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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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 practised. 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 '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 symbolisms. 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

...
The Dutch designer Piet Oudolf has captured that innocent/ecstatic image of the garden in recent projects, such as his Hortus Conclusus for the 2012 Serpentine Pavilion in London. [Fig. A] And the garden renewed the High Line, in New York, inaugurated in 2009. [Fig. B] These differ widely in programme, size, site, 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 “self-organized 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 — “self-organized” and “occupy” — frame gardening as a natural phenomenon rather than a social act. Oudolf’s approach is, in fact, not new but situates him as part of a generation of designers influenced by French botanist Gilles Clément. His manifesto, since 1980, has described the Earth as a “planetary garden” to be cultivated through the method of the “jardin mouvement.” [Fig. D] This approach has been practiced very successfully, 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. E] 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 “naturalized” L’ile de Berlinois 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. [Fig. F] Oudolf’s take on the hortus conclusus is also problematic in its own way, in celebrating *austerity* at exactly the time that the United Kingdom had elected an austerity conservative government. [Fig. G] 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 a garden to: spatially and formally establish an idea of *limits*. [Fig. H] In ensembling 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 legible as the architecture that they are. Gardens are architectural not necessarily in the sense of authorship or design but, first and foremost, as urban spaces 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 stake 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 tundra and completed only five years after it was originally planned in 1957, when Lucio Costa conceptualized it as a cross of “monumental” and “residential” axes. [Fig. I] While the former formalized the civic sphere as a symbolically emptily explanade flanked by administrative buildings, the latter organized the domestic realm into a grid of large city blocks — the superquadras — measuring 300 by 300 metres each. [Fig. J] As Costa had intended the superquadras to become
"socially aggregating"—or "ordo populus"—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 "concluded element" clearly framed by a linear mass of trees. It didn't matter if, within the block, building typologies varied as long as the ground between them—the "inter-safe"—provided the everyday with a civic quality. Costa and Burle Marx saw "green space" here not as "leisure space," but as space that could articulate the individualising 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 C] These gardens, thereby, were spaces of mediation between the 'private'—legally demarcated by the apartments stationed 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 emblems of the modern concept of capital city. Thus if "the project of Brasilia is a practice of limits," the superquadra gardens analogically re-enact such practice from the vantage point of the city residents, who become both actors and—according to Costa—"spectators." 

Part of the problematic found in the gardens of Onsdorf and Clément, which stand in conceptual opposition to those of Burle Marx and Costa, is the fact they become almost indistinguishable from parks, 'gardens' and 'forests.' Although all of these terms do refer to "planted 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 territory and its landscape. The 'garden' differs from these insofar as it is a domestic space, one conceptually related to "house" and ownership. Hence the general definition of the term: "a piece of ground adjoining a house, used for growing flowers, fruits, or vegetables." While its prompt association with horticulture is mostly Western and can be traced to the sixteenth century, its association with the house is cross-cultural and far older, if not immemorial. Etymology offers clues as we see the term enter Middle English from garden, Old Northern French.
on what should be considered "sacred." That is, enclosures helped to construct and crystallize a collective reality for the world. By enclosing land, thus—by giving their life from somewhere 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 etymological traces of "garden" to verse.

As the garden emerged as a walled enclosure amongst others, its form produced spatial relations by means of an enclosure. That is, it has been a paradoxically introverted space that exists only in direct relation to what it leaves outside its walls. Although may that 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 also 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 inhabitance, fertility, irrigation, symmetry, cardinality, order and unity. They were thus the "cushions" 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 art of gardenin to legitimize his authority. The gardens grew within the palace in the capital city Pasargadae—which the king allegedly cultivated by himself—were rectangular compounds divided by a cruciform system of springs and pathways. [Fig. H] These led visitors through an extensive collection of botanic species that were imported from the four parts of the territory under his rule. In this way, Cyrus also referenced the ubiquitous form of garden found around Persia, the cheshar bigh, [Fig. I] which translates as "four garden plots," deriving from the Indo-European root bāgh, "to share out." Such a reference had a symbolic impact on Achaemenid peoples because it was their image of "terrestrial paradise," or perī-deēg, meaning "wall estate," at the crossing of two rivers. According to the Avesta—the text of Zoroastrian religion—these walls are not for military defense but, in fact, for defining what deīg and what deīg do not belong inside that estate, that is, under the rule of its owner. Hence Cyrus' use of the walled cruciform garden as a paradigm of paradise, served both as a testament of sovereignty and an urban model for the epicenter of an empire. 12
Yet, prior to these appropriations, the idea of terrestrial paradise as a garden was rooted in the original meaning of the word *paradise*, as an enclosed space for "sustenance and happiness." A place where one "shall dwell" and "weave clothes." 44 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 *parados* into the Greek language to describe instead the enclosed hunting parks made for the pleasure of Persian royals. 45 By that time, around 400 BC, the Greek term for garden was *thera*. 46 This did not mean orchard but "farmed" with a strictly productive connotation, because these gardens existed within an idea of the house as oikos, defined by Aristophanes as the "focus of economy, management of biological life." 47 Hence, in ancient Greece, only palaces and temples would have *parados* within their walls. 48 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 connotations. It belonged to the realm of the *domus*, or house, which — according to Roman law — was the focus of the *domus*, or "master of the household," and his extended *familia*. The *domus* was a unit, composed of a sequence of rooms, and functioning as a sort of microcosmic public space to accommodate meetings between the master and his clients, associates, and subordinates. As visibility was crucial to legitimise these social relationships as "public", all hosting spaces were aligned by a single axis that was visible from the street entrance. [Fig. 1] Their sequencing ordered various rituals of hospitality offered by the *domus*, where each room was associated with specific gestures 49 that provided a narrative of the *familia* as a tangible "system of alliances." 50 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. 51 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. 52 So, this...
was a microscopic place that represented the core of the familia, where members would personally garden colourful shrubs of vines, myrtles and roses in order to offer them to the extended household during social rituals of worship and dinner parties, ultimately ‘naturalising’ their right to possession. As such, the hortus was an idyllic self-representation of power and appropriation, as it hid the true exploitative workings of the household, which was mostly reproduced by slave labour. Effectively, because Romans did not like to see labour of any sort, especially in representational spaces like the peristyle, they used gardening as a way to celebrate them, or ‘leisure’. This ritual became crucial in creating an apparent suspension of business within that ritualistic circuit of affairs between master and client. [Fig. E] To reinforce that effect, the space was periodically opened to strangers who, in turn, had to abide by the legetamen or ‘garden law’, typically inscribed at the entrance of the space. Juridically that meant that neither the city nor any other law could apply to the garden enclosure. As this periodical status paradoxically downplayed the actual private landownership of the domus, the association of garden with the image of ‘terrestrial paradise’ was key to tactfully reminding guests and newcomers of the ruling power of the domus.98

The hortus would further become, during the later part of the Roman Empire, indispensable to a new type of dwelling, the villa, as part of the colonisation, gentrification, and systematic expansion of the limits of the Roman Agro region towards a larger territory.99 Its aforementioned idyllic character would legitimise yet another controversial project of class empowerment, at the expense of land appropriation and slave labour. The villa was not only a country retreat but also a theatre of the ‘good life’. It choreographed social rituals through a monumental spread of rooms and gardened enclosures. Here the hortus and its ‘programme’ would become larger and splintered into a series of peristyles and hypodromes, composed of taller trees, grand pools, groves, and sculptures. [Fig. L] Remaining visible or open to the public, these gardens helped their luxurious estates to be seen as morally acceptable, by staging the impression they shared out the joy of the land.69 Meanwhile, in practice, their enclosures enabled the owners to exploit and control not just the area of the villa but also its surroundings. It is here that the walled garden’s ontological trait of producing inducements by means of

...
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
frees of intention. It is an ideographic engram as evidenced by the fact
it has been subjected to continuous 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. Where could
a garden be designed or not. It is always made by and for some. Its
construction and cultivation can be taken therefore as an idea of the
forces and active subjects with a stake in these processes.18 For
this reason, understanding the garden through the device of the archetype
may overcome previous institutional 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
was to be owned by the very same elite with the power to write
history as we know it.20 This thesis does not dismiss these cases
but, on the contrary, seeks to understand how their architectures have been to put forward dominant ideologies and practices
while leaving room for alternatives. The latter may perhaps be found
in gardening as collective knowledge and action from the vantage
point of the gardener as a labourer—one that seldom appears in
most 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,21 while forms is a positive act of (de)limitation and separation.22
Architectural space becomes a political form as it preconditions
antagonist relations by making them tangible.23 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).24 It is because
of its rendering of this fundamental distinction that garden enclosure
is here defined as an archetype of political form and space.

Form: Four Architects of Urban Transformation. Architecture and Urban Design 81, no. 1 (2013): 23-27. This follows Agnese de Rossi's proposal to "go
on an example of a complete set which suppose to the function acting as a paradigm to design in the final
analogue, in order to become inserted into our present context, on
the contrary, to present the possibleuml;̈differences in a way which
can not be shown in any other way. "Agnese, ibid., p. 18.

2. In a sign which states in the physical discipline and a kind of, which seems impertinent, and there


as "archetypal" as it is arguably the most exemplary take on the original family-owned 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 outsized public monument within suburban villas. Its design was highly theatrical to formalise, ritualise and, as a result, institutionalise the sequestration of rural land. The more recent English allotment is the image of "pastoral" politics. It addresses the normalisation of urban re-purposing of land into garden plots which have formally dissipated 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 subservient condition. What is at stake behind this gradual loss of legibility, it is argued, is the variety of ways in which each garden appropriated the archetype to enable distinct projects.

Despite having controversial agendas, these examples share a crucial pedagogical dimension: they turned gardening into a sort of self-care and, therefore, inherently an instrument of resilience and solidarity. In their own transformations of the kyrtas, these planted enclosures either refuted or complied with the dominant ideologies of their times. Yet to our present sensibility, some of them tend to be placed low on the list of "beautiful gardens" recommended to architects for visiting and inspiration. The consensus priority of today seems to be the calming, relieving, and almost liberating visual experiences of greeneries 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 still be re-appropriated by alternative projects for recognisable enclosures? And why would these be relevant today? The present research therefore urges us to uncover not only the "actualities" of such paradigms, but also to argue for their "possibilities". Hence it poses a dialectic relationship between historical analysis and design methodology, in which it re-appropriates the formal logic of each case study to propose new collective gardens that may challenge 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 anthological 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 stepping-stone, it discovered several facts that have determined all subsequent selection of examples, and their structuring into three chapters. First of all, Persian architectural knowledge and horticulture have been historically transmitted to ancient Greece and Rome. Second, the incorporation of that microcosmic concept of the garden into the dwelling -- in the form of the hortus -- has allowed Romans to refine ancient notions of ownership into property law. Since the hortus have after that become the most influential garden to Western architectures, the author and her supervisors have decided to investigate its possible role in the spatial and conceptual developments of private property. The limitation to the Western examples has helped the author 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 tale 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 written and built evidence of their forms and aims. As the Persian idea of paradise garden has influenced the Roman hortus, and this would later become the Christian image of Mary's womb in the form of the hortus conclusus, monastic gardens have been the obvious choice. No other example has come to mind except for monastic gardens on eastern Europe which were prompted discarded in favour of arguably Western ones. The author has browsed through the gardens within twelfth-century Cistercian monasteries and 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 gardens. Cistercian monasteries had been designed inspired in ancient roman domus, and so, have suburban renaissance villas been a reinterpretation of both. At this point, the research has fallen into an intrigue circle—one from which both researchers and supervisors did not want to turn away. The question was about how to frame such prolific type and period in the architecture history. The answer came with the rediscovery of Villa Bertini, designed by Domenico Fontana in 1585, 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 André Le Nôtre, 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 constructively lead the thesis into a full circle, as it could explain the present age of limitless nature-like park-gardens. The researcher has considered eighteenth-century gardens, such as those by Capability

73. Based on the ideas of 'theatre' and 'theatricality' as key components of human life, the present work addresses the concept of a garden as a microcosmic domestic enclosure while enabling the expansive re-parcellation of the urban territory from the vantage of labouring subjects.

This thesis is therefore far from aiming to be a garden encyclopaedia or to provide a universal definition. Rather, under the guise of a 'PhD by Design', it reconsiders history as a series of projects and, also, the possibility of historical research and theory as a project in itself, or that, is a possible 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, parliaments or public squares, for instance, are 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 happen or is represented—that would be too far-reaching for current trends in garden theory, already burdened with defining an object much less permanent than most. Secondly, the term 'political' is 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 articulation moves beyond representation to act as a bridge between abstract concepts and social life. However, other than in the physical experience of the space itself, this concept is not easily graspable, through architectural plans of buildings; let alone plans of gardens. Hence the urgency of this thesis in its project of revealing such a possibility through specific examples that, although well known to historians, have never been showcased through the proposed methodology.

All the authorial drawings in the thesis share the same graphic language and manner. Sharp lines—in either black or cyan inks—are combined with an economy of hatches to allow both author and reader to rediscover the chosen examples of gardens from the 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 con-
firmed that, in a ‘PhD by Design’, drawing is fundamental research method
rather than a celebratory illustration. Alike the — incomparable —
drawings by Giovanni Battista Padova on suburban renaissance villas,27
those in the present thesis have attempted to consistent use of angles
and graphic techniques. Besides the comfort of embracing personal
abilities and limitations into all drawings, there are many advantages
of having produced them in this specific manner.

First and foremost, such economy and consistency have
enabled the researcher to develop a comprehensive method
of documenting, tracing, redrawing, scaling, framing, selecting, and
exposing the selection of case studies. From an editorial perspective,
the ease of digital software in a 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 impersonality liberating — in the sense of not tightening the work
to its authorship — and didactic, as it draws the reader’s attention to the
often architectural form of each garden, as described in the text.

The act of redrawing the case studies and subsequently drawing out
design projects in response is as important as writing. It
allows us to formally consolidate the architecture of gardens, which
have always suffered changes or perished. Drawing and designing
projects may also overcome the limitation of second-hand experiences
of which J.B. Jackson once complained. In this way, we may attempt
to think of 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 contexts — that is, design as thinking through
analogy.28

Such methodology finds its way across the chapters. One
may argue that the cloistered horti of the twelfth-century Cliterian
monastery was, for instance, a ‘re-drawing’ of the peristyle garden

from the Roman deus. The first chapter reveals how this analogy
enabled monks to recognise the hortus as an earthly paradise at the
‘centre’ of their world, and hence to perform the rules of settling their
communal ‘household’ away from the city. Here, the archetype
is brought to its clearest form: a total enclosure where every element
— shadowing fissures or cruciform pathways — conveys the state of
being shut off. The second chapter addresses how the hortus became
enlarged and divided into several planted ‘interracies’ 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 mecury,
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 1800s England, the subject of the third chapter.
While the ‘picturesque garden’ was a version of the art-form, it was
its counterpart, the allotment, which ultimately divorced the garden
from the domestic. The latter was implemented as the norm for a
type of kitchen garden physically detached from the house, placed in
a small plot, to be individually hand-cultivated by a proletarian family.
Although mostly utilitarian and non-designed, their configuration
followed specific practices for subdividing a piece of land without
requiring internal partitions and often obscuring outer fences.

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

All three case studies are variations of the garden, since they
make use of the same archetype — the hortus — to give a recognisable
form to new concepts of household and property, with or without the
city. While each takes the garden "from archetype to project" in

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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-governed 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 privatized landscape. Such conditions make these gardens at times more legibly enclosed and designed, and at times rather pragmatically planted. Here we see how the garden archetype may lend itself to a myriad number of iterations.

Could the garden serve as a device to counteract contemporary, problematic practices of household and property? The design projects proposed by each chapter investigate such possibilities in the context of three cities—Tehran, Rome and London—where land value is heavily 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 public spaces are 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 only 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 faggetti (pejorative term for ‘little towns’), these districts are densely urbanised with cheap housing and precarious public spaces. Most border rural land that is beautiful yet ‘idle’, or not cultivated. Here, on these rough edges, the concept of the monumental villa—one once used to colonise the former countryside of the city—could be implemented: a linear system of gardens that make everyday circulation into a choreography of strolls through canopied sidewalks, encounters on terraced balconies, 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 their autonomous nature spatially tangible.

The thesis puts forward an alternative theory of the garden which reveals not only what it has actually been but, foremost, what it could—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 sprawl proposed by Gilles Clément, which remain ideological enclosures without the physical limits which would make them tangible as such. Our interest on 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?

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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 jard. 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 gerd “(kitchen) garden; orchard; palace grounds.” This branched off either from Frankish ġard or from Proto-Germanic *gardaz, and is cognate with the Gothic gards, ‘house’, and Old English gerd. All of these indicate “enclosure, fenced enclosure, garden, court, residence.” Also from gerd is derived yard, as an “enclosed patch of ground around a house.” Meanwhile endure, the “action of enduring, or state of being enclosed,” emerges as a sole noun only around the mid-fifteenth century. Hence one can assume that hitherto, garden 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 — *dangur Andur*, "the great Other." The sky, the sea and south, were only perceived as in their role as "a sign" of that power manifested in living creatures, or their fixed things. Usually these could be an animal, a tree, a mountain and so on. Before these "significant objects" could even be designated in language, they were differentiated in form and 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 "interpreted" as the "centre of everything," making the valley recognisable as a place.

