THE GARDEN AS POLITICAL FORM

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The Garden as Political Form
from archetype to Project

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Summary

The present thesis is a project, which reconsiders the garden as an example of shared domestic space, and gardening as a collective praxis. This project draws on a reconsideration of the garden as an archetype of ‘ideological enclosure’ and, hence, a spatial device with which alternative rules of coexistence may be recognized and practiced. At large, the thesis may contribute to the discussion on whether and how architectural form gives legibility to alternative ideas of living together.

Despite the abundant literature on gardens, the political and social aspects of their architectures have not been sufficiently addressed. Moreover, with the recent advent of a rhetoric of ‘green spaces’, anywhere vaguely planted is often called a ‘garden’, despite being hardly ever distinguishable from other planted enclosures such as parks. Yet, precisely the ubiquitous use of the term in architectural discourse makes it difficult to interrogate the object. This suggests a problematic loss of legibility of the garden as a paradigmatic form of appropriation and distribution of land and social relations. Through this paradigm, it is argued, one may understand how the city itself is constructed and imagined. Every element involved within its architecture mediates both technicality and symbolism. The inclusion of exotic plants, irrigation arrangements, and botanical knowledge, for instance, are not innocent but often identified with dominant ideologies, geopolitics and concepts of urban territory. Such a hypothesis is here investigated through a dialectic relationship between historical analysis and design methodology. Three singular historical events – the Cistercian cloister (twelfth century), the suburban Roman villa (sixteenth century) and the English allotment (nineteenth century) – show how the archetype has been transformed to serve different projects of power, ownership, and household. Each analysis is then used as a springboard for specific design strategies that challenge mainstream ideas of ownership, especially within cities under increasing pressures from real-estate markets. The thesis thus proposes an alternative theory of the garden which reveals what its architecture may become.
Introduction
The garden: An archetype of ideological enclosure

Political questions become inextricable when disguised as cultural ones.

Few forms of architecture have ever been so widely adored and discussed as that of the garden. It has served countless times as a significant paradigm of the human experience, for Eastern and Western cultures. Despite so many variations on the subject in both literary and built forms—or precisely because of it—the term ‘garden’ has become difficult to define. Today, most would say, it readily evokes an image of ‘innocence,’ somewhere for contemplation or cultivation of flowers, birds, fishponds, rocks, and sculptures. On a conceptual level, it is also commonplace to associate the term with a possible return to nature and, thus, a refuge from the pressures of urban life. For architectural commissions of various scales, from urban planning and real-estate development to interior design and fashion runways, it has become indispensable to their so-called success to incorporate spaces termed ‘gardens.’ Moreover, with the advent of a mainstream focus on sustainability, architects have been increasingly compelled to deploy gardens as a means to improve environmental factors while providing a flashy image of ‘eco-friendliness.’ One may discover, however, that the architecture of the garden has deeply social implications since it is closely linked to historical concepts of household and property. The reading of this relationship reveals how groups of people have recognised and privatized their own idea of living together.
The Dutch designer Piet Oudolf has captured that innocent/ecostylish image of the garden in recent projects, such as his Hortus gardens for the 2012 Serpentine Pavilion, London. [Fig. A] and the garden renewal of the High Line, in New York, inaugurated in 2009. [Fig. B] These differ widely in programme, site, size, and form. Yet they do share the strategy of creating a paradoxical sense of "freeing up public space" which allegedly allows weather, time and so-called "realistic communities"—perennial plants, insects and humans—to "spontaneously and continually occupy the city." [9] [Fig. C] It is interesting to note here how two of the most politically charged terms of the present decade—"realistic" and "occupy"—frame gardening as a natural phenomenon rather than a social act. Oudolf's approach is, in fact, not new but situates him as part of a generation of designers influenced by French botanist Gilles Clément. His manifesto, since 1980, has described the Earth as a "planetary garden" to be cultivated through the method of "the garden movement." This approach has been practically very successful, because it involves mostly the planting of perennial species which are low-maintenance and do not require intensive gardening. This means the designer can operate with a "soft hand" and the afterlife of his design will also require less labour, cost, and be more efficient. The concept had been comprehensively tested in Clément's Parc Henri Matisse. [Fig. D] proposed for the 1990 Euralille masterplan, in France. Here we see, unquestionably, the achievement of the designer's intellectual seriousness put into practice. Some interventions, however, such as the "naturally-germfree" LifeBox garden are conceptually questionable as they ended up "naturalising" the least natural of things—corporate public space—and therefore "over-identifying" with neoliberal ideas of the city. Oudolf's talk on the latter concludes is also problematic in its own way, in celebrating austerity at exactly the time that the United Kingdom had elected a new Conservative government. Additionally, his High Line project helped to speed up the high-end gentrification of Manhattan's Meatpacking District. Perhaps more alarming, however, is the fact that these examples obliterate the most defining trait of the garden: to spatially and formally establish an idea of limits. In enclosing and transforming the ground, gardens and gardening inevitably produce limits. While configurations where the eye is deceived into missing boundaries may yield pleasant views, the obliterating of limits can be critically reductive once gardens become illegible as the architecture that they are. Gardens are architectural not necessarily in the sense of authorship but design but, first and foremost, as urban entities which are always historically constructed. For their forms produce spaces that can, once inhabited and used, transmit ideas of coexistence and acquire social meaning. In other words, gardens put a take on life. Such a high impact on the daily lives of users is perhaps most evident in the work of Brazilian designer Roberto Burle Marx, especially in his collaborations for Brasilia, the capital of Brazil. The city was built on a twelve-kilometre grid and completed only five years after it was originally planned in 1957, when Lucio Costa conceptualised it as a cross of "monumental" and "residential" axes. [Fig. E] While the former formalised the civic sphere as a symbolically empty expanse flanked by administrative buildings, the latter organised the domestic realm into a grid of large city blocks—the superquadras—measuring 300 by 300 metres each. [Fig. F] As Costa had intended the superquadra to become...
"socially aggregating"—or "ordo gregis"—he interconnected them with a network of roads and pedestrian pathways. Each block was designed to function as a communal neighbourhood, in the form of a "concluded element" clearly framed by a linear mass of trees. It didn't matter if, within the block, building typologies varied as long as the ground between them—the "interquadr"—provided the everyday with a civic quality. Costa and Burle Marx saw "green space" here not as "leisure space", but as space that could articulate the individualizing interiors of modern apartments with the broader collectiveness of the urban block. Burle Marx's contribution enabled this with a series of gardens, designed to resemble "living rooms" under the shades of tropical plants, as well as to allow unexpected encounters to occur. [Fig. G] These gardens, thereby, were spaces of mediation between the "private"—legally delimited by the apartments stationed above their plinth—and the "public", represented by what was outside the superquadra, including the monumental axis and the congested urban core. As the perimeter mass of trees delimited each block as a "world" of its own, the internal gardens, in turn, mirrored this world, albeit on a smaller scale, as embodiments of the modern concept of capital city. Thus if "the project of Brasilia is a practice of limit", the superquadra gardens analogously re-enact such practice from the vantage point of the city residents, who become both actors and—according to Costa—"spectators".

Part of the problematic found in the gardens of Oudolf and Clément, which stand in conceptual opposition to those of Burle Marx and Costa, is the fact they become almost indistinguishable from parks, "farms" and "forests". Although all of these terms do refer to "planted-enclosures", they are far from interchangeable. This is not only a matter of scale, shape or function but, primarily, one of inherently distinct relationships with the city, the territory and its landscape. The "garden" differs from these insofar as it is a domestic space, one conceptually related to households and ownership. Hence the general definition of the term: "a piece of ground adjoining a house, used for growing flowers, fruits, or vegetables." While its present association with horticulture is mostly Western and can be traced to the sixteenth century, its association with the house is cross-cultural and far older, if not immemorial. Etymology offers clues as we see the term enter Middle English from garden, Old Northern French.
on what should be considered "sacred." That is, enclosures helped to construct and crystallize a collective reality for the world. By enclosing land, thus — by opening their life from everything outside which was not sacred — these groups would develop a prototypical notion of ownership. And, while the formation of the settlement implied a way in which the entire community had agreed to live, the formation of gardens was specifically concerned with each household. Since most groups shared the same knowledge, resources, tools, and beliefs, their gardens varied little from another. Being used for ritual that generally involved worshipping, bonfires, keeping animals, cultivation, threshing, marking land ownership, and storing food adjacent to the house. However, similar, each garden was a unique microcosm that, in the finitude of its open-air enclosure, posed a dialectic relationship with that of the settlement: on one hand, it was an artificial miniature version of the larger whole, on the other, it allowed the possibility of an alternative way of living. It is perhaps this space, where actuality coexisted with potential, that lays bare the implicit etymological traces of 'garden' to want.

As the garden emerged as a walled enclosure amongst others, its form produced spatial seduction by means of enclosure. That is, it has been a paradoxically inscribed space that exists only in direct relation to what it leaves outside its walls. Although that may be true of other enclosures, the garden is arguably unique in making such mutual validation physically tangible at just one glance. Spatially speaking, it is a relatively small-scale, continuous wall, openness to the sky, sense of orientation and centrality are the main factors that contribute to such legibility. Additionally, it is singular in being a 'domestic space' that caters to humans, fauna, flora, productivity, idleness, taming nature, seasonal time, weather, and renewal. Hence the garden is a place that iseter to all spaces of the household, as well as the surrounding settlement, with its larger territory, and the wilderness. In the desert conditions found on the Iranian Plateau, gardens would therefore become emblems of inhabitation, fertility, irrigation, symmetry, cardinality, order, and unity. They were thus the 'rural' of a life that was not yet possible outside their walls. In the first millennium BC, for instance, the Achaemenid king Cyrus would use both gardens and the set of gardening to legitimize his authority. The gardens grew within his palace in the capital city Pasargadae — the king on rituals to architecture, see Her.Virna Avinash and Marlo S. Gett (eds.), Ritual and the Architectural Ritualization of Sacred Space (Leuven, 2003).

35. On the ability of rituals and programmatically rule within spaces of the household, see Richard Bradley, Rituals and Sanctioned Change in Ptolemaic Egypt (Oxford, 2010).


Fig. 1, Chasht-bagh, the ubiquitous configuration of the walled gardens in the Iranian Plateau.


41. There is almost no physical remains of the early Achaemenid garden except for the stairs, which architectural support were used for spa-like gardens in palace gardens, Her. Baran "The Ancient Springs in Persia, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).


Yet, prior to these appropriations, the idea of terrestrial paradise as a garden was rooted in the original meaning of the word "paradise," as an enclosed space for "substance and happiness." A place where one "shall dwell" and "wear clothes." So, even here, when the garden was not physically attached to a house, it still embodied the limited, vital, and civic conditions of a household. This took a turn when Xenophon brought the term "paradise" into the Greek language to describe instead the enclosed hunting parks made for the pleasure of Persian royals. By that time, around 300 BC, the Greek term for garden was "kēras." This did not mean orchard but "farmyard" with a strictly productive connotation, because these gardens existed within an idea of the house as oikos, identified by Aristotle as the "house of economy, management of biological life." Hence, in ancient Greece, only palaces and temples would have "paradise" within their walls. Meanwhile, to the Romans, it made perfect sense to assimilate the original Persian concept of paradise to their domestic courtyards. The term "hortus," the Latin word for "walled orchard" or "kitchen garden," had not only pragmatic but deeply social implications. It belonged to the realm of the domus, or house, which—according to Roman law—was the locus of the domus, or "master of the household," and his extended "familia." The domus was a unit, composed of a sequence of rooms, and functioning as a sort of microcosmic public space to accommodate meetings between the master and his clients, associates, and subordinates. As visibility was crucial to legitimise these social relationships as "public," all hosting spaces were aligned by a single axis that was visible from the street entrance. Their sequencing ordered various rituals of hospitality offered by the domus, where each room was associated with specific gestures that provided a narrative of the "familia" as a tangible "system of alliances." The hortus, located either at the rear of the plan or within a central peristyle, was the most inclusive and visible space of all. The peristyle marked— and monumentalised—the legal procedure through which the land had been enclosed and, therefore, became evaluable as a "thing," legally recognised as property of the domus as a juridical person. The hortus inside would, moreover, give this ownership a permanent character through various signs of personal use and cultivation, such as aged olive tree, unearthed overgrown roots, decorations and, especially, fountains and irrigation. So, this
was a microcosmic place which represented the core of the family, where members would personally garden colourful shrubs of vines, myrtles and roses in order to offer them to the extended household during social rituals of worship and dinner parties, ultimately “naturalising” their right to possession. As such, the hortus was an idyllic self-representation of power and appropriation, as it hid the true exploitative workings of the household, which was mostly reproduced by slave labour. Effective, because Romans did not like to use labour of any sort, especially in representational spaces like the peristyle, they used gardening as a way to cultivate, or “teach”. This ritual became crucial in creating an apparent suspension of business within that ritualistic circuit of affairs between master and clients. [Fig. K]

To reinforce that effect, the space was periodically opened to strangers who, in turn, had to abide by the ius horti or ‘garden law’, typically inscribed at the entrance of the space. Juridically that meant that neither the city nor any other law could apply to the garden enclosure. As this periodic status paradoxically downplayed the actual private landownership of the donors, the association of garden with the image of ‘terrestrial paradise’ was key to tactfully reminding guests and newcomers of the ruling power of the donors.

The hortus would further become, during the later part of the Roman Empire, indispensable to a new type of dwelling, the villa, as part of the colonisation, gentrification, and systematic expansion of the limits of the Roman Agro region towards a larger territory. Its aforementioned idyllic character would legitimise yet another controversial project of class empowerment, at the expense of land appropriation and slave labour. The villa was not only a country retreat but also a theatre of the “good life.” It choreographed social rituals through a monumental spread of rooms and garden enclosures. Here the hortus and its ‘programme’ would become much larger and splintered into a series of peristyles and hypodromes, composed of taller trees, grand pools, groves, and sculptures. [Fig. L]

Remaining visible or even open to the public, these gardens helped their luxurious estates to be seen as morally acceptable, by staging the impression they shared out the joy of the land. Meanwhile, in practice, their enclosures enabled the owners to exploit and control not just the area of the villa but also its surroundings. It is here that the walled garden’s ontological trait of producing indigence by means of

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The thesis argues that the garden is an archive of ideological residue whose political form allows a group of people to recognise and practice their own idea of living together. The term archipelago is here understood as an example — in the sense of a paradigm. At the same time that this proposition acknowledges that the garden has no universally accepted form, it opens up the possibility of understanding the garden as a paradigmatic urban construct. As such, the garden is a space historically constructed, whose formal relationships epitomise a problematic context which it at once helps to generate but also to make intelligible. One can thereby understand certain passages of history — such as the development of a given natural environment or the development of a city — through its architectural form. Moreover, as a category, archipelagoes can also be taken as “an alternative to the idea of type.” This approach therefore offers a methodological alternative to most
contemporary scholarship with regards to the garden, which often defines it either in purely aesthetic or ecological terms, as if these were aspects devoid of ideology. The reading of the garden as an archetype reveals, in fact, that nothing about it can ever be entirely freed of intention. It is an ideologically "natural" as evidenced by the fact it has been subjected to continuous and continuous iterations. Its form is preconditioned and motivated by various degrees of decision-making on how to enclose, organise and cultivate space. This involves land, water, living beings and, crucially, social relationships. Whether a garden is designed or not, it is always made by and for someone. Its construction and cultivation can be taken as evidence as an idiosyncratic forces and active subjects with a stake in these processes. For this reason, understanding the garden through the device of the archetype may overcome previous institutional histories or sensory evidence on the subject. Most of these have been concerned only with state-centric gardens up to the eighteenth century, which happened to be owned by the very same elite with the power to write history as we know it. This thesis does not dismiss these case studies but, on the contrary, seeks to understand how their architectures have been able to put forward dominant ideologies and practices while leaving room for alternatives. The latter may perhaps be found in gardening as collective knowledge and action from the vantage point of the gardener as a labourer - one that seldom appears in most specialised literature. The close spatial reading of architectural form and its aftermath may thus reveal the potential of a counter-project that is latent in every garden. Finally, the political is the shaping of the possibility of conflict, established in the grouping of distinct forces, while form is a positive act of (de)limitation and separation. Architectural space becomes a political form as it preconditions antagonist relations by making them tangible. By the same token, all mammal endures may ineluctably be political. The garden, it is argued, stands out for its sheer ideological function, through which ethical boundaries are made physical with the utmost intensity. As we have seen, it originated purely in order to display the division between what was sacred (inside) and what was profane (outside). It is because of its rendering of this fundamental distinction that garden enclosure here defined as an archetype of formal and space.

Form: Four Architectures of Urban Transformation. "Architecture is the armature ofler consciences, and the architect is the consciency of these armatures", asserts an architect at the core of the Frankfurt School. This is the basis of the Frankfurt School's theory of architecture. The architect is the consciency of the social armature, and the armature is the consciency of the social process. As the philosopher Bruno Latour has put it, "architecture is a means to an end, and the end is the realization of the social armature, which is not a事后性 toss up (as the architects would have it). It is a political decision. In this regard, the Belgian painter Peter Landuyt, together with Jiří Štrempek and Gustav Molter, have used the term to argue that the political nature of urban form, and how cities should be understood as a complex process of mediation and decision, in which form is preeminent. From these perspectives, the political form of architecture becomes a political form that makes itself manifest both visually and spatially to be used as an instrument by a given group of individuals who inhabit it. This hypothesis is based on the possibility of action without the preconditions of institutional politics. And that it is important to be "real" in the sense that only those who are interested in the political nature of urban form, can be involved in the making of these decisions. For quotations and references, see Appendix.

The English allotment project is perhaps the most significant example of a spatial enclosure through which one can understand the critical passage in the Western history of ownership. The Cistercian cloister marks the shift from a network of autonomous settlements, governed by families, towards nation-wide cities, governed and taxed by the centralising organisations of power. The suburban Roman villas emblematised the moment in which nation-state cities expanded their territories through the extensive colonisation, suburbanisation, and exploitation of rural land and labour. The English allotment epitomises the processes through which the modern city has ultimately completed the private re-urbanisation of industrialisation and urbanisation of the open-field agriculture and its landscape. Even though this shift started over two centuries ago, its paradigm still lives on in the status quo, only in updated forms. Contemporary gardens such as those designed by Gilles Clement may be fresh and botanically innovative, but they render perspectives that are just as limiting as picturesque gardens. For this reason, the thesis 'ends' with its analysis of English allotments, from their emergence until the present day.

The thesis develops through three parts, each on a category of 'garden enclosure.' These parts compose an alternative theory on how gardens have operated as political forms of legitimating projects of power, ownership, and household. The Cistercian cloister is seen
as 'archetypal' as it is arguably the most exemplary take on the original family-ruled enclosure from which emerged the horstus conclusus. Its configuration adheres to the liturgical practice of communal settlement. The category 'monumental,' applied to the Roman example, refers to the magnification of the horstus into an outstanding public monument within suburban villas. Its design was highly theatrical to formalise, ritualise and, as a result, institutionalise the exhaustion of rural land. The more recent English allotments is the image of 'pastoral' politics. It addresses the normalisation of urban re-territorialisation of land into garden plots which have formally dissolved the archetype and conceptually reduced it to a simple tool for urbanisation. English allotments serve not only for food production, self-help and education but, also, to discipline proletarian families by instilling in them an innocent image of the very landscape that produced their subsistence condition. What is at stake behind this gradual loss of legibility, it is argued, is the variety of ways in which each garden appropriated the archetype to enable distinct projects.

Despite having controversial agendas, these examples share a crucial pedagogical dimension: they turned gardening into a sort of self-care and, therefore, inherently an instrument of resilience and solidarity. In their own transformations of the kyrtos, these planted enclosures either refused or complied with the dominant ideologies of their times. Yet to our present sensibility, some of them tend to be placed low on the list of 'beautiful gardens' recommended to architects for visiting and inspiration. The consensus priority of today seems to be the calming, relieving, and almost liberating visual experiences of greenery together with a profusion of vegetables artificially brought together into tamed exterior. Irrespective of beneficial psychological effects, what else is left of those once-powerful garden forms? Could they be still re-appropriated by alternative projects for recognisable enclosures? And why would these be relevant today? The present research therefore urges us to uncover not only the 'actualities' of such paradigms, but also to argue for their 'possibilities'. Hence it poses a dialectic relationship between historical analysis and design methodology, in which it re-appropriates the formal logic of each case study to propose new collective gardens that may challenge, or mainstream ideas of ownership. This hypothesis is not only a project of architecture history but also a critique of new design practices which overlook the garden as an ideological enclosure. Contemporary gardens—such as those by Gilles Clément, James Corner, and Piet Oudolf—oblitrate the visibility of limits. In doing so, these designs do not cease to be 'ideological' spaces as they do embody the neoliberal idea of the urban territory as a soft, ever-expanding, and seemingly spontaneous—thus apolitical—landscape.

On the one hand, this generation of (skilful) designers poses an exciting paradigm of 'hands-on architect-gardeners.' On the other, their projects dismiss the most anthological trait of garden architecture which is to be self-evident domestic enclosures. The significant fact is that gardens have been historically connected with the space of the household is equally absent from Clément's generation. For this absence, so-called 'gardens' as those of the High Line, are indistinguishable from urban parks. Although such cases may help the sceptical reader to understand the urgency of the present thesis, they are not the most appropriate examples through which to develop its alternative theory. As most critiques, the research has started from the opposite form to its object of criticism: The Persian garden.

Walled, enclosed, introverted, microcosmical, sacred, horticultural, domestic, purposeful and, at the same time, gratuitous, gardens built in Iran before the twentieth century—either within deserts or cities—are the utmost examples of ideological enclosures. That is so precisely because they make their limited interiors tersely visible and distinguishable from their contexts. As the research has taken those as a working starting point, it discovered several facts that have determined all subsequent selection of examples, and their structuring into three chapters. First of all, Persian architectural knowledge and horticulture have been historically transmitted to ancient Greece and Rome. Second, the incorporation of that microcosmic concept of the garden into the dwelling—in the form of the horstus—has allowed Romans to refine ancient notions of ownership into property law. Since the horstus have after that become the most influential garden to Western architectures, the author and her supervisors have decided to investigate its possible role in the spatial and conceptual developments of private property. The limitation to the Western examples has helped the author evaluate what examples would fall into these criteria. The selection of case studies is a thesis in itself, and it is through its cut, that the architect
cannot avoid projecting her operative take on history.

Due to the projective nature of a 'PhD by Design', the selection of examples would have to not only prove the garden as an ideological enclosure in support of private property but, also, revealing its potential to enabling alternative projects. Another criterion was to select examples which had both written and built evidence of their forms and aims. As the Persian idea of paradise garden has influenced the Roman hortus, and this would later become the Christian image of Mary's womb in the form of the hortus conclusus, monastic gardens have been the obvious choice. No other example has come to mind except for monastic gardens on eastern Europe which were promptly discarded in favour of arguably Western ones. The author has browsed through the gardens within twelfth-century Cistercian monasteries but has eventually discovered the Cistercians had consciously used the hortus conclusus to define their settlements away from the city and private property. After the first chapter, it became clear that the thesis should only consider a variety of historical iterations on the roman concept of the hortus conclusus. Cistercian monasteries had been notably important in ancient roman domus, and so, have suburban renaissance villas been a reinterpretation of both. At this point, the research has fallen into an intriguing circle — one from which both researches and supervisors did not want to turn away. The question was how to frame such prolific type and period in architecture history. The answer came with the rediscovery of Villa Peretti, designed by Domenico Fontana in 1585, and was the prototype of the modern urban park and star-shaped — thus infinite — planning of urban territory. The second chapter should undoubtedly stop at there since such concepts have dominated Western architecture throughout the following three centuries. This influence would gradually end the garden while a finite domestic enclosure and, thereby, the collective legibility and use of its political form, thus, its spatial power of establishing limits. The analyses of radial gardens, such as those by Andre Le Notre, would be far behind within overall argument. It was at this stage that the consideration following generation, the so-called 'picturesque' landscape, appeared to constructively lead the thesis into a full circle, as it could explain the present age of limitless nature-like park-gardens. The researcher has considered eighteen-century gardens, such as those by Capability Brown, to eventually opting for their counterparts. Unlike picturesque farmsteads, allotment sites would single-handedly return to the garden as a microcosmic domestic enclosure while enabling the expansive re-parcelling of the urban territory from the vantage of labouring subjects.

This thesis is therefore far from aiming to be a garden encyclopaedia or to provide a universal definition. Rather, under the guise of a 'PhD by Design', it reconsiders history as a series of projects and, also, the possibility of historical research and theory as a project in itself, or, that is, a possible counterexample to institutional history. The methodology of using paradigms means that the hypothesis may eventually apply to only very specific examples which may represent only small groups of similar cases. Additionally, to read gardens as 'political forms' does not imply that museums, parlament or public squares, for instance, are any less worthy of a such claim. In fact, while we can argue that the political nature of architecture has become something of a theoretical commonplace, very little has been written about gardens in this sense. The reason might be, firstly, because gardens are not typically seen as places where politics happens or is represented — that would be too far-fetched for current trends in garden theory, already burdened with defining an object much less permanent than most. Secondly, the term 'political' is in itself disputable, in the field of architecture as elsewhere. Therefore, within the proposed research framework, a building gains the status of 'political form' not only when it symbolises ideologies but, most importantly, when it enables or normalises its practices. That is, when a building's spatial mediation moves beyond representation to act as a bridge between abstract concepts and social life. However, other than in the physical experience of the space itself, this concept is not easily graspable, through architectural plans of buildings, let alone plans of gardens. Hence the urgency of this thesis in its project of revealing such a possibility through specific examples that, although well known to historians, have never been showcased through the proposed methodology.

All the authorial drawings in the thesis share the same graphic language and manner. Sharp lines — in either black or cyan inks — are combined with an economy of hatches to allow both author and reader to rediscover the chosen examples of gardens from the soil
vant point of architectural form. The aim of this somewhat ‘dry’
study is to make the visual outcome of the thesis ‘non-
representational’ or the least representational as possible. Although
it has been tempting to celebrate garden architecture with overworked
drawings through the process, the author has successfully
confirmed that, in a ‘PhD by Design,’ drawing is fundamental research method
rather than a celebratory illustration. Alike the — incomparable —
drawings by Giovanni Battista Falda on suburban renaissance villas, 28
those in the present thesis have attempted to consistent use of angles
and graphic techniques. Besides the comfort of embracing personal
abilities and limitations into all drawings, there are many advantages
of having produced them in this specific manner.

First and foremost, such economy and consistency have enabled the
researcher to develop a comprehensive method of
documenting, tracing, redrawing, scaling, framing, selecting, and
exposing the selection of case studies. From an editorial perspective,
the use of digital software in a clear graphic language has made both
drawing and printing more precise, more controllable and faster.
The problematic of drawing in this manner is to become too
impersonal. Although, after reading the present thesis, one may find this
impermanency liberating — in the sense of not tightening the work
to its authorship — and didactic, as draws the reader’s attention to the
uber-architectural form of each garden, as described in the text.

The act of redrawing the case studies and subsequently drawing out
design projects in response is as important as writing. It
allows us to formally consolidate the architecture of gardens, which
have always suffered changes or perished. Drawing and designing
projects may also overcome the limitation of second-hand experiences
of which J.B. Jackson once complained. In this way, we may attempt
to think in the schematic rather than merely to describe or copy it. This
work thus acknowledges the experimental nature of drawing as its
research method, one by which design may become a process of
making associations with the formal logic of singular objects into other
proportionally similar contents — that is, design as thinking through
analogy. 26

Such methodology finds its way across the chapters. One
may argue that the cloistered nuns of the twelfth-century Cisterian
monastery, for instance, a ‘re-drawing’ of the prestyle garden
from the Roman dome. The first chapter reveals how this analogy
enabled monks to recognise the káros as an earthly paradise at
the ‘centre’ of their world, and hence to perform the rules of
settling their communal ‘household’ away from the city. Here, the archetype
is brought to its clearest form: a total enclosure where every element
— shadowing willows or cruciform pathways — conveys the state of
being shut off. The second chapter addresses how the káros became
enlarged and divided into several planted ‘interiors’ by the suburban
rustic villas of sixteenth-century Rome. Highly monumentalised as
theatre-like juxtapositions of nature and classical architecture, these
gardens were meant to choreograph new rituals of hospitality between
owner and guests — mostly Vatican cardinals and courtiers.
The increasing complexity of such requirements transformed the measy,
domestic orchard into a botanic museum and, eventually, an urban
park-farm. Longer walks and heavily stoned vistas constructed both
the visual narratives and the literal grounds for a broader project of
‘suburban countryside’. Just as the paradigm of house-garden shifted
from compact to dispersed, so did that of city-country shift from
closed to infinite. The garden became visually less enclosed and more
divided from the house. It was now a total art-form that turned
property into an emblem of the larger territory and its social order.
This culminated in 1800s England, the subject of the third chapter.

While the ‘picturesque garden’ was a version of the art-form, it was
its counterpart, the allotment, which ultimately divorced the garden
from the domestic. The latter was implemented as the norm for
a type of kitchen garden physically detached from the house, placed in
a small plot, to be individually hand-cultivated by a proletarian family.
Although mostly utilitarian and non-designed, their configuration
followed specific practices for subdividing a piece of land without
requiring internal partitions and often obscuring outer fences.

Intimate, microcosmic plots at one provided access to arable land but
also served to pacify neutralise the fact that these very plots were the
result of recent, violent processes of enclosure and dispossession
of land.

All three case studies are variations of the garden, since they
make use of the same archetype — the káros — to give a recognisable
form to new concepts of household and property, with or without
the city. While each takes the garden "from archetype to project" in
their own project-specific way, what differentiates them mostly are the parties involved in conceiving and using them. The allotment, unlike the Cistercian cloistered garden, was neither constructed nor self-ruled by its community of subjects. Rather, it was implemented by the landowner elite for the dispossessed worker as a project within the broader reactionary intent of making socially visible and morally acceptable the parliamentary enclosure of land. While the suburban villas of Vatican cardinals were used by the landowner class themselves, they shared the aforementioned impulse of a modern paterfamilias to legitimise itself by naturalising the arbitrariness of the privatised landscape. Such conditions make these gardens at times more legibly enclosed and designed, and at other times rather pragmatically planted. Here we see how the garden archetype may lend itself to a myriad number of iterations.

Could the garden serve as a device to counteract contemporary problematic practices of household and property? The design projects proposed by each chapter investigate such possibilities in the context of three cities—Tehran, Rome and London—where land value is heavily underpinned by real-estate markets. The Cistercian case, for instance, could apply to contemporary conditions of living similar to the monastic, converted households one experiences today in Tehran. Just as publicness is mostly shut away from state surveillance, so is sharing a garden only possible 'behind closed doors'. Hence the case study’s cloister could give form to a protocol of rules, one that would enable a number of apartment buildings to join their own backyards into one larger ‘paradise’—common—garden. Such a principle would, however, be redundant in Rome, where public parks exist as the result of successful openings of Renaissance suburban villas. The Roman ‘suburbs’ of today are actually now much farther away. Usually called ‘borgo’ (pejorative term for ‘little town’), these districts are densely urbanised with cheap housing and precarious public spaces. Most border rural land that is beautiful yet ‘idle’, or not cultivated. Here, on these rough edges, the concept of the monumental villa—once used to colonise the former countryside of the city—could be implemented: a linear system of gardens that make everyday circulation into a choreography of strolls through canopied sidewalks, encounters on terraced belvederes, or puis on steps towards empty fields. Neither public nor private, these places could be developed through policies presented by each district’s population to local bodies, such as churches and commerce associations. In London there are no ‘idle’ landscapes but rather the so-called ‘commons’, or metropolitan grounds for public recreation. The term stands for an area that used to be wastelands enclosed for the communal grating of working families until the Enclosure Act of 1773. Since then, paternalistic provision of allotment gardens has become the usual way to compensate for the systematic privatisation of land that followed—while never truly reversing dispossession. Because these were legally designed to prevent rather than to enable land reform, allotments are non-permanent statutory schemes. Today, increasing market pressure on land value is causing these sites to disappear. A project here would propose to design allotments that enjoy the legal protection of the commons. The association of both schemes could become a strategy for strengthening one another. That could yield a third type of landholding, in which plot-holders self-rule the gardening of public ‘commons’ and, perhaps, reclaim their original common use. The garden, in these projects, would make their autonomous nature spatially tangible.

