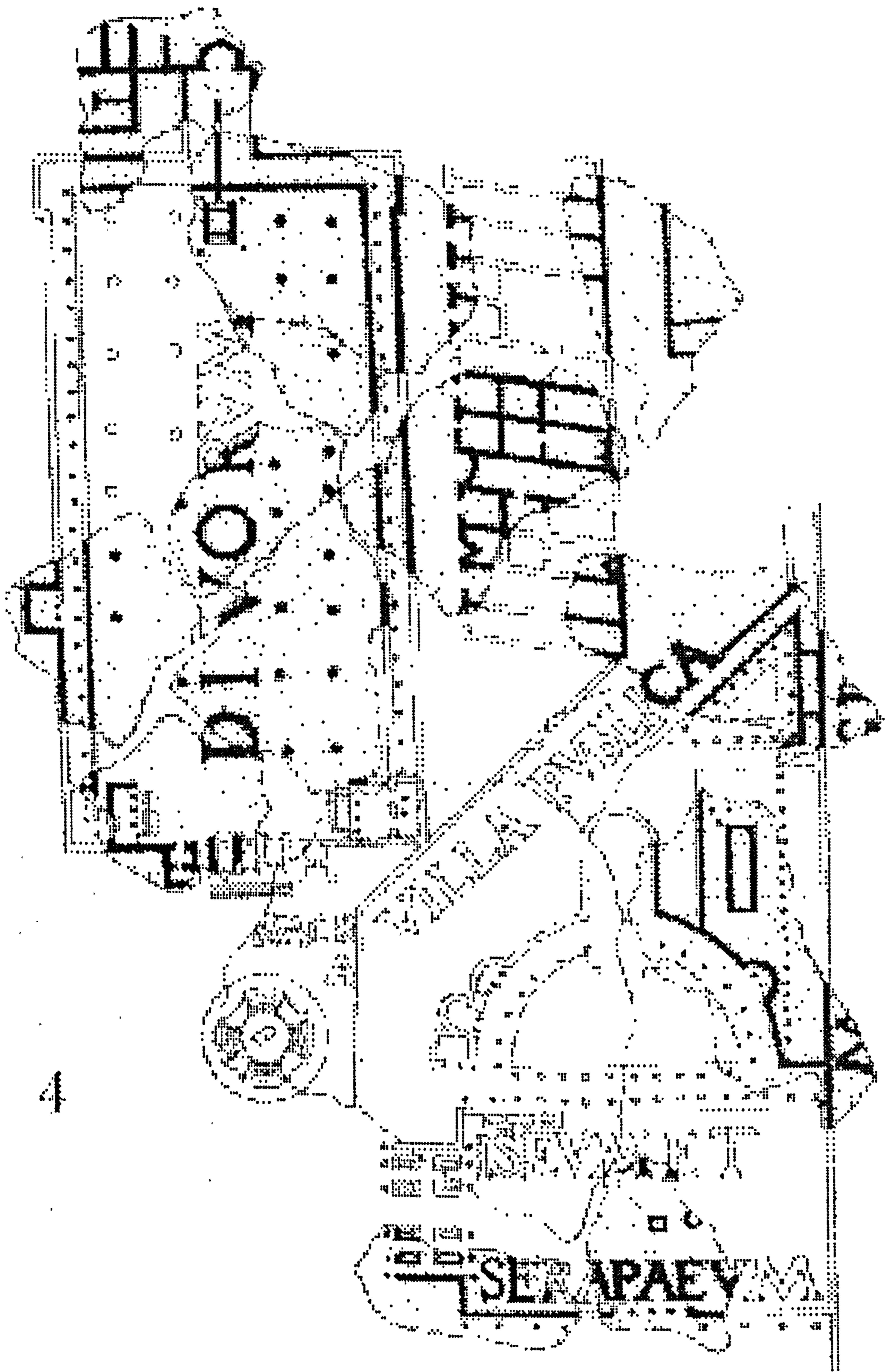
encouragement for things ostensibly Attic. Caligula learned the hard way, but Nero persevered, until eventually Domitian became Jove, his successors undecided between Jove, Jehovah and Jesus. This was not necessarily a personal thing; the emperor was the entire empire in symbol, its unity. The status of god was probably conferred for the benefit of the subjects of Egyptian empire, tacit emperor (within "princeps") for the Asia Minor contingents. It became the ecumenical model for popes. On fragmentation of the empire, each subsequent constituent component laid claim to this revered imperial status, perpetuating it and its rites and ceremonies.

Special and elaborate ceremonies which involved ritual washing in a tholos set in front of ceremonial city gates had been introduced from Oriental empires and evolved. Agrippa's name is associated with one, the *lavacrum Agrippae* at *Porta triumphalis* [179].¹⁸ Ceremonial city gateways adopted special architectural forms. Tent-like roof forms and baldachin-like cupolas and loggias had stonework whose detail consciously referred to stretched fabric, something requiring expensive skill. In other words, the inherent symbolism was Landscape based and important, in that these expressions of rites of passage welcoming an emperor-god took their form from temporary open air structures originally placed, probably, in *paradeisoi*, the campaign groves of oriental kings [180]. The idea had been adopted by Alexander. Whether it was subconscious, explicit, or mere mimicry of some design picked up through the archaeological work of people like Alberti, Vignola has here presented the Cardinal Gambara with similar flattering cosmic and godly power. At the same time, his pavilions, following Palladio's erroneous but understandable interpretation of antique villa forms, incorporate symbolic elements from descendants of Xerxes' tent. Or has Cardinal Gambara presented his God with these earlier attributes?¹⁹ The pavilions have the condensed and concise architectural form of castrum corners, Roman symbol of royal power and of the empire in total, and are crowned with elegant cupola-like loggias used for the form in imperial towns and cities.²⁰ The idea is clear in several contemporary Medici villas, notably Cafaggiolo and Lambrogiana, embryonic in others. These associated structures, even more the procedures they represent, were closely bound up with Augustan

18. As well as extensive rebuilding and enlargement of the city's aqueducts.

19. See *Baldwin Smith: Architectural symbolism* Princeton 1956, Chapter II. 1-4, & III.

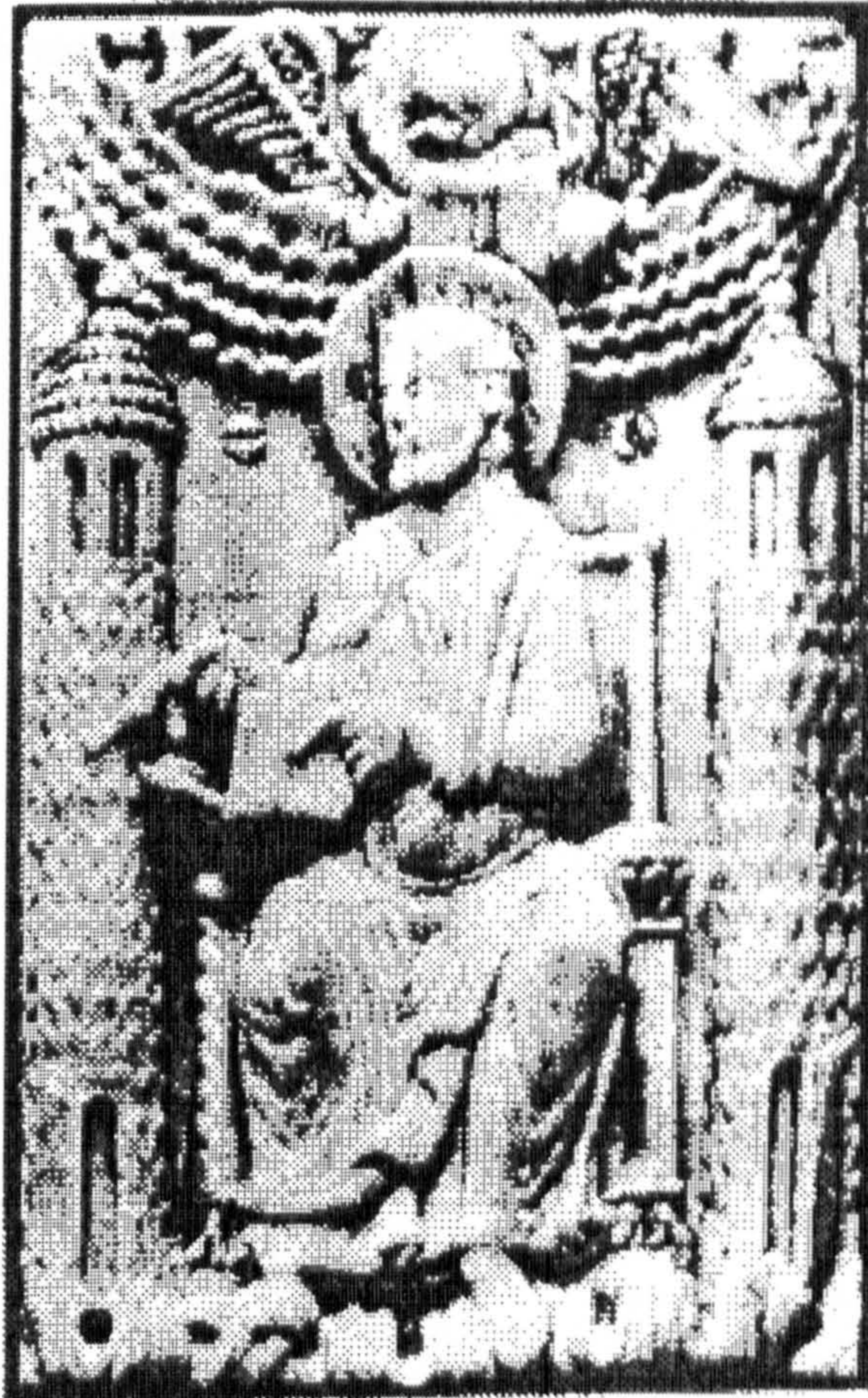
20. Castrum form is evident in Italian villas of the Renaissance. The most obvious is the Medici's Lambrogiana, illustrated so clearly in Utens lunette. It is a veritable miniature of Diocletian's palace at Split with its towers at each of four corners of the square, each tower with a suggestion of the royal loggia. The form is frequently taken to be defensive. It is, in Roman hands, symbolic of the imperial presence. The two functions possibly merged. Its symbolism was sufficiently important for it to be repeated by Buontalenti at Villa dell'Artimino without raising the corner towers above the roof. Illustrated in *Sciolla, G.C.: Ville Medicee*. Novara 1982. pp 71.



Baldwin Smith 1958 ff 4

Rome: porta triumphalis

Top. The evangelist sits enthroned between the two towers which symbolised the porta triumphalis of an imperial city. These are the later conical as opposed to dome-capped towers following a decline in available mason skills. The arch is implied, not stated in this ivory (V&A London).



Evangelist Mark Baldwin Smith ff 68

Bottom. Towers are further simplified here to prismatic forms resembling Lante's palazzetti. The arch has become detached, but is stated.



Magi before Herod Baldwin Smith ff 72

Triumph:towers & portals

epiphanies,²¹ whose rites seem rooted as far back as Sumer and replaced the Roman's own *adventus* and triumph. Such an Advent, Epiphany, an appearance in the Dionysiac theatrical sense of tragedy, was often a calendric event.²² New calendars were initiated. A new god was installed with new honours, new rites, new cycles of seasons, new ways of viewing space-time. A city so honoured became effectively Imperial and the City of God. We have already ascertained Renaissance infatuation with the rites of city founding and the *mundus*, part of this epiphany.²³

If we attach the design of this Landscape to Roman imperial ceremony, we have a another powerful layer of allegory. We arrive at an *istoria* for Lante which is redolent of the *Porta Triumphalis* of Rome, and its association with the processional approach to Old St. Peter's.²⁴

The Porta Triumphalis, located in the Campus Martius, was the place where all the imperial triumphs started before their processions passed through certain of the circuses and theatres, circled the Palatine, and then by way of the Via Sacra traversed the Forum Romanum before reaching the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline By the time of the Empire the Villa Publica was a kind of state palace with a garden where, in a ceremony which curiously recalls the old Assyrian festival celebrating the seasonal coming of a city's god, the Triumphator spent the night and probably breakfasted before being received at the Triumphal Gate. After making his entry into the Porticus Divorum, he made sacrifices on two small temples The Porticus Divorum, as built by Domitian and depicted on the plan, was a great rectangular court open in the centre, and colonnaded down both sides and perhaps planted with rows of trees, where the throng of participants could receive the Imperial Triumphator as a Divus and see him mount the platform at the south end of the enclosure. Beyond the platform was a temple ... which was a shrine of the divinity responsible for the happy return and protection of the emperor (there was a) circular, and probably domical, structure placed prominently in the middle of the processional way leading to the triumphal gate. This was a fountain tholos which came to be known as the Lavacrum Agrippae(perhaps) a ceremonial place of ablutions connected with the imperial rite of apotheosis.²⁵

²¹. Augustan as the title of all Roman emperors not merely Octavian. Epiphany is a Greek word for the mysterious even miraculous appearance of a deity; the Latin triumph and *adventus* were ceremonial arrivals.

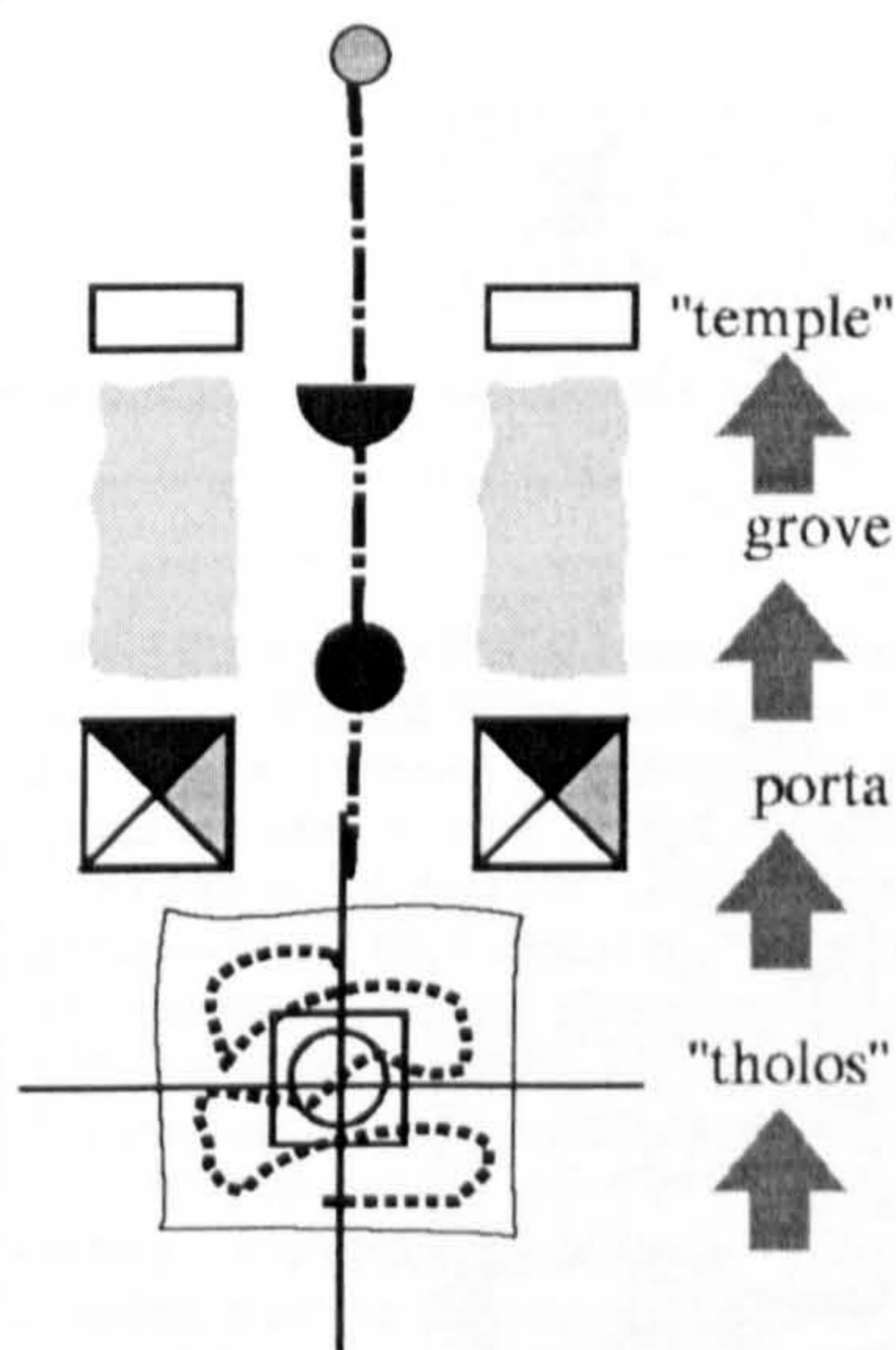
²². This use of theatrical assumes its earlier meanings of representation of divine myth.

²³. For Bomarzo, Chapter 9 above.

