The Garden as Political Form: From Archetype to Project

Thesis

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THE GARDEN AS POLITICAL FORM

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The Garden as Political Form
from archetype to Project

PhD by Design
Architectural Association School of Architecture
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Table of Contents

7 Acknowledgements
9 Summary
13 Introduction
   The garden: An archetype of ideological enclosure
2. ARCHETYPAL
37 Hortus Conclusus as an idea of settlement
   Cistercian cloister and Persian chahar bagh
77 Paradise Now
   A protocol within Tehran plot grids
2. MONUMENTAL
97 Gardened estates as analogical reconstructions of the city:
   suburban villas in Rome
187 Other as Dignum
   A policy for Roman borgate
3. PASTORAL
213 Garden plots as final naturalization of Enclosure:
   allotments in London
265 Allotia Commons
   A practice of London commons
277 (Dis)closure
   The garden: A project within yet outside the city
285 Image Sources
291 Bibliography
307 Biographical Note
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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 recognised 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

More forms of architecture have ever been so widely admired 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 the 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 recognized and practiced their own idea of living together.
The Dutch designer Piet Oudolf has captured that innocent/ecstatic image of the garden in recent projects, such as his Hortus Cornialis for the 2013 Serpentine Pavilion, in 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 public space’ which allegedly allows weather, time and so-called ‘resilient communities’—perennial plants, insects and humans—to spontaneously and continually occupy the city. [Fig. C] It is interesting to note here how two of the most politically charged terms of the present decade—‘resilient’ 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 manifestos, since 1980, have described the Earth as a “planetary garden” to be cultivated through the methods of the “jardin mouvement.” 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-gardened’ L’Ile Dernière 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 task on the High Line is also problematic in its own way, in celebrating austerity at exactly the time that the United Kingdom had elected an extreme Conservative government. [Fig. E] 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 excluding 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 obliteration 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 or design but, first and foremost, as urban relics 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 talk 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 tabula rasa 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. F] 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 superquadra—measuring 300 by 300 metres each. As Costa had intended the superquadra to become...
"socially aggregating" — or "ordo gradus" — he interconnected them with a network of roads and pedestrian pathways. Each block was devised to function as a communal neighbourhood, in the form of a "closed 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 inter-pins — provided the everyday with a civic quality. Costa and Burle Marx saw "green space" here not as "leftover 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. 3] These gardens, thereby, were spaces of mediation between the 'private' — legally demarcated by the apartments stacked above their plots — 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 limits," 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. 159

Part of the problematic found in the gardens of Onofre and Clément, which stand in conceptual opposition to those of Burle Marx and Costa, is the fact they become almost indistinguishable from parks, 'forests,' and 'forests'. Although all these terms do refer to "productive enclosures," they are far from interchangeable. This is not only a matter of size, shape or function but, primarily, one of inherently distinct relationships with the city, the territory160 and its landscape.161 The 'garden' differs from these insofar as it is a domestic space, one conceptually related to household162 and ownership. Hence the general definition of the term: "a space of a garden adjoining a house, used for growing flowers, fruits, or vegetables." While its prominent 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.163 Euphemology offers clues as to see the term emerge from Middle English from garden, Old Northern French.

157. Licinis Costa, Registrado como Arquiteto. (Rio de Janeiro, 1933), pp. 320-331
160. Neoholism is a term coined by Zarate, "architecture and the environment," for the study of the "productive enclosures" within the built and natural environment. Hence throughout history, architects have been involved in the politics, power struggle, and production of landscapes, institutions, and social regulations, such as the state, only in order to "produce" and "design" landscapes. (Clément, "Arquitectura Brasileira," p. 115.)
161. Floresta and "forests" are productive enclosures that can be understood through the lens of the "productive enclosures," which suggests a more thorough understanding of the concept of "productive enclosures." In this sense, they cannot be distinguished from the concept of "productive enclosures." (Clément, "Arquitectura Brasileira," p. 115.)
162. "Garden" has been a term widely used from the Proto-Indo-European root gre- meaning either "to grasp, enclose" or "to want." This semantic fluidity dates further back to 10,000 BCE, when early Neolithic people, such as the Natufians, started to settle around the fertile crescent, making walled enclosures. Before cities, the act of enclosing space helped settlements to overcome the homogeneity of the natural condition, ensuring the orientation and stability necessary for sociocultural life. Those enclosures, moreover, offered a "measure" against the immeasurability of wilderness. They presupposed a rationale of how to collectively appropriate, distribute, and cultivate land within the "productive" form of a site, through which settlers could both organize and order themselves socially. More than simply a response to pragmatic concerns, the physical fact of every enclosure resulted from processes of decision-making and agreement.
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 anything 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 one another, being used for rituals 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 affirmative miniature version of the larger whole; and 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 eschatological traces of afterlives to come.

As the garden emerged as a walled enclosure amongst others, its form produced spatial seduction by means of refuge. That is, it has been a paradoxically introverted 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, its 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, decay, and renewal. Hence the garden is a place that is free 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 "nursery 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 gardens to legitimise his authority. The gardens grew within his palace in the capital city Pasargadae—which the king..."
Yet, prior to these appropriations, the idea of terrestrial paradise as a garden was rooted in the original meaning of the word *peira-degos*, as an enclosed space for "sustenance 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 royalties. By that time, around 400 BC, the Greek term for garden was *thriki*. 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 "locus of economy, management of biological life." Hence, in ancient Greece, only palaces and temples would have *paradises* 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 *dona*, 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 place 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. [Fig. J] 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 an aged olive tree, unearthed overgrown roots, decorations and, especially, fountains and irrigation. So, this

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Fig. J: House of Trajan (Pompeii, 96–113 AD).
The historian was a microcosm place that embodied 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. This was mostly reproduced by slave labour. 

Effectively, 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 celebrate *stamen* or "leisure". This ritual became crucial in creating an apparent suspension of business within that ritualising circuit of affairs between master and client. 

To reinforce that effect, the space was periodically opened to strangers who, in turn, had to abide by the *lex hortorum* or 'garden law', typically inscribed at the entrance of the space. Jurisprudentially, this 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 domus, the association of garden with the image of a "terrestrial paradise" was key to teasing out guests and newcomers of the ruling powers of the domus.

The *hortus* would further become, during the later part of the Roman Empire, indispensable to a new type of dwelling: the villa, as a part of the colonisation, gentrification, and systematic expansion of the limits of the Roman Agro region towards a larger territory. This 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 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 series of peristyles and hypocausts, composed of tall trees, grand pools, groves, and sculptures. 

Fig. L: A leisure garden within the structure of villa of the Hadrians. (Travis, and Current AD.)

Having the recommendation of Virgilianites that honours of influential figures "should have splendid spaces", in *Aeneid*, Book VI. Large or powerful families and gardens have more than two rooms, one of which was within the peristyle. The size of these ceilings grew proportionately with the household, whose wealth was proportionally greater during the *Late Republic* of Romanesque of the high intercultural contact. Sand Doss, *The Roman House* (Brooklyn, Joins Hampton University, 1992).

Ornament often assimilate of vegetation "spruce" or "wood" should be placed in a social defining concept, especially by present-seen conceptual. 

... of the city during the Republic. This was because the villa depicted in the same name as "Roma" or "Rome", in this city, and the *province* of the peristyle. The most influential take on plants came from the *Terpsichore* and *Artemis* or "garden". The possibility of having plants either through self-subsistance gardening and often related activities directed from constructivist imperialism. In other words, the possibility of not working while "acting worthy.


... the most layout and transformation of the *Tivoli* garden. The image of the *pedestal* garden did not intrude on the garden in such as a concept of a place created by its owners.


But, p. 5.

... that is the case in *Landscape* and *Architectural Design* of the Greek, *Jones*. (New York: New York, 1970).


61. But, p. 5.


The thesis argues that the garden is an archetype of ideological endowments whose political form allows a group of people to recognise and practice their own idea of living together. The term **archetype** here, understood as an example — in the sense of a paradigm. At the same time that this proposition acknowledges that the garden has not universally accepted form, it opens up the possibility of understanding the garden as a paradigmatic urban form. As such, the garden is a space historically constructed, whose formal relationships epitomise a problematic context context which it once helps to generate but also to make intelligible. One can thereby understand certain passages of history — such as the domestication of a given natural environment or the development of a society through its architectural form. Moreover, as a category, archetypes 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 encoded as evidenced by the fact
it has been subjected to continuously different iterations. Its form is
preconditioned and motivated by various degrees of decision-making
on how to enclose, organize, 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 therefore as an index of the
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 institutionalized histories or scanty evidence
on the subject matter. Most of these have been concerned only with
state-of-the-art 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 ideologues 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 specialized 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 precondition the
antagonist relations by making them tangible. By the same token,
all mammal enclosures may inevitably be political. The garden, it
is argued, stands out for its sheer ideological function, through which
ecological 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
is here defined as an archetype of political form and space.
as "archetypal" as it is arguably the most exemplary take on the original family-ruled enclosure from which emerged the hortus 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 hortus into an outsoufacing public monument within suburban villas. its design was highly theatrical to formalise, ritualise and, as a result, institutionalise the exploitation of rural land. the more recent English allotment is the image of "pastoral" politics. it addresses the normalisation of urban re-purification of land into garden plots which have formally dissolved the archetype and conceptually reduced it to a simple tool for urbanisation. English allotments served 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 is, 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 a tool of resilience and solidarity. In their own transformations of the kyrtos, these planted enclosures either reframed 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" that are recommended to architects for visiting and inspiration. The consensus priority of today seems to be the calming, relaxing, and almost liberating visual experiences of greenery together with a profusion of vegetables artificially brought together into tamed exteriors. Irrespective of beneficial psychological effects, what else is left of those once powerful garden forms? Could they be still re-appropriated by alternative project 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 those 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 produce new collective gardens that may challenge 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 — obliterate 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 anthropological trait of garden architecture which is to be self-evident domestic enclosures. The significant fact 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 to 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, microcosmic, 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 steppingstone,9 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 microcosm concept of the garden into the dwelling — in the form of the hortus — has allowed Romans to refine ancient notions of ownership into property law.10 Since the hortus have after 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 evaluating 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 Roman idea of parthenos garden has been a model for 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 central 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 garden. Cistercian monasteries had been declared in the 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 researchers and supervisors did not want to turn away. The question was about how to frame such a poetic type and period in architecture history. The answer came with the rediscovery of Villa dei Papiri, designed by Domenico Fontana in 1589, as the prototype of the modern urban park and star-shaped—thus infinite—planning of urban territory. The second chapter should undoubtedly stop 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 therefore redundant within the overall argument. It was at this stage that the consideration following generation, the so-called 'picturesque' landscape, appeared to concretely lead the thesis into a full circle, as it could explain the present age of limitless nature-like park-gardens. The researcher has considered eighteenth-century gardens, such as those by Capability

Brown, to eventually opting for their counterparts. Unlike picturesque farmsstead, allotment sites would single-handedly return to the garden as a microcosmic domestic enclosure while enabling the expansive re-parcellation of the urban territory from the vantage of labouring

This thesis is therefore far from aiming to be a garden encyclopedia 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 counterproject to institutional history. The methodology of working with 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, parlaments or public squares, for instance, are any less worthy of such a 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 spaces where politics happens or is represented—that would be too far-fetched for current trends in garden theory, already burdened with defining an object more less permanent than most. Secondly, in that 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 ink—are combined with an economy of hatches to allow both author and reader to rediscover the chosen examples of gardens from the sole
vantage point of architectural form. The aim of this somewhat ‘dry’ way of drawing 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 — inconvertible — drawings by Giovanni Battista Falda on suburban Renaissance villas,20 these 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 editor’s perspective, the use of digital software in clear graphic language has made both editing and printing more precise, more controllable and faster. The problematic risk of drawing in this manner is to become too impersonal. Although, after reading the present thesis, one may find this impersonalization liberating — in the sense of not tightening the work to its authorship — and didactic, as draws the reader’s attention to the other 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, my attempt to rethink the archetype 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.21

Such methodology finds its way across the chapters. One may argue that the cloistered forms of the twelfth-century Cistercian monastery was, for instance, a ‘re-drawing’ of the peristyle garden from the Roman deum. The first chapter reveals how this analogy enabled monks to recognize the kots in 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 explores how the kots became enlarged and divided into several planted ‘interiors’ by the suburban rustic villas of sixteenth-century Rome. Highly monumentalised as theatrical 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 mcs, domestic orchard into a botanic museum and, eventually, an urban park-farm. Longer walks and heavily staged 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 divorced 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 18th century 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 once provided access to arable land but also served to pacify neutralize the fraud 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 kots — to give a recognizable form to new concepts of household and property, with or without the city. While each takes the garden “from archetype to project” in

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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-rulled 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 impetus of a modern patriarchy to legitimise itself by naturalising the arbitrariness of the privatised landscape. Such conditions make these gardens at times more legible and enclosed, and at other times rather pragmatically planted. Here we see how the garden archetype may lend itself to a myriad 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 under pressure from real-estate markets. The Cistercian case, for instance, could apply to contemporary conditions of living similar to the monastic, concealed 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. This space would then be accessible from each flat through the cloister and would be designed to fit four patches of soil managed and shared by the residents. 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 isogeta (pejorative term for ‘little town’), these districts are densely urbanized 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 strolia through canopied sidewalks, encounters on terraced belvederes, or pauses 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 areas that used to be wastelands enclosed for the communal grazing 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 them 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 – and can still – potentially become. The hypothesis presupposes 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 sprawling proposed by Gilles Clément, which remain ideological enclosures within the physical limits which would make them tangible as such. Our interest in 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 grêve "(kitchen) garden; orchard; palace grounds."

This branched off either from Frankish grôf or from Proto-Germanic garaz, and is cognate with the Gothic grafs, "house," and Old English gehard. All of these indicate "enclosure, fenced enclosure, garden, court, residence." Also from geard is derived yard, as an "enclosed patch of ground around a house." Meanwhile endurae, 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 being in the world through successive acts of formal differentiation and spatial delimitation. Men sought, in the homogeneity of
natural space, unique objects and events to explain their existence in relation to a transcendental power – *deus et inimik* – *the great Other.*

Hence the sky, the sea and so forth, were only perceived as in their role as “a sign” of that power manifested in living creatures, or in fixed things. Usually these could be an animal, a tree, a stone, a mountain, and so on. Before these “significant objects” could even be designated in language, they were differentiated in form and in space; a tree would acquire meaning once a community distinguished it from all other trees as a vertical axis of connection with the sky, and so would a lake become an accepted reality once it was regarded in relation to a valley. The lake would be “therefore” interpreted as “the centre of everything,” making the valley recognizable as a place.