The thesis puts forward an alternative theory of the garden which reveals not only what it has actually been but, foremost, what it could be and can still—potentially become. The hypothesis presumes that actuality and potentiality are self-evident within the garden only insofar as it remains legible as an exclusive form of spatial enclosure. This is in contrast to most garden theories and practices of the present, such as the perennial sprawls proposed by Gilles Clément, which remain ideological enclosures without the physical limits which would make them tangible as such. Our interest is the garden relates to a broader questioning of how the spatiality of architectural form makes abstract ideas visible. How can architecture today rethink the garden so as to reclaim its legibility, in a world that has made its urban condition completely illegible?

Is it possible to rethink the archetype as a conceptual boundary that offers an alternative to the ongoing commodification of land and social relationships?
Archetypal

The concept of archetypal refers to the transformations that are arguably the most exemplary take on the original family-ruled enclosure from which emerged the hortus conclusus. Both the Cistercian Cloister and the Persian chaharbagh have forms which perfectly adhere to and reveal the rules of two ideas of communal settlement.
Hortus Conclusus as an idea of settlement: The Cistercian cloister and Persian *chahar-bagh*

Hortus conclusus means ‘enclosed garden’ in Latin and is cognate with the Vulgar Latin term *hortus conclusus*, from which derives the Old French *jardin*. In its present use, the English word *garden* is chiefly a noun meaning “a piece of ground adjoining a house, used for growing flowers, fruits, or vegetables” or for (plural) “ornamental grounds laid out for public enjoyment and recreation.” In fact, garden only entered Middle English around the late thirteenth century from the Old Northern French *gredin* “(kitchen) garden; orchard; palace grounds.” This branched off either from Frankish *gred* or from Proto-Germanic *gaddaz*, and is cognate with the Gothic *garden*, ‘house’, and Old English *gord*. All of these indicate “enclosure, fenced enclosure, garden, court; residence.” Also from *gred* is derived *yard*, as in “an enclosed patch of ground around a house.” Meanwhile *endograss*, the “action of enclosing, or state of being enclosed,” emerges as a sole noun only around the mid-fifteenth century. Hence one can assume that hitherto, gardens had meant a sort of ‘enclosure’.

In fact, when the garden first emerged as a place known as the *garden*, every built space was an enclosure. That was around the sixth millennium BC, with the spread of agriculture from Mesopotamia to Europe. Early agricultural peoples could only comprehend their condition of living in the world through successive acts of formal differentiation and spatial delimitation. Men sought, in the homogeneity of
Spatial enclosure and the concept of sacred

All these events once were interruptions in the continuity of natural experience. Because they were manifested as a wholly different order from given reality, they were sacred. Once they relied on to be so, a line would be traced around to secure and protect them. The space circumscribed would also become sacred while the field left out would become profane? Essentially, that was the act of making an enclosure: to create an absolute reality from the given in man's surroundings. Hence such a notion of sacred was not like ours, which is implicated by the holy or the institutionally religious. Rather the sacred meant the only and possibly legible modality of existence. To be precise, it differed from the chaotic and so illegible - state of nature. Hence the concept of enclosure is entangled with the human urge to distinguish the "things" that manifest a sacred character from those that do not. In this primordial sense, every enclosed space was sacred. Every enclosure - from farms to houses and temples - meant the reality of one's world. We may not empathise with this viewpoint today, but it was crucial for early agricultural communities in forming their settlements. By enclosing land, thus - by segregating their life from everything else outside which was not sacred - these groups would develop a proto-narrative of ownership, based on what would later become the Roman concept of "re" or "thing." The passage from these enclosures to the legal sense of property as we know it today is of course neither simple nor direct. It does, nonetheless, relate to the act - or procedure -

This point will be developed later in this chapter, when we look at the Cistercian cloister which draws on the Roman concept of "re" as a means to cut, or separate, the Order's communal settlement from everything else. In the meantime, let us continue to dissect the primordial sense of the garden as a sacred enclosure which led to the medieval karthoudos in the first place.

Spatial orientation was therefore a quest for most communities that settled around the Iranian Plateau, from the sixth millennium BC onwards. (Fig. A) as settling could only mean to living at the centre of the world. In Zoroastrian belief, the Centre was connected with the original force of Ahura Mazda. Also, amidst that bow-shaped desert, the omnipresent northwestern mountains were understood to manifest that metaphysical position. Therefore most early Iranian settlements were grounded as a longitudinal axis towards the vertical one implied by those rocks. With the establishment of such a tribal, a communal could locate the Centre, water, sky, sun, moon and wind. Henceforth, the allocations of all arcs were important to the sacred modality of experience. Agriculture and the "economy of daily life" were not perceived as managerial, as they are in our present. Instead these spaces were completely charged with the sacred perceptions of fertility, of solar cycles, of seasons. Early Iranian architectures were, firstly, and above all, intended to make these cosmologies permanently present in life. Hence the mosque and most houses had an opening right above their centres. Essentially, ceilings were opened not for better illumination, but rather to mirror the sacred sky onto enclosed ground. The mosque and even the house would thus become also 'the Centre' of...
The development of garden precedents in the Middle East, as preserved in various historical and cultural contexts, has been a significant factor in the evolution of garden design. Gardens were not only spaces for aesthetic pleasure but also played a crucial role in societal and religious practices. The formal garden typology, particularly prevalent in Islamic societies, was characterized by its geometric patterns, symmetrical layout, and the use of water features such as fountains and pools.

In Islamic gardens, the use of water was not just a decorative element but also served spiritual and educational purposes. The alignment of fountains and pools was often arranged to align with the Qibla, the direction of Mecca, symbolizing the connection between the earthly paradise and the spiritual realm. The geometric layout of the garden was believed to reflect the order of the universe, mirroring the cosmic harmony.

The transition from the Islamic garden to the European Baroque garden marked a shift in design philosophy. While the Islamic garden emphasized order and harmony, the Baroque garden introduced a more dynamic and expressive design, often featuring grandiose elements such as large fountains, statues, and elaborate geometric patterns. The Baroque garden was not only a visual delight but also a reflection of the power and wealth of the aristocracy.

In the 18th century, the Neoclassical garden emerged, borrowing from both Islamic and Baroque traditions. This period saw a renewed interest in simplicity and naturalism, with gardens becoming more intimate and focused on the beauty of nature. The Neoclassical garden often featured symmetrical arrangements, but with a softer, more naturalistic approach, using landscaping to mimic the landscape rather than impose strict geometric patterns.

Today, the study of garden design continues to evolve, incorporating new technologies and ecological considerations. The longstanding traditions of garden design serve as a foundation for modern garden practices, emphasizing sustainability, biodiversity, and the integration of human activities with the natural environment.
Due to the harshness of the Iranian Plateau, the hag gardens were able to immediately convey the fullness of living at 'the Centre of the World'. Although these were private enclosures, they were of exceptional presence, impossible to miss even from the outside, with the regular alignment of tall cypress hedges that were not four orthogonal walls, making the garden not only the densest plantation amongst farming but also the only legible form in the desert. The hag and chahar-bagh were also more festive than courtyard houses or even mosques. As these were very low, earthy and modestly opened enclosures, they would often conjoin and merge with their surroundings — either built or natural. Meanwhile, the hag types had wide openings, out of which larger places could be supposed or collectively imagined.

Hence, in our terms, the hag gardens established an exceptional living condition in the homogeneity of harsh biotopes. Essentially, they made visually tangible what had always been included and allowed inside, so their gated walls determined what was 'sacred' by separating it from 'everything' else. [Fig. E] Usually, the perimeter wall was a thick structure of baked clay, almost entirely shut blind to the surroundings. The inner sides were very often inhabited, with walled cellars and paved passages. These rarely led to a continuous wall as their purpose was to provide the court with punctual niches and cells, specifically functional to each planted quarter. The wall was therefore an inhabitable frame with a very introspective character, for it contained several rooms for both religious rituals and the pragmatic demands of gardening, such as storage of tools and seeds. At the same time, the disposition of these rooms had a tense formal relationship with the interior of the garden, since it matched or confirmed the layout of the ground. Every room carved within the wall was therefore also sacred and symbolically meaningful.

The most important one was the fountain located at the very centre of the planted court. This particular object was charged with evocative symbolism of the highest intensity. The borders were sharply sculpted into a perfect cubical or spherical bow so they could give a legible form to the ever-formless water. It is worth noting the sacred function of such an element in the purification rituals of Zoroastrianism. In this cosmography, water was referred to as the most primordial of all natures and the origin of everything on earth, even of fire. The fountain spot was hence the first agitation that connected...
the garden with both the underground of the earth and the highest point of the sky. It was symbolically the ‘nucleus’ of the world, the only centre where the foundation of a terrestrial agave was possible. But it was also the literal connection between the garden and the spring underneath. This source, in fact, was joined to the central fountain by an underground pipe, the qant. [Fig. 1] This was in fact part of a large ‘inter-territorial’ irrigation system of underground channels, carrying melted ice from the mountains towards the desert plains. Due to their conditional relation with topography, the course of the qant coincided with the orientation of the garden. [Fig. 3] This, as we saw, turned to the sacred vision of northwest mountain chains, or (in some cases) of the western hills. Throughout the garden as an ideological enclosure, we will note that symbolical reasons of form are also eventually conformed with the available technologies of the specific historical context. Perhaps this is due to the fact that most ancient forms of knowledge were indeed cosmological.

The next example of such confluence is the cruciform water-course, girdled from the central fountain. This other azawiya replicated an act of crossing that would define any settlement as a sacred place, thus set apart from the natural desert. Even more visible within the garden, such cross squares the inner space as imago mundi. Water runs through it, evoking the original crossing of two rivers. Consequently such a squaring transforms the ground into four cardinal enclosures. The division symbolizes the universe as four horizons—which implies the analogous distribution of a commune system.

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19. "Because these lands contain irregular layers of sand and puddles, they form inaccessible water resources. The particular surface configuration of the Iranian Plateau and the Available Irrigation Technologies through a System that draws water to be moved to the lower lands to be used for drinking or irrigation. Qanats are underground aqueducts that collect groundwater at the feet of mountains and carry it by gravity, through gravity slope for using it to irrigate crops. "Islamic Irrigation: In-Depth Integration and Development, Omayyad University Press, 20000.

20. Imaginary is a Latin term for image, model, retrospection of the world.
Omnipresent throughout the court composition, this symmetry would have a two-fold symbolism: firstly, the divine ordering of the cosmos; secondly, the spatial organization of a community. The wide rectangular opening above would frame the court as a terrestrial model of the celestial cosmos. It would also perfectly insulate and protect the cardinal flower beds from dusty winds. The layout of these places was never random. Rather, they were rigorously referential to the central axis. In turn, the flowers were typically arranged in evenly modulated orthogonal patterns. Most roses and blueberries, these cultures were also used in the Africander Ritual of Blessing. Therefore, they had to be grown no longer than a human hand. The colours were mostly red, yellow and blue to promote spiritual and material purifications. Jasmine was a symbol of the Lord Ahura Mazda, trifoils of the plant (angel) Bahman, royal basil of the Shcheriber, and so forth.

If the garden were on a slope, a plinth would be gently sculpted from the fountain level towards the lower plateaux. The water spring would further stream down through the court towards each of the cardinal endings at the court borders. From there, the water would meet a sub-grid of channels to irrigate the flowered beds. The plinth was symbolically analogous to a sacred mountain and so the climb produced a rite of passage from the lower earth towards the higher centre close to the sky. That was, in fact, the very level where the fountain also reflected the clouds. The main axis of circulation was forcefully aligned with and cut out of the cruciform watercourse. Very often rhythmic rows of eternal symmetries were placed beside it. These reinforced the central pathway as a vertical axis up to the sky, where Ahura Mazda abides. In this sense, the mystical ascension through the plinth — followed by the contemplative ‘looking back’ to the court behind — was the ‘programme’ of the walled garden. The lower was always the point of entrance of the garden. This was usually gated with a monumental arch or even a small pavilion, accessed by a road or bridge. After the fundamental axis and the wall, the gate entrance sealed the formal distinction of sacred from profane, inside from outside. There is much to be said about the high variations and their amazing architecture. But from here we can take this example of an enclosed garden as the (almost) immemorial archetype for the spatial distinctions of sacred place from profane desert. As previously introduced, such differentiation is conceptually inherent in any manmade enclosure of early antiquity — especially in Iran. However, the garden enclosure is the one that develops spatial distinctions in order to render a precise “idea of living at the Centre of the world,” which is what we mean by “ideological enclosure of the sacred.”

Due to this teleological legibility, the walled garden became an exemplary type of shared space for Iranian communities. As these were ruled by the cosmological ethics of Zarathustrianism, individuals needed symbolical spaces to distinguish good from bad, included from excluded, fellow from barbarian, and so on. Hence, the garden emerges not only as a literal form of ethical distinction but also as a device for collective representation. And that is precisely why (and how) the garden archetype later became instrumental to the Achaemenid idea of empire. As for the further political distinctions of territory from land from water, these can only be deduced after the fundamental concern of sacred from profane. In other words, the garden can only become legible as a political form because it was once delimited as a sacred space. In this regard we have, until now, only skinned over how this archetype makes Zarathustrian dualism, from osnial to terrestrial, tangible.

With the thesis Camp of Faith, Hamed Khoorosi puts forward the high as an instrument of territorial governance: “Iranian gardens were the only spatial configuration wherein any form of life was possible; they were in fact life-sustaining camps in the literal tooba tops of the Iranian plateau.” Due to the harshness of the context, the relation of garden to its territory becomes explicit. Therefore, on such an archetype becomes the spatial device through which the power of the sovereign dominates the territory.” From this we learn how the paradigm of garden enclosure serves as an analogy for imperial practices, which is that it is no longer deduced from osnial to terrestrial. Rather, in Persian antiquity, the archetype goes from tehrarnal to cosmcal to become legible as an urban model. For example, in the plan of Pasargad, [Fig. H] the chahar-bagh was deployed, as the literal image of terrestrial cosmos, to propose the idea of a capital city. Khoorosi helps us to disentangle this passage through the political theology of parshad as a walled state in the city. As it defines by means of spatial enclosure who does and who does not belong inside, and under the rules of the owner, sovereign or a God. The image that best illustrates this idea of terrestrial paradise
as an exclusive form of walled enclosure is Topographicia Persica Terrae, drawn by Athanasius Kircher in 1675.  

Paradise as a walled garden

Paradise has entered European languages via the Greek perion, generally with a sacred connotation. In fact, this etymology goes back to Old Persian pari-dahta, with pari meaning 'around' and dahta, 'pile or heap'. In Modern Persian usage, the word holds an explicit spatial dimension, as dahta means 'fort' or 'enclosure' and 'to be made of clay'. Similarly, the Indo-Iranian verb shana means 'to construct out of earth'. In his essay 'The House of Clay', Bruce Lincoln notes that pari-dahta is a non-defensive 'clay wall', built with putrid bodily matter. That is, it is an "earthly enclosure, described as the dwelling place of those intimately associated with death." Further, in "A Life research de paradis perdus," the historian enquires more deeply into the conceptual implication of pari-dahta in formulaic inscriptions.

from Mazdaean-Zoroastrian to the Achaeumenes. As we saw in the case of garden symbolism, these have imbued the ethical duality of ancient Iranian language and thought. Nevertheless, paradise appears only once in the entire Avesta text, but it is emphatically described as an earthly and manmade place.

The narrator is himself the Creator of paradise. Ahura Mazda, "Who is marked by absolute benevolence, uncompromised by any hint of evil." Wrapped in good force, paradise is a total enclosure in which all can be enlightened with "the Truth" (Arta). The place, therefore, is protected from Truth's deviant opponent "the Lies" (Draza). Here
the wall is the physical device through which this protection — or to put it better, this distinction — is actualized on earth among men. This is crucial to understanding the sixth-millennium BC Sabzvar-kegh as the possible exemplary type for Achaemenid paradise. Such an event had emerged from a similar ethical concern: to distinguish (sacred) good from (profane) evil, though in the Persian Empire, the vision of paradise in the Sabzvar-kegh was taken as an analogy of imperial practice over communities and territory. So the abstract boundary between "the Lie" and "the Truth" would become legible through that physical boundary established by the garden form. Precisely at this point do both conceptual and formal boundaries become political. Hence this is how the garden architecture operates. Firstly, it emerges as both ethical and formal boundary, in order to make legible an idea of living in the world. So, it gives form to a human condition. Secondly, it makes intelligible the reproducibility of a paradigm without renouncing its own singularity and (potentially) political dimension.

Going back to the writings in the Avesta, paradise is a place that only the followers of Lord Ahura Mazda are allowed to enter. Therein, their lives shall be re-created in righteousness. Meanwhile in Genesis, paradise is a place once lost through the fault of Adam and Eve. But it could still be regained through the work of Christ. Similarly, at both times in history, paradise is a condition of a perfect form of life that — at some given point — is essentially lost. And yet it can be restored to faithful men through the action of a divine power. Although in the Persian text this condition is described precisely as an earthly walled garden, in the Bible of the early Church it mostly becomes metaphysical with different images and terms. Some of the best known are Kingdom of God, Heaven or the Garden of Eden, though it is clear the latter is the actual place where Adam and Eve lived up to God's perfection until their devotion towards sin. Similarly, paradise is the spiritual state of purity reigning before Adam's Fall. [Fig. J]

Tenth-century Christian texts claim that paradise was indeed regained by Christ and can be entered once again by those who follow Him. But this action, as well as attendance at church, implies the experience of a wholly Christian life to be led in true faith. With this early tradition, it became implied that Christian men should live according to the image of Adam before the fall. Hence, for a century or
distinct and exemplary form of life—from birth to work. Thereafter the Church's "hortus conclusus" was walled in order separate clerical from lay practices. It gave legibility to the exceptional life of Christ rather than the mental fault of Adam. The exceptional birth of a redemptory power mattered more than penitence for sin.

The wall was simple, flat, stone, and low. The hortus conclusus was guardedly and tiny wildflowers. The fountain, central but not monumental, was sealed to symbolise the untouched womb and perpetual virginity of Mary. The sensation was of an intimate interior, with the predominance of dark green and bloody red. Sharp rays of light cut to the ground through a dome of bending willow trees. The Church's "hortus conclusus" was clearly a "non-productive" feminine place, a garden that enclosed the perception of a single event with no parallels with anything in nature—the Immaculate Conception. [Fig. 1] The walled garden was also associated with Christ's nativity set.

The personification of Mary in the hortus conclusus mingled with the seemingly paradisal enclosed garden described in biblical texts, such as the Song of Songs 4:12. Originally, the canon of this book implied that love was something only between Christ and the Church. Meanwhile, by the twelfth century this became (over) simplified into a mildly mystical individual interpretation of maternity. Henceforth, it reflected a love perception of the hortus conclusus as a intimate garden. A simple wall in height enabled couples to gain access for playful flirtations "love." In sum, to late medieval layers of Western Europe, the hortus conclusus meant mundane pleasure within a special setting, walled away from the city, yet operating as one of its current forms of use. That space was not really perceived as sacred, since it was mostly allocated to the backyards or to the outskirts of the city. That is, it was no longer defined as a 'centre,' separate from everything else.

Either to 'ordinary' men or to wealthy landowners, the hortus gradually became more of a form of scenography than a representational sort of garden. Hence, the layout variations were more practical and ornamental than symbolic. Sometimes the walled cruciform layout was used in order to make optimal use of the land in the dense urban space of Western medieval cities. If any symbolism could be evoked, it was only an echo of the immemorial associations of the axis that the garden archetype had once carried to Europe from Persia and Egypt via Greece and ancient Rome. While the hortus conclusus was transformed in the perceptions and uses of laymen in the city, the Church was going through one of its most extensive internal reforms and conflicts.

The emergence of mendicant orders was a reaction against this institution's becoming one of the largest landowners of the urban territories of major medieval cities. One of those orders was the Cistercian, founded by a monk later known as St. Bernard de Clairvaux in the twelfth century. The order mainly distinguished the Cistercians from the monks of other Orders was their strict interpretation and practice of what they claimed to be the "original" rules of St. Benedict. They thought that most Orders, such as the Cluny and the Benedictines themselves, had eventually "corrupted" the model of St. Benedict because they let their monasteries thrive too much, expand and accumulate wealth. [Fig. 1] The Cistercians also criticized the demands of the monks as leading the monks to not only work to the point of producing surplus but, also, to live alone rather than in a coenobitic community. Their argument was mainly based on the idea that those faults resulted from the contradiction of one of the most fundamental rules of the monastic form of life, the renunciation of private property. That is, monks could possess things for the sole purpose of use—rather than owning them. So the question of rule and property became extremely important for the Cistercians, especially when it came to building their settlements outside the city. Yet how can one settle through building—in stone—and still renounce property? The Order sought the answer to this paradox by redefining the formal relationship of spatial enclosure with rule and use as a means to separate their monasteries from everything else, the city and its law. [Not that they would have put it in such terms, but this is clearly shown in the architectural evidence that we are about to see in this chapter]. In that sense, the typical form of the Cistercian monastery was both the device and direct product of their tale not only the Rules of St. Benedict but also the notion of property.

At the law of medieval towns normalised possession of land and things as well as the entire lives of tax-paying citizens, the Cistercians went in search of an alter juridical concept which would, instead, protect their form of life as a virtuous practice from the powers of kings and popes. The Order found a possible model in the ancient tradition of Roman law, from which two concepts became useful in defining...
ing their lives and their monasteries as common. One of them was the definition of a juridical person, which means that legal norms can never be applied to life as a complex biographical reality but rather always to the individual as an abstract centre. These are the cases in which, as we have seen, means at the same time "the thing and the process, the value and the procedure through which it was established."

This Order, moreover, was not like the Franciscan one, which proposed the radical and to have never developed a paradigmatic model of monastery. The Cistercians were, rather, keen on making use of form to live exactly up to their will. And if the monks and Bernard were looking for a paradigm when they left the old monastery of Citeaux, the Roman house was the one through which the concepts of juridical person and real property coincided. The Cistercian monastery was analogous to the ancient Roman house. The form mainly responsible for this analogy was the cloister, in a manner that resolves as follows: firstly, the quadrangular arcade was similar to the peristyle in marking the procedure through which the entire house (monastery) and its household (abbots, monks and lay brothers) had been enclosed and, therefore, set apart (sacred) from the world (city) outside (profane). Secondly, the 7th (land) enclosed by that procedure was a garden. Similarly to the home, this enclosed garden made the monastery legible as an autonomous microcosmos (paradise). This space, as such, was walled so that only ordained monks could enter. Within the cloister they could practice rituals such as gardening, foot washing before entering the church, and read either books or nature - as the terrestrial manifestation of the Gospel. Like the Roman peristyle, the cloister was therefore a space that had its own specific rules and, at the same time, addressed the exclusive, thus common, and purpose of the entire monastery. But before we look at how this analogy would lead to a total reconsideration of the walled garden, both conceptually and practically, let us first understand what paradise meant to the Cistercians.

Initially Bernard had written 86 sermons on the Song of Songs (originally known as Song of Solomon). These were keen on making clear reservations on the kind of love at stake in that text. The intention was to warn of the mirroring of canons, which could eventually yield to temptation. But it was also about setting a clear distinc-

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Fig. 4. Abbey of Citeaux, the present house of the Cistercians. It is interesting to consider one of the great events during the French Revolution.
The cloister as paradise

"Four steps in spiritual life to wit: Reading, Meditation, Prayer and Contemplation. This is the Scale of the Cloister — a scale set between heaven and earth, having but few steps but reaching an immense and unbelievable distance. For, while fixed upon earth, it pierces the clouds and sees the hidden places of heaven. You must know that these steps are distinct in name and number, so they are in nature and order. 49 The Scale of the Cloister and The Ladder of Monks were written by the Carthusian Prior Guigo II, in the mid twelfth century, to instruct monks in the four steps of the spiritual life. They explain that reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation are four degrees as consequential as the rungs of a ladder. Therefore, they can only lift monks to heaven if exercised uninterruptedly and in a perfect progression. Each degree must be conducted with a precise aim: "Reading is to seek the sweetness of the blessed life. Meditation is to find it. Prayer is to ask for it and Contemplation is to enjoy it." Further, the author demonstrates how "one precedes another, not only in the order of time but in causality." In the most didactic passage in The Ladder of Monks, the whole path is recapitulated as follows: reading comes first, and is, as it were, the foundation; it provides the subject matter we must use for meditation. Meditation considers more carefully what is to be sought after; it digs, as it were, for treasure it finds and reveals, but since it is not in meditation's power to seize upon the treasure, it directs us to prayer. Prayer lifts itself up to God with all its strength, and begs for the treasure it longs for, which is the sweetness of contemplation. Contemplation when it comes rewards the labours of the other three; it incites the thirsting soul with the dew of heavenly sweetness. Reading is an exercise of the outward senses; meditation is concerned with the inward understanding; prayer is concerned with desire; contemplation outstrips every faculty. The first degree is proper to beginners, the second to the proficient, the third to confessors, the fourth to the blessed. 50

Besides beauty and objectivity, these texts matter because they use the cloister as a paradigm to describe the daily path (and programme) towards spiritual ascension. Here, in fact, the cloister is not only a metaphor amongst the many employed by the author. Instead, it is the literal outcome of form coinciding with rule, liturgy and thought. The same could also be said in general about most religious spaces or the whole plans of monasteries. However, the late medieval cloister becomes a unique device within monasticism because it actualises the practice of the rule as a will to a form-of-life. 44 Although it appears in almost every monastery plan, the cloister developed unevenly throughout the whole medieval period. Precisely because it is such a focal space of monastic thought, it has also varied significantly amongst different Orders.

To the Cistercians, the cloister was more spatially and symbolically prominent than it was for the Carthusians. Perhaps that is why
the authorship of *The Rule of the Cloister* was once historically attributed to St. Bernard de Clairvaux rather than its earliest author, the Carthusian Prior Guigo II. To the Order of the latter, the quadrangular arcade was in reality more of a buffer space, or an empty void, aimed at keeping the individual cells far away from each other, so that monks could pray and read in uninterrupted silence. Meanwhile, to the former, the cloister was the space where the steps of the ladder were rendered visible and feasible for the monks to gauge. The discrepancy between Carthusian and Cistercian cloisters is due exactly to the way each Order interpreted asceticism, common life, liturgy, penitence and *paradise*. For the Carthusians, the cloistered garden was extremely austere, a pastoral-like hedge, with a mediately defined centre. It meant that *paradise* lies only above and beyond daily life. Meanwhile to the Cistercians, the garden was a cruciform *horam conditis* with a well-defined centre. With these a restricted, yet highly evocative, symbolism of axes, a few trees and a central fountain was attained. Hence the garden in the Cistercian cloister was the image of *paradise* actualised within the monastery.

That was so because the Cistercian monks ruled their life in common as if they were already there. Here with we see the ideological conception and use of garden enclosure towards a particular will for life. Though it is not our strategy to learn by comparison, it is quite remarkable how the cloistered garden appears more prominent to Cistercian monasteries than to those of other Orders. Because the Cistercians had reservations about towards form and the Benedictine Rules, they were keen on architecture and figurative representation. The Carthusian monks avoided these as much as possible. Hence, they restricted the use of ornaments, formal gardens and every built element that did not play a literal role in their hourly liturgy and Sunday processions. In fact, liturgical practice was the main driver of the Cistercians' opposition to their former branch, the Cluniacs. Before we move on to the Cistercian plan, we should note that liturgy was the main ideological device that distinguished the Cistercians from other Benedictine ruled Orders—and from late medieval practices in general.

The Cistercian Order sought to give a straightforward interpretation of the original rules written by St. Benedict. This induced their (well known) stricter refusal of the material wealth of the lay world. But it was also a self-critical rejection of deviance and corruption at large, especially regarding most monastic practices of late

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**Fig. 0:** Ideal scheme of a Cistercian monastery:

1. Lavatorium
2. Guesthouse
3. Cloister (walks)
4. Benches for the sick
5. Separation of donors
6. Cloister (the-robed)
7. Martyrs
8. Stairs to the cloister
9. Scenery
10. Bookshelves
11. Dormitory for visiting monks
12. Monks' entrance
13. Lay-brothers' entrance
14. Chapterhouse
15. Stairs to the dorm
16. Parlor (sitting room)
17. Monks' cells
18. Novitiate's room
19. Dining room
20. Lady's room
21. Kitchen
22. Cellar's sitting-room
23. Little for lay-brothers
24. Store-rooms
25. Lay-brothers' refectory
26. Lay-brothers' latrine


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6). Concerning the mode and order of Divine services, the monks of Citeaux decided right at the beginning to observe in everything the traditions of the Rule, omitting every incident and rejecting all appendices to the office, new offices and breviaries, which were added (to the Office) externally by less considerable fathers. Aware of human frailty and imperfection, after numerous considerations, they found (new additions) to be more dangerous than necessary for the monks, since their multiplicity led to their taking tepid and negligent attention, not only by the monks, but also by the monks. "Quot de ordinatione s. gloriosi papae Leonis XII., transactis in Camera Beneficientiae, in Commune Nobilitati et Ruristic, in Rome, Oct., 1797, p. 243"
Although Benedict was the first to put it clearly into words, this idea of ascetic life within an autonomous compound had existed since the Coptic monk Pachomius, who was born and lived in Egypt between 290 and 350 AD. And so, by the time of Benedict, there were in fact living examples of coenobitic buildings, such as the Christian Orthodox monastery of Saint Catherine, [Fig. Q] built at the bottom of Mount Sinai around 540 AD. Yet the utmost actualization of Benedict’s take on coenobitic settlement appears in the ninth-century ideal scheme for a Carolingian monastery. Since this document has been preserved at the library of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Gallen, in Switzerland, it is often called today the “Plan of St. Gall” [Fig. R], although it was originally commissioned to be a model. The scheme measures 44 by 30 Carolingian inches, or about 111 by 72 centimeters spread over five calfskins. Although the drawing reads more as a diagram, the back of its sheet contains several scriptures detailing and listing the logistics of all functions, materials, and maintenance of the monastery. Those also include instructions for the “management
Fig. R (rooms-i). Hypothetical reconstruction of the secondary cistern with the stairs in the rear of the main nave's compound. There were many strips of vegetable cultivation, weed and flower planters in almost every space in between the walled enclosures.
of the gardens" and the mango hortulans (house of the gardener) who also should be a monk. How to lay out and select species to cultivate in the hortus (vegetable garden) and in the herbas (medicinal herb garden), the cemetery and orchard. And, of course, how to lay out the main cloister, attached to the south flank of the church so its open interior could get enough sunlight for a crucifixus hortus, with a single fountain at its centre. Unlike all other gardens, the hortus conditor was strictly non-productive, as it was only meant to offer calm to the monks, so they could simply rest or concentrate on rituals such as reading, praying, and foot washing before entering the church. Departing from the hypothetical reconstruction proposed by the historians Walter Horn and Ernest Born, we can imagine a bit of the architectural form (Fig. 3) and understand how the cloister was extremely important in making the entire monastery legible as a sacred space. Hence its central position and exclusive spatial relationship within the scheme. Yet, it was still an enclosure amongst others, since all spaces in the complex — either open or roofed — were also defined by walls and equally introverted. Nothing really stood out from the plan, not even the hortus conditor. For, in the end, there were not only several gardens but also planters in almost every space between the buildings. The scheme thus implied that every inch of land should be enclosed and put to work.