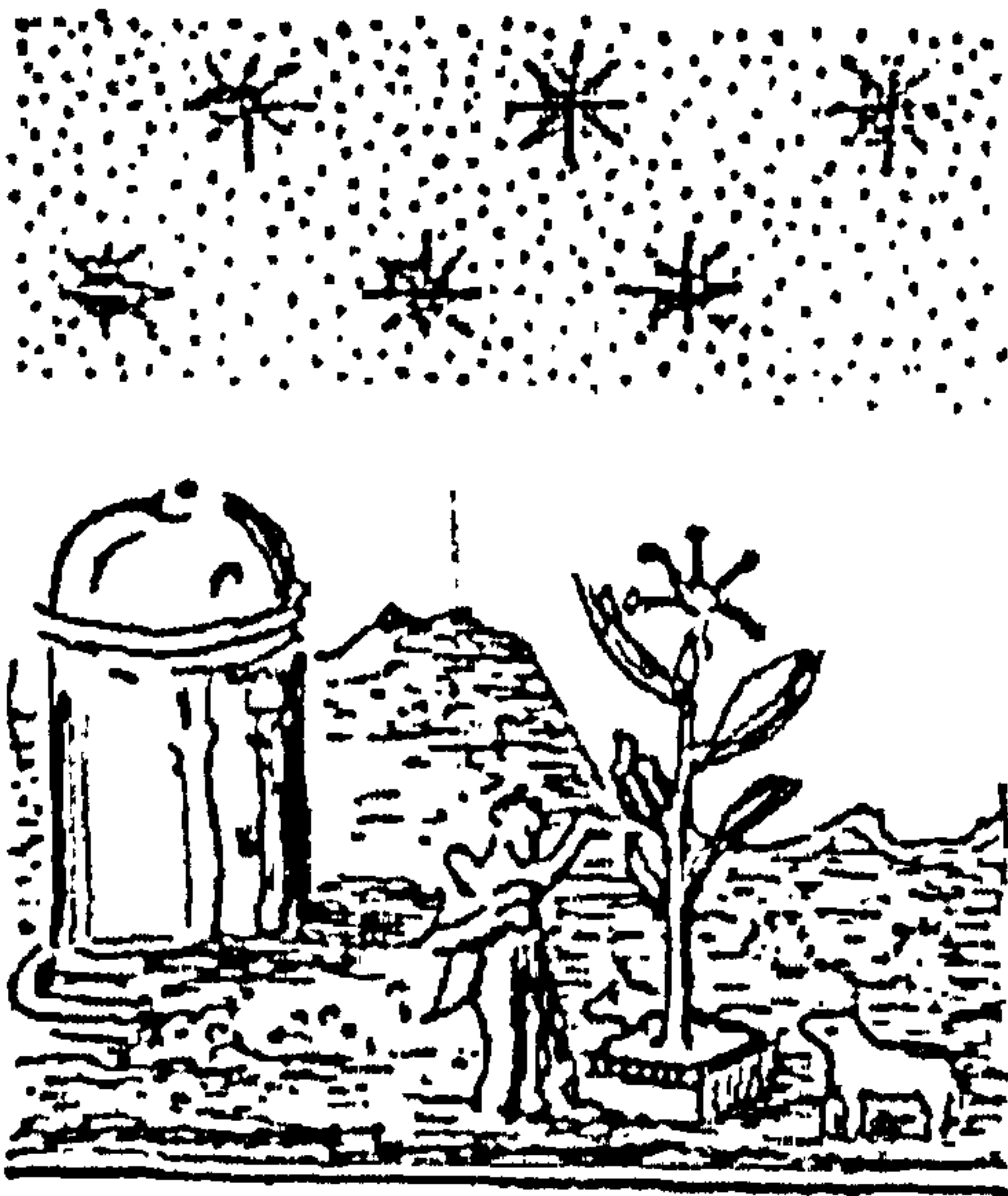
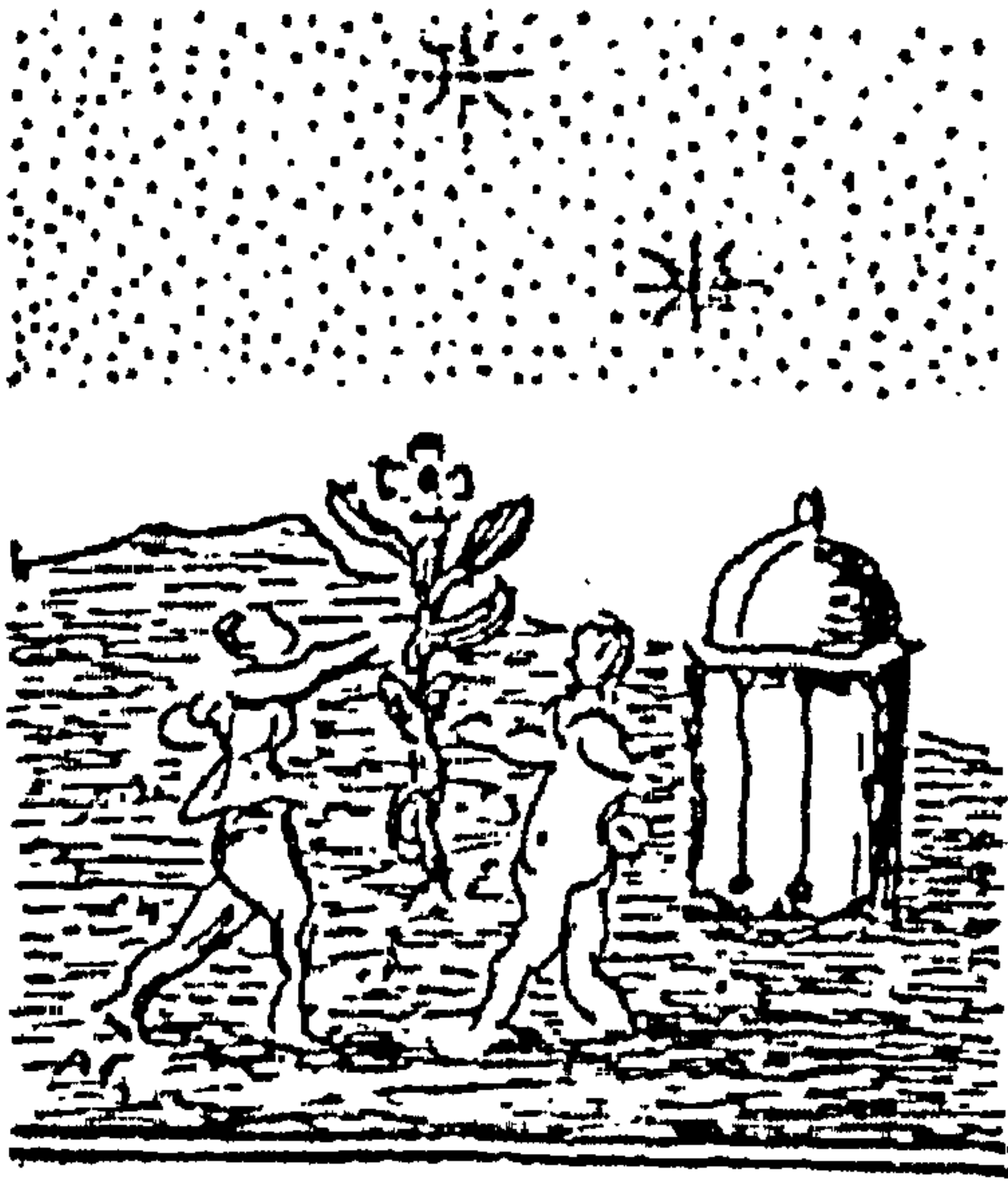
²⁴. *Baldwin Smith 1956*. pp.28

²⁵. *Baldwin Smith 1956*. pp 25-26. With apologies for the bittiness of the quote that would otherwise be too long in context.

Those last words state important energy inherent in the process, the conversion of a human being into god. Its author goes on to say that this tholos was carefully positioned over the spring that was the source of the Petronia, a sacred river of the Campus Martius, and represented a *fons vitae aeternae*, that is, a spring which is constant and perpetual, symbolic of and essential to the continuing existence of a city state. Ancient cities could be founded only by heroes, members of a ruling oligarchy, those self same people whose powers enabled them to traverse *apeira* with the success of an Argos. This symbolism was therefore, outside Greece, a royal prerogative, Rome's original source, part of its Vergilian myth supposing Trojan, pre-Attic, kingly origin. For Rome, only man made god was good enough. The whole material structure, it appears, complete with pine cone phiale, then became part of the ceremonial way to Old St. Peter's basilica, which must still have existed, however decrepit, in 1560 [181 - 183]. There were still a hundred years to go before completion of its replacement, on which Vignola worked. Its approaches had been the subject of designs by no less than Alberti, one hundred years before, and thirty years remained before completion of its main structure by Giacomo della Porta, Vignola's disciple.

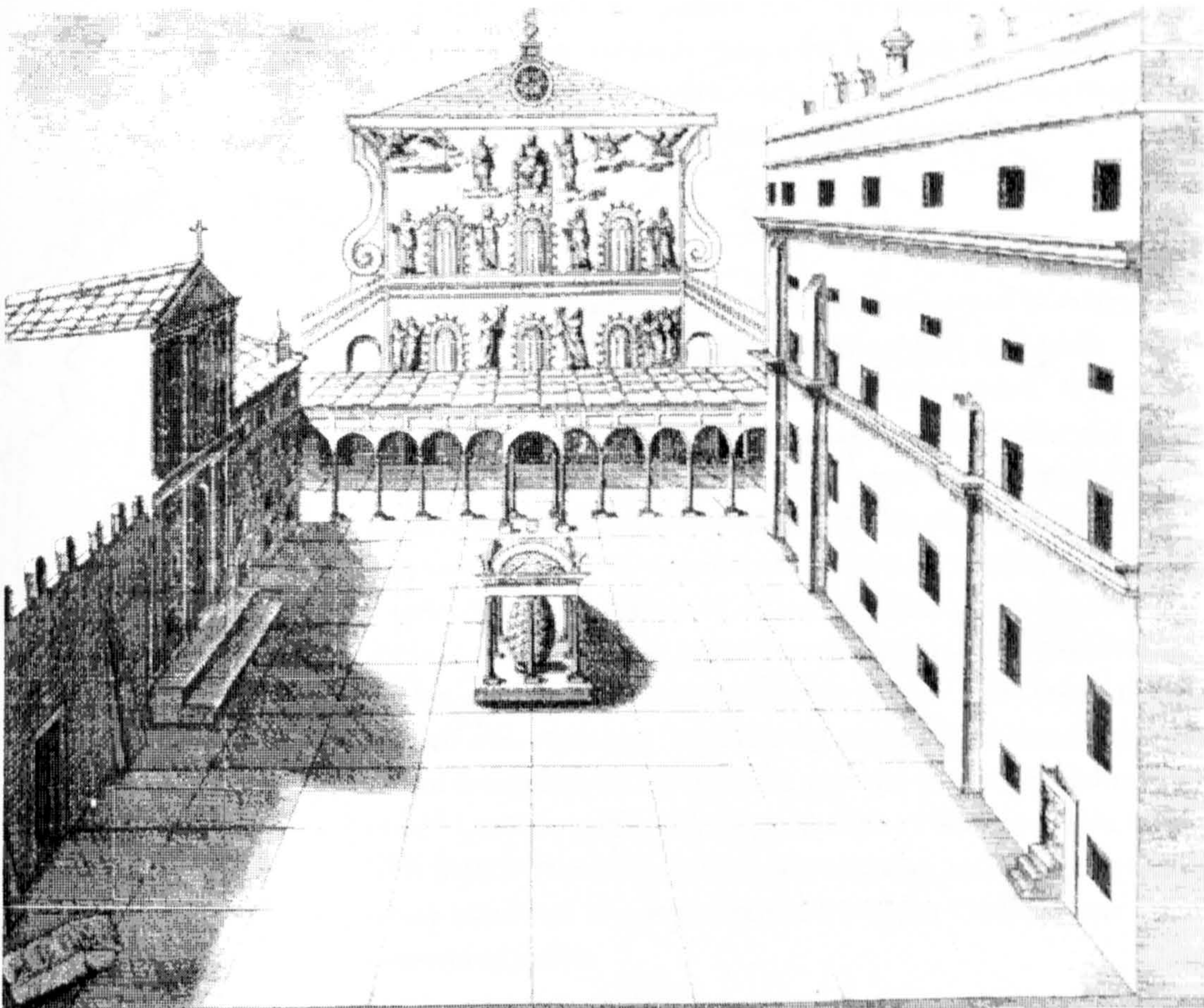


Just how well this scheme fits Lante's groves and fountains in the paradise scarcely needs further exposition. Nor is it necessary to detail the ramifications that might be implied within an allegorical compression as competent as Villa Lante's programme, especially in view of the triumphal and ceremonial nature of the processional, a *via sacra* that crosses and recrosses the playful stream always moving to engage the participant. A very special kind of spatial symbolism is created here, at once dynastic and imperial, perhaps imperial in the sense of Holy Papal Empire or the important



Frescos of paradise from Old S. Peter's, Rome, depicting the Eden myth from the Hebrew book of Genesis. Presumably the tholos stands for the presence of God as source of all spirituality. This is the presence implied in Lante's templum parterre. In these frescos connection must be made to the presence of the real tholos which stood outside in the courtyard and came from the lavacrum Agrippae.

Tholos and deity



Morton H.V. The waters of Rome. London 1966 pp 204

The pine cone phiale from the lavacrum Agrippae in its mediaeval setting in front of old S. Peter's, Rome, complete with baldachin. Morton says "Eight columns of red porphyry supported a dome of gilded bronze adorned with gilt peacocks and dolphins - both Christian symbols - and beneath this graceful canopy the pine cone dripped water from every scale." In its original position in the Campus martia this fountain marked the cleansing which preceded deification of emperor and triumphator. Removed in AD500, it was still outside S. Peter's in Dante's time. He called it "the pine of S. Peter" comparing it with the face of a giant seen in the last circle of *Inferno*. Paul IV melted it down in 1613 after it had been moved to a courtyard in the Vatican. It was still in place outside S. Peters until shortly before this, after the building of Villa Lante, having escaped every major sacking of Rome. The pigna and two peacocks remain as niche ornaments. These are similar to devices on the Sassanian paradise dish (*Paradisus terrestris*).

Porta triumphalis lavacrum

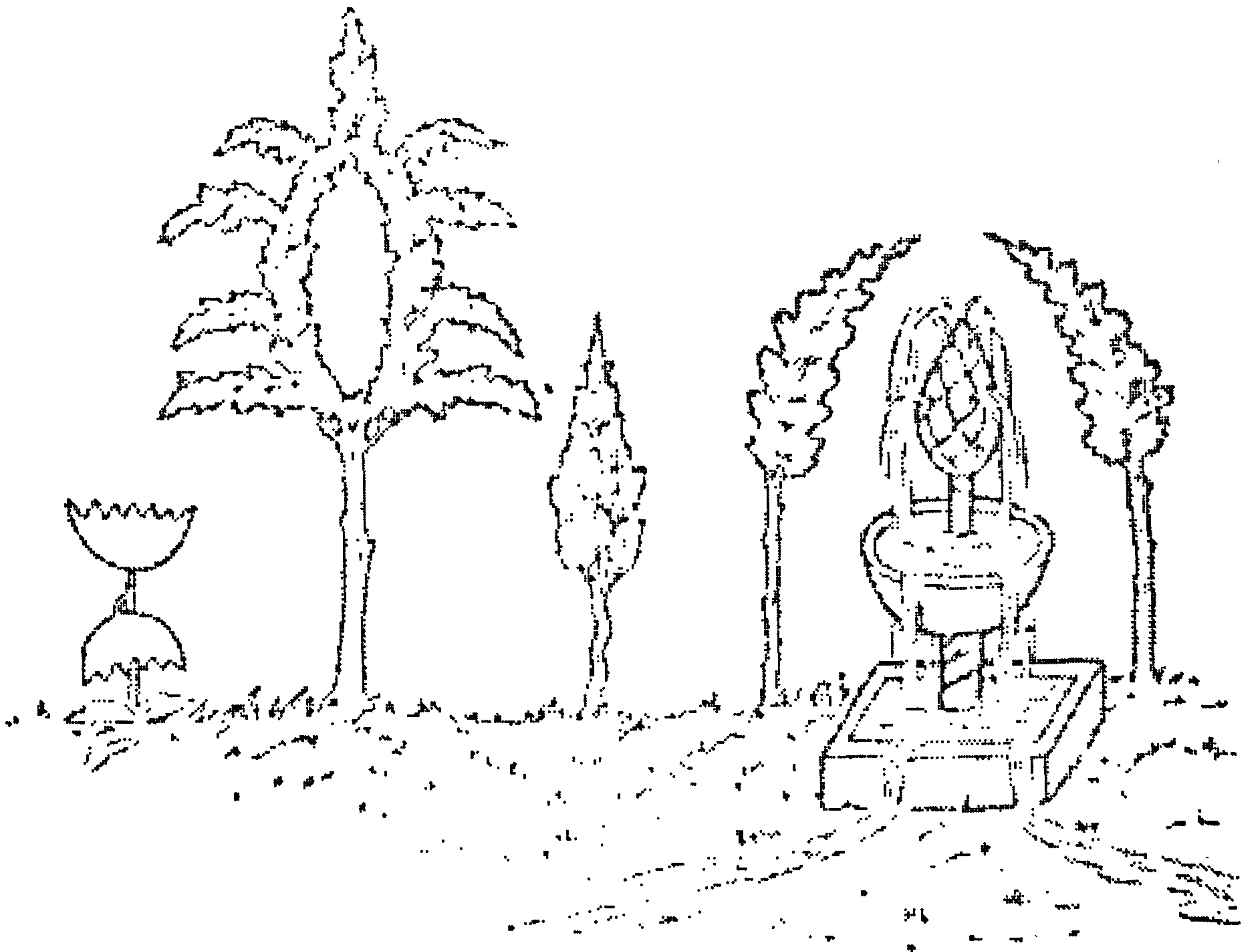


FIG. 99. A GARDEN AND PINEAPPLE FOUNTAIN

Sketch (Gothein ff.99) of a mosaic of a Byzantine Landscape which is as compressed as its Hellenistic gismo precursors (PI10). The phial is closely associated with divinity and deification, with tholoi, and with the Lavacrum, which Lante's dolphin fountain, a fulcrum near the head of the hung Landscape, once had (ie. with baldachin, which the two trees in this sketch signify or which once signified such trees. The phial of Lavacrum Agrippae remained part of S. Peter's ceremonial way until the XV-XVIc.

Byzantine pine cone fountain

symbolic "Christendom" of the time. At this point one is reminded of the Tridentine injunction to avoid complications of idea and language no 'ordinary' person could appreciate. A sophist technique, complication is something to which all allegoria, especially Mannerist, is prone, both in analysis and construction! But then, we could meditate on the value of light.²⁶

The Reign of the Square.

Vignola takes Alberti's strictures for the proportion of external civic space we observed in Bomarzo, the 1:1 unity of the square. Having done so, he never departs from it in the hung garden. With it, setting three in line, he creates a procession which rises and falls on the slope, beautiful, architecturally adorned serene steps in Landscape [184]. It is very escapist. Within this three part procession he weaves intricate arabesques of meaning through interlocking and subdivision, ensuring a stately and dignified but dynamic progression in either direction [176] [185]. Bomarzo is a mostra of Arkadian ideals and watery places. In it Orsini concerns himself with aspects of linguistic nationalism or regionalism, and the cult of independence, transposing concepts from one medium to the other. Lante demonstrates the perfection of skills available from XVIc architects in all aspects of urban design, including universals which transcend language directed through a Christianised ecumenical vision.

Villa Lante's park promises eternal life seductively ensconced in a bliss of Neo-Platonic concordances. Vignola's design, committed, supremely professional and impersonal, handles contemporary universalities with the skill one would expect of so distinguished a practitioner. Taking a well formulated programmatic brief by expert iconographer (David Coffin suggests Fulvio Orsini)²⁷ and erudite client, he transposes it into sublime architecture of other space, the space of "there", an idealised world of the mind. He was working at Caprarola at the time, the estate of Orsini's friend and father in law, Alessandro Farnese, cardinal Gambara's kinsman.²⁸ A letter from Gambara to Farnese requests the services of Vignola to work on Lante, but that seems to be all the records reveal. Presumably he remained in the pay of Farnese.