Spatial enclosure and the concept of sacred

All these events were interruptions in the continuity of natural experience. Because they were manifested as a wholly different order from real nature, they were sacred. Once they relied on to be so, a line would be traced around to secure and protect them. The space circumscribed would also become sacred while the field left out would become profane. Essentially, that was the work of making an enclosure: to create an abstract reality from the given in situ surroundings. Hence such a notion of sacred was not like ours, which is implicated with the holy or the institutionally religious. Rather the sacred meant the only and possibly legible modality of existence. To be precise, it differed from the chaotic and so illegible — state of nature. Hence the concept of enclosure is entangled with the human urge to distinguish the "things" that manifest a sacred character from those that do not. In this primordial sense, every enclosed space was sacred. Every enclosure — from farms, to houses and temples — meant the reality of one's world. We may not empathise with this viewpoint today, but it was crucial for early agricultural communities in forming their settlements. By enclaving land, thus — by separating their life from everything else outside which was not sacred — these groups would develop a prototypical notion of ownership, based on what would later become the Roman concept of re or thing. The passage from these enclosures to the legal sense of property as we know it today is of course neither simple nor direct. It does, nonetheless, relate to the act — or procedure —
the world. As these enclosures were girded from a central cross, they replicated that foundational 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, gardened horticultures were planned intensively and, therefore, were synchronous 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 archetype of garden enclosure – the baq. Moreover, we will need this as a conceptual base to understand the architectural language of the Western medieval _hortus conclusus_: most biblical symbolism of the Garden of Eden branches off from Pan-Iranian cosmology – that is, from the Zoroastrian idea of the _shenaznan_ as a 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 _shenaznan_ was influenced by the Iranian walled garden.

Even up to our day, the baq and the _chahar-bagh_ 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 baq and the _chahar-bagh_ are totally walled private gardens. [Fig. 0] The form was of a rectangular shape, usually used for burial functions. The latter was quadrangular, mostly used as a sanctuary within palatial assets. The term _baq_ is derived from the Indo-European root _bagh_, which means ‘to share out’, ‘to enjoy’. It comes from the Old Persian and Avesta as _baqah_, which means ‘distribution of good fortune’. In Modern Persian, the term appears in two forms: _baq_ (short ‘a’ sound): ‘God’; and _bagh_ (long ‘a’ sound): ‘garden’. Perhaps the _baq_ was the formal progenitor of the _chahar-bagh_, which literally comnotes ‘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-bagh_ – which is the cruciform subdivision of its interior – has been consistently recognized as a sign of both property and coexistence, 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 core, followed by the enclosure of land and subsequent subdivision and distribution of water, cultivation and reproduction. Although, prior to that, the double sense of _bagh_ – as both material and spiritual – only confirms the existential duality so present in Iran, from Zoroastrianism to Islam and onwards. The _baq_ variations give spatial legibility to the ideal duality between terrestrial and celestial cosmos. [Fig. 0]
Due to the harshness of the Iranian Plateau, the high 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 espaliers hatched 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 high and chahar-bagh were also more fragrant than courtyard houses or even mosques. As these were very low, earthly and modestly opened enclosures, they would often conjoin and merge with their surroundings — either built or natural. Meanwhile, the high types had wide openings, out of which larger places could be supposed or collectively imagined.

Hence, in our terms, the high gardens established an exceptional living condition in the homogeneity of harsh biotopes. Essentially, they made visually tangible what 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 vaulted ceilings and paved passages. These rarely led to a continuous wall as their purpose was to provide the court with punctual niches and cells, specifically functional to each planned 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 'minaret' that connected
the garden with both the underground of the earth and the highest point of the sky. It was symbolically the navel of the world, the only centre where the foundation of a terrestrial garden 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 qanat. 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 qanat coincided with the orientation of the garden. [Fig. G] 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 symbolic 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 watarcourse, girded from the central fountain. This other qanat 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 qanat. Water runs through it, evoking the original crossing of two rivers. Consequently such a squaring transforms the ground into four cardinal enclosures. The division symbolizes the universe as four horizons — which implies the analogous distribution of a commune system.

Fig. F. Section of a qanat. Iranian gardens are usually irrigated by these underground channels that bring fresh water down from the snow-capped mountains at the northern regions of the Plateau. In-between the garden wall and the farming, there is a track of lakes. The qanats drain the water into several shafts, linked to the underground channel, thus pushing the cold water forward. Masoud Kheirabadi, Iranian City Formation and Development, (Ghazvin University Press, 20000), p. 99.

Fig. G. Plan and section of the royal Palace Qasr-e Qish irrigated by the underground channel known as qanat. The building sits on the mountain six kilometers north outside the walls of Tehr. But 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 concise, so it would see an ideal model 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 axis. In turn, the flower beds were typically arranged into evenly modulated orthogonal patterns. Mostly roses and blueberries, these cultures were also used in the Atragic 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 god of the plant (angel) Bahram, royal basil of the Shakiher, and so forth.

If the garden were on a slope, a plinth would be gently sculpted from the fountain level towards the lower plateaux. The water spring would be further steamed down through the courts towards each of the cardinal entries at the court boundaries. From there, the water would meet a sub-grid of channels to irrigate the flower beds. The plinth was symbolically analogous to a sacred mountain and so the climb produced a route of passage from the lower court towards the higher centre close to the sky. That was, in fact, the very level where the fountain also reflected the clouds. The main axis of circulation was forcefully aligned with and cut out of the 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 scaled 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 terrain legibility, the walled garden became an exemplary type of shared space for ideological communities. For these were ruled by the cosmological ethics of Zoroastrianism, individuals needed symbolic spaces to distinguish god from bad, included from excluded, followers from heretics, and so on. Hence, the garden emerges not only as a literal form of ethical distinction but also as a device for collective representation. And that is precisely why (and how) the garden archetype later became instrumental to the Achaemenid idea of empire. As for the further political distinctions of territory from city, here and from enemy, these can only be deduced after the fundamental concern of sacred from profane. In other words, the garden can only become legible as a political form because it was once delimited as a sacred space. In this regard we have, until now, only skinned over how this archetype makes Zoroastrian dualism, from celestial to terrestrial, tangible.

With the thesis of the "God of the Factory," Hamed Khoosrovi puts forward the high as an instrument of territorial governance: "Iranian gardens were the only spatial configuration wherein in any form of life was possible; they were in fact life-sustaining camps in the literal toba toga 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 celestial to terrestrial. Rather, the Persian archetype, the garden goes from terrestrial to cosmic to become legible as an urban model. For example, in the plan of Persepolis, the char-bagh was deployed, as the literal image of terrestrial 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 Topographical Paradies Terrae, drawn by Athanasius Kircher in 1675. [30] [Fig. 1]

**Paradise as a walled garden**

Paradise has entered European languages via the Greek ἔδαφος, generally with a sacred connotation. [31] In fact, this etymology goes back to Old Persian pairi-dāzai, with pairi meaning “around” and dāzai, “pile or heap”. In Modern Persian usage, the word holds an explicit spatial dimension, as dāzai and dāz mean “fort” or “enclosure” and “to be made of clay”. Similarly, the Indo-Iranian verb dizdān means “to construct out of earth”. In his essay “The House of Clay,” Bruce Lincoln notes that pairi-dāzai 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.” [32] Further, in “À la recherche du paradis perdu,” the historian enquires more deeply into the conceptual implications of pairi-dāzai in figurative inscriptions.

from Mazdean-Zoroastrian to the Achaeumenes. 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. [33] but it is emphatically described as an earthly and manmade place:

There, on that place, shall the worthiapp [sic] of Zarathustra erect an enclosure, and therein shall he establish him with food, wherein shall he establish himself with clothes, with the coarest food and with the most worn-out clothes. That food he shall live on, those clothes he shall wear, and that, shall be his new life, until he has grown to the age of a Horse, or of a Zarauna (..) [34]

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" (Arae). The place, therefore, is protected from Truth’s deviant opponent “the Lie” (Druga). [35] 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 chaluk-logh as the possible exemplary type for Achaemenid paradise. Such an event had emerged from a similar ethical concern: to distinguish (sacred) good from (profane) devil, though in the Persian Empire, the vision of paradise in the chaluk-logh 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 Lord Ahuru Mazda are allowed to enter. Therein, their lives will 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 level at least — is essentially lost. And yet it can be restored to faithful men through the action of a divine power. Although in the Persian text this condition is described precisely as an earthly walled garden, in the Bible of the early Church it mostly becomes metaphysical with different images and terms. Some of the best known are Kingdom of God, Heaven or the Garden of Eden, though it is clear the latter is the actual place where Adam and Eve lived up to God's perfection until their devotion towards sin. Similarly, paradise is the spiritual state of purity reigning before Adam's Fall. [Fig. J]

Tenth-century Christian texts claim that paradise was indeed regained by Christ and can be entered once again by those who follow Him. But this action, as well as attendance at church, implies the experience of a wholly Christian life to be led in true faith. With this early tradition, it became implied that Christian men should live according to the image of Adam before the fall. Hence, for a century or

so, paradise was associated with baptism, desert martyrdom, 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 virtuous 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 realise that "life in paradise" has nothing to do with neutrality. It is in fact, a constant tension of conflicting 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 other hand, the formulation of paradise denoted the good in marriage. On the other, it banned desirous one 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 inconsistency 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 medieval thought. The archetypal walled cruciform garden was brought back in 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, untouched womb of Mary and, thus, both a representation and a way out of any contradiction between love, marriage 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

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distinct and exemplary form of life— from birth to work. Thereafter the Church's *hortus conclusus* was walled in order separate clerical from lay practices. It gave legitimacy to the exceptional life of Christ rather than the mortal fault of Adam. The exceptional birth of a redemptory power mattered more than penitence for sin.

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

The personification of Mary in the *hortus conclusus* mingled with the seemingly paradoxical enclosed garden described in biblical texts, such as the Song of Songs 4:12. Originally, the canons of this book implied that love was something only between Christ and the Church. Miraculously, by the twelfth century this became (over) simplified into a mildly mystical individual interpretation of matrimony. Henceforth, it reflected a lay perception of the *hortus conclusus* as an idyllic garden. A simple wall low in height enabled couples to gain access for playful flirtations "love." In turn, to late medieval layers of Western Europe, the *hortus conclusus* meant mundane pleasure with 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 hortus gradually became more of a form of scenography than a representational sort of garden. Hence, the layout variations were more practical and ornamental than symbolic. Sometimes the walled cruciform layout was used in order to make optimal use of the land in the dense urban space of Western medieval cities. If any symbolism could be evoked, it was only an echo of the immortal associations of the axis that the garden archetype had once carried to Europe from Persia and Egypt via Greece and ancient Rome. While the *hortus conclusus* was transformed in the perceptions and uses of laymen in the city, the Church was going through one of its most extensive internal reforms and conflicts.

The emergence of mendicant orders was a reaction against 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 Glumienses and even the Benedictines themselves, had eventually "corrupted" the contemplation of St. Benedict because they let their monasteries thrive too much, expand and accumulate wealth. [Fig. M] The Cistercians also criticised the fraterlite of 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 normalised possession of land and things as well as the entire lives of tax-paying citizens, the Cistercians went in search of an alter juridical concept which would, instead, protect their form-of-life as a virtuous practice from the powers of kings and popes. The Order found a possible model in the ancient tradition of Roman law, from which two concepts became useful in defining...
ing their lives and their monasteries as common. One of them was the definition of a juridical person, which means that legal norms can never be applied to life as "a complex biographical reality" but rather always to the individual as "an abstract centre." And the other was the concept of re 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 position 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, the Roman designs were the one through which the concepts of juridical person and re 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 arcade was 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 perimeter (land) enclosed by this procedure was a garden. Similarly to the house, this enclosed garden made the monastery legible as an autonomous microcosm (paradise). This space, so much, 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 paradise meant to the Cistercians.

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

Fig. N. Abbey of Citeaux, the parent house of the Cistercian. In an eighteenth-century drawing just before its destruction during the French Revolution.
The cloister as paradise

"Four steps in spiritual life to wit: Reading, Meditation, Prayer and Contemplation. This is the Scale of the Cloister—a scale set between heaven and earth, having but few steps but reaching an immense and unbelievable distance. For, while fixed upon earth, it pierces the clouds and 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." The Scale of the Cloister, 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 consequent 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 in so it were, the foundation; it provides the subject matter we must use for meditation. Meditation considers more carefully what is to be sought after; it digs, as it were, for treasure it finds and reveals, but since it is not in meditation's power to seize upon the treasure, it directs us to prayer. Prayer lifts itself up to God with all its strength, and begs for the treasure it longs for, which is the sweetness of contemplation. Contemplation when it comes rewards the labours of the other three; it interiorizes 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.

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 actualizes the practice of the rule as a will to a form of life. Although it appears in almost every monastery plan, the cloister developed unevenly throughout the whole medieval period. Precisely because it is such a focal space of monastic thought, it has also varied significantly amongst different Orders.

To the Cistercians, the cloister was more spatially and symbolically prominent than it was for the Carthusians. Perhaps that is why
the authorship of The Rule of the Cloister was once historically attributed to St. Bernard de Clairvaux rather than its earliest author, the Carthusian Prior Guigo II. To the Order of the latter, the quadrangular arcade was in reality more of a buffer space, or an empty void, aimed at keeping the individual cells far away from each other, so that monks could pray and read in uninterrupted silence. Meanwhile, to the former, the cloister was the space where the steps of the ladder were rendered visible and feasible for the monks to gauge. The discrepancy between Carthusian and Cistercian cloisters is due exactly to the way each Order interpreted asceticism, common life, liturgy, penitence and paradise. For the Carthusians, the cloistered garden was extremely austere, a pastoral-like hedge, with a modestly demarcated centre. It meant that paradise lies only above and beyond daily life. Meanwhile to the Cistercians, the garden was a cruciform khartos continua with a well-defined centre. With these restrained, yet highly evocative, symbolism of axes, a few trees and a central fountain was achieved. Hence the garden in the Cistercian cloister was the image of paradise actualised within the monastery. That was so because the Cistercian monks ruled their life in common as if they were already there. Here, with the more ideological conception and use of garden enclosure towards a particular will for life. Though it is not our strategy to learn by comparison, yet 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 as much as possible. Hence, they restricted the use of ornaments, formal gardens and every built element that did not play a literal role in their hourly liturgy and Sunday processions. In fact, liturgical practice was the main driver of the Cistercians' opposition to their former branch, the Cluniacs. Before we move on to the Cistercian plan, we should note that liturgy was the main ideological device that distinguished the Cistercians from other Benedictine ruled Orders — and from late medieval practices in general.

The Cistercian Order sought to give a straightforward interpretation of the original rules written by 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 deviancy and corruption at large, especially regarding most monastic practices of late

Fig. 6. Ideal scheme of a Cistercian monastery.}

69. "Concerning the mode and order of Divine services, the monks of Cluny did, not in the beginning to observe all the traditions of the Rule, cutting away wholly and rejecting all appendages to the plain, even in and Brézé, which were added (to the Office) or introduced by later considerations. Hence, they found (new additions) to be more dangerous than necessary for the monks, since their multiplicity made a heavier task to their daily and diligent meditation, not only by the monks, but also by the laymen.


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medieval Christendom. Hence the Order started to rethink the faith of their condition by reestablishing liturgical practices — their Divine Office. From this developed a text, with the reform of the Benedictine Rules by the General Chapter. The main purpose was to strip current practice of the excesses added by the Cluniacs throughout the centuries. So, the new Office abolished the over-elaborate masses and cut the singing of 200 psalms a day to 150 a week, because these made the monks too occupied in every hour, leaving only a little time for manual labour. It was also argued that excessive singing and oration could lead to "tepid and negligent recitation." Rather, the Order Chapter reduced the number of canonical hours to eight and the Conventual Mass to a daily one. Sunday Mass was also included and, later, influenced the disposal of many plans — such as of Kirkstall Abbey in England. In sum, the Cistercians sought to create a truly self-willed, centred and simpler form of liturgy, just as in their plans for their monasteries.

Such emphasis on a concise liturgy and the original rule produced a "typical" scheme of monastery. [Fig. 6] though by buildings, guest houses, infirmaries and barns were allowed to be placed outside the main building around the abbey. However, what had become paradigmatic of the Cistercian monasteries was a logic of spatial growth that never transgressed the spatial unity and centrality given by the main compound of canonical buildings. In this sense, the idea of spatial seclusion was not manifested in the fortification wall around the abbey, but it was rather conveyed from its own cloistered episteme towards the entire complex. That was the central spatial character that differentiated the eventual growth of the Cistercian settlements from those of other orders, such as the Cluniacs. The Cistercian Order was highly critical of the abbeys which enriched themselves and let their abbeys overexpand, because they thought that too much wealth corrupted both the monastic will and practice of rules. That is extremely interesting as it reveals the Cistercians either believed in or noted the right formal relationship between use, rules, and space. And, that is why they became so keen on establishing rules and principles to model their monasteries. Although it was not possible to completely remodel the existing building of Cluny, the first to house the Order, that of Clairvaux was built from scratch. [Fig. P] The monks there were thus able to plan it so as to adhere to the Cistercian Rule. This was in fact a
Although Benedict was the first to put it in writing, the idea of ascetic life within a monastic community had existed within the Franciscan Order as early as the thirteenth century. This document has been incorporated into the monastic rule of St. Benedict's Abbey, founded in the nineteenth century. The rule of St. Benedict's, which is based on the monastic rule established by St. Benedict, is still in use today.