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 revive and to protect them. The space circumscribed would also become *sacred* while the field left out would become *profane.* Essentially, that was the set of making an enclosure: to create an absolute reality from the given in many vast 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 legitimate 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 empathize with this viewpoint today, but it was crucial for early agricultural communities in forming their settlements. By enclosing land, thus – by separating their life from everything else outside which was not sacred – *those* groups could develop a prototypical notion of ownership, based on what would later become the Roman concept of *res* 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 –

...
the world. As these enclosures were girded from a central cross, they replicated that foundation logic of settlement into individuated forms of sacred realities. A similar dialectics and spatial generation also applied to the early Iranian walled garden, which was a sacred enclosure amongst all others, however conceptually unique.

Originally in Iran this type of planted space was not explored as a significant source of agriculture. In fact, garden horticulture was planned intensively and, therefore, were asynchronous with the sacred cycles of millenary agricultural space. Thus, it was never winter within the garden walls. Although sometimes dwelled in or assimilated by a household, these were not housing as such. Often used to stage Zoroastrian rites, the garden was neither a mosque nor a Tower of Silence. That garden had instead the purpose of arranging every object known as 'sacred' within the finite totality of a single place. In other words, the walled garden exemplified the perfected form of the world constructed as an ordered cosmos. That alone does not yet complete our argument. Neither does it apply to every garden that ever existed around the world, though in the Iranian example, we may discover how the evocative symbolism of the sacred spatially defined an archetypal type of garden enclosure – the hajv. Moreover, we will need this as a conceptual base to understand the architectural language of the Western medieval hortus gallicus: most biblical symbolism of the Garden of Eden branches off from Persian cosmology – that is, the Zoroastrian idea of the Paradisi montis quadrata walled garden. It is not our task to argue for such far-reaching archaeology. Instead we may use it to discover to what extent the architectural language of the hajv was influenced by the Iranian walled garden.

Even up to our day, the hajv and the chahar-hajv are the most ubiquitous forms of garden in the Iranian Plateau. The physical evidence dating these arrangements back to the Neolithic period is scanty. But, for our purpose, let us describe these garden variations just before dawn of the Persian Empire. Often found in the desert as freestanding structures, the hajv and the chahar-hajv are totally walled private gardens. If the former was of a rectangular shape, usually used for burial functions. The latter was quadrangular, mostly used as a sanctuary within palatial assets. The term hajv is derived from the Indo-European root haj-, which means 'to share out', 'to enjoy'. It comes from the Old Persian and Avesta as hajv, which means 'distribution of good fortune'. In Modern Persian, the term appears in two forms: hajv (short 'a' sound); 'God', and hajv (long 'a' sound); 'garden'. If the hajv was the formal progenitor of the chahar-hajv, which literally connotes 'four-gardens'. Remarkably, these etymologies denote the event as either the owner or a metaphysical entity that creates and distributes wealth into one or four garden plots. Hence the most defining trait of the chahar-hajv – which is the cruciform subdivision of its interior – has been consistently recognized as a sign of both property and coexistence. [Fig. C] as later depicted in a miniature by a Mughal artist. In other words, the cruciform stream is an index of the process of allocating a centre, followed by the enclosure of land and subsequent subdivision and distribution of water, cultivation and reproduction. Although, prior to that, the double sense of hajv – as both material and spiritual – only confirms the existential dualism so present in Iran, from Zoroastrianism to Islam and onwards. The hajv variations give spatial legibility to the ideal duality between terrestrial and celestial cosmos. [Fig. D]
Due to the harshness of the Iranian Plateau, the bāgh 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 trees set out of four orthogonal walls, making the garden not only the densest plantation amongst farming, but also the only legible form in the desert. The bāgh and chahār-bāgh were also more fragrant 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 bāgh types had wide openings, out of which larger places could be supposed or collectively imagined.

Hence, in our terms, the bāgh gardens established an exceptional living condition in the homogeneity of harsh biotopes. Essentially, they made visually tangible what and who was 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 inhabitable, with walled ceilings and paved passages. These rarely led to a continuous walk 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 amidst that connected...
the garden with both the underground of the earth and the highest point of the sky. It was symbolically 'the nave' of the world, the only centre where the foundation of a terrestrial agora 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 quattuor [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 plateau. Due to their conditional relation with topography, the course of the quattuor coincided with the orientation of the garden. [Fig. 2] 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, girded from the central fountain. This other quattuor replicated that 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 imagio 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 symbolises the universe as four horizons – which implies the analogous distribution of a cosmic system.

Fig. 1. Section of a quattuor. Iranian gardens are usually irrigated by these underground channels that bring fresh water down from the snow-capped mountains at the northern region of the Plateau, in between the garden wall and the farming, there is a system of holes. This serves to allow the water to enter several shafts, linked to the underground channel, thus pushing the cold water forward. (Isanlo, Khatib-Halali, Iranian water management and development, Oxycon University Press, 2000).

Fig. 2. Plan and section of the Royal Palace Qasr-e Qaleh irrigated by the underground channel known as quattuor. The building rise on the mountain six kilometers south outside the walls of Tabus. Faris Ali Shah had built the garden in the eighteenth century. The construction was an explicit reference to the Persian tradition of the chahar-bagh but much more monumental, so it would not only serve for the city to expand.
Omnipresent throughout the court composition, this symmetry would have two-fold symbolism: firstly, the divine ordering of the cosmos; secondly, the spatial organisation 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 cross. In turn, the flowers were typically arranged into evenly modulated orthogonal patterns. Mostly roses and blueberries, these flowers were also used in the Afghani Ritual of Blessing. Therefore, they had to be grown no longer than a human hand. The colours were mostly red, yellow and white to promote spiritual and material purifications. Jasmine was a symbol of the Lord Ahura Mazda, the fjords of the poets (angels) Bahman, royal basil of the Shakiwans, and so forth.

If the garden was on a slope, a plinth would gently sculpted from the fountain level towards the lower plateaus. The water spring would further stream down through the cross towards each of the cardinal ending 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 route of passage from the lower earth towards the higher centre close to the sky. That was, in fact, the very level where the lower level also reflected the clouds. The main axis of circulation was forcefully aligned with and cut out of the crossform watercourse. Very often rhythmic rows of 'eternal' sacred spires 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 a bridge. After the fundamental cross and the wall, the gate entrance sealed the formal distinction of sacred from profane, inside from outside. There is much more 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 only 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 sense legibility, the walled garden became an exemplary type of shared space for idealized communities. As these were controlled by the cosmological ethics of Zoroastrianism, individuals needed symbolic spaces to distinguish good from bad, from included, to forebode, and so forth. 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 city and from energy, 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 delimitated as a sacred space. In this regard we have, until now, only sketched over how this archetype makes Zoroastrian dualism, from essential to territorial, legible.

With the thesis Comp of Faith, Hamed Khoosrovi puts forward the high as an instrument of territorial governance: "Iranian gardens were the only spatial configurations wherein any form of life was possible; they were in fact life-sustaining camps in the literal toba top of the Iranian plateau." Due to the harshness of the context, the relation of garden to territory becomes explicit. Therefore, 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 religious to territorial. Rather, in Persian antiquity, the archetype goes from pre-territorial cosmos to become legible as an urban model. For example, in the plan of Persepolis, the char-bagh was deployed, as the literal image of territorial cosmos, to propose the idea of a capital city. Khoosrovi helps us to disentangle this passage through the political thelogy of paradise as a walled state analogous to the city, as it defines by means of spatial enclosure who does and who does not belong inside, and under the rule 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 Topographic Paradies Territoris, drawn by Athanasius Kircher in 1675. [32] [Fig. 1]

Paradise as a walled garden

Paradise has entered European languages via the Greek paradosis, generally with a sacred connotation. [33] In fact, this etymology goes back to Old Persian pari-daag, with pari meaning 'around' and daag, 'pile or heap'. In Modern Persian usage, the word holds an explicit spatial dimension, as daag means 'fort' or 'enclosure' and 'to be made of clay'. Similarly, the Indo-Iranian verb daad means 'to construct out of earth'. In his essay "The House of Clay," Bruce Lincoln notes that pari-daag 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." [34] Further, in "A la recherche du paradis perdu," the historian examines more deeply into the conceptual implications of pari-daag in formulaic inscriptions.

from Mazdaean-Zoroastrian to the Achaemenians. As we saw in the case of garden symbolism, these have imbued the ethical dualism of ancient Iranian language and thought. Nevertheless, paradise appears only once in the entire Avesta text, [35] but it is emphatically described as an earthly and manmade place:

There, on that place, shall the worshippers of Mazda erect an enclosure, and therein shall they establish him with food, therein shall they establish him with clothes, with the correct food and with the correct worn-out clothes. That food he shall live on, those clothes he shall wear, and thus, shall they let him live, until he has grown to the age of a Homa, or of a Zarma (...). [36]

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" (Atis). The place, therefore, is protected from Truth's deviant opponent "the Lie" (Druga). [37] 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 charkashu as the possible exemplary type for Achaemenid paradise. Such an event had emerged from a similar ethical concern to distinguish (sacred) good from (profane) bad, though in the Persian Empire, the vision of paradise in the charkashu 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 archetype 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 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 description is detailed 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 deviation 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

so, paradise was associated with baptism, desert oratory, virginity and monasticism, though this symbolism has stirred controversy within the Church ever since. St. Augustine questioned the role of baptism in the entrance to vituous life. His claim is very simple: How are we restored to paradise if we have never been there? Or how have we been there, apart from being there in Adam? Only 'in Adam' did we live in paradise, but 'in Adam' we were driven out as well. Thus, by rethinking what original sin consists in, St. Augustine discloses the question about what paradise means—if not the place where deviance is inevitably about to break forth? With this we realize that 'life in paradise' has nothing to do with neutrality. It is rather, in fact, a constant tension of competing desires. Just like one aiming to write a thesis and, at the same time, longing for a moment of complete solitude, for simply doing nothing. Moreover, as St. Augustine noted, paradise can only be achieved in common, in the sense of a collective will of living together. Hence the early Church never really settled on the precise forms of living in (or towards) paradise. Neither did it define the spatial analogy to such a (spiritual) state. This point has always been the crux of internal disagreements. Amongst Christians in general, the paradise of the early Church was not only intangible in form but also impossible to reach in practice. On the one hand, the formulation of Paradise denoted the goal in matrimony. On the other, it banned desire in sexual desire. There was an ambiguous plane between canonical and lay practices. This plane was paradise and it lacked a precise form, both in ethical and physical dimensions.

Later, in the twelfth century, a similar sort of ideological in-consistency led to further ambiguities around paradise. The dichotomy between unmarried clergy and married laity was a vulnerable point of conflict. Thereafter the hortus conclusus arose as a conceptual mediator between the Western European Church and its medieval hymns. The archetypal walled cruciform garden was brought back into the form of an intimate and highly introverted enclosure. [Fig. K] To the Church, the microcosmic character of the hortus conclusus was analogous to the closed off, or untouched, womb of Mary and, thus, both a representation and a way out of any contradiction between love, matrimony and childbirth. Here the walled garden was not exactly the replica of the Garden of Eden (which was still held as an actual place lost somewhere in Mesopotamia). It was instead the origin of Christ and his
distinct and exemplary form of life— from birth to work. Thereafter the Church’s hermitage was walled in order separate clerical from lay practices. It gave legibility to the exceptional life of Christ rather than the mortal fault of Adam. The exceptional birth of a redemptory power mattered more than pertinence for sin.

The wall was simple, flat, stone and low. The hermit inside was fluffily with kitchen herbs and tiny wildflowers. The fountain, central but not monumental, was seeded to symbolize the untouched womb and perpetual virginity of Mary. The sensation was of an intimate interior, with the predominance of dark green and bloody red. Sharps rays of light cut to the ground through a dome of bending willow trees. The Church’s hermitage was clearly a non-producer’s 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 hermitage mingled with the seemingly paradoxical enclosed garden described in biblical texts, such as the Song of Songs 4:12. Originally, the colony of this book implied that love was something only between Christ and the Church. Meanwhile, by the twelfth century this became (over)-simplification toward a mildly mystical individual interpretation of maternity. Henceforth, it reflected a lay perception of the hermitage as an idyllic garden. A simple wall low in height enabled couples to gain access for playful flirtations "love." In tum, to late medieval layers of Western Europe, the hermitage 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’, separated from everything else. Either to ‘ordinary’ men or to wealthy landowners, the hermit gradually became more of a form of seclusion than a representative 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 crossed to Europe from Persia and Egypt via Greece and ancient Rome. While the hermitage 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 that 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 factor which 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 Clunies and even the Benedictines themselves, had eventually "corrupted" the spirit of St. Benedict because they let their monasteries thrive too much, expand and accumulate wealth. [Fig. M] The Cistercians also criticized extreme ascetics as leading the monks to not only work to the point of producing surplus but also, to live alone rather than in a communal community. Their argument was mainly based on the idea that these faults resulted from the contradiction of one 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 ofugi—rather than owning them. So the question of rule and what we hold 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 on not only the Rules of St. Benedict but also the notion of property.