Later, in the eyes of the Cistercians, perhaps, the "original sin" of the St. Gall plan was to lay out walled enclosures in an additive grid system, which eventually led and functioned as a city. Or, as we may rather see it today, the campus of a modern factory. The Cistercian criticism would be that resemblance was exactly the problem of most Benedictine monasteries following such a model: the danger of becoming a machine of wealth creation, because that carpet-like grid of enclosures allowed for infinite expansion, thus a more appropriation of land, subdivisions, production and surplus. Yet, the fact that it had the hortus conditor at its centre allowed the scheme still to pose an alternative to most medieval towns, whose centres were instead defined by market squares. A tendency which would later culminate in the paradigm of the Bastide.
ides of centralising the canonical buildings around a single cloister, with an exclusive horaiotropos. This is surely the case of the Cistercian monastery of Clairvaux, which, even after its eventual growth, proved that the central cloister would hold the plan of canonical functions forever cohesive, despite the growth of the rest of the abbey. Meanwhile, in the Cistercian monastery of Fontenay, in the Region of Burgundy, the church was the first and most important building. However, only the construction of the central cloister was able to give legibility and legitimacy to the entire monastic settlement. In other words, the abbey was only considered sacred once it had a cloister for the exclusive use of the ordained monks. Confirming the Benedictine Rule, the church was shaped after the Latin cross, with the narthex facing east, and the sanctuary heading west. [Fig. U] The cloister was girded from the monks' choir pitch towards the south. From this corner opened the eastern passage of the cloister, leading the monks into the Church. Meanwhile, the quasi (lay brothers) could only enter through their doorways, totally shut from the western arcade. The other purpose of such isolation was to differentiate the canonical character of the cloister, because only the chapter and the monks were allowed in—the latter were meant to see or hear the lay brothers. Actually, the passages were dimensioned to keep all hierarchies of circulation as short as possible. In fact, the quadrangular sides were constrained to thirty meters. Meanwhile, the domus conventus, the
frathy (the ordinary dayroom of the monks, at the end of the eastern passage) or even the Church's sanctuary could be extended outwards this module. Particularly in Fontenay, the east and west cloister walls were two modules (or two vaults) longer than the north and south ones. This was partially due to the modulation of the Church's body of choirs—which the Cistercians ruled should never become too long, so that singing would not take over from the liturgy as an over-theatrical act. But perhaps such brevity in circulation was also meant to make time for sacramental life—and never otherwise. Hence the Fontenay cloister worked as a clock. It was a device that modulated the lengths of walls from one canonical space to another, making them fall into place with liturgical acumen. [Fig. V]

In fact, the monks' daytime was ruled through seven canonical hours, while night-time had an eighth one only for Vigils. The exact time of each celebration varied according to the season. However, the sequel and orientation of liturgical practices remained the same: starting from the night-time Office of Vigils towards daytime celebrations of the Lauds, at daybreak, followed by the Prime, the Terce, the Sext, the None, the Vespers and finally, the Compline. Thus, the monks always began the Divine Office at midnight, when they woke up together in the dormitory, 'the doxer' above the eastern passage of the cloister. They descended through the 'night-stairs' towards their own choir in the church. Therein they sang for one hour in Vigils. The monks in Fontenay followed the example of St. Bernard strictly. So, it was not rare for them to dismiss the neptune and remain in Vigils until sunrise. At daybreak, they would either return to or remain in the Church choir to sing the Lauds. In fact, the monks celebrated every canonical hour in the Church throughout the day until its literal completion, the Compline or 'night prayer'. The intervals between the seven daytime prayers were fixed. They were spent in silence, mostly within the cloister arcades and the frathy. The eastern passage was the most important to canonical rite, and so to the whole plan. And this applies not only to Fontenay but also to every Cistercian monastery ever built. In fact, the importance of this passage was predicted in the text of the **Quaestiones**. There the ordination and orientation of claustral buildings were chapter house, auditorium and dormitory (upper level), frathy, refectory, kitchen, offices and **dormitorium** (ground floor). After the church, these follow from the most to the least important, from most

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liturgical to most menial. The overall layout of rooms around the cloister was also meant to conform to the conventual mass and Sunday processions. Hence, after the mass, the monks could leave the choir directly to the northern arcade. There they would sit on the benches to wait for the foot washing. As this rite happened at the lavatory across the quadrangle (south), the monks would reach it following the western passage. Housed in a small portion stepped inside the garden, the lavatory was more used during everyday liturgy. That was because the Cistercians washed their hands and bodies regularly between prayers. But it also served the refectory where monks took their Friday feast or only dinner. This was a relatively small longitudinal building, with the kitchen on one side (east) and the officer room on another (west). The three were only accessed from the south of the cloister. They formed, together with the lavatory, a reversed cross. The water was supplied by a channel below the lavatory foundations in the cloister garden. The Cistercian rules in fact aimed also at a coincidence of religious symbolism with water management.  

Fontenay was one of the best examples. In fact, such criteria were even stated in the institute of the Order as for Quo in fossa utrumque Communis: "Neither in cities, nor in courts, nor in villages, should be built our common life, but in places away from the behaviour of "faulted men."

Most Orders, such as the Dominicans, usually sought to settle their monasteries on cliffs or on desert plateaus — precisely to evoke the emblem of external asceticism or of the ancient monastery Monte Cassino. The Cistercians rather avoided such situations as much as possible. The Order itself also instructed that the monastery should never be placed on top of a hill, nor on an island, by a sea, beside a lake or a large river. The typical Cistercian monastery should be set up beside a stream in the narrowest part of a valley opened to the west, and closely bordered by mountains to the north, south, east and west. [Fig. W] Such a conditional image of seclusion played a strategic part in the Cistercian renunciation of claiming landownership in the city. In this trait, they were similar to most other Orders. However, they differed in the precise way they refused to address self-representation towards the outer world — and this issue becomes clear once we understand the architectural language of the Cistercian monastery. The suffusion of colours and materials, pictorial stucco, narrative vivaux
mented— with very little or no topiary. The flowers, mostly red and white, evoked the symbolism of Christ and the Virgin Mary—as we saw earlier. Each cardinal bed was outlined by a sleek curb of stone and levelled with the ground—just a half meter lower than the cloister passages. The steps from the quadrangular arcade to the garden ground were never monumental. In fact, their dispositions were not always in strict consonance with the whole symmetry but were only discrete forms of access. Sometimes the connection between the cloister and the garden was very visual, making the latter conducive to the literal (and less pictorial) image of paradise. Here, in the garden was the spiritual stage of contemplation itself, which the scal of the cloister starts towards and ends with. Here we understand how the garden archetype—which we have been tracing since the Persian chahar-bagh—works as a cosmological construction. The legibility of its fives axes reconnect a delimited terrain with the transcendental plan of the sky. Hence the articulation of horizontal crossed ground and vertical trees render the centre as unique and sacred. As did the respective combination of horizontal squared passage and vertical arches. This happened precisely when the monks beheld the garden framed by each vertical arch of the arcade. Here they performed the elliptical wall through the cloister as a perfect—intelligible—analogy of the ladder towards God.

*Hortus conclusus* as an example of political space

The form of the Cistercian cloister went beyond representation to become the ablation of the monastic project of a totally ascetic (yet) communal form-of-life. In this sense the exclusive *hortus conclusus*, shut away within the centre of the monastery, was the only possible configuration available to produce the inclusion of the core group of monks through spatial exclusion. Though our reading is far from ended here. Remaining unmentioned are the many spatial meanderings of the Cistercian cloister. Though before we search further, let we reflect on what we have encountered. As a steppingstone, the trajectory of the *hortus conclusus* indicates that formal and spatial legibility develop in a way closely entangled with the human urge to distinguish and delimit *sanctum* from *profane* and *good* from *desert*. It is only from the spatial cognition of these ethical distinctions that political distinctions can arise and become legible to a plurality of men. Like the idea of the *polis*, the construction of paradise entails the constant mediation of antagonistic forces and conflict. Hence the instrumentality of the wall, which defines the mediating character of such space by making tangible the fundamental distinction between inside and outside. In other words, if different individuals can agree upon basic questions, such as about the centre of a finite space is, they can henceforth recognize themselves as a group—with a common will—and reach agreements on more complex conflicts, which inevitably arise from any enclosed form of sedentary coexistence. Both in ancient Persia and medieval Europe, therefore, the collective making of enclosure attempts to distinguish absolute realities from an indefinite (neutral) field of many. Indeed, the enclosed garden shares this general logic of all other ontological enclosures. But it was the only one whose sole purpose was to formalize intrinsic ethical boundaries into a legible articulation of physical ones. Garden enclosure was the only one whose function was to render an idea of the world within the fringiture of a single space. Although it would therefore become a device of representation, the walled garden had already transcended its representational dimension. Due to the ethical reasoning of their deeply evocative symbolism, the Persian *chahar-bagh* and the Cistercian *hortus conclusus* offer two models for experiencing space as a constant set of distinguishing *good from desert, sacred from profane, inside from outside*. From within the arcade wall to inside the cloister, the *hortus conclusus* established a flagrantly altered condition of living within and apart from vast hostile fields. Each in their own singular way, Persian and Cistercian forms of garden enclosure denoted a clear relation between defined-legible—sacred—enclosure versus undefined—illegible—profane—voidness. Although both would produce very introspective enclosures, they eventually constructed ideas of outside from within.
Paradise Now
A protocol within Tehran plot grids

Amongst the archetypes of Iranian architecture, the Persian garden is the one that most recapitulates the act of founding and managing a city. The garden, in this sense, is analogous to the city. In Tehran, this occurs not only on a symbolic level, but literally. Gardens are the elements that best exemplify how to not only inhabit the harsh desert biotope of that region but, also, to make it thrive. Due to its incredible efficiency in providing protection against drying winds, and in distributing water, the garden posed a possible paradigm, or an urban model properly said, for the formation of the first settlement of Tehran and its future expansions. The city was once in fact described as "a compound of several walled gardens." Yet the relationship between the garden and the building of Tehran as a walled 'gardened' city goes much deeper than apparent similarities in terms of greenery and management of life in the desert. The main reason why the garden has been so influential to the form of this city is conceptual, for it was not only an enclosure which protected life but also one that clearly separated this life from everything else. As the archetypal image of the terrestrial paradise – thus a peaceful place where one should abide by a ruling sovereign – the Persian garden functioned as a sort of a perfect diagram for the ideology of power which would build itself up through the urban form of Tehran.
This analagous relationship becomes evident when the Safavid King, Shah Tahmasp I, built the first wall of the city in 1539 as an attempt to tame local tribal unrest and give his government both political and spatial unity. The typical Persian shahar-khâgh was the most ubiquitous form of enclosure within the broader enclosure of the city. While almost every citizen inhabited a courtyard house with a shahar-khâgh inside, the royal complex at the core of the city was also a compound of courtyard palaces and gardens. Later, in the eighteenth century, in a period of political stability and peace, the reign of Fath Ali Shah would enclose Tehran with a second and larger wall, starting a phase of modern urbanisation from 1798 onwards. [Fig. A] As the Shah was keen on using architecture to put an aesthetic mark on his governance, he made his summer residence visible at the summit of the Alborz mountain just outside the urban walls. As his Qasr-e Qajar Palace had a huge garden, it exemplified how the city could eventually expand towards the mountains. By the end of the following century, Iran’s geopolitical position weakened, as it lost the war against Russia and its territory was progressively colonised by Western countries such as Britain. Nasereddin Shah would thus build the third and largest wall as an attempt to rebuild and control the capital as a totally introverted, defensive compound. This move not only aimed at creating an image of a strong state but also understood urban form as a means to control the life of its citizens. And in this sense the garden was again a useful tool, as it could reinforce the idea of the city as a paradise ruled by an omnipotent sovereign. As in 1937, the last wall was totally demolished by the regime of the Pahlavi Shah, Tehran began to sprawl. [Figs. B] The walled character of the capital began to gradually disappear, and the garden was reduced to a tool for urbanisation. By 1998 most of the north and western areas had sprawled through carpets of private plots and gardens. [Figs. C and D] Gardens were no longer in the central courts of the dwelling but in the backyards. The problem is that, because public space is heavily controlled by the state, most social encounters take place inside these apartments. But this collectiveness is never fully actualised because these buildings lack shared spaces.

These historical events have translated into the socio-geographical anatomy of Tehran, as for instance the disposition of medieval
Persian gardens around its region. Built to work as satellite sites, these walled assets were mostly located at the waterlogged bottom of the Alborz mountains. This was the most opportune situation to take advantage of cleaner waters (which could be streamed down the mountains with gravity). Thus, the farther north a garden was built, the larger and more fertile it could be. Eventually, this equation would make the northern lands the most valuable suburban domains of the city.

Accordingly, later reforms, between 1890 and 1940, have unquestionably led to the richest private developments and urban expansions being found in the north. This configuration partially explains why the city and its social strata coincide in form: the upper and greenest north houses the richer class, while the lower and more arid south houses the poorer. Meanwhile, the middle class emerged at the literal centre of such a strip. Perhaps, due to its focal location in the city, this modern class has grown conscious of its mediating role within the public body and the state, though such critical mass gradually faded away from 1940 onwards as several state housing projects aimed at decentralise intellectuals and civil servants. [Fig. E] Created through extensive grids of private plots, these developments would also complete the urbanisation of the Iranian capital. The most successful developments were implemented between the old centre and the northern suburbs. Plot grids like that of Abbas Abad, Vanak and Jordan became the quarters for a 'new bourgeoisie to arise. [Figs. F-G] As a backdrop to these systems of housing infrastructure, huge urban parks were built—such as Millad Park—next to a ‘carpet’ of several residential blocks over the rich neighbourhood of Jordan. This eventual marriage of grid and park also marks a crucial transformation of the Persian garden archetype and its influence on the urban form of Tehran. Because of the park (the intent to frame, normalise and soften public life), new houses would no longer need their own (courtyard) garden—or it was only acceptable to favour the public park as a space where the state could police civilians.

In accordance with the logic of the new plot-grid typologies, the garden lost its central position within the dwelling. Moreover, regulations detached the garden from the domestic space by reducing its to a backyard limited to 40% of the plot surface. Considering that the most usual plot module deployed in those grid projects measured 7 x 30 metres, there was very little space to enjoy the sandy Iranian breeze under the sun. This applied to both single houses and multi-storey buildings. [Fig. H] This problem with this regulation is that limited the ground floor of residential buildings to commercial use only. [Fig. I] Henceforth, backyards were ultimately prevented from becoming extensions of the households with their own singular forms of social encounter. At best, modern plot backyards became scantily planted areas, leftover areas or storage places for the shops on the ground floor. This typology hardly ever came close to the family "khorsh"-high garden frequently found within traditional Iranian courtyards.
Fig. F: Present growth around the urban grid of Kayqa Noura, a state-sponsored housing project. The Tunisian government built the complex in 1951 to alleviate and control the working class on the east side of Tunis, further away from the National University and the old city centre.

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Fig. G: Present growth around the urban grid of Akaba Abad and Yousef Abad, two state-sponsored housing projects, from 1966. Their purpose was to allocate the middle class on the north, outside the administrative buildings.

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Fig. 1. Existing situation of the ground level of a typical plot-grid block. The strictly commercial use of the ground floor has reduced most backyards and transformed them into storage, dumping and parking spaces.

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Today, such a lack of spatial possibilities only worsens the living conditions of the workers still dwelling in many of those grid projects. Iran’s economy, as a whole, is currently shrinking and its middle class is getting increasingly poor. Unlike previous generations, the present generation faces precarious working relations, lower wages, higher rents and speculation on land values. Meanwhile, the city does not provide many ways out of this situation. Neither ideological or physical quality can be tried out or collectively enjoyed since state-run surveillance and censorship of "the private lives of citizens" are still omnipresent.

Besides the typically introverted spaces of the household, there is, therefore, a necessity to conceal every part of life, making households the ultimate spaces where an alternative publicness may emerge. Although the same can be said of most neoliberal cities now (whose public spaces are no longer made to represent the possibility of political action), the state-surveillance and public-recession dynamic is exaggerated in Tehran. Therefore, it is unquestionably more visible and more potent than elsewhere. Uprootedness, however, is much less recognisable as an increasingly general condition. But one may understand how it happens by looking more closely at what has become of the backyard in most grid-state projects built between 1930 and 1970. The right to inhabit the ground—which has historically equalled the right of citizenship, since the Tehran became a modern capital—was stripped away from apartment dwellers (either owners or tenants). Spatially, this implied the blunkest disconnection between the upper floor and the backyard—that is, literal uprootedness. With a small group against them, what would happen if a small group of tenants got together to claim direct access to the backyard of their building? Further, would a spatial intervention mediate possible conflicts of interest in ways of enjoying the newly regained backyard?

Most and foremost, what form of collective place could this become? Imagining this scenario, the following proposal reconceives the concepts of sacral enclosures emerging with the aim of defining a possible protocol for reclaiming and sharing the backyards of Tehran’s residential plots. Small groups of neighbours could collaboratively construct the rules and procedures of such protocol in four phases. [Figs. J to M] For each procedure there is an architectural response—that is, a formal device—enabling the collective practice of rules and, thereby, the possible emancipation of the tenants [Figs. N–Q].
Fig. 4. Possible transformation of the ground level. The exclusive spatial enclosure of the closure has enabled the members of twelve apartments to recognize themselves as an extended household. Moreover, the shared area enabled them to collectively create and continuously perform roles in how to share, use and manage the space. Eventually, they agreed on how to enjoy the squared ground as a place to gather, play, rest or do nothing in the presence of others.

Fig. 5. Possible transformation of the first level. A collective cluster binds together the households of 12 plots. A concrete wall defines the space. The element also contains cells and storage, which give each apartment access to the outside. This arrangement gives each space for leisure and encounters. If more units to be alone, they can use the individual cells, which transform into bar, bed and study. Alternatively, they can take one of the four units down to the open ground floor.
Fig. P: New skiers will see from the interior of an existing apartment.

Fig. Q: The complete urban microstructure enables the household to collectively use, share, and transform existing build spaces into a single urban extension package.
Monumental

The concept of this category refers to the magnification of the hortus into an outward public monument within suburban villas. Its design was highly theatrical so as to formalise, ritualise and, as a result, institutionalise the expropriation of rural land.
Gardened estates as analogical reconstructions of the city: suburban villas in Rome

Renaissance is an inaccurate term to describe what would happen to the home after 1280: this is one archetype that has never ceased to exist. It had, in fact, outlived the Roman Empire through the empirical transmittal of its practice to become the most recognisable form of gardening throughout the following millennium. As seen in the previous chapter, the Cistercian abbeys were only the most developed example of myriad variations on the household garden. As much purposeful as symbolic, these places might have hitherto ranged in productivity but not in sacredness, since all were collectively constructed by religious, peasant or feudal groups. Liturgical motivations had conditioned the configuration of these enclosures to be self-centred and compact. While values like 'taste,' 'possession' and 'social order' may have been implicit in their design, these were of secondary importance. Gardened enclosures in the thirteenth century were not conceived of to display surplus. This, however, would change once the rural territories constituted by those communities began to be deeply affected by contemporary events, such as the naval warfare in the Mediterranean, which diversified both the geography and circulation of fortune, thus suddenly devaluing agrarian production. This consolidated the so-called city-states, along with their new service economies and the broad adoption of land taxation, establishing an exploitative system.
through which towns mastered the countryside, changing social relations between them. Serfs progressively became paid labourers; artists and craftsmen shifted their subordinate ties from the aunts of isolated monasteries to the patrons of urban guilds, taking along with them three centuries of empirical knowledge in building and gardening. As if it had not been enough to be extorted by popes and kings, and ruined by internal corruption, the Cistercian, especially, lost their terrestrial paradise to the increasing secularisation and popularisation of artistic production. Now the hortus was (literally) for sale, and thus prone to re-appropriation and reimagining.

The hortus as a frame

The earliest reimaginings of the household garden to become well-known were not architectural but literary, perhaps most evidently seen in the Decameron, written by Giovanni Boccaccio around 1350. An immediate success in its time, it can be said the narrative followed in the footsteps of two previous productions. The first was the 1275 continuation of the poem Roman de la Rose, in which Jean de Meun turned the hortus amoris into the hortus amorosus, both a lyrical trope and an allegory of (secular) courtly love. The second was the Divine Comedy of 1320, in which Dante Alighieri humanises paradise, thus reaching out to clerical and non-priestly beyond the clergy. Profoundly influenced by these texts, Boccaccio went further, to reimagine the walled garden not as an elusively figure but rather as a framing device for his storytelling. The artifice was used to divide his novel (whose title means “ten days”) into one hundred tales, narrated and shared by ten young women. In the plot, these characters seek refuge from the Black Death in 1348 in a country retreat at Pisa, just outside a heavily infected Florence. They amuse one another in order to pass time until the plague ends. Amongst the several enclosures described in the book, they gather mostly around flowery horti. As their daily storytelling becomes a ritual, the hortus transform into stages through which the characters gaze upon the Tuscan horizon to imagine the story scenes, also set in fictitious gardens themselves. Meanwhile, in the foreground, where the young group is seated, terraces, benches and lefebr branches provide the shade, comfort and optical stability necessary for mental engagement.

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Both in the country retreat and in the stories being told, the hortus is still described as enclosed; however, it is no longer ruled, served or completely introverted: it is used for the visual delight of real and imaginary places, as well as — unprecedentedly so — landscapes. In contrast to Boccaccio’s fellow authors, the microcosmic nature of the hortus archetype is indispensable to the plot. It serves as a spatial device that facilitates following his long narrative and, at the same time, conveys the “pleasure factor” of such places, where the characters almost forget the dreadful events in the city. [Fig. A]

Boccaccio did not take this idea as a whole. Since the concept of “country as a refuge” had been contemporaneously praised in reaction to not only the epidemic of 1348 but also to an increasing “disenchanted” with urban life and — especially in the central part of the Italian peninsula — with monasticism. His friend and fellow Tuscan scholar Petrarch was, in fact, the primary voice of that trend. After having lost his wife to the plague, his sanctity to the city, and his faith in the Church, Petrarch fled Avignon to a modest rural estate, with two lodges and a small hortus, in the village of Vaucluse. This exile was written there to argue (or to personally justify) the choice of a simpler life of solitude in the country. The author refers to his new dwelling as a “nule rurale,” explicitly following Pliny the Younger. Although his autobiographical treatise does not describe architecture per se, it evokes an anti-urban character in the main purpose of the place: to enable given in the sense of idleness, self-indulgent reading and other activities freed from contractual obligations — in other words, the possibility of not working while acting worthily. Petrarch borrowed this from the Stoic concept of orname dignitate, which he had discovered by reading Cicero. Beyond erudition, this referencing was indeed necessary to convince any schooled reader of the viability and legitimacy of that so-called “pleasure with dignity” (similar to the way in which the ancient Roman lawyer had to argue it to his patrician audience). This was especially true because most rural areas of Europe in the 1300s meant the very opposite of harmony, due a permanent state of violent expropriation, exploitative social relations, bad harvests, pillaging and war. Petrarch needed, therefore, a small square of campesinal ground to shut that Dantesque hell off and describe his idea of blissful solitude within an imaginary country. This ministrum was the enclosure of his
estate. Within it, the horus acted as a frame, one similar to Bocaccio's, only to another fiction: an idyllic version of the rural condition.

Hence, to both authors, the archetype became crucial to portraying the enjoyment of simplicity—the nude as such—as either a coping device or a motivation to leave the city for an allegedly 'better' life. While to Petrarch this meant a sobering sentiment, to Bocaccio it had happier connotations. In any case, the prominence of gardens over farms gives each retreat the sort of rusticity suitable for men of letters and rich Florentine youths—or 'bourgeois subjects', so to speak—who would want to act out a 'country life' for a while but could never live like true farmers. Far more psychological than 'typological', the distinction of garden from farm was precisely what set both country retreats apart from farmsteads, and their houses from farmhouses. De ruinarum, for instance, praises kitchen gardening and shepherding, for these seem just as bucolic, yet far less laborious than farming or grazing, while still yielding subsistence for a single person. Petrarch further claims those activities benefit not only the body but also the mind, exercising the mental concentration that nobody could ever reach in agitated cities. So besides emphasizing the line between pleasure and business, the idea of gardening over farming prescribes the distinctive pace and gesture of life in his retreat. Within this, men like the author would have to ditch their beaded shoes for sandals, yet without ever losing the comfort of a proper seat for reading, paved steps to climb up and shade to rest in. A similar association happens in the Devarion, where real and imaginary horii appear as 'interiors' that are much less formal than libraries or ballrooms and, therefore, perfect spots for playful storytelling, courteous flirting, chivalrous games, fights and open-air feasts. Hence in both texts these places and their cultivation mediated not only urban and rural but also reality and fantasy; these eventually transmuted one into the other. Until then, the horus had been mostly known and used as a sacred space (making the abstract idea tangible, and not the other way around) and, therefore, with a much more introverted, restrictive and exact purposefulness, Petrarch and Bocaccio epitomize a shift of paradigm.
The rustic villa as a myth of the countryside

The rustic villa as a myth of the countryside was a construct of the collective imagination and acceptance of the rustic villa as a shared enclosure, "economically independent" from the city and "harmoniously integrated" with the rural landscape. However, this was only apparently so because, in fact, the concept is the core of a private estate, whose sustenance and raison d'être derive from urban riches and whose relationship with the fields is nothing but oppressive. Hence a cultural paradox by definition, the villa is a 'bourgeois' dream's take on reality, a project where the imaging and cunning effects of architecture become a 'programmed' tool to construct a morally acceptable narrative of the status quo. Previously, within the monastic hortus conclusus, spatial enclosure adhered to rules so as to reveal an idea of settlement. Meanwhile, within the villa, spatial enclosure enacted appropriation and inhabitation while also working to mask the actual ideology, labour and violence entailed in these processes. And it did so in the most compelling, self-deluding way. For the pure luxury of every rustic villa is precisely the nonchalant manner of providing the owner with time and space for idleness—regardless of the fact that this rest is only possible thanks to the unceasing work of servants and dispossessed peasants. (This is similar to the city itself, which can only exist at the expense of a country by its side).

Further, the more the villa is able to hide its dependency on the urban distribution of wealth, the more leisure is excused and celebrated under the dignified guise of land cultivation. Though one should keep in mind that, between the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century contexts of agrarian crisis, such a game of appearances was more about restraining pleasure than showing it off. Because, along with the newly landed class of clerics and financiers, came the reactionary fear of peasant riots and (probable) class conflict. These were soon dealt with through the praise of a new ethos that was no longer feudal but, for the readers of Petrarch, very much influenced by Cicero and Roman pastoral.

It was towards this sensibility that the orchard, as an actualisation of the ancient hortus, became extremely important. Not surprisingly, Leon Battista Alberti highlighted it in the brief Vite, written around 1440. However, here a large step is taken ahead of Boccaccio.
and Petrarch for two reasons. First, the concept in the text is neither proposed as lyrical scenery nor a place of individual solitude, but rather as an ethical investment per se.

29. Leon Battista Alberti, *Liber de rebus* 

30. It is interesting to note that Alberti contemplated some parts of the scheme initially as a garden building which combines the dignity of a city house with the delight of the garden, to the class of owners of country villas in the Renaissance period.

31. For Alberti describes it as the element between the limits of the villa and its house, forming thus a 'domestic belt' of greensward around the core of the complex.

32. The second, yet even more significant, reason that this text deserves the utmost attention is the fact that the plantations embracing the house of the villa is called a 'garden'; a word rarely written at that time—rather than the usual hortus or the itinerarium.

33. The interior arrangement of Alberti's garden was a question he never answered, perhaps to avoid falling into contradictions. On the one hand, his villa shuns ostentation, while on the other it has an appearance that is impossible to miss. Thanks to the ubiquity of pergaments or trellises, it may have indeed gone without saying (or drawing) that his so-called 'garden' should inevitably catch the eye of the visitor, to render the entire 'investment' an image of sheer privilege.

Field, wall, garden, and house: the villa as a model of the urban territory

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Regardless of the layout or species, just because of its position of
The relationship between both these significant factors was not fully understood until a later date, when the influence of both the Roman and the Greek traditions became more apparent. The Roman Empire, with its vast territorial expansion, had a significant impact on the architectural and urban planning of the Middle East. The Greek influence, on the other hand, was primarily through the transmission of architectural knowledge and design principles.

In the case of the Middle East, the Roman influence was more pronounced in the later stages of its history, particularly during the Islamic period. The architectural methods and techniques developed by the Roman Empire were adapted and modified by the Islamic architects, who were able to incorporate the new technologies and materials into their own architectural traditions. This resulted in the development of a unique style of architecture that is still evident in many of the buildings of the Middle East today.

The Greek influence, on the other hand, was more direct and immediate. The Greeks had a significant impact on the architecture of the Middle East during the Hellenistic period, when Greek culture and civilization were at their zenith. The Greeks introduced new design principles and techniques, which were adopted by the local architects and gradually integrated into the local architectural traditions. This resulted in the development of a distinctive style of architecture that was distinct from the Roman style and yet still maintained many of the characteristics of Greek design.

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Orchard and loggia
and the ‘villafication’ of the countryside

Whether incidental or not, these alterations did eventually convert
these properties into what was becoming increasingly known as estate
villas. And by doing so, through the very reshaping of these grounds, they
have as well started to ‘villafy’ those fields. (That is, not villific-
ation in the sense of portraying someone as a villain but, instead,
villafication as a building process that ends up rendering an area
into a system of enclosures analogous to the singular complex of a villa.)
For one on the other, the prototypical marriage of orchard
and loggia enabled the Medici to expand their patrimony without
further taxes, by putting more land under the guise of unprofitable
gardening. On the other, it profoundly transformed the cultural
and visual perception of the region. As that prototype looked so new
yet so local within Florentine traditions, it stood out as a clear sign of
non-feudal social relations, private cultivation and, most of all, the
influential presence of the Medici while an institution. 
Cafaggiolo
and Trebbio thus became the very artefacts through which the group
would progressively wrest the rural territory from Lombard
control. Since this happened along with the fall of feudalism, the family
of bankers took advantage of the fact that service economies were
becoming increasingly dependent on the exploitation of agrarian
land. Even without possessing every inch of this newly urban dom-
ain—but just by redefining two farmlands as pleasure-purposed
dwellings—the Medici started the systematic process of cultural
and social appropriation that made them the civil power of Flor-
ence. At this point, one should ask whether this was the “honourable
family” that crossed the mind of Alberti while he was writing Wils.
The similarities between his conceptual description and Cafaggi-
olo are flagrant. The only nuance is the word ‘giardino’, chosen by
the author to mean a different sort of orto than the one mentioned in
that cadastral of 1425. The fact that Wils was finished only a decade
later moreover suggests that either the spaces called ‘gardens’ or the
term itself were becoming increasingly ambiguous. Still, it does not
prove any significant change in practice. It is more likely that Alberti
had himself put forward, especially after the Medici events, that the
household garden should acquire ornamental (thus non-ideological)

43. Becomes the loggia coupled
with the walled culture orchard
looked quite similar to the peasant
of most Florentine country houses.

44. See the groundbreaking
research of Eugene R. Gianetto,
‘The Medici Gardens of Fifteenth-Century Florence: Con-
centration and a Social Tradition’, PhD,
Through the evidence of original
records, the research and contempo-
rary correspondence, the author
argues that the ‘orto’ and ‘giardino’
of Cafaggiolo—as well as all gardens of
the ancient Medici properties in the
Tuscan countryside—were on-site
implementations, not empirical
organizations, or created rather than
designed, just above described as
works of art. They, therefore, have
nothing do with the now-called
giodico Italiano—a concept only
invented and popularized through
nineteenth-century books written
by English and French tourists and
enthusiasts, who gave modern
Florentine villa owners always had highly
formal gardens with symmetrical
symmetry, ornamental borders, wide
varied and often.
Gianetto further extols how the
construction of the pavilion and
ornate or sociable, or
articles, that highlighted the political
influence of the Medici.

dimensions once coupled with built forms. In other words, Alberti’s
‘giardino’ either proposes or acknowledges (or re-disCOVERS) the garden
as an architectural space.

For the rest of the fifteenth century, in fact, the articulation of
orchard and loggia remained crucial to identifying the Medi-
ci patrimony beyond Mugello, but through a certain way in which
beauty always appeared incidental and visual delight subliminal, so
as not to break the myth of these possessions as ‘ethical investments’.
Their loggias were therefore consistently similar to vernacular
porches, just as their orchards were compact attachments and ‘infor-
mally’ planted. Modesty and casualness not only accorded with the
alleged purposes of household gardening but also the practice itself
was still based on empirical horticultural knowledge. Whether in
town or country, rich or poor, most gardens enclosures during the
Quattrocento were on-site implementations, far from being designed. 
And so were those introduced in the first reform of Careggi around
1440. [Fig. D] and those planted at Fiesole by 1457. Fourteen miles
away from Mugello and just one hour’s walk from Florence, these places served the wealthiest and busiest generations of the family—hence their closeness to the city. But while the ‘villafazione’ of the original property at Careggio was circumstantially similar to Tresbbio and Cafaggiolo, the case of Fiesole was completely different. The patron was not Cosimo de’ Medici but his son, Giovanni, who sought to purchase land that had never been owned by the family. He commissioned their favourite architect, Michelozzo—in probable collaboration with Alberti—with the building of a farmed estate to admitly admit a function as a ‘villa suburbana’. At that time, the concept was not yet so clearly different from the ‘rustic’ one. Since Giovanni was so fond of Gato (the ancient agricultural writer who praised the rewarding simplicity of life in the country) and quite nostalgic about Careggio, his retreat evoked the rusticity of the earlier Medici properties, though it undoubtedly had a ‘suburban’ condition as it was so close to Florence, both physical and visually. This relationship thus produced a different psychological state and, so, a changing ‘programme’ in which pleasure was increasingly associated with comfort, social gathering and leisure, and less with the past fourteenth-century praise of modesty, solitude and cultivation. This villa thus never really functioned as a ‘garden’. Yet its suburban character did not mean that all its terraces were not ‘tidier’ than the ones at Careggio, though it did make their articulation with built structures much more controlled and formally important.