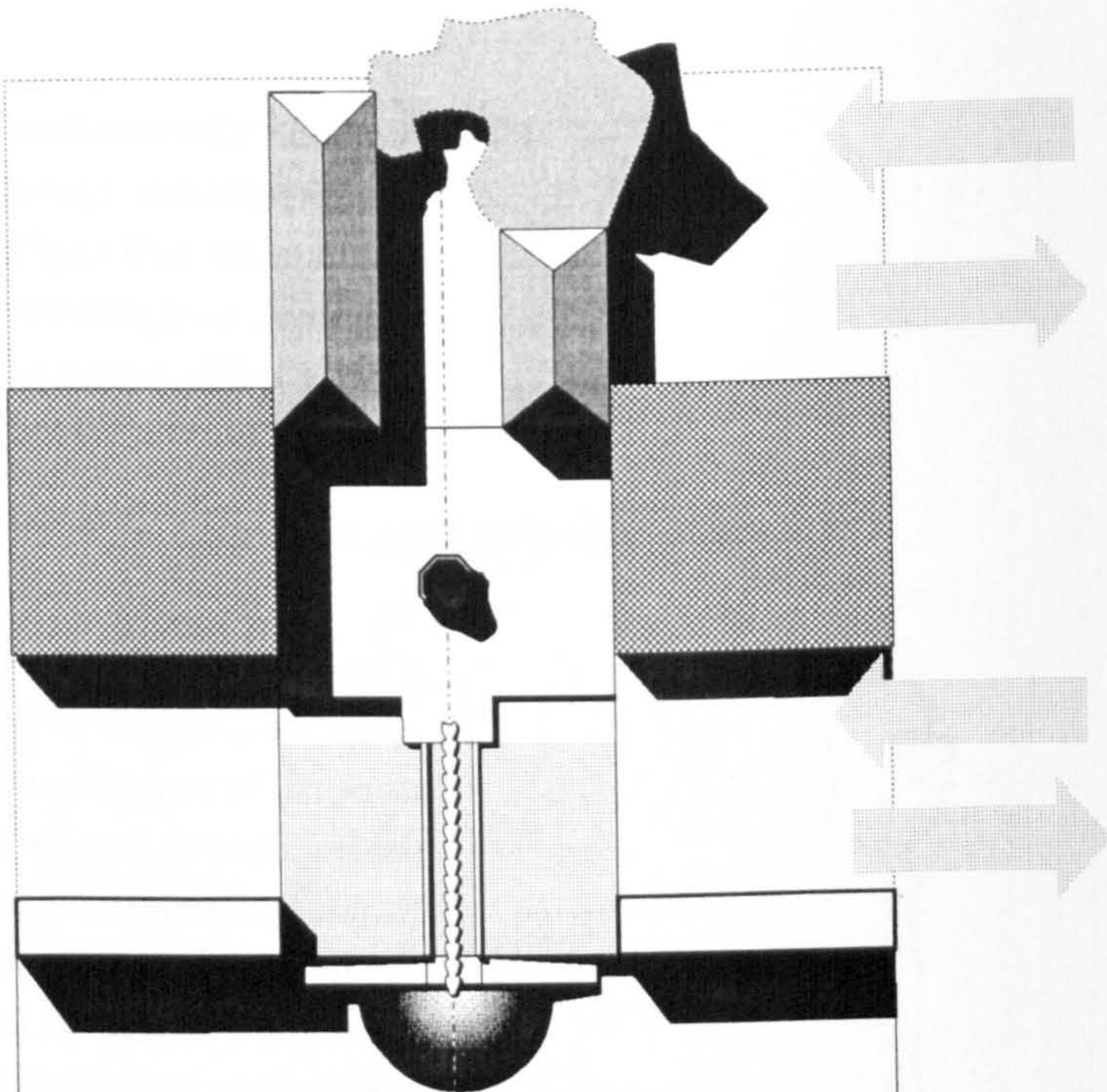
²⁶. Reputedly what relict Mannerist painters from the Studiolo at Florence did when their symbolism became unacceptable even to Mannerist patrons. *Ferrari, M.L.: Studi di storia dell'arte*, ed. A. Boschetto. Florence 1976.

²⁷. *Coffin 1979*.

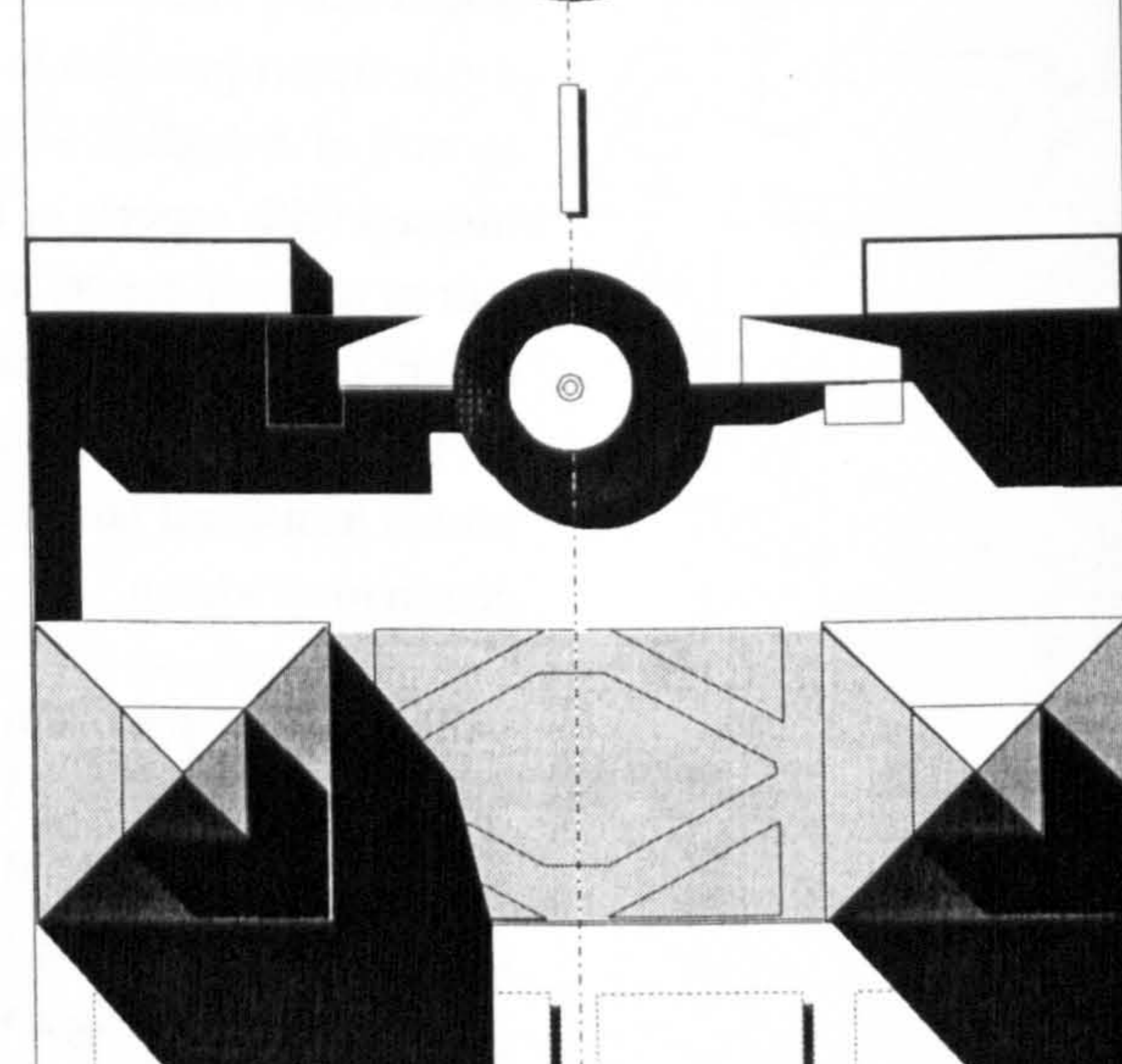
²⁸. Orsini approached him for structural advice about his grotto, but there is no apparent record of any other contact at Bomarzo. Writers attribute Bomarzo's temple to him, but Bredekamp convincingly asserts Orsini's own authorship of this.

Human complexity

terrace of threes

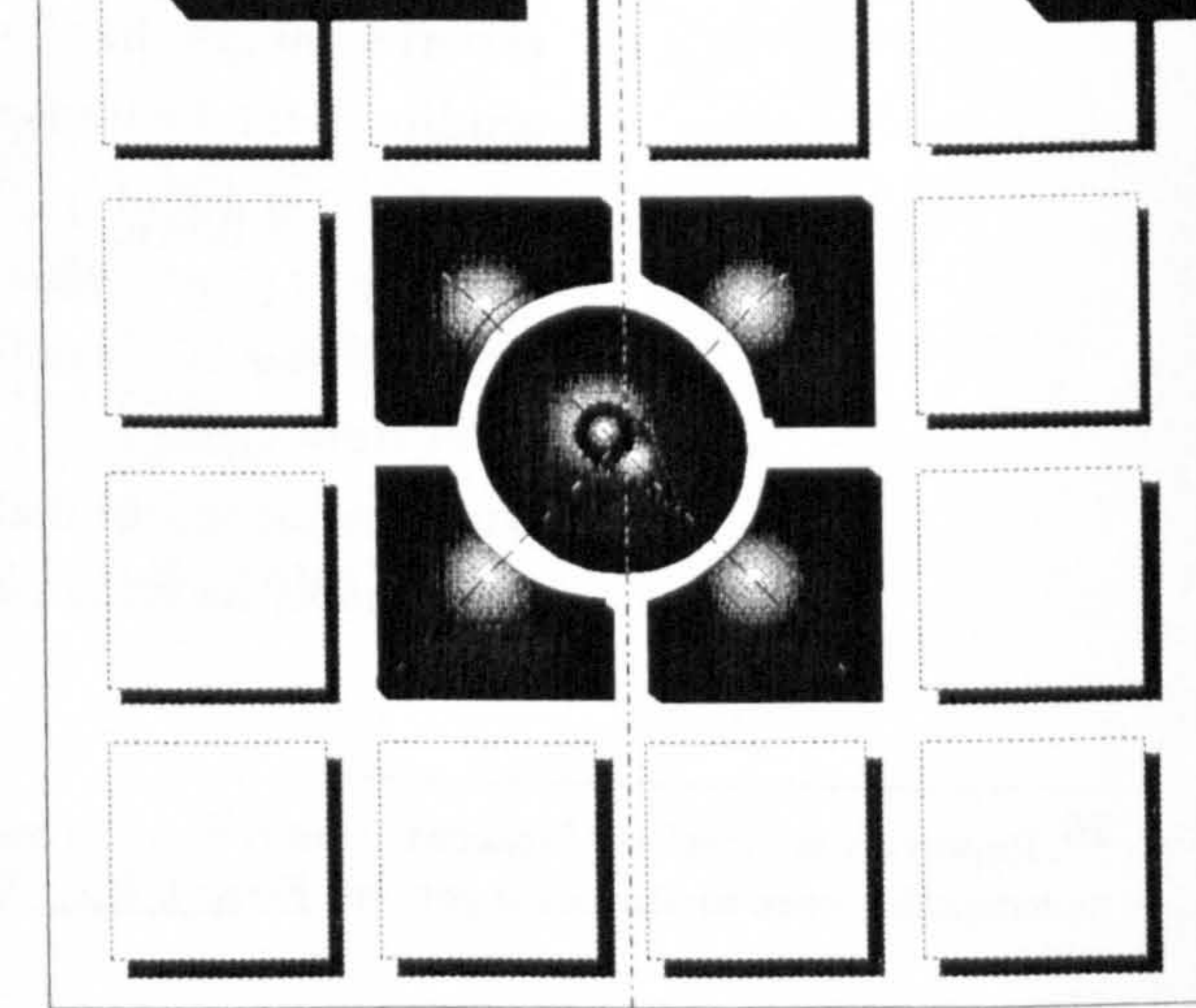


terrace of twos

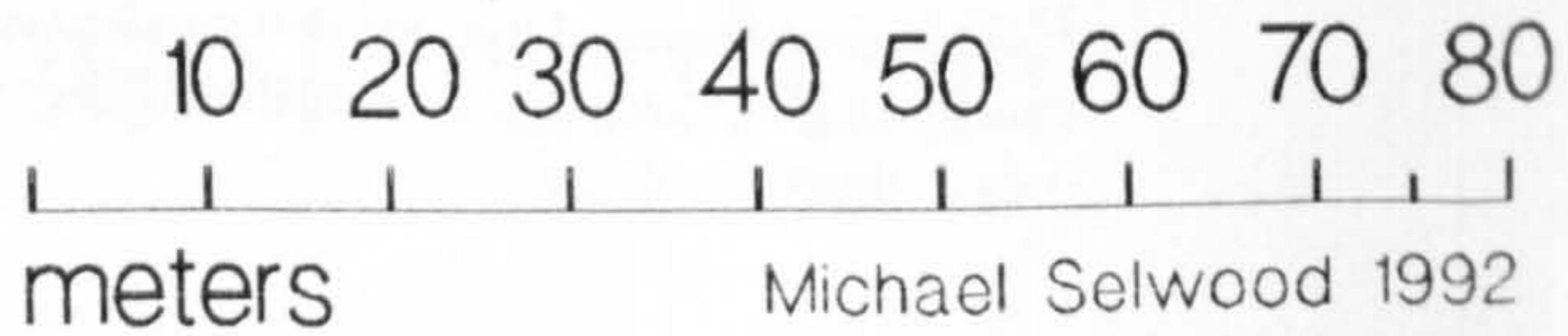


Divine simplicity

terrace of one



Villa Lante relief plan of formal garden



triumphal arch
gate of heaven

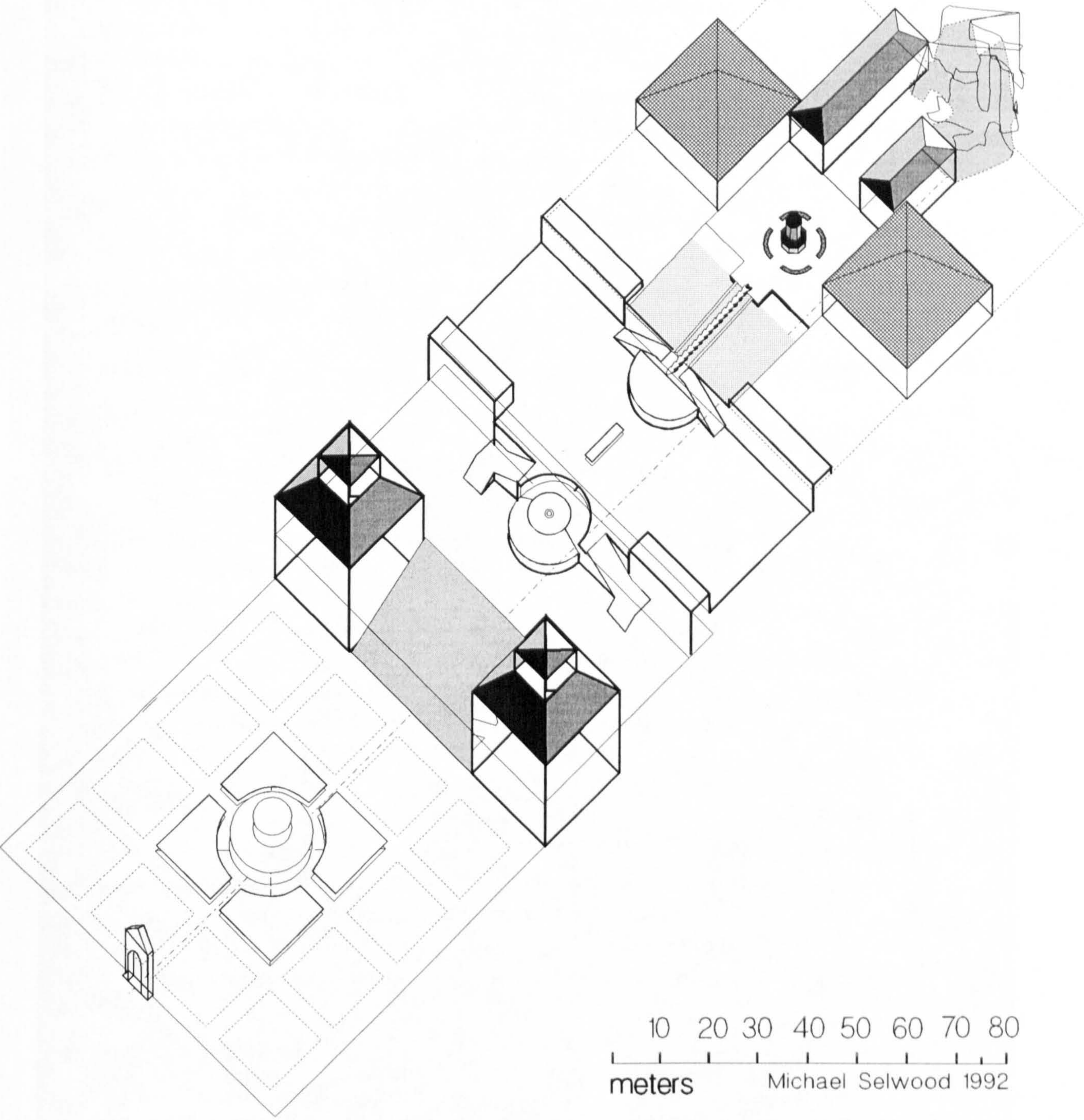
cloister/paradise

castrum

feast/triclinium

tholos/lavacrum
baldachin

PI185



Villa Lante axonometric
projection of formal garden
(earth forms and structures)

Little doubt can really exist about Vignola's authorship of Lante's paradise. One of his last works, no architect contemporary could have matched this virtuosity of conception. The nineteenth century, we are told, was the era of the virtuoso in music; one thinks of Paganini and Berlioz, Brahms, or Liszt. Here in this single work of the sixteenth is supreme virtuosity in the plastic arts unmatched since.²⁹ It must have been planned and laid out meticulously. The accuracy needed for some of its stunning effects could only have been achieved through detailed architectural drawings or perhaps the architect's constant presence on site.³⁰ We have already observed the way the semicircular fountain of lanterns embraces the parterre fountain. Conceptualisation like this needs the firm intellectual grasp of Brunelleschi's and Alberti's systematic perspective that Vignola attained, not its mechanics alone.³¹ The degree of perceptual control inherent in *costruzione legitima* is essential to imaging effects as controlled as those of Lante, not only to setting them out. Design precision would have been impossible without them. Use of the grid pavement is also a key to this, especially the sublimely creative way it infuses the symbolic structure. A feature of Donatello's spacious later reliefs, this intensity of use in Landscape space seems new even though the forms draw heavily on mediaeval compressions. It's contrast with the boschetto is sharply defined. Comparison between this use of grid and that at d'Este Tivoli, or Lambrogiana, for example, is revealing. d'Este appears positively clumsy, even mundane beside Lante's Pythagorean poetics [186 - 188]. Oh that Vignola's drawings would miraculously appear! What pleasures would their analysis promise!