As the law of medieval towns normalized 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

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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." And the other was the concept of a norm 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 opposed property so radically as 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, Fig. II the Roman dream was the one through which the concepts of juridical person and norm formally 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 reads as follows: firstly, the quadrangular arcades were similar to the peristyle in marking the procedure through which the entire house (monastery) - and its household (abbot, monks and lay brothers) - had been enclosed and, therefore, set apart (sacred) from the world (city) outside (profane). Secondly, the (land) enclosed by that procedure was a garden. Similarly to the house, this enclosed garden made the monastery legible as an autonomous microcosm (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, use 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 garden 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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56. In 1998, after several efforts to reform monastic life in the realms of St. Benedict's rule, these monks from the Abbey of Morimond decided to withdraw to a cloister space to the Purple of Cloister under the protection of St. The Duke of Burgundy. The monks were to give for a cloister and toward the cloister of the Benedictine Rule. Their practice soon became exemplary in the form of an Order that was formed completely same and based on that already-existing sect of the Benedictine Rule. The Abbey, perhaps, was the very place where the practice was to be implemented in the form of an Order that was formed completely same and based on that already-existing sect of the Benedictine Rule. The Abbey, perhaps, was the very place where the practice was to be implemented in the form of an Order that was formed completely same and based on that already-existing sect of the Benedictine Rule. The Abbey, perhaps, was the very place where the practice was to be implemented in the form of an Order that was formed completely same and based on that already-existing sect of the Benedictine Rule.
The cloister as paradise

"Four steps in spiritual life..." 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 seizes the hidden places of heaven. You must know that these steps are distinct in name and number, so they are in nature and order." 99 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 it 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 inhbits 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 devotees, 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 by no means 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. 52 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.
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 pasture-like hedge, with a mildly detached centre. It meant that paradise lies only above and beyond daily life. Meanwhile to the Cistercians, the garden was a cruciform habitus conducive to a well-defined centre. With these a restrained, 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. Herein 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 Clunias. 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 Saint 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

69. "Concerning the mode and order of Devine services, the monks of Clissiaz decided right at the beginning to observe in everything the traditions of the Rule, cutting away entirely and rejecting all innovations; now, as it was, or what was before, which were added to the Office (at least) by some of the monks, was taken for the benefit of the monks, since their multiplicity results in their material and negligent attention, not only by the monks, but also by the inferior. Quoted from the Benedictine Rule, transcribed in Louis Leclercq, The Carthusian Order and Rule, (Kest, Keston: Kent University Press, 1971), p. 249
strictly followed the precepts of Benedict of Nursia and which, later in the eighth century, had been compiled with the title Rule of Saint Benedict. In short, the main goal of his rules was to establish a religious order but to offer monks an instrumental guide to organise themselves as autonomous communities. Autonomous not only in the sense of subsistence but above all, a single self-governing group of monks. For this reason, Benedict was concerned with the relationship between ascetic life and the common will and rules. His text therefore starts by distinguishing the main sorts of Christian asceticism which existed at that time, between the fifth and sixth centuries AD. Amongst those, the coenobit provided the only modality in which monks lived in the same place and shared the same rules. Benedict thus focused on developing this idea further and added:

The monastery should, if possible, be so arranged that all necessary things, such as water, mill, garden, and various crafts may be situated within the enclosure, so that the monks may not be compelled to wander outside, for that is not at all expedient for their souls.

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. 1] built at the bottom of Mount Sinai around 540 AD. Yet the utmost actualisation 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 centimetres 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. These also include instructions for the "management..."
Fig. R (count-ta): Hypothetical reconstruction of the secondary cloister with the main street at the rear of the monastic compound. There were many strips of vegetable cultivation, weed, and flower planters in almost every space in between the walled quadrants.

Fig. R (count-tb): Hypothetical reconstruction of the monastic cemetery and its gardens, walled by a step-walled. On the right, the medicinal herb garden cultivated by the monks.
Fig. 8 (center): Hypothetical reconstruction of the garden entrance, flanked by rows of columns. On the right, the frameworks outlined by the lay-houses.

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of the gardens" and the hortus conclusus (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 crucifixion hortus, with a walled fountain at its centre. Unlike all other gardens, the hortus conclusus 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 historians Walter Horn and Ernest Born, we can imagine a bit of the architectural form [Fig. 8] and understand how the cloister was extremely important to 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 conclusus. 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 looked like a city. Or, as we may rather see it today, the campus of a modern factory. The Cistercian criticism would be that this 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 indefinite expansion, thus more appropriation of land, subdivisions, production and surplus [Fig. 9]. Yet the fact that it had the hortus conclusus 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 [Fig. 7].

So, from such as the Cistercians were so keen on following that original Rule of St. Benedict, their monasteries seem to clearly avoid the grid configuration of St. Gall. They have focused, instead, on the
ides of centralising the canonical buildings around a single cloister, with an exclusive hermitage. 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, 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 theordained 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 quarters (lay brothers) could only enter through their domus, 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 not 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 conterminum, the
fratsy (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 walks were two modules (or two vaults) longer than the north and south ones. This was primarily 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-theoretical act. But perhaps such brevity in circulation was also meant to make time for sacramental life—and never otherwise. Hence the Fontenay cloister orchard was a clock. It was a device that modulated the lengths of walks 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 only for Vigils. The exact time of each celebration varied according to the season. However, the sequent 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 doxos' above the eastern passage of the cloister. They descended through the 'night-stairs' towards their own choir in the church. Therein they sing for an hour in Vigils. The monks in Fontenay followed the example of St. Bernard strictly. So, it was not rare for them to dismiss the nevsumt 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 liturgical 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 fratsy. 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 rule:

There the ordination and orientation of clausural buildings were chapter house, auditorium and dormitory (upper level), fratsy, refectory, kitchen, offices and dormitory (ground floor). After the church, these follow from the most to the least important, from most
liturgical to most menial. The overall layout of rooms around the cloister was also meant to conform to the conventual model and Sunday processions. Hence, after the mass, the monks could leave the choir directly into 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 room 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 dinner. This was a relatively small longitudinal building, with the kitchen on one side (east) and the office room on another (west). The two were connected 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. In fact, such criteria were even stated in the statutes of the Order as for Quo in loco cuncta concursa Cumque: "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' [29]."

Most Orders, such as the Dominicans, usually sought to settle their monasteries on cliffs or on desert plateaus – precisely to evoke the emblem of Eastern asceticism or of the ancient monastery Monte Cassino. 30 The Cistercians rather avoided such situations as much as possible. The Order justified also instructed that the monastery should never be placed on top of a hill, nor on an island, by the 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. 6] Such a conditional image of enclosure played a strategic part in the Cistercian renunciation of claiming lordship 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 vitræux and column ornamentation were strictly forbidden by the rules. In fact, these were opposed by St. Bernard, who wrote keenly about the risks of art and architecture as vain distractions, which could eventually distract the monastic from their original will towards God. Thus, even if the exceptional high ceiling of the Church and the bold vaults yielded some effect of 'perpetuities' and monumentality, they would be taken over by a stronger sense of humility provoked by the use only of bare stone and white walls.

The orientation was thought to make the Cistercian idea of spiritual contemplation coincide with a evocative symbolism of nature and with the management of the site through minimal resources. As a rule, the cloister's layout should use the valley as a single and chiefly centred master plan. The intention to centrality was the first step to accret the site and to ensure cohesion for the following constructions. Although the church was the first built enclosure, the centre of the whole monastery was only sacralised afterwards, with the girding of the quadrangular cloister by a cruciform axis of stone pathways, which were usually very narrow. The junction of this cross cleared a modest circle in the first central spot, where there was either a cylinder fountain made of stone or sometimes nothing at all. This axis divided the ground into four cardinal flowerbeds. Although they were not as square as the whole cloister, their cruciform configuration was laid out in order to confirm the symmetry of the whole monastery plan towards the centre of the garden. Moreover, the cloister was not only squared to symbolise the shape from which God has made every perfect form, but also to mark the very centre of the monastery. In this sense, the cloister was designed to crystallise the sacred character of the site and, at the same time, all other constructions that followed the building of the church. While the quadrangular arcade held all open space, it also recalled their accesses, converging their sights towards the central axis. It was there that contemplation could be eventually attained. The cloister is the most representational device of a monastery. And that is due in great part to the sense of centre reinforced and laid out by the cloistered koryndia. The few trees planted were usually old willows, placed either around the centre or near the lavatory portico. The latter was just as low as the former and was always attached to the south or the west of the cloister arcade. The four flowered beds were short, yet dense, and always constantly ornate.
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 ground was only visual, making the latter conceal the literal (and less pictorial) image of paradise. That is, the garden was the spiritual stage of contemplation itself, which the scale 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 few 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 walk 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 articulation 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 sacred from profane and good from distant. 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 where 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 enclosures were attempts to distinguish absolute realities from an indefinite (neutral) field of many. Indeed, the enclosed garden shares this general edge of all other ontological enclosures. But it was the only one whose sole purpose was to formalize intricate 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 frindle of a single space. Although it would therefore become a device of representation, the walled garden had always transcended its representational dimension. Due to the ethical reasoning of their deeply evocative symbolisms, the Persian chahar-bagh and the Cistercian hortus conclusus offer two models for experiencing space as a constant act of distinguishing good from distant, 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 denote a clear relation between defined-legible-sacred-enclosure areas, undefined-illegible-profane-vastness. 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 analogical 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-bagh 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-bagh 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 urbanization 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 colonized 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 Reza 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 urbanization. By 1958 most of the north and western areas had sprawled through carpets of private plots called 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 colonized 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 Reza 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 urbanization. By 1958 most of the north and western areas had sprawled through carpets of private plots called 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 colonized 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 Reza 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 urbanization. By 1958 most of the north and western areas had sprawled through carpets of private plots called 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 colonized by Western countries such as Britain.
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 greener 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 to decentralize 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 plot 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 topologies, the garden lost its central position within the dwelling. Moreover, regulations detached the garden from the domestic space by reducing it 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] The problem with this regulation is that it limited the ground floor of residential buildings to commercial use only. [Fig. I] Henceforth, backyards were ultimately prevented from becoming extensions of the household with their own singular forms of social encounter. At best, modern plot backyards became scantily planted arcs, leftover arcs or storage places for the shops on the ground floor. This typology hardly ever came close to the family Solar-bagh garden frequently found within traditional Iranian courtyards.
Fig. F: Present growth around the urban grid of Kayyemh, a state-sponsored housing project. The Iranian government had built the complexes in 1981 to alleviate and control the working class on the east side of Tehran, further away from the National University and the old city centres.

Fig. G: Present growth around the urban grid of Abbas Abad and Yousef Abad, two state-sponsored housing projects, from 1985. Their purpose was to allocate the middle class on the north, outside the administrative buildings.
Fig. 1. Existing situation of the ground level of a typical plot-grid block. The indistinguishable typology of the single-family apartments would prevent the households to not only connect but also access the backyards downstairs.

Fig. 2. Existing situation of the ground floor of a typical plot-grid block. The strictly commercial use of the ground floor has eliminated most backyards and transformed them into storage, dumping and parking spaces.
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 house—holds 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-containment dynamic is exaggerated in Tehran. Therefore, it is unquestionably more visible and more potent than elsewhere. Uprootedness, however, is much less recognizable 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 plot-grid state projects built between 1950 and 1970. The right to inhabit the ground—which has historically equaled the right of citizenship, since the Tehran became a modern city—was stripped from apartment dwellers (either owners or tenants). Spatially, this implied a blunt disconnection between the upper floor and the backyard—that is, literal uprootedness. With all the odds against them just described, what would happen if a small group of tenants got together to claim direct access to the backyard of their building? Further, how would a spatial intervention mediate possible conflicts of interest on ways of enjoying the newly regained backyard?

Most and foremost, what form of collective place could this become? Imagining this scenario, the following proposal reconsiders the concepts of sacred enclosures emerging with the (re)turning to design a possible protocol for reclaiming and sharing the backyards of Tehran's residential plot grids. Small groups of neighbours could collectively construct the rules and procedures of such protocol in four phases.

![Figure 1: Opposite page: Phase 1](image1)

The households of two apartment buildings decide to reclaim the backyards of their buildings to create more residential use. So, the group establishes rules and organizes the space.

![Figure 2: Phase 2](image2)

The group passes an agreement to include a wall on the ground floor, with the old clusters and partitions. New rules help the area to maintain the new structure and access the upper floor. Then, a new area is defined to let the new covered area from the street and the ground-floor shoppers.

![Figure 3: Two more households of the neighboring buildings follow the first example in reclaiming their backyards. The group then expands to include all other tenants and considers to join the same process together by distributing the walls between them.](image3)

The group expands to include all other tenants and considers joining the same process together by distributing the walls between them. In turn, everyone agrees to see the backyard, two new areas being created. The new may cause new rules to help them sharing, cultivating and managing the newly made-ground. On one half, many tenants can have a small patch of soil to plant anything from a lot of alternative species. On the other, tenants can play or lay down and do nothing.

![Figure 4: Phase 3: After viewing the possibility of having a courtyard, two tenants in the building across the block decide to join and perform the same procedures of phases 1 and 2. After some time, they join the first group and decide to connect their backyards. They decide the structure, which can only grow temporally, should be maintained with partial concrete. All rules remain. New questions arise on whether the newly reclaimed ground could serve in various areas.](image4)
Fig. N. Possible transformation of the first level. A collective shelter binds together the households of 12 plots. A concrete wall defines the space. The element also contains cells and staircases which plan each apartment access to the rooms. This arrangement gives inner space for leisure and encounters. If users wish to be alone, they can use the individual cells, which alternate into bed, bed and study. Alternatively, they can take one of the four staircases down to the open ground level.

Fig. O. Possible transformation of the ground level. The exclusive spatial enclosure of the cliques has enabled the number of twelve apartments to recognize themselves as an extended household. Moreover, the vaulted form enabled them to collectively create and continuously perform roles in how to share, use and manage the space. Basically, they agreed on how to enjoy the squared ground as a place to garden, play, rest or do nothing in the presence of others.
Fig. P: New cladding wall seen from the interior of an existing apartment.

Fig. Q: The complete scheme which enables the domestic to collectively reclaim, share and transform existing bulk walls into a single new terrace garden.
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, outlined 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 Cluniac _hospitium_ was 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 the design of their space and form, 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 abbots 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 violence by internal corruption, the Cistercians, 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 reimagination.

The hortus as a frame

The earliest reimaginations of the household garden to become well-known were not architectural but literary, perhaps most evidently seen in the De Rebus, 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 urban 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 amoris, both a lyric topic 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 clerics and schoolmen beyond the clergy. Profoundly influenced by these texts, Boccaccio went further, to reimagine the walled garden not as an evasive figuration but rather as a framing device for his storytelling. The artifice was used to divide his novel (whose theme means ‘ten days’) into one hundred tales, narrated and shared by ten young characters. In the plot, these characters seek refuge from the Black Death of 1348 in a country retreat at Piccarda, just outside a heavily infected Florence. They amuse one another in order to pass time until the plague ends. Amongst the many enclosures described in the book, they gather mostly around flowery hortus. As their daily storytelling becomes a ritual, the hortus transforms into a stage 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 leafy branches provide the shade, comfort and optical stability necessary for mental engagement.