Because the topography at Fiesole was so complicated, possessing and inhabiting the site required substantial earthworks. The solution was thus to reshape the hilly profile into a stepped system of walled piazzas, terraces and orchards, capped by a cubic house. [Fig. E] (According to a contemporary exchange of letters this idea was first suggested by Giovanni and was inspired by the local monastery of St. Jerome.) Interestingly, the terracing of his villa was the first in the region to be carried out for private use. Until the construction of 1452, only churches and monasteries were structured in such a manner. Meanwhile, the loggia made it clear that the estate was not an abbey; the typically religious stacking of terraces set the residence apart from local farmhouses. Even though not all levels were originally interconnected by stairs, they provided the busy house with a useful landing. The cube, in turn, generously opened itself onto the higher terrace through three arches, thus smoothing the transition between interior and exterior. This time, the loggia was not attached but scooped out from the volume of the wall, so to direct attention towards the terrace, which was shaded by a garden. Whereas the positioning of loggia and terrace was intentional, the plantation was a suffusion of short citrus trees which followed the flow already set in motion by the other built volume. Furthermore, the sequence of these spaces not only made contact with nature more gradual and comfortable, but also established a new item in the programme: the view. And here one understands best why the villa sits on top of such steep terrain. For what defined the suburban character of the event was its enabling the owner “to look back at the city from a high and distant promontory” at the opposite point. Precisely at Fiesole, and over a hundred years after the Domenico, architects had finally caught up with the literary use of the Hortus as a framing device. The scene, in fact, of Giovanni de’ Medici looking back at Florence through the branches of pomegranate trees could have been as lyrical if only
his gaze was one of longing. Instead, he may have just been seeking better visual command of the city under his rule. [Fig. F]

Decades later, his aged son Lorenzo also visited the villa in pursuit of the same view, only through enlarged terraces and a couple of new orri, one of which was called a ‘giardino’. The term appears in an inventory from 1492 to distinguish one space meant for growing flowers from another, used only for vegetables, fruits and threshing grains. This distinction was in fact similar to the categorisation used by Bolognese jurist Pietro de Crescenzi in *Opus Agraria communis*, written around 1305 but only published in 1471—ten years after the first orri at Fiesole. But these were on-site implementations that may have not been influenced by that treatise. Because it aimed at explaining agriculture to fourteenth-century landowners, gardening was included mostly in its economic aspect. There was no guidance about layout nor anything remotely close to a ‘design procedure’, let alone the formal effects of each species of tree and so on. The word *pleasure* was only mentioned with a moral tone by ancient agricultural writers, dismissing whether the purpose would require a specific organisation of space. So while the republishing of *Agraria* may have reached Giovanni—who preferred small gardens for their productivity and frugality—it did not impress Lorenzo. He preferred larger plantations, mostly for growing flowers and fruitless evergreens, such as figs and cypress—hence the many other agrarian improvements made over the property until he died towards the end of the fifteenth century. Though, again, curbed flowerbeds did not mean his gardens were symmetrical or anything less than casual and undoubtedly domestic. They did, nevertheless, reflect a creative re-appropriation of gardening techniques motivated by the specific desire of a patron. Even before the rediscovery of *Agraria communis*, clipping flowers or hedges on pergolas (and so forth) had been activities mostly performed by monks, who had perfected them as rituals of collective cultivation.

Once commissioned, these gestures lost their liturgical meaning and simply provided individual pleasure. Though to someone born a Medici, a great deal of such feeling derived not only from studying and contemplating but, above all, from “possessing the world.” Hence the outward character of the flower garden at Fiesole, which works with the terrace to frame Florence amidst the rural and larger...
region. If to a tourist today this is just another photogenic sight, to Lorenzo it was instead the 'correct' (mollified) vision of a still fragmented yet newly urban territory and, therefore, instrumental for him to recognise and assert himself at the ruling power in that system.

As a two-generation process, the event of Fiesole, moreover, epitomises the late fifteenth-century 'subject' development of wealthy and influential townsmen, who similarly sought to institutionalise their public figures by associating themselves with iconic representations of the landscape. That was the case with Federico da Montefeltro, a successful mercenary who had seized the lordship of Urbino by 1444. Three decades later, as a duke and paternalistic ruler, he became known for being as diligent towards soldiers as to the people, whom he referred to as "citizens." Federico was in fact interested in Aristotle, and in (recently rediscovered) Roman law, and thus been on tempering power not only in practice but also in appearance. In order to turn that still-feudal duchy into a stable-looking court, he lined up the best possible front of secretaries, scribes, writers, philosophers, mathematicians, painters and architects. From painting to building, the general approach was to formally fuse the alleged 'magnificence' of his governance with the glory of his military achievements and, especially, the splendour of his personal life. It is, therefore, hard to find an artwork under this type of patronage which does not celebrate at least one of these dimensions. All appear entangled – for instance, in the famous cycle of dipinti painted around 1465 by the Florentine artist Piero della Francesca, in which the Duke and Duchess Battista Sforza face each other while they are (literally) backed up by a rural landscape. [Fig. H] which expands far beyond the actual territory of Urbino. The 30-year refurbishment of the Palazzo Ducale, led by architect-engineer Luciano di Laurana, also displays similar associations, especially in the decoration of the studiolo, whose cabinets and Miller had been covered with trompe-l'oeil marquetry portraying the patron in scholarly dress amidst literary canons, fictitious objects and imaginary windows looking onto the hilly fields of his dukedom. In the midst of mingling fantasy and reality, these commissions freely
chose subjective yet distant 'points of view' that overestimated the span of the landscape around the city. This happens not out of imprecision but, on the contrary, from the intent to project with extreme realism the daydream of an ongoing process of re-appropriation, territorial expansion and control.

Besides their instrumentality in representing a political institution, these images were artistic experiments at the highest intellectual level of their time. They reconstructed the landscape so compellingly thanks to the rules of geometric perspective, improved by Alberti and Paolo Uccello after Filippo Brunelleschi, and mostly theorized by Piero della Francesca. The work by the latter in Urbino was, in fact, a prolific phase in his lifetime's research, which happened to cross paths with the specific demands of Montefeltro. From this encounter yielded the 1474 publication of the treatise De propriedatibus pignandi and the whole ethos of a so-called 'mathematical humanism', which distinguished the duchy from earlier centres of humanistic culture such as Florence and Siena. As the Duke had declared certainly after De re aedificiorum, architecture became a 'liberal art based upon arithmetic and geometry'. In practice, this implied a conscious interaction with what was being developed in painting. Not only the perspective of architectural space could generate the form of an image, but also the inverted process was then made available and, of first all, encouraged. That was the case with the hypnotic Vogli and Oddi. [Fig. 1] argued by Manfredo Tafuri to be the first rendering in history since it had probably been commissioned to verify an alternative altarpiece for the construction of the church of San Bernardino. However, there is no evidence of a direct collaboration between the master Piero della Francesca and dogger Francesco di Giorgio Martini. As a matter of fact, building and painting look quite different. Yet both share the same quest for synthetic geometry, each in its framing and formation of space. To the Siennese architect, specifically, that meant a possible common language between his long-term experience with military structures and the demand for a religious building with civil undertones, which had become typical of all the interventions commissioned by Montefeltro towards his 'palacification' of Urbino.}

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Monument and perspective, memory and ideology

The resultant "city in the form of a palace" can still be seen from the entrance of San Bernardino, far outside the eastern hill of San Donato. Its profile is arrested by a strange building: six massive arches emerge out of the earthy cliff to bear a garden terrace, enclosed by the protruding wings of a double loggia. [Fig. J. Solemn rather than monotonous, this architectural object was the highlight of the reform of the convent of Santa Chiara – another commission from the Duke to Martini during the construction of that church. Hence, the U-shape resulted from opening up the main cloister of the former compound. [Fig. K] Despite the lack of contemporary plans showing the old and new plantations, it is logical to assume that raising half of the quadrangular arcade was just enough to completely alter the home landscape. Because such an intervention disregarded all exclusive rules, the sacred function of the original enclosure was irrevocably
disabled. Unfortunately, the earliest spatial depiction of the outcome dates only from 1619, [Fig. 1].

If the Venetian artist was faithful to reality, that space had become a hanging garden of some casually planted dark-green shrubs flanking an empty terrace. Whether this "gardin pitto" had been designed or implemented on the site, it did follow the protruding loggia to embrace the view rather than its centre, confirming that it was no longer meant to address the whole convent as an autonomous settlement. Since the new plantations will still have provided the nuns with flowers and fruits, everything indicates their primary purpose was to direct bodily movement, especially of the visitors, towards the verge of the terrace. What else was laid down along the way remains a mystery since the garden has been reconfigured many times until becoming the carefree garth of today. At the very least one may visit and discover that its vantage leads exactly to San Bernardino, far across the valley. That is why the U form turns to the east rather than the sunny south - a decision which would moreover make Santa Chiara, the resting place of Battista Sforza, function as a synecdochal "quotidien" for San Bernardino, where Federico da Montefeltro had chosen to be buried. The garden terrace thus served as a stage for the after-rehearsal of the dual coupling.

Alternatively, to rephrase it within our theory as an artifact, this marks the transformation of the koryos from a sacred space into a monument. Despite the fact that neither Francesco di Giorgio nor any of his contemporaries ever called this a garden as such, it indeed functioned as a place of remembrance. This is especially true if we observe it within the bigger picture, for which that visual conversation between buildings also operated as a monumental and landscape as a political achievement. The sight eventually dominated the visual plane of the terrace, thus recalling the territorial expansion of Urbino under the name of Montefeltro. Regardless of the circumstances or the intentions of patron and architect, this association was the inevitable product of a specific mindset, or a way of seeing, within the artistic ethos influenced by Piero della Francesca. In fact, as with his depictions portraying husband and wife, church and convent face each other from the highest vantage points of the valley. Similarly with the painting, these situations also create the necessary optical distance for the viewer to comprehend those objects within their rural region.

which consequently appears larger than ever before. In Santa Chiara, specifically, the confident adherence of flanking garden and protruding loggia thus indicates that Francesco di Giorgio was affected by the possibility of conceiving form and space through geometric linear perspective - even if he had only traced rays and planes in his mind. This method, of imagining action through a sequence of frames, was unprecedented amongst architects, although it had been present in embryo since the Renaissance and was already fully-developed by the advent of mid-fifteenth-century perspective. [Fig. 2] Tafuri notes the contemporary case of the Palazzo Piccolomini di Pescia, [Fig. M] with its compact U-shaped block facing a thinly walled courtyard in front of a terraced garden. [Fig. N] Nonetheless, he claims the asset at Urbino to be "the first occurrence, in the history of humanist architecture, of a total realization of the built volume towards the landscape." This derives the monumentality of garden and loggia, not as a matter of scale but for forming a perspectival stage set through which landscape would be looked at as a grotto, impressing and thus mobilizing human memory to associate this image with both an ancient-looking structure and the monumental institution which had built it.

The example of Urbino was of course not the first time that an architecture made one "think through remembrance." For monuments have existed all over the Italian peninsula since early antiquity. Two examples are the peripteral temples in the Villa of Publico ninth century BC and the burial grove in the Tomb of Sestos in Spoleto, [Fig. O] each built and planted in Pompeii before the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79. Similarly to the example of Santa Chiara, these were symmetrical enclosures of forms arranged for the vantage point of the human eye, so as to invite and absorb its attention and direct it towards a narrative of reality from the 'points of view' of the families who ruled them. Ancient architects have (apparently) pursued this theatrical effect as much more consciously than Francesco di Giorgio, whose era had not yet uncovered such ruins. The Romans knew from the Greeks that the images of 'places' on the human mind was a technique of sorting and accessing memory - or mnemotechnics, the "art of memory." The artistic transformation of perspective into iconography thus played a fundamental role in the process. By simulating and manipulating the visual sensation of a place, perspective puts cognition where it needs to be to associate this present with past experience.
Villa e Vigna: the 16th-century reinvention of Rome

The gratuitously tall loggias at Santa Chiara not only confirmed the reinvention of the torre as a framing device but also inaugurated the monumentalisation of landscape. This shift relates to the quest for the formalisation of infinity that would culminate, a century later, in the Baroque concept of urban territory. However significant, that was not yet recognisable to anyone at that time, let alone put in such terms. Nonetheless, that monumentality undoubtedly impacted on whoever was active in Urbino—such as Baldassare Peruzzi, assistant to Francesco di Giorgio, or Donato Bramante, apprentice to Pietro della Francesca. This is evident in most of their later works, especially the Cortile del Belvedere and Vittoriano da Agostino Chiari (today known as Villa Farnesina), both complexes defined by monumental loggias embracing terrace gardens in Rome. [Fig. O] the city where Peruzzi and Bramante moved at the beginning of 1500 when the city had


98. As argued by Francois Teneur, before the invention of printing, the mechanical use of memory was already important in communicating other forms of knowledge and culture in early periods. "Men's brains became a new tool for the transmission of information," (1993), p. 59. It became not only a print but also a rhetoric of memory. Francois Teneur, "The Memory of Memory" (London: The Bodleian Library, 1993), pp. 189-210.

99. Ibid.


102. Prouit, Ibid., p. 16.


Fig. O: The proliferations of major villas Florence and suburban villas around Rome between the 15th and 17th centuries. Note Urbino on the top right.
just emerged from its "eternal" decay. Their patrons were "men of action" (the same chivalrous subject of Montefeltro), popes, cardinals, and their court of aristocratic relatives, secretaries, treasurers, and businessmen turned-electoral-sponsors—mostly foreigners aiming at an office in the Holy See and financial gain. This thriving was due to the political resumption of revolutions that had been initiated by Martin V in 1417, furthered by Nicholas V until 1455 but retracted since the death of Sixtus IV in 1484. In short, the "removal of the city" was intended to consolidate the merging of the religious and temporal powers of the Church through the imposition of new urban policies and piecemeal planning that could polarize and reclaim civic governance from the lay administration. Both centuries were thus similarly marked by strategic relocations of Christian places and buildings towards a systematic re-appropriation of the city, though the thirteenth-century approach was crucially different in having turned "restoration" into a means to colonize, suburbanise, renew and gentrify the precarious rural areas as edging the Aurelian walls, and further beyond. Interestingly enough, these processes were neither pushed through war nor enemy but the architecture itself, along with the cultural revival of the Roman pastoral myth of the idyllic countryside. Ancient writers (such as Cato, Varro, Pliny and Cicero) were then more widely read than ever before, and so professionals such as Peruzzi, Bramante and Raffaello Sanzio di Urbino, were required to reshape dried-up vineyards into (what may now be reconsidered) "suburban villas". These were the very type of enclosure that could legitimize, the expropriation of idle land and, at the same time, celebrate the country as a place for leisure and contemplation. Orchards, terraces and loggias were thus fundamental to inhabiting, while monumentalising, the forgotten landscape of the Roman Agro, which was far from an idyllic peaceful place at that time but, instead, decadent and violent. Moving further ahead of the precedents of Florence and Urbino, sixteenth-century Rome was therefore the precise context in which the route went to Rome to implement the designed place, while the "programme" of the suburban villa shifted from the one of a private summer estate to a public museum, a botanic garden, a theatre, eventually, an urban park. This meant that—just as Alberti might have previously suggested with his diagrammatic Villa—these variations would also formalise specific ideas of urban territory which, within less than a hundred years, had gone from compactly closed to indefinitely spread. Considering that the architectural re-invention of the enclosed garden into a public (secular) monument was crucial to such progression, one should ask: what else specifically motivated the formal organisation of these projects?

**Amphitheatre of vineyards and power**

First and foremost, the rural region around Rome was utterly different from that of Urbino and Florence, or anywhere else. And, particularly up to 1500, that place was decadent, precocious and depopulated since the fourteenth-century plagues and sackings had destroyed most aqueducts and fountains. And so, the city was itself an unusual agglomeration of unfinished urban work, muddy riverbanks, churches and public buildings clustered alongside medieval housing. All thus radiated loosely and inconsistently from the northern Campo Marzio towards the entrance of the Via Appia,
in the south-west, where the built mass waned away between treets of idle land. Although anyone could graze and plough on these voids, the public provision was so precarious that agrarian production was too scanty to supply the Roman service economy. As a result, 30,000 inhabitants were confined within a few hectares of the Tiber River, where they could collect water manually. And the river, moreover, was constantly augmented with ships importing food from other regions. Hence this landscape was far from being the "rose garden" of the picturesque "Campana Romana" later invented by British travellers on the Grand Tour. Regardless of that general state of precarity, the simple pleasure of a country retreat was a commonplace to most native Romans. And the usual place for such experience was not yet a suburban villa (it had never been a necessity before but, instead, a status or a sign). While the villa was a fortified farmhouse ruled by wealthy clans - thus units typically isolated amidst the further open fields - the oenon was a walled vineyard with a house, an orchard, and a kitchen garden; it was thus a mixed culture and the most ubiquitous form around the city, since nearly every Roman family, from peasants to bankers, cultivated at least one patch. Even today, it is even possible to find the plantations fended along consular roads, such as Via Flaminia. Until 1500, however, their locations would usually range from the north-west to the south-western hills within the Aurelian walls. This was partly because these areas were the most devalued ones - if not in a state of total abandonment - but mainly for the reason that vines grow best in hilly volcanic areas. Since a sign could be as small as an urban parcel, it could also be found on almost every vega terrain of the lower peripheries as well. In this case, wealthy families that could arrange irrigation would implement larger vineyards with separate orchards over the blueprint of undiscovered ruins - such as Vigna Magna and Ortacchio degli Eboli, which arose from the earthy relic of the Circo Massimo. Secondly, the geographic distribution of Roman vineyards was intrinsically to the legal definition of the urban territory, just as their holdings and cultivations were to citizenship. Because - unlike the medieval origin of the oenon - the sign came from a much older tradition that dated back to the Early Republic, when the Empire sought to colonise the Roman agrarian region (the agro romano) the ancient pomarium by awarding veterans dama-size parcels of arable land.
central stage. In 1188 this stage was split into two when the Church emancipated itself from the Holy Roman Empire. Until then, these opposing powers had been polarising Rome between the clerical west and the secular east. The Holy See dominated the Lateran, Vatican, the civic administration and the Capitoline Hill. And just as this resulted in a double society — one of the Papacy and the other of "the city" — sign culture was also two-sided. The location of a sign therefore implied where the owner stood in that arena, or the theatre of power which Rome would gradually become throughout the first half of the sixteenth century. Having a villa around the northeast of the city, for instance, meant siding with the Medici and the Florentine community.147

Third, yet equally significant, precisely because of that double character, a sign was the place where both sides of society could meet each other and potentially intermingle.148 This possibility was something that every foreigner would have to learn about to participate in this "game." Further, because the Roman nobility scorned commerce but praised agriculture, being a rich landowner was not enough: one should also know, or at least appear to know, how to work the land since this was considered the only "honorable" way to enjoy it. So when a cardinal or a cleric arrived (from Naples, Genoa, Florence and so forth), the first step for him to introduce himself into Roman society and establish his presence in the city was to acquire both an urban palazzo in the centre, and a rural signa subsuming the Aurelian walls.149 It was almost as if these appropriations were a tacit agreement between his alien figure and the local ways of doing things, not only cultural but also, political. On the one hand, the cultivation of a sign meant the chance of blending one's personality in with a very Roman tradition. On the other, the possession of anything above all of land — meant a proportionally large influence over the administration of the commune. Furthermore, for either the cardinals obsessing about the throne, or the treasurers and electoral sponsors overwhelmed with hard work and greed, gardening was a relaxing activity. As we have seen, it meant the possibility of "etern with dignity."150 For the popes, who were commonly elderly and ill and so usually in power for less than a decade, a sign provided not only shade and wellness but, foremost, a space through which to leave a hallmark on the Roman landscape. Many pontificates would there-

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119. By 1505 Cardinal Farnese was advised to regularly visit the garden of his signa on the Tiber near the detriment of his health. As noted by David R. Coffin, a letter from Giunti in 1520 by the Vatican-based humanist Paulus Comenius, Coffin, ibid., p. 56.
By the early sixteenth century it had become clear that the conversion of rural vineyards into what would be later called 'suburban villas' was much more than a cultural phenomenon. But it was the Genoese Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere who first used these processes as a strategy for urban transformation. Immediately after his election as Pope Julius II, in 1503, Rovere addressed the 'villa exquisita' trend by promoting the development of Via della Lungara, a new type of street meant to be entirely flanked with lush gardened estates. [Fig. 1] The papacy carried out this work along with other swift yet massive interventions — such as Via Giulia and the reforms of the Papal Palaces — aimed at establishing the Vatican Hill as the most visible and powerful centrality of Rome. In this sense, the entire western side of the Tiber also had to change from a depleted outskirt to a thriving 'suburb'. But to produce this radical change of landscape was even harder than convincing a fragmented city that it had only one 'navel', and that this navel had been transferred to a site with no significance to anyone (except to Christian pilgrims who climbed the Vatican to worship at the shrine of St Peter). Until Julius II, the west side was a fragmented area controlled by a few baronial families, who owned most of the land from below the hill to the south end of the Janiculum. Due to the steep topography and scanty arid lands, those groups had progressively walled the fields into small farms that were cultivated like the more adaptable Roman vigneti. All, nonetheless, had dried up since Pope Alexander VI had neglected the aqueducts, leading the entire city into crisis. As hunger, disease and crime weakened papal authority and undermined civic order, the feudal gentry were able to retain their local domains even though they had become unproductive.

The idea of Via della Lungara, nonetheless, dates to the plans of Alexander, who already saw it as an alternative route for either pilgrims or the flux between the Vatican and the harbour of Ripa Grande, henceforth bypassing the west side. Julius acted more...
quickly than his predecessors in understanding not only that he had to solve the socio-economic crisis to be able to govern but also that, crucially, the moment was also an opportunity to restructure the urban geography of power in his favour. The new papacy therefore put forward a double agency that worked either to avoid a plebian revolution or against the interest of the old oligarchies. Julius financed public bakeries, for instance, and built streets which cut through areas of wasteland to raise taxation until the local barons had no option but to sell them. 84

If the Via della Lungara was to stir fierce opposition and local resistance — and it did, as did all Julian interventions — the Pope made sure the construction was swift and the architecture "successful. 85 The commission naturally went to his chief architect, Bramante, who had been in any case interested in fusing town planning with stage set design and so traced the new street as a compelling piece of perspective through a single straight line, paved with white stone for over a thousand metres. 86 The result can still be seen today from Porta Settimiana, where the street is continuously flanked by walls three metres high that are regularly interrupted by leafy treetops behind them. 87 The Via, moreover, instantly changed the broader area as it ran over the tortuous tracks of an ancient road to cut through the narrow mouth between the Tiber and the Janiculum Hill. Although the gesture simply formalised the north-to-south direction of the topography, it eventually unsettled the medieval configuration of endosures to impose a more rentable parcellisation. Land use, however, was limited, since the lots were neither large enough for farming nor small enough to become affordable again. The sizes were instead just enough to fit residential estates in which gardening could only satisfy the reproduction of leisure. The location itself already implied such a programme, for it was visibly close to the city and still remote enough to provide 'tranquillity'. Just across the river, Julius was also building Via Giulia to rival the lay administrative centre of the Capitoline Hill, on the south-eastern side. One of the factors that stressed that this street denoted business (negozio) was the parallel existence of Via della Lungara, denoting pleasure (spleto). For pen negozio, both literally and conceptually, the anti-urban character of the latter legitimised the urbanity of the former. While Giulia was an "enquint of a city street" in the manner

85 Via della Lungara was to lead directly to the Borgo Vittoriana, and the Via Giulia would lead to the new Porta Giulia, together they would direct traffic in a circle that creat the true "central approach" of the Tiber, the bridge and fortress of St. Angelo. 86 Ibid.

86 Immediately after his election as Pope Julius II in 1503, Rome was encircled by fortifications, and its surrounding area served as a protective relief: the Pope in this metropolis that saw off from the outside the sixteenth-century expansion of the city. The constitution of Via delle Lungare was in turn to make sure that these sorts of private initiatives would work to advantage. And it worked well, for 1502, when Julius II officially gave the project to the above-ground buildings in the newly urbanised area of the south.

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90 The construction of Via delle Lungare was in turn to make sure that these sorts of private initiatives would work to advantage. And it worked well, for 1502, when Julius II officially gave the project to the above-ground buildings in the newly urbanised area of the south.
134. Neither Farnese nor Ardemone nor Colin Ross has ever questioned whether the conversion of the Vatican Palace into Rapis Grande was the original reason for Agostino's purchase of the Papal States while the property in his father's hands in Rome. Less than a decade after-moving to Rome, he had managed to convert the property. In 1635, the Papal Pope, Alexander VII, granted Agostino the rights to operate several armament arsenals near the port city of Civitavecchia. Chigi became extremely influential after acquiring a vast fleet of ships to transport and export arms from Civitavecchia to other states. Alexandre Vincenl (ed.), The Villa Farnesina in Rome (Modena: Fratelli Bocca, 1970).

135. Apart from the improvement of the Lungara, there had been no other exchanges of influence between Julius II and Chigi. Around 1516, the banker sold the Pope's land to the state at a very low price. In return, Julius made Agostino a Senator.

136. According to Farnesio, all the gardens of the estate were implemented on site between 1509 and 1518, except for the large orchard planted on land acquired only in 1520. Christoph H. Farnesio, Ibid., p. 13.

137. The pergola garden was implemented in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. It was depicted as a scene in six scenes of the Palazzo di San Lorenzo, Agostino Chigi (Rome, 1536).

138. In 1511 Agostino had made long trips to the city, where he had made many business and chivalrous contacts with the elite. He may have seen (and acquired) a copy of the manuscript. See the illustrations of the Flower Bed Patterns in Francesco Colonna's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, Venice, 1499 (J. W. Appel, The Drawings of Poliphilus, Paintings of Holbein Woodcuts in the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, London, 1856, Plates 125-126).

139. The port of Civitavecchia was developed into a major port by Agostino. The city became a major hub for the transportation of goods to and from the mainland. The construction was the first described in a poem, in Rimo Fodio, Sibyllinae Agostini (Rome, 1528).

140. The harbour of Raps Grande, two of his busiest workplaces. He was not only the wealthiest citizen in Europe but also the chief treasurer of the Vatican Palace and the owner of a mercantile empire of more than 100 ships, which were often brought from Civitavecchia to Frascati bringing the alum from his Tolefani mines to the Roman market. Hence the estate at Via della Lungara was a critical point of mediation in his affairs both in social, political, economic, and social, territorial dimensions. Not incidentally, Julius II—whose election had been financed by the Siene banker—returned the favor by dredging the Tiber to improve navigation. The Chigi fleet could thereby also offload red marble, fresh meat, gold-plated chairs, peacocks, mature trees and other goods to go from the suburban docks straight to the conspicuous consumption of the retreat, which by 1511 resembled more a pleasant embankment and less an underbrush type. From the date of purchase, Agostino had the old soil cleared and gradually rebuilt into one large terrace drained by gutters and fountains, and planted with a kitchen garden, a secret tower, an extensive orchard, and an unusually large garden. This one in particular stood out from the other enclosures for other reasons. Firstly, the area of nearly 50 by 50 metres was divided into four planters by a cruciform pergola and probably bound with boxwood. Hence the place produced views similar to the woodcut illustrations of Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, published only a few years before. [Fig. V] Second and more significantly, these elements were 'walled up' by an unforeseen profusion of fauna and flora: colourful birds and butterflies; flowers traditionally cultivated in Rome (pink cabbage roses, narcissus, laurel, jasmine, iris); indigenous trees (poplars, beech, chestnuts, maritime pines, vines, evergreen shrubs of the malmion mediterraneus); and exotic species (such as the Tuscan hop hornbeam, Sicilian lemon, Turkish pomegranate and American squash). There may have been antique statues casually distributed under the shadows of those leafy treetops, though the cast of unusual plant species was the true motif of the garden.

In case such elitism was not enough to imply the intercontinental reach of the owner, it occasionally came up as a conversation starter while he hosted his guests. Stedlings were shipped from the Agro and other regions directly to Agostino, who apparently had become a collector and called that space a 'winehouse.' Although the Latin
not only with an admirable exterior, visible from the city, but also with equally impressive interiors, where Agostino could 'generously' disclose his botanical collection while hosting his guests through other specific gestures, ordered and catered to by a bespoken sequence of spaces and objects. More than defining the retreat as an environment of hospitality and entertainment, while bestowing on Chigi a certain charisma, the villa seems to have been crucial to portraying him as a 'magnifico' patron—a concept that had just been published in a treatise of 1498 by the humanist Giovanni Pontano to advise new courtiers on how to display private wealth, 'splendor', and express public goodness, 'magnificence', without presuming to the status of royalty. (This was a convenient adaptation of Aristotle, to whom magnificence was both a virtue and a responsibility for prestigious men to either master their households or govern the city.) Although Pontano had targeted the elite under the (Aragon) King of Naples, his concerns were shared by the Roman society of foreigners who, like Agostino, had to justify themselves as a court within the 'imperial' plans of Julius II. And in this context, another refashioning—of Cicerio—helped them to understand that, in antiquity, magnificence was a (controversial) praxis amongst Roman politicians and oligarchs, one that had nothing to do with exclusive luxury but with magnanimity, "doing something great," for the (visible) benefit of the broader community of citizens. This mentality was fitting, again, to late Renaissance Rome not only because it came from the classical canon but because this was the Julian way of seizing the civic administration from the Capitol Hill. Whether Chigi had ever read Aristotle, Cicerio or Pontano, but was the real 'climatino' to which his suburban place was a response. Hence one of the strongest motivations for him to convert his arable area into a walkable system of pleasant gardens was to make the grounds public—not in the (present) sense of handing it over to the state to the people could use it, but instead, invite authorities and influential figures to enjoy it and, thereafter, to recognize such expenditure as a legitimate contribution to their broader project of the urban territory.

On a summer night in July 1516, for instance, the Pope visited the Villa with his entourage, even though the owner had been away for several months working in Venice. Whether arriving by boat or carriage, the group must have noticed that, while the eastern...
rampart formed a riverfront, the western walls shaped the course of Via della Lungara to give access to the main gate. The reception inside welcomed cassocks and beaded shoes with a paved vestibule. This was followed by a bright rectangular court, enclosed by the orchard on the left-hand side, the pergola garden in the front and the principal residence on the right.11 As it was warm, and most rooms smelt like fresh plaster, 'the House of Chigi' invited Julius to dine on an elevated loggia, Fig. W, which served as the grand lobby of the casino, that is, the main house of the villa. Over there he looked at the court from the perspective of a sort of 'balcony', to which the empty parterre below had suddenly become a 'stage'. The illusion continued as even the treetops hatching out of the orchard, on the opposite side, formed a leafy 'proscenium arch', while the building embraced the void with two tower-like wings, as if to complete the occasional 'theatre'.12 Between 1505 and 1511, Chigi had commissioned the casino from Peruzzi13 (who was also about to design, in fact, the stage set for a play written by Cardinal Bibbiena)14 — hence the intentional use of architectural perspective to turn the Chigi retreat into spectacles; and the apparent similarity with another protruding building, the Convent of Santa Chiara at Urbino. However, the main influence may have come from another work by Francesco di Giorgio, with whom he had possibly collaborated: Villa Chigi a le Volte, owned by Agostino's brother, Sigismondo, in the rural region of Siena.15 [Fig. X] Because Volte was intended to do for the Chigi what Mugello had for the Medici, Agostino probably requested the referencing, to imply that possessing rural land was a 'tradition' in his family. Both houses are thus almost identical U-shaped blocks accessed by a central loggia. This element is exactly what distinguishes the one in Volte from a farmhouse, and the other at Lungara from an urban palazzo. And the crucial difference between the two was the ethos of the Roman revival of magnificence within that 'suburban' condition posed by the new street of Julius II. The loggia for Agostino was therefore designed to impress rather than underrate, since either the patron or his architect had understood that the entire property should function not as a rustic podere but as a public monument to represent the Chigi as a civic powerhouse, amongst others (just as the Roman down used to do for the patrician families).