It is believed that St. Benedict's Abbey was founded by St. Benedict himself, who is said to have been born in Italy around 480 AD. The exact location of his birthplace is unknown, but it is believed to have been in a place called Subiaco. St. Benedict is said to have founded the monastery at Subiaco in 529 AD and then moved to Monte Cassino, where he founded another monastery.

St. Benedict's Abbey is located in the town of Monte Cassino, which is situated in the region of Campobasso, Italy. The abbey is well-known for its beautiful architecture and its rich history. The abbey is open to visitors and is a popular tourist destination.

The monastery is built on a hill overlooking the town of Monte Cassino, and it is surrounded by beautiful gardens and fields. The monastery has a number of buildings, including the main church, which is the largest building in the monastery.

The monastery is also home to a school for young monks, which is known as the " Kloster School." The school has a long history and has produced many monks who have gone on to become leaders in the monastic community.

The monastery is also known for its library, which contains a large collection of books and manuscripts. The library is open to visitors and is a popular place for scholars and researchers.

The monastery is run by a group of monks who live according to the rules established by St. Benedict. The monks work together to maintain the monastery and to care for the community. They also provide hospitality to visitors and guests.

The monastery is a place of prayer and meditation, and it is open to visitors who wish to learn more about the monastic way of life. The monastery is a peaceful and serene place, and it is a wonderful place to spend some time in reflection and prayer.
Fig. R (map-in). Hypothetical reconstruction of the secondary cloister with the site at the rear of the main nuns' compound. There were many strips of vegetable cultivation, weed and flower planters in almost every space in between the walled enclosure.

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Fig. R (zoom-in): Hypothetical reconstruction of the gates entrance, flanked by rows of cypresses. On the right, the framework outlined by the key elements.

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ides of centralising the canonical buildings around a single cloister, with an exclusive *horae* and *candela*. This is surely the case of the Cistercian monastery of Clairvaux, which, even after its eventual growth, proved that the central cloister would hold the plan of canonical functions forever cohesive, despite the growth of the rest of the abbey. Meanwhile, in the Cistercian monastery of Fontenay, in the Region of Burgundy, the church was the first and most important building. However, only the construction of the central cloister was able to give legibility and legitimacy to the entire monastic settlement. In other words, the abbey was only considered sacred once it had a cloister for the exclusive use of the ordained monks. Confirming the Benedictine Rule, the church was shaped after the Latin cross, with the narthex facing east, and the sanctuary heading west. [Fig. U] The cloister was girded from the monks' choir pitch towards the south. From this corner opened the eastern passage of the cloister, leading the monks into the Church. Meanwhile, the observant (lay brothers) could only enter through their dormitory, 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 dormitory, the...
frasty (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 partially due to the modulation of the Church's body of choir—where the Cistercian monks would never become too long, so that singing would not take over from the liturgy as an over-the-top affair. But perhaps such brevity in circulation was also meant to make time for sacramental life—and never otherwise. Here the Fontenay cloister worked as a clock. It was a device that modulated the lengths of walls from one canonical space to another, making them fall into place with liturgical acumen. [Fig. V]

In fact, the monks' daytime was ruled through seven canonical hours, while night-time had an eighth one only for Vespers. The exact time of each celebration varied according to the season. However, the sequence and orientation of liturgical practices remained the same: starting from the night-time Office of Vespers 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 'dorset' above the eastern passage of the cloister. They descended through the 'night-stairs' towards their own choir in the church. There in they sing for one hour in Vespers. The monks in Fontenay followed the example of St. Bernard strictly. So, it was not rare for them to dismiss the night-prayer and remain in Vespers until sunrise. At daybreak, they would either return to or remain in the Church choir to sing the Lauds. In fact, the monks celebrated every canonical hour in the Church throughout the day until its literal completion, the Compline or 'night prayer'. The intervals between the seven daytime prayers were fixed. They were spent in silence, mostly within the cloister arcades and the frasty. 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 Quadrennials. There the ordination and orientation of cloistered buildings were chapter house, auditorium and dormitory (upper level), frasty, refectory, kitchen, offices and dormitory (ground floor). After the church, these follow from the most to the least important, from most

84. This considerably adds to the sanctity of the site, especially in the context of the four main circumambulations. The site has a transient quality that is not often found in other cloister gardens. This is because of the way the monks have arranged themselves around the site, rather than just being present at the site itself. It creates a sense of movement and energy that is both spiritual and physical.

85. This is a reference to the work of the Bavarian architect and urban planner, Peter Zumthor. His design of the choir of the New Church in Wieskirche, Bavaria, is a perfect example of how architecture can enhance a site's spiritual qualities.

86. This is a reference to the work of the German philosopher and naturalist, Immanuel Kant. His ideas on the existence of a supreme being and the nature of the universe have had a profound influence on the development of modern philosophy.

87. This is a reference to the work of the Irish poet and philosopher, William Butler Yeats. His poetry and essays on the nature of the universe have had a significant impact on the development of modern literature and philosophy.
liturgical to most menial. The overall layout of rooms around the cloister was also meant to conform to the conventual mass and Sunday processions. Hence, after the mass, the monks could leave the choir directly into the narrow arcade. There they would sit on the benches to wait for foot washing. As this rite happened at the lavatory across the quadrangle (south), the monks would reach it following the western passage. Housed in a small portion left to 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 three were accessed from the south of the cloister. They formed, together with the lavatory, a reversed T. The water was supplied by a channel below the lavatory foundations in the cloister garden. The Cistercian rules in fact aimed also at a coincidence of religious symbolism with water management. Fontenay was one of the best examples. In fact, such criteria were even stated in the Institute of the Order as for Quo in loco, etc. Fontenay: "Neither in cities, nor in courts, nor in villages, should be built our common life, but in places away from the behaviour of 'frequented men'."

Most Orders, such as the Dominicans, usually sought to settle their monasteries on cliffs or on desert plateaus — precisely to evoke the emblem of the Eucharistic sacrifice or of the ancient monastery Monte Cassino. The Cistercians rather avoided such situations as much as possible. The Order itself also instructed that the monastery should never be placed on top of a hill, nor on an island, by 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 close by bordered by mountains to the north, south, and east. [Fig. W] Such a conditional image of inclusion played a strategic part in the Cistercian renunciation of claiming landownership in the city. In this trait, they were similar to most other Orders. However, they differed in the precise way they refused to address self-representation towards the outer world — and this issue becomes clear once we understand the architectural language of the Cistercian monastery. The suffusion of colours and materials, pictorial stucco, narrative vitraux
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 confound the literal (and less pictorial) image of paradise. That is, the garden was the spiritual stage of contemplation itself, which the soul of the cloister starts towards and ends with. Here we understand how the garden archetype—which we have been tracing since the Persian chahr-bag—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 elucidation 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 god from diestant. 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
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 1533 as an attempt to tame local tribal unrest and give his government both political and spatial unity. The typical Persian chshah-khābār was the most ubiquitous form of enclosure within the broader enclosure of the city. While almost every citizen inhabited a courtyard house with a chshah-khābār inside, the royal complex at the core of the city was also a compound of courtyard palaces and gardens. Later, in the eighteenth century, in a period of political stability and peace, the reign of Fath Ali Shah would enclose Tehran with a second and larger wall, starting a phase of modern urbanisation from 1798 onwards. [Fig. A] As the Shah was keen on using architecture to put an aesthetic mark on his governance, he made his summer residence visible at the summit of the Alborz mountain just outside the urban walls. As his Qasr-e Qajar Palace had a huge garden, it exemplified how the city could eventually expand towards the mountains. By the end of the following century, Iran’s geopolitical position weakened, as it lost the war against Russia and its territory was progressively colonised by Western countries such as Britain. Nasir-ed-Din Shah would thus build the third and largest wall as an attempt to rebuild and control the capital as a totallyintroverted, 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 urbanisation. By 1958 most of the north and western areas had sprawled through carpets of private plot grids. [Figs. C and D] Gardens were no longer in the central courts of the dwelling but in the backyards. The problem is that, because public space is heavily controlled by the state, most social encounters take place inside these apartments. But this collectiveness is never fully actualised because these buildings lack shared spaces.

These historical events have translated into the socio-geographical anatomy of Tehran, as for instance the disposition of medieval...
Persian gardens around its region. Built to work as satellite stiles, 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 critical mass gradually faded away from 1940 onwards as several state housing projects aimed to decentralise intellectuals and civil servants. [Fig. E] Created through extensive grids of private plots, these developments would also complete the urbanisation of the Iranian capital. The most successful developments were implemented between the old centre and the northern suburbs. Plot grids like that of Abbas Abad, Vanak and Jordan became the quarters for a new bourgeoisie to arise. [Figs. F - G] As a backdrop to these systems of housing infrastructure, huge urban parks were built — such as Millad Park — next to a ‘carpet’ of several residential blocks over the rich neighbourhood of Jordan. This eventual marriage of 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 citizens.

In accordance with the logic of the new plot-grid typologies, the garden lost its central position within the dwelling. Moreover, regulations detached the garden from the domestic space by reducing 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 households with their own singular forms of social encounter. At best, modern plot backyards became scantily planted areas, leftover areas or storage places for the shops on the ground floor. This typology hardly ever came close to the family-sized high garden frequently found within traditional Iranian courtyards.
Fig. F: Present growth around the urban grid of Karyn Naraiah, a state-sponsored housing project. The Jaffa government had built the complexes in 1961 to alleviate and control the working class in the east side of Tel-Aviv, further away from the National University and the old city center.

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Fig. G: Present growth around the urban grid of Alaba Alad and Yassif Alad, two state-sponsored housing projects, from 1965. Their purpose was to allocate the middle class on the north, outside the administrative buildings.

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

Besides the typically introverted spaces of the household, there is, therefore, a necessity to conceal every part of life, making households the ultimate spaces where 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 concealment dynamic is exaggerated in Tehran. Therefore, it is unquestionably more visible and more potent than elsewhere. Uplootedness, however, is much less recognisable as an increasingly general condition. But one may understand how it happens by looking more closely at what has become of the backyard in most plot-grid state projects built between 1930 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 uplootedness. 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 concept of designing 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. [Figs. J to M] For each procedure there is an architectural response—that is, a formal device—enabling the collective practice of rules and, thereby, the possible emancipation of the tenants [Figs. N-Q].
Fig. 14: Possible transformation of the first level. A collective cloister binds together the households of 12 plans. A concrete wall defines the space. The element also contains cells and storage spaces, which give each apartment access to the exterior. This arrangement provides space for lesions and enclosures. If users wish to be alone, they can use the individual cells, which eliminate into the bed and study. Alternatively, they can take one of the four staircases down to the open ground floor.

Fig. 15: Possible transformation of the ground level. The exclusive spatial enclosure of the cloister has enabled the members of twelve apartments to recognize themselves as an extended household. Moreover, the walls forms enabled them to collectively create and continuously perform roles in how to share, use and manage the space. Essentially, they agreed on how to enjoy the shared ground as a place to garden, play, rest or do nothing in the presence of others.
Fig. 9: The complete dinner which enables the households to collectively rechime, share and transform right back into a single source container function.
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

During the Renaissance, it is inaccurate to describe what would happen to the city after 1280: this is one archetype that has never ceased to exist. It had, in fact, outlived the Roman Empire through the empirical transmission of its practice to become the most recognisable form of gardening throughout the following millennium. As seen in the previous chapter, the Clunyian charters were only the most developed example of myriad variations on the household garden. As much as part of 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 these 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.


2. In 1281, Pope Martin IV decided to enclose against the Byzantine Empire of Constantinople.
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 abbeys of isolated monasteries to the patrons of urban guilds, taking along with them three centuries of empirical knowledge in building and gardening. As if it had not been enough to be extorted by popes and kings, and ruined by internal corruption, the Cistercians, especially, lost their earthly 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 reimaginings of the household garden to become well-known were not architectural but literary, perhaps most evidently seen in the De re rustica, written by Columella in the 1st century. An immediate success in its time, it can be said the narrative followed in the footsteps of two previous productions of the same period. The first is the 12th-century Comedy of Flanders, in which Jean de Meun turned the hortus amoenus into the hortus anserius, both a lyrical type and an allegory of (secular) courtly love. The second was the Divine Comedy of Dante, in which Dante Alighieri humanises paradise, thus reaching out to clerks and schoolmen beyond the clergy. Profoundly influenced by these texts, Boccaccio went further, to reimage the walled garden as an elusively figure but rather as a framing device for his storytelling. The artifice was used to divide his novel (whose title means ‘ten days’) into one hundred tales, narrated and shared by ten young characters. In the plot, these characters seek refuge from the black death of 1348 in a country retreat at Ficole, 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 stage sets through which the characters gase upon the Tuscan horizon to imagine the story scenes, also 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.

Boccaccio did not take this idea as such. 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 "disenchchantment" 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. Petrarch’s first attempts at writing (to personally justify) the choice of a simpler life outside the city. The author refers to his new dwelling as a "eremitica," 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 grief in the sense of loneliness, 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 "omnium dignitates," which he had rediscovered through reading Cicero. Beyond erudition, this referencing was indeed necessary to convince any schooled reader of the viability and legitimacy of that so-called "pleasure with dignity" (similar to the way in which the ancient Roman lawyer had to argue it to his patient audience). This was especially true because most rural areas of Europe in the 1300s meant the very opposite of harmony, due to permanent state of violent expropriation, exploitative social relations, bad harvests, pillaging and wars. Petrarch needed, therefore, a small square of stonewall ground to shut that Dantesque hell off and describe his idea of blissful solitude within an imaginary country. That miniature was the enclosure of his...
Hence, to both authors, the archetype became crucial to portraying the enjoyment of simplicity—the rude as such—as either a coping device or a motivation to leave the city for an allegedly "better" life. While to Petrarch this meant a sobering commitment 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 rustica, for instance, praises kitchen gardening and shepherding, for these seem just as bucolic, yet far less laborious than farming or grazing, while still yielding subsistence for a single person. Petrarch further claims those activities benefit not only the body but also the mind, exercising the mental concentration that nobody could ever reach in agitated cities. So besides emphasizing the line between pleasure and business, the idea of gardening over farming prescribes the distinctive pace and gesture of life in his retreat. Within this, men like the author would have to ditch their beaded shoes for sandals, yet without ever losing the comfort of a proper seat for reading, paved steps to climb up and shade to rest in. A similar association happens in the De rustica, 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 those places and their cultivation mediated not only urban and rural but also reality and fantasy, these eventually transmuted one into the other. Until then, the 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 epitomize a shift of paradigm.
The rustic villa as a myth of the countryside

The rustic villa as a myth of the countryside was a construct of the collective imagination and acceptance of the rustic villa as a shared enclosure, "economically independent" from the city and "harmoniously integrated" with the rural landscape. However, this was only apparently so because, in fact, the concept is the one of a private estate, whose sustenance and raison d'être derive from urban riches and whose relationship with the fields is nothing but oppressive. Hence a cultural paradox by definition, the villa is a "bourgeois' dream" taken 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, with the monastic hortus conclusus, spatial enclosure adhered to rules so as to reveal an idea of settlement. Meanwhile, within the villa, spatial enclosure enacted appropriation and inhabitation while also working to mask the actual ideology, labour and violence entailed in these processes. And it did so in the most compelling, self-deluding way. For the pure luxury of every rustic villa is precisely the nonchalant manner of providing the owner with time and space for idleness—regardless of the fact that this rest is only possible thanks to the uneasing 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 exaggerated 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 clerics and financiers, come 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 hortus, became extremely important. Not surprisingly, Leon Battista Alberti highlighted in his brief Villa, written around 1440. However, here large steps are taken ahead of Boccaccio.
and Petrarch for two reasons. First, the concept in the text is neither proposed as lyrical scenery nor a place of individual solitude, but rather as an ethical investment per compluia etiam, for simple pleasure, and the retreat of a patria familia and his own family. Although not termed such, Cicero’s idea of dignity does come up as something to be earned through land cultivation, which, the architect argues, is a virtuous mode of sustenance instead of frivolous exhibitionism.

This conviction entangles a couple of Alberti’s recurrent thoughts: agriculture as second nature, and family as societal nucleus. Villa 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.)