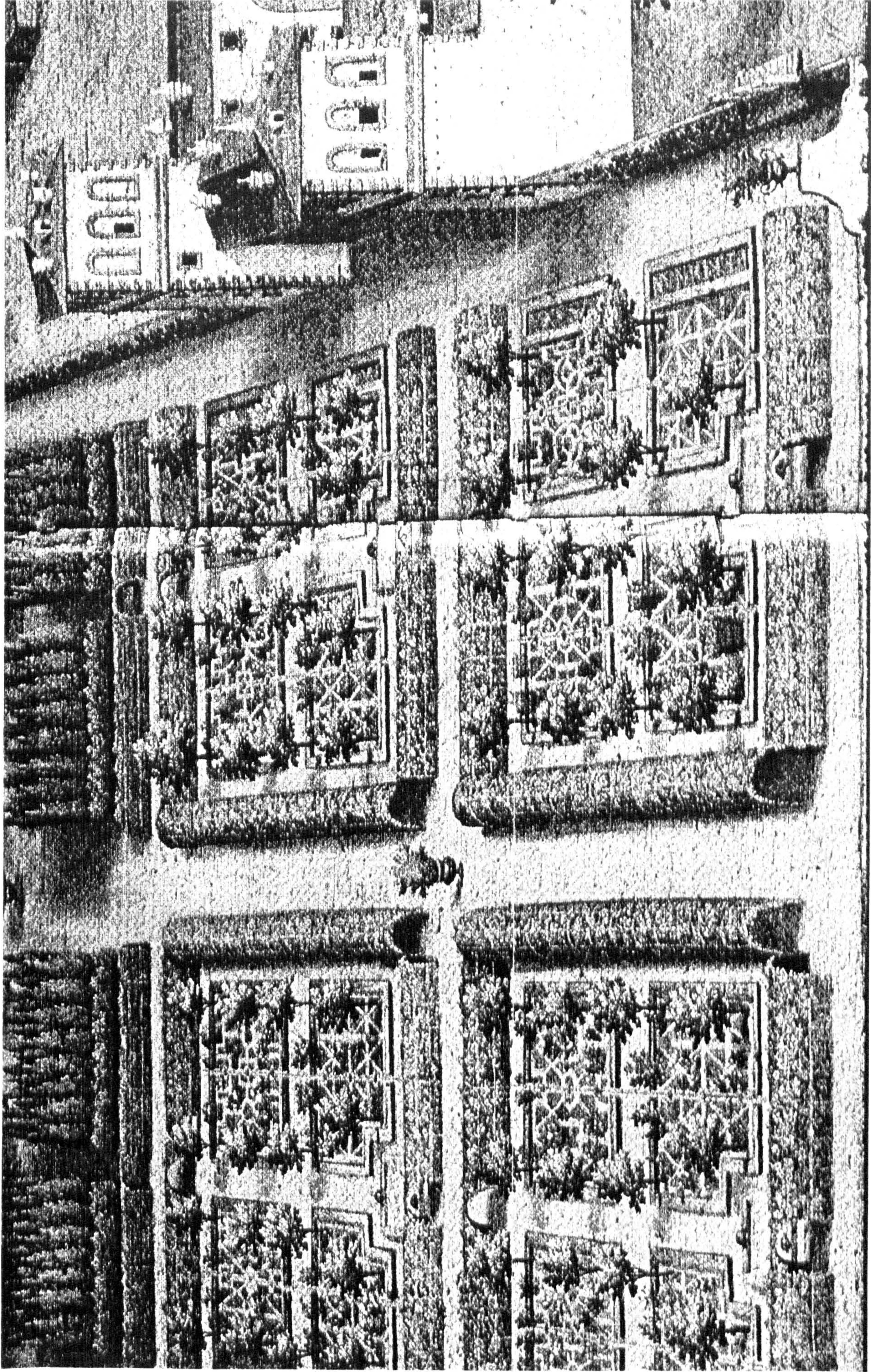
Orderly Lante.

Lante's elegant casinos, built at different times and by different architects (Vignola(?) and Maderno) but of uniform architecture, occupy and signify space within their paradise. The possibility that only one casino was intended was once considered seriously. It is

²⁹. The author makes no apologies for this bald statement. It has nothing to do with the fashionable style either. What makes it so special is that it encapsulates every aspect of cultural development into the kind of statement which is accessible at whatever level one happens to be, from the seductive rhetoric of its surface to the many layers of underlying philosophy. It also does it without recourse to complex expressionism, encapsulating all within the simplest of geometric frameworks. No obvious psychological or intellectual barriers are erected as at Bomarzo to create a filtered privacy.

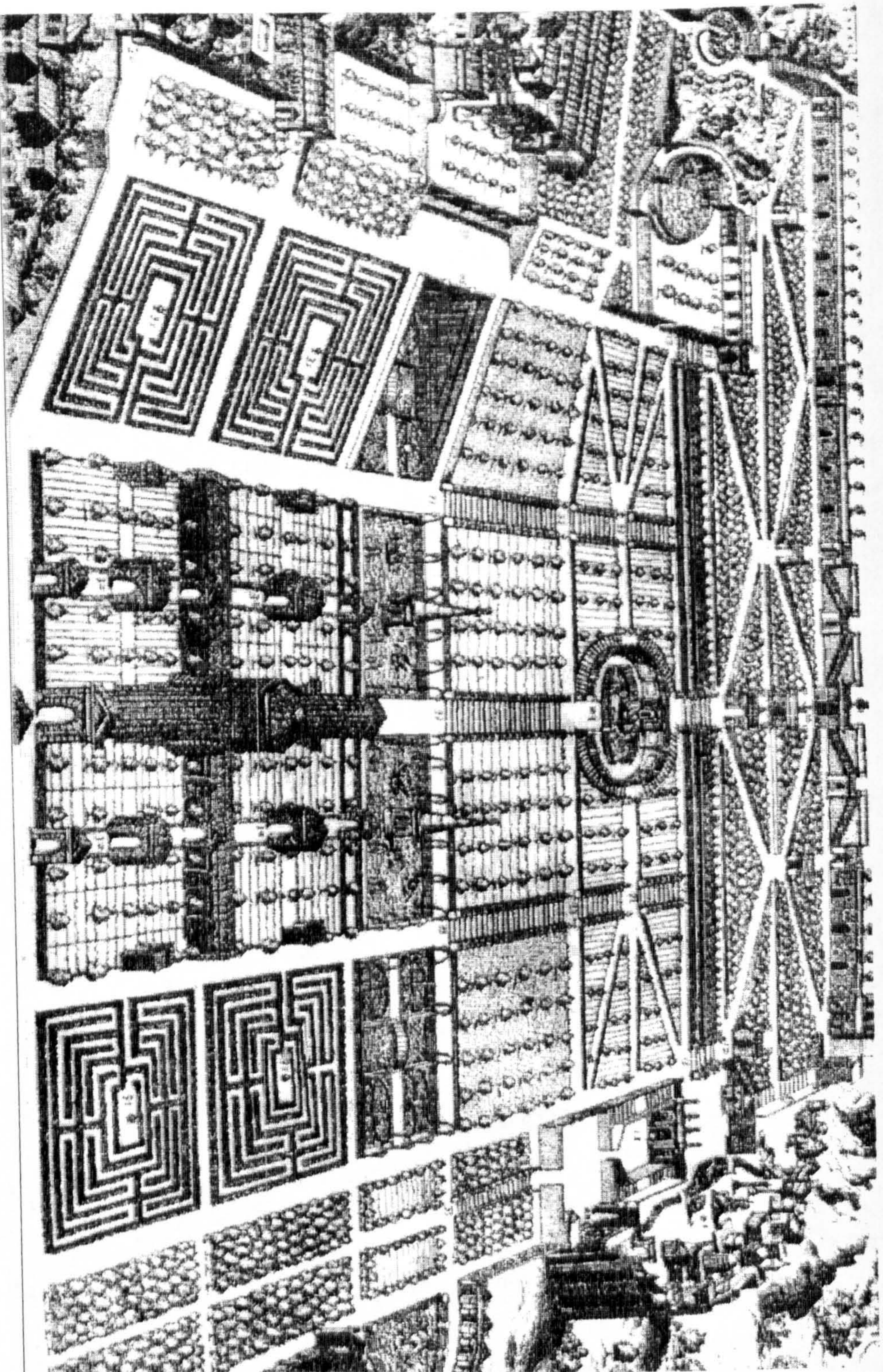
³⁰. Bomarzo could have been set out using natural features. A shift in geometry of a few feet one way or another would have few repercussions on its meanings and cohesion.

³¹. He extended the system to make it useful for designing architectural space in *Due regole della prospettiva pratica*. Gadol.J:Leon Battista Alberti. Chicago 1969. pp 52-54. Brunelleschi in White.J: The birth and rebirth of pictorial space. London 1957. pp 113-116.



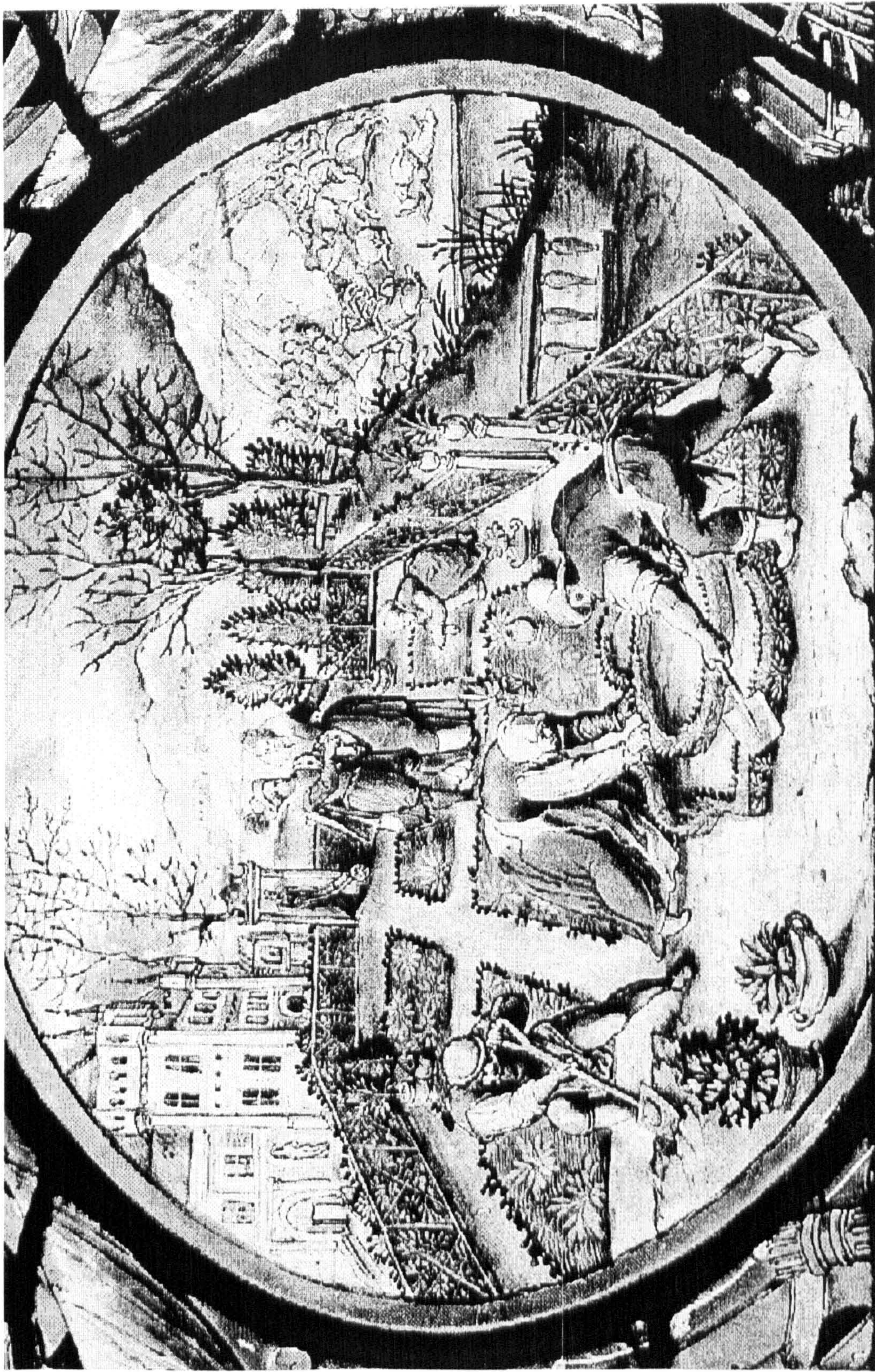
Lambrogiana by Utens

PI186



Despite magnificence of content, the grid layout of the Villa d'Este lacks the elan and mastery shown by Vignola at Villa Lante. Ligorio's subdivisions are pedestrian by comparison and ignore underlying significance inherent in the spatial symbolism of the idea.

Grid & templum: d'Este, Tivoli



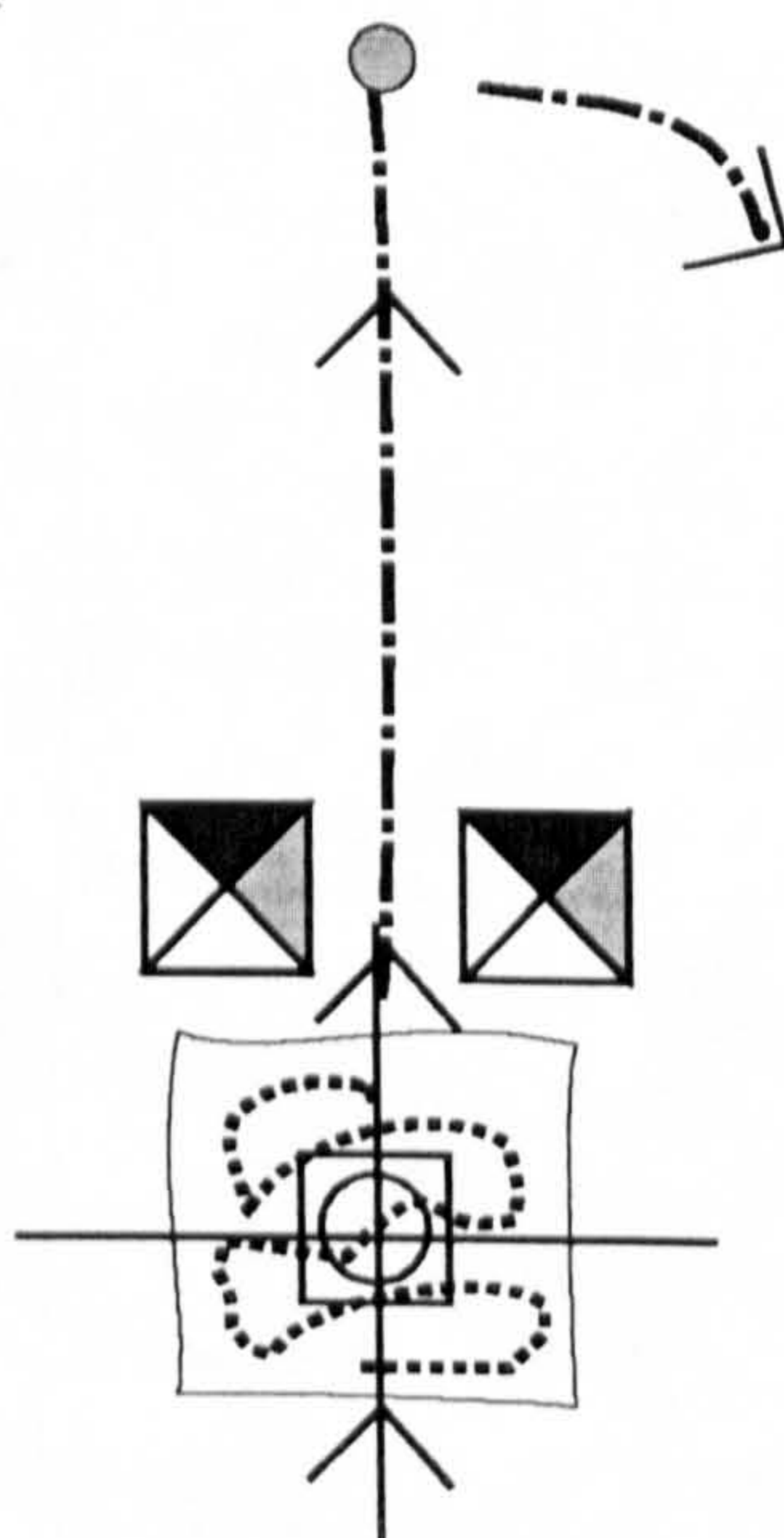
This illustration is introduced to draw attention to the differences between the villa Landscapes discussed and the normality of the period for the nobility. It is a glass painting.

A XVic Italian garden in spring

still of interest and illustrates how minor changes can modify spatial symbolism in a programme.

We can look at the principles by examining the hung garden at an intermediate stage, before it was transferred to the richer cardinal Montalto. The presence of one casino differs radically from that of two. In spatial terms it completely alters axial symmetry and inner logic. The long axis is supplanted, but represents a kind of spatio-temporal image popular in Renaissance art. In it, the volta of life and renewal passes and re-passes the sacred pavilion in a constantly reciprocating rhythm. A cross axis becomes dominant, where the single pavilion looks across this stream, detached from it, immortal, viewed against the backdrop of the boschetto, whose status is enhanced thereby. It would also present a profoundly different balance with the boschetto, more in keeping with the asymmetrical depictions of Pompeiian frescos. Both arrangements make iconographic sense. On the basis of the extant design, pavilions and internal axial landscape are inextricably interlocked.

The space they generate closely resembles that of an emblematic antique imperial triumphal way with most of its attributes [185]. Here is the kind of symbolic abstract space which pervaded post-imperial ceremonial architecture, Gothic and Romanesque alike.



Lante's linear axis is clear and direct.