Following that architectural statement right at the entrance of his...
palace, Agostino could thereafter emulate the character of a (much less restraining) patron family to host friends and enemies, from gentle clerks to senators and clerics.\footnote{In this sense, the reception court was at once a square, a parterre, a stage, a room and a gazebo opened within the dense plantations of the orchard and wisteria. Hence it anagogically mediated between urban and rural, courtesy and chivalry, magnificence and splendour; publicity and privacy, to introduce the whole property as a ‘world’ where these categories intermingled — and setting henceforth the ludic tone of the events to follow further inside. For the first time, a Renaissance architect used such a spectacle effect to monumentalise a residential compound that was neither a palace nor a palazzo. Although it may not have impressed Julius — who would have asked Peruzzi to triple the scale — Vindariam Oglia was the perfect scenery to please someone like Giovanni di Lorenzo de’ Medici, who became Pope Leo X, someone with a penchant for theatricality and who, by 1518, had invested heavily in theatrical art and architecture to transform the whole city into a court. More importantly, the property should indeed have satisfied Leo, since two years before he had passed a policy that granted tax breaks and building privileges to the suburban gentry. His announcement attests not only to how suburbanisation was at the core of the papal strategy to colonise and reshape the urban territory but, crucially, to how and why a private landowner should do it:}

(…) to enlarge and to embellish his patrimony not only for his own use but for the dignity and beauty of the city also to shine outside, where many gardens, vineyards and other buildings as well as some nice, useful and necessary residences have been rising in the last few years.\footnote{In this sense, the reception court was at once a square, a parterre, a stage, a room and a gazebo opened within the dense plantations of the orchard and wisteria. Hence it anagogically mediated between urban and rural, courtesy and chivalry, magnificence and splendour; publicity and privacy, to introduce the whole property as a ‘world’ where these categories intermingled — and setting henceforth the ludic tone of the events to follow further inside. For the first time, a Renaissance architect used such a spectacle effect to monumentalise a residential compound that was neither a palace nor a palazzo. Although it may not have impressed Julius — who would have asked Peruzzi to triple the scale — Vindariam Oglia was the perfect scenery to please someone like Giovanni di Lorenzo de’ Medici, who became Pope Leo X, someone with a penchant for theatricality and who, by 1518, had invested heavily in theatrical art and architecture to transform the whole city into a court. More importantly, the property should indeed have satisfied Leo, since two years before he had passed a policy that granted tax breaks and building privileges to the suburban gentry. His announcement attests not only to how suburbanisation was at the core of the papal strategy to colonise and reshape the urban territory but, crucially, to how and why a private landowner should do it:}

What this bull describes is a process of villafication of the agrarian region. Does it sound familiar? It does as, in fact, Leo was a Medici and might have learned from his father Lorenzo what one should do to legitimate the unproductive appropriation of arable land.

He therefore issued that policy in the same period that Chigi was enlarging the Vindariam. [Fig. 1] Such good timing was more than a coincidence, as Leo still owed Agostino for the financing of his pontificate (papal coronation). It is equally worth noting that the modus
operandi of the ingenious pontiff was to mask that sort of abuse of power with gestures seemingly selfless yet never without pomp. By "to enlarge and to embellish," he meant to make suburban possessions appear anything but idle, so that their land could never be reclaimed—neither by the peasantry nor by the emperors of Rome. Hence many of the new estates had gardens planted with tall trees, which made their inhabitation visible from outside; or reformed with other monumental objects such as aqueducts and public fountains, which represented the Church or influential families—as these were the only institutions capable of installing and maintaining them. [Fig. Z]

Form and function—and size—were therefore just as critical to confer these places with the appearance that Leo X considered "useful." Further inside, the courtyard manner of showing splendour were thus more exaggerated than ever before. And so they implied a magnificence increasingly formalised through theatrical perspectives, through "stage set architecture," thus not necessarily by scale. In that same year, for instance, Chigi commissioned a "dream team" of star artists to help (and pressure) Peruzzi to finish decorating the main house of the villa. The focus in this phase were the trompe-l'oeil frescoes that could maximise the theatricality that would make the entire estate ready to cater to extremely playful rituals of hospitality. Raphael, therefore, intervened in the entrance loggia with the mythological story of Cupid and Psyche. [Back to Fig. W] The fantastic scenes drew the guests' attention to the dramatisation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, which usually took place on the empty parterre just below. The classics had become direct references to the idea and culture of retreat, just as suggested by Petrarch almost two centuries earlier. And so, Giovanni da Udine wrapped up the fresco by admittedly beautifying the arches with grotesque flowers (a recently rediscovered style of Roman art) and the vaults with realistic ivy festoons, fruit pendants, and wicker curls with colouring typical of the Venetian school. This mocking of natural elements made the whole structure allude to the wooden pergola outside. The gallery, however, did not give access to the temple, which was instead connected to the main house of the villa through the south façade, by the "Garden Loggia" (today the "Loggia of Galatea." [Fig. AA])

This loggia was also compellingly frescoed by Peruzzi, Sanzio and Sebastiano del Piombo, with epic scenes and landscapes of (im-

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164. Agostino Chigi was famous for inviting the best artists of that time to compete with each other on long-term collaboratives. Even though, by 1509, Raphael was still a pupil of Giulio Romano, he was already the most wanted painter in Rome, a rival to Peruzzi. David R. Coffin argues that Raphael was the chief designer of the villa and gentleman, the so-called "frescori" since the purchase in 1510 of additional land to the north. A document of May 27a, 1510, for the first time, work on the combined studio and pavilion (or "caravanserai") that Raphael designed to stand on the north-western corner of this land along the Vittoria Langen. But the idea, and even the design, may date from the time of the land acquisition. By the time of Chigi's death on April 10, 1510, the construction was not complete, but in a contract of the end of June of the same year, the master promised to complete their work within 6 months. Meanwhile Chigi had begun construction difficulties with insufficient sums for the renovation of his garden, and in January 1513 it is suggested that he was moving from the Tuoni since he could be in Rome "above the house." David R. Coffin, "The Villa of the Chigi in 15th Century Rome," in The Art Bulletin 1986, p. 50.

165. Christophe L. Przywara, La Villa Farnesina a Roma (Molise: Franco Corna Piccioni, 2000), pp. 163-
233, and for a quite specific account of the participation of Raphael, see Bernardo Dandini, "A Study of the Frescoes of Raphael in the Vatican Collection," in The Art Bulletin 1986, pp. 163-
233.


167. This structure is kept the monumental space focus distancing the anti-saloon world. This move, however, emphasized the exigencies of the loggia, which had to be open and, at the same time, modest interior and exterior. For instance, the frescoes and frescoes hanging from the religious gables allude to the tomb of cardinal Jules-Patrick, "Frescoes of the Villa Farnesina," in Ambrosiana, 2006, p. 20-27.


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Fig. 2: The Villa Farnesina Chigi (blue) connecting the main urban interventions in the city between 1510 and 1550. Julius II (A), Vittoria Langen (dashed), Vettovaglia (blue outline), Leo X (B).}
possibly) harmonious rural fields. The pleasant decoration helped to make the lodge-like room suitable for more formal banquets, mostly during the winter, or to gather the guests before long walks such as the secular ‘processions’ through the (real) pergola towards the "Tiber Loggia." As a party held in August 1518, for instance, he used this exact choreography to celebrate the Feast of Saint Lawrence with a banquet on the riverside pavilion. After each course, a ‘ballet’ of servants collected the gold plates (designed by Raphael especially for Chigi) and threw them in the Tiber. The act tricked even the smart Pope, unaware of the nets installed beforehand and on the riverbed to retrieve them."

The hours, however, would not have worked without the help of wine, and certainly not before the spatial ‘prelude’ of the Viridarium. The ‘procession’ through the exotic microcosm was in itself a bewildering experience, in which the various scents, shapes, shades, shadows and whistles immersed the guests in a mental state where fiction and reality were hardly discernible. This garden was therefore used as a scenery for plays, dances and banquets. In this case, servants would assemble tables on trestles covered in silk along the cruciform pergola. Once coupled with live music, and live birds served in individual pans, the setting was able to overcome the imagination of the most avid reader of the De amorum. The extensive orchard nearby functioned as the same game of illusions, as it carried on the flux from the Tiber Loggia to the guest house through an equally absorbing enclosure, analogous to the mystical forest of many chivalrous tales. Despite the fact that both gardens had been empirically implemented on site, it is evident that an architect in chief—a probably Peruzzi—had decided to place them precisely between the three polarities of the property, not simply to connect the buildings, to each other and to the exterior, but to take advantage of this exterior by making it intelligible as an interior amongst the others—an intelligibility that could only be achieved through reshaping the ground into a physically comfortable and socially inhabitable system of enclosures. Hence the choice of gardening as a process—of working through the site—to formalise the signs into the place so-called "Viridarium Chigi." The medieval vines could not have lived up to the new sixteenth-century demand for rituals of hospitality. Meanwhile if
to Peruzzi the gardened solution was a matter of framing, and so of giving sense to a continuous sequel of spectacular perspectives, for the client that was about having more – so literally more time and a variety of occasions – to emulate the character of a magnificent benefactor that would institutionalise his political influence on Roman society.96

The garden as a pedagogical project

Although Agostino was perhaps too dazzled to convince in that role, his retreat succeeded as a monument essentially because the garden, along with the frescoed perspectives inside the casino, gave it a fully fledged pedagogical dimension. That is precisely how the Viridarium defined the humanist concept of the suburban villa.97 For the garden not only hid the property's economic dependence on the city to fulfill the programme of courteous reception and leisure but also transformed this programme into a spectacle, one which legitimised the exploitation of agrarian land. The gardens and loggias were used to give a spatial order to gestures that justified splendour as magnificence; they eventually formalised the entire estate into an artefact that commemorated the act of possession, over and over, from various angles and in different ways. In other words, by making the place public, those archetypes validated private ownership. The fact that, to the Renaissance ideal, this validation was not a paradox, did not make the re-appropriation of agrarian land any less controversial, though the Viridarium normalised this process by ritualising abuses and hospitality. It is interesting to note that, here, the same event meant to negate business by enabling pleasure, has conversely merged both together again – since antiquity – yet into a condition much more glorious, and architecturally interesting, than the present one that we happen to know so much about. That ritualisation resulted, in fact, in a 24-hour 'play', to which the labour and materials (such as slow-cooking artichokes, polishing goblets, curbing roses, and so forth) entailed in the reproduction of stelae and hospitality had become supporting acts and scenography. It is precisely this paradoxical blend of conspicuous consumption and the concealment of labour that makes the Viridarium a humanist villa. While the game of illusions of leisure and autonomy develops well through perspective, the plan of the villa, however, tells a different story of territorial relationships through the exploitation of the countryside and economic dependency on the city. But then, again in perspective, the self-absorbing enclosure of the tall leafy trees makes one forget about the 'real world' outside and the regions where the gardener, servants and oysters had come from. Even though some of their landscapes were close to Rome, they were nowhere visible inside the property. Just think of how the U-shaped casino decisively turns to the centre of the area instead of Via della Lungara or the Janiculum Hill, or how all other enclosures in the complex frame each other but not the surroundings. The exception is the frescoed column in the Sala delle Perspective, which captures Rome flooding [Fig. A11] against the background of a sunny Agro, represented as an idyllic landscape – regardless of its condition of increasing precariousness and conflict. [Fig. AC] Around the same time as Peruzzi was making this fresco, in fact, Sebastiano del Piombo was painting the biblical scene Pets backed by a much 'darker' countryside, apparently one in permanent state of siege.98 [Back to Fig. F] Because of its programme, the Viridarium, instead, put forward another narrative that 'corrected' the uglier history of the Agro – as if to erase and reset its memory – from the vantage point of a room filled with an audience of powerful landowners. Hence the pedagogical message one can therefore learn from this (incredibly beautiful yet controversial) architecture is: 'the city is a mess that needs improvement, meanwhile everything's fine with the country – so, let us colonise, suburbanise and gentrify it.'

From an architectural perspective – and this means an ideological one – the Viridarium Chigi, therefore, resembles an imperial villa. For this type also had (in a similar way) spatially enabled and culturally legitimised the Roman colonisation, exploitation and consumption of the ancient Agro. In fact, by an irony of fate (or historical consistency), Chigi's property was laid over the ruins of an Augustan villa. [Fig. AD] In the former district called 'Transalbana' (the current Tastiere), this fact came to light only during an excavation of 1879,99 and is one neither Chigi nor Peruzzi could have known. Instead of archaeology, their knowledge of villas was entirely based on treatises and stories, mostly without descriptive drawings or images.100 This fact made the type clear as a concept...
of a pleasant place, but quite vague as a specialised architecture of possession. However, the sixteenth-century urbanisation was so similar to the ancient colonisation of the countryside that the overall disposition of the Viridarium ended up reproducing the same formal logic of occupation implied by the Roman type. And if one reconsiders the plan solely as a diagram — following Alberti in that typical reading of wall-garden-house — Chigi’s system of enclosures comes across as a model of urban territory that reflected the transformations happening to Rome at that time. In this sense, the orchards and kitchen gardens analogically related to the rural region with the internal limits to the Aurelian walls, the viridarium to the new suburbs and the main house to the administrative centre. Such spatial order thus spells out the logic of organizing a territory within which a planted area revolves around the life and mastery of a single built centrality, defined by the embrace of a compact U-shaped mass in the manner of an amphitheatre. This situation was similar to the Roman topography itself, which had conditioned the centre to increasingly subsume the countryside as a means to support its service economy and governance. Although we may only arrive at this analogy by reducing the Viridarium to a schematic plan, it affected the memory of late-humanist subjects — even if only subliminally — that they experienced space through bodily motion and perspective. Precisely for the lengths required to ‘correctly’ direct these perceptions, size did matter, not to monumentality (which does not depend on largeness) but to the visual recognition of the property as a place, which — while a system of enclosures analogous to the urban territory — implied a particular idea of coexistence and social exclusion, a ‘correct’ decorum of forms and gestures, and — in the specific programme of the — the possibility of dancing.

Garden and steps as theatre of the city

Dancing, however, was not a possibility for Julius II, to whom the was less a pretext to emulate the moderating figure of a paterfamilias and more a heuristic device to reconstruct the authoritarian character of an authoritarian ruler such as, indeed, Julius Caesar. For throughout his mandate, every urban renewal — from streets and squares to courtyards and gardens — was an opportunity to up-

Fig. A.8: Previous page: Colonnade in the Suburbia Prospicente, Villa Lante, c. 1511-15.
generously sized, Julius' pleasure garden — the Cortile del Belvedere — was huge and therefore became a caricature (and the first 'failure') of that progressive change of form and function.

The project, in fact, took the monumentalization of the atrium to the point where the archetype even lost its most defining trait: the formal intelligibility of an idea of household. As we are about to discover by retracing the original plan, [Fig. A1] it is (and might have always been) difficult to understand the Cortile del Belvedere as a garden — let alone that of a country retreat — even though James S. Ackerman and Arnoldo Bruschi have thoroughly argued that it was "a classical villa." 63 This is perhaps because, as the nickname indicates, Julius meant the "Cortile" to be the new courtyard of the Casino del Belvedere, formerly the summer residence of Pope Innocent VIII (1434-1492). 64 It is worth noting that, until the sixteenth-century intervention, this was a U-shaped loggia-pavilion isolated on the summit of Mount St. Erigado to the north of the Vatican Palace. [Fig. A3] Due the date of construction — in the fateful decade of the 1480s — and the evident similarity with the loggia of Santa Chiara, Frommel attributes the mysterious authorship to Baccio Pontelli, a pupil of Francesco di Giorgio. 65 But the designer does not matter as much as the fact that, like its contemporary in Urbino, this arcadia opened up towards a church (the old Constantine Basilica) on a cliff just across a rural valley. Hence the portmanteau "belvedere," Italian for "beautiful sight" — though the Casino was not just about looking at the landscape but also being looked at as it stood over the routes taken by Christian pilgrims 66 and, especially, diplomatic guests coming from the north to publicly enter Rome through the gates of the Leonine Wall. 67 Despite this privileged location, the pavilion had been idle since the death of Innocent. Precisely so, Julius decided to reclaim it as a fundamental pole to transform the papal estates from a scattering of objects into a single and visibly 'autonomous' complex, like the imperial villas described in ancient literature. 68 To the Pope, who was proudly restless, the choice of programme was neither about amplifying the retreat nor enjoying the view which the Cortile eventually blocked. It meant, instead, fulfilling his promise of undertaking the unfinished legacy of his uncle, Sixtus IV, as well following in the footsteps of Martin V. 69 The difference this time was the employment of an architect...
like Bramante, who was even bolder than Julius and already driven to research classical architecture; he was thus able to overcome the lack of archaeological knowledge of his generation. The architect, in fact, surpassed the idea of the type with the powerful gesture of connecting the old Belvedere to the Vatican Palace through a massive courtyard building in the unprecedented shape of a straight line half a kilometer long. For this reason alone, one may already understand why the space inside could never look nor function like anything 'domestic', especially a garden.

Even though Bramante enclosed the Cortile with a continuous arcade in the exact centre of the papal settlement—similarly to the main cloister of an abbey—his design eventually expands the archtype into a sequel of colossal steps and terraced gardens to make another idea of collective enclosure legible: instead of a household, it referred to the 'head'—literally the capital—of the Holy See. Hence the project managed to formalize Julius' pretext of bypassing the Middle Ages to return straight to classical antiquity, when temporal power was actualized through the liturgical, thus religious, use of civic space. And that is why the new court for the Belvedere was neither a hortus nor a hortus conuinus, but a forum courtyard. Julius II, in fact, issued a commemorative medal calling the building a "Via." The main question is why he took the unusual solution of terracing and gardening such an urban space instead of simply paving it flat and leaving it empty.

The most apparent answer is Julius' imperial agenda, which called for the overstatement of even the simplest of urban events. But the actual motivation behind those design decisions was Bramante's take on the site itself. For upon arrival he discovered that the 'void' between the Casino and the Vatican Palace was far from a tabula rasa but, instead, was a complex topography densely planted with vines, historical and symbolically charged. The cultivation, nonetheless, was not known as a vinotheca or a viandarium105 or a pantheon, as seen in contemporary registers, perhaps because the area was originally part of the religious boundary that had formerly defined the Ager Vaticanus outside ancient Rome just above the military frontier of the Campo Marzio.106 The naming, though, dates from 1772 when Nicholas III purchased the land, amongst several other vineyards, meadows and woods around the north of St. Peters, expanding the...
Church's headquarters to roughly the same limits we see today.

As this Pope was the first to leave the Lateran for the Vatican, he annexed the Constantine Basilica with a Romanesque sort of 'Domus Aurea', which contained a large walled garden, a fountain, an orchard of orange trees and a secluded grove of 'simplices', where the pontiff could cultivate medicinal herbs (as if he were a monk). The ground - where the Cortile stands today - was locked away just outside the Leonine Wall to provide the papal residence with a protective plantation, one resembling the ancient pomerium. But since the Church had lost Jerusalem in 1244, the enclosure soon acquired the value of a 'paradise regained'[35] or a boat filled with various plants and animals like the Ark of Noah, as Fra Paolo da Verona illustrates in a map of 1523. [Fig. A1] These associations overlapped with the medieval belief that the paterre was the exact ruin of a Naumachia, an ancient type of stadium with an artificial pond for the staging of naval battles. In any case, by the time Bramante encountered the site, it had the long rectangular shape of a circus and the profile of a basin which perfectly matched the form of a theatre, specifically one at the new urban scale dreamt of by his client. The enclosure even fitted the exemplary ratio of 1:3, which (as mentioned by Vitruvius and confirmed by Alberti) was the proportion of the Circus Maximus and of an ancient Roman forum. Bramante, moreover, understood that natural comedy at the missing centerpiece of the palatial complex started by Nicholas III, which simply needed the addition of architecture to formalise it as such, like the hippodrome of the Domus of Augustus on the Palantine Hill. Since this ruin was just a myth and not yet excavated, he found a similar model in the hippodrome which Pliny the Younger had famously described as the climax of his Tuscan villa.

At first sight, therefore, Bramante should have been confident of the rectangular block, 'stadium-like' parti. On a closer look, the full architectural arrangement of the inner space was still in question, since the stage inside Pliny's hippodrome was a taurus - a necessarily smooth garden walk - that could not 'deal' with the sharp rise of the Vatican valley. As terracing had always been the most successful way of taming Roman topography since the Etruscan settlements, the architect looked further around until he found the Forum and Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia in Praeneste.
just outside Rome.²⁸³ This new sort of ‘city-building’ inhabited a seemingly impossible climb through an axial system of great temple squares, flanked by continuous arcades and interrupted by several terraces connected by triangular ramps and retained by walls niches. In other words, the very design brief of the Cortile del Belvedere, whose only difference was having re-arranged those elements in the narrower containment of a hippodrome.²⁸⁴ Moreover, either by chance or intuition, Bramante sensed that the emulation of Piazza del Popolo dovetailed with Julius’ idea of city being a Roman example of civic space in which the ritual practices of religious and temporal powers were not (yet) separated, neither from each other nor from architecture, while being also an act of inhabiting and organizing the territory. Hence by aiming at the same monumentality, the Cortile could fully embody — if not become the model for — the Pope’s project of renewing the city within its broader region. The terraced climb, furthermore, produced a rhythm of tension and release that, by affecting neuromuscular perception, predisposed the human body to long walks and critical breaks and, thereby, to experience space from the perspective of both actor and audience.²⁸⁵ So instead of framing the landscape as its background, the Cortile had (literally) transformed the landscape itself into a theatre. The main auditorium of this theatre was composed of three-storey loggias, the upper galleries of which should also serve as museums and passageways from the Casino to the Vatican Palace, while the ground-floor arcades gave direct access to the courtyard. This, in turn, was almost symmetrically divided into two levels of rectangular terraces linked by two staircases and a colossal step, which served as another audience seat for the gladiatorial games, bullfights and tournaments occasionally staged on the lower court.²⁸⁶ Meanwhile the upper terrace was a garden of classic sculptures around a flowered lawn laid out in a wide semicircle, similar to that within Pliny’s hippodrome.²⁸⁷ [Fig. A11] And so, through the frame of this ‘horseshoe’, one could look back at the long axial climb and picture the gigantic courtyard as an unified whole of repetitive forms — such as the 6C arcades, 41 steps and countless rosebushes — and have a sense of direction, centrality and order.

While symbolically this perspective spelled out the unification of the Holy See under ‘Julius’ command, in practice it induced the crowd of new couriers to recognise itself as a group within the palatial project of temporal power.²⁸⁸ After all, an empire can only validate its existence if it has an audience, which is, in other words, the constituent force of the public which — as a body politic — recognizes the imperial rule.²⁸⁹ This is the reason for the socio-political function of theatre and why Roman forums were often similar to circuses, as we have some late Renaissance squares similar to those.²⁹⁰ Unfortunately, neither Bramante nor Julius ever saw their Cortile functioning as such, because its construction took more than six decades to complete.²⁹¹ [Fig. A1] In any case, the Belvedere remains an important experiment — above all for garden architecture — because it was one of the first times (since the fall of the Roman Empire) when an architect (especially someone like Bramante, who was one of the pioneers of the profession as we know it) designed a garden prior to its implementation on site.²⁹² This does not mean that artists before him had never conceptualised courtyards and cloisters intrinsic to the gardens inside them. (The precedent of Santa Chiara, once again, is a definite example of the marriage of built and planted enclosures — as were most monastic Faccio concilius — proofs that the household garden had never ceased to be a form of architecture.) But the Belvedere marks the moment when this architecture becomes not only a device in terms of the perspectival control of a layout and other compositional questions (such as the choice of flowers for their colours and so on) but, fundamentally, a project in the sense of deciding how to actualise an idea through form and space. If Bramante conceived the Cortile in perspective — and it is likely that he did — the hemicyclic garden was surely a key space, and the most poetic experience of space in the entire building. For, in fact, what could be more effective to stress that anachronistic ‘stadium’ as a monument than turning the final stepped terrace into an oval flowered, one cultivated for sheer ornamental purposes? Moreover this ‘denouement’ was a secular reminder of Nicholas’ “pometeria”, which confirms that Bramante took the site not only as a condition but as a blueprint. If anything, the Belvedere makes the site the regulatory idea of the project, thus inserting, henceforth, the fifteenth-century paradigm in which architects, instead, imposed the programme on the physical context.²⁹³
The Cortile del Belvedere significantly contributed to the garden becoming a design motif and a mode of planning through the formalisation of the site into a place (or "sub-urbanism," as Sébastien Morant would put it). Yet the Cortile eventually failed the task of mobilising living memory to believe in Julius' resurrection of the Rome of Nero's Naumachia—hence the fresco in which the painter Perin del Vaga mocks the unfinished courtyard by representing it as an "ancient ruin" in his intentional pastiche of Hellenistic landscape painting. [Fig AL] Vaga produced this work in the early 1540s, when it was finally clear that an ambition like that of the Belvedere could have been achieved most effectively with much more subtlety, though it was not Bramante's fault, since he was one of the best at fulfilling ambitious projects with monumentality, yet tactfully punctual stage set design. Take, for instance, his garden logs for the Naumachia of the villa of Cardinal Colonna, in Gessanzaco, [Fig AL] built between 1508 and 1512. Here the architect answered the demand for a "domestic" open-air theatre by formalising the site and casting ancient prototypes in a similar way to the project he had carried out for the Pope. The "problem" of the Cortile, though, was that it has never carried collective acceptance as a villa—even though it was meant to be one. And that happened precisely because the rose-flowered hemicycle and its court read more like a forum made for great civic action than a household garden made for intimate domestic leisure. The example of this failure, therefore, makes one think of the critical role of the garden in making an idea of place that stands between domestic and civic. Alternatively, the garden is an architecture that offers the possibility of not belonging to any category, and this is where its potential lies—either becoming a project in itself or enabling (or disabling) the very aim of one. In comparison with the Cortile del Belvedere, the Villa on the Chigi was more "successful" because Peruzzi took full advantage of the interaction of the garden with a collective place in the household—under the humanist interpretation of alue and the programme of the villa as a "theatre" of social life. This enabled, thereby, the whole property to didactically transmit its own (acceptable) version of the suburban condition and its historical implication to the urban territory.

The signs of Pope Julius III were the "last" humanist villa because it confidently fused the spatial experimentations and prototypes that had been introduced in the previous five decades. [Fig AM] The architect Giacomo da Vignola reconciled the "domestic theatricality" of the Villa Chigi and the ultra-formalised monolithic motif of the Belvedere with Raphael's idea of the suburban villa as a system of rooms, of paved gardens designed as interiors.
over, the tripartite plan of walled gardens—going from the most to the least public—seemed like Alberti’s reading of the ancient Roman house. Later in his papacy, Julius III faced increasing antagonism from the Curia and therefore left the Vatican for his villa on Via Flaminia. Similarly to Pope Leo X, he had a team of star architects reform the property into a comfortable gardenized retreat, a place where he could both rest and govern away from curial politics and conspiracies.

However, the idea of an outward-looking enclosure would survive the following decades until 1551, when Villa Giulia was built to break it. At the same time, the casino was surrounded with various enclosures: from vineyards to meadows (horti), woods (aulae) and lofty parks (lunae) for hunting. [Fig. AN] This activity was traditional amongst the nobility. It was therefore usual to see it feature amongst current castle/villas, though it reappeared in Villa Giulia for another reason—to recreate a natural-looking territory around

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Fig. AN. The central part of the Villa or “Vigna” of Pope Julius III. (Source: du Vignol, 1535.)
a single building. This one was so large and self-resolved that it represents the entire villa. The inside was divided into three court gardens. The first was more of a geometrical carpet of hedges, limited by the U-shaped loggia and entrance to the casino. This was followed by a walled and sunken symposium. Lastly, there was an actual loggia—called here a scenae frons. [Fig. AO] The main free-standing house in the diverse field of the villa was a sharp reminder of the difference between the outside and the inside, introverted enclosures. Hence this spatial configuration analogously established an antagonistic relationship of city versus countryside. Yet the entrance way of the property faced Via Flaminia with the frame of two public fountains, which gave the villa its monumental, thus, civic character, clearly differentiated from the rural land around it. [Fig. AP] The visibility of those fountains right on that road, which led through the northern entrance of the city, was important in making the owner seem a benefactor to the city and its new rural territory, thus giving legitimacy to the villa. Hence the introverted place that would follow after that first impression may have just reflected how it was hoped that just reflected how Julius III wanted his retreat to be a place to live introverted while governing the Holy See from outside the Vatican. Since he wanted to govern in seclusion, it was only logical that his property had a clear microcosmic—and seemingly self-sufficient—character for which a guided system of enclosed gardens, vineyards, and hunting parks, was crucial. That is also why the symposium was not only walled but even sunk six metres down. The fountain was the Pope's favourite place to relieve his stress. However, the space was periodically open to anyone willing to follow a code of conduct posted at the entrance. Known as las arcas, the text limited the epigrams found in imperial gardens around Rome.

Garden terraces as chorographies of possession

Architecture becomes an instrument of power once it acknowledges that humans are subjects, and that social relationships are never black and white. On the one hand, the form of a space has to be easily understood to transmit an idea or simply fulfill whatever practical purpose it was intended for. On the other, it must 'disappear' to allow the needs for interaction to inhabit it. That is how buildings...
get into everyday life and become didactic instruments promoting a project larger than their footprints. Leo X seemed to have 'known' that—on some level—since he did not make architecture or art for the exclusive benefit of his own wealth or the glory of his name, but instead, to sustain the specific social milieu which, eventually, could work for him. "Sweet is the yoke of mining" was the Leonine motto, expressing that his hierarchy was "softer", even though he was just as (if not more) ambitious as Julius II.\(^{177}\) The crucial difference was that the Medici Pope was a subtle strategist, who would never clash with the old cardinal class as did Rovere. Instead, Leo focused on making diplomatic alliances while discreetly granting favours that raised the influence of his family and the broader Florentine society—which he promised to reconcile with that of Rome.\(^{180}\) An example of such practice was the commissioning of a summer retreat, now known as Villa Madama, on the summit of Monte Mario to the north of Rome, beyond the Vatican Hill.\(^{181}\) The pontiff had personally acquired the land in 1509, when he was still a cardinal, to enjoy it as a typical Roman villa with a main house smaller than most papal residences, an orchard and close proximity to the hunting ground of the Prati.\(^{182}\) But—after his papal policy of 1516, which extended the building privileges for suburban landowners—he started to convert the property into what contemporary documents already termed a "villa suburbana."\(^{183}\) Only a year later, though, he put the estate in the name of his cousin—whom he had just made cardinal—Giulio de' Medici.\(^{184}\) [Fig. AQ] The reasons for that transfer are worth noting. First, it served Leo to prevent future problems with the Camera Apostolica while still keeping the possession in the hands of the Medici.\(^{185}\) Secondly, the Pope had just appointed his protégé as vice-chancellor in charge of the Vatican's foreign affairs.\(^{186}\) So, it would look legitimate to give him a spot at the northern entrance of the city to receive diplomats and guests of the Curia with the necessary pomp of such an office.\(^{187}\)

Yet Giulio lacked the temperament and charisma for diplomacy and, therefore, needed all the help he could get from architecture and other arts of mediation and collective delight. So he followed through with the enterprise of transforming the sign into a monument to his public life as a representative of the theatrical court to which Rome had just been reduced.\(^{188}\) Raphael was Leo's appointed architect and the natural choice for the job. It perfectly fitted his stardom, thorough knowledge of classical culture—and hedonism—which made him just as anxious to show erudition to his peers as to lead the life of a humanist courtier.\(^{189}\) Moreover, he was both a key collaborator and frequent guest in the Viturianum of Agostino Chigi. Hence not only was this a professional who knew Giulio's "programme" from first-hand experience but—after Bramante's death in 1514—he was the ablest man to compete with Peruzzi's invention of the suburban villa. That mattered because competition and innovation were demands by virtue of both the type and the ethos of ostentatious patronage established under the Leonine papacy.\(^{190}\) In any case, the architect had to be inventive since the site posed the difficult condition of a sharp rise, suggesting the blueprint of a theatre, similar to that of the Belvedere. Unlike Bramante, though, Raphael did take advantage of the view, which dramatically arrayed the north of the Agro towards Monte Pino (where the client's family possessed their fourteenth-century palace, which only a few decades later would become the famous Villa Medici).\(^{191}\) Hence the new retreat for Giulio (and Leo) was to stage not only the rituals of diplomatic reception inside its enclosure but also the 'Florentine side' of the Roman landscape. In this sense, the other Medici property at Fiesole was a resourceful precedent to invoke, and it does come to mind today when one sees the cubic house of Villa

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Madama seated on the rectangular terrace that emerges from the forested cliff. This building, however, corresponds to less than half of the original design and would not even come close to the final result had all the terrace gardens been built — particularly those emulating a hippodrome, a circular court and a symposium, work carried on by Antonio da Sangallo after the architect in chief had prematurely died in 1519. [Fig. AS] Though before we finally land there, let us start with a brief look at the first drawing by Raphael. [Fig. AT]

For as much as it is tempting to project on this plan (our modernist expectation for) so-called "high Renaissance" symmetry, the main building of the villa was not symmetrical. That is because overall mirroring would have created unavoidable duplications, whereas the festive programme required every space to be unique. As Robin Evans has (beautifully) argued, the villa for Giulio de' Medici was "a picture of social relationships," normed by a decorum of gestures meant to choreograph the correct sequel of ceremonial encounters in diplomatic receptions that lasted whole days, if not weeks. Like Bramante, therefore, Raphael used Pliny's villa as conceptual model but his formalisation of the hilly site into a theatrical place was even cleverer — or rather — because he did not lose sight of the "domestic" dimension of the programme. As for the diplomatic receptions under Leo, feasts would lead straight to musical concerts and these to other rituals without intermediation except for the change of ambience. So the design translated that into an ensemble of walled enclosures interconnected by portals, loggias, chambers, steps, courtyards and gardens, which transformed the walls from blunt separations to smooth transitions. Hence Raphael's rejection of corridors. Yet there was still a strong sense of movement since the constant variation of levels put the guests in continuous circulation from one space to another. What was not clear from the plan, though, was which compartments were roofed, and which ones were open to the air. But that was precisely the fundamental idea of this project: every enclosure was a room. Only then did the architect deploy symmetry within the individual space of each set, to define it as a moment that demands attention, similar to the acts of a long Roman play. It may be a cliché to say that was the move of a 'genius,' but it does show how Raphael acknowledged a concept that had been...
developing since the fourteenth century, but most architects had said they were from fully fledging gardens or interiors. And so, the site became a visible system of interiors once Raphael filled it out with a narrative of various gardens, each one working like a painting.\textsuperscript{240}

Similarly to the way Raphael constructed his paintings (under the influence of Perugino), he ordered each enclosure so that it shaped symmetrical perspectives in which the central subject matter was not merely the picture but was the picture itself. The triple-arched loggia, for instance, drove the guests’ eyes to the brighter centre of the terrace garden, where a long table would occasionally be used for ambasatorial banquets. In this sense, the compact measure of each interior mattered just as their concentric (self-referential) forms. Outside the main building of the villa, however, Raphael pushed the limits of this rule with a sequence of three terrace gardens; these are much wider than the others within the main building and yet do not seem different from the interiors. Following the same principle, each one is uniquely shaped into a square, a circle, and a circular cone-like composition of two semi-circles and a square. Unfortunately, there is no evidence about the species or the precise layout in which they were gardened. Equally importantly, though, recent findings have discovered that these gardens ran in parallel with the house instead of meeting it transversally.\textsuperscript{45} And, again, either Raphael or Sangallo (who continued drawing this proposal) avoided an overall symmetry. The choice is interesting because it could have thrived on the example of Bramante’s Belvedere, which negotiated its climb with the “obvious” solution of connecting the terraces by a triangulated system of ramps and steps. But Raphael avoided this artifice because it would have produced an overall axi-ality alien to the spatial “narrative” of the other rooms in the villa.\textsuperscript{195}

The three garden terraces below the villa formalise the act of possession into a processional climb. The movement of climbing up the cliff through consequential terraces connected by stairs is not only the very physical process through which the land here was formally enclosed and spatially appropriated, but also transmits a visual narrative of this appropriation in relation to the broader territory.