Both in the country retreat and in the stories being told, the hortus is still described as enclosed; however, it is not longer ruled, sacred 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 him 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 for granted. 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 sanity 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 region of Vaucluse. De iure sacer 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 ‘life in nature’, explicitly following Pliny the Younger. Although his autobiographical treatise does not describe architecture per se, it evinces an anti-urban character in the main purpose of the place: to enable the 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 being one in dignitas, which he had rediscovered by reading Cicero. Beyond erudition, this referencing was indeed necessary to convince any schoolboy 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 rural areas of Europe in the 1300s meant the very opposite of harmony, due to a permanent state of violent expropriation, exploitative social relations, bad harvests, pillaging and wars. Petrarch needed, therefore, a small square of campesina ground to shut that Dantesque hell off and describe his idea of blissful solitude within an imaginary country. This miniature was the enclosure of
estate. Within it, the hortus acted as a frame, one similar to Boccaccio’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 rural as such — either as a coping device or a motivation to leave the city for an allegedly ‘better’ life. While to Petrarch this meant a sobering sentiment to Boccaccio 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 villis urbatis, for instance, praises kitchen gardening and shepherding, for these seem just as bucolic, yet far less laborious than farming or grazing, while still yielding sustenance 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 emphasising 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 Deauvans, where real and imaginary horti appear as ‘interiors’ that are much less formal than libraries or ballrooms and, therefore, perfect spots for playful storytelling, courteous flirtation, 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 events truly transmuted one into the other. Until then, the hortus 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 Boccaccio epitomise 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 case of a private estate, whose existence 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 'programme' to construct a morally acceptable narrative of the status quo. Previously, within the monastic hortus conclusus, spatial enclosure had adhered to rules 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 crises, such a game of appearances was more about restraining pleasure than showing it off. Because, along with the newly landed class of clerks and financiers, came the reactionary fear of peasant riots and (probable) class conflict. These were soon dealt with through the praise of a new ethic 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 homestead, became extremely important. Not surprisingly, Leon Battista Alberti highlighted it in the brief Villa, 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 for future delights, ‘for simple pleasure’, and the retreat of a patrician family and its own family. Although not termed as such, Cicero’s idea of dignitas does come up as something to be earned through land cultivation, which, the architect agrees, is a virtuous mode of sustenance instead of frivolous exhibitionism. This conviction entwines a couple of Alberti’s recurrent thoughts: agriculture as second nature, and family as societal nucleus. Each further suggests how the orchard could be located precisely at the converging point of these ideas, not only conceptually but also spatially. For Alberti describes it as the element between the limits of the villa and its house, forming thus a ‘domestic belt’ of greenery around the built core of the complex. (It is worth noting that here ‘villa’ is the whole property rather than just the house. This is a notion that is quite different from the present understanding, mostly derived from the English use of ‘villa’ to generally mean any detached house or pavilion—whether on a meadow in Illinois or housing estate campus in Stuttgart.) However, Alberti described it as a two-third of the whole property as ‘villas’ meant to mean anything that has a garden or a ‘villae’ in the classical Latin, where, for instance, the so-called ‘Villa’ of the most famous gardens of the 17th and 18th centuries, was meant to be a complex rather than a single object. This is more likely to be a large view of the villa and its garden, as the author explains in the same passage. Certainly not out of carelessness, the author chose the tone to convey the ornamental character for which orchards were not yet recognized. In his view, a ‘gardens’ would make any country estate appropriate for a ‘honorable’ family to live in.

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

The interior arrangement of Alberti’s garden was a question he never answered, perhaps to avoid falling into contradictions. For on the one hand, his villa seems ostentatious, while on the other it has an appearance that is impossible to miss. Thanks to the ubiquity of patrician orchards, it may have indeed gone without saying (or drawing) that his so-called ‘gardens’ should inevitably hatch out of the property walls to render the entire ‘investment’ an image of sheer privilege. Regardless of the layout or species, just because of its position of...
Hypostemma Polpili and described as a dream-like labyrinthine place made of several gardens. The relationship between both ideas is not far-fetched since this book had been very influential since its publication in 1499, contemporary to the architect. Although it is commonly attributed to Francesco Colonna, recent scholarship has speculated that Alberti was the actual author. Nonetheless, Villa and its typical scheme were most probably sourced from the knowledge of Vitruvius. Considering that Alberti had previously described the plan of the Roman domus with similar abstraction (as a sequence of rooms moving from the most to the least 'public', embodying the rituals and social hierarchy of patrician families), he may also have seen the rustic villa as an artefact that was as much physical as ideological. Hence the moralistic tone of the text. Knowing his audience, Alberti would have realised that 'pleasure' and 'retreat' were only secondary to a primary yet hidden motivation, which has noticeably changed very little since De architectura: the urge of a privileged urban class to recognise and justify itself in the social strata, while it expropriates rural land.  

Expropriation of land does not presuppose the making of villas but, precisely through these artefacts, it may become a systematic process of cultural appropriation and class empowerment. Hence the type has always been the favourite means for every new gentility class to seize and update former patriarchal staples towards the institutionalisation of its power. This was the paradigm of the Medici, who enriched themselves as bankers in Florence but only rose to rule the city after gaining control of the larger region through the 'villasification' of several of their farmlands. This started from the valley of Mugello, where Trebbio and Caffaggiolo had been possessed by the family as early as 1373. The area was then a system of fields, towers and castles mastered by the Lombard clan: Ubaldisi, Trebbio and Caffaggiolo were not 'villas' — in neither name nor form. Instead, they blended in with the feudal landscape as, respectively, a podere (a share-crop farm typical of Tuscany) and a scofa (similar to a fortress). [Fig. C] According to original registers, only recently rediscovered, Caffaggiolo contained a palatium (a palatial building) and a 36-square-metre arsenale. This garden was strictly utilitarian, participating in the large agrarian production of the property and surrounding. This relation would remain even after 1573, when 'giardino' was introduced to the cadastre as a synonym for a sort of large proprione (mixed culture), with fruit trees and grapevines. A tax return of 1425, nevertheless, replaced the term with the Florentine word orto, stressed as 'cultivations' that did "not yield any income" and were "part of the dwelling". This reflects not only a formula to escape increasing taxation but, crucially, a change of purpose in possessing arable land. Since gardening was then clearly recognised and declared in relation to "dwelling" rather than farming, a tighter spatial interaction was established between the orchards and the primary household. This relationship was formalised by the addition of leggioni, which not only connected those spaces but also made Caffaggiolo seem less like a fortress and more like a summer residence. Trebbio was similarly expanded with the addition of a fruit-bearing orto enclosed by pergolas, thus acquiring the appearance of a podere meant for familial retreat.
Orchard and loggia
and the ‘villafication’ of the countryside

Whether incidental or not, these alterations did eventually convert these properties into what became increasingly known as rustic villas. And by doing so, through the very reshaping of these grounds, they have as well started to ‘villafy’ those fields. (That is, not villafication 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 on the one hand, 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 would become increasingly dependent on the exploitation of agrarian land. Even without possessing every inch of this newly urban domain—just by redefining two farmyards as pleasure-purposed dwellings—the Medici started the systematic process of cultural and social appropriation that made them the civil power of Florence. At this point, one should ask whether this was the ‘honourable family’ that crossed the mind of Alberti while he was writing Vita. The similarities between his conceptual description and Cafaggiolo are flagrant. The only nuance is the word ‘garden’, chosen by the author to mean a different sort of ‘orto’ than the one mentioned in that catalogue of 1425. The fact that Vita was finished only a decade later moreover suggests that either the spaces called ‘gardens’ or the term itself were becoming increasingly ambivalent. Still, it does not prove any significant change in practice. It is more likely that Alberti had himself put forward, especially after the Medicis events, that the household garden could acquire ornamental (thus utmost ideological) dimensions once coupled with built forms. In other words, Alberti’s ‘gardén’ either proposes or acknowledges (or redesigns) 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 Medici 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 ‘informally’ 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 garden enclosures during the 1440s 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 'villafision' of the original property at Careggi was circumspectly similar to Tresio and Caffaggiolo, 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 admitably function as a 'villa suburbana.' At that time, the concept was not yet as clearly different from the 'rustic' ones. Since Giovanni was so fond of Cato (the ancient agricultural writer who praised the rewarding simplicity of life in the country) and quite nostalgic about Careggi, 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 was thus never truly functioning as a 'garden. Yet its suburban character did not mean that it was 'idyllic' than the ones at Careggi, though it did make their articulation with built structures much more controlled and formally important.

Because the topography at Fiesole was too complicated, possessing and inhabiting the site required substantial earthworks. The solution was thus to reshape the billy profile into a stepped system of walled parterres, terraces and orchards, capped by a cubic house. [Fig. 8] 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 1472, 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 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 suffusion of short citrus trees which followed the flow already set in motion by the other built volumes. 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" vantage point. Precisely at Fiesole, and over a hundred years after the Duomo, architects had finally caught up with the literary use of the term 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 then through enlarged terraces and a couple of new orai, 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 Piero de Crescenzi in his Opera rustica omni, written around 1305 but widely republished only in 1471 - a decade after the first orai 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 pleure is 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 Opera may have reached Giovanni - who preferred walled parterres for their productivity and finitude - it did not impress Lorenzo. He preferred lush plantations, mostly for growing flowers and fruitless evergreens, such as firs and cypresses, hence the many other arrangements made all over the property until he died towards the end of the fifteenth century. Though, again, curbed flowerbeds did not yet 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 Opera omni, clipping flowers or hitching vines 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 townsman, who similarly sought to institutionalise their public figures by associating themselves with inventary 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 1469 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 walls had been covered with trompe-l'œil 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 overestimate 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 theorised by Piero della Francesca.46 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.47 From this encounter yielded the 1474 publication of the treatise De perspective 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.48 As the Duke had declared (certainly after De re aedificatoria), architecture became a “liberal art based upon arithmetic and geometry.”49 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, first of all, encouraged. That was the case with the hypnotic Vogli of Child. Fig. 1 argued by Manfredo Tafuri to be the first rendering in history since it had probably been commissioned to verify an alternative alternate for the construction of the church of San Bernardino.50 However, there is no evidence of a direct collaboration between the restorer Piero della Francesca and dopier Francesco di Giorgio Martini.51 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 Siamese 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 under tones, which had become typical of all the interventions commissioned by Montefeltro towards his ‘palacification’ of Urbino.52

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 on the eastern hill of San Donato.53 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.54 [Fig. J] Solenn rather than monstrous, this architectural object was the highlight of the reform of the convent of Santa Chiara—a further commission from the Duke to Martini during the construction of that church.55 Hence, the U-shape resulted from opening up the main cloister of the former compound.56 [Fig. K] Despite the lack of contemporary plans showing the old and new plantations, it is logical to assume that cutting half of the quadrangolare was just enough to completely alter the home condition.57 Because such an intervention disregarded all exclusive rules, the sacred function of the original enclosure was irreversibly
disabled. Unfortunately, the earliest spatial depiction of the outcome dates only from 1619, as Fig. 1. It was initially brushed into the background of a painting by Palma il Giovane. 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 "garden of pines" had been designed or implemented on the site, it did follow the prevailing logic to embrace the view rather than its centre, confirming that it was no longer meant to address the whole complex as an autonomous settlement. And since the new plantations would still have provided the nuts 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 garter 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 southern south, a decision which would moreover make Santa Chiara, the resting place of Battista Sforza, function as a symbolic "preservation" for San Bernardino, where Federico da Montefeltro had been chosen to be buried. The garden terrace thus served as a stage for the staging of the dual couple.

Alternatively, to rephrase it within our theory as an artifact, this marks the transformation of the "foglia" 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 its bigger picture, for which that visual conversation between buildings also comes into view, and so monumentalised the landscape as a political achievement. The sight eventually dominated the visual plane of the terrace, thus recapturing the terrestrial expansion of Urbania under the tenure 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 dipinti 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.
es, so as to organise abstract thought into a transmissible story — that is, ‘memory’.68 Despite their distinct historical contexts and mediums, the three cases thus exemplify how ideology, perspective and monumentality are intrinsically related to and motivated by each other. And this is why it is essential to ask of artistic periods and regions not only whether they have perspective, but also which perspective they have.69 For what differentiates ancient from late-quattrocento monumentality is precisely the kind of perspective each one produces. Whereas in those Pompeian examples, the backgrounds are walled gardens close behind the first visual plane — meaning the world is ‘small’ — in that of Urbino, the background is a rural landscape distanced through an incredibly long depth of view, meaning that garden and loggia aimed at framing (in the sense of capturing) infinity. Not incidentally, this happened with the rise of the gentility of Montefeltro, who sought to institutionalise their ‘possession of the world’.70 This was a world that was expanding following the advent of global trade and maritime colonisation. Hence the fifteenth century rejected the self-containing perspective of medieval art, replacing it with the re-formulation of Euclidean geometry, a systematic method of depicting space far beyond the sphere of the human body.71

Villa e Vigna: the 16th-century reinvention of Rome

The gratuitously tall loggia at Santa Chiara not only confirmed the reinvention of the kiosks 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.72 However significant, that was not yet recognisable to anyone at that time, let alone when 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.73 This is evident in most of their later works, especially the Cortile del Belvedere and Viridarium da Agostino Chigi (today known as Villa Farnesina), both complexes defined by monumental loggias embracing terrace gardens in Rome, [Fig. 0] the city where Peruzzi and Bramante moved at the beginning of 1500 when the city had
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 intransigence that had been initiated by Martin V in 1422, furthered by Nicholas V until 1455 but retracted since the death of Sixtus IV in 1458. In short, the "remonition 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 reclamations of Christian places and buildings towards a systematic re-appropriation of the city, though the sixteenth-century approach was crucially different in having turned "restoration" into a means to colonize, suburbanize, renew and gentrify the precarious rural areas edging the Aurelian walls, and further beyond. Interestingly enough, these processes were neither pushed through warfare nor economy but architecture itself, along with the cultural revival of the Roman pastoral myth of the idyllic countryside. Ancient writers (such as Catil, Varro, Pliny and Cicero) were then more widely read than ever before, and so professionals such as Peruzzi, Bramante and Raffaello Santi di Urbino, were required to reshape dried-up vineyards into (what may now be reconsidered) "suburban villas". These were the very type of enclosures 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. [Fig. P] Moving further ahead of the precedents of Florence and Urbino, sixteenth-century Rome was therefore the precise context in which the karta went from a site-implemented to a 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, towards, eventually, an urban park. This meant that – just as Alberth 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 reinvention of the enclosed garden into a civil (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, precarious and depopulated, since the fourteenth-century plagues and sackings had destroyed most aqueducts and fountains. And so, the city was itself an unremarkable agglomeration of unfinished urban work, muddy riverbanks, churches and public buildings clustered alongside medieval housing. [Fig. Q] 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. As a result, 30,000 inhabitants were confined within a few heads of the Tiber River, where they could collect water manually. And the river, moreover, was constantly polluted with ships importing food from other regions. Hence this landscape was far from being the "rose garden" of the picturesque "Campagna 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 native Romans. And the usual place for such experience was not yet a suburban villa (it had never been a race or a podere) but, instead, a castra or a signum. While the castra was a fortified farmhouse ruled by wealthy clans - thus units typically isolated amidst the farther open fields - the signum was a walled vignoble 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 possible to find the primitive formations along consular roads, such as Via Flaminia. Until about 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 desolate ones - if not in a state of abandonment but mainly for the reason that vines grew best in hilly volcanic areas. Since a signum could be as small as an urban parcel, it could also be found on almost every street of the lower peripheries as well. In this case, wealthy families that could afford irrigation would implement larger vignoble with separate orchards over the blueprint of undiscovered ruins - such as Vigna Inglesi and Ortacchio degli Ebrei, which arose from the earthy relief of the Circus Maximus. [Fig. R]

Secondly, the geographic distribution of Roman vignoble was intrinsic to the legal definition of the urban territory, just as their holdings and cultivations were to citizenship. Because - unlike the medieval origin of the castra - the signum came from a much older tradition that dated back to the Early Republic, when the Empire sought to colonise the Roman agrarian region (the agrariae) outside the ancient pomerium by awarding veterans demesne parcels of arable land.