The second, yet even more significant, reason Alberti offers is that this concept deserves the utmost attention is the fact that the plantation encompassing the house of the villa is called a ‘gardens’—a word rarely written at that time—rather than the usual hortus or the rusticus system. Certainly not out of carelessness, the author chose the term 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 ‘honourable 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 another question he never answered, perhaps to avoid falling into contradictions. For on the one hand, his villa shuns ostentation, while on the other it has an appearance that is impossible to miss. Thanks to the ubiquity of pergamentous orchards, it may have indeed gone without saying (or drawing) that his so-called ‘gardens’ should inevitably latch onto 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

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38. One, who on seeing the ‘hanging gardens’ at the villa, was not yet come to the development of the villa as a separate concept, the idea of a garden becomes apparent in the villa. The word ‘villa’ was first used in literature by Vitruvius, who in his treatise on architecture, describes the garden as a place of relaxation and recreation.
39. The secret is that certain families like the Alps and the Courbet’s, the latter a model for Alberti’s villa, have a complex history. The ancient town of Montefeltro was built on the site of an ancient Roman villa, known as ‘Marseilles.’ In this context, it is interesting to note that in the villa, Alberti not only proposed the idea of a new building type, but also the idea of a new concept of a garden.
40. The villa at the entrance to the garden was an essential part of the design, and the gardens were designed to enhance the overall experience of the visitor. The gardens were not only a place of relaxation, but also a place of education, with the idea of teaching the visitor about the history and culture of the area.
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Hyperrationalis Raphaeli 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 have also 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 realized that ‘pleasure’ and ‘retreat’ were only secondary to a primary yet hidden motivation, which has noticeably changed very little since De architettura: the urge of a privileged urban class to recognize and justify itself in the social strata, while it expropriates rural land.34

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 institutionalization of its power.35 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 Castrignan were possessed by the family as early as 1399. The area was then a system of fields, towers and castles mastered by the Lombard clan. Ubaldini, Trebbio and Castrignano were not ‘villas’—in ethnic nor form. Instead, they blended in with the feudal landscape as, respectively, a padron (a share-crop farm typical of Tuscany) and a moza (similar to a fortress).36 [Fig. C] According to original registers, only recently rediscovered, Castrignan contained a palazzo (a palatial building) and a 36-square-metre orme.37 This garden was strictly utilitarian, participating in the large agrarian production of the property and surrounding.38 This relation would remain even after 1573, when ‘gardens’ were introduced to the cadastral as a synonym for a sort of share ormo (mixed culture), with fruit trees and grapevines.39 A tax return of 1425, nevertheless, replaced the term with the Florentine word orto, stressing as ‘cultivations’ that did not yield any income and were “part of the dwelling.”40 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 recognized and declared in relation to ‘dwellings’ rather than farming, a tighter spatial interaction was established between the orchards and the primary household. This relationship was formalized by the addition of loggias, which not only connected those spaces but also made Castrignano seems like a fortress and more like a summer residence.41 Trebbio was similarly expanded with the addition of a fruit-bearing orto enclosed by pergolas, thus acquiring the appearance of a padron meant for familial retreat.

Fig. C. Villa Gambi de Castiglione (c. 1510), Andreas Dasart (c. 1560). The first gardens of the villa were not only the vines in the courtyard, but rather ‘vines’ commonly planted orchards and kitchen gardens.
Orchard and loggia and the 'villificazione' of the countryside

Whether incidental or not, these alterations did eventually convert these properties into what was becoming increasingly known as rustic villas. And by doing so, through the very reshaping of these grounds, they have as well started to 'villify' those fields. (That is, not villification in the sense of portraying someone as a villain but, instead, 'villification' as a building process that ended up rendering an estate's* system of enclosures analogous to the singular complex of a villa.) For on this one hand, the prototypical marriage of orchard and loggia enabled the Medici to expand their patrimony without further incursions, 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 old 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 full of feudalism, the family of bankers took advantage of the fact that service economies were becoming increasingly dependent on the exploitation of agrarian land. Even without possessing every inch of this newly urban domain — but just by redefining two farmlands as pleasure-purposed dwellings — the Medici started the systematic process of cultural and social appropriation that made them the civil power of Florence. At this point, one should ask whether this was the "honourable family" that crossed the mind of Alberti while he was writing his. 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 orchard than the one mentioned in that cascading of 1425. The fact that Vias was finished only a decade later moreover suggests that either the spaces called "gardens" or the term itself were becoming increasingly amenable. Still, it does not prove any significant change in practice. It is more likely that Alberti had himself put forward, especially after the Medici events, that the household garden must acquire ornamental (thus utmost ideological) dimensions once coupled with built forms. In other words, Alberti's "gardens" either propose or acknowledge (or rediscovers) 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 estate 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 quattrocento were on-site implementations, far from being designed. And so were those introduced in the first reform of Coreggio 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 'villasfazione' of the original property at Careggi was circumstantially similar to Tusciano and Cafaggiolo, the case of Fiesole was completely different. The patron was not Cosimo de' Medici but his son, Giovanni, who sought to purchase land that had never been owned by the family. He commissioned their favourite architect, Michelozzo — in probable collaboration with Alberti — with the building of a farmed estate to admittedly function as a "villa suburbana." At that time, the concept was not yet so clearly different from the 'rustic' one. Since Giovanni was so fond of 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 never really functioned as a 'rural'. Yet its suburban character did not mean the actual presence of built structures more controlled and formally important.

Because the topography at Fiesole was so complicated, possessing and inhabiting the site required substantial earthworks. The solution was thus to reshape the hilly profile into a stepped system of walled park, terraces, and orchards, capped by a cubic house. [Fig. E] (According to a contemporary exchange of letters this idea was first suggested by Giovanni and was inspired by the local monastery of St. Jerome.)

Interestingly, the terracing of his villa was the first in the region to be carried out for private use. Until the construction of 1452, only churches and monasteries were structured in such a manner. Meanwhile, the loggia made it clear that the estate was not an abbey; the typically religious stacking of terraces set the residence apart from local farmhouses. Even though not all levels were originally interconnected by stairs, they provided the house with a useful landing. The cube, in turn, generously opened itself onto the higher terrace through three arches, thus smoothing the transition between interior and exterior. This time, the loggia was not attached but scooped out from the volume of the wall, so to direct attention towards the terrace, which was shaded by a garden. Whereas the positioning of loggia and terrace was intentional, the plantation was a suffusion of short citrus trees which followed the flow already set in motion by the other built 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 the ability of the owner "to look out 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 horca as a framing device.

In fact, of Giovanni de' Medici looking out over 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 ornamental gardens, one of which was called a "garden." The term appears in an inventory from 1492 to distinguish one space meant for growing flowers from another, used only for vegetables, fruits, and thistles. This distinction was in fact similar to the categorisation used by Bolognese jurist Pietro de Crescenzi in Opus Florae communis, written around 1305 but widely republished only in the year 1471—a decade after the first visit at Pescia. 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 "garden" was only mentioned with a moral tone by ancient agricultural writers, dismissing whether the purpose would require a specific organisation of space. [Fig. G] So while the republishing of Florae may have reached Giovanni—who preferred walled parterres for their productivity and finiteness—it did not impress Lorenzo. He preferred lavish plantations, mostly for growing flowers and fruitless evergreens, such as firs and cypresses, hence the many other embellishments 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 Florae communis, clipping flowers or hinging 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 Pescia, 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 recognize and assert himself at the ruling power in that system.

As a two-generation process, the event of Floreale, moreover, epitomises the late fifteenth-century 'subject' development of wealthy and influential townsfolk, who similarly sought to institutionalise their public figures by associating themselves with incantatory representations of the landscape. That was the case of 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 "cittains." Federico was in fact interested in Aristotle, and in (recently rediscovered) Roman law, and thus been on tempering power not only in practice but also in appearance. In order to turn that still-feudal duchy into a stable-looking court, he lined up the best possible front of secretaries, scribes, writers, philosophers, mathematicians, painters and architects. From painting to building, the general approach was to formally fuse the alleged 'magnificence' of his governance with the glory of his military achievements and, especially, the splendour of his personal life. It is, therefore, hard to find an artwork under this type of patronage which does not celebrate at least one of these dimensions. All appear entangled for instance, in the famous cycle of dipinti painted around 1465 by the Florentine artist Piero della Francesca, in which the Duke and Duchess Battista Sforza face each other while they are (literally) backed up by a rural landscape. [Fig. H] which expands far beyond the actual territory of Urbino. The 30-year refurbishment of the Palazzo Ducale, led by architect-engineer Luciano di Laurana, also displays similar associations, especially in the decoration of the studiolo, whose cabinets and 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 theorized by Piero della Francesca. The work by the latter in Urbino was, in fact, a prodigious phase in his lifetime's research, which happened to cross paths with the specific demands of Montefeltro. From this encounter yielded the 1474 publication of the treatise De perspective pingendi and the whole ethos of a so-called 'mathematical humanism', which distinguished the duchy from earlier centres of humanistic culture such as Florence and Siena. As the Duke had declared certainly after De re aedificatoria, architecture became a 'liberal art based upon arithmetic and geometry. In practice, this implied a conscious interaction with what was being developed in painting. Not only the perspective of architectural space could generate the form of an image, but also the inverted process was then made available—and, first of all, encouraged. That was the case with the hypostyle Vigia and Cid. [Fig. 1] argued by Manfredo Tafuri to be the first rendering in history since it had probably been commissioned to verify an alternative altar piece for the construction of the church of San Bernardino. However, there is no evidence of a direct collaboration between the restorer Piero della Francesca and dogger Francesco di Giorgio Martini. As a matter of fact, building and painting look quite different. Yet both share the same quest for synthetic geometry, each in its framing and formation of space. To the Siernese 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.

Monument and perspective, memory and ideology

The resultant "city in the form of a palace" can still be seen from the entrance of San Bernardino, far outside the eastern hill of San Donato. Its profile is arrested by a strange building: six massive arches emerge out of the earthy cliff to bear a garden terrace, enclosed by the protruding wings of a double loggia. [Fig. J] Solemn rather than monotonous, this architectural object was the highlight of the reform of the convent of Santa Chiara – another commission from the Duke to Martini during the construction of that church. Hence, the U–shape resulted from opening up the main cloister of the former compound. [Fig. K] Despite the lack of contemporary plans showing the old and new plantations, it is logical to assume that raising half of the quadrangular arcade was just enough to completely alter the home enclosure. 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 1679, [Fig. 1] briefly brushed into the background of a painting by Palma il Giovane.31 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" had been designed or implemented on the site, it did follow the protruding loggia to embrace the view rather than its centre, confirming that it was no longer meant to address the whole convent as an autonomous settlement. And since the new plantations would still have provided the nuns with fruits and flowers, 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 garden of today.34 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 sunnier south—a decision which would moreover make Santa Chiara, the resting place of Battista Sforza, function as a symbolic "nurturer" for San Bernardino, where Federico da Montefeltro had chosen to be buried.35 The garden terrace thus served as a stage for the after-memories of the ducale couple.

Alternatively, to rephrase it within our theory—as an artifact, this marks the transformation of the heresy of a sacred space into a monument.36 Despite the fact that neither Francesco di Giorgio nor any of his contemporaries ever called this a garden as such, it indeed functioned as a place of remembrance. This is especially true if we observe it within the bigger picture, for which that visual conversation between buildings also came to fruition and monumentalized the landscape as a political achievement. The sight eventually dominated the visual plane of the terrace, thus recalling the territorial expansion of Urbino 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'. 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.¹⁹ For what differentiates ancient from later-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 distant 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'. 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 sceno art, replacing it with the reformulation of Euclidian geometry, a systematic method of depicting space far beyond the sphere of the human body.²⁰

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

The gratuitously tall loggia at Santa Chiara not only confirmed the reinvention of the porch 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.²¹ 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 Domenico Bramante, apprentice to Pietro della Francesca.²² This is evident in most of their later works, especially the Cortile del Belvedere and Viridarium di 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

96. Francesca transformò un oratorio in a terrazzato panteistico, through which the garden is seen. They are juxtaposed with pieces of other typical buildings of the period from 1510-1530. The result was a "Romanesque" style. The gardening of Farnesina." Ieperan, The Henry E. Huntington Library, 42, no. 4 (2010).


98. As noticed by Francesco Valla, before the invention of printing, the architectural use of memory was already communicated to other forms of knowledge and in every sphere. "Memory becomes a distinct field of 'improving' (knowing and 'using' an memory."


102. The relationship of architecture and the Baroque idea of eternity will be further addressed at the end of this present chapter. See Stephen Greenblatt, Sign, Text, and Architecture: The Search for Firm Assertion (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 75-105.

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—elected-sponsors—mostly foreigners aiming at an office in the Holy See and financial gain. This thriving was due to the political renaissance of Rome which had been initiated by Martin V in 1417, furthered by Nicholas V until 1455 but retracted since the death of Sixtus IV in 1484. In short, the "reconstruction 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 reclamation of Christian places and buildings towards a systematic re-appropriation of the city, through the sixteenth-century approach was crucially different in having turned "restoration" into a means to colonise, suburbanise, renew and gentrify the precarious rural area as 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 Catullus, Varro, Pliny and Cicero) were then more widely read than ever before, and so professionals such as Peruzzi, Bramante and Raffaello Sanzio di Urbino, were required to reshape dried-up vineyards into what may now be reconsidered as "suburban villas". These were the very type of enclosures that could legitimise 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 Villa 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 botanical garden, towards, eventually, an urban park. This meant that—just as Alberti might have previously suggested with his diagrammatic Villa—these variations would also formalise specific ideas of urban territory which, within less than a hundred years, had gone from compactly closed to indefinitely spread. Considering that the architectural re-invention of the enclosed garden into a public (arcadial) 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 secessions had destroyed most aqueducts and fieschi. And so, the city was itself an unadulterated 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 was made away between trees of idle land. 56 Although anyone could graze and plough on these voids, the public provision was so precarious that agrarian production was too scanty to supply the Roman service economy. As a result, 30,000 inhabitants were confined within a few families of the Tiber River, where they could collect water manually. And the river, moreover, was constantly contaminated with ships importing food from other regions. 57 Hence this landscape was far from being the "rose garden" of the picturesque "Campania Romana" later invented by British travellers on the Grand Tour. Regardless of that general state of precarity, the simple pleasure of a country retreat was a commonplace to most native Romans. And the usual place for such experience was not yet a suburban villa (it had never been a "rose or a "pavil""); but instead, a "cave or a signum."

While the cave was a fortified farmhouse ruled by wealthy clans—thus units typically isolated amidst the farther open fields—the signum was a walled vineyard with a house, an orchard, and a kitchen garden; it was thus a mixed culture and the most ubiquitous form around the city, since nearly every Roman family, from peasants to bankers, cultivated at least one patch. Even today, it is even possible to find the plantations fanned along esplanade roads, such as Via Flaminia. Until 1500, however, their locations would usually range from the north-west to the south-western hills within the Aurelian walls. 58 This was partly because these areas were the most developed 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 region terrain of the lower peripheries as well. In this case, wealthy families who could arrange irrigation would implement larger vineyards with separate orchards over the blueprint of undiscovered ruins—such as Vigna Inglesi and Orsaticchii degli Ebrei, which arose from the earthy relief of the Circo Massimo. [Fig. R]

Secondly, the geographic distribution of Roman vineyards was intrinsic to the legal definition of the urban territory, just as their holdings and cultivation were to citizenship. 59 Because—unlike the medieval origin of the cave—the signum came from a much older tradition that dated back to the Early Republic, when the Empire sought to colonize the Roman agrarian region (the "agricola region") outside the ancient "pomerium" by awarding veterans demi-pride parcels of arable land. 60

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[Fig. R] Dante from the Tozzi side of Roman Decius, Ennius Dafnis and Asciano Cleopatra (1737).

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. 62 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. 63 Henceforth "signum culture" proper became not only an aspect of Roman society but also a compulsory emblem of the increasing tension between city and "its" countryside. [Fig. S] These are similar to an amphitheatre that beholds Rome commanding all action on the

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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"—signs were 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 example, 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 intermingle. This possibility was something that every foreigner would have to learn about to participate in this "game". Furthermore, 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 cleric arrived (from Naples, Genoa, Florence and so forth), the first step for him to introduce himself into Roman society and establish his presence in the city was to acquire both an urban palazzo, in the centre, and a rural signa abutting 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 sponsors overwhelmed with hard work and needs, gardening was a relaxing activity. As we have seen, it meant the possibility of "dine 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-

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[116] By 1580 Cardinal Ferrante was advised to regularly visit the gardens of his signa at the Trastevere for the betterment of his health. As noted by David R. Coffin, analyzing the book De Caelis, written in 1520 by the Rome-based humanist Paolo Cresci. Coffin, ibid., p. 30.
By the early sixteenth century it had become clear that the conversion of rural vineyards into what would be later called ‘suburban villas’ was much more than a cultural phenomenon. But it was the Genoese Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere who first used these processes as a strategy for urban transformation. Immediately after his election as Pope Julius II, in 1503, Rovere addressed the ‘Villa ex-agna’ 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 Palace—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 outskirts 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 ‘nave’, and that this nave 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 lands, these groups had progressively walled the fields into small farmsteads to be cultivated like the more adaptable Roman types. All, nonetheless, had dried up since Pope Alexander VI had neglected the aqueducts, leading the entire city into crisis. As hunger, disease, and crime weakened papal authority and undermined civic order, the feudal gentry were able to retain their local domains even though they had become unproductive.

The idea of Via della Lungara, nonetheless, dates to the plans of Alexander, who already saw it as an alternative route for either pilgrims or the flux between the Vatican and the harbour of Ripa Grande, henceforth bypassing the west side. Julius acted more

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150. Julius intended to take total control over all the Papal States and one to the Vatican the entire project from which was his domain towards other territories, such as Venice, Naples, Florence and so forth. Although he was the first to achieve this, the approach of singular interventions was certainly borrowed from his uncle Julius II and the earlier papacy of Nicholas V. For a complete account of the project of the Via della Lungara as a part of the broader project of Julius II, see Annable Bremmer, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1972), pp. 113–126.

151. Ibid., p. 116.


153. Alexander VI had underestimated the potential of these areas around Lungara, and at the time was therefore already in his plans, not to only connect the Vatican to the harbour of Ripa Grande but also to offer a west side alternative for the circulation of pilgrims going to the Vatican Hill. Montfort Toulmin, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 76.
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 sought to create a double agency that worked together to avoid a plebeian revolution or against the interests of the old oligarchies. Julius financed public bakeries, for instance, and built streets which cut through areas of waste land to raise taxation until the local barons had no option but to sell them.