\textsuperscript{240} As noted by Jolliffe, “enforced by Perugino, Raphael was the greatest master of all time of the composition of objects in space, but the scene was so insufficient to show whether he could transfer the three-dimensionality of a scene into those of landscape. We can therefore consider this garden study for a moment to the work of Raphael’s master Perugino.” Geoffrey Jolliffe, “Italian Renaissance Gardens,” in Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Vol. 121, No. 4982 (6 February 1933), pp. 279-297, p. 295.


\textsuperscript{45} The only perspective that mattered were the ones within each enclosure and, occasionally, their outlook into the Roman landscape outside.

Fig A.1 Hypothetical reconstruction of the complete project of the Villa di Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere. Raphael’s original plan had proposed the Villa as a Venetian villa. This narrative would begin at the main gate, to the west of the villa, where there was an existing loggia facing the Venetian island and kitchen garden on the left-hand side.
These gardens framed more than just the site, though. They opened up to the landscape much more frankly than the other enclosures inside the main building of the villa. And so, by framing the view of Rome with the Agro, these gardens transformed the movement of climbing—as 'conquering'—the site into a ritual that actually refers to the broader territory. This reveals that gardens are not just interiors but ones that necessarily relate to the world outside them. Here, the posing of this relation aimed at appropriating land beyond the footprint of the villa.

Garden and avenues as a farm-park

After the Sack of Rome in 1527, Villa Madama was burned and so were its gardened terraces. Decades later, though, another form of private garden open to the public emerged. This was the case of the Ortì Farnesanì, designed by Vignola in 1550. Like all the other examples, the site was a deserted rural fringe—but this one was at the ancient kernel of the city. Cardinal Alessandro Farnese purchased various small parcels of land on top of Monte Palatino. The villa was built in two main phases. First, the east cliff of the hill was tamed by a long two-storey façade. [Fig. A1] This happened to also straighten up the muddy Campo Vaccino (and Via Sacra), which passed just by the front. Entering the façade through a sculptural gate, one finds a semi-circular hall, niches with ancient statues and a long shallow climb. Up on from the first terrace, the street was framed by the windows on the façade. A room with a grotto was carved in the turf of the hill. Three other stairways would lead to a second terrace. But this climb was accompanied by two gardened ramps. Above it, a small belvedere frames the view of Tempio della Pace on the opposite side of the street, and the Roman Forum. These gardens were periodically open to the public. Despite the variety of plants, their main theme was the large collection of ancient sculptures owned by Farnese. In 1573, he gave the property to his nephew, Cardinal Odoardo Farnese (who was an expert botanist). Here began the second and most important phase of the project, when a new and larger garden was laid out further over the hill. Literally built on the exact grounds of the Domus Tiberiana, this was the first private botanical garden in Italy. At the same time the type emerged as a didactic
space for universities in other Italian cities, such as Pisa and Padua. Within the Farnese property, however, this was a place to display the capacity to import and cultivate species from all around Italy and the globe. [Fig. AV] Because of its role in the spatial narrative of gates, steps, terraces and casinos, this botanical garden still offers an analogy with the city: the re-establishment of a new form of open garden right on the grounds of an ancient public domus (that had both private peristyle-gardens, and gated horti facing the Roman Forum). Hence, consciously or not, Orti Farnesiani actualised a reinterpretation of the late-republic juridical framework of publicness with the city—however, one only ruled by the Farnese family. Hence the garden as a new botanic acropolis, [Fig. AV] overlooking the process of suburbanisation—and gentrification—of Campo Vaccino and the surrounding area towards the precarious south-east side of Rome.
This vector—of the park-like villa—had underlain not only Orti Farnesiani but also other contemporary cases, epitomised and best represented by Villa of Cardinal Ippolito d’Este, in Tivoli. [Fig. A/1] In this, Piole Lerrigio had laid out an extensive garden so huge it looked and functioned like a park.54 This tendency to amalgam—both formally and conceptually—two distinct ideas of spatial enclosures reached an unforeseen acceleration between 1518 and 1519, when Cardinal Felice Peretti di Montalto, and the architect, Domenico Fontana, deployed garden design to turn a decadent age into a cultivated villa, and this, eventually, into a "turf" park.55 This would later become Vigna Peretti di Montalto, commonly known as "Villa Peretti."56 [Fig. A/2] With the latter, the property was enlarged and its garden entirely reconfigured. Peretti was later elected Pope Sixtus V and launched simultaneous reforms from Colli Quirinale towards Monte Equinoctium—the location of his property.57 The more area was renewed, the more the villa was made sense located there. Although traces of a written heritage were never discovered,58 the Pope’s garden was periodically opened to visitors. These facts bring to the fore the question of whether such publicness was meant to offer pilgrims a secondary entry of connection between S. Maria Maggiore and the future fair at Piazza delle Terme. If true, this would invest the garden with an innovative programme: turning circulation into a productive activity. Therefore, it stands on the border between gardens and park. In our discussion, such a strategic move is another proof of the great success of monumental villas in challenging rural suburbs. What is singular here? The garden of Villa Peretti demonstrated how such a process could be indefinitely reproduced all over Rome and the entire countryside.

If we agree with Giedion,59 we may immediately understand Villa Peretti as the literal reference model for Sixtus V’s implementation of his urban reforms of Rome—such as straight streets linking the basilicas to guide the visits of pilgrims. The principle of this interventions was illustrated in a map of Rome by Antonio Bordini in 1588. [Fig. A/2] Whether this relation was ever conscious may never be proved or ruled out. Much more telling, though, would be to determine whether his own garden experience60 could have spatially enacted the Pope’s perception of the Roman landscape, just as his villa may have shaped and enabled the gentrification of the south-eastern and most precious edge of the city. Whether Peretti purchased the dried-up vineyard in 1576 with this in mind is unknown, but not impossible. In a brief commentary61 on Villa Peretti, recent scholarship has raised a similar suspicion, observing that, by 1580, the estate was enlarged until it bordered the terrains of Acqua Alaterna.62 Just three years later, its landowners promoted the restoration of the aqueduct. In turn, this was purchased in 1585 by the newly elected Sixtus V. Perhaps the trade was too timely not to be a planned association. Yet the idea of building Villa Peretti on that old vineyard might have made sense for Sixtus mainly because the vineyard laid just beside his favourite building, the Basilica S. Maria Maggiore.63 Moreover, he knew his active role in the Counter Reformation would soon get him the throne, hence building such a retreat while he still had the power was a way to make a legacy and leave his mark on the city. The fear of not being able to do that in time was real since, backstage, the Cardinal had been progressively disenchanted by Gregory XIII.64 So, he needed a tacit retreat, but could not afford the aristocratic choice of Monte Pincio.
On the other hand, Monte Equilino was not only cheaper but deserted enough to work as a tabula rasa.

The closest depiction of this area is found in a city map engraved by Mario Cartaro and first published in 1576. [Fig. BA]

Here, the south-east fringe of the Aurelian Wall (at the top of the plate) looks almost the same as the countryside outside: hills evenly covered with striped checkerboard plantations, divided into farmsteads shaped by curvilinear roads. The uniform appearance is interrupted only by a few objects without apparent connection: the S. Maria degli Angeli building over Terme di Diocleziano, some aqueducts and the Basilica S. Maria Maggiore. Two narrow roads seem to turn the area away from the city: Via Pia (from Piazza Navona) and Via Gregoriana, almost converging at ninety degrees. The former arrives at Palazzo Quirinale and the latter at the Basilica. The space of their lost crossings looks steep and messy. Only S. Maria Maggiore stands out from a scattered line of tiny buildings, porticos, and arches. At the other side of its nave, a clear ground is flanked by a low wall with a gate in the middle. This is the entrance to the vineyard purchased by Peretti. Inside, there is a small walled court towards the chapel S. Lucia. At the back, there are crops eastwards all over the piano-shaped terrain. There is not a legible centre nor a prominent pathway. In fact, the map remains neutral about the state of cultivation. But it was probably good because the Equilino was very poorly irrigated (most aqueducts nearby were ruined). [43]

In the following year, 1577, a map published by Etienne Dupérac and Antoine Lafréry did not show any changes, except for a clearer representation of the slope inside the property and a medieval basilica suburbana, called Turris Monumentis. This was probably part of the larger Hellenistic-Persian garden of Maccenas, which is described in the Satires by Horace. [Fig. BB] (Had the Cardinal been a humanist reader – which he was emphatically not – the Turris would have been kept as a cherished feature of his villa.) This was a hard start, even for Peretti, who was the son of a peasant and knew what to do. So, he spent nearly five years mainly ploughing and enlarging the grounds of his vineyard. [44] Only in 1581 was Fontana commissioned to redesign the estate as a villa. The original plans of that stage are unknown. But an advanced outcome was etched by Antonio Tempesta in a map first issued in 1593, but probably finished by 1589. [Fig. BC]
Here the villa is subitled Vigna di Montalto. Now much higher, the walls are cornered with watchtowers. The original gate has been replaced by a monumental entrance. Outside the front, Obelisk Equilino (1587) is off-centred to align with both Basilica and the entrance of the Montalto property. Two parallel rows of short trees 'guard' the newly rectangular piazza.

Another free-standing object joins the family of Basilica and Obelisk: Palazzo Felice (1587), the cubicle casino placed inside the essay which definitely reads now as a monumental garden. Each of the four linear spaces girded a different framing element: from the front loggia, an avenue of cypresses hosts an entrance gate; from the back portico, a court clears the sight for a fountain trio to emerge by poplar trees; on the right, a pergola walks through two crops of olives to end at last by a hilly shade house. The left facade is draped by an apparently ornamental kitchen garden. The sequence suddenly stops at another avenue. Transversal and longer than the first, it links the upper house to the second gate, Porta Quirinale (1587). Regular gaps between cypresses frame one side, the villa at the longest length and, on another, aqueducts backed by the city walls. As these huge column-like objects are carefully planted side by side, they would flank the straight avenue as two huge walls, making the space completely shaded and breezeless during a summer afternoon. This effect would thereby make of each pathway a prolongation of the inside space of the small casino — that is, from the centre of the villa onwards.

This seems to be, in fact, one of the intentions behind the star-shaped plan, though the most evident one is to draw one gaze on what awaits outside: for instance, S. Maria degli Angeli (1586) next to Piazza della Term (1588), with Monte Pincio in the background. So, garden architecture is not so much driven to frame vistas as landscape but, first and foremost, landscapes city.

Such a change only accorded with the productive role of Villa Peretti towards its surroundings. Instead of facing the Term with a castle wall, the property offered the façade of its secondary (yet bigger) Palazzo Montalto (1588). [Fig. BD] This had a lower wing (the bottega) which was designed to assist merchants with 18 shops and dormitories. The villa was thus put to work, just like the other urban reforms of Sixtus V. First, the garden lay out a possible system to make the rural side inhabitant and walkable. Second, it is reconfigured along with the changing city: in and out, straight roads making sense of old bits and new pieces. Indeed, the Equilino eventually looked like a vibrant suburb frankly connected with both city and countryside. However, the map did not picture the most crucial transformation: Acqua Alexandrina was streaming hastily from 1586 when it was restored by Acqua Felice. Throughout the century, irrigation was a problem as Romans as the floods in November. The latter were countered by successive reforms along the River banks — the flanking of Via Giulia and of Via della Lungara, where Villa Chigi was grounded 10 metres above water.

Nevertheless, none of the Popes before Sixtus V (including his enemy Gregory XIII) had managed to repair and improve the water supply at urban scale. Thus, more than roads and obelisks, the reclaiming of Roman aqueducts was the actual civic triumph of his papacy. But this was only accomplished precisely because it had started beforehand within the private enrichment of his villa. It is equally worth noting that in 1586 Sixtus V had also purchased Vigna di...
Napoli from Cardinal Capara — the idea was a gardened checkerboard tabula annex to Palazzo Quirinale. Having two huge properties to keep irrigated, Peretti was thus personally interested in solving the irrigation drama once and for all. The result is evidenced in the famous axonomic plan of Giovanni Battista Falda, printed in 1676. Falda was known for his highly detailed perspectives of the major villas and gardens around Rome. So we may trust his depiction of Aqueduct Felice leaving Porta di S. Lorenzo to enter Villa Peretti. Water streamed down for about 500 metres in parallel with the longest wall of the property, whose original size had nearly tripled. As earlier implied, the canalization of the villa had a lot (if not everything) to do with the appropriation of the aqueduct itself. In fact, it would have been impossible to cultivate the extensive garden without it. Despite the date of 1676, the layout depicted by Falda was probably built from 1588 until the Pope died in 1590. By expanding the outer limits of his villa, Stuxus V had also encompassed the convent annex of S. Maria Maggiore and straightened up Strada di Porta S. Lorenzo and Via Gregoriana.

The whole villa is now formed by two areas which are divided by an obtuse set-square wall. On the left-hand portion, the original gardened area is replaced by a triangulation of avenues cutting through the garden. (Fig. BE) Each enclosure is bound by a low parterre and offset by a line of conifers. Two types of plan dominate: the cruciform flower bed centred around a fountain and the grass set with small trees. (Perhaps many of these were of pears since the fruit featured in Sixtus V’s coat of arms and peretti means pear in the Roman dialect.) The casino lost its shady spot to be winged by two private yet monumental gardens. Meanwhile, a miniature farm replaces the hilly boathouse. Within a single trapezoidal hedge, mixed horticultures, animal pastures, barns, storage houses and wells are lain flat until our gaze meets the Basilica outside. Perhaps it is just the way Falda simplified topography, but the villa does look much flatter in his time. If so, rainfall would be absorbed by the deep-ploughed soil of each garden, while greater outflows would be drained by plumbs or guttered away by seven paved avenues running down (on an average of 300 metres) towards Strada Felice. The placement of a large pool basin on the lower level of the property may well be related to drainage relief. 

280. There is not enough evidence to confirm that this were so, but it is likely that it had to be dodged at least loosely coated with soil. Since, in any case these were not bare, the painting of ourpaper would cover the garden with dust. Daniel R. Cottrill, Gardens and Gardening in Papal Rome. (Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 160

Fig. 30. Hypothetical isometric view of the gardens and main house in the Villa Peretti.
Given the huge amount of soil removed, it is impossible not to question the reason behind the decisions made by Peretti and Fontana. Famous predecessors, such as Villa Madama and Otti Farnesiani, had dealt with similar sites by building up terraces to stage their gardens. This was, in fact, the Roman way, making theatrical apotropaic devices out of topography. Thus, why were terraces so timidly deployed in Villa Peretti? Sisto V was not interested in referencing ancient prototypes of the so-called Golden Age. (Instead, he would only look at imperial and medieval pasts to cherry-pick useful objects.) Furthermore, he had a completely different purpose in framing the city with its landscape: to drive civic and pilgrim traffic. I would like to argue that none of his urban work was clearer about this idea than the last garden layout inside his villa, because here the obsessive use of straight avenues aims solely at creating distance. It is all about the very distance times the experience of motion. So that points of arrival (gates, courts and fountains) are given enough reverence — as they emerge from long walks through repetitive scenes, such as the compassed pitches of cutleaf cypress trees. Occasionally, a well-ordered garden could be glimpsed between cypresses. Hence the overall image of Villa Peretti was of a highly cultivated place. In fact, Sisto V was himself an eager gardener who planted and nursed the first seeds of olive and cypress trees, using, perhaps, the horticultural knowledge gained either from his father, or from his youth as a Franciscan friar, along with the garden manuals published during his childhood. # This further, with that miniature farm on the scene, not only would the villa appear self-sufficient, but also Sisto V could play the pastoral character — while in fact he was a powerful landowner. At that turbulent moment, that was the most cautious image-making for a former mendicant turned Pope. #7

While that first area is undoubtedly the garden of the villa, the annex looks like a padron with polygonal boxes and ornamental shrubs. Still, both plans read as parts of the same villa narrative, since the cypress crossroads centred in the former is prolonged towards the latter, while the set-square wall between allows for their independent access and controlled connection. In my view, the padron would be locked whenever the garden was opened to visitors. Surely, the two enclosures had different architectural programmes. But were they complementary.
From archetype to project

Whether it was ever involved in the silk industry project, that annexed podere appears indeed to address the city rather than just the villa, for either its productive nature or the apparent infinitude of its limits and connections. Foremost, the space housed a major aqueduct of Rome. The duo of monumental garden and urban podere pushes Villa Peretti outside the family of suburban villas. Today, this villa would be naturally understood as an urban park with several gardens and two palaces. But this oversimplifies what is as complex as a threshold. First, the park did not exist as a concept at that time. Second, the spatial disorientation (that one can only experience with this type of enclosure) did not happen anywhere inside Villa Peretti, because garden visitors could always guide themselves through the star-shaped layout of straight avenues. Despite the impossibility of seeing the outlines of the villa, the star-shaped avenues produced a sense of order and centrality. So, this villa did not break up the Renaissance marriage of nature and architecture. However, it did shake many of its principles, as it had inverted the supremacy of walls in shaping gardens. It constructed, thus, the literal scheme of the city to become an open (almost infinite) and multi-centred territory. [Fig. BF] Hence, these six villas only touched here related to the very crux of this entire thesis, namely from ‘archetype to project’ - that is, when the garden ceases to be legible as an endowment and shut away from the city (or desert), to gradually become an architecture obliterating urban limits, rather than making them legible.
Otium cum Dignitate
A policy for the Roman borgate

These six paradigms of suburban villas were formal acts of appropriation that happened to be analogous reconstructions of the spatial relation between Rome and its countryside, from compactly enclosed to infinitely open, like the very logic and direction of urban development that have influenced the much later transformation of Rome into the capital of Italy, as is perfectly clear from the conversion of those gardened villas into picturesque parks, such as the opening of Villa Borghese. [Fig. A] However, now there seems to be a revival of the same orchard, quite similar to the sixteenth-century refashioning of the rustic vineyard into monumental gardens. [Fig. B] Non-profit associations such as the Zoppola Romana are mostly responsible for helping groups of people—mostly residents in precarious areas, with little or no public space—to occupy vacant land, where they self-organise several giardini condivisi. [Fig. C] During the last decade, these small "local" interventions have resulted in what may be considered a "new wave" of 200 allotments around Rome, [Fig. D] in a region that is no longer that idyllic countryside just outside the Aurelian wall, but at the far periphery of the Grande Raccordo Anulare (Great Ring Junction) or, simply, the GRA. The third similarity is that large portions of this territory are owned by a few families, who are the major contractors of the city. The Salini, for example, possibly own as much land as did the Rosso family during the Renaissance. In the 1990s, such powerful
groups built several housing districts, mostly illegally, on the abundant vacant agrarian land around the Roman Agro.  

According to urbanists Italo Insolera and Paolo Berdini, around 60% of these urbanisations were illegally built by private developers, forming the borgate.  


5. Ibid., p. 207.  


Fig. A. The periphery of Rome in 1855 (in black) and in 185,000, 000,000 (in blue). Note the areas of the largest villas (blue dots) which would remain as public parks between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
an archipelago of Borgate around the city centre. [Fig. 6] Many of these developments—especially those built between the 1990s and 2000s—critically lack cohesive systems of even the most basic public spaces, such as sidewalks. [Figs. F and G] However, these conditions may not be entirely bad, as these settlements are isolated but nonetheless next to beautiful natural, or rural, fringes. [Fig. H] and some Borgate have found compensation for the absence of conventional squares in the local establishment of small parochial churches, which provide the residents with some sort of collective space and schools. [Fig. I] The following design brief questions the role of the monumental gardens of Roman villas in the process of appropriation and suburbanisation of the rural area around of Rome. Further, such a prototype—once displaced and reversed—may enable a policy for re-appropriating idle land around the many peripheries of the city today.

Even though the general precarity of infrastructure, services and public spaces accentuates the insular condition of the Roman Borgate, they do have great potential to become less dependent on the city or, at least, to enable relaxation, leisure and social encounters. If only the land around these places were inhabitable. [Fig. J] In this sense, the Borgate populations face the same problem faced by the sixteenth-century papal court, having to make the countryside into an architecture of dwelling in retreat with spaces for social rituals. Upon this possible analogy, the project gives the Borgate a readable system of collective places for both the stoppage and circulation of pedestrians. It is an affirmative set of delimitation, of both natural and built borders, that takes advantage of the landscape, similar to the examples of suburban villas, but with a totally different aim. Instead of privately appropriating idle land for the sake of colonisation and urban development, our design strategy aims at enabling emergent groups and associations of local residents to reclaim idle land. The first step towards this is to rethink the garden as an architecture that can formalise the rough edges of these Borgate so that residents may begin to recognise and demarcate their space of intervention. [Figs. K to N] Through the very shaping of the ground, an alternative paradigm of the ‘common’ suburban villa could gradually start to interconnect the insular Borgate with a linear system of terraces, steps and shared

Fig. C: A site of agricola units (albercati parka) called "Orto dei Lavoratori" in Eurabia-Sagra-Olivetti, within the suburban district Municipio Roma IX. The site was organised around 2010 by the group FarOmo, of former factory workers living in the Borgate. Rome: Monolithic, with the support of the allotment association "Lupate Roma".
Fig. D. The areawide of 800 allotments (blue dots), of which most were acquired between 2001 and 2015 on the perimeter of Rome. Although many are far away from the old city center, they still sit within the municipal limits (black circle line) of the Great Ring Junction, called Grande Raccordo Anulare or GRA.

Fig. E. Spread of Brega (blue dots) 1990-2010, within the Convent of Rome. The illegal burials are usually on edge in-between the legal city (blue hatch), open spaces or landfills (gray hatch), archaeological parks (green hatched) and reserves (blue dot hatch). Percentages range from north to south west.
Fig. F. Ponte Area is a housing district mostly illegally built from 1990 onwards. The settlement edges the Natural Reserve Cavatina, on the north region outside the GBA. This has generally preserved it has public services and infrastructure. The site essentially sits between two boundaries (blue line), where marginal settlement remains with most of its indigenous vegetation (tulip pattern). As these fringes touch the two main surrounding roads of the settlement, they could feature a linear system of pedestrian circulation, terraces for leisure and collective events.

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Fig. G. S. Michele is a housing area from 1990 onwards. Its settlement edges the Natural Reserve Cavatina, on the west area outside the GBA. The site is mainly dense urbanization of single-family houses that lack public squares, sidewalks and even paved streets. The local parish church (blue line) is the only collective space in the settlement, even though it sits isolated on a high slope with difficult access, especially for pedestrians. This space, however, has the potential to become a model for future strategies of intervention.

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Fig. 1. A map showing a housing estate that was illegally built in the 1990s onwards. The settlement is on the northern boundary of the GBA. It has several problems, such as the lack of a comprehensive system of public spaces, circulation, and infrastructure. The map shows the existing road network along the River Corran (blue line). These areas could gain a linear system of collective space for leisure and pedestrian circulation for residents.

Fig. 1. Coastal area with a housing estate built from 2000 onwards, edging the Natural Reserve Makgadikgadi on the west region outside the GBA. At first sight, it appears that everything is fine with this housing estate, as it has some public spaces and infrastructure. However, this area has a serious problem of circulation, environmental comfort, and safety. At the border (blue line) with the Great Ring, there are no physical barriers to protect the residents from the speed and local traffic of the highway.

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Fig. J. An edge between Giardini Cusino and idle land, at the east end of Roman Campagna.

Fig. K. Top: Edge (blue) between Pigna (Rome) and the Roma della Suburra (circle hatch), a donor mixed forest.

Fig. L. Edge (blue) between S. Pietro and idle land, marquis Di Coralli (dot hatch), grass (circle pattern).

Fig. M. Top: Edge (blue) between S. Bocca and Roma della Suburra (circle hatch) and idle land (dot hatch).

Fig. N. Edge (blue) between Giardini Cusino, agricultural and idle land (dot hatch).
A set of local policies could regulate their building and management through the association of existing parochial churches and allotment organisations, such as the Zappata Romana.

The creation policies maybe an efficient — and emancipatory — way to counter the historical negligence of both the Administrative Commune of Rome and private developers. Eventually, these self-built and self-managed systems of monumental gardens may not only deal with the difficult topography of the Roman Agro but, also, choreograph everyday circulation into social rituals. These rituals could be communal gardening or, simply, sitting on a terrace to gaze at the sun setting over the landscape. The main reference models for this would be the very prototypes taken from the suburban villa. [Fig. P]

So, each project is a process that starts with the extraction of crucial prototypes from each villa to understand their logic of operation and formal principle. This is, in fact, the linear pathway punctuated by monumental gardens framing city and landscape. Further, those prototypes are extrapolated to compose a wide linear villa-garden. At each point of stoppage, a specific prototype enacts a principle of our policy, such as: inhabitation of existing borders with linear walks and pergolas; formalisation of (potential) centralities with canopies; accessibility of natural fringes via steps, stairs ways and plinths; re-appropriation of idle land with terraces; reclaiming streams with water mirrors. [Figs. Q to Y]

Eventually, these new paradigms of ‘suburban villas’ may even be welcomed by real-estate attempts to market the Roman periphery as a ‘greener and, thus, vibrant and sustainable.’ Nevertheless, even before that happens, our project may house many collective forces on the rise and foster their potential to become autonomous. To start with, it reclaims the formal representation and the spatial use of their immediate landscapes. All this may lead to the possibility of re-appropriation of idle land through a system of terraces which demarcate and, at the same time, give the borgate population the luxury of enjoying ‘with dignity’. That is, the possibility of ‘doing nothing’ after a long journey back from work. [Figs. Z to AA]
Fig. P: Prototypes for a possible architectural grammar of the monumental garden.
Fig. 9. Top: A rough edge between Viale Roma and a tract of idle land.
Fig. 9. Bottom: A central street without sidewalks in Casale di Quarto.

Fig. 10. Top: A pergola redefines the edge as an inhabitable limit.
Fig. 10. Bottom: A strips of medina create new centrality, such as a busy street. The same devices also give access to idle land and attractive features, such as breezes and open space.

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Fig. V. Top: A street stop at the verge of Via della Guastavilla, in Prima Porta.
Fig. V. Bottom: A street radar stops at the t lid land, in Posta d’Oro.

Fig. X: Top: A swamp offers a place for leisure while giving access to a natural reserve.
Fig. X. Bottom: A house faces Rome, “as for every,” within the urban territory.
Fig. 2. The rain falls on the still land around Uleybost.

Fig. A4. The terrace of a collective garden after the flood, Uleybost.
Pastoral

The more recent English allotment is the image of 'pastoral' politics. It addresses the normalisation of urban re-parcelisation into garden plots which has formally dissolved the archetype and conceptually reduced it to a tool for sheer urbanisation. English allotments served not only food production, self-help and education but, also, to discipline proletarian families by instilling in them an innocent image of the very landscape that produced their condition of disposssession.
Garden plots as final naturalisation of Enclosure: allotments in London

Life's getting hard in here
So, I do some gardening
Anything to take my mind away from where it's supposed to be
The nice lady next door talks of green beds
And all the nice things that she wants to plant in them
I cannot grow tomatoes on the front steps
Sunflowers, bean sprouts, sweet corn and radishes
I feel virtuous, I pull out weeds

As living conditions currently worsen everywhere—from neglected peripheries to expensive urban centres—gardening comes to signify not only a relaxing activity but also the possibility of a 'better life.' That is because the cultivation of a garden implies a significant amount of space, time and autonomy, which happen to be the ultimate 'luxuries' one can aspire to today, especially within cities such as Rome and London. Despite their many singularities, these urban territories shared the same living conditions, mostly defined by their 'service/knowledge economies' and so-called 'post-Fordist' or 'immaterial' modes of production. Every worker involved in the reproduction of these systems—from Chief Executive Officers to factory assembly workers, doctors, cleaners and even farmers working 'outside the city'—currently face a diminution of rights and a lack of contractual warranties. Although the scheduling and management of time have become two of the most fundamental job skills, workers cannot plan their own lives. The precarious condition of zero-hours contracts further emphasises that paradox. Moreover, the innate human 'feeling of not feeling at home' is no longer an existential problem, but a real


2. "Today, all forms of life have the experience of 'not feeling at home,' which, according to Heidegger, would be the origins of anguish. Then, there is nothing more shared and more common, and in a certain sense necessary, than the feeling of 'not feeling at home.' No one is less isolated than this person who feels the horrid pressure of the unrelieved world. In other words, that feeling to which fear and anguish converge is externally the source of hope. One could say, perhaps, that 'not feeling at home' is in fact a characteristic root of the concept of the multitude, while the opposition between the 'inside' and the 'outside.' Paola Virno, The Grammar of the Multitude. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e)), 2004), p. 54
fact for most young workers who cannot afford to buy a house. To ‘do some gardening’ somewhere may become, therefore, a way to at least compensate for that feeling. As Courtney Barnett sings in Acute Gardeners, growing tomatoes can make one forget about all problems and feel proactive, thus ‘in charge’ of some part of life increasingly precarious. Such an effect is also important to ‘well-to-do’ workers. To corporate agents, for instance, whose entire ‘careers’ fit in few Excel spreadsheets, the cultivation of the simplest ‘window-box herb garden’ can bring a tangible sense of accomplishment. If done properly, either as a ritual or a hobby, gardening can bring consistency, pleasure and imagination to the everyday. Mostly for all the reasons above, there is a current resurgence in the demand for allotment sites within London. This popular interest is comparable to the present ‘new wave’ of ‘giardini consolativi’ around Rome. In both cases, allotment gardening has become a way for either retired middle-class or young workers to improve their lives with healthy habits, self-care, socialisation and local associations. Their key difference is the way in which each has developed historically. The present Roman take on allotments draws directly from the ancient tradition of almost every household – even the humblest – having a small vineyard with an orchard to cultivate in the idle outskirts of the city. So, there is no nostalgia there but a sense of continuity and, perhaps, reinvention of a practice – and knowledge – common to nearly all social classes. Whereas in London, there is a general view of the English allotment as either a past ‘culture’ that is disappearing or a ‘proletarian’ symbol of utilitarianism and resistance. Although none of these propositions are wrong, they are neither historically accurate nor complete. It is nonetheless a fact that English, and especially London, allotments are disappearing despite the growing demand. And, in order to understand why, one must look closer at their history.