Suddenly turned into domestic settlers, these soldiers did not know how to farm extensively but could intuit and collectively learn how to manage animal husbandry, fruit trees and especially vines, one of the most resilient species in Latium. Moreover, with agricultural writers such as Varro promoting the morals of rural life, aligned with the fact that grapes are harvested in the summer, the image (or memory) of Roman rurality has been associated with the ritual of reaping vines as a "dignified" way to enjoy seasonal holidays. Henceforth "signum culture" proper became not only an aspect of Roman society but also a consolatory symbol of the increasing tension between city and "its" countryside.

Ironically, it is from the highest vignoble that one may picture how this relationship implies a complex spatial order, one that is even emphasised by the natural condition of the arch of hills ranging from north-west to south-east. [Fig. S] These are similar to an amphitheatre that beholds Rome commanding all action on the...
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.  

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 intertwine. 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 "honourable" way to enjoy it. So when a cardinal or a clerk 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 shutting the Aurelian walls. It was almost as if these appropriations were a tacit agreement between his alien figure and the local ways of doing things, one 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 sponors overwhelmed with hard work and greed, gardening was a relaxing activity. As we have seen, it meant the possibility of "dining with dignity." 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 pontifices would there-
fore have their ages reformed and expanded. Sometimes these would become experiments to test their plans for the city. More often than not, they were private initiatives that led to broader processes of expropriation and infrastructural renewal of idle land to, eventually, subsume entire areas under the control of the Pontifical States.

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 Giannino 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 ex aquis' 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 finally 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 arable land, those groups had progressively walled the fields into small farmlands to be 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 Riva Grande, henceforth bypassing the west side. Julius acted more

180. Julius intended to take total control over all the Pontifical States and use in the Vatican the exact point from which to expand his domain towards other territories, such as Venice, Naples, Florence and so forth. Although he was the first pope to achieve this, the approach of urban interventions was essentially borrowed from his uncle, Urban IV, and the earlier popes of the Lateran (see also: Bruscoli, Sneade, Lachmann, Thomas & Hudson, 1971). pp. 176–178

191. Ibid., p. 176

192. Enschede, ibid., p. 178

193. Alexander VI had underestimated the potential of the area around Lungara, and the street was therefore already in his plans, not to only connect the Vatican to the harbour of Riva Grande but also to offer a west side alternative for the circulation of pilgrims going to the Vatican Hill. Montefeltro Taddeo, Intervengono le Marche. Roma, cit. (Annotazioni), p. 78
quickly than his predecessor 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 plebiscite revolution or against the interest of the oldest 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.\(^{124}\)

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.”\(^{125}\) 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 simple straight line, paved with blue stone for over a thousand metres.\(^{126}\) The result can still be seen today from Porta Settimiana, where the street is continuously banked by walls three metres high that are regularly interrupted by leafy treetsops behind them.\(^{127}\) The Via, moreover, instantly changed the broader area as it ran over the tortuous tracks of an ancient road to cut through the narrow coomb 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 enclosures to impose a more rentable parcelisation. Land use, however, was limited, since the lots were neither large enough for farming nor small enough to become affordable. The sizes were instead just enough to fit residential units in which gardening could only satisfy the reproduction of leisure. The location itself already implied such a programme, for it was 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 southern side. One of the factors that stressed that this street denoted business (negozio) was the parallel existence of Via della Lungara, denoting pleasure (avoid), for Via negozio, both literally and conceptually, the anti-urban character of the latter legitimised the urbanity of the former. While Giulia was an “embankment of a city street” in the manner

128. The Via della Lungara was to lead directly to the Borgo, Vatican, and from the Via Giulia was to lead across the new Ponte Sisto, together with view of the Vatican and the traffic that had been isolated from the main road in the city, the bridge and the fortress of St. Angelo. Ibid., p. 134.

129. Immediately after his election as Pope Julius II in 1503, Rome was encouraged to advance and construct the landowners who wanted to expand their properties and put an end to the Papal States, with the help of the Venetian Senate, who was also in favor of this. The commission of Via della Lungara was in order to make sure that the construction of this private initiative would work to the advantage. And it worked that way until 1507, when Julius II officially gave the commission to those who proposed building the new urban areas of the new Tiber, Mastrdìo. “Rome, today, seems a city of art and music, with the Janiculum Hill from the Tiber.” Mastrdìo, “Della stimosa, Roma e il suo paesaggio fisico.”

130. This issue was one of the key points in the debate on public space, by Francesco De Sanctis, who publishes it in 1849.

131. The Via della Lungara, 1496-1503, was not only a Roman family of the time, moved to Rome in 1593, and a newborn church, which was supposed to be the last of its kind in the city. The Via della Lungara was an example of a suburban street. A “broad, straight street”, aiming to connect the city with the country, was the beginning of an urbanised landscape, built to attract Renaissance architecture, and to formise the area of material production and exchange, such as Ponte Sisto, in the Tiber, to which it was rapidly connected to the bridge of Friuli, England and Spain. Elsewhere, Giulia, the Villa of the Popes, was also a prerequisite. (Rome, Italian Palazzi and Libri della Storia, 2000).

132. The first deed authorising the purchase of the Via della Lungara by the Chigi was not systematically acquired. Mastrdìo, “Roma, 1849.” Rome, 1849, p. 12.

133. When the Via della Lungara was purchased by the Colonna family, commissioned by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (later Pope Paul III), the other hand, who bought him his house in September 1514 before the completion of the Via della Lungara. By 1559, the road had been laid out north of the imperial city gate of the Tiber, another stretch that the street to the north of the Tiber, which was extended to the north to the bank of the Tiber, was extended to the north to the bank of the Tiber.


136. The Via della Lungara was an “embankment of a city street” in the manner of a monumental corridor of palazzos and other institutional buildings. Lungara was an “embankment of a city street,” the “facades” of which had trees over columns but were not less impressive.\(^{128}\) In any case, in parallel they eventually formed a comprehensive U-shaped circuit around the west side, an urban loop of multiple uses and perspectives of which the Vatican was no longer a “seat.”\(^{129}\) In this sense, Via della Lungara contributed to a process of suburbanisation perpendicula, as it submerged an entirely rural area under the dome of a new urban centrality.
and the harbour of Ripa 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 often cruised from Civitavecchia to Frumencio, bringing the alms from his Tostasini mines to the Roman market. Hence the estate at Via della Lungara was a critical point in his affaires in all social, political, economic, and territorial dimensions. Not incidentally, Julius II—whose election had been financed by the Sienna banker—returned the favour by dredging the Tiber to improve navigation.

The Chigi fleet could thereby also offload red marble, fresh meat, gold-plated chairs, peacock, 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 underwater cape. 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 bower, 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 x 50 metres was divided into four planters by a cruciform pergola and probably bound with boxwood. Hence the place produced views similar to the woodland illustrations of Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, published only a few years before. [Fig. V] Second and more significantly, those elements were "swallow[ed] 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 (poppies, beech, chestnuts, maritime pines, vines, evergreen shrubs of the maquis mediterraneus); and exotic species (such as the Tuscan hop-binebeam, Sicilian lemon, Turkish pomegranate and American squash). There may have been antique statues casually distributed under the shadows of those leafy treepods, though the cast of unusual plant species was the true motif of the garden.

In case such exotica was not enough to imply the intercontinental reach of the owner, it occasionally came up as a "conversation starter" while he hosted his guests. Sledgels were shipped from the Agro and other regions directly to Agostino, who apparently had become a collector and called that space a "vinafrum." 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 botanic collection while hosting his guests through other specific gestures, ordered and catered to by a bespoke 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 was hence crucial to portraying him as a 'magnificent' patron—a concept that had just been publicized in a treatise of 1498 by the humanist Giovanni Pontano to advise new courtiers on how to display private wealth, 'splendour', 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 Cicerone—helped them to understand that, in antiquity, magnificence was a (controversial) praxis among Roman politicians and oligarchs, one that had nothing to do with exclusive luxury but with magnanimity, "doing something great," for the '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, Cicerone or Pontano, but the real climate to which his suburban place was a response. Hence one of the strongest motivations for him to convert his arable 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, to 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 1517, for instance, the Pope visited the Vedriunum 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 word derives from the Roman concept of careful topiary of evergreens, in the sixteenth century it referred to "a garden of reserve of various plants" without any artistic connotation. Such a loss of meaning was perhaps due to the fact that not only gardening was generally empirical but also that the term "garden" was biased by the anti-frugal revival of Early Republic agricultural literature—which Agostino never read but proudly supported the republishing of. However anecdotal, the detail is helpful to understanding why the owner converted his whole estate into such a specific (idea of) a garden.

While those groundworks were nevertheless insufficient to overcome the apocalyptic Roman floods, which kept on eroding the soil each year, the plantations eventually transformed the site into a place—that is, an enclosure defined through habitation (from the original Latin able to "cultivate, inhabit, and worship"), one.
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. As it was warm, and most rooms smelled 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 piazza below had suddenly become a stage. The illusion continued as even the turrets 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'. Between 1505 and 1511, Chigi had commissioned the casino from Peruzzi (who was also about to design, in fact, the stage set for a play written by Cardinal Bibbiena) — 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. [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 Volterra from a farmhouse; and the other at Lungara from an urban palazzo. 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 understated, since either the patron or his architect had understood that the entire property should function not as a rustic poushe 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) paterfamilias, to host friends and enemies, from gentle clerks to senators and clerics.86

In that sense, the reception court was at once a square, a piazza, a stage: a room and a glade opened within the dense plantations of the orchard and vineyard. Hence it analogically mediated between urban and rural, courtesy and chivalry, magnificence and splendidour, publicness 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 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—Vitellianus Olgiati 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.88 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.89 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 spot not only for his own use but for the dignity and beauty of the city also to sit outside, where many gardens, vineyards and other buildings as well as some sites, useful and necessary residences have been rising in the last few years. 88)

What this bull describes is a process of villafication of the agrarian region. Does it sound familiar? It does so, 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 Vitellianus. [Fig. 1] Such good timing was more than a coincidence, as Leo still owed Agostino for the financing of his process (papal coronation). It is equally worth noting that the modus

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operators and 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 inheritance 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. 2]

Form and function—size—were therefore just as critical to confer these places with the appearance that Leo X considered "useful." Further inside, the grand 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 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 enter exactly 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 dramatizations of Ovid's Metamorphoses, which usually took place on the empty parterre just below.  

164. Agostino Chigi was famous for having the best artists of his time to compose with each other in long-term collaborations. Even though, by 1505, Raphael was still a pupil of Giulio Romano, he was already the mostiscan painter in Rome, a role that was filled by Peruzzi. David Richlin argues that Raphael was a friend of the noble and generous, or so-called "families" since "the purchase in 1502 of additional land to the north..." They would maintain family ties with Raphael's descendants. [Fig. 2] For the first time, work on the combined role of patron and architect (the latter) that Raphael designed to stand on the north-eastern corner of this land along the Via della Lungara, 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, 1520, the frescoes were not completed, but in a contract of the year of the master in 1520, the latter was permitted to complete their work within six months. Meanwhile Chigi had no concerns with difficulties and unhappiness of the artist's work in his garden. And in January 1519 it was suggested that he was moving from the Tiber since he could be closer to Rome.  


167. This transition is kept by the monumental spaces facing decorating the antinominal work. This, moreover, emphasizes the archaeology of the loggia, which is to walk up and, at the same time, meditate on ancient ruins. For instance, the fruits and vegetables hanging from the statues are a feature of the Roman art.  


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po\-si\-bly) 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." At 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 away in the Tiber. The act tricked even the smart Pope, unaware of the nets installed beforehand on the riverbed to retrieve them.

The hoax, 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 whispers 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 serenaded in individual pans, the setting was able to overcome the imagination of the most avid reader of the Decameron. The extensive orchard nearby functioned towards 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—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 to move in — 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.\(^{115}\)

The garden as a pedagogical project

Although Agostino was perhaps too dazzled to convince in that role, his project succeeded as a monument essentially because the garden, with its frescoed perspective into the inside, gave it a fully-fledged pedagogical dimension. That is precisely how the Vignand did redefine the humanist concept of the suburban villa.\(^{116}\) For the garden not only hid the property's economic dependence on the city to fulfil the programme of courtly reception and leisure but also transformed this programme into a spectacle, one which legitimised the expropriation 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 set of possessions, 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 Vignand normalised this process by ritualising abusing 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 glamorous, 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, curving roses, and so forth) entailed in the reproduction of time 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 Vignand a humanist villa. While the game of illusions of leisure and autonomy develops well...
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 urban 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 preconditioned 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-humanistic subjects — even if only subliminally — once 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 oium — the possibility of doing nothing.

Garden and steps as theatre of the city

Doing nothing, however, was not a possibility for Julius II, to whom oium was less a pretext to emulate the moderating figure of a patronnis 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-
generously sized, Julius' pleasure garden — the Cortile del Belvedere — was huge and therefore became a caricature (and the first 'failare') of that progressive change of form and function.

The project, in fact, took the monumentalisation of the basilica 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 Arnaldo Bruschi have thoroughly argued that it was a 'classical villa.' 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 (1484–1492). It is worth noting that, until the sixteenth-century intervention, this was a U-shaped loggia-pavilion isolated on the summit of Mount St. Egido to the north of the Vatican Palaces. [Fig. A2] Due to 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. But the designer does not matter as much as the fact that, like its contemporary in Urbino, this arcade opened up towards a church (the old Constantinian 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 and especially diplomatic guests coming from the north to publicly enter Rome through the gates of the Leonine Wall. 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. To the Pope, who was proudly restless, the choice of programme was neither about simplifying 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. The difference this time was the employment of an architect...

103. These themes on 'the Belvedere as a classical villa' will be further commented on throughout this chapter. See James S. Ackerman, 'The Belvedere as a Classical Villa,' *Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 19 (1963), pp. 20–22, and Arnaldo Bruschi, *Roman Buildings* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997), pp. 107–112.