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.” 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 white stone for over a thousand metres. 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 treetops behind them. The Via, moreover, instantly changed the broader area as it ran over the tortuous tracks of an ancient road to cut through the narrow sump between the Tiber and the Janiculum Hill. Although the gesture simply formalised the north-to-south direction of the topography, it eventually settled the medieval configuration of endorses to impose a more rentable parcellisation. And 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 estates in which gardening could only satisfy the reproduction of leisure. The location itself already implied such a programme, so it was possible 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 southeast side. One of the factors that stressed that this street denoted business (negozio) was the parallel existence of Via della Lungara, denoting pleasure (eterno). For via negozio, both literally and conceptually, the anti-urban character of the latter legitimised the urbanity of the former. While Giulia was an “eterno di city street” in the manner of a monumental corridor of palaces and other institutional buildings, Lungara was an “eterno of a suburban street,” the “facades” of which had trees over columns but were less impressive. 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 “residence.” In this sense, Via della Lungara contributed to a process of urbanisation perpendicularly, as it subsumed an entire rural area under the domain of a new urban centrality.

Garden and loggia staging new rituals of hospitality

Overall, the Lungara development had all the ingredients to attract every wealthy foreigner who was keen to possess a villa and convert it into a summer retreat. [Fig. U] And that was the specific subject of Brussels, whom Julius II wanted to “visiting,” thereby colonising the Agro while he was taking control of Rome. Because — even if many cardinals and clerics were not his allies — their mere presence in the west side was enough to weaken in the old baronical families who threatened his authority. That is why the Pope was so keen on paving the suburban street to embody his governance, while leaving its completion to the new landowners, who were in any case seeking to represent themselves through privately improving their parcels. Rovere encouraged them to go so by conceding generous tax breaks so that the western area became more inhabitable and attractive — in other words, a quasi-jurisdiction towards a faster and cheaper process of gentrification. For urban gentiles such as the banker from Siena, Agostino Chiigi, the trade-off fulfilled not a duty, but a desire: Via della Lungara could serve him not only for short sojourns but also as an eterno of social position to his clientele just across the Tiber. As early as 1505 (when he was living in a palace on Via dei Banchi), he purchased a medieval eterno next to the one owned by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese on the southern entrance of the street, at Porta Settimiana — and just across from the site of Cardinal Riario, currently Villa Corsini. Besides the prestige of these neighbours, the choice of location reveals that Chiigi was primarily interested in the direct connection between the Vatican (through Porta S. Spirito)
and the harbour of Riva Grande, two of his busiest workplaces. He was not only the wealthiest creditor 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 Frumentum bringing the solar from his Tolentini mines to the Roman market. Hence the estate at Via della Lungara was a crucial point mediating his affairs in all social, political, economic, and territorial dimensions. Not incidentally, Julius II—whose election had been financed by the Sienese 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, peacocks, mature trees and other goods to go from the suburban docks straight to the conspicuous consumption of the retreat, which by 1511 resembled more a pleasant embankment and less an underwater grotto. 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 forest, 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 crosscut pergle and probably bound with boxwood. Hence the place produced views similar to the woodcut illustrations of Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, published only a few years before. [Fig. V] Second and more significantly, those elements were ‘swallowed up’ by an unforeseen profusion of fauna and flora: colourful birds and butterflies; flowers traditionally cultivated in Rome (pink cabbage roses, narcissus, laurel, jasmine, iris); indigenous trees (poplars, beech, chestnuts, maritime pines, vines, evergreen shrubs of the mediterranean); and exotic species (such as the Tuscan hop-hornbeam, Sicilian lemon, Turkish pomegranate and American squash). There may have been antique statues casually distributed under the shadows of those leafy treetops, though the cost 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. Sutlings were shipped from the Agro and other regions directly to Agostino, who apparently had become a collector and called that space a “vivarium.” 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 published in a treatise of 1498 by the humanist Giovanni Pontano to advise new courts on how to display private wealth, 'splendour', and express public goodness, 'magnificence', without assuming 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) practice amongst Roman politicians and elgarchs, one that had nothing to do with exclusive luxury but with magnificence, "doing something great", for the visible" benefit of the broader community of citizens. This mentality was fitting, again, to late Renaissance Rome not only because it came from the classical canon but because this was the Julian way of seizing the civic administration from the Capitol Hill. Whether Chigi had ever read Aristotle, 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 land 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, therefore, to recognise such expenditure as a legitimate contribution to their broader project of the urban territory.

On a summer night in July 1512, for instance, the Pope visited the Vedrano with his entourage, even though the owner had been away for several months working in Venice. Whether arriving by boat or carriage, the group must have noticed that, while the eastern...
rampart formed a riverfront, the western walls shaped the course of Via della Lungara to give access to the main gate. The reception inside welcomed cossacks 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 plants, 'the House of Chigi' invited Julius to dine on an elevated loggia, Fig. W which served as the grand lobby of the casino, that is, the main house of the villa. Over there he looked at the court from the perspective of a sort of 'balcony', to which the empty parterre below had suddenly become a 'stage'. As the illusion continued as even the treetops hatching out of the orchard, on the opposite side, formed a leafy 'proscenium arch', while the building embraced the void with two tower-like wings, as if to complete the occasional 'theatre'. Between 1510 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 Bibiena) — hence the intentional use of architectural perspective to turn the Chigi retreat ever bigger; 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 of the putting rural land as a 'tradition' in his family. Both houses are thus almost identical U-shaped blocks access by a central loggia. This element is exactly what distinguishes the one in Volte from a farmhouse, and the other at Lungara from an urban palazzo. The crucial difference of 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 understand, since either the patron or his architect had understood that the entire property should function not as a rustic gazebo but as a public monument to represent the Chigi as a civic powerhouse, amongst others (just as the Roman domus 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) patronymicz to host friends and enemies, from gentle clerks to senators and clerics. In that sense, the reception court was at once a square, a piazza, a stage, a poem and a gaze opened within the dense plantations of the orchard and vineyard. Hence it analogically mediated between urban and rural, courtesy and chivalry, magnificence and splendour, publicness and privacy, to introduce the whole property as a 'world' where these categories intermingled — and setting henceforth the judicious tone of the events to follow further inside. For the first time, a Renaissance architect used such a spectacular effect to monumentalise a residential compound that was neither a palace nor a palazzo. Although it may not have impressed Julius — who would have asked Peruzzi to triple the scale — *Vidriariu Olgi* was the perfect scenery to please someone like Giovanni di Lorenzo de Medici, who became Pope Leo X, someone with a penchant for theatricality and who, by 1518, had invested heavily in theatrical art and architecture to transform the whole city into a court. More importantly, the property should indeed have satisfied Leo, since two years before he had passed a policy that granted tax breaks and building privileges to the suburban gentry. His announcement attests not only to how suburbanisation was at the core of the papal strategy to colonise and reshape the urban territory but, crucially, to how and why a private landowner should do it:

(…) to enlarge and to embellish his house not only for his own use but for the dignity and beauty of the city, also to attract visitors, where many gardens, vineyards and other buildings as well as some size, useful and necessary residences have been rising in the last few years.

What this bull describes is a process of villification of the agrarian region. Does it sound familiar? It does as, in fact, Leo was a Medici and might have learned from his father Lorenzo what one should do to legitimate the unproductive appropriation of arable land. He therefore issued that policy in the same period that Chigi was enlarging the *Vidriariu*. [Fig. 1] Such good timing was more than a coincidence, as Leo still owed Agostino for the financing of his power (papal coronation). It is equally worth noting that the modus

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Fig. 1. The situation of the "Vidriariu Agrarian Olgi" by 1516. Note how the site of Via della Lungara has gone from a rural "village" to a comfortably "suburban" place.
opera and of the ingenious pontiff was to mask that sort of abuse of power with gestures seemingly selfless yet never without pomp. By “to enlarge and to embellish,” he meant to make suburban possessions appear anything but idle, so that their land could never be reclaimed — neither by the peasantry nor by the gentry of Rome. Hence many of the new estates had gardens planted with tall trees, which made their inhumanity 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. 7]

Form and function — and size — were therefore just as critical to confer these places with the appearance that Leo X considered “useful.” Further inside, the courtly manners of showing splendour were thus more exaggerated than ever before. And so they implied a magnificence increasingly formalised through theatrical perspectives, through “stage-set architecture,” thus not necessarily by scale. In that same year, for instance, Chigi commissioned a “dream team” of star artists to help (and pressure) Peruzzi to finish decorating the main house of the villa. The focus in this phase were the trompe-l’œil frescoes that could maximise the theatricality that would make the entire estate ready to enter to impressive play of 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 dramatisations of Ovid’s Metamorphoses, which usually took place on the empty parterre just below. The classics had become direct references to the idea and culture of retreat, just as suggested by Petrarch almost two centuries earlier. And so, Giovanni da Udine wrapped up the fresco by admirably beautifying the arches with grotesque flowers (a recently rediscovered style of Roman art) and the vaults with realistic ivy festoons, fruit pendants and wicker curbs with colouring typical of the Venetian school. This mocking of natural elements made the whole structure allude to the wooden pergola outside. The gallery, however, did not give access to the studio, which was instead connected to the main house of the villa through the south façade, by the “Garden Loggia” (today the “Loggia di Galatea”). [Fig. A A] This loggia was also compellingly frescoed by Peruzzi, Sanzio and Sebastiano del Piombo, with epic scenes and landscapes of (im-
possibly) harmonious rural fields. The pleasant decoration helped to make the lodge-like room suitable for more formal banquets, mostly during the winter, or to gather the guests before long walks such as the secular 'processions' through the (real) pergola towards the "Tiber Loggia." At a party held in August 1514, 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 into the Tiber. The act tricked even the smart Pope, unaware of the nets installed beforehand on the riverbed to retrieve them.

The hortus, however, would not have worked without the help of vine, and certainly not before the 'prelude' of the Vitruvian. The 'procession' through the exotic microcosm was in itself a bewildering experience, in which the various scents, shapes, shades, shadows and wisps immersed the guests in a mental state where fiction and reality were hardly discernible. This garden was therefore used as a setting 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 serving in individual pans, the setting was able to overcome the imagination of the most avid reader of the Vitruvian. The extensive orchard nearby functioned towards the same aim of illusion, 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 Vitruvian Chigi. The medieval vines could not have lived up to the new sixteenth-century demand for rituals of hospitality. Meanwhile if

169. Christoph L. Frowanzel, La Ville Renaissance (Madrid: françois gourcuff, 2002).
170. Only a few years before that event, Chigi had built the huge rooms that flanked the entrance pavilion of Leo X. Hence the act of throwing gold into the Tiber, through which Agostino may have secured his financial power over the Pope.
173. In 1528 the gardens were not yet finished. Perhaps because of the difficult task—undertaken by Raphael—to turn it on such a modest frame as those of Bramante's palaces for Cesare Borgia (who already awaited by Leo X from the Romain family).
to Peruzzi the gardened solution was a matter of framing, and so of giving sense to a continuous sequel of spectatorial perspectives, for the client that was about having more — so literally more time and a variety of occasions — to emulate the character of a magnificent benefactor that would institutionalise his political influence on Roman society.

The garden as a pedagogical project

Although Agostino was perhaps too dazzled to convince in that role, his retreat succeeded as a monument essentially because the garden, along with the frescoed perspectives inside the casino, gave it a fully fledged pedagogical dimension. That is precisely how the Viridarium redefined the humanist concept of the suburban villa. For the garden not only hid the property's economic dependence on the city to fulfill 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 provide a spatial order to gestures that justified splendour as magnificence; they eventually formalised the entire estate into an artefact that commemorated the act of possession, over and over, from various angles and in different ways. In other words, by making the place public, those archetypes validated private ownership. The fact that, to the Renaissance ideal, this validation was not a paradox, did not make the re-appropriation of agrarian land any less controversial, though the Viridarium normalised this process by ritualising leisure 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 recreation of stamn and hospitality had become supporting acts and scenery. It is precisely this paradoxical blend of conspicuous consumption and the concealment of labour that makes the Viridarium a humanist villa. While the game of illusions of leisure and autonomy develops well


776. Although this attribution has been common in the primary literature, no other author has ever argued for it in such terms.

777. Sebastiano del Piombo based the background of the Villa in the rural landscape of Viterbo. 100 kilometers away from Rome, through the painting is taken from an example of the natural landscape of its region. In contrast, the Viridarium is set in a more enclosed setting.


of a pleasant place, but quite vague as a specialised architecture of possession. However, the sixteenth-century suburbanisation was also similar to the ancient colonisation of the countryside that the overall disposition of the Villa Aldobrandini ended up reproducing the formal logic of occupation implied by the Roman type. And if one reconsiders the plan solely as a diagram — following Alberti in that typical reading of wall-garden-house — Chigi’s system of enclosures comes across as a model of urban territory that reflected the transformations happening to Rome at that time. In this sense, the orchards and kitchen gardens analogically related to the rural region with the internal limits to the Aurelian walls, the villa to the new suburbs and the main house to the administrative centre. Such spatial order thus spells out the logic of organizing a territory within which a planted area revolves around the life and mastery of a single built centrality, defined by the embrace of a compact U-shaped mass in the manner of an amphitheatre. This situation was similar to the Roman topography itself, which had conditioned the centre to increasingly subsume the countryside as a means to support its service economy and governance. Although we may only arrive at this analogy by reducing the Viridarium to a schematic plan, it affected the memory of late-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 dnium — the possibility of designing.

Garden and steps as theatre of the city

Dinum, however, was not a possibility for Julius II, to whom dnium was less a pretext to emulate the moderating figure of a paterfamilias and more a heuristic device to reconstruct the authoritarian character of an authoritarian ruler such as, indeed, Julius Caesar. For throughout his mandate, every urban renewal — from streets and squares to courtyards and gardens — was an opportunity to up-
generously sized, Julius' pleasure garden — the Cortile del Belvedere — was huge and therefore became a caricature (and the first ‘failiere’) of that progressive change of form and function.

The project, in fact, took the monumentalisation of the atrium to a 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 re-reading the original plan, [Fig. AI] 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."34 This is perhaps because, as the nickname indicates, Julius meant the "Cortile" to be the new courtyard of the Casino del Belvedere, formerly the summer residence of Pope Innocent VIII (1434-1492).44 It is worth noting that, until the sixteenth-century intervention, this was a U-shaped loggia-pavilion isolated on the summit of Mount St. Egidio to the north of the Vatican Palaces. [Fig. AI] Due the date of construction — in the fateful decade of the 1480s — and the evident similarity with the loggia of Santa Chiara, Frommel attributes the mysterious authorship to Baccio Pontelli, a pupil of Francesco di Giorgio.45 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 pilgrims46 and, especially, diplomatic guests coming from the north to publicly enter Rome through the gates of the Leonine Wall.47 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.48 To the Pope, who was proudly restless, the choice of program was neither about amplifying the retreat nor enjoying the view which the Cortile eventually blocked. It meant, instead, fulfilling his promise of undertaking the unfinished legacy of his uncle, Sixtus IV, as well following in the footsteps of Martin V.49 The difference this time was the employment of an architect.
like Bramante, who was even bolder than Julius and already driven to research classical architecture; he was thus able to overcome the lack of archaeological knowledge of his generation. The architect, in fact, surpassed the idea of the type with the powerful gesture of connecting the old Belvedere to the Vatican Palace through a massive courtyard building in the unprecedented shape of a straight line half a 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 archtype into a sequel of colossal steps and terraced gardens to make another idea of collective enclosure legible instead of a household, it referred to the 'head'—literally the capital—of the Holy See. Hence the project managed to formalise Julius' pretex 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 'forum courtyard.' In fact, Julius II, in fact, issued a commemorative medal calling the building a "Vita." The main question is why he took the unusual solution of terracing and gardens such an urban space instead of simply piling it flat and leaving it empty.

The most apparent answer is Julius' imperial agenda, which called for the ostentatiousness 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 Campus and the Vatican Palace was far from a tabula rasa but, instead, was a complex topography densely planted with vines, historical and symbolically charged. The cultivation, nonetheless, was not known as a sign but a 'viridarium' or a 'pannarium', 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 1772 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 Constantinian Basilea with a Romanesque sort of 'Domus Aurea', which contained a large walled garden, a fountain, an orchard of orange trees and a secluded garden of simples 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 just outside the Leonine Wall to provide the papal residence with a protective plantation, one resembling the ancient pomerium. But since the Church had lost Jerusalem in 1244, the enclosure soon acquired the value of a "paradise regained", or a boat filled with various plants and animals like the Ark of Noah, as Fra Paolino da Venezia illustrates in a map of 1523. [Fig. A1] These associations overlapped with the medieval belief that the parterre was the exact ruin of a Naumachia, an ancient type of stadium with an artificial pond for the staging of naval battles. In any case, by the time Bramante encountered the site, it had the long rectangular shape of a circus and the profile of a basin which perfectly matched the form of a theatre, specifically one at the new urban scale dreamt of by his client. The enclosure even fitted the exemplary ratio of 1:3, which (as mentioned by Vitruvius and confirmed by Alberti) was the proportion of the Circo Massimo and of an ancient Roman forum. Bramante, moreover, understood that natural curiosity 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 Palantine Hill. Since this ruin was just a myth and not yet excavated, he found a similar model in the hippodrome which Pliny the Younger had famously described as the climax of his Tuscan villa.