During the 2017 UK elections, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn described himself as an “incurrigible runner, cyclist and allotment gardener,” who, if becoming Prime Minister, would not give up his plot in East Finchley.† [Figs. A-B] While this ‘candid’ statement was probably an attempt to identify with a larger electorate than Labour’s, such hobbies do imply the very qualities required from the most effective workers, who (like the politician) should be (or become): self-disciplined, self-initiating, healthy, skilled, hands-on and creative.† An...
Allotment in this sense means much more than its general definition of a "land of usually 250 square metres rented by an individual for growing vegetables or flowers." [Fig. C] Not coincidentally, Corbyn concluded his self-portrait by remarking that "digging and clipping gives me peace to think better." Partly for this kind of association, one understands why the practice has become increasingly popular amongst Londoners and the mainstream media. The BBC recently launched its series "The Big Allotment Challenge," while the Guardian's online "Allotment Blog" has been a success since 2012. By browsing through markets and bookshops, one finds that "slow-cooked organic home-grown foods" are in fashion. Often married with environmentally-friendly slogans, this may also hint at the making of a broader ethos, one that is already crystallized in the city, with stores with such names as Planet Organic found on almost every street. Meanwhile, chronic surges of Conservative austerity have been progressively forcing tax payers to provide alternative ways for their own basic needs. For instance, the less public funding goes to hospitals, the more the NHS resorts to promoting outdoor activities as a major prophylaxis. Faced with such a scenario, it is easy to agree that vegetable gardening is one of the most productive uses of one's spare time. Besides life-style pursuits and rigorous consumerism, the latest wave of allotment-holding has been pushed by a general need for wellbeing, the significant share of which is usually attributed to verdant places.

Although London has a well-recognized collection of over 40 parks, 120 garden squares and 126 commons, 737 allotment sites with 36,000 plots do not fulfill the demand.

Over 2,000 aspiring gardeners face long waiting lists. Conversely, land has been made less available. Ever since their lowest popularity in the 1970s, many sites have been removed, some entirely revoked. For instance, from a 1972 list of 65 sites in Battersea, 20 were removed due to either new urban planning or private development. Similarly, Ealing Dean Allotments have had more than half of its original area replaced by charity housing for the elderly. Across the city, on Eastside Hackney Wick, Manor Garden was threatened by the construction of the 2012 Olympic Park. All this happened lawfully, because most sites were statutory schemes and thus subject to government decisions. They ran on land that had previously been acquired by local authorities and allocated for the specific purpose of allotment gardens, a procedure that generally implies legal protection against removal. Nevertheless, just as councils "must provide" plots following popular demand, they also have the power to alter or to not renew their lease. The latter often prevails. This is especially true after the London Government Act of 1963, which released the duty of allotment provision for inner boroughs, changing it from mandatory to discretionary. Therefore there is a contrast between centre and suburb when it comes to the quantity, concentration and size of sites. But in general, all local government is increasingly pressured to prioritise real estate over community participation. Such a condition is clearly visible in the way these gardens survive around London: 86% lie outside the central boundary where new urbanism is constrained by green belt policies, while 13% are gathered in the less-valued boroughs just below the Thames, and less than 1% persist in the more disputed areas. [Figs. D-E] In other words, allotments have been equally valued for their grounds and desired for their welfare and form; they therefore represent a critical enclave between private interests and the collective benefit. The fact that their geographic distribution has been almost the same for nearly two centuries suggests this present condition is only one stage within a larger, older and perhaps ongoing process with the city. No other clue is more telling than the name of this garden type. "Allotment" originally means "that which is allotted: a share, part, or possession granted or distributed; that which is assigned by lot, or by God; anything set apart for a special use as to a distinct party." The noun may have been either natively formed by the late seventeenth century or, most probably, came into English a century earlier through allotment from the Old French "alouer" and "doter," for "allocation or assignment" and "to parcel out, to divide or distribute as by or into lots." In any case, both formations share the -lot, which is the Germanic word for "parcel of land." This is cognate with Old High German "lot" for "share of land" and Old English "lot" for "object used to determine some one's share." Hence the connotations "distributed or assigned by lot" mentioned above. These definitions thus confirm that "allotment" denotes the result of a specific process of distribution, which historically has always been enacted by a higher entity. Depending on the narrative of power, this entity may be seen itself, an auspice, a deity, a king or the state. Meanwhile, for the first
Fig. D. Distribution of allotment sites (blue) within Greater London.

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Fig. E. Density of allotment sites per borough within Greater London.

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Towards a ‘prehistory’ of English Allotments

While Parliament wrote the ‘legal history’ of English Allotments, David Crouch and Colin Ward have been amongst the first historians to address the matter from the perspective of plot holders, who — until the 1940s — were mostly British middle-aged male workers. It is important to note, though, that during those years Colin Ward was a young architect on his way of becoming one of the most prominent anarchist thinkers of that generation. His interest in that type of gardening has therefore focused on the possibility for small communities to self-build allotment sites as means to self-organise and support a subsistence form-of-life outside the system of private property. And it is perhaps due to his compelling book — The allotment in landscape and culture — that figures such as Jeremy Corbyn, or even young East-London hipsters, tend to suppose the model is a ‘working-class invention.’ Likewise, the author of the present thesis personally admits having almost promptly accepted this hypothesis at the very early stages of her research. After all, it is rare to find an urban event which has not been established by ruling classes or other powerful institutions, such as the Church or State. The angle proposed by Ward and Crouch has allowed a resourceful branch of researchers, such as Elizabeth Scott, to reveal the history of allotments as a tale of resistance. Although that is indeed an important passage in the — ongoing — development of English allotments, it is relatively recent. Moreover, as someone who sets himself against the concept of modern state, Ward contradicts himself by praising the Allotment Act of 1922 for having increased the number of sites and rights of tenure for plot holders. The fact that his main book on the subject slips the entire previous century is even more problematic in its dismissal of the period when allotments had been clearly linked to parliamentary enclosure. The work by Ward and Crouch is nonetheless extremely important as a projective and possible theory of allotment as a social practice. But forasmuch as one sympathises with this assumption or thinks it could take the type a step further architecturally, still, it should be taken as a partial and incomplete view. Instead, in order to reframe the English allotment towards an architectural project for an alternative form of living in London, one must understand this has always been an extremely ambivalent model. This ambivalence does not only come from the archetypal trait of enclosed gardens but, mainly, the fact that allotments do have a ‘prehistoric’ within the process of (literally) allotting the city. If only sites were more often looked at from above, even the most innocent observer would become sceptical: their shapes do fit into urbanisation, precisely, as the necessary planted ‘voids’ within densely built areas. Although these ‘voids’ have now become rare and precious, most stand on land that was once the least productive arable soil, the residual edges, the last ‘crumbs of the cake’ of large appropriations of land. Hence the insular condition of these places today. That also confirms why they are usually far from central London — in the zones where the former ‘countryside’ was. The comparison of an Ordnance Survey map from 1930 with another from 1860 reveals that both allotment gardens and suburban housing blocks have the same shapes of former rural géométrie. It is also by chance that, roughly within the second half of that period, both allotment practice and the urban amalgamation of rural land boomed.
But when and how did the term allotment become a garden type? The concept had emerged and resurfaced in multiple places in Britain, developing unevenly from a range of practices from the late eighteenth century onwards. Just as they varied among parishes and counties, so did their names: 'garden ground,' 'field gardens,' 'potato gardens,' 'cottage gardens.' Meanwhile, 'allotment of land' by itself was frequently associated with the provision of fuel and collection of turf [Fig. F] as described in the first Allotments Act of 1832, in which the term 'garden' is not mentioned at all. Or, with the Select Vestries Act of 1819, parishes were formally allowed to 'let land for labourers.' Yet cases of areas more precisely described as 'allotted in gardens for the labouring poor' were already reported in 1797. Hence it took a while before the events spread widely. The small landholding named 'allotment garden,' as it is presently considered, was only normalised for the first time with the Allotments Act of 1908. Ever since, many associations of plot holders have transformed the type into a practice, properly said, to lessen the cost of household reproduction by offering the possibility of growing one's own food instead of buying everything from supermarkets. In promoting even popular access to the land, English allotments have almost become a possible mechanism towards land reforms. Although this has never happened in this country, overall, the model turned out to be unquestionably beneficial to the development of civil agencies. Ultimately, it poses an alternative model to the increasing commodification of life and urban land. That is perhaps why most people and even scholars believe allotments are a 'grass-root movement,' set in antithesis to modernisation. For instance, in a compelling essay about the disappearance of New York's rogue gardens, leftist thinker and self-professed 'avant gardener' Peter Lamborn Wilson praises English allotments as 'remnants of pre-Enclosure commons.' [Fig. G] That is, however misleading. As Jeremy Burchardt has thoroughly proved, 'neither in its intentions nor in its effects was the mainstream allotment movement backwards-looking. On the contrary, allotments were a persistently modernising force. This is evident in the earliest sites around the 1970s, when landowners...
and farmers provided peasants with "potato grounds," so they could survive the severe subsistence crisis during and after the Napoleonic Wars. This crisis was also caused by Parliamentary Enclosure, which had abruptly dissolved the open-field system into a homogeneous territory of intensive agriculture. These were much less productive and resilient and produced a series of bad crops and failed harvests.

The relation of 'field allotments' and 'allotment gardens' with parliamentary enclosure is nonetheless much more complex and ambivalent than it appears. It had varied over time in the face of political and social events, such as peasant riots and the establishment of philanthropic societies dedicated to help the 'labouring poor.' The emergence of the so-called 'Swing Riots' between 1830 and 1831 was a series of protests by small farmers, cottagers and labourers against the effects of this acceleration of enclosure. For not only had parliamentary enclosure abolished a system, which (for better or worse) gave the peasants access to common and waste lands but, crucially, they had devised the labour. Since that process favoured the repopulation of diverse farmsteads into extensive monocultures, it increased the need for horse-powered machines, which ended up reducing the quantity of manual labour required. Machines, moreover, made tangible how the new gender had alienated the peasants from the land in all possible dimensions. And, if it is difficult to define the origins of the 'land question' in English culture, the Swing episode does give a significant clue as to why land has become so central to working-class struggle. Yet the protests did not focus on attacking the legal acts that had legitimised that massive privatisation of landownership. Instead, they threatened landlords and rich tenant farmers with demands for higher wages, better working conditions and less machinery. The Swing Riots were important, in this sense, for reclaiming the land from the point of view of labour and, in other words, for addressing the idea that land does not imply just soil and yields but also an entire process of cultivation through social relationships from which it should not be estranged. To the peasants, enclosure was tragic precisely for having freed the manors from the traditional duty to provide them with the right to use — not just the land. However, their claims, which were thus essentially ethical but relatively modest, upset the landed class beyond Kent, where the protests concentrated, as evidenced by the events that followed immediately after the Riots, such as the foundation...
Plots and the moralisation of rural labourers

Northfield Allotments is the oldest surviving example of allotments within the urban territory of London. The site has been in continuous cultivation since its establishment in 1834 in the old centre of Ealing, 12 kilometres west of Charing Cross [Fig. J]. This case is extremely significant not only for marking the late development of allotments near the city but also, being one of the earliest Enclosure enactments with the specific purpose of allotment gardening. The original name of the site was, in fact, 'Ealing Dean Common Allotments', after the formerly open field it occupied. [Fig. K] At that time, Ealing was not yet the Metropolitan Borough it is today, but an agrarian parish divided into large medieval manors, such as Gunnersbury and Pitshanger. These estates cropped wheat, barley and rye to produce mixed-grain flour. Because of their location, at the very crossroads of Middlesex, they made Ealing a hotspot for the seasonal agricultural and horticultural economy of the county. As this system relied on migrant wage labour, the area hosted great influxes of foreign labourers - mostly Irish, some either going or coming from London. [pp. 312-313] The parish was a major attraction also in the vast tracts of wasteland along main roads, such as Hounslow and Brentford Green, which allowed non-parishioners to graze. At the same time, only certain groups of parishioners had access to the common fields, where they could plant potatoes, dig turf, and collect fuel. The Ealing Vestry had the authority to impose these restrictions since it governed the parish on behalf of the Diocese and of the Bishop of London. Charles James Blomfield, who held the manorial rights over all land, wastes and produce. To enforce its power and control, the Vestry made commuting and intercommuting increasingly difficult from the sixteenth century onwards. However, this changed after 1800, when the entity decided to couple such practices with workhouses in order to reduce poor rates and assert social

Fig. J. Ealing Dean Commons in the Map of London and the adjacent County to John Rocque, as Survived in 16 Sheets. John Rocque (1741).


56. By 1858 there were nearly 100 workhouses within the parish. Ealing Local History Library, Arc. 1857, 'Farnham Road, 1791-1872'. (Middlesex, 1862). 16 February 1860.


59. Such as the Almshouse in the list of Ealing, formerly known as Church Road. Ealing Local History Library, Arc. 1857, 'Ealing Turnstile Road, 1791-1872'. (Middlesex, 1862).

60. Ibid.


64. The author of this thesis has borrowed the Ealing Local History Library with the kind permission of the Ealing Dean, who kindly provided access to the library's archives. For the purpose of this research, the author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Ealing Dean and his staff. Documents, photographs, and correspondence of the Ealing Dean and his staff are available for consultation by appointment only. [Fig. L]

There is no record in the official minutes of the exact reasons for the petition. Moreover - contrary to what progressive historians, such as Colin Ward, would have chosen to presuppose - there is no evidence to suggest that labourers were the initiators of the process. Instead, given the obscurity and speed of transactions between the
Vestry and the Bishop, one can suspect both parties had already been interested in transforming Ealing Dean, regardless of the actual will of the parishioners. In fact, according to the Poor Law Reform, ongoing at that time, enclosing the Common would give the Vicar more political credibility amongst philanthropists to raise funds for the parish. Meanwhile, for the Bishop, the further subdivision of the land into garden plots mattered for two main reasons. Firstly, the process would legally reinforce his authority over Ealing, a strategic unit of the Diocese. Secondly, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, he believed that letting gardens to Labours was more beneficial than simply providing land for grazing or ploughing. Although such an alternative had been experimented with rather timidly by late 1700, mainly in northern counties, the years 1830 saw greater interest from the southern gentry, ecclesiastic figures, cosmopolitan philanthropists and Members of Parliament. It was no longer far-fetched to consider that spade horticulture could make allotments more economically efficient than those conventional modalities. Above all, for the Bishop, with his clerical role, the purposeful task of gardening and growing food had a dignifying educational value for any ‘man’ - let alone the ‘poor parishioner’, who, could then, feed ‘his own’ family. Subsistence gardening, in this sense, spoke to the heart of the Protestant faith in individual self-help, nuclear households, and pastoral governance. So, was it not the case that the Bishop and Vicar planned the enclosure of Ealing Dean out of sheer ambition for ownership, social control and power? From their viewpoint, enclosing and allotting that site into familial gardens was the most appropriate choice from every possible angle. Moreover, after the historical event between 1800 and 1820, the Vestry might have accepted that the ‘poor problem’ in Ealing was complex and, thus, required solutions beyond the — clumsily — pragmatic construction of workhouses and limited provisions of sites for grazing and collecting turf.

One can understand the persistence of the idea of the garden as an archetype of collective enclosure, crucially different from farms and parks. Unlike farming, which addressed the reproduction of the entire parish and — at that point — of London, gardening was a ‘domestic’, thus ‘private’, affair. It therefore seemed to exist outside the political economy of parliamentary enclosure which caused so much controversy in early 1830. Unlike public strolling, which shaped the mundane’ behaviour of urban subjects, gardening was a humble, and so ‘male’, occupation for the parishioner and ‘family man.’ (Pre-)Victorian England thinks and speaks in parables. The moralising character behind the enclosure of Ealing Dean permeated the legal deed of consent, even though the text was intentionally technical: I Glr[...]

"Twenty acres correspond to the entire Common, whose area and triangular shape had been predefined by surrounding globes and roads. What mattered most in this document was not the perimeter of the enclosure but the internal subdivision and use of the land. So the writer starts by referring to the amended document, a drawing strikingly similar to the ‘planning application’ which most London councils presently require for any development. Fig. M) The scheme proposed pathways and new lanes to integrate the site to the existing grid of public circulation. The draftsmen was equally precise in stressing the properties nearby, such as the ‘land’ and tenants belonging to Mr. Sam Tompkins. Topography was nonetheless missing, except for the couple of ponds and streams, coloured in dark grey, and ditches offsetting the eastern and western fences. In further contrast to the accuracy of the text, the plan abstains from laying out the grid of one-road parcels, which would form the future allotments? One must note how
emphasize the Bishop was in linking “one rod per person” and then
categorizing such an individual as a “poor parishioner.” That implied
the process was about redistributing land to a specific subject—the
labouring parishioner—yet without acting against the status quo. On
the contrary, the allotment of Ealing Dean followed the age of private
property as it identified citizenship with landholding.10 Such ‘respect’
for ownership is explicitly evident in both writing and text. For in-
stance, the writer asserts that the site should never disturb the “public
nor the ‘Occupiers of the Houses’” nearby. Even more remarkable,
though, is the absence of the word “garden,” which the Bishop replaces
by “Allotments to be cultivated with the Spade.” He thus meant the
enclosure was for agroticulture rather than enclosed farming.2
One may further interpret the emphasis on “Spade” as implying that
such cultivation should serve productive rather than ornamental purposes.
Finally, the clearest indication of the ideological element in the plan to
enclose the Common appears when the Bishop prohibits work on
“the Lord’s day.” That is, no gardening on Sundays.2

Parish of EALING.
Dean Common Allotment.

I, Thomas Adams, of the Parish of Ealing,
Labourer, being desirous of renting Twenty Rods of Land, as marked out
on Ealing Dean Common, on the Plan, and Numbered ___, do prom- ise
faithfully to observe the following Conditions, or Penalty of being im-
mediately dispossessed of the Allotment if they are not strictly performed:
First.—I will pay to the Parish Officers for the time being, to commence
from Lady-Day next, the Sum of ____. Shillings yearly, for the said Lot, in Quarterly Payments, to be made at the Cross-House, Ealing, at the first Monthly Audit immediately following the Quarter Day on which the Rent is payable.
Secondly.—I will keep the Land well and properly Cultivated (as a Garden)
and Manured, and will keep the Quiest Hedges at all times well Weedied and Cleaned, and Mended when necessary, I will not erect, or suffer to be erected, any House or other Building upon the Land.

More than a ‘contract’, this document was a sort of set of ‘terms
and conditions’ for the enclosure and future use of the Common.
The entire event thus seemed an opportunity for the Bishop to put an
urgent idea into practice. Although it was the Vestry that drafted the
tenancy agreements, the terms perfectly coincided with the Episco-
pal will. The Vestry let the first plot in 1833, to a parishioner named
Thomas Adams. [Fig. N] The tenancy agreement requires the tenant
to declare himself as a “Labourer” and “promise to faithfully observe” six
conditions. These are as follows:

1. I will pay to the Parish Officers the annual sum of ____ Shilling(s),
in quarterly payments (..)
2. I will keep the Land well and properly Cultivated (as a Garden) and
Manured, and will keep the Quiest Hedges at all times, well Weedied and Cleaned, and Mended when necessary, I will not erect any House or other Building upon the Land.
3. The Vicar and Parish Officers may and shall be at liberty to come to
their pleasure on the Land, to see the Cultivation of it.
4. I will not trespass or allow any of my family or tenants, on any
such norms are worthy of careful consideration as they completely dismantle the present image of the English allotment as a 'movement' invented by the working class. Cases such as Ealing Dean reveal that, instead, allotments had existed for almost a hundred years under the tight control of parochial authorities and influential landowners.

There are many terms in the tenancy agreement. Firstly, the annual payment of five shillings was symbolic. Its function was to remind the labourer that the allotment was not the fruit of charity but implied a voluntary relationship between him and the Vestry. Secondly, the obligation of "proper" cultivation meant the plot should not only look tidy but also be productive. In other words, the land should never become "illegible" and neither should the labourer. Note that this is the first time the expression "as a Garden" appears to describe the purpose of the site. Meanwhile, the text mentions "hedge" instead of "fence." The primary role of hedging or fencing is one of the most defining traits of allotments in England. To this day, hedges and narrow pathways are used to define plots and avoid locking them. The chief reason for the norm on hedging was to convey the legal nature of such possession, which is not about owning but about holding a small parcel of land, subject to certain conditions. Unlike a house, whose dwellers may hide the interior behind a facade and shutters, the space of an allotment must always remain visible to the outside. The absence of built, thus, le bileous boundaries paved the way for the third condition. For it gave the Vicar easy access to 'inspect' the plot at any given time. Meanwhile, the fourth condition forbade the labourers to "trespass" on each other's plots. The combination of these two norms was anal-

88. For an overview on the subject, see Thomas Leslie, Suburbia. Academic Geographies. (New York University Press, 2008).
89. "The minimum limit of the urban poverty is determined by the value of the commodities, without which the labourer cannot exist his total income, because the value of those matters of subsistence which are physically indispensable." Karl Marx, Capital, Volume 3. (New York: International Books, 1883-1894), p. 275.

90. Poor Law Amendment Act 1836.
92. Ibid., p. 208.

93. Poor Law Amendment Act 1836.
94. Since the English Parliament wanted to lower the spending on "poor relief," the Board focused on the waste of the workhouse system. Garden allotments, therefore, did not feature in the final report to MPs. Allotments nonethehigh became a topic of debate, as the assistant commissioners interviewed labourers, farmers and landowners. When
questioned about the "recent experiment," the participants offered either positive or contrary opinions. Most of them, though, agreed that gardening plots could help low-income families to produce their own food. Precisely for this reason, employers were opposed to the practice because they worried it would make employees "tired" and, thus, less "willing" (or not desiring) to work for them. Many landowners, however, had mixed feelings about allotments: some held to the belief that sites could reduce violence and riotousness amongst rural labourers. As the Commission reported these perceptions, many MPs and philanthropic organisations—such as the Labourer's Friend Society—changed their emphasis in regard to promoting this "new" type of landholding: instead of focusing on food production, they started to highlight data showing that sites had improved both the welfare and effectiveness of Downing.
size of allotments today. From the perspective of the tenant, this was enough space to produce a substantial part of the annual intake of his family. Meanwhile, for the Vicar, such a fraction was small enough to prevent total subsistence and emancipation of his 'block' of parishioners. In other words, the allotment made labour self-reliant but—narrow—indeed, self-reliant from wage, employment and paternalism. In addition, one eighth of an acre easily translated into a rectangular area of 20 perches, which enabled the Vestry to systematically subdivide the triangular Communion into a totalling grid. By 1835, the entire enclosure was divided into 145 plots. Through the process of demonstrating such a grid, Parish Officers would most ever deepen their knowledge of a good portion of the larger territory that they had to control and collect titles from. It is worth noting that Ealing Dean Common Allotments featured in the Apportionment Book and Tithe Map of 1839 [Fig. 10, where they are described as Property of the Bishop of London occupied by the Poor of Ealing].

Fig. 10. Opposite page. Tithe Map of Ealing, 1839.
visible in the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1890 and 1934. [Figs. P–Q] Solely based on such a formal relationship, one may argue that the allottment was indeed far from a ‘backward’ ruralist’ practice. On the contrary, it related much more to the production of urban space and its subjectivity than the rural life of the parish, which was, in fact, on the verge of ending. Such a claim sounds so far-fetched in the context of the present fetishisation of allotments, but the allotment of Ealing Dean was not at all about farming, but about gardening. Furthermore, the one eighth of an acre plot grid made such cultivation much denser and more diverse than it was on the manors and glebe farms around it. Even though potatoes, wheat and barley were the most popular crops amongst plot holders until 1850,116 the strict rule of spade husbandry gave them a horticultural character. Thus, the site must have stood out from that late-agricultural landscape. While such a perspective would only be obtainable today from an aeroplane, a labourer inside his plot was not able to differentiate this enclosure from that of the site—let alone from the outside.

Since allotments were—and still are—the ‘non-designed’ antitheses of the picturesque garden, their spatial experiences have never been the focus of local histories and scholarly research— that is to say, not from an architectural point of view. This is because historians—and even architects—generally tend to think the making of architecture pre-supposes professional design practice and authorship. Although cultural studies have successfully brought to light the perspective of labourers, they dismiss the fact that allotments do produce spaces and, thereby, perspectives. These enclosures are thus no less formal and ideological than those of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown or late-Renaissance Roman villas. Still, the nineteenth-century ‘plebeian’ garden is crucially different for being—a priori—the result of quasi legal norms and, later, parliamentary statutes that pre-established the dimensions, shapes and uses of their enclosures. In other words, the English allotment is a type which, as such, is conceived and ‘designed’ by norms. This normalisation has reduced the garden archetype to a grid of urban re-parcelisation and social
control in a way that not even the other two paradigms accomplished. With this hypothesis in mind, one should attempt to reconstruct the interior perspective of a typical plot around 1850 — for instance, on the east side of Ealing Dean Common. Picture the perspective of a middle-aged male bricklayer, standing before his crops at the height of his (average for a Victorian) 5.7 feet:

The August sun softly rakes. It is a Monday — but work was on another hour — while the dew will sparkle, and green leaves will spread. But bushels are still again, but not yet ready for harvest, so he leans down to check on the spinach, gets his dinner, and takes a deep breath, squeezing the twenty feet. On the way back up, he looks around and see nobody, though spiders are tick-ticking everywhere. How far does this sound go? Where does the site start? Where does it end? He wonders. The space of his plot, though, is finite. It is his “place in the world,” his “in the hedge,” where he can forget all that and proce the inevitable hardship that comes every winter. Was life better during his childhood, gardening with his parents and uncles on the croft next to their house? This memory fades away, along with the cloudy vision of the quickset hedges. Are these “thick” enough for the Vicar? he wonders. “When will the Vincy finally fix the fences around our site?” he concludes, though he can’t see them from his plot apron.

Nothing — apparently — is “wrong” with this picture. The bricklayer lives in a precarious condition, but, at least, the parish lets him one eighth of an acre “at a peppercorn” to help in the reproduction of his household. Gardening, moreover, brings him psychological comfort as it gives consistency to the everyday, and some certainty in life. He thus feels “proactive” within the vegetal interior he has single-handedly crafted. This “self-valourising” feeling nonetheless crumbles as soon as the labourer starts to worry about the vigilant Vicar. Although worth noting, such worry — or fear — is less problematic than the fact that he is not able to visually understand the entire site as a finite enclosure. Since all plots were laid out in such a compact grid, and spade husbandry made their gardens so microminuscule, tenants could not see the fences around the site. On the one hand, this situation was “good” for them: they could forget about everything else and focus on gardening. On the other hand, it was extremely problematic as regards making labourers oblivious to the very signs of the historical process which had caused their condition.
of dispossession and precarity in the first place. The fences around Ealing Dean were not just for blocking the entry of animals. Above all, these were formal enactments of the legal procedure through which the access to that land had ceased to be a common right of the local population. While the perimeter fence enclosed and kept the site private, the gardens inside obliterated the limits of that enclosure, thus making it seem a natural feature of the landscape. In other words, allotments made the garden archetype act as a frame that naturalised enclosure and ownership.

As deeds and norms "designed" the site at Ealing Dean, one cannot confirm whether such complex formal relationships were the work of art of the Bishop or the Vestry. It is nonetheless safe to suppose that both entities did not expect the allotments to become so ambivalent—especially in regard to the self-valorisation, commodification and—eventually—social activism amongst plot holders. As previously noted, the activity of gardening was mainly responsible for the first of those three processes. Meanwhile, the construction of friendship based upon shared interests took a bit more time than occasional chats about seeds, soil, and seasons. That kind of effect evolved rather gradually, while labourers perceived themselves to a singular group of tenants facing the same landlord, represented by the site's Managing Committee. This situation was highly politicalising as it was analogous to the power relationship between the people and the state. According to archival evidence, the Committee met with the Parish Officers at least seven times between 1855 and 1836. Since their minutes focused on the preoccupations of management rather than feedback from users, one cannot suppose the allotments were organised at that point. The scenario starts to visibly change from 1853 onwards, when the tenants collectively sent the Committee open letters concerning encroachments and site improvements and requesting the resignation of certain managers. These complaints reflected how the growth and suburbanisation of Ealing threatened to intrude upon the allotment area. Above all, they also trace the formation of a collective sense of belonging amongst tenants. So, if the spatial perspectives from within the site succeeded in naturalising ownership, they eventually failed to accomplish the same result when shaping the labourers' subjectivity. That is also because the Vestry did not allow the tenants to spend "too much" time on the site. From the inauguration date until the end of the century, tenants could only garden their plots until 9 A.M. As discussed earlier, the Parish Officers were also committed to shutting the site on Sundays. Unfortunately, for the tenants, they were not the most religious parochioners and, in 1848, petitioned the Managing Committee to allow Sunday gardening until 8 A.M. Any aged worker today can easily relate to the main reason behind that request, which is the use of free time. That is, dedicating the weekend to leisure and other productive activities—seemingly—outside employment.

The Sunday gardening appeal included the names and occupations of the petitioners. Of a total of 139 participants, there were 91 farm labourers, 11 gardeners, nine carpenters, nine bricklayers, five shoemakers, two cow keepers, two woodwipers, and one each of several miscellaneous occupations, such as painter and blacksmith. From that period forward, the typical plot-holder profile gradually shifted from rural labourer to suburban worker. So did the local population of Ealing. The predominantly masculine character of the site moreover changed—through not as quickly—until its reversal during the two world wars. It is nonetheless evident that, by 1860, the reality of the allotments was far from the paternalistic ideal [Fig. 5] of transforming the labouring poor into docile subjects. Even though the 1858 petition failed to convince the Committee, it reveals that most plot holders were not all passive. Perhaps because the norms restricted gardening hours to early mornings on weekdays, the site possibly became a "guilty pleasure" but never the whole "world" of the labourers. There were other social experiences at play in the politicisation of those subjects, such as, for instance, work in itself, talking with a colleague, walking the streets and so forth. In addition, it is highly possible that labouring tenants would bring these influences into their morning chats with other plot holders. In other words, the allotment would thus function as what 1970s O.M. A. would call a "social condenser." For this reason, one may associate the nineteenth-century allotment with the development of agricultural trade Unions in the 1850s. Although extremely important, this happened mainly in the south Midlands and there is no evidence to support a similar correlation with Ealing Dean, or any other site close to London at that time.
In any case, this example is interesting in regard to architectural theory, as it reveals how the potential for activism amongst plot holders underlay the – spatial – ambivalence between notional individuality and conceptual collectivism. In this sense, even the restrictive norms on plot sizing and gardening became twofold. On the one hand, the one-eighth of an acre rectangle and its spade husbandry restrained subsistence and surplus. On the other, it made ‘living labour’ tangible in space and action, rather than image. Later, in the 1900s, the interiors of individual tool sheds would have a similar effect on labourers’ awareness, as their bare shelves revealed all the utensils and thus the amount labour – involved in gardening. [Fig. 7] The urban event of Ealing Dean could have thus – partly – enabled each plot holder to realise not only their ‘use value’ but also the immanent potential of his or her ‘labour power.’

Fig. 5: Page from the 1895 volume of the Labourers’ Friend Society Magazine. Following the patristic rhetoric of the EFS and its publications, this image idealised the rural labourer gardening his allotment alongside his nuclear family. The savings on the background emphasise domesticity.