105. According to traditional historians of ancient art, the construction started in 1456 and the Casino was opened in 1497. See Frommel, *pp. 205–207*

106. Ibid., p. 207.

107. "By the fifteenth century the ceremonial entry was a very common phenomenon at Rome. Since the Vatican was the residence of the Pope, visits by foreign officials and princes, including those of all the small Italian states, were frequent. The development of diplomacy with the papal states meant that ambassadors, even those with permanent residence in the city, were also accorded ceremonial entry. At the intersection of the new popes every foreign prince, or more worldly a special exchange, visited Rome to do homage to the new pontiff." David R. Coffina, *The Villa Life of Renaissance Rome* (Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 149.


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 kilometre 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 architectural onto a series 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 formalise Julius’ pretext of bypassing the Middle Ages to return straight to classical antiquity, when temporal power was actualised 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 conclusus, but a fossam, a court, aum, 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 overthrow of even the simplest of urban events. But the actual motivation behind those design decisions was Bramante’s take on the site itself. Upon arrival he discovered that the ‘void’ between the Casino and the Vatican Palace was far from a titolo used but, instead, was a complex topography densely planted with vines, historically and symbolically charged. The cultivation, nonetheless, was not known as a “vigna” but a “vindinaria” or a “garnanum”, 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. The naming, though, dates from 1576 when Nicholas III purchased the land, amongst several other vineyards, meadows and woods around the north of St. Peter’s, 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 giardino detto semplice or 'garden of simples', where the pontiff would cultivate medicinal herbs (as if he were a monk). The ground — where the Cortile stands today — was locked away 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', or a boat filled with various plants and animals like the Ark of Noah, as Fra Paolo da Venezia illustrates in a map of 1523. 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 did have 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 1:2, which (as mentioned by Vitruvius and confirmed by Alberti) was the proportion of the Circo Massimo and of an ancient Roman forum. Bramante, moreover, understood that natural beauty as 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 Pala- shine 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 gym — 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 Prænesti.
just outside Rome. This ancient sort of 'city-building' inhabited by seemingly impossible conglomeration through axial systems of great temple spaces, flanked by continuous arcades and interrupted by several terraces connected by triangular ramps and retained by walls with niches. In other words, the very design brief of the Cortile del Belvedere, whose only difference was having re-purposed those elements in the narrower containment of a hippodrome. Moreover, either by chance or intuition, Bramante sensed that the emulsion of Palestrina dovetailed with Julius' idea of city in 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 — not become the model for — the Pope's project of renewing the city within its broader region. The terraced court, furthermore, produced a rhythm of tension and release that, by effecting neuro-muscular perception, predisposed the human body to long walks and critical breaks and, thereby, to experience space from the perspective of both actor and audience. So instead of framing the landscape as its background, the Cortile had (literally) transformed the landscape into itself as a theatre. The main auditorium of this theatre was composed of two-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 triangulated ramps and a colossal step, which served as another audience seat for the gladiatorial games, bullfights and tournaments occasionally staged on the lower court. Meanwhile the upper terrace was a garden of classic sculptures around a flowerbed laid out in a wide hemicycle, similar to that within Pliny's hippodrome. And so, through the frame of this 'horse-shoe', one could look back at the long axial climb and picture the gigantic courtyard as a unified whole of repetitive forms — such as the 60 arches, 120 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 crow of new courtyards to recognise itself as a group within the papal project of temporal power. 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 political — recognise the temporal rule. This is the reason for the socio-political function of theatre and why Roman forums were often similar to circuses, as were some late Renaissance squares similar to toscans. Unfortunately, neither Bramante nor Julius ever saw their Cortile functioning as such, because it construction took more than six decades to complete. In any case, the Belvedere remains an important experiment — above all to 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) aimed to a garden prior to its implementation on site. 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 hospices gardens — proofs that the traditional garden had never ceased to be a form of architecture.) But the Belvedere marks the moment when this architecture becomes not only a design 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 aesthetic 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 flowerbed, one cultivated for sheer ornamental purposes? Moreover this 'decoration' was a secular reminder of Nicholas' pomposity, 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.
The Cortile del Belvedere significantly contributed to the garden becoming a design model and a mode of planning through the formalisation of the site into a place (or "sub-urbanism," as Sébastien Marot 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 Nona 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. A/K] 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 monumental, yet tactically punctual stage set design. Take, for instance, his garden loggia for the symposium of the villa of Cardinal Colonna, in Genazzano. [Fig. A/L] 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 the fact 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 d'Este at Tivoli was much more "successful" because Peruzzi took full advantage of the interaction of the garden—while a collective place in the household—with the humanist interpretation of a villa 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 was the "last" humanist villa because it confidently fused the spatial experimentations and prototypes which had been introduced in the previous five decades. [Fig. A/M] The architect Giacomo da Vignola reconciled the "domestic theatricality" of Viciarum 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 pubic—seemed like Alberti's reading of the ancient Roman house. Late 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 gardened 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 (parterre), woods (arbusti) and lofty parks (lago) for hunting.⁴⁴⁸ (Fig. AN) This activity was traditional amongst the nobility. It was therefore usual to see it feature amongst grassy castle/villas, though it reappeared in Villa Giulia for another reason—to recreate a natural-looking territory around

Fig. AN. The main house of the property of Julius III and the system of various enclosures that ranged from vineyards (vigna) to meadows (parterre), woods (arbusti) and lofty parks (lago) for hunting. "Villa Giulia," ca. 1551.


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 court. This was followed by a walled and sunken symposium. Lastly, there was an actual loggia — called here a portico. [Fig. A0] 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 analogically 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. A1] 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 Julius III wanted his retreat to enable him to live introvertedly 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 was 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 guilt. However, the space was periodically open to anyone willing to follow a code of conduct posted at the entrance. Known as the artium, the text mimicked 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 fulfil 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 as an instrument of the worship of his persona nor as propaganda for his papacy but, instead, to sustain the specific social milieu which, eventually, could work for him. "Sweet is the yoke of mine" was the Leonine motto, expressing that his authority was 'softer', even though he was just as (if not more) ambitious as Julius II. The crucial difference was that the Medici Pope was a subtle strategist, who never would clash with the old Tolentino class as did Dorotheus. Instead, Leo focused on making diplomatic advances while discretely granting favours that raised the influence of his family and the broader Florentine society — which he promised to reconcile with that of Rome. 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. 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 papal residences, on an orchard and close proximity to the hunting ground of the Prati. 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." Only a year later, though, he put the estate in the name of his cousin — whom he had just made cardinal — Giulio de' Medici. [Fig. AQ] The reasons for that transfer are worth noting. Firstly, it served Leo to prevent future problems with the Camera Apostolica while still keeping the possession in the hands of the Medici. Secondly, the Pope had just appointed his protégé as vice-chancellor in charge of the Vatican's foreign affairs. So, it would look legitimate to give him a spot right at the northern entrance of the city to receive diplomats and guests of the Curia with the necessary pomp of such an office.

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 to establish his role. So he followed through with the enterprise of transforming the signa into a monument to his 'public' life as a representative of the theoretical and practical approach to which Rome had just been reduced. 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. Moreover, he was both a key collaborator and frequent guest in the Vallicranza of Agostino Chigi. Hence not only was this a professional who knew Giulio's "programme" from first-hand experience but — after Bessarion'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. 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 Pincio where the client's family possessed their fourteenth-century podere, which only a few decades later would become the famous Villa Medici. 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
Madama seated on the rectangular terrace that emerges from the forested cliff. [Fig. AS] 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 out by Antonio da Sangallo after the architect in chief had prematurely died in 1519.  

[Fig. AT] Though before we finally land there, let us start with a brief look at the first drawing by Raphael.

For as much as it is tempting to project on this plan (our modern 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 vesuvius 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 vila as conceptual models but his formalization of the hill 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 interruptions except for the change of ambience. So the design translated that into an enfold of walled enclosures interconnected by portals, loggias, chambers, steps, courts 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 cell 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 shied away from fully fledged gardens as interiors. And so, the site becomes a visible system of interiors once Raphael filled it out with a narrative of various gardens, each one working like a painting.  

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, drew the guests' eyes to the brighter centre of the terrace garden, where a long table would occasionally be used for ambassadorial 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 hippodrome-like composition of two semi-circles and a square. Unfortunately, there is no evidence about the species or the precise layout in which these gardens ran in parallel with the house instead of meeting it transversely.  

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 more 'obvious' solution of connecting the terraces by a triangulated system of ramps and steps. But Raphael avoided this artifact because it would have produced an overall axiality alien to the spatial 'narrative' of the other rooms in the villa.  

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.
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.444 Decades later, though, another form of private garden open to the public emerged. This was the case of the Orti Farnesiani, 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. AU] 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, nitches 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.445 Despite the variety of plants, their main theme was the large collection of ancient sculptures owned by Farnese. In 1575, 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 botanic garden in Italy. At the same time the type emerged as a didactic
Below: Full longitudinal section of the Orti Farnesiani in "Terme Garden" in 1815, a sort of botanic acropolis overlooking the Campo Vaccino.

[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 gates here facing the Roman Forum). Hence, consciously or not, Orti Farnesiani actualised a reinterpretation of the late-republican 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, epitomized and best represented by Villa of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este in Tivoli. [Fig. AX] In this, Pio Leo, who laid out an extensive garden so huge it looked and functioned like a park. This tendency to almost blur—both formally and conceptually—two distinct ideas of spatial enclosure reached an unforeseen acceleration between 1581 and 1585, when Cardinal Felice Peretti di Montalto, and the architect, Domenico Fontana, deployed garden design to turn a decadent site into a cultivated villa and this, eventually, into a "park." This would later become Vigna Peretti di Montalto, commonly known as "Villa Peretti." [Fig. AX] 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 Quirinali towards Monte Esquilino—the location of his property. The more area was renewed, the more the villa made sense located there. Although traces of a written tradition were never discovered, 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 artery of connection between S. Maria Maggiore and the future fair at Piazza del Terme. If true, this would invest the garden with an innovative programme: turning circulation into a planvable yet productive activity. Therefore, it stands on the border between garden and park. In our discussion, such a strategic move is another proof of the great success of monumental villas in establishing rural suburbs. What is singular here? The garden of Villa Peretti demonstrated how such a process could be independently reproduced all over Rome and the entire countryside.

If we agree with Giedion, 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 these interventions was illustrated in a map of Rome by Antonio Bordini in 1588. [Fig. AZ] Whether this relation was ever conscious may never be proved nor ruled out. Much more telling, though, would be to determine whether his own garden experience 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 commentary 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 Alessandrina. Just three years later, their 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 lay just beside his favourite building, the Basilica S. Maria Maggiore. 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, back in the Cardinal had been progressively disenfranchised by Gregory XIII. So, he needed a tacit retreat, but could not afford the aristocratic choice of Monte Pincio.
On the other hand, Monte Esquilino 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 country 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 straight roads seem to lead the area away from the city: Via Pia (from Via Nomentana) 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 crossing looks steep and messy. Only S. Maria Maggiore stands out from a scattered of tiny buildings, porticoes and arches. At the other side of its nave, a clear ground is flanked by a long wall with a gate in the middle. That 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 bad because the Esquilino was very poorly irrigated (most aqueducts nearby were ruined).

In the following year, 1577, a map published by Etienne Dupérac and Antoine Lafféry did not show any changes, except for a clearer representation of the slope inside the property and a medieval hortus conclusus, subtitled Turris Monzae. 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 harsh 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. 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 subtitled "Villa di Montalto." Now much higher, the walls are cornered with cypress trees. The original gate has been replaced by a monumental entry. Outside the front, Obelisk Equilino (1587) is off-centred to align with both the 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 cubicolo caminio planted inside the piazza which definitely reads now as a monumental garden. Each of the four linear spaces girdled a different framing element: from the front loggia, an avenue of cypresses hosts the entrance gate; from the back portico, a court clears the sight for a fountain trio to emerge nestled by poplar trees; on the right, a pergola walks through two oaks to end casually at a hilly shady bosco. The left façade is draped by an apparently ornamental kitchen garden. The sequence suddenly stops at another avenue. Transveral and longer than the first, it links the upper bosco to the second gate, Porta Quirinalis (1587). Regular gaps between cypresses reframe, on 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 each pathway a prolongation of the inside space of the small camino – 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 our gaze to what awaits outside: for instance, S. Maria degli Angeli (1586) next to Piazza delle Terme (1588), with Monte Pincio in the background. So, garden architecture is not so much driven to frame villa 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 Terme 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 inhabitable and walkable. Second, it was 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 heavily 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 to become Acqua Felice. Throughout the century, irrigation was a problem as Romani as the floods in November. The latter were countered by successive reforms along the Tiber 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 enlargement of his villa. It is equally worth noting that in 1585 Sixtus V had also purchased Villa d'
Naples from Cardinal Carafa—his residence was a gardened checkerboard tabula ansata 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 viewed 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, with 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 colossus enlargement 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 1585 until the Pope died in 1590. By expanding the outer limits of his villa, Sixtus 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 (or shaping) several gardens. Each enclosure is bound by a low parapet and offset by a line of conifers. Two types of plan dominate: the cruciform flower bed centred around a fountain and the grass pod yielded by small trees. Perhaps many of these were of pears since the fruit featured in Sixtus V's coat of arms and Peretti means pears in the Roman dialect. The casino lost its shady seat to be winged by two private yet monumental gardens. Meanwhile, a miniature farm replaces the hilly boos. Within a single trapenoid 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 gutters away by seven paved avenues running down (on an average of 300 metres) towards Strada Felice. The placement of a large oval basin on the lower level of the property may well be related to drainage relief. 

Fig. 2: Hypothetical axonomic view of the garden and main house in the Villa Peretti.

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Given the huge amount of soil removed, it is impossible not to question the reason behind the decisions made by Peretti and Fontana. Other predecessors, such as Villa Madama and Ottavio Facelli, had dealt with similar sites by building up terraces to stage their gardens. This was, in fact, the Roman way, making theatrical spectacles out of topography. Thus, why were terraces so timidly deployed in Villa Peretti? Sixtus 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 works is 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 way 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 cascaded pitches of cupressus 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, Sixtus 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 adulthood. Further, with that miniature farm on the scene, not only would the villa appear self-sufficient, but also Sixtus 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.  

While that first area is undoubtedly the garden of the villa, the annex looks like a pedana 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 pedana would be locked whenever the garden was opened to visitors. Surely, the two enclosures had different architectural programmes. But were they complementary?