At first sight, therefore, Bramante should have been confident of the rectangular block, 'stadium-like' parti. On a closer look, the full architectural arrangement of the inner space was still in question, since the stage inside Pliny's hippodrome was a pergola — a necessarily smooth garden walk — that could not 'deal' with the sharp rise of the Vatican valley. As terracing had already been the most successful way of taming Roman topography since the Etruscan settlements, the architect looked further around until he found the Forum and Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia in Praeneste,
just outside Rome. This ancient order of "city-building" inhabited a seemingly impossible climb through an axial system of great temple squares, flanked by continuous arcades and interrupted by 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 fewer elements in the narrow containment of a hippodrome. Moreover, either by chance or intuition, Bramante asserted that the emulation of Palestrina dovetailed with Julius' idea of city being a Roman example of civic space in which the ritual practices of religious and temporal powers were not yet separated, neither from each other nor from architecture, while being also an act of inhabiting and organizing the territory. Hence by aiming at some 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 climb, furthermore, produced a rhythm of tension and release that, by affecting neuromuscular perception, predisposed the human body to long walks and critical breaks and, thereby, to experience space from the perspective of both actor and audience. So instead of framing the landscape as its background, the Cortile had (literally) transformed the landscape itself into a theatre. The main auditorium of this theatre was composed of two-storey loggias, the upper galleries of which should also serve as museums and passageways from the Casino to the Vatican Palace, while the great-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 "horseshoe", one could look back on the long climb and picture the gigantic courtyard as a unified whole of repetitive forms - such as the 60 arches, 110 steps and countless rose-bushes - and have a sense of direction, orientation, and stability.

While symbolically this perspective spelled out the unification of the Holy See under Julius' command, in practice it induced the crowd of new courtiers to recognize 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 - recognizes the imperial rule. This is the reason for the socio-political function of theatre and why Roman forums were often similar to circuses, as some later Renaissance squares similar to those. Unfortunately, neither Bramante nor Julius ever saw their Cortile functioning as such, because its 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) designed a garden prior to its implementation on site. This does not mean that artists before him had never conceptualized 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 cloisters - proofs that the household garden had never ceased to be a form of architecture.) But the Belvedere marks the moment when this architecture becomes not only a 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 actualize 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, if anything, what could be more effective to stress that anachronistic 'stadium' as a monument than turning the final stepped terrace into an oval flowered, one cultivated for sheer ornamental purposes? Moreover this "denouement" was a secular reminder of Nicholas' pomerium, which confirms that Bramante took the site not only as a condition but as a blueprint. If anything, the Belvedere makes the site the regulative idea of the project, thus inverting, 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 site and a mode for 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 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. AK] 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 Naumachia of the villa of Cardinal Colonna, in Genazzano, [Fig. AL] built between 1508 and 1512. Here the architect answered the demand for a 'domestic' open-air theatre by formalising the site and casting ancient prototypes in a similar way to the projects 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 was much more 'successful' because Peruzzi took full advantage of the interaction of the garden—with a collective place in the household—with the humanist interpretation of drama and the programme of the villa as a 'theatre' of social life. This enabled, thereby, the whole property to didactically transmit its own (acceptable) version of the suburban condition and its historical implication to the urban territory.

The signs of Pope Julius III were the 'last' humanist villa because it confidently fused the spatial experiments and prototypes which had been introduced in the previous five decades. [Fig. AM] The architect Giacomo da Vignola reconciled the 'domestic theatricality' of Vridimburgo Chigi and the ultra-formalised and monumental motif of the Belvedere with Raphael's idea of the suburban villa as a system of rooms, of paved gardens designed as interiors.
over, the tripartite plan of walled gardens – going from the most to the least public – seemed like Alberti’s reading of the ancient Roman house. 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 (prati), woods (alberghi) and rocky lands (crag) for hunting. [Fig. AN] This activity was traditional amongst the nobility. It was therefore usual to see it feature amongst contemporaneous castle/villas, though it reappeared in Villa Giulia for another reason – to recreate a natural-looking territory around.

Fig AN: The central part of the Villa or “Vigna” of Pope Julius III on Corso, designed in 1551.

Fig AN: The main house of the property of Julius III and its system of various enclosures that ranged from vineyards (prati) to meadows (prati), woods (alberghi) and rocky lands (crag) for hunting. (Villa Giulia, 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 casino. This was followed by a walled and sunken symposium. Lastly, there was an actual loggia — called here a "scaletta". 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.\[231\] [Fig. AP] The visibility of those fountain 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 that first impression may have just reflected how Julius III wanted his retreat to enable him to live introverted while governing the Holy See from outside the Vatican. Since he wanted to govern in seclusion, it was only logical that his property had a clear micromonic — 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 "ars lorem",[299] the text imitated the epigrams found in imperial gardens around Rome.

Garden terraces as choreographies of possession

Architecture becomes an instrument of power once it acknowledges that humans are subjects, and that social relationships are never black and white. On the one hand, the form of a space has to be easily understood to transmit an idea or simply fulfill whatever practical purpose it was intended for. On the other, it must "disappear" to allow the needs for interaction to inhabit it. That is how buildings...
get into everyday life and become didactic instruments promoting a project larger than their footprints. Leo X seemed to have 'known' that—on some level—since he did not make architecture as a means of promoting the worship of his personas 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 'soft', even though he was just as (if not more) ambitious as Julius II.93 The crucial difference was that the Medici Pope was a subtler strategist, who would never clash with the old baronial class as did Alexander. Instead, Leo focused on making diplomatic alliances and discreetly granting favours that raised the influence of his family and the broader Florentine society—what he promised to reconcile with that of Rome.94 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.95 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 house smaller than most papal residences, an orchard and close proximity to the hunting ground of the Prati.96 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".97 Only a year later, though, he put the estate in the name of his cousin—whom he had just made cardinal—Giulio de' Medici.98 [Fig. AQ] The reasons for this transfer are worth noting. Firstly, it served to soothe future problems with the Camera Apostolica while still keeping the possession in the hands of the Medici.99 Secondly, the Pope had just appointed his protégé as vice-chancellor in charge of the Vatican's foreign affairs.100 So, it would look legitimate to give him a spot at the northern entrance of the city to receive diplomats and guests of the Curia with the necessary pomp of such an office.101

Yet Giulio lacked the temperament and charisma for diplomacy and, therefore, needed all the help he could get from architecture and other artforms of social mediation and collective delight.102 He followed through with the enterprise of transforming the signa into a monument to his 'public life as a representative of the theatrical court to which Rome had just been reduced.103 Raphael was Leo's appointed architect and the natural choice for the job. It perfectly fitted his standard, 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.104 Moreover, he was both a key collaborator and frequent guest in the Villa of Agostino Chigi. Hence not only was this a professional who knew Giulio's 'programme' from first-hand experience but—after Bemante's death in 1514—he was the ablest man to compete with Peruzzi's invention of the suburban villa. That matter because competition and innovation were demands by virtue of both the type and the ethos of ostentatious patronage established under the Leonine papacy.105 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.106 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 resuscitable 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. A4] 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 nymphaeum, work carried on by Antonio da Sangallo after the architect in chief had prematurely died in 1519.445 [Fig. A5] Though before we finally land there, let us start with a brief look at the first drawing by Raphael. [Fig. A6]

For as much as it is tempting to project on this plan (our modernist expectation for) so-called “high Renaissance” symmetry, the main building of the villa was not symmetrical.45 That is because overall mirroring would have created unavoidable duplications, whereas the festive programme required every space to be unique. As Robin Evans has (beautifully) argued, the villa for Giulio de’ Medici was “a picture of social relationships,” normed by a decorum of gestures meant to choreograph the correct sequence of ceremonial encounters in diplomatic receptions that lasted whole days, if not weeks.456 Like Bramante, therefore, Raphael used Pliny’s villas as conceptual models but his formalisation of the hill site into a theatrical place was even cleverer—or after—because he did not lose sight of the “domestic” dimension of the programme.457 As for the diplomatic receptions under Leo, for us it 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 eschewal of walled enclosures interconnected by portals, loggias, chambers, steps, courtyards and gardens, which transformed the walls from blunt separations to smooth transitions. Hence Raphael’s rejection of corridors.458 Yet there was still a strong sense of movement since the constant variation of levels put the guests in continuous circulation from one space to another. What was not clear from the plan, though, was which compartments were roofed, and which ones were open to the air. But that was precisely the fundamental idea of this project: every enclosure was a room. Only then did the architect deploy symmetry within the individual space of each set to define it as a moment that demands attention, similar to the acts of a long Roman play. It may be a cliché to say that was the move of a genius, but it does show how Raphael acknowledged a concept that had been
developing since the fourteenth century, but most architects had
shied away from fully fledging gardens on interiors. And so, the site
become a visible system of interiors once Raphael filled it out with a
narrative of various gardens, each one working like a painting.240

Similarly to the way Raphael constructed his paintings (under
the influence of Perugino), he ordered each enclosure so that it
shaped symmetrical perspectives in which the central subject matter
was not merely the picture but was the picture itself. The tri-
angle-arched loggia, for instance, drove the guests' eyes to the brighter
centre of the terrace garden, where a long table would occasionally
be used for ambasadorial 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 gar-
dens; 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 hippocrnon-like composition of two semi-circles and a square.
Unfortunately, there is no evidence about the species or the precise
layout in which they were gardened. Equally importantly, though,
recent findings have discovered that these gardens ran in parallel
with the house instead of meeting it transversally.414 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 device because it would have produced an overall axi-
ality alien to the spatial 'narrative' of the other rooms in the villa.465

The three garden terraces below the villa formalise the act of
possession into a procession 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 for-
nally 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. Decades later, though, another form of private garden open to the public emerged. This was the case of the Ortì Farnesiani, designed by Vignola in 1540. 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, niches with ancient statues and a long shallow climb. Up on from the first terrace, the street was framed by the windows on the façade. A room with a grotto was carved in the turf of the hill. Three other stairways would lead to a second terrace. But this climb was accompanied by two gardened ramps. Above it, a small belvedere frames the view of Tempio della Pace on the opposite side of the street, and the Roman Forum. These gardens were periodically open to the public. Despite the variety of plants, their main theme was the large collection of ancient sculptures owned by Farnese. In 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 botanical garden in Italy. At the same time the type emerged as a didactic
space for universities in other Italian cities, such as Pisa and Padua. Within the Farnese property, however, this was a place to display the capacity to import and cultivate species from all around Italy and the globe. [Fig. AV] Because of its role in the spatial narrative of gates, steps, terraces and casinos, this botanical garden still offers an analogy with the city: the re-establishment of a new form of open garden right on the grounds of an ancient public domus (that had both private peristyle gardens, and gates here facing the Roman Forum). Hence, consciously or not, Orti Farnesiani actualized a reinterpretation of the late-republic juridical framework of publicness with the city—however, one only ruled by the Farnese family. Hence the garden as a new botanic acropolis, [Fig. AV] overlooking the process of suburbanisation— and gentrification— of Campo Vaccino and the surrounding area towards the precarious south-east side of Rome.
This vector—of the park-like villa—had underlain not only Orti Farnesiani but also other contemporary examples, epitomized and best represented by Villa of Cardinal Ippolito d’Este, in Tivoli. [Fig. A2]. In this, Piovecino had 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 1561 and 1565, when Cardinal Felice Peretti di Montalto, and the architect, Domenico Fontana, deployed garden design to turn a decaying town into a cultivated villa and this, eventually, into a “farm-park.” This would later become "Villa Peretti di Montalto," commonly known as "Villa Peretti." [Fig. A3] 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 inventory 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 entry of connection between S. Maria Maggiore and the future site at Piazza della Reina. If true, this would invest the garden with an innovative programme: turning circulation into a procurable 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 redefining rural suburbs.

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 Bordinus in 1586. [Fig. A4] 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 the gentrification of the south-eastern and most precarious edge of the city. Whether Peretti purchased the dried-up vineyard in 1571 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 1586, the estate was enlarged until it bordered the terrains of Aqua Alessandrini. 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 laid 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 Equilino was not only cheaper but desolate enough to work as a tabula rasa.

The closest depiction of this area is found in a city map engraved by Mario Cartaro[58] and first published in 1576. [Fig. BA] Here, the south-east fringe of the Aurelian Wall (at the top of the plate) looks almost the same as the countryside outside: hills evenly covered with vast 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 cut the area away from the city: Via Pia (from Via Nomentana) and Via Gregoriana, almost converging at eighty 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 Equilino was very poorly irrigated (most aqueducts nearby were ruined). [59]

In the following year, 1577, a map published by Etienne Dupérac and Antoine Lefèvre[60] did not show any changes, except for a clearer representation of the slope inside the property and a medieval turris murae, substituted Turris Monetae. 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 hash 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. [61] Only in 1581 was Fontana commissioned to redesign the estate as a villa. The original plans of that stage are unknown. But an advanced outcome was etched by Antonio Tempesta in a map first issued in 1593, but probably finished by 1589. [Fig. BC]
Here the villa is subitled Viga di Montalto. Now much higher, the walls are crowned with watchtowers. The original gate has been replaced by a monumental entrance. Outside the front, Obelisk Equilino (1587) is off-centred to align with both the Basilica and the entrance of the Montalto property. Two parallel rows of short trees ‘guard’ the newly rectangular plaza.

Another free-standing object joins the family of Basilica and Obelisk: Palazzo Felice (1587), the cubicule casino placed inside the evo which definitely reads as now as a monumental garden. Each of the four linear spaces is girded by a different framing element: from the front loggia, an avenue of cypresses fronts the entrance gate; from the back portico, the noble court clears the sight for a fountain trio to emerge niched by poplar trees, on the right, a pergola walks through two crops of olives to end casually at a hilly shady base. The left façade is draped by an (apparently ornamental) kitchen garden. The sequence suddenly stops at another avenue. Transversal and longer than the first, it links the upper base to the second gate, Porta Quirinale (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 flanking the straight avenue as two huge walls, making the space completely shaded and breezless during a summer afternoon. This effect would thereby make of each pathway a prolongation of the inside space of the small casino — that is, from the centre of the villa onwards.

This seems to be, in fact, one of the intentions behind the star-shaped plan, though the most evident one is to draw our gaze to what awaits outside: for instance, S. Maria degli Angeli (1586) next to Piazza delle Terme (1788), with Monte Pincio in the background. So, garden architecture is not so much driven to frame villa as landscape but, first and foremost, landscape 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 bottiglie) 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 Sistus V. First, the garden lay out a possible system to make the rural side inhabitable and walkable. Second, it is reconfigured along with

the changing city: in and out, straight roads making sense of old bits and new pieces. Indeed, the Equilino eventually looked like a vibrant suburb, a land use change from both city and countryside. However, the map did not picture the most crucial transformation: Aqua Alexandrina was streaming hourly from 1586 when it was restored to become Acqua Felice. Throughout the century, irrigation was a problem — as Roman as the floods in November. The latter were countered by successive reforms along the Tiber banks — the draining of Via Giulia and of Via della Lungara, where Villa Chigi was grounded 10 metres above water.

Nevertheless, none of the Popes before Sistus 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 enclosure of his villa. It is equally worth noting that in 1585 Sistus V had also purchased Viga di...
Naples from Cardinal Caraffa—the idea was a gardened checkerboard tabula annex to Palazzo Quirinale. Having two huge properties to keep irrigated, Peretti was thus personally interested in solving the irrigation drama once and for all. The result is evident in the famous axonometric plan of Giovanni Battista Falda, printed in 1676. Falda was known for his highly detailed perspectives of the major villas and gardens around Rome. So we may trust his depiction of Aqueduct Felice leaving Porta di S. Lorenzo to enter Villa Peretti. Water streamed down for about 500 metres in parallel with the longest wall of the property, whose original size had nearly tripled. As earlier implied, the colossal 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 1688 until the Pope died in 1690. 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 small gardens. Each enclosure is bounded by a low topiary and offset by a line of conifers. Two types of plan dominate: the cruciform flower bed centred around a fountain and the grassy grid shaded by small trees. (Perhaps many of these were of pears since the fruit featured in Sixtus V's coat of arms and Peretti means pars 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 box. Within a single trapezoidal hedge, mixed horticultures, animal pastures, barns, storage houses and wells are lain flat until our gaze meets the Basilica outside. Perhaps it is just the way Falda simplified topography, but the villa does look much flatter in his time. If so, rainfall would be absorbed by the deep-ploughed soil of each garden, while greater outflow would be drained by plumbs or guttered away by seven paved avenues running down (on an average of 300 metres) towards Strada Felice. The placement of a large oval basin on the lower level of the property may well be related to drainage relief.
Given the huge amount of soil removed, it is impossible not to question the reason behind the decisions made by Peretti and Fontana. Famous predecessors, such as Villa Madama and Otti Farnerisani, had dealt with similar sites by building up terraces to stage their gardens. This was, in fact, the Roman way, making theatrical apotropoeis out of topography. Thus, why were terraces so timidly deployed in Villa Peretti? Sisto V was not interested in referencing ancient prototypes of the so-called Golden Age. Instead, he would only look at imperial and medieval pasts to cherry-pick useful objects. Furthermore, he had a completely different purpose in framing the city with its landscape: to drive civic and pilgrim traffic. I would like to argue that none of his urban work was clearer about this idea than the last garden layout inside his villa, because here the obsessive use of straight avenues aims solely at creating distance. It is all about the very distance times the experience of motion. So that points of arrival (gates, courts and fountains) are given enough reverence — as they emerge from long walks through repetitive scenes, such as the compassed pitches of corbelled cypress trees. Occasionally, a well-ordered garden could be glimpsed between cypresses. Hence the overall image of Villa Peretti was of a highly cultivated place. In fact, Sisto V himself was an eager gardener who planted and nurtured the first seeds of cypress and cypresses, 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 Sisto V could play the pastoral character — while in fact he was a powerful landowner. At that turbulent moment, that was the most cautious image-making for a former mendicant turned Pope. 97

While that first area is undoubtedly the garden of the villa, the annexe looks like a giardini 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 giardini would be locked whenever the garden was opened to visitors. Surely, the two enclosures had different architectural programmes. But were they complementary?
or autonomous? What could that annex 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 programme to revitalise the city. 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 Colosseum into a weaving factory. Given this ambition, we may speculate whether the annex was used to grow mulberry trees. Otherwise, where else in the city could one extensively crop a species that requires an empty circle of 25 metres around it?