325. This experience could reverse the separation of the labourer from the basic means of production, such as his being body and the land itself. That organism was the book for restriction, which transformed writers into objects. To reserve this process would be the first step for the labourer’s willing restriction against that of capital exploitation, which happened upon the appropriation of his labour power. On restriction, see Karl Marx, Grundrisse. (New York: Penguin, 1978), p. 405.

Fig. 7: The interior of a typical tool shed at Ealing Dean Common. Allotment plots at the beginning of 1900. Following new practices around that time, the EFS allowed each plot holder to build only one small shed. To prevent this ‘building to become a heated house, the Managing Committee established it could not occupy more than 10% of the single plot.
Victory and Defeat

One may research beyond Ealing Dean and investigate other historical consequences of allotment sites within London's zone of influence. However, the present thesis aims instead to trace how the example of Ealing Dean relates to the modern mechanism of enclosure, through which the city's farmland and villages were amalgamated with the countryside. While the acts of enclosing and allotting Dean Common played a direct role in those processes, the following subjugation of plot holders played a more elusive role. Archival evidence and spatial analysis nonetheless suggest that this site helped to transform labour subjectivity from a rural to an urban subjectivity, involving thus a move from 'labourers' — mainly concerned with reclaiming access to the land — to 'workers' — preoccupied with wages. This is not to say that land and landownership ever ceased to matter to both categories. On the contrary, between 1870 and 1920 both issues remained a cross-regional subject of debate, in which allotments were a frequent and extremely ambivalent topic. Several events led to the inclusion of garden plots in that conversation. First, the progressive disfranchisement of labourers and workers. Second, significant changes in the legislation demanding large landowners provide the 'labouring poor' with smallholdings. And third, the Victorian development of urban infrastructure, working-class housing, public parks, gardens and allotments. There was therefore a potential for associations, philanthropists and MPs to put forward allotments as a solution — one in which a system of shared horticultural sites could present an alternative to the socially problematic system of private property and intensive farming. Still, from both Liberal and Conservative perspectives, allotments were a way to prevent the rise of socialism in England. Because if labourers could rent — and cultivate — their plots in the land, they would feel, and would legally be, a part of the capitalist status quo. Hence the ambivalence of allotments. Whenever a crisis arose, lawmakers would moreover make the model more instrumental to the state than to workers. This happened in World War I, as Parliament passed the Cultivation of Lands Order of 1916, empowering councils to purchase and appropriate vacant land for allotment gardening. The government took similar action during World War II, with the "Dig for Victory" campaign, urging civilians to garden vegetables everywhere, to 'battle' war-time austerity. [Fig. U]


198. By 1870 most of the rural population had moved to the city. Average social and political issues, Parliament passed the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 to provide suffrage to middle-class men and rural labourers. This paved the way for the Local Government Act of 1894 establishing that rural districts could select their local councils. This "labourers'" franchise paralleled economic efforts at land reform, such as the Land Reform Union in 1886, becoming the English Land Reform League in 1894.

199. Such as the Poor Allotments Management Act 1972 (39 & 40 Vict. c. 70), which increased the oversight of allotments provided with outside money, the Commons Act 1896 (28 & 29 Vict. c. 59), requiring councils to provide land for the poor, the Allotments Act 1856 (45 & 46 Vict. c. 59), obliging them to manage land for the benefit of the poor to make it available to allotments of up to one acre (0.4 hectares) at a fair rent (already used in recreational land); and, especially, the Small Holdings and Allotments Act of 1915 (4 & 5 Eliz. 2 c. 35), which increased the minimum plot size to five acres.

141. Combatants would thus have to return the land to their original owners.

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Those war-time incentives suggest how garden allotments had rapidly gone from a controversial experiment to being seen as a means of cheap and self-reliant production of food within the domestic sphere. As most sites were still the fruit of paternalistic reaction to poverty, they had to ensure tenants would benefit from successfully gardening their plots. So, either landlords, managers or local charities often provided holders with spades, seeds, manure, and expertise. This assistance was key to fulfilling the purpose of poor relief, and thereby promoting patriarchal benevolence. The more Parliament controversially accelerated the enclosure of open fields, the greater became the need for that promotion. The faster industrial growth consumed natural resources, the more urgent became the reassertion of ‘nature’ and seemingly ‘anti-urban’ themes, such as horticulture. There was therefore a Victorian climate proper for gardening in general, with mass-produced tools, flower shows, awards for garden achievements, publications and guides. [Fig. V] Above all, the very process of organising allotments entailed the development of an associational life-style which favoured their productivity. The exchange of seedlings and experience was particularly important to workers whose connection to the land had never existed or been literally interrupted by migration. This was the case of most tenants in the East Finchley Allotments, established in May 1917 within the parish of Finchley, Middlesex, eight kilometres north of Charing Cross. [Fig. W] Similarly to...
Ealing Dean, this site filled the enclosure of commonable land, over which the Bishop of London also held the memorial rights until the 1960s. 44 Unlike the previous case, though, Finchley Common was a much larger area, extending over 1000 acres when local landowners campaigned for the Bishop to privatise it in the early 1800s. 45 An Act of Parliament of 1815 separated 15 acres to be let as fuel allotments to local farmers. 46 Five years later, another Act enclosed the entire field and immediately parcellled out more than 150 acres to pay for the costs of that Act. 47 By the Cultivation Order of 1916, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of England—who had recently inherited the Bishop's demesne over the Common—leased the land to the Finchley Urban District Council in 1917. 48 The site was, and still is, a 12-acre rectangle surrounded by a cemetery, 49 a forest, 50 and housing dating from 1890. 51 In spite of the Allotments Act of 1908, which allowed plot sizes up to two roods, the Council has kept parcels at a quarter of a rood to increase their number and match local demand. 52 The local authority also had to follow the green shape of the enclosure and, regardless of the sloped terrain, organised the site into a uniform grid of 96 plots, arranged in two continuous rows, only interrupted by the original features of the Common, such as ditches and streams. The first tenants in 1917 were mostly middle-aged male workers from Middlesex, or immigrants, 53 paying annual rents of ten shillings. 54 Even if most lacked gardening skills, cultivation was nonetheless easy since the Finchley soil is a fertile loaming of chalk, brown clay and gravel. 55 Thus, many plot holders succeeded in cropping the species advised by the RHS to sustain their households during war-time austerity. 56 By 1933, plot holders had not only established a garden but also a cohesive and active Holders' Association. 57 An encroachment loomed in 1930, the group pressed the Council to buy the freehold from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. 58 Since the Church still had a pedagogical interest in promoting allotments, the conveyance established that the site should always serve such a purpose. 59 However, the document did not mention site rules. The Association decided to maintain the original rules, but with some relaxations, such as all-day gardening on Sundays. 60 But rules became concerned with facilitating coexistence rather than 'good Christian conduct'. Still, they reinforced private property. 61 As the Association thrived, it put on annual shows stimulating tenants to plant ornamental species. 62

1830-1900 1914-45 1950-60 1990-2010

Most popular crops: Most popular crops: Most popular crops: Most popular crops:

- Bean
- Wheat
- Coins
- Tobacco
- Onion
- Barley
- Garlic
- Thyme
- Turnip
- Carrot
- Rosemary
- Bayleaf
- Red chalibar
- Bluebell
- Onion
- Barley
- Garlic
- Thyme
- Turnip
- Carrot
- Rosemary
- Bayleaf
- Red chalibar
- Bluebell
- Onion
- Barley
- Garlic
- Thyme
- Turnip
- Carrot
- Rosemary
- Bayleaf
- Red chalibar
- Bluebell
- Onion
- Barley
- Garlic
- Thyme
- Turnip
- Carrot
- Rosemary
- Bayleaf
- Red chalibar
- Bluebell
- Onion
- Barley
- Garlic
- Thyme
- Turnip
- Carrot
- Rosemary
- Bayleaf
- Red chalibar
- Bluebell
Although 'industriousness' still mattered, East Finchley epitomised the moment when the normalisation of urban allotments started to become less moralistic and more pragmatic. In particular, from 1920 onwards, legislation significantly increased the number of sites, their social inclusiveness, and the assurance of land tenure for tenants. One may understand this transition by tracing the development of Cumberland Basin Allotments, 3.2 kilometres northwest of Charing Cross. [Fig. AB] The formation of the site was somewhat connected to the private enclosure of a 'common', since it took place over the landfall of Cumberland Market Basin. [Figs. AC-AD] Built in 1830 as part of the Regent's Park development planned by John Nash in 1813, the Basin received the deliveries of hay, straw, coal, vegetables and meat for Cumberland Market. As this was the core of a 'service district' between the Park and Euston Station, the Crown Land Commissioners — which owned the land — built several warehouses, workshops and houses to house the merchants and artisans in the backbone of the Regent's Terrace housing. After WWI...
and further decline of the Market in the 1920s, the Commissioners decided to demolish and redevelop the district with small workshops and housing for war veterans and community workers. The renewal brought seven new buildings that were six stories in height (the Crown Estate Flats), to form a residential centre around the Basin, which had already become idle by the time the estate was complete in 1937. The flats were thriving less than a year later, when a group of neighbours founded the Crown Tenants Horticultural Society (CTHS). At first the CTHS was only concerned with window-box gardening "to practice the principles of horticulture and improve the aesthetic environment around the estate." This slogan echoed the Crown Flats' reputation for tidiness, which was in fact a product of the strict rules of 'good Christian' conduct imposed on the tenants. In 1938, the CTHS requested land for allotments but got no support. The perfect opportunity came about only after the London Blitz in 1940, when the army gradually cleared and filled the Basin with bombing debris. Only a year later the Crown decided to enclose the landfill site. [Fig. AF]

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While the terrain remained idle, with an obscure legal status, the Crown Estate supposedly used the allotment premise to acquire the freehold of the land. Indeed, as soon as the Commissioners got tenure over the former Basin, they stopped supporting the CTHS. The tenants spent another year struggling to organise and finance the site, especially because the landfill was far from fertile. As the contemporary minutes book reports, the main concerns were drainage, groundworks, and irrigation. Meanwhile, infrastructure seemed unattainable in the short term. The Managing Committee took only a couple of meetings to subdivide the 5.5-acre site into a regular grid of 54 plots, aligned in two long rows. [Fig. A.] In this respect, the only difficulty was for the members to agree upon how to distribute the parcels. Since most preferred to have their gardens as close as possible to their dwellings, the members decided to zone the site according to the position of the buildings around it and to make specific ballots to allocate the plots to each group of residents. Cumberland is therefore an extremely rare case of modern English allotments in which the holders were not only the ones who envisioned and organised the site ex nihilo but also where their plots and homes were spatially connected. Contrary to the conditions of Eding Dean and East Finchley, the limits of this site were constantly visible. And this visibility was not due to higher fences—which would only be installed much later, in the 1960s—but the combination of a smaller area being situated within a residential courtyard. This situation produced two powerful perspectives from the vantage point of the labouring tenants, who could thus see their houses from and through their garden plots and vice versa. [Fig. A] Despite the homely/utilitarian appearance of allotment gardening, at that point, this placement eventually gave the site a monumentality, which reminded the holek - and all other local residents—of the collective process of reclaiming the idle landfill for their shared use. This was a significant achievement, even though this condition was still subject to tenancy restrictions—hence, to private property—and the ‘good will’ of the Crown Estate. The Cumberland site was an exceptional example of collective enclosure that allowed its users to interact with each other, as well as to directly intervene in its spatial organisation. This is remarkable, considering that it happened just ten minutes away from Regent’s Park, a public space meant to shape urban subjects into polite consumers of the city.78

77. In the 1950s, the Managing Committee decided to make the site with a black iron fence two meters in height, to prevent the entry of livestock and pedestrians, David Mackay, interview by the author on his garden plot at Cumberland Basin Allotments, Digital audio recording, London, 19th September 2007.

78. That is not to say that such a ‘programme’ should give way for parks to reign because the prosperity allotment—specifically stope people—they were during World War II. But these types of leisure are problematic when local community and societal agencies are happy to accommodate and go with the public spaces and, thereby, influence private property values.

79. The Cumberland example moreover indicated the possibility of an urban void becoming a shared extension of single-family apartments, whose households would have otherwise had fewer material and social resources. The fact that such a space had the irrefutable domestic character of a vegetable garden—with plain open sight—would also transform the public experience of the entire area. To pedestrians coming from Regent’s Park, the site could thus redefine their understanding of gardens within that urban condition. In other words, the Cumberland Allotments showcased that public parks and garden squares are not the sole—nor the most inclusive or interactive—form of collective enclosure in London. If the plot holders had been able to disentangle their right to gardening from that of property, this site would have posed a fully-aliased alternative to the landownership crises that gradually developed in the following decades, and which presently divide London. As seen earlier in this chapter, the need for the social and economic advantages of small horticultural landholding had been especially evident during the world wars; hence the parliamentary incentive for the people to garden food everywhere, including idle land. Yet today, when the British government blames the European Union to justify its austerity policies, the use of parks and open spaces in general is nevertheless reduced to tourism, jogging and picnicking. On a philosophical yet no less practical level, the apparent ‘anti-domesticity’ of parks and garden squares contradicts the present condition of London’s knowledge/service economy. As this system has blurred the modern distinction between living and working—with houses and workspaces absorbing each other—it makes no sense to expect every urban enclosure to pretend that separation still exists. Allotments are more relevant than ever, in this sense, because they reveal instead that the divide between living and working may have never existed—not at least for workers, whose lives clearly become, very early on in the capitalist re-parcellation of London and its countryside about the endless reproduction of labour. Unlike garden squares, allotments have harnessed the territorial dimension of housework. Plot holders may thus collectively rethink gardening as a self-valorising praxis and transform their sites into an economically self-sufficient and socially emancipatory space. The question is hence to prevent this thriving place becoming its own worst enemy, as it will increase the value of the land, which will, in turn, threaten it with encroachment.
Allot in Common
A practice of London Commons

Most allotments within Greater London currently suffer from the threat of the same process of urban re-parcelisation which their 'prehistoric' helped to establish. While the type has developed from a measure for 'poor relief' towards a middle-class hobby, many sites have thrived into not only beautiful gardens but also lively spaces of social encounter. As such, Ealing Dean, East Finchley and Cumberland Basin have given some quality of life to their neighbourhood. From the present vantage point of real-estate markets, these places are 'green' and 'community' features which add value to the land. Since their landlords have recently considered selling parts of them to either private or public developments, associations have recently petitioned to get Parliament and local authorities to act in their favour. As these specific sites are objects of historical interest and preservation, the struggles ended with long-term leaseholds and statutory protection against encroachment. But this history of urbanisation has not been so kind with other, less famous, sites. Especially those outside the central boroughs now have to fight in order to survive the real-estate speculation of the last — or latest — frontiers of the city. Even though allotment gardening has ultimately become a fashionable and highly commodified activity, it still generally strengthens the friendship, union and activism of many plot holders, who can thus press the councils to act in their favour. Part of the problem, though, is the fact that the
protection of sites depends not only on legislation but also on political will, which increasingly gives rise to economic interest. The solution could be to articulate these gardens more closely with both the space and concept of dwelling. With the exception of Ebenezer Howard, the British have never addressed the allotment as a housing question. During the 1920s in Germany, for instance, Leberecht Migge conceived projects of allotments in which gardening was an integral—biological—process of self-sufficient dwelling.\[Fig. B–C\]

Similar to allotments, 'commons' are enclosures aimed at compensating for the loss of collective access to the open fields. Yet both are utterly losing ground to urbanisation. Contrary to the common misunderstanding, all common land within Greater London is private property.\[Fig. D\] Any place called 'common', 'heath' or 'green' always belongs to someone, be that an authority, corporation, community or an individual. The owner enjoys the same status as any landowner, except that the first demarcation of the property was followed by a second legal process which subjected the land to certain Rights of Common.\[Fig. E\] The individuals who jointly hold and exercise these rights are called 'commoners'. As a landholding, commons vary widely in size, shape, character, management and terms of entitlement, since this may have been either petitioned by councils, reached by private agreement or forged by groups of citizens. In any case, current legislation advises councils to register and subscribe the sites under the Commons Act of 2006, which classifies commonable land as that which is uncultivated and has natural or historical features, where members of the public may exercise certain individual rights, depending on so-called "local customs and traditions."\[Fig. F\] Although some commons—especially within rural areas—still serve these purposes, most have been converted or newly created under the general prerogative of the recently reformed Freedom to Roam.\[Fig. G\] This means the right to trespass, walk, cycle or move through open land for leisure or sheer enjoyment of wild areas, such as mountains, grass and woodlands, marshes, gravel pits, and so forth. Until the mid-1900s, such rights usually ranged from grazing specified livestock, cutting wood (except timber), digging turf for fuel, taking minerals out of the soil, and fishing on ponds and streams—all for non-profitable produce only. The so-called 'commons' around London originally refer to the enclosure of the open fields and wasteland within former feudal


Fig. B. Allotment gardens within the housing project Hindenbruch–Rienhardt, Frankfurt (1929). L. Migge in collaboration with Ernst May (1920).

Fig. C. The Growing Settlement phasel diagram of a 'self-sufficing' settlement. L. Migge (c. 1930).

4. According to the Commons Act 2006, there are around 570,000 hectares of common land in England and Wales, of which 550,000 hectares are registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965. This is because it's a small portion since commons were once much more extensive, and in medieval times covered most of the least productive land. Meanwhile within the administrative limits of Greater London, there are currently 241 registered sites of commonable land, amounting to a total of 1,174 hectares.

Fig. D. Distribution of the 241 sites of commonable land, or the so-called "commons" within Greater London until 2016.
Ealing Common thus fairly represents most commons within Greater London. The biggest shrinkage of this particular site occurred during the 1930s, when the area known today as Ealing Borough was a conurbation of Victorian towns - as were many other middle-class suburbs - sprawling across what was still considered "countryside". For over 60 years up to that decade, the commons held ten hectares for mixed-culture farming on the south-east of the site, the Ealing Common Farm. Regardless of the demand for and full entitlement to the activity, the local Council - who owned the manorial rights over the land - decided to lease that parcel to the Rothschild private development of single-family houses, built along the construction of Gunnersbury Avenue. [Fig. E] Following the enlargement of West Acton Underground Station and subsequent densification nearby, the rights of the entire common generally shifted from household produce to leisure. That happened even though small household and collective mixed-culture farming fitted the definition of "local traditions" under the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866. This was when Ealing Council purchased the manorial rights over the land and registered it under such legislation. That year, however, was also the precise time when Ealing Common lost most of its area. That was not only due to encroachment and urbanisation but also urban design. The architect Charles Jones, who worked for Ealing Council as a surveyor and planner from 1865 to 1913, decided to cut three diagonal avenues across the common; these would be shaped as straight "parkways," continuously flanked by horse chestnut trees in a similar fashion to the ubiquitous urban embellishment of London at...
Although the new scheme did not touch most of the inner area of the common, it interrupted the specific ways through which the commoners collectively experienced, negotiated and had long struggled to keep their rights to the land. For, in fact, since its earliest stages, Jones' planning had already 'de-communed' 15 hectares along the verges of Uxbridge Road and Hangar Lane to reconfigure them as public pavements and greened boulevards. [Fig. C] Up to 1866, the old track of this crossroad had served grazing and horseback passage through the Manor of Pitsbanger. [Fig. H]

The total area of Ealing Common today, of 15.67 hectares, is less than half what was first enclosed in 1850. And it no longer differs in character from most urban parks around the city. The site has even served to raise the land value of the surroundings since it is still wide and green enough to be marketed as "a landscape" and a "free space" for leisure. The crucial difference, nonetheless, is that while parks typically enjoy the legal status and protection of "public spaces," commons are overseen only by statute. That is why they are more vulnerable to encroachments and have increasingly become contested grounds. In other words, commoners have to constantly reclaim and exercise their rights over the land, otherwise the landlord may either revoke or pressure them to sell such entitlements. The challenge in saving the commons around London is therefore not to design spaces that cater to the current politics for their conservation but to, instead, rethink these enclosures as collective practices. Within this framework, the thesis proposes an alternative process of allotment which at once responds both to the deficit of vacant plots and the ongoing shrinkage of commonsable land within Greater London.

The experiment could take place in the present situation of Ealing Common, as it has been the outcome of a paradigmatic history of private enclosure, encroachment, urbanisation and, highly likely, extinction in the next few decades. The idea is to allot the entire area to the people who currently queue on waiting lists for garden plots, either from Ealing Council or the local authorities of other metropolitan boroughs. Although this strategy departs from the existing regulations on allotments, it puts forward an entirely different procedure based on a couple of twists: firstly, the statutory protection of the Common should rather instantly extend to the new site and future — and possibly multiple — associations of plot holders from

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92. Since most Londoners move from one rented house to another so many times in their lifetimes, it no longer makes sense to group plot holders according to their addresses.

93. In 1954, a private housing development on the lower right-hand side encroaches the area where commoners used to share for mixed-culture farming.
the very moment of foundation. Secondly, the configuration of the site does not start from the sheer parcelisation of the ground but the even distribution of twelve parallel lines of continuous sheds. [Fig. H] Similarly to the present typical boolched, these should be self-built by the plot holders, perhaps, with the same construction systems available and well-known modules. Their key difference, though, is to follow an architectural principle — or logic — that always group and interconnect individual sheds into linear pavilions. These should have no internal partitions. [Fig. G] Circulated two metres above the ground and distanced 30 metres away from each other, [Fig. H] At large, the plan of stripes divides and, at the same time, redefines the site — and virtually ‘ends’ — area of the Common into a system of several allotment sites. The continuous sheds could perhaps remain the only elements to formalise the limits of the Common and, still, leave its perimeter open. While this scheme makes such a place visible and accessible by non-members, it also produces interior perspectives that orient and let plot holders understand the process of enclosure which originated the site. In doing so, the users can gradually recognise and organise themselves into small associations. Each group will collectively garden and take care of two linear sheds and the void in between. [Fig. J] Initially, this space could mimic the typical enfilade of ten-acre parcels, which the members would have to rent — at a peppercorn — from Ealing Council. In the long term, however, each association could gradually replace the original configuration with plots of various sizes, shapes, species and purposes. These ad hoc transformations would certainly alter the layout of pathways and crops, so that members could constantly negotiate the sharing of the land. Should conflicts arise, the associations could use the linear sheds as places of ‘assembly’ and ‘group therapy.’ The open plans of these pavilions could moreover facilitate the sharing of tools, seeds, manure, books, knowledge, cooking and effects. In doing so, each association would thrive based on increased cooperation. A barter economy could emerge in which small groups of members could exchange, for instance, an afternoon of manuring for a night of childcare. The entire Common could thereby eventually return to the ancient meaning of its name, that is, to become again a place of a shared and self-sufficient system of social relationships.

Fig. H: Proposal of an allotment site on Ealing Common.
Fig. 1. Initial configuration of the grid between two continuous sheds.

Fig. 1. Initial state of the single plots (with striped caps and straight pathways) bounded by continuous sheds, becoming typically larger, these sheds may house local assemblies for small innovations or plot holders. The new structures could provide the neighborhood with shared storage space for tools, seedlings, materials, and books; open kitchens, log tables, toilets, and small individual rooms.
(Dis)closure
The garden: a project within yet outside the city

The garden, as we have seen, is a paradigmatic form of enclosure through which it is possible to understand key passages in the development of settlements, cities, and urbanisation. It has been historically and spatially connected to the house – although existing somewhat between the household and the city – and has, at times, lent itself to controversial processes of land appropriation and the domestication of nature and society. The hypostyle hall of the Cistercian cloister (twelfth century) materialised an idea of communal settlement. It was an introspectively enclosed space that delimited inside from outside, which enabled the monks to recognise and, thereby, practice the rules of living together as an ascetic ‘family’ or ‘household’. In giving a sense of unity, stability and direction, the cloistered garden was not only an exemplum of a highly ritualised form-of-life but, also, and an architectural model of autonomous inhabitation within harsh and homogeneous biotopes, such as deserts and forests. The possibility of the garden as an urban model would later enable the total reinvention of the rustic Roman villa into monumental gardens (sixteenth century). These suburban ‘gardened estates’ so to speak, were analogical reconstructions of the city as an enclosure in progressive expansion. In becoming a theatre of new
social rituals of hospitality and gnm, these places reinterpreted the urban landscape to legitimise the appropriation, colonisation and further 'gentrification' of the Roman countryside. Far from economic phenomena, these processes were phases in broader political projects of the Roman Church, seeking to increase its power through the expansion and reformation of the urban territory around Rome and the Vatican. Forasmuch as the archetype has never ceased to be one of a domestic space, from that moment forward, it would gradually lose its intimate connection with the place of the household and become as expansive as parks. Such a transition led the way for the garden to become a tool of modern urbanisation, as it was the case of the English allotments (nineteenth century) during the 'heyday' of parliamentary enclosure. The model had nonetheless emerged a century before as a mostly philanthropic experiment for promoting 'poor relief.' Later, with the Victorian incentive to paternalistic politics, the London elite of landowners, for instance, would press the British Parliament to use such a premise as a means to make the private enclosure of open fields morally acceptable. Spatially, the realisation of garden plots into a type of small landholding enabled several Acts of Enclosure to 'finish off' the privatisation of commonable land. Meanwhile, in practice, the potentially endless grid of allotment sites has eventually naturalised the urban re-parcelisation of the countryside.

The three chapters have thus traced a historical 'vector' of the enclosed garden as an instrument for different projects of urban territory. Throughout this trajectory, we have observed a progressive enlargement and formal disruption of the encapsulated sense of limits of such a form. These tendencies have led to a general loss of legibility of the garden, not only as a singular entity but also, as an entire architecture of domestic space. Thus, a place in the very sense of a microcosm, where dwelling and living is constantly and collectively reconstructed — possibly — apart from everything else which happens outside. (Be that a congested urban condition or a forested area, a desert, and so forth.) Moreover, that form of 'dissolution' has contributed to the present misconception of gardening as a commodified hobby of predefined activity and scientific knowledge. That is not to say that, for instance, spaces for the public enjoyment of botanic species 'are not gardens'. To be sure, there are no such things as 'bad' or 'good' gardens: only those which are legible as ideological enclosures and those which are not. And both equally matter to architecture theory. The question of the present thesis has never been about judgement or creating a universal definition of a subject that cannot — and should not — be reduced to a single accepted form. On the contrary, this research reconsiders the garden as a way to rethink architecture as both a practice and a project in — or of — itself. One of the most interesting discoveries of the three chapters is the fact that gardening is essentially a mode of building. As such, the activity has always had the potential to completely transform the processes of design and construction which crystallise the garden as a form of appropriation.

In this sense, perhaps one of the most influential aspects of the historical transformation of the archetype is the gradual re-signification of gardening as a family-related social ritual towards a normalised practice. For each of the three paradigms, there has been a specific discourse on gardening as a productive — thus 'dignified' — form of enjoying land, experiencing and controlling nature. And, the more such an enclosure has served as a spatial procedure for powerful institutions to appropriate land and labour, the more it became urgent for the proprietors to re-conceptualise the garden as a theatrical landscape to establish a morally acceptable narrative of landownership. It can be argued, therefore, that the history of the enclosed garden is a history of the Western tradition of private property and social division of labour, starting from the domestic sphere. However, unlike other architectures directly involved in these processes — such as the house, farm and the city itself — which have arguably become sheer spaces of production, the garden has always kept a certain degree of 'uselessness' and experimentation. Thanks to gardening, such a space has retained the ambiguity of the earliest or ancient forms of dwelling, where worship, leisure, idleness and pragmatic concerns fluidly occurred within the same space. It is precisely because of such ambiguity that the garden is one of few archetypes of domestic
enclave that may still offer the spatial means to a way 'out' of the status quo which it has helped to establish. This view of the garden is not to be found in the extensive histories written hitherto on the subject. The research thus presents a fresh understanding, in which the garden allows for the possibility of continuous interventions that 're-signify' spatial coexistence.

Perhaps the major contribution of this thesis is to develop a research methodology that is as analytical as it is propositional. It reconsiders the history of the garden through relevant events that may yield, at once, historical analyses as well as projections of what the relationship between the garden and the city can potentially become. Under the guise of a 'PhD by design' this research understands history as an on-going project. Each analysis of a paradigmatic garden works towards clearly defining the formal relationships and associations between the example and its context. This is then followed by specific design strategies where learned architectural form is incorporated into other proportionally similar contexts in contemporary cities: design thinking through analogy. For Tehran, Iran, within the state-sponsored blocks of private housing, it is proposed to create a new public space to enable the collective construction of common space. Precisely the legible enclosure of the space allows for the shared practice of protocols and its juridical setting apart from the housing complex. In Rome, Italy, along the precarious perimeter between illegal acts and the surrounding countryside, the concept of the garden villa is taken to enable the collective enjoyment of idle land. The proposal is to be implemented in phases with the participation of residents and local organizations. Urban policies are created that do not need the state or master planning to operate. Architectural form here may eventually reclaim idle land. In London, UK, new forms of allotments are proposed to enable the collective production of a system of social relations that may enjoy the legal protection of the public statute of commonable land. Given time and the will to participate, gardening may indeed promote self-valuation and emancipation.

Despite the different contexts of each design proposal, the notion of the archetype has proven an alternative to that type.

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and typology, through which the concept of dwelling is seldom opened to intervention. If rethought as an archetype, the garden can become a spatial device to enable the collective construction and practice of rules rather than the adoption of pre-established norms. The latter is usually imposed by the state on the domestic sphere through law that links citizenship to private property. The garden as an archetype allows for a different status from that of public or private enclosure, as strategic models that do not depend on the state for their existence. Additionally, since the project sites share similar conditions in which property is either defined as public or private, anything that is recognized as common falls into a vague and, thus, precarious category of a 'third way'. It is argued here that the common — in the sense of a totally shared network system of social relationships — actually runs completely outside the definitions of public and private. As Antonio Negri has defined it, the common is not a third but a 'second way'. The thesis does not aim at working within a utopian condition of the total abolishment of property. Instead it considers the existing or latent associations of people whose practices and use of architectural space falls outside dominant modes of production preconditioned by private property. This is a welcome contribution to current architectural theory, as it considers architecture beyond such conditions and opens up the opportunity to rethink the profession's modes of operation.

It is important to note that gardening has been historically connected — if not equated — with horticulture, thus conceptually and practically opposed to agriculture. The latter is based on private property and capitalistic modes of production which alienate everyone — even those who hold property — from the land and from the possibility of cultivating their own food. The existence of the city is in fact utterly dependent on intensive farming which happens in the countryside. Because people cannot hunt, gather or forage their own food, they have to purchase it and thus live by wage labour. Hence the many historical processes of urban appropriation and territorialization of nearly all arable land around most Western cities. Recent scholarship has argued that agricultural production — specifically of grain — enabled early states to establish, organize and control their territories. As grain
Gardening may facilitate a willing group of people to organise themselves and share space and resources. The present thesis has attempted to debate this question, which hopefully may remain open: how to rethink the garden archetype and enable gardening as a practice, through which we can redefine what it means to work and live together. The garden, in this sense, may also serve architects hoping to challenge the very idea of design as a predefined imposition. It may, therefore, open up a space for communication and self-valorisation against the increasing commodification of public space and conditions of “not feeling at home.” Architects should reconsider the garden as a way to envision new rituals and modes of organising collective life. In doing so, this is a space that blurs conventional distinctions between designing and building. So, this is an architecture that functions alongside the conception of protocols and policies which, if collectively constructed by the users of the garden, may construct shared spaces with yet outside the preconditions of public and private. That is how the garden becomes a political form: it not only materialises an idea in space and practice but, most importantly, it leaves room for experimentation, imagination and awareness. At its best, gardening becomes both the project and construction of an alternative form of life outside the city.

6. Paolo Virno knowingly coined this expression after Martin Heidegger. “Today, all forms of life have the experience of not feeling at home, which, according to Heidegger, would be the sign of capitalism. Thus, there is nothing more shared and more common, and in a certain sense more public, than the feeling of not feeling at home.” No man is isolated but the person who feels the heavy pressure of the indeterminate world. In other words, that feeling in which fear and anxiety converge is indissolubly the concern of many. One could say, perhaps, that “not feeling at home” is in fact a distinctive trait of the concept of the public, while the separation between the “inside” and the “outside”, (...) Paolo Virno, The Gamma of Multitude. (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004): p. 94

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Fig. 5. A. Drawing by the author.

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Fig. 12. Drawing by the author.
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- Rio Olympics Games 2012 / Architecture / Competition

- Cinema Theatre / Architecture / Construction stage
- Music Hall / Architecture / Feasibility & concept stage

- University Campus / Planning and urban design / Concept stage
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