Fig. 56. Hypothetical reconstruction of Villa Peretti. The situation plan clearly shows the villa was a distinctive enclosure of monumental gardens, orchards and fountains. Note how the star-shaped plan of garden was spatially set up the potential meaning of the choice while it runs through the Giro de Prati. Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the City of Rome had demarcated the entire property to expand it with the Termini Station.
or autonomous? What could that annexe offer the villa that was not yet accomplished by the main garden? In 1586 (one year after the second area was acquired) Sixtus V started to develop the silk industry as part of his economic revitalisation of Rome. He legislated that mulberry trees should be planted everywhere so that silkworms could be raised on a large (or visible) scale. Eventually, he even planned to transform the Coliseum into a weaving factory. Given this ambition, we may speculate whether he had used his podere to grow mulberry trees. Otherwise, where else in the city could one extensively crop a species that requires an empty circle of 15 metres around it?

From archetype to project

Whether it was ever involved in the silk industry project, that annexe podere indeed addressed 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 pushed 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 podere 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 the family podere, 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 an order of cardinal spaces and centralities. So, the 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 open (almost infinite) and multi-centred territory. Hence, these six villas only touched on here related to the very crus of this entire thesis, namely from 'archetype to project' — that is, when the garden ceases to be legible as an enclosure ruled and shut away from the city (or desert), to gradually become an architecture obliterate 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 sign orchard, quite similar to the sixteenth-century refashioning of the rustic vineyard into monumental gardens. [Fig. B] Non-profit associations such as the Zappate Romane 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-organize 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 Rossetti 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.¹

According to urbanists Italo Insolera and Paolo Berdini, around 60% of these urbanisations were illegally built by private developers, forming the borgate.² Lacking cohesive planning and regulation, borgate are usually precarious neighbourhoods with almost no public infrastructure (from rubbish collection to pavements). As their private developers firstly launched a shopping mall by a highway, and then included housing schemes, these districts often involve the limits of nature reserves, protected areas or the abundant vacant agrarian land around the Roman countryside.³ The borgate often vary in size, shape, density and social status.⁴ But they always follow the logic of the real-estate market, with a predominance of the palazzi and villas.⁵ Their target population is mostly the migrant families of low-income workers. As neither the contractors nor the mayor have ever accomplished an interconnection of the periphery with the — already insufficient — infrastructure of Rome, these districts have gradually formed

Fig. A. The reopening of Villa Borghese to the city of Rome, 12 July 1909.

4. Ibid., p. 87
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 44

Fig. B. The urban territory of the Commune of Rome in 1915 (dot-hatched) around the imperial walls (thick black line) with the main nineteenth-century pretentious villas (blue dots). Note the areas of the largest villas (blue blacks) which would reappear as public parks between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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an archipelago of borgate around the city centre. [Fig. E] Many of these developments — especially the ones 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 act 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

9. As was the case with the papal gardens of sub urban villas in sixteenth-century Rome. See Chapter 2 of the previous thesis.
Fig. F. This is a housing district mostly illegally built since 1990 onwards. The
settlement edges the Natural Reserve Grottaglie, on the north region outside of the GRA. This
settlement is generally preserved for its lack of public services and infrastructure. The site
nevertheless is located between two lakes (blue line), whose margins somehow remain with most of its
indigenous vegetation (red line pattern). As these fringes build the two main surrounding roads of
the settlement, they could feature a linear system of pedestrian circulation, terraces for leisure
and collective recreation.

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Fig. G. This is a housing district from 2000 onwards. Its settlement edges the Natural
Reserve Grottaglie, on the west region outside the GRA. The site is mainly street urbanization
of single buildings housing that lacks 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,
holds the potential to become a model for future strategies of intervention.

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Fig. 4. Izmir is a housing estate mostly illegally built from 1990 onwards. The settlement edges the Natural Reserve Mapulla, on the north outside of the OBA. The site has several problems, such as the lack of a comprehensive system of public space, circulation and infrastructure. One step, however, was the remaining site land along the River Cmara (blue line). These areas could gain a linear system of collective spaces of leisure and pedestrian circulation for residents.

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Fig. 5. Cemik Yerkes is a horticultural built from 2000 onwards, edging the Natural Reserve Mapulla, on the west again outside the OBA. At first sight, it seems that everything is fine with this horticultural, as it has some public space and infrastructure. However, this area has a severe 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 speedy and loud traffic of the highway.

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Fig. J. An edge between Giardinetti Comelli and idle land, at the east end of Roman Comune.

Fig. K. Top: Edge (blue) between Pope Pius and the Roma della Giara (circle hatch), a drawn mixed forest.

Fig. L. Edge (Blue) between All Point and idle land, marquis shacks (dot hatch), grass (circle pattern).

Fig. M. Top: Edge (blue) between Gaul Body and Roma della Giara (circle hatch) and idle land (dot hatch).

Fig. N. Edge (Blue) between Giardinetti Comelli, agricultural and idle land (dot hatch).
orchards. [Fig. O] A set of local policies could regulate their building and management through the association of existing parochial churches and allotment organisations, such as the Zappeti Romano.

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, stairways 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 borgata population the luxury of enjoying 

Fig. O: Territorial strategy for intervening in the precarious conditions of many illegal settlements around Rome to re-combine the sixteenth-century suburbs with a possible model for a linear system of great walls, terraces and gardens.
Fig. 7: Top: A rough edge between field and a stream of idle land.
Fig. R: Bottom: A central street without sidewalks in Cento di Coralli.

Fig. 8: Top: A jagged redefines the edge as an inhabitable limit.
Fig. T: Bottom: A group self-forms into market, such as a busy street. The same device also gives access to idle land and attractive features such as breaks and open space.
Fig. U. Top: A street stop at the verge of Via della Giustizia, in Prima Porta.
Fig. V. Bottom: A street-level stop at the peak ideal, in Piazza del Popolo.

Fig. X. Top: A zapping offers a place for leisure while giving access to a natural reserve.
Fig. Y. Bottom: A house is seen to the "so far away," within the urban territory.
Fig. 2. The rain falls on the idle land around Lysfridet.

Fig. A4. The terrace of a collective garden after the flood, Lysfridet.
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 dispossession.
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 calls of green beds
And all the nice things that she wants to plant in them
I can grow tomatoes on the front steps
Sunflowers, beans sprouts, sweet corn and bananas
I feel practically, 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 very possibility of a 'better life.' That is because the cultivation of a garden implies a significant amount of space, time and attitude, 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
fact for most young workers who cannot afford to buy a house. 3 To ‘do some gardening’ somewhere may become, therefore, a way to at least compensate for that feeling. As Courtney Barnett sings in ‘Acne Garden’, growing tomatoes can make one forget about all problems and ‘feel proactive,’ thus ‘in charge’ of some part of a 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 condivisi’ 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 tale 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. 4 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 “incorrigible runner, cyclist and allotment gardener,” who, if becoming Prime Minister, would not give up his plot in East Finchley. 5 [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, hand-on and creative. 6 An


4. See the present thesis from page 103 to 105.


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 renew their lease. The latter often prevails. This is especially true after the London Government Act of 1963, which relaxed 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 urbanisation 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 portion granted or distributed; that which is assigned by lot, or by God; anything set apart for a special use or to a distinct party." The noun may have been either nominally formed by the late seventeenth century or, most probably, came into English a century earlier through "allotment," from the Old French "allotter" and "distribuer," 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 "klota" for "share of land" and Old English "hlot" for "obtained to determine 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 chance itself, an auspice, a deity, a king or the state. Meanwhile, for the first
Fig. D. Distribution of allotment sites (blue) within Greater London.

Fig. E. Density of allotment sites per borough within Greater London.
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 allotments (1982)—that figures such as Jeremy Corbin, 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 to 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 skips 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 archetypical trait of enclosed gardens but, mainly, the fact that allotments do have a ‘prehistory’ 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 (Fig. F) with another from 1860 (Fig. G) reveals that both allotment gardens and suburban housing blocks have the same shapes of former rural glebes. 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 amongst 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. II] 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 these 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 1922. 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 easy 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. I] 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 opened the open-fields 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 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 1832 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 peasantry access to common and waste lands but, crucially, they had divested their labour. Since that process favoured the re-peopling 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 gaze 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 crucial to working-class struggle. Yet the protesters did not focus on attacking the legal acts that had legitimised that massive privatisation of landownership. Instead, they targeted 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 peasantry, enclosure was tragic precisely for having freed the manors from the traditional duty to provide them with the right to use - not pay - 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 founda-

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Fig. 1. Plan of a typical medieval manor in England.

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Fig. 14. Top: Cater, Thomas Wade (1864).

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44. Ibid., p. 293.

45. It is the direct system, open-fields, that could be less profitable than extensive mechanised farming on the land. It used to be said that the land's fertility, based on the principle of interchangeability of plots, would allow the land to support more people. In other words, the open-field system was what today is referred to as sustainable, especially in the environmental and social dimensions. Collective kitchen gardening was one of the reasons why that was so. The diminution of the open-fields system was conducted and explored not only by the English countryside but also by the structure of rural society, starting from an early date, the proprietor. The Enclosure of common land removed the traditional rights of the peasantry and produced a contradiction of dereification which eliminated the peasants from both their old society and its life. This was a fundamental factor in the transformation of the traditional kitchen gardens that were once used to support a large number of people. This marks the political construction (and rearrangement) of the modern world, which is no longer defined by a community of other peasants but, instead, by a new nuclear family. Karl Marx, "Farm Rules, So-Called" (1880).
tion of the Labour's Friends Society in London and the renewal of parliamentary interest in the provision of allotments, mostly around the county of Somerset. Although the riots were concentrated in the county of Kent, they affected the broader region that included Essex, Surrey and Middlesex.

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 kilometers 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 to or coming from London - which periodically inflated the local population. The parish was attractive also for its various tracts of wasteland along main roads, such as Hang Lane and Deyton 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 commoning and intercommoning 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 avert social conflict. These problems, however, were only to increase as London rapidly expanded, accelerating the enclosure and mechanisation of agricultural production at large. Three decades later, failed crops in Acton and Hampton hit the economy of Middlesex, causing mass starvation, impoverishment of seasonal labourers and social unrest.

In Ealing, consequently, workhouses became overcrowded, and parishioners complained about having to pay taxes. In response, the Vestry insisted upon enforcing respect for the Church and policing the roads. However, in 1832 it decided to also experiment with its largest common, Ealing Dean, and petitioned the Bishop for his consent to enclose and allot the land for "poor relief". By the end of that year, he officially authorised the enclosure. [Fig L]

There is no record in the official minutes of the exact reasons for the petition. Moreover - contrary to what projective 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 letting gardeners to labourers 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 year 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 parishioners', who could, then, feed their '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, it was 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 unrest between 1800 and 1830, 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 a 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

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"Twenty acre" corresponded 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 draftman was equally precise in stressing the properties nearby, such as the "land & 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 abounds from laying out the grid of one-rood parcels, which would form the future allotment. One must note how
emphasize the Bishop was in linking "one rood 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. Such 'access' for ownership is equally evident in both drawing and text. For instance, 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 rural horticulture rather than mechanised farming. 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.
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 an essential 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 not become idle 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 ‘hedger’ instead of ‘fence.’ The primary role of hedging over fencing is one of the most defining traits of allotments in England. To the present day, hedges and narrow pathways aim to delimit the plots without 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 façade and shutters, the space of an allotment must always stay visible to the outside. The absence of built, thus, liable 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 analogous to the governance of London, which entangled the right of the police with that of private property — similarly to the present status quo in the city, and most other cities in the West. "Biopolitics," though, was neither a theory nor a buzzword at the time in question, as it has become today. Nevertheless, one may argue that the presence of the Vicar — both physical and psychological — had a biopolitical dimension. If the workhouses had been evident instruments of social control and exploitation of the ‘poor’, the allotment mechanism was much more subtle yet profound in its reach, because the Vicar could care for and shape the labourer’s life where capital’s knife cuts most keenly: the vital — everyday — reproduction of the human body and its labour power. One could say the same about workhouses, but public gardens were crucial different because of their pedagogical, social and cultural dimensions. Ealing Dean was, in this sense, a project of governance through not only subjugation but, above all, subjectification. Despite the coercive nature of such techniques, the entire endeavour presupposed some empowerment of the labourers. This idea is evident in the fifth term of the tenancy agreement, ‘commanding’ the labourer to become a moral model for his community. That is, by conducting himself as a ‘good Christian’: ‘solicitous, honest and industrious.’ Such a ‘commandment,’ however, soon turns into a sheer threat with the word ‘disposition’. The sixth term describes the ‘penalty’ to be imposed if the plot-holder fails to respect any of the five earlier terms. Here one cannot help suspect cynicism on the part of the Vestry, because it wrote the contract exactly when parliamentary enclosure was utterly depressing labourers of their rights to communing on open fields.

In order to better understand this historical context, one should also consider another crucial event, indirectly related to parliamentary enclosure: Poor Law Reform, which started in 1832, precisely during the implementation phase of Ealing Dean. The Bishop (of course) chaired the Central Board of the Royal Commission responsible for recommending the changes which eventually led to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. Since the English Parliament wanted the reform to lower the spending on ‘poor relief,’ the Board focused on curtailing the workhouse system. Garden allotments, therefore, did not feature in the final report to MPs. Allotments nonetheless soon 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 could make employees "idle" and, thus, less "willing" (or not doing) 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 Labourers' 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 workforce and reliability of their tenants. The Reform further influenced the allotment debate, leading to a shift away from "providing land to the 'poor'" towards "boosting industriousness amongst labourers." Indirectly, in this context not only meant diligence, but also evoked the Protestant concept of self-help. Thanks to this development, allotments became interesting not only to Conservatives but also to the increasing number of Liberal MPs. "Helping the 'poor' to help themselves out of poverty" was the key point upon which various political figures, with divergent agendas, could agree. Such a consensus undoubtedly reflected the remaining influence of late eighteenth-century evangelicalism over Parliament and the political economy at large. However, 1830 inaugurated a phase in which pragmatism gradually disguised the appearance of ideology in politics and economy. It was precisely this change that would reinvigorate rural paternalism and its interest in garden allotments. And for Liberal MPs allotments seemed ideal, for they could not only benefit and reform the moral character of the "labouring poor" but also lower public spending on poor relief. The Bishop was thus not alone in his enthusiasm. However, unlike other powerful figures and landowners, he knowingly focused on the pedagogical dimension of garden allotments. Besides the purely religious nature of his position, such a focus was due to his prior first-hand experience in the early 1820s. Blomfield had an experimental site in the village of Chesterford, Essex, where he was Rector, eight years before his election to the Diocese of London.\footnote{Oliver Murray (2015-19) All rights reserved / No reproduction without permission.}
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 ‘flock’ of parishioners. In other words, the allotment should make labourers self-reliant but—nay—independent 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 Common into a totalising grid. By 1835, the entire enclosure was divided into 145 plots. Through the process of demarcating such a grid, Parish Officers would moreover deepen their knowledge of a good portion of the larger territory that they had to control and collect tithe from. It is worth noting that Ealing Dean Common Allotments featured in the Apportionment Book and Tithe Map of 1839 (Fig. OI, where they are described as “Property of the Bishop of London occupied by the Poor of Ealing.”)