From archetype to project

Whether it was ever involved in the silk industry project, that annexed to the main villa appears indeed to address the city rather than just the villa, for either its productive nature or the apparent infinity of its limits and connections. Foremost, the space housed a major aqueduct of Rome.

The duomo di monumenti gianico and urban poesia pushes Villa Peretti outside the family of suburban villas. Today, this villa would be naturally understood as an urban park with several gardens and two palaces.

But this is not as complex as a threshold. First, the park did not exist as a concept at that time. Second, the spatial disorientation (that one can only experience with this type of enclosure) did not happen anywhere inside of Villa Peretti, because garden visitors could always guide themselves through the star-shaped layout of straight avenues. Despite the impossibility of seeing the outlines of the villa, the star-shaped avenues produced an order of cardinal spaces and centralities. So, this villa did not break up the Renaissance marriage of nature and architecture. However, it did shake many of its principles, as it had invented the supremacy of walls in shaping gardens. It constructed, thus, the literal scheme of the city to become an open (almost infinite) and multi-centred territory. (Fig. BF) Hence, these six villas only touched on here relates to the very crux 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.

Fig. BF. Opposite page. Six panel garden 누만 에 운달로 세운 the sixteenth-century renovation of the suburban villa. Through out these streets, the towns have developed from a compact domestic interior to a monumental public garden and, essentially, a park-like urban form. Such transformations have enabled specific projects for the city of Rome in an urban territory. Both the substance and spirit of the town are made possible by the sixteenth-century urbanisation of Rome. The city has illustrated the capacity to establish itself as the capital of a newsubjacent territory. From the top, by degree of formal cohesion: (1) Villa Farnese (Cesi), compact evidence of house and garden; (2) Villa Aldobrandini in the area still connected to the town and service gardens, mostly formed or designed as per a single scheme; (3) Villa Giulia (the same attempt but existing as a compact formal relation); (4) Villa Medici (Cornaro), reduction of the system; (5) Villa Aldobrandini, reduced in size and accessibility; (6) Villa Peretti di Montalto, star-shaped at the core of a disorder, lacking any ring as park in the city, whose plan itself begins to spread towards the suburbs.
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 some garden villas into picturesque parks, such as the opening of Villa Borghese. [Fig. A] However, now there seems to be a revival of the idea of an orchard, quite similar to the sixteenth-century refashioning of the rustic vineyard into monumental gardens. [Fig. B] Non-profit associations such as the Zappeia Romana are mostly responsible for helping groups of people — mostly residents in precarious areas, with little or no public space — to occupy vacant land, where they self-organise several “giardini condivisi.” [Fig. C] During the last decade, these small “local” interventions have resulted in what may be considered as 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.*

According to urbanists Italo Inselora and Paolo Berdini, around 60% of these urbanisations were illegally built by private developers, forming the borgate.* 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.* The borgate often vary in size, shape, density and social status.* But they always follow the logic of the real-estate market, with a predominance of the palazzi and villas.* 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...
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 habitable. [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 resalable 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...
Fig. D: The new wave of 200 allotments (blue dots), of which most were assigned between 2010 and 2015, on the periphery of Rome. Although most are far away from the old city centre, they still sit within the municipal limits (black circle line) of the Grande Raccordo Anulare or GRA.

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Fig. E: Spread of Burger (blue dots) 1970/2010, within the Commodus of Rome. These illegal spots are usually on edge in-between the legal city (blue hatched), outskirts or isolated land (light dot hatched); archaeological parks (cross hatched) and reserves (dot dot hatched). Proportion suggests range from north to south-east.

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Fig. F: Pomo Aka is a housing district mostly illegally built from 1990 onwards. The settlement edges the Natural Reserve Griante, on the north region outside of the GEA. This brings its particular problems for it lacks public services and infrastructure. The site seems to be between two blocks (blue lines), where serious infrastructure remains with most of its indigenous vegetation (tissue pattern). As these fringes which two main surrounding roads of the settlement, they could feature a linear system of pedestrian circulation,核心技术 for tourist and collective recreation.

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Fig. G: Via Manzoni is a borough from 2000 onwards. Its settlement edges the Natural Reserve Griante, on the north region outside the GEA. The site is mainly used for urbanisation of single-family 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 hill slope with difficult access, especially for pedestrians. This space, however, has the potential to become a model for urban strategies of intervention.

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Fig. 1: Good example of a housing estate newly built from 1990 onwards. The settlement edges the Natural Reserve Gardens, on the north outside of the OBA. The site has several problems, such as the lack of a comprehensive system of public spaces, circulation and infrastructures. One way, however, note the remaining old land along the River Crocette (blue). These areas could gain a linear system of collective spaces of leisure and pedestrian circulation for residents.

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Fig. 1: Good example of a housing estate newly built from 2000 onwards, edging the Natural Reserve Marzamemi, on the west again outside the OBA. At first sight, it seems that everything is fine with this housing estate, as it has some public space and infrastructures. However, this area has some problems 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 noisy and road traffic of the highway.

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

Fig. K. Top: Edge (blue) between Primula and the Roma delle Macchie (circle hatch), a show painted forest.

Fig. L. Edge (blue) between Nettuno and idle land, morpionic shrubs (spot hatch), grass (circle pattern).

Fig. M. Top: Edge (blue) between Giulio Racconta and Roma delle Macchie (circle hatch) and idle land (spot hatch).

Fig. N. Edge (blue) between Giardini Centrale, agricultural and idle land (spot 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 Zoppata Romana.

The creation of a park has 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 and gazing 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 Borgate population the luxury of enjoying green with dignity. That is, the possibility of ‘doing nothing’ after a long journey back from work. [Figs. Z to AA]
Fig. P. Prototypes for a possible architectural grammar of the monumental garden.
Fig. 8. Top: A parapet redefines the edge as an inhabitable limit.
Fig. 8. Bottom: A parapet redefines the edge as an inhabitable limit.

Fig. 7. Bottom: A group self-forms existing centrality, 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 del Giardino, in Prima Porta.
Fig. V, Bottom: A street shaded stop at the tides lead, in Prato d'Nerz.

Fig. X, Top: A stop offers a place for leisure while giving access to a natural reserve.
Fig. Y, Bottom: A house frame Roma, "as for easy," within the urban territory.
Fig. 2. The rain falls on the tiled roof around Ljutomer.

Fig. A6. The terrace of a collective garden after the flood, Ljutomer.
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 talks of green beds
And all the nice things that she wants to plant in them
I cannot grow tomatoes on the front steps
Sunflowers, beans, sweetcorn, beets, and radishes
I feel prettier, I pull out weeds

As living conditions currently worsen everywhere—from neglected peripheries to expensive urban centres—gardening comes to signify not only a relaxing activity but also the possibility of a 'better life.' That is because the cultivation of a garden implies a significant amount of space, time and agency, 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 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. 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 ‘career’ 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 take on allotments draws directly from the ancient tradition of almost every household – even the humblest – having a small vineyard with an orchard to cultivate in the idle outskirts of the city. So, there is no nostalgia there but a sense of continuity and, perhaps, reinvention of a practice and knowledge common to nearly all social classes. Whereas in London, there is a general view of the English allotment as either a past ‘culture’ that is disappearing or a ‘proletarian’ symbol of utilitarianism and resistance. Although none of these propositions are wrong, they are neither historically accurate nor complete. It is nonetheless a fact that English, and especially London, allotments are disappearing despite the growing demand. And, in order to understand why, one must look closer at their history.

During the 2017 UK elections, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn described himself as an “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, hands-on and creative. 6 An

4. See the present thesis from page 108 to 109.


Allotment gardens, a procedure that generally implies legal protection against removal. Nevertheless, just as councils “must provide” plots following popular demand, they also have the power to alter or to not renew their lease. The latter often prevails. This is especially true after the London Government Act of 1963, which placed 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 pressurised 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 leaf-valued boroughs just below the Thames. And less than 1% persist in the more disputed areas. 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 natively formed by the late seventeenth century or, most probably, came into English a century earlier through “allotment”, from the Old French “allouer” and “doler”, 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 “hlot” for “share of land” and Old English “hot” for “obit used 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 change 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 Allotment in Landscape and Culture — that figures such as Jeremy Corbyn, or even young East-London hipsters, tend to suppose the model is a 'working-class invention.' Likewise, the author of the present thesis personally admits 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 one. Instead, in order to reframe the English allotment towards an architectural project for an alternative form of living in London, one must understand this has always been an extremely ambivalent model. This ambivalence does not only come from the archetypal trait of enclosed gardens but, mainly, the fact that allotments do have a '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 with another from 1860 reveals that both allotment gardens and suburban housing blocks have the same shapes of former rural glyphs. It is also not 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.27 Or, with the Select Vestries Act of 1819, parishes were formally allowed to 'let land for labourers.'28 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 1922.29 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

Fig. F. East Ealing in 1934.

the possibility of growing one's own food instead of buying everything from supermarkets. In promoting new 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."30 [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."31 This is evident in the earliest sites around the 1990s, when landowners
and farmers provided peasants with "potato grounds," so they could survive the severe subsistence crisis during and after the Napoleonic Wars. This crisis was also caused by Parliamentary Enclosure, which had abruptly dissolved the open-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 an even more complex and ambivalent than it appears. It had varied over time in the face of political and social events, such as peasant riots and the establishment of philanthropic societies dedicated to help the "labouring poor." The emergence of the so-called "Swing Riots" between 1830 and 1831 was a series of protests by small farmers, cottagers and labourers against the effects of this acceleration of enclosure. For not only had parliamentary enclosure abolished a system, which (for better or worse) gave the peasants access to common and waste lands but, crucially, they had devalued their labour. Since that process favoured the re-parcellation of diverse farmsteads into extensive monocultures, it increased the need for horse-powered machinery, which ended up reducing the quantity of manual labour required. Machines, moreover, made tangible how the new gentility had alienated the peasants from the land in all possible dimensions. And, if it is difficult to define the origins of the 'land question' in English culture, the Swing episode does give a significant clue as to why land has become so central to working-class struggle. Yet the protesters did not focus on attacking the legal acts that had legitimised that massive privatisation of landownership. Instead, they threatened landlords and rich tenant farmers with demands for higher wages, better working conditions and less machinery. The Swing Riots were important, in this sense, for reclaiming the land from the point of view of labour, in other words, for addressing the idea that land does not imply just soil and yields but also an entire process of cultivation through social relationships from which it should not be estranged. To the peasants, enclosure was tragic precisely for having freed the manors from the traditional duty to provide them with the right to use - not just - the land. However, their claims, which were thus essentially ethical but relatively modest, upset the landed class beyond Kent, where the protests concentrated, as evidenced by the events that followed immediately after the Riots, such as the foundation...
Plots and the moralisation of rural labourers

Northfield Allotments is the oldest surviving example of allotments within the urban territory of London. The site has been in continuous cultivation since its establishment in 1834, the old centre of Ealing, 12 kilometres west of Charing Cross [Fig. J]. This case is extremely significant not only for marking the late development of allotments near the city but also, being one of the earliest Enclosure enactments with the specific purpose of allotment gardening.48

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.50 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 Dreyton Green, which allowed non-parishioners to graze.51 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.52 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.53 To enforce its power and control, the Vestry made commoning and intercommoning increasingly difficult from the sixteenth century onwards.54 However, this changed after 1850, when the entity decided to couple such practices with workhouses in order to reduce poor rates and avert social conflict.55 These problems, however, were only to increase as London rapidly expanded, accelerating the enclosure and mechanisation of agricultural production at large.56 Three decades later, failed crops in Acton and Hampton hit the economy of Middlesex, causing massive starvation, impoverishment of seasonal labourers and social unrest.57 In Ealing, consequently, workhouses became overcrowded, and parishioners complained about still having to pay taxes.58 In response, the Vestry insisted upon enforcing respect for the Church and policing the roads.59 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”.60 By the end of that year, he officially authorised the enclosure.61 [Fig. L]

There is no record in the official minutes of the exact reasons for the petition.62 Moreover—contrary to what some historians, such as Colin Ward, have chosen to presuppose—there is no evidence to suggest that labourers were the initiators of the process. Instead, given the obscurity and speed of transactions between the
Vestry and the Bishop, one can suspect both parties had already been interested in transforming Ealing Dean, regardless of the actual will of the parishioners. In fact, according to the Poor Law Reform, ongoing at that time, enclosing the Common would give the Vicar more political credibility amongst philanthropists to raise funds for the parish. Meanwhile, for the Bishop, the further subdivision of the land into garden plots mattered for two main reasons. Firstly, the process would legally reinforce his authority over Ealing, a strategic unit of the Diocese. Secondly, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, he believed that letting garden 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 parishioner', who could, then, feed his own family, Subsistence gardening, in this sense, spoke to the heart of the Protestant faith in individual self-help, nuclear households and pastoral governance. So, 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. Instead, they saw that their proposal would give the site into communal hands 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 customary pragmatic construction of workhouses and limited provisions of sites for grazing and collecting turf.

One can understand the persistence of the idea of the garden as an archetype of collective enclosure, crucially different from farms and parks. Unlike farming, which addressed the reproduction of the entire parish and—at that point—of London, gardening was a 'domestic', thus 'private', affair. It therefore seemed to exist outside the political economy of parliamentary enclosure which caused so much controversy in early 1830. Unlike public strolling, which shaped the

"Twenty acres" 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 abandons from laying out the grid of one-road parcels, which would form the future allotment. One must note how
Parish of EALING.

Dean Common Allotment.

I. Thomas Adams, of the Parish of Ealing, Labourer, being desirous of renting Twenty Rod of Land, as marked out on Ealing Dean Common, on the Plan, and Numbered 4, do promise faithfully to observe the following Conditions, on penalty of being immediately dispossessed of the Allotment if they are not strictly performed:

First.—I will pay to the Parish Officers for the time being, to commence from Lady-Day next, the Sum of 40 Shillings yearly, for the said Lot, in Quarterly Payments, to be made at the Cross-House, Ealing, at the first Monthly Audit immediately following the Quarter Day on which the Rent is payable.

Secondly.—I will keep the Land well and properly Cultivated (as a Garden) and Manured, and will keep the Quickest Hedges at all times well Weeded and Cleaned, and Mended when necessary, I will not erect, or suffer to be erected, any House or other Building upon the Land.

Fig. IV. The first contract and tenancy agreement for a single plot of Dean Common Allotment.

77. According to the records of Ealing Parish Church from 1854 to 1869, Thomas Adams was a bricklayer, born around 1830, in Bermondsey. He lived with his wife and children at Green Lane, a 25-minute walk from the Ealing Dean Common.


79. The Parish Officer was located at the Church of St. Mary, a 20-minute walk from the allotment. The Bishop's prohibition had become a norm in London by the end of the eighteenth century. The Bishop's prohibition had become a norm in London by the end of the eighteenth century. The Bishop's prohibition had become a norm in London by the end of the eighteenth century.

80. Five shillings in 1850 would be 50 pounds today. This was an annual rent at a peppercorn, considering the rent was equal to one week's wages for a laborer (and simple daily wages for a skilled laborer).