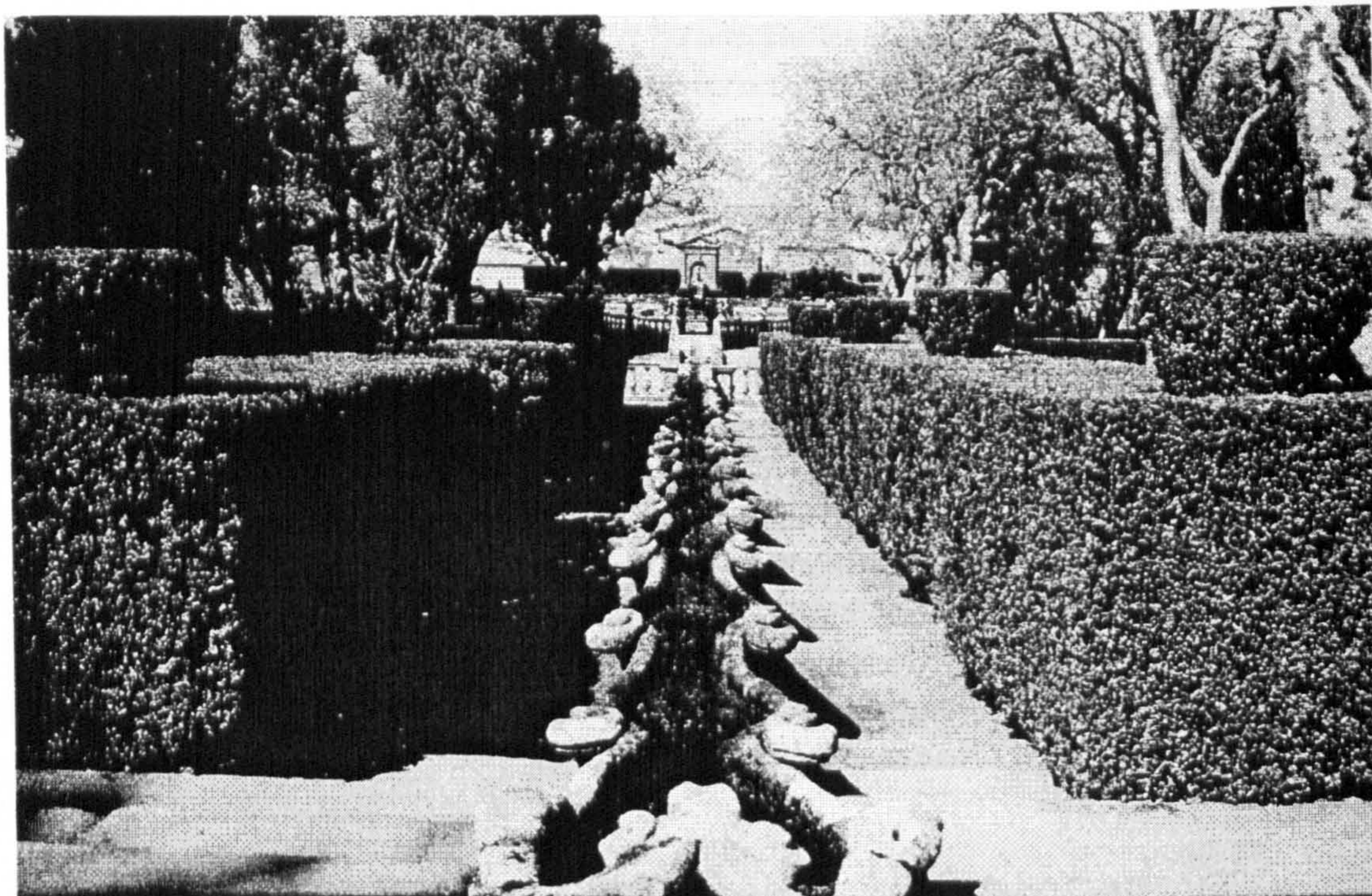
Like a cathedral, there is only one axial entry and axis. Entry into the upper area by Diluvia has to be from a cross axis. Cross axes invite only short diversion from the central goal. Only in the quadripartite water parterre is there divergence. Intricacies there formalise a templum, an antithesis of labyrinth and a constituent part of it, where the ancient twisting crane dance has been

rationalised into concentric conformity. It signifies centrality but not direction, arrival, pivoting only about its fulcrum. The space is broad; it is square; its paths generate a chaconne-like movement in people, though with only a suggestion of variational complexity. It stops the linear flow of space (or starts it). Between the pavilions a bifurcating path raises this dance into a procession, and the space between the two casinos becomes a palatium portal of Augustine's mystical city. The sequence of overlapping squares on the slope uses control inherent in steps to create a larger symbolic procession against which the progress of the water is offset - the laborious climb of humanity towards spiritual fulfilment and the happy, playful conformity of water (spirit also) with divine logic? The palazzini have pyramidal roofs which, with concentric cupolas emulate the ceremonial portals of Roman cities that hosted an Augustus, dead or alive [64].³² Similar symbolism attaches to the twin towers of cathedrals, a regal rite of passage for bishop princes from one world to another, from the city to the sanctum palatium of God.

Lante's energy core

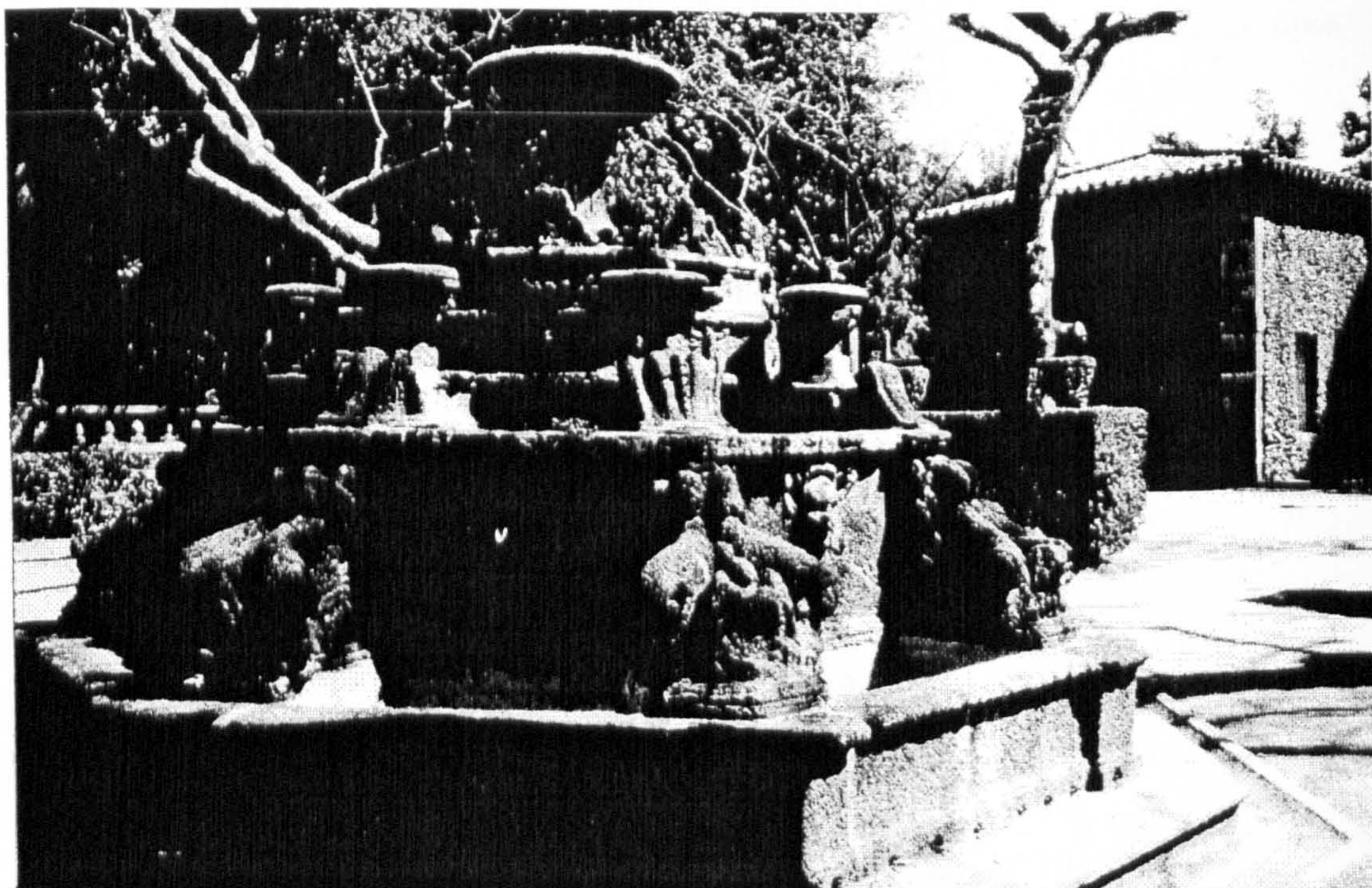
Lante's axial garden presents one energy core [189] [190]. Little personal freedom of choice is permitted within the programme. Only after following the passage along the stream of consciousness that is The Word, gaining admittance to the City of God by entering palace portals in the forms of a celestial arch of sky and twin towers eventually reaching The Source, the biblically assumed beginnings of humanity, only then could one drift into the boschetto. Similar duality of symmetry exists in qranic imagery [191]. The underlying assumption is that of the supremacy of orthodox indoctrination. Aldobrandini's Belvedere at Frascati re-states this with absolute finality [191]. The important thing is that things tangible always trigger concern for hidden intangibles. Freedom in this case involves a willingness to accept the male geometric concept of absolute space masquerading as divine order. We still enjoy ceremony and rite, even though it frequently takes some strange forms. In the XXc that enjoyment is often indirect, vicarious even, experienced through a pane more selective, more coloured even than language, the "media". It is still a large component in the pleasure obtained from contemplating spatial manipulation in a vaulted gothic cathedral whose arcs describe the firmament, or the magnificence of a celestial palatium as expressed by a great dome, Sa. Maria del Fiore, St. Peter's, Hagia Sophia, or Mecca. We may not

³². see *Baldwin Smith, E: Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages*. Princeton 1956. pp 79 -.



author

Lante's hedged in river as existing does not accord with contemporary imagery. At its head is a dolphin fountain. The joint imagery has connotations that are important.



Groups of dolphins were part of Augustus' state imagery linked with the sacred precinct outside his house on the palatine. The form of this fountain at Lante was similar to the tholos outside S.Peter's. Similarities with the process of deification afforded a triumphator cannot be avoided, even to the use of pine cone phials around the templum fountain.

Lante's stream of celestial bliss



author

Now enclosed within high hedges the triumphant stream of life appears to have flowed through meadows in the original scheme giving a different spatial feel and symbolism. The stone form would have greater significance in a more open space.

Lante:triumphant stream

now so easily interpret literal content in the detail aimed at initiates, but there is no doubt about the consoling effect of such spatial "mysteries" on the psyche. The political power of the original wanes with each successive generation. It cannot be retrieved, the repressions of so-called "fundamentalism" notwithstanding. As that is so, realities in the underlying messages concealed-revealed in the geometry of ideal space are paradoxical. Clearer is the kind of abstraction promoted by the architectural purification of Modernity; symbolic content, through purging, is more obscure. An object that states with such unerring clarity as Lante, that there is only one way to human enrichment can be interpreted as both repressive and pessimistic. Without humanist symbolism it denies the explorative intellectual richness of the Renaissance, supplanting it with comforting and pretty illusions of certitude - at least on the surface. Lante was "written" by a prominent Orsini humanist though.

The boschetto's programme is simple, clear to the point of bucolic reduction. No complex geometries are involved in its formation. No intense metaphorical juggling complicates its simple and direct signs. The paradox is that the "random" geometry conceals simple mindedness. By contrast the paradise is fastidiously multi-layered, complex and intellectual underneath its superficial simplicity. What it does have is reference to an ancient system, the Triumph or Imperial Epiphany - also written into the dynamic core of Christian belief via the Easter mythology - whose intention was to give ordinary people the opportunity to share in events that would otherwise be too remote geographically.³³ A fundamental disparity exists here between the Roman church of the Renaissance and Rome in antiquity. For the Christian in the XVIc Jerusalem was the Holy City, remote from the experience of the majority, every bit as much "there" as was Arkadia. The idea is prominent in contemporary painting [193]. Having become such a prominent symbol it was politically essential that it was kept to the fore in people's minds, since so much effort was expended on its re-conquest. As a matter of policy, the Roman system created regional cities of god (or God), making a real effort to bring the political space of the empire to its individual components. This had the effect of involving local populace at less than plutocratic level in imperial achievements. Hadrian's almost mythical walkabouts were not purely tourism, though tourism, even package tours, was rife. A city honoured with a visit was architecturally marked.

³³. Disrespect is not intended in this use of mythology; the Hellenistic and Roman appropriations in Christian rite are a source of modern research, and proving fruitful. Most of the dynamic core of Christian belief which we inherit is based on Hellenistic mysteries which influenced and were influenced by Judaic practice and myth.

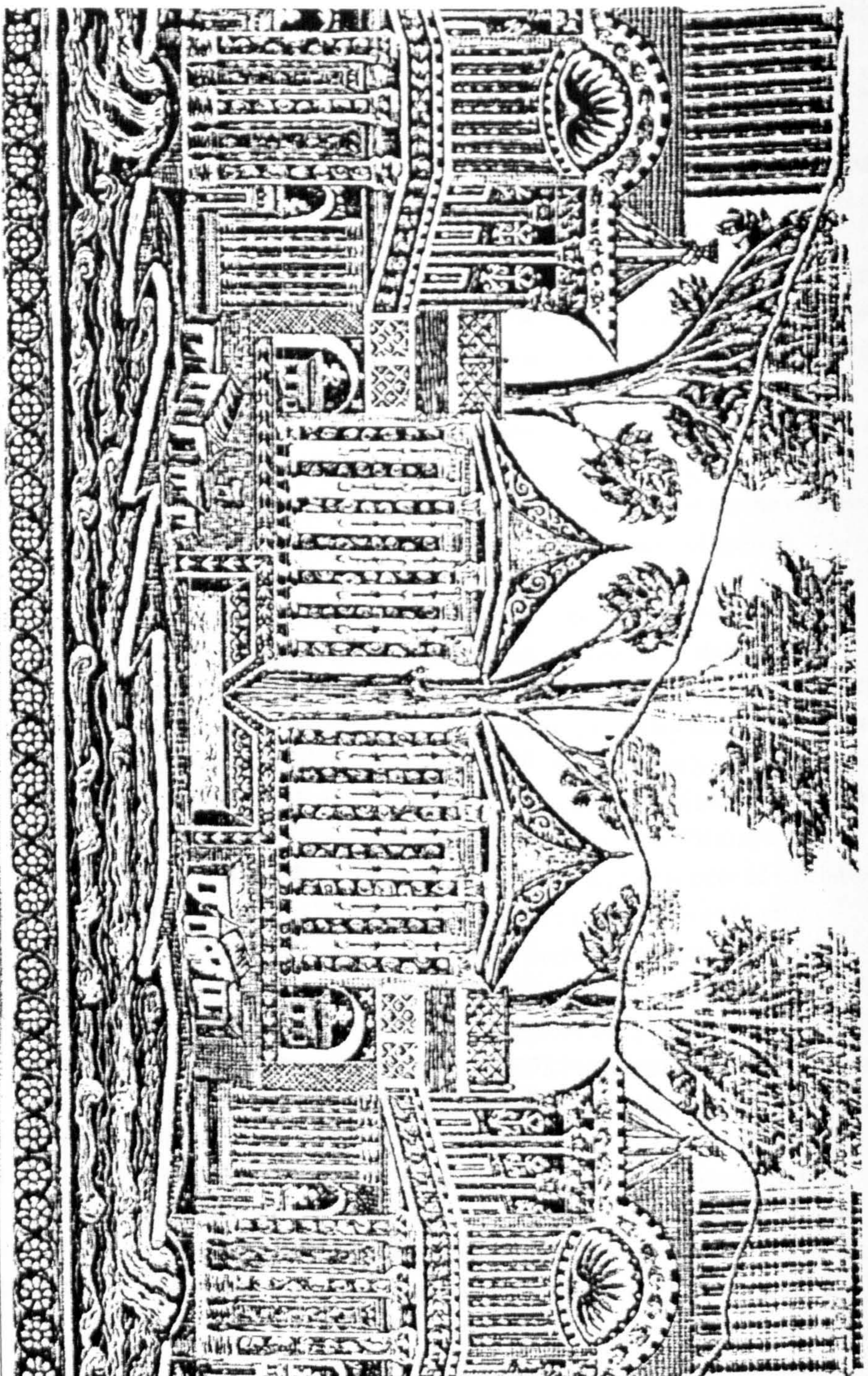
Viewed as an art object, Lante assumes repressive power. It is phallic space, a secure assertion of a male religion. Twin towers state the principle of male dominion, the implied palatium of a god-king ultimately adopted by a Roman Augustus. So does its single axis form. The stream travels down, the traveller up towards its entry. Behind, on this same axis, is the mountain. As with all allegory, this pilgrimage can be read the other way, a primary device of Mannerism which sought to cultivate individual choice (anarchy? - not in our sense of that word). Do we then read it both ways? We do. Contemporaries would be able to read it in ways that fitted their stance. It was written and engendered by bishops however humanist, so that, whichever way it was read led one to an ultimately similar conclusion. Try this: the spirit ascends into the light to its cleansed and purified source from the garden of eternal life and youth where the original Gambara fountain centred on a pyramid, pre-Christian symbol of eternity; or this: the life of man follows the stream of the Word from ancient beliefs towards eternal youth in the templum, endlessly renewed.

Both ways, the pilgrim - in best meditational mood - passes through celestial "gates" into the imperial city of a world god.³⁴ In itself, this templum is another equivalent of passage from one world to another, from the profane - outside - to the sacred, - inside - the City of God, from "there" to "here" and from "here" to "there". Definitions of "here" and imagery of "there" differ from those of Bomarzo, but the process, the dynamic or kinetic structure is the same. At one end, water pours from a notional flood, the universally purifying presence of The Word on the surface, and at the other end it springs from the earth, the purifying presence within interior "there". Gambara does not state, or depict, this flood like Orsini. It remains invisible, present only by pouring into paradise. It is "there", "outside", only in this case there might be "here". "Inside" and "outside" space in a socio-political sense are explored in Boccaccio's unique ribald way, in *Decameron*, using the metaphor of a well.³⁵

We are drawn yet again to understand a particularly Renaissance sense of spatial continuity and universal presence. Lante's stream emerges at the upper end from a hole, rushing over simulated grottoes in a torrent sufficient at once to cleanse the whole world.

³⁴. The obtuse statement is doctrinal, part of the resistance to the incursions into Europe by Islam, seen as damaging, especially following the collapse of Byzantium. Christendom was "inside", Islam "outside" in this scheme of things. The principle of appropriating Arkadia might also have political overtones in the same scheme, since Islamic nations, as direct inheritors of Hellenistic traditions, were in a position to take possession in a propaganda war should they so wish. Did they?

³⁵. *Decameron* VI.IV



Mosaic from Great mosque Damascus 705-715AD

This Qranic representation of Eden reveals the mirror inherent in the templum and the duality of space generated. One implication of such stark duality is the function of attaining unity. This might be human, abstract, or any concept between the two. Hellenistic in origins, this depiction departs some way from the sacred Landscapes of Boscotrecase which contain references to templum but do not use it as a principle of structure in such bare form. At Villa Lante, this duality is specifically stated; there the symmetry is emphatically founded on the unifying stream flanked by a processional duality as expressed in this image. The functions vested in this mosaic in the central tree and basin at its foot are those of Lante's stream and parterre.

Qran and Eden



Pietro Aldobrandini receives emissaries at his Frascati villa. Theatre of triumph, a baroque expression of ideas within Villa Lante, Bagnaia.

Orthodoxy of triumph



The month of April Falconetto 1500 (Chastel pp 214)

....it was the month

Chinese Landscape gives similar depth, partly by naming; a circular hole is a gate of the moon, and although no water issues from it, by this naming and the presence of water behind, it represents the gift of water and of spiritual passage. We can be equally seduced by the eloquent beauty of such rhetoric in China or at Lante. Cardinal Gambarara's majestic symbolic control of the forces of nature is manifestly impressive if illusory.

Privacy and pomp.