The parish commissioned the map on the occasion of the Tithe Commutation Act 1836, which required local authorities to publish detailed surveys of all landownership within their bounds. This demand was due to the Tithe Reform, which established that payments to the Church should be in cash instead of in kind. This event epitomised a period of general empowerment and suburbanisation of parishes, at a time when the territory of London was rapidly expanding towards the countryside. From the map one learns that the occupation of Ealing was still quite agrarian. However accurate, the mapping ignored the railways under construction at that time, even though Uxbridge Road—on the north of Dean Common—appears straighter and larger than it was. Soon after the inauguration of Ealing Broadway Station in 1838, the local population grew rapidly and the parish went from being a rural settlement to being a town and, eventually, a suburb. As this process occurred first on the northern side, the map still shows Dean Common, on the south, entirely surrounded by farms. If the map had provided greater detail regarding the site, one would be able to further understand how the allotment grid signalled— if not anticipated — the forthcoming urban re-parcelisation of its context. The similarity between the logic of alloacting Ealing with that of privatising urban land becomes
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 allotment 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, 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 presupposes 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 40% of urban re-parcellisation 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. [Fig. 8] 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 slowly rises. It is a Monday—but work takes wait another hour—while the dew will sparkle, and green leaves spread. Bees buzz, birds sing, but not yet ready for harvest, so he leant down to check on the spinach, gats a bit dry and takes a deep breath, smelling the sweet soil. On the way back up, he looks around and not anybody, though spiders are tick-ticking everywhere. How far does this sound go? Where does the site start? Where does it end? He wonders. The shape of his plot, though, is fine. It is his "place in the world," his "slice in the hedge," where he can forget all about and conclude 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 quick-set hedges. "Are these "tidy" enough for the Vicar?" he worries. "When will the Verry finally fix the fences around our site?" he complains, though he can't see them from his plot any more.

Nothing—is apparently—"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 so some certainty in life. He thus feels "protective" 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 important, 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 microcosmic, 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 precariousness 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 procedures 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 garden 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 for 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 ambitious - 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 affect 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 poltergeistic 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 1856. Since their minutes focused on the preoccupations of management rather than feedback from users, one cannot suppose the tenants 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 among 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 AM. As discussed earlier, the Parish Officers were also committed to shutting the site on Sundays. Unfortunately for the tenants, the sites were not the most religious parochioners and, in 1858, petitioned the Managing Committee to allow Sunday gardening until 8 AM. Any waged 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. 100 Of a total of 133 participants, there were 91 farm labourers, 11 gardeners, nine carpenters, nine bricklayers, five shoemakers, two cow keepers, two widowed housewives, and one each of ten 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, 101 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 politisation 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'. 102 For this reason, one may associate the nineteenth-century allotment with the development of agricultural trade Unionism in the 1860s. 103 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 isolated individualization and communal organization. In this sense, even the restrictive norms on plot sizing and gardening become 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 in ideology. 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 realize not only their ‘use value’ but also the immanent potential of his or her ‘labour power.’

Fig. 6. Frontispiece to the 1885 volume of the Labourers’ Friend Society Magazine. Following the post-naturalistic character of the 1880s and its publications, this image idealized the rural labourer gardening his allotment alongside his nuclear family. The setting in the background emphasized domesticity.

Fig. 7. The interior of a typical tool shed at Ealing Dean Commons. Allotment at the beginning of 1900. Following more practices around that time, the council allowed each plot holder to build only one small shed. To prevent this ‘building’ to become a habitual practice, the Managing Committee established it could not occupy more than 10% of the single plot.

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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 was captured and amalgamated with the countryside. While the acts of enclosing and allotting Dean Common played a direct role in those processes, the following justifications of plot holders played a more collective 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 those 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 plot sites. There was therefore a potential for associations, philanthropists and MPs to put forward allotments as a tool — 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 stake in the land, they would feel, and would legally be, 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 compulsorily appropriate vacant land for allotment gardening. The government took similar action during WWII, with the 'Dig for Victory' campaign, urging civilians to garden vegetables everywhere, to 'battle' war-time austerity. [Fig. U]

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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 reactionary praise 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. Above all, the very process of organizing allotments entailed the development of an associative 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 uprooted 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. 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. Unlike the previous case, though, Finchley Common was a much larger area, extending over 900 acres when local landowners campaigned for the Bishop to privatise it in the early 1800s. An Act of Parliament of 1815 separated 15 acres to be let as fuel allotments to local farmers. Five years later, another Act enclosed the entire field and immediately parcelled out more than 100 acres to pay for the costs of that process. 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. The site was, and still is, a 12-acre rectangle surrounded by a cemetery, a forest, and housing dating from 1890. 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.

The local authority also had to follow the green shape of the enclosure and, regardless of the sloping terrain, organised the site into a uniform grid of 48 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, paying annual rents of ten shillings. Even if most lacked gardening skills, cultivation was nonetheless easy since the Finchley soil is a fertile layering of chalk, brown clay, and gravel. Thus, many plot holders succeeded in cropping the species advised by the RHS to sustain their households during war-time austerity. By 1923, plots holders had not only established a garden but also a cohesive and active Holders' Association. As overcrowding loomed in 1930, the group pressed the Council to buy the freehold from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Since the Church still had a pedagogical interest in promoting allotments, the conveyance established that the site should always serve such a purpose. 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. But rules became concerned with facilitating coexistence rather than 'good Christian conduct.' Still, they reinforced private property. As the Association thrived, it put on annual shows stimulating tenants to plant ornamental species. Fig. AA

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

Most popular crops:

Chard
Potato
Jerusalem artichoke

Rumex and dandelion
Sweet potato

Brassica oleracea
Marrow

Rumex acetosella
Sorrel

Lettuce
Pumpkin

Onion
Barley
Garlic
Thyme

Turnip
Carrot
Ranunculus
Bay leaf

Quail and chickens (eggs and mutton)

Violets
Bluebell

Beekeeping (honey), small pet (Chihuahua)
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 1930 onwards, legislation significantly increased the number of sites, their social inclusivity, 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 landfill 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 stables to house the merchants and artisans in the backyard 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 storeys 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 drained and filled the Basin with bombing debris. Only a year later the Crown decided to enclose the landfill site. [Fig. AE]

Fig. AE: The landfill of Cumberland Basin a year after the London Blitz of 1940.


165. Ibid., p. 364.

166. The Market formally shut down in 1920.

167. Charles E. Birdall was the architect in charge of the Crown Flats.


169. Ibid., p. 3.


171. Ibid., p. 35.

172. Ibid.
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.76 Indeed, as soon as the Commissioners got tenure over the former Basin, they stopped supporting the CTHS.77 The tenants spent another year struggling to organise and finance the site, especially because the landfill was far from fertile. As the contemporary minutes report, the main concerns were drainage, groundworks and irrigation.78 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 grid of 54 plots, aligned in two rows. [Fig. A1] 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 managers 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.79 Cumberlam is therefore an extremely rare case of modern English allotments in which the allotmenting was not only the ones who envisaged and organised the site ex nihilo but also where their plots and homes were spatially connected. Contrary to the conditions of Eding and East Finchley, this site was constantly visible. And this visibility was not due to higher fences — which would only be installed much later, in the 1960s — but to the combination of a smaller area being situated within a residential courtyard.80 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. A1] Despite the homely, utilitarian appearance of allotment gardening at that point, this placement eventually gave the site a monumentality, which reminded the holds — and all other local residents — of the collective process of reclaiming the idle landfill for their shared use. This was an enormous 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 passive consumers of the city.81

73. The documentation on the ownership of the Basin — both before and after the landfill — is sparse. The only hard evidence available to the public dates from 1901, when the Pedley Trust purchased the freehold from the Crown Estate.

74. Minutes, bid.: p. 35

75. General Meeting held on 19 September 1948, in Flat 12, Woodside House: Minutes of The Crown Estates Horticultural Society (Cumberland Basin Horticultural Society, CTHS Archive).

76. Meeting held in No. 3 Air raid Shelter at 3:30 pm on Saturday February 13th, 1948: Minutes of The Cumberland Estates Horticultural Society (Cumberland Basin Horticultural Society, CTHS Archive).

77. In the 1950s, the Managing Committee decided to move the site to own a black iron from two metres in height, to prevent the entry of passers-by and to avoid local enemies by maintaining the site’s image to community and greatly public space and, thereby, future private property values.

78. That is not to say that such a ‘programme’ should give way for parks to again become the vestry allotments — and those of state propagandists — they were during World War II. But these types of history are problematic when local memories and collective identities are put aside for an economy and public space and, thereby, future private property values.

79. Cumberland example more so 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 — within plain open sight — would also transform the public experience of the 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 — and not 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-fledged alternative to the landownership crises which gradually developed in the following decades, and which presently divide London.80 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 need for the people to garden 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.81 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 workspace absorbing each other — it makes no sense today 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-purification of London and its countryside, about the endless reproduction of labour. Unlike garden squares, allotments have bettered the territorial dimension of housework. Plot holders may thus collectively rethink gardening as a self-valouring praxis and transform their sites into an economically self-sufficient and socially emancipatory space. The question is how 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 "prehistory" 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 neighbourhoods.

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 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 in to economic interest. The solution could be to articulate these gardens more closely both with 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. [Figs. 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. 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 fought for 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'. 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 reclaimed Freedom to Roam. This means the right to trespass, walk aimlessly, 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...

3. 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.' In the absence of any further consideration, this is therefore a small portion of those commons now once much more extensive, and in centuries past covered most of the coast. Meanwhile, within the administrative limits of Greater London, there are currently 124 registered sites of commonable land, amounting to a total of 172 hectares.
manors and fiefs. Until then, extended families of peasants and serfs held the right to collectively grow vegetables on the crofts and plough on the fallows to sustain themselves. In fact, according to the political economist, Massimo de Angelis, a common is neither a place nor a thing but a "system of social relationships." It thereby constitutes a specific mode of production—neither based on private property and wage labour—but, instead, on commingling. That is, the praxis of sharing resources, services, care, knowledge, etc.

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 many other middle-class suburbs—sprawling across what was still considered "countryside." For over 60 years up to that decade, the commoners shared ten hectares for mixed-culture farming in 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 1863 to 1913, decided to cut three diagonal avenues across the common; these would be shaped as "parkways," continuously flanked by horse chestnut trees in a similar fashion to the ubiquitous urban embellishment of London at
that period." [Fig. F] 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 preceded boullevards. [Fig. G] Up to 1866, the old track of this crossroad had served grazing and horseback passage through the Manor of Pichanger. [Fig. H]

The total area of Ealing Common today, of 75.67 hectares, is less than half what was first enclosed in 1830. 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 allotments which at once responds both to the deficit of vacant plots and the ongoing shrinkage of commonable 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 home to another so many times in their lifetimes, it no longer makes sense to stress plot holders according to their affiliation.

93. In 1934, 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 toolshed, 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. In circumscribed two metres above the ground and
distanted 30 metres away from each other. [Fig. J] At large, the plan of

stripes divides and, at the same time, redefines the wide - and virtually

endless - 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

nonmembers, 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 them-

selves into small associations. Each group will collectively garden

take care of two linear sheds and the void in between. [Fig. J] Initially,

this space could mimic the typical enfilade of ten-rod 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 con-

stantly 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. 1. Initial configuration of the grid between two continuous sheds.

Fig. 2: Initial state of the single plot (with striped caps and straight paths) bordered by continuous sheds. In becoming relatively larger, these sheds may house local assemblies for small associations of plot holders. The new structures could provide the associations with shared storage space for tools, feedings, manure, 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 somewhere 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 *hypocaust* of the Cistercian cloister (twelfth century) materialised an idea of communal settlement. It was an introverted enclosure that delimitated 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 gnom, these places reinterpreted the 
hortus into a wider and outward-projecting enclosure. As such, 
the archetype started to frame and construct a narrative of the 
landscape to legitimise the appropriation, colonisation and further 
'gentrification' of the Roman countryside. Far from 'economic 
phenomenon,' these processes were phases in broader political 
projects of the Roman Church, seeking to increase its power 
through the expansion and reformulation of the urban territory 
around Rome and the Vatican. Forasmuch as the archetype has 
ever 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 an 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 normalisation of garden plots into a type of small landholding 
enabled several Acts of Enclosure to 'finish off' the privatisation 
of commutable land. Meanwhile, in practice, the potentially endless 
grid of allotment sites has eventually naturalised the urban 
re-polarisation 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 archetype's 
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 finite 
enclave but also, as an entire architecture of domestic space. Thus, 
a place in the very sense of a microcosm, where dwelling and living 
can be 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 
formal 'dissolution' has contributed to the present (mis)conception 
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 (re)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-ruled 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 
reconceptualise the garden as a theatrical landscape to establish a 
morally acceptable narrative of landownership. It can be argued 
that the idea 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, farms 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
enclosure 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: designing thinking through analogy. For Tehran, Iran, within the state-sponsored blocks of private housing, it is proposed an 'urban garden' 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 perimeters between illegal housing 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 commensurable land. Given time and the will to participate, gardening may indeed promote self-valorisation and emancipation.

Despite the different contexts of each design proposal, the notion of the archetype has proven an alternative to that of type 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 recognised as common falls into a void and, thus, precariously 'true' of a 'third way'. It is argued here that the common — in the sense of a totally shared network of social relationships that actually run completely outside the definitions of public and private. As Antonio Negri has defined it, the common is not a third but "second way." The thesis does not aim at working within a utopian condition of the total abolition of property. Instead it considers the existing or latent associations of people whose practice 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 reconsiders 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 upon private property and capitalist 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 territorialisation of nearly all arable land around most Western cities. Recent scholarship has argued that agricultural production — specifically of grain — enabled early states to establish, organise and control their territories. As grain
Gardening may facilitate a willing group of people to organize 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 reflection 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 organizing 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, 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 materializes 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.
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III. PASTORAL

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Biographical Note

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- Faculty of Engineering Library / Architecture / Construction stage

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2010 IAB Architect of Tomorrow Awards
Honourable Mention, graduation project ‘Housing Rio Seaport Area’

2008 IAB Annual Awards
Honourable Mention, ‘Brazilian Houses in the 20th Century’

2006–07 CNPq National Grant for Research Development