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

1. I will pay to the Parish Officers the annual sum of 5 Shillings, in quarterly payments (…).
2. I will keep the Land well and properly Cultivated (as a Garden) and Manured, and will keep the Quickest Hedges at all times well Weeded and Cleaned, and Mended when necessary. I will not erect, or suffer to be erected, any House or other Building upon the Land.
3. The Vestry and Parish Officers may and shall be at liberty to come at their pleasure on the Land, to see the Cultivation of it.
4. I will not trespass, nor allow any of my Family to trespass, on any
Such norms are worthy of careful consideration as they completely dismantle the present image of the English allotment as a 'movement' instigated 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 £5 was symbolic. Its function was to remind the labourer that the allotment was not the fruit of charity but implied a normal relationship between him and the Vestry. Secondly, the obligation of 'proper' cultivation meant the plot should not only look tidy but also be productive. In other words, the land should never become 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 "hedges" instead of "fence." The primary function 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 blocking 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 in the interior behind a façade and shutters, the space of an allotment must always stay visible to the outside. The absence of built, thus, lodgable 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 "trespast" on each other's plots. The combination of these two norms was anal-

88. For an overview on the subject, see Thomas J. Foster, Agricultural Growth. (New York: University Press, 1980).
89. The minimum limit of the public power is determined by the value of the community, the amount of supply of which the labourer consumes most of his total energy, conveyed in the social bonds of those manor institutions which are physically inseparable. (Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 2, pp. 259-260).
90. One could say the same about workhouses, but these plots were crucially 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 enterprise 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": sober, honest and thirsty. Such a "commandment," however, soon turns into a sheer threat with the words "dispossession." 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 the word contract exactly when parliamentary enclosure was utterly dispossessing 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 implantation 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 correcting 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 agrarian 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 "tired" and, thus, less "willing" (or not seeing) to work for them. Many landowners, however, had mixed feelings about allotments: some held to the belief that sites could reduce violence and riotousness amongst rural labourers. As the Commission reported these perceptions, many MPs and philanthropic organisations—such as the Labourer's Friend Society—changed their emphasis in regard to promoting this new type of landholding: instead of focusing on food production, they started to highlight data showing that sites had improved both the 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." Industriousness 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 diverse 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 priestly nature of his position, such a focus was due to his prior first-hand experience in the early 1820s. Blomfield had started an experimental site in the village of Chesterton, Essex, where he was Rector, eight years before his election to the Diocese of London.© Olivia Mars (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 'lump' of parishioners. In other words, the allotment should make labourers self-reliant and not be 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 divide 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 tithes from. It is worth noting that Ealing Dean Common Allotments featured in the Apportionment Book and Tithe Map of 1839 (Fig. 01, 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 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-parcellation of its context. The similarity between the logic of allotting Ealing with that of privatising urban land becomes
visible in the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1890 and 1934. [Figs. F-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 productivity 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 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 1859,10 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 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 ‘plebian’ 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 null 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 is to wait another hour—while the dew will sparkle, and green leaves spread. But already the clock ticks, but not yet ready for harvest, as he leans down to check the spinach, gets his big scythe, and takes a deep breath, smirking the sweaty soil. On the way back up, he looks around and just nobody, though spiders are tick-ticking everywhere. How far does this tower go? Where does the site start? Where does it end? Has wonders. The space of his plot, though, is finite. It is his "plot in the world," his "slice in the cake," where he can forget all and put on the invisible habit that comes every winter. Was life better during his childhood, gardening with his parents and watching the crofts next to their house? This memory fades away, along with the cloudy vision of the quickset hedges. "Are these "laid" enough for the Vicar?" he worries. "When will the Ventry finally fix the fences around our site?" he complains, though he can't see them from his plot any more.

Nothing—apparently—is "wrong" with this picture. The bricklayer lives in a precarious condition but, at least, the parish lets him one eighth of an acre "at a peppercorn" to help in the reproduction of his household.99 Gardening, moreover, brings him psychological comfort as it gives consistency to the everyday, and some certainy 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 well noting, such worry—or fear—is less problematic than the fact that he is not able to visually understand the entire site as a finite enclosure. Since all plots were laid out in such a compact grid, and spade husbandry made their gardens so micromicroscopic, 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

[228. Hypothetical reconstruction of the personal experience of a plot-holder by the author, based on her first-hand spatial experience of the present condition of the site at Ealing Dean and interviews with plot holders.]

[229. The nineteenth-century use of the expression "at a peppercorn" stems from the formerly common practice of stipulating the payment of nominal rent in peppercorns.]

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of dispossession and precarity in the first place. The fences around Ealing Dean were not just for blocking the entry of animals. Above all, these were formal enactments of the legal procedure through which the access to that land had ceased to be a common right of the local population. While the perimeter fence enclosed and kept the site private, the gardens inside obliterated the limits of that enclosure, thus making it seem a natural feature of the landscape. In other words, allotments made the garden archetype act as a frame that naturalised enclosure and ownership.

As deeds and norms 'designed' the site at Ealing Dean, one cannot confirm whether such complex formal relationships were the work (of art) of the Bishop or the Vestry. It is nonetheless safe to suppose that both entities did not expect the allotments to become so ambivalent—especially in regard to the self-valorisation, commodification and eventually—social activism amongst plot holders.

As previously noted, the activity of gardening was mainly responsible for the first of these three processes. Meanwhile the construction of friendship based upon shared interests took a bit more time than occasional chats about seeds, soil and seasons. That kind of effect evolved rather gradually, while labourers perceived themselves to a singular group of tenants facing the same landlord, represented by the site's Managing Committee. This situation was highly politicising 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 1835 and 1836. 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 1835 onwards, when the tenants collectively sent the Committee open letters concerning encroachments and site improvements and requesting the resignation of certain managers. These complaints reflected how the growth and suburbanisation of Ealing threatened to intrude upon the allotment area. Above all, they also trace the formation of a collective sense of belonging amongst tenants. So, if the spatial perspectives from within the site succeeded in naturalising ownership, they eventually failed to accomplish the same result when shaping the labourers' subjectivity. That is also because the Vestry did not allow the tenants to spend 'too much' time on the site. From the inauguration date until the end of the century, tenants could only garden their plots until 9 A.M. As discussed earlier, the Parish Officers were also committed to shutting the site on Sundays. Unfortunately for the tenants, they were not the only religious parishes and in 1858, petitioned the Managing Committee to allow Sunday gardening until 8 A.M. 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. Of a total of 129 participants, there were 91 farm labourers, 11 gardeners, nine carpenters, nine bricklayers, five shoemakers, two cow keepers, two woodwose 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, it reveals that most plot holders were not all passive. Perhaps because the norms restricted gardening hours to early mornings on weekdays, the site possibly became a 'guilty pleasure' but never the whole 'world' of the labourers. There were other social experiences at play in the politicisation of those subjects, such as, for instance, work in itself, talking with a colleague, walking the streets, and so forth. In addition, it is highly possible that labouring tenants would bring these influences into their morning chats with other plot holders. In other words, the allotment would thus function as (what 1970s O.M.A would call) a "social condenser." For this reason, one may associate the nineteenth-century allotment with the development of agricultural trade Unions in the 1860s. 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 underlined the spatial ambivalence between spatially individualized and unindividualized spaces. In this sense, even the restrictive norms on plot sizing and gardening became two-fold. On the one hand, the eighteenth of an acre rectangle and its plot husbandry restrained subsistence and surplus. On the other, it made living labour tangible in space and action, rather than image. Later, in the 1900s, the interiors of individual tool sheds would have a similar effect on labourers' awareness, as their bare shelves revealed all the utensils and thus the amount labour involved in gardening. Fig. 1 The urban event of Ealing Dean could have thus: partly enabled each plot-holder to realise not only their 'use value' but also the immense potential of his or her 'labour power.'
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 harnessed and amalgamated with the countryside. While the acts of enclosing and allotting Dean Common played a direct role in those processes, the following subjectification of plot holders played a more crucial role. Archival evidence and spatial analyses 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 remain 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 disenfranchisement 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 project — 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, a part of the capitalist status quo. Hence the ambivalence of allotments. Whenever a crisis arose, lawmakers would moreover make the model more instrumental to the state than to workers. This happened in World War I, when Parliament passed the Cultivation of Lands Order of 1916, empowering councils to expropriate 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]
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 such 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. [Fig. V] Above all, the very process of organizing allotments entailed the development of an associable lifestyle 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. [Fig. W] Similarly to
Ealing Dean, this site filled the enclosure of commonable land, over which the Bishop of London also held the memorial rights until the 1960s. 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 1811 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 [Fig. X] on a valley 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 given shape of the enclosure and, regardless of the sloped terrain, organised the site into a uniform grid of 96 plots, arranged in two continuous rows, only interrupted by the original features of the Common, such as ditches and streams. The first tenants in 1917 were mostly middle-aged male workers from Middlesex, or immigrants, paying annual rents of ten shillings. Even if not lacking gardens in 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. [Fig. Y] By 1923, plot holders had not only established a garden but also a cohesive and active Holders' Association. An encroachment 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 confusing with facilitating coexistence rather than 'good Christian conduct'. Still, they reinforced private property. [Fig. Z] As the Association thrived, it put on annual shows stimulating tenants to plant ornamental species. [Fig. AA]
Although 'industriousness' still mattered, East Finchley epitomised the moment when the normalisation of urban allotments started to become less moralistic and more pragmatic. In particular, from 1920 onwards, legislation significantly increased the number of sites, their social inclusiveness, and the assurance of land tenure for tenants. One may understand this transition by tracing the development of Cumberland Basin Allotments, 3.2 kilometres northwest of Charing Cross. Fig. AB The formation of the site was somewhat connected to the private enclosure of a 'common,' since it took place over the lands of Cumberland 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 homes to house the merchants and artisans in the backbones of the Regent's Terrace housing. After WWI

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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. While 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]

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

Regent's Park was nevertheless equally amenable to urban landscaping that, in contrast, was seen in more different ways. This experience of such a space of apparent oligarchic control over a site not only constrained residents but also leveraged local conditions.

The Cumberland example moreover indicated the possibility of an urban void becoming a shared extension of single-family apartments, whose households would have otherwise had fewer material and social resources. The fact that such a space had the irrefutable domestic character of a vegetable garden - within plain open sight - would also transform the public experience of the entire area. To local residents, the Cumbernauld Allotments showed how public parks and garden squares are not the sole - and not the most inclusive or transformative - form of collective enclosure in London. If the plot holders had been able to disentangle their right to gardening from that of property, this would have posed a fully-grounded challenge to the landownership crisis that quickly developed in the following decades, and which presently divides London. As seen earlier in this chapter, the need for the social and economic advantages of small horticultural landholding had been especially evident during the World Wars, yet also remarkably for the cultivation of vegetables and edible plants. The British government blamed the European Union for just such an austerity policy, which, the state, uses of parks and open spaces in general is nevertheless reduced to tourism, jogging and picnicking. On a philosophical note, yet not less practical level, the apparent 'anti-dominance' of parks and garden squares contradicts the present condition of London's knowledge economy. As this system has blurred the modern distinction between living and working - with houses and workplaces absorbing each other - it makes no sense to expect every urban enclosure to pretend that separation still exists. Allotments are more relevant than ever, in this sense, because they reveal that the divide between living and working may never have existed - not at least for workers, whose lives have become, very early on, in the capitalist re-parcellisation of London and its countryside, about the endless reproduction of labour. Unlike garden squares, allotments have spared the territorial dimension of housework. Plot holders may thus collectively rethink gardening as a self-valuing 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, 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 to either private or public developers, 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
Ealing Common thus fairly represents most commons within Greater London. The biggest shrinkage of this particular site occurred during the 1930s, when the area known today as ‘Ealing Borough’ was a conurbation of Victorian towns— as were many other middle-class suburbs— sprawling across what was still considered ‘countryside’. For over 60 years up to that decade, the commoners shared ten hectares for mixed-culture farming on the south-east of the site, the Ealing Common Farm. Regardless of the demand for and full entitlement to the activity, the local Council—who owned the 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 fallsow 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—not based on private property and wage labour—but, instead, on commutation. That is, the praxis of sharing resources, services, care, knowledge, etc.

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The Freedom to roam is an ancient right in various European countries, especially the Nordic ones. In England, nonetheless, the common has been replaced as an individual right of access to open country, in reality, in 2000—a move that prompted a group called the Campaign for Natural England to publish a report. See the latter legislation at https://www.gov.uk/rights-of-way/open-access-land/your-rights.

From this, it can be seen that the present misconception of the commons as ‘an open space’ is overly simplistic and the consequent difficulty in distinguishing the two from each other. Though the latter is by definition an urban area—highly designed to look like a nature that has never existed—the former seems to be an open space—designed to fulfill the right to a supposedly ‘natural’ state of things, one which nobody else has ever experienced.

Montesquieu described the French Revolution as a commonality—land owned by the community and used for communal benefit. In modern terms, this would be similar to the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866, which regulated commons areas and other open spaces in London.

The Rothschilds owned large estates just south of the area and used much of those lands for real-estate development. The Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866 governed the development of such areas, and the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866.

The land of Ealing Common was one of the first to be regulated under the Act of 1866. The common was sold to the Metropolitan Board of Works for use as a public park, and the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866.

The morning ride 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 gradually 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 straight ‘parks’, continuously flanked by horse chestnut trees in a similar fashion to the ubiquitous urban emblishment of London at the time.
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 Hanover Lane to reconfigure them as public pavements and greened boulevards. [Fig. G] Up to 1866, the old track of this crossroad had served grazing and horseback passage through the Manor of Pitshanger. " [Fig. H]

The total area of Ealing Common today, of 1567 hectares, is less than half what was first enclosed in 1860. And it no longer differs in character from most urban parks around the city. The site has even served to raise the land value of the surroundings since it is still wide and green enough to be marketed as "a landscape" and a "free space" for leisure. The crucial difference, nonetheless, is that while parks typically enjoy the legal status and protection of "public spaces," commons are overseen only by statute. That is why they are more vulnerable to encroachments and have increasingly become contested grounds. In other words, commoners have to constantly reclaim and exercise their rights over the land, otherwise the landlord may either revoke or pressure them to sell such entitlements. The challenge in saving the commons around London is therefore not to design spaces that cater to the current politics for their conservation but to, instead, rethink these enclosures as collective practices. Within this framework, the thesis proposes an alternative process of allotment which at once responds both to the deficit of vacant plots and the ongoing shrinkage of 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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100. In the south west corner of Ealing Common there is a small enclosed park, called Warwick Down.
101. Ealing Common was later placed under the Common Regeneration Act of 1958, which laid the rule of the metropolitan commons to improve the conditions of old and new estates.
102. Some but not all commons are protected as open or greened areas. For this reason, one may preserve their condition as vulnerable.
103. Since most Londoners move from one rental house to another so many times in their lifetime, it no longer makes sense to restrict plot holders according to their address.
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, it to follow an architectural principle—or logic—that always group and interconnect individual sheds into linear pavilions. These should have no internal partitions. Each of the twelve stands two metres above the ground and distances 30 metres away from each other. [Fig. 1] At large, the plan of stripes divides and, at the same time, redefines the wide—and virtually endless—area of the Common into a series of allotment sites. The continuous shed 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 themselves into small associations. Each group will collectively garden and take care of two linear sheds and the void in between. [Fig. 2] Initially, this space could mimic the typical enfilade of ten-room 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 purpose. These ad hoc transformations would certainly alter the layout of pathways and crops, so that members could constantly negotiate the sharing of the land. Should conflicts arise, the associations could use the linear sheds as places of assembly and ‘group therapy’. The open plans of these pavilions could moreover facilitate the sharing of tools, seeds, manure, books, knowledge, cooking and effects. In doing so, each association would thrive based on increased cooperation. A barter economy could emerge in which small groups of members could exchange, for instance, an afternoon of manuring for a night of childcare. The entire Common could thereby eventually return to the ancient meaning of its name, that is, to become again a place of a shared and self-sufficient system of social relationships.
Fig. 1. Initial configuration of the void between two continuous sheds.

Fig. 2. Initial stage of the single plots, with strips of grass and straight pathways, bordered by continuous sheds. In becoming atypical longer, these sheds may house local amenities for small associations of plot holders. The new structures could provide the associations with shared storage space for tools, seedlings, manure, and books, open kitchens, big 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 hypotheticating 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 recognize 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, 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 'gardenesque' estates, so to speak, were analogous reconstructions of the city as an enclosure in progressive expansion. In becoming a theatre of new
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—of or of itself. One of the most interesting discoveries of the three chapters is the fact that gardening is essentially a mode of building. As such, the activity has always had the potential to completely transform the processes of design and construction which crystallise the garden as a form of appropriation.

In this sense, perhaps one of the most inﬂuential aspects of the historical transformation of the archetype is the gradual re-signiﬁcation of gardening: from a family-rulled 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, therefore, that the history of the enclosed garden is a history of the Western tradition of private property and social division of labour, starting from the domestic sphere. However, unlike other architectures directly involved in these processes—such as the house, farms and the city itself—which have arguably become spheres 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 the 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: design thinking through analogy. For Tehran, Iran, within the state-sponsored blocks of private housing, it is proposed a 'garden-city' to enable the collective construction of common space. Precisely the legible enclosure of the space allows for the shared practice of protocols and its juridical setting apart from the housing complex. In Rome, Italy, along the precarious perimeter between illegal habitat 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 organisations. Urban policies are created that do not need the state or master planning to operate. Architectural form here may eventually reclaim idle land. In London, UK, new forms of allotments are proposed to enable the collective production of a system of social relations that may enjoy the legal protection of the public statute of commonable land. Given time and the will to participate, gardening may indeed promote self-valorisation and emancipation.

Despite the different contexts of each design proposal, the notion of the archetype has proven an alternative to that of type...
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 communiation and self-valuation against the increasing commodification of public space and conditions of “not feeling at home.” Architects should reconsider the garden as a way to envision new rituals and modes of organising collective life.

In the meantime, there is a space that blurs conventional distinctions between design and building. So, this is an architecture that functions alongside the conception of protocols and policies which, if collectively constructed by the users of the garden, may construct shared spaces with/ for outside the preconditions of public and private. This is how the garden becomes a political form: it not only materialises an idea in space and practice but, most importantly, it leaves room for experimentation, imagination and awareness. At its best, gardening becomes both the project and construction of an alternative form of life outside the city.
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