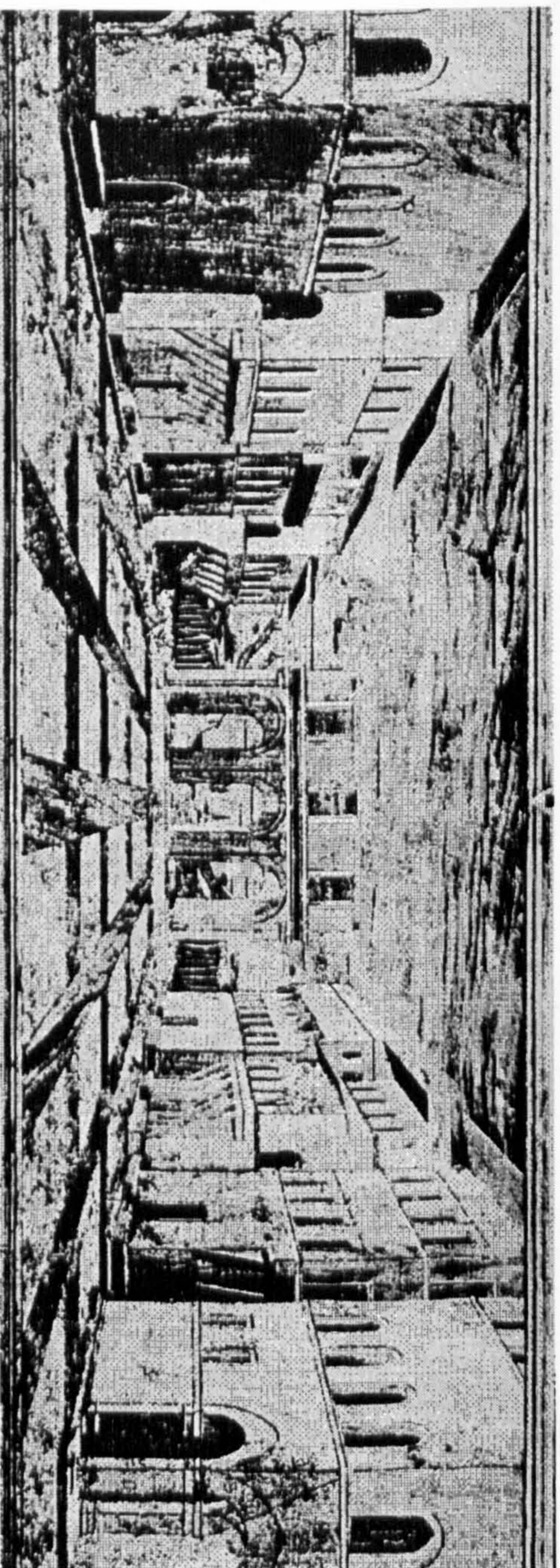
Cicero refers to ideal friendship as a gift of Nature in *De amicitia* with Epicureanism in mind. Boccaccio did not share his view, seeing it as a result of acculturation, a point picked up above. Mediaeval tradition portrayed Epicurean Aristippus as archetypal hedonist. His Epicurean leaning was a point Cicero stressed in *De finibus*. St. Augustine was also preoccupied briefly with Epicurean beliefs in his analysis of Socrates, of whom Aristippus was a disciple. There is a potential dialectic link here between Bomarzo and Lante. In response to Orsini's espousal of Epicurean principles, Lante takes St. Augustine's ideal *City of God*, a seminal orthodox work, together with Thomist theory, and transposes them into an architecture of Landscape. This, in effect, espouses the supposed doctrine of Aristippus's companion Socratic disciple, Antisthenes. Aristippus, said Augustine, made delight of the body the chief good; Antisthenes, he says, made his chief good the delight of the mind.³⁶ Lante, superficially at least, follows tridentine doctrine with its Augustinian and Thomist emphases. Like Boccaccio's novella based on Aristippus and Antisthenes (though obviously not in subject matter!) it has a pleasing and acceptable storyline, albeit visual, but communicates other matters to initiates with consummate skill. This is undoubtedly a secret of its overwhelming success, for even its distinguished chronicler Montaigne records no hint of any knowledge of the programme. The result of these attitudes, it is suggested, was the possibility of conscious and emphatic placement of an Augustinian perfection, a reference to his influential *City of God*, within the boschetto at Lante [194] [195]. It responds there to Orsini's more diffuse, if controlled, anarchical interpretation of Boccaccio (among others). (Anarchy should not be interpreted here as a judgmental comment but as anarchy with responsibility.)

Lante's "conformities": the Boccaccio connection?

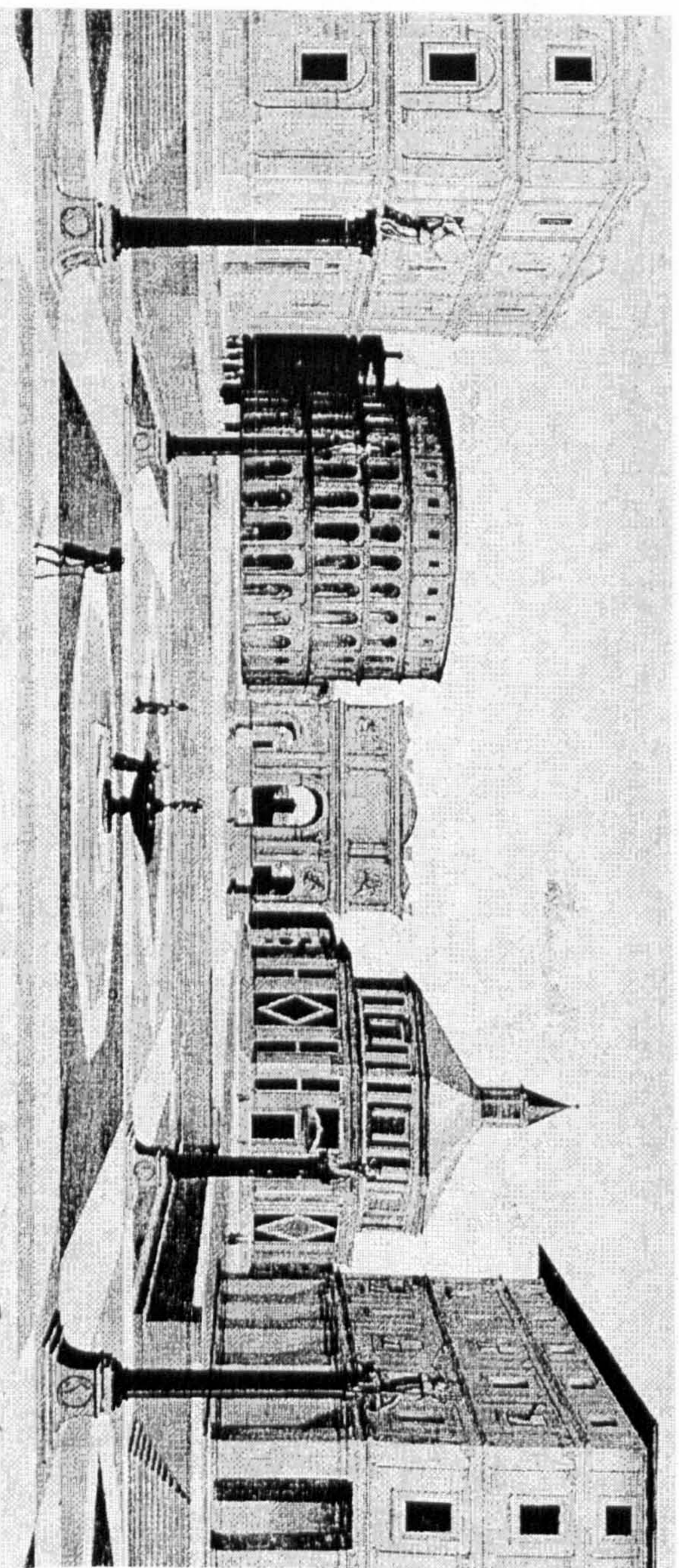
Why is the inherently repressive, unquestioning perfection of Lante more popular than the ebullient probing odyssey of Bomarzo?
Would it still be as popular if the boschetto and the full programme

³⁶. *Mazotta, G.: The world at play in Boccaccio's Decameron*. Princeton 1986. pp 256-257.

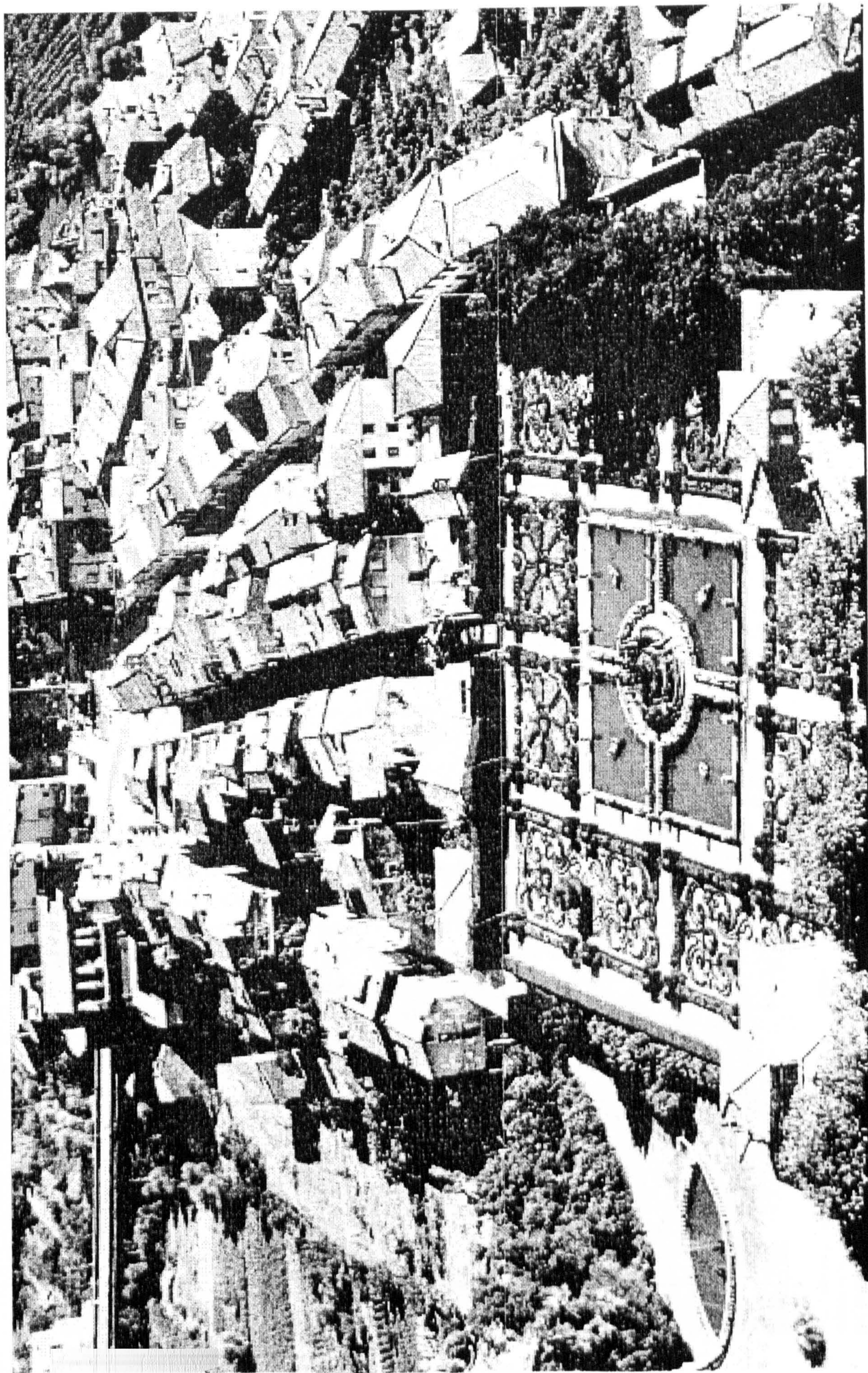
Two famous XVc city images. Both depict space composed of civic architecture which infers hidden space beyond the facades. The floor marks ceremonial space, the arches in each case signify the presence of triumphalism. Top is grid marked, much as d'Este Tivoli or Lante. Space is continuous and compressed.



This matches villa Lante's organisation quite well. For the space associated with the boschetto there we might substitute the inferred space between the framing buildings and the two centralised monumental forms which suggest flow. The foreground recalls templum, mundus, and tholos, its quadripartite form centred on a fountain. We should not think of such space in terms of components. Like villa Lante, it is homogeneous; differentiation is excluded by the form.



Villa Lante:sacred city



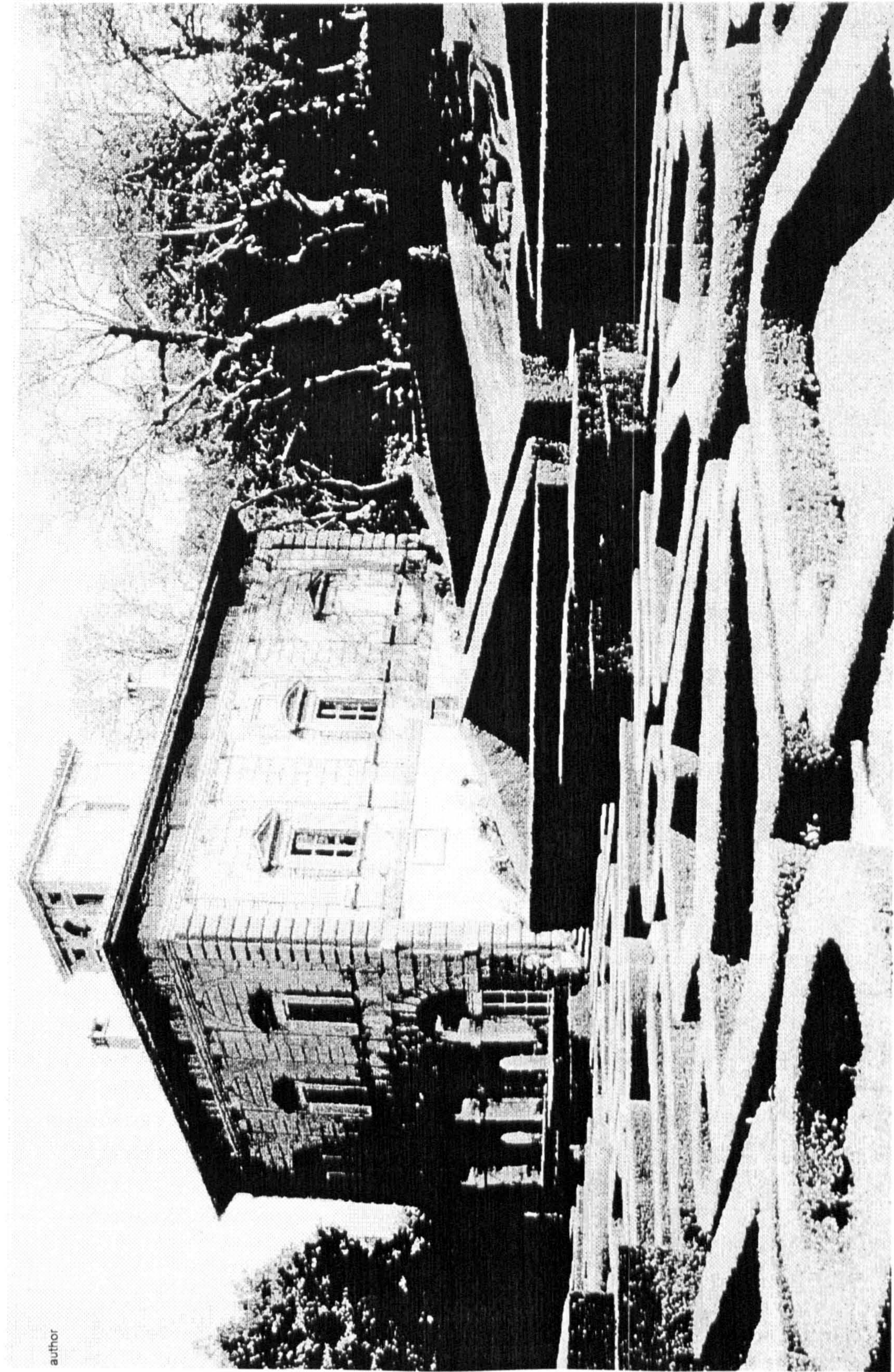
were present or if Bomarzo had been as well preserved? Is it Lante's professional gloss of impersonality, or its lack of superficial confrontation? Would Lante be so popular now were it full of young trees as intended, instead of the somewhat sentimental aged planes with which it exhorts its past? To what effect do unintentional programmatic ideas in each govern twentieth century reactions? Both are richly poetic. Boccaccio's ideologies and melancholic humours, couple with the imagery from *Romance of the Rose* are present either way [196]. Both have large programme components engaging abstract and literary political space. At Lante it dominates; it is all really, but is treated in a more remotely symbolic way than Bomarzo's. Surely it is not that overweening will to impose human ideologies on landscapes that still charms? Sansovino's dedication to his friend in the frontispiece of Sannazaro's *Arkadia* is acute and specific. Lante, certainly on the surface, is not the epitome of Sannazaro's pantheistic antiquarian groves in a Landscape of free if hieratic herdsmen whose complaint can be aphoristically summarised in the Brahms and Joachim mottoes, "fae" and "faf".³⁷ If that seems remote, language has only these occasional points where ideas can be transferred so directly to the visual and aural arts, and this is what Lante uses in a less literal way than Bomarzo. It is very abstract indeed. Perhaps we need not bother to think of the complicated intestine. Bomarzo makes little sense as it remains without some reconstruction. Reconstruction demands penetration of its ideas to be of any use, a deep and difficult navigation fraught with whirlpools and rapids.

Villa Lante's landscape also has all that self satisfaction and shrewd Roman sense of underlying ceremonial hidden in the 'tre-case paintings. Perhaps a cardinal bishop cannot arrive at Epicurean conclusions; imagine the consequence! His architect therefore, Caprarola's boschetto fresh in his mind, resorts to one component from antiquity revealed by those frescos, an essential constituent of all ecclesiastical architecture and explored to the point of exhaustion almost by Alberti, their concealed Pythagorean kosmos. Approved to some extent by Aristotle, this geometric cosmos had its acceptability sealed by Aquinas whose words head this chapter. Set beside Bomarzo's Sacro-bosco, Lante is vast in area. Yet the overriding impression that remains, even now, is of the comparative ranging expansiveness of Bomarzo.

We have proposed and connected Boccaccio's work with Bomarzo. How do we stand at Lante? The opposites are suspect. Indeed, they are so suspect as to induce a strong inquisitiveness. *Gambara* and

³⁷. Joachim "frei aber einsam"; Brahms "frei aber froh", a musical dialogue present in some splendidly beautiful compositions.

author



The modern parterre, though pleasing in its shapes, misses the literary references inherent in the flower filled templum geometry of the original. The geometry disorganises the unity intentions with emphatic shapes.

Longus & "The Rose"

P1196

Orsini were not enemies; they were part of the Farnese magic circle. Gambara was interested in and visited Bomarzo, and Farnese wrote occasional letters to joint friends relating Orsini's engagement with his Landscape. Bomarzo was startlingly original in its design, probably in its programme. Caro, the humanist iconographer, could not see its sense at first. A common contact was Fulvio Orsini, bishop of Spoleto, also an astute iconographer it appears. Orsini's personal inquisition in Bomarzo did not spark off wrath among his high powered curia friends, only the lesser bureaucrats, who were easily dissuaded by these same friends. By comparison, Farnese's Vignola based Landscape at Caprarola is intellectually cramped until its later stages, after Orsini's was well under way. Nor is Caprarola, even Vignola's boschetto, as accomplished as his Lante, where the handling of water is impressive beyond any normal progression. Bomarzo was the first great water garden of the Renaissance. Later, Farnese's greatest power rival, Ippolyte d'Este set about his Tivoli Landscape. The programmes all relate.

Bomarzo, we decided, linked into Boccaccio with a common overall form and Aristippus. If you want rhetorical opposition, the logical place to go is to Antisthenes, ignoring other aspects than the Thomist interpretation. How well each Landscape, Bomarzo and Lante, express the logic of that particular part of Platonic myth needs no further elaboration. Boccaccio was very clever at averting criticism. One of the ways this manifests itself is in multiple interpretations built into his works, not least in the Eclogues, where, like Vergil, he hides critical elements inside immense charm. His letter to Fra. Martino, quoted in the English translation of the Eclogues, reveals much. One of the most eloquent is number five, *Silva cadens*, with its supremely beautiful lament.

"The fifth eclogue is entitled 'The Falling forest' because it treats the decline and in some sense the fall of the city of Naples after the flight of King Louis, whom I mentioned before. Speaking in a pastoral manner, I call the city a 'forest,' for just as wild animals live in the woods, so do men in the cities; and in the same manner I sometimes call men sheep, goats, and cows. There are two speakers, Caliopus and Pamphylus. By Caliopus I understand someone reciting excellently the damages done to the desolate city, for 'caliopes' in Greek is 'good sonority' in Latin, which good sonority in someone can be nothing other than speaking in a proper order. Pamphylus can be understood as any Neapolitan you prefer who loves his city wholeheartedly, since 'pamphylus' in Greek means 'all love' in Latin."

We can clearly see cross-lingual punning at work, concealed analogies, political affiliate ideologies, autobiography, for

Pamphylus may be Boccaccio's own voice.³⁸ Calliope as the muse of epic poetry, points to historical content not satiric or bucolic entertainment. It is the pattern of all allegory and common to the *Eclogues*. This left it open to Vicino Orsini to fuse them on to Epicurean philosophy, and Fulvio Orsini to charm Tridentine Thomism into his mythical spaces which are both Classical and Christian. One suspects that Gambarà lost his stipend for hidden programme in Lante as much as for the expense. Boccaccio's techniques invite us to draw conclusions in this way, for it was the way of the sixteenth century even more than the fourteenth.

Diluvia.

The headwater of the garden is a complex of symbolic allegorical references. We have already discussed the equation Arkadia = Christendom. Eliminate from your mind the present sequestering of the garden from its boschetto. You can drift in and out here, wandering between a large expanse of semi-open woodland filled with fountains and bowers, crossed by shady allees in the French style. Diluvia is flood. Noah's flood was the result of torrential downpour, lunar in origin, not chthonian - though the two were connected. Deucalion's, on the other hand was chthonic. Subterranean powers stopped up an underground river (all rivers had their counterparts underground to make a vascular system). Deucalion's wisdom was the equivalent of Noah's simple piety. Both are myths of the triumph of human wisdom over adverse natural powers. Diluvia at Lante is a circular hole in a wall of rock. Obviously the uppermost imagery here is classical. Of all the space in the Landscape, Diluvia is the most compressed and claustrophobic. It does not share directly in the general spatial freedom between boschetto and paradise.

The reason for the spatial compression is the temples of the muses. Take a closer look at muses, Musaeus, and a Renaissance penchant for crossing languages produces Moses.³⁹ Moses and muses are both expressions of exemplary human wisdom, one through differentiation the other through synthesis. Although this part of the Landscape is not enclosed (you are not allowed to think of its walls), it is fully part of the overall geometry, once amplified by the presence of square aviaries.⁴⁰ It forms components of the most

³⁸. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogues*. tr., J.L. Smarr. New York 1987. pp 217 - 218.

³⁹. Musaeus occurs in one of Boccaccio's sources, an eclogue of the IXc or Xc, by one Theodulus (Smarr 1987 pp 237). In that work Falsehood sings scenes from early mythology, and Truth scenes from Christian mythology, where Greek literature was considered to be a garbled version of the latter. This last was not Boccaccio's view however.

⁴⁰. These are shown on the 1596 engraving and are on the Guerra drawing. They are not on the Catasto plan, and the available illustration of the fresco is insufficiently clear to determine (Coffin).

complex system of subdivision in the platforms, triads, and it is most closely associated with the grove, representing? - rustic simplicity, ancient confusions, or Arkadia, external Christendom?

Mostri again.

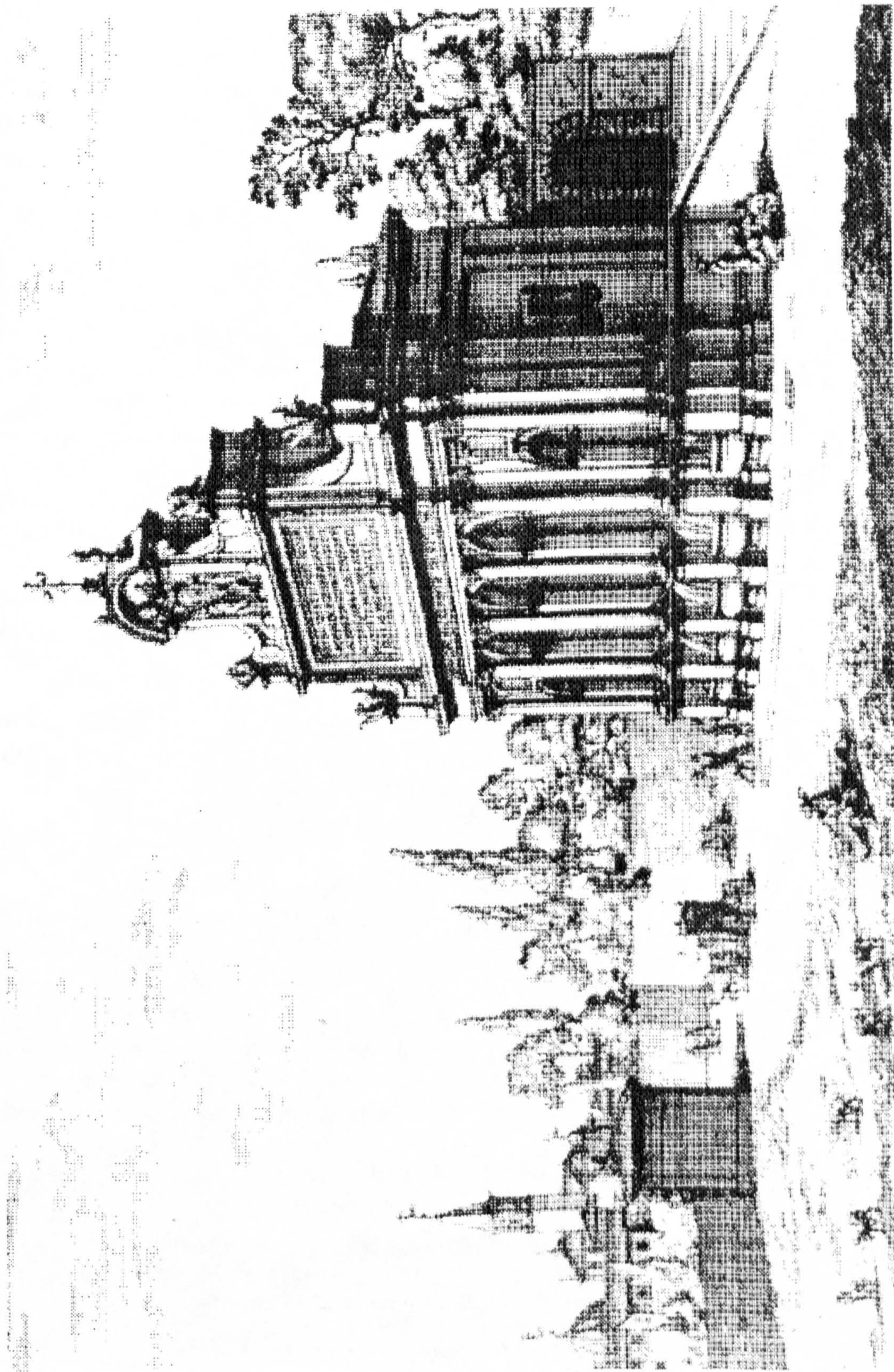
Bomarzo makes well considered statements about knowledge and beliefs. It is a Landscape from which water bubbles, spurts, tumbles and pours in many places and forms. Each mostra represents an energy group from ancient myth, sources of great diversity. The point he seems to make is not one of plurality for its own sake. It is more that plurality of conceptualisation leads to better understanding of the universal One, for he seeks to unify them within an *istoria* that we still cannot completely grasp. Part of that *istoria* is the natural streams which continue regardless of human intervention.

Fontana's mostra for the new aqueduct of the Paola, which has the overt form of a porta triumphalis for its castellum, evokes in an instant the lavacrum and conjures episodes of triumphal entry into the city of returning hero or emperor [197].⁴¹ More to the point, perhaps, it reinforces similar elements in the iconography of Villa Lante, whose owner after Cardinal Gambara was Cardinal Montalto, the builder of Aqua Felice. It was also known for the intervention of Sixtus V, who insisted on Moses replacing Neptune on its mostra.⁴² Lante has only one source. Whatever games the water is made to play, it is the same water, linear, direct. From the mostra of Diluvia it takes its circus to the final templum of the parterre. There we find such beautiful meditative stillness in unconstrained spreading light. We went to great lengths earlier in discussing the derivations and variants of tholoi, and traced their connections with Asklepeios. Tholoi and templum make an intimate unity. It would not be surprising to discover that Asklepeia were one origin of the quadripartite Landscape form. At the heart of Boccaccio's Eclogues is a short passage of lyrical peace.

*He spoke then of how Nathan,
washed in a stream, showed to future people
how he by such a washing would cleanse pigs
of ancient filth; of water turned to wine,
and bankers driven out, and fires, winds,*

⁴¹. This procedure seems particularly to have been fostered by Octavian and Agrippa after their successes in Gaul and the Orient, avidly pounced upon by less effectual successors. It was a theme promoted hard in Octavian's rejuvenating reforms for Rome. (see Zanker's *Power of the Image*

⁴². *Seznec J; La survivance des dieux antiques*. London 1940. tr. B.F. Sessions. pp 264.



Carlo Fontana's porta triumphalis, a mostra for the Aqua Paola, a consciously historicising mostra on the top of a hill.

Morton Waters of Rome pp 171

Porta triumphalis for Aqua Paola mostra

*and swelling waves calmed by Asklepeios' orders,
and ghosts and buried shades brought back to life,⁴³*

The whole of this particular Eclogue is a reinforcement of Boccaccio's *Genealogia*, where he drew together Christian and Greek mythologies. Asklepeios conflates with Christ, healer and resurrector. This confronts Bomarzo's Epicurean interpretation of Boccaccian marvels with exquisite nicety, especially with a pyramid at its centre.

Thus the world and word begin with Deucalion/Noah and end with Asklepeios/Christ along one single stream.

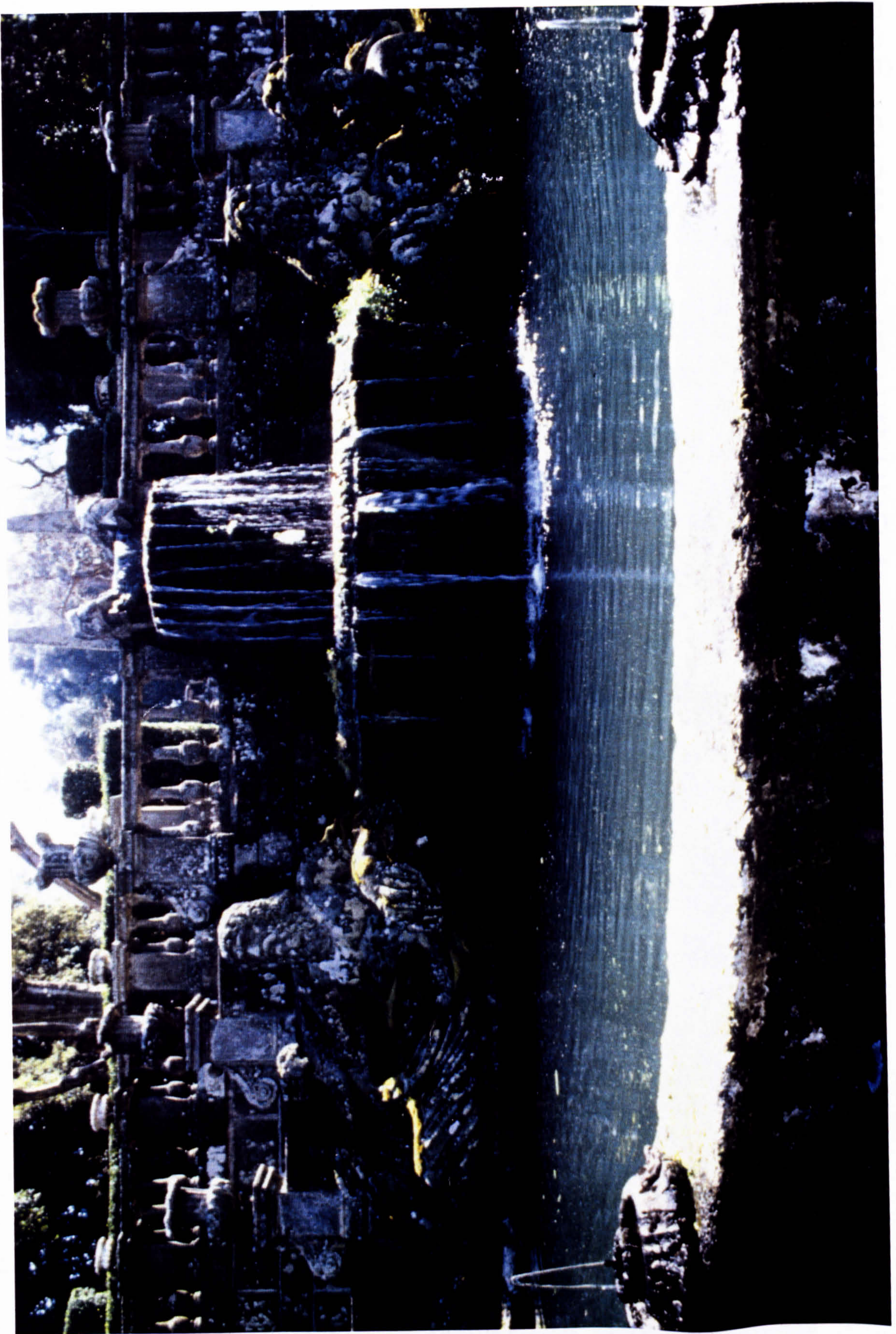
There is another mostra at Lante, but it is an abstraction, a mere episode along the way. Bomarzo's dramatic interpretation of Sannazaro's deliciously malicious image of the river god is here turned into an amiable duality stripped of any primary role, just as in *Arkadia!* [198] Being a duality, the stream can readily slip between him. Take a careful look too, at the dolphin fountain which once graced a baldachin structure. Surely these dolphins are as securely harnessed, if a little more prissy, as those of Orsini's Dionysiac bathtub. Perhaps too they are a little more literal in their interpretation of Boccaccio's meaning. In this position they occupy that space reserved for triumphs and epiphanies in the processional of a via sacra.

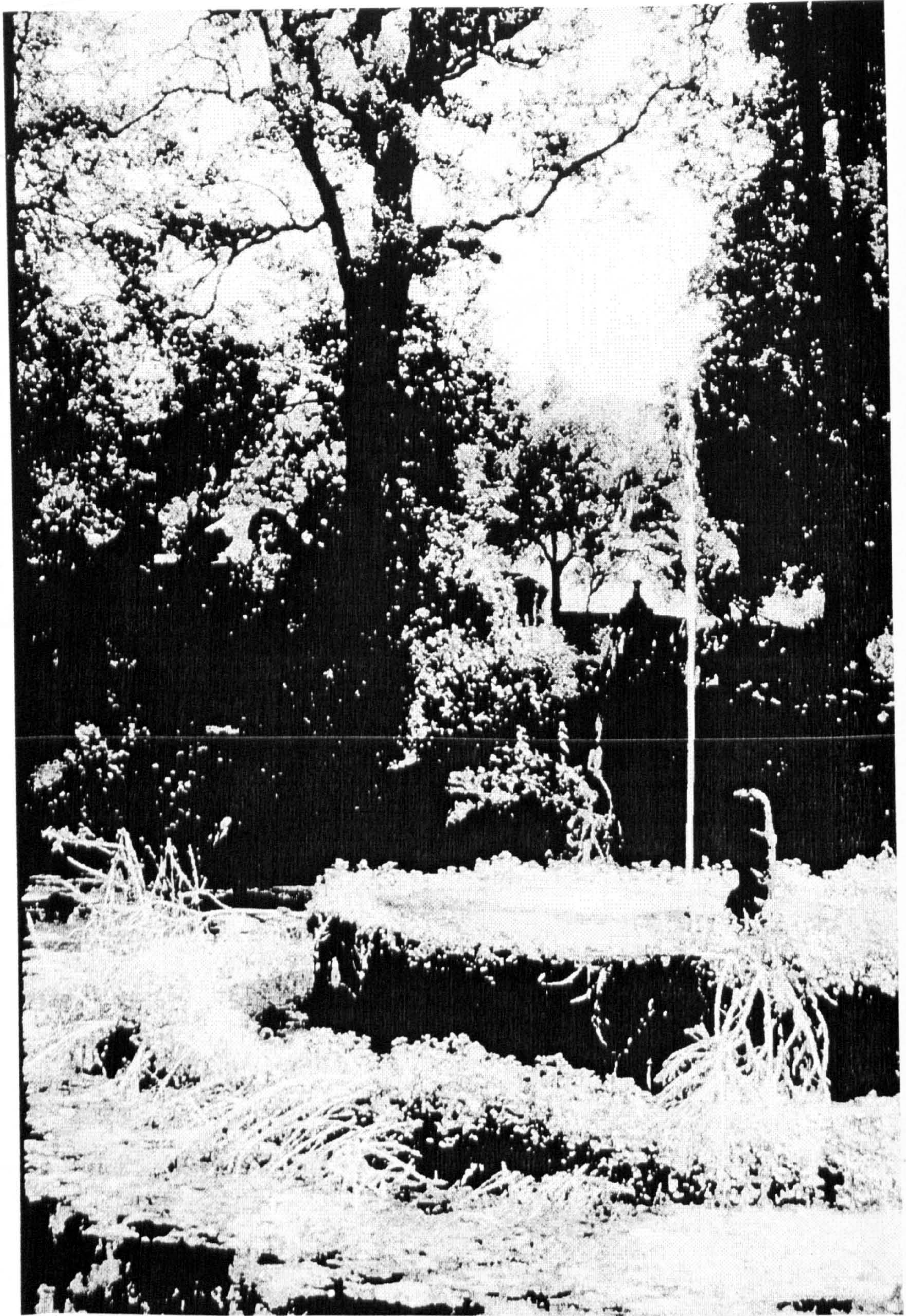
Much of Lante's spatial iconography is obscured by the loss of its Arkadia, its boschetto, whose interactive presence heightened the drama of the central theme [199 - 201].

Humanist propaganda.

Nowadays we are perhaps more able to reconcile the massive body of Hellenistic and humanist philosophy and mysticism within Christianity. Episodes from Apuleius, a writer so proscribed throughout the rise of imperial Christianity and the Middle Ages because of his apparent proselytising of Isis-Serapis that it was thought his works had been totally effaced, are used significantly by Orsini. They are craftily blended with the *istoria* of Boccaccio's influential Eclogues. Along with references to contemporary humanist tracts and anti-doctrinaire cartoons, this probably seemed like insurrection to paranoid orthodoxy. Dream and myth structures switch iconography instantly from one sequence to another without transitional linking logic, just as Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia* and alchemical symbols do.

⁴³. *Boccaccio, G: Eclogues* tr. Smarr. XI.185-190.



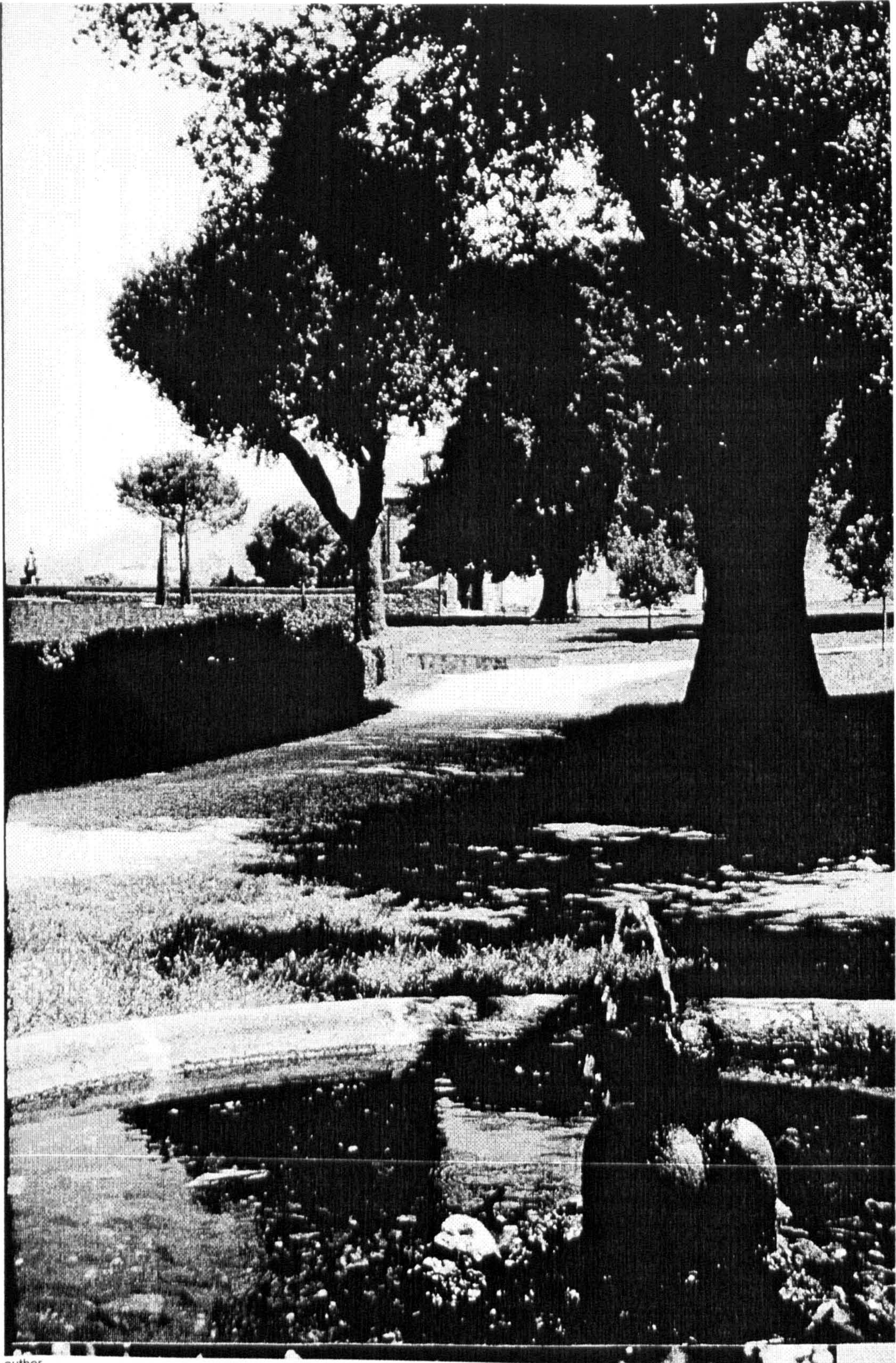


c. Author

This fountain is in the vicinity of No. 2 on the 1596 plan (q.v.) It was once one of a sequence depicting aspects of Arkadian primitivism in the boschetto

Lante's Arkadia





author

Loss of features from the boschetto deprives the formal landscape of the hung garden of cultural dialogue and isolates Lante from its contemporaries for the modern mind. This small fountain is in the vicinity of No. 7 on the 1596 plan (q.v.)

Lante's Arkadia

Summary

Where you have been

Two main foci characterise the work, the first the study of late Hellenistic ideas of Landscape depicted in the Boscotrecase frescos of Chapter Two, the other the discussion of spatial iconography arising from these ideas in two powerful Italian Mannerist landscapes, Bomarzo and Villa Lante. Central in position and an important key to concepts in these last chapters, is the extensive research and synthesis on tholoi. Lante's spatial ideologies centre around re-cyclings and developments related to this form. Ancient literary concepts of Landscape carried through to Renaissance Italy occupy Chapters One and Three, and discussion of the tools of abstract space forms Chapter Four.

We opened with one of the best known and most used late Greek literary Landscape stereotypes, Lamon's orchard, from Longus' novella *Pastoralias*, deriving broadly speaking via Homer from Sumer. Longus concentrates detail on nature and environment rather than his human protagonists, so that, although we have little other evidence for the existence of this particular form of grove, and therefore cannot assume its existence at that time as an agrarian fact, it is presented as a summation of the greater landscape and contrasted with other types, like Philetas' garden or the archaising grove of the Proemial. Chapter Three, pages 71 and Plate 47, looks into the realities of its island context.

Lamon's grove is declared to us as a work of nature, not an artefact, which presents some difficulties in interpreting realities. It is paralleled by Orsini's statement about his sacro-bosco, that it is what it is. However this may be, it is a key Hellenistic representative of what was, or was to become, the quincuncial garden, a Mediaeval stereotype, its combined ancient and Christian iconography gradually losing significance and becoming "the done thing". The symbolic form already had extended spatial implications, as we saw later, which included pyramid or mountain.

This grove is then set amongst Renaissance counterparts that reconstruct its symbolism, where its allegorical potential undergoes many metamorphoses, some disturbing. The thread it starts in this work is later developed through literary and mythological precedents, revealing how the form gained its cultural importance, through the analysis of tholos and its context in Chapter Five. In Lante's procession of spaces the more sinister imagery is discarded. Chapter One draws into Landscape History a selection of ideas

from antique and Renaissance literature, though the threads are not drawn until the closing chapters.

Longus lived around 200AD, the end of the Antonine era, seen by many historians as the last great age of Classicism. The Boscotrecase frescos date from around 12BC, near the end of Octavian's reconstruction of Roman culture and society, contemporary with Ovid, which laid the foundations. Alexandrian in quality and techniques, pre-dating Longus by two hundred years, their images seem to contrast with the scenes painted in *Pastoralias*. Chapter Two discusses their provenance, the villa and villa life, before delving into their spatial symbolism and allegories. They are seen to synthesise a new concept we might call Landscape. However, they could be just fortunate survivors of an extensive tradition of Hellenistic painting. Longus' orchard grove is a portion of a villa society, a detached patrician enclosure in a pastoral setting. Typical of Greek literary precedents it is not stuffed with iconographic objects, despite its dense allegories. Not one of the frescos from Boscotrecase is without such objects, and they reach climactic profusion in Oracle. They are all found in some form in Mannerist Landscape iconography, but following exploration of each, tholos is presented as a linking lynchpin in Chapter Five. Chapter Two involves much research in contemporary literature both from original works and commentaries, as well as comparative studies in other landscape frescos of the time. Though the analysis and synthesis is original, it starts from the work of Von Blanckenhagen.

Literary Longings

Chapter Three resumes the literary theme, taking it in reverse chronology to its logical limits in the first known literature of Sumer. It is a more extensive survey than is generally found, with several reconstructions - Alkinoos Pl 48, Sumerian orchard Plate 51, Tomb of Cyrus II Plate 53. These reconstructions are based on the "descriptions" found, Cyrus' tomb also on remains. What the chapter reveals is persistent imagery constantly re-cycled for different purposes, remaining fairly constant in form, but almost always accreting meanings.

It can be seen from this that Oracle fresco synthesises different ideologies and related forms, the "dissenting", though aristocratic-democratic, informality of Theocritus' groves and the geometric, palace-based orthodoxy of the enclosed Aphrodite garden (or Ishtar, or Astarte), the home for dead heroes. Chapter Four discusses aspects of this, together with some of the illusionistic tricks which form an essential part of mythography (mythopoeic space) allegory and the psychology of audience and procession. We have called the

principle of this Attributive Space because it recalls ideas and attributes deriving from stereotypes like statuary, that are introduced but whose "inner" space lies outside that to which they are attached. In literature it might be called allusory, referring en passant to other works, other writers or ideas. Its purpose is to transmit the mind of the onlooker or participant in the ceremony of the space quickly and without too much thought into space outside but germane to the programme presented. Part of this can be seen in Onians' thesis of *Bearers of Meaning*, and is a vital part of classical design.

Unwinding

Chapter Five¹ is a major research study and synthesis of material connected with the Greek architectural form known as tholos, complete with historical, mythological and mythographic background and references. It focuses on one special tholos Thymele, part of the great Asklepeion at Epidauros, analysing the psychological implications of, and manipulations induced by, the architecture. A signifying element in the Oracle fresco, is the tholos, part of the impressive heroon portrayed, implying oracular power, voices from the dead. The chapter is in part research and analysis, pulling in information from widely scattered sources to produce the only assembled history of the form known to the author.² A large component is synthesis using tools from structural anthropology, pre-history, semiology, psychology, comparative religions, and primitive architecture (Guidoni's label) to reconstruct how it could have come to be used for deification rites. The result is a pattern of probabilities which show how this strange form evolved from basic human organisation of a particularly meaningful bit of earth's surface into architecture. Allusory, if not allegorical, transformations of meaning like those encountered in mythopoeic thought, became sublimated into startlingly pure architectural form, then slowly devolved back into its origins in Landscape, this time with a capital L. The complete research has been compressed within the confines of this thesis, retaining sufficient to make connective sense, since it is a sub-study, however important.

The small chapter called Interlude is important to reconstruction of the deification ritual through which the form became transmitted

¹. The chapter heading, Unwinding, is allusory, like many of the others. Asklepeios apparently means "he who winds (or twines about)". His attribute, the staff, has the entwined snakes of Hermes'. They represent then, and later, the harmonious reconciliation of opposites, release of tension. Hermes is the navigator of labyrinth, assisting dead heroes find their way to the correct sphere of the after life. The tholos Thymele had a labyrinth basement. The uses in festival seem to have been connected with ancestor contact for the purposes of gaining a perspective of life and reducing stress, "unwinding". The chapter's purpose is to unwind the labyrinth of its meaning.

². However, there is a considerable debt to the survey by Florian Saller: Die griechische Tholos. Mainz-am-Rhein 1986, which covers its Hellenistic period.

with expressive potential to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.³ Neo-classicism later reduces it to the conceit of "Temple of Venus", originally a sub-component of its meanings. As part of a processional rite, the opposite part of which was theatre, another temple form, it can be traced back to ideas in Bit-Akitu, the initiatory garden of the kings of Sumer, linked to a city centre that was a religious theatre by its orgiastic processional of life and death - the making and the passing of God-priest-kings who were expected to couple with Innana (Aphrodite).⁴ Semiologists will recognise the debt to Barthes in deconstructing Greek theatre.⁵

The final chapters

It is only in the final chapters that themes come to some kind of rest, where they bifurcate into dialectical polarities within Renaissance thought and belief. In the two great Landscapes of Bomarzo and Lante the dialogue is particularly intense, for Lante seems to be a retort to Bomarzo, and for long had the last word. Brief Tours, Chapter Six, taken from the author's personal journals of Italian travels, presents a moderately informed reaction contrasted with the analysis arising from this research.

Bomarzo follows no normal Landscape garden stereotypes. In view of its creator's knowledge and erudition, it seems unlikely this could result from his personal ignorance. It could be a spatial manifesto about the Mannerist separation of Classical iconography from the accepted Renaissance synthesis Lante re-affirms. Another serious option is that of undermining allegory, for at times we might be forgiven for believing that Ezekiel had been reincarnated as Lord of Bomarzo! We find concurrent ideas for this landscape in elements of the Boscotrecase frescos, the "real" crags and lakes, or the landscapes implied by the Arkadian shepherd. There is a distinctly Epicurean flavour in the rest, deeply sceptical as it is about conventional ideologies.⁶

It is largely in underlying impetus that Bomarzo's Classical Antiquity leaps out at us, its creative inner use a sign of deep assimilation of those ideas. Where other Landscape gardens of the time use the trappings, the elegant objects illustrated in the Boscotrecase frescos, Bomarzo largely eschews them. Helicon is there, but with ambiguities which draw into the image both the significance of Apollo and Arkadia, and the processes of that

³. That it was an equally important part of Islam should not be lost sight of. Many mosques have one as an integral part of their external precinct.

⁴. Theatre here is used generically and broadly as space set aside for the performance of communal bonding rite, not in the more specific sense of "a theatre".

⁵. *Barthes, R: The responsibility of forms. Paris 1965*

⁶. Which also fits Orsini's retirement from public service into a private life of family and friends.

particular mythic space embedded in alchemy (Pl 120, 130). Helicon was part of a mountain symbol/allegory. True, we find Persephone as monumental, as impersonal as the statue depicted in Oracle, a stereotype, with coronet and command (Pl 113, 122), but then look at Demeter, that faintly sleazy, laid-back lady squirting water from various parts whilst untold happenings go on around her (Pl 140). The one is close to antique statues, the other in a different world altogether.

We can find here the elegant arguments implied by the Arkadian group in Oracle, the Theocritan tradition of a free and limitless grove, or the Promethian aspects of Polyphemus in the aroused giant from before the Golden Age, gazing into his savage "Ninferno" (Pl 126). This grove is, as Sansovino implied, an ancestral Arkadia where Pan is first king. All those strenuous inner assertions of autochthony from the frescos are present, from the very heart of the composition, the land itself, to which the carved rocks properly belong, its mostri, and its manipulation of the labyrinth. And the barco di mostri, terminus of the aqueducts? or the source of all wisdom, Arkadia itself? Since Orsini had no real mountain to hand on his fertile Tuscan plateau, he turned the fashionable "sacri monti" into "sacro bosco", using a device well known to Hellenistic religions, implied, Attributive, or allegorical space, to make his Parnassus. This summary is broad, but the Landscape was, and remains, densely attributive space from which, once entered, there is no escape!

Orsini uses sacred geometry in overlapping series - root two squares, and root five (golden mean) rectangles, implied root three triangles (Pl 121). They fit into the land forms as though they belong (in contemporary terms) making no particular attempt to dominate, which is innovatory. The most startling innovation is the extent and variety of mostri starting from a lake, which, in alchemy is where king and queen, sun and moon, couple in a ritual fusion of opposites, the so called "first work". There is also the presence of Hermes with all its implications. Into such polyvalent imagery, Orsini feeds other allegorical programmes related to humanist literature with antique classical bias, until almost every feature is stuffed to capacity (Pl 146, 148, 150).

The pure and single stream from Monte San Angelo

Bomarzo's exuberant theme of water issuing in profuse diversity from the earth's internal processes is taken up more earnestly by Lante's programmers, where it is treated with greater sophistication

in a very full contradictory answer.⁷ Lante draws together the threads of this research into its subtle modulations of orthodoxy and dissension. More devious than Bomarzo, its programme and objective imagery (as in rite), contrive to conceal erudite complexities under a cloak of utterly serene simplicity that seemingly obeys the edict of the Council of Trent impeccably.⁸ There is one stream of water, issuing fully flushed from "natural" rocks carefully construed by human ingenuity at the foot of the mountain, - for here there is a real mountain - which then proceeds through a sequence of adventures, like lovers in a Hellenistic novella (*Pastoralias?*), outside which the boschetto, altogether vaster in area, is hinterland, Arkadia subordinated to the sacred city, superficially not dissimilar to Lamon's orchard.

Ritual cleansing, removal of blood guilt, the theme of deification at the *lavacrum agrippae* at Rome's *Porta triumphalis* (Pl 179), reaches Lante through its connection with Old S. Peter's (Pl 182), within the sacred Christian precinct of Rome. The processional of Lante's terraces is that of its urban design. We are surely intended to see here at Lante a parallel between Augustine's "City of God", expressed in every repetition of the square proportion and quincuncial form (Pl 184, 185), with its thread of water (to be read also as The Word), the thread of life itself, a single flow stemming from the universality of Rome and leading to eternal bliss. All is deemed in axial line with the distant mountain at whose foot this pleasance nestles, a feature to become a stereotype of the Neo-Renaissance and Baroque (Pl 171). The quincunx as templum projects, in implied space, into a pyramid, the crystalline city. In other words, the regionalist and, in modern European terminology, pluralist, concept stated by Bomarzo's diverse mostri, is flatly contradicted. That more ancient pluralist idea is, at Lante, committed to "countryside", the boschetto beyond the divine city, then with its splendid unaltered fountains (Pl 172). At the same time the two elements were not completely separated, as they are now, and a wanderer in the boschetto could drift into the terraces at their head, as was the water.

The programme analysis of Bomarzo extends known existing ones, particularly in the discussion of dialogue potential, hidden literary programmes and implied or obtuse form. It seeks to balance the perceived Freudian bias of Bredekamp. The synthesis is original, a reconstruction, exploring Mannerism's manipulation of classical iconographic themes. That of Lante explores aspects not covered by

⁷. The analysis does not supplant, but supplements that propounded by D.R. Coffin in his *The villa in the life of Rome*.

⁸. Paradoxically it can't, since the extreme refinement of detail and form is itself arcane, and in this Bomarzo is perhaps more approachable.

Coffin, who offers the best explanation of the surface programme, as well as the potential dialogue with Bomarzo. Bomarzo explores the synthesis of apparent opposites, their harmonious or productive conjunction, Lante their essential separateness. Both are "Ovidian" in their cyclical space, though Bomarzo emphasises the presence of death in life, Lante that of life in death.

Inside Landscape

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Inside Landscape: an iconography of delusion

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