

The Seventh Lecture.

Babuino



Encouraged by my advent as a mythographer, I essayed a fiction of larger scope. I chose a Cast of the main architectural devices and invited them to accompany my Protagonist, who remained un-named in the first person singular, into a succession of six lifespaces which I also never named. I found this 'obscurity' lent itself to my fictive need. I felt that those who knew some Architectural history, both Ancient and Modern, would not find them too hard to recognise. The story opens in Neapolis, a city that synthesised Science-fiction Archigram with Naples. Neapolis is Greek - meaning 'New Town'.

The action then moved to 'Bel-Air', code for Los Angeles, then to 'Babuino', a street in the Baroque Rome of the Campo Marzo, and then to 'Albano', which was the Roman Campagna at Tivoli. Leaving the Old World, my scene shifts to 'Grand Central', a city like New York. The last lifespace, before he returned to his, again unspecified, home was a place like Woodstock, where the company lived in 'traveller' squalor under dirty plastic sheets.

The fiction ends with: "It is easy to travel. One lives in a world of one's own invention. Returning home is harder. One discovers what it is that has made one what one is".

He arrives in Neapolis and forgets to prescribe the view from his room. So he wakes to find his 'plug-in container-room' has been moved down to 'default', which is the second floor. Washed by robot hands he is offered a variety of clothes according to how he wishes to appear when he ventures out. He asks to be a 'typical' and his soiled clothing is returned. He understands that his credit card has revealed his tastes and programmed a café, for example, to give him coffee the way he likes it. He liberates a robot conversationalist from its chains at this café. It had been built to resemble a flowering plant and the café-owner chained it up to improve his amenities. Grateful, the Robot penetrates the veil of the city for him, describing what is going on behind the facades of its buildings. Visiting a ruin, and consulting his Baedeker, he is surprised when the Robot conjures-up the ruin quite new. Japanese Tourists photograph this holographic artifice. But my Protagonist is angry. He prefers to rebuild the temple in his mind. Swept along by a crowd he finds he is in an arena where robotic machines are in gladiatorial combat.



The Protagonist, took refuge, after the horrors of the Arena, in what he discovered was a Museum of Domesticity where he adopted, so as to continue to hide, the role of the Absent Tenant. He awoke to see, through the windows, a large building that had separated into vertical slices, sliding down the street on air-pads. Instead of the main buildings being taken-over by the political victors, they moved over to the victorious quarter. This was why the city-maps were dated.

The Robots seem to be powered by the crowd itself, who communicate with the arena by holding onto an energised metal handrail. As the machines lay in ruins, he saw small figures running from them through the battle and realises they were not remotely-controlled. A victory emanation, like smoke from a Neapolitan 'guglia' or trophy-pile, covers the sky and he understands that this was an 'election' decided by combat in the arena. Exhausted by the crowd's murderous passions, he crawls into an empty house and sleeps. He is woken by a trembling in the ground. Going to the window he sees a large building going past, supported on air pads. Climbing up on to the roof, he sees the main buildings of the city travelling about, in sections if need be, to destinations decided by the victors of the election. Looking at his map he notices a date stamped on it. Time-expired by these electoral alterations he realises that he must now buy a new one.



In 'Bellaire' (as in Frei Otto's 1975 Mannheim Garden Exhibition, the buildings are covered in mirrors to make them invisible. Inside everything is always fresh and new. This is because the enclosure, furnishings and floor, are made of living 'ecoplast' tissue. This is a genetically-engineered 'skin' with a very slow metabolism. The enclosures change shape according to the function of the moment. The Protagonist is taken by Crystal Ball, the Professor's daughter, to visit the bungalow home of a highly respected Enumerator. He finds its contents disordered and distributed at random until he learns that they are governed by a desire to achieve 'calm'. The regularity in question is a flattened 'EcoDollar profile' in which the average value of the objects in any one room is the same as that of every other. The second-hand double-breasted pinstripe suit of the Protagonist causes alarm as its value will not compute.



Securely, yet invisibly, lodged in the Museum of Domesticity, the Protagonist explored 'Babuino', the oldest part of Neapolis. Marooned, one evening on the roof of an ancient palace, he finds the statues come alive, shoot him with an arrow, and carry him off. He becomes a 'Mythical' suffers adventures, and returns to recognise his nocturnal companions in the dusty decorations of the ruin-zone.

I tested the received devices of Architecture in these diverse lifespaces. My use of Architecture as an instrument of mensuration revealed the risible quality of the late 20C suburb. I enjoyed poking fun, via the seeming innocence of the Protagonist, at the suburb's compulsions and laboured ambitions. These focussed on the business of 'buying health' at 'Health Hotels'. These were institutions whose success guaranteed the ruin of the neighbourhood as it was first overdeveloped and then abandoned by the Hospital-Hotel when it sought a more 'unspoilt' site. The main prophylactic was the 'ballistic' sport of 'zooming' carried out on giant inverted saucer-parks that floated on liquid metal.

The most inventive section of this book was his exploratory decipherment of 'Babuino' (aka. Baroque Rome), which formed the oldest section of Neapolis. This offered the public of 1984 (apt year) an understanding of the 'picturesque' Mediaevo-Humanist city-planning whose rationale remained undiscovered by the indefatigable Camillo Sitte. The text was offered to Thames and Hudson, who, perhaps unsurprisingly, turned it down. Practitioners do not invent novel theories. That is left to Critics. Sitte was, at least, honest enough to admit his inadequacy, proffering the lame explanation that 'Modern man had lost 'factor 'x' and was therefore incapable of the "Italian Picturesque"'.

Later enthusiasts for Italian cities, such as the Californian 'Deconstructivists' have tried to imitate the 'picturesque effect'. The most doggedly 'rationalising' of them, Peter Eisenmann, accompanies his careful labours by huge emissions of textual theory. His exhibit in the Venice Biennale of 1991, which he shared with Gehry, was accompanied by the recorded rumblings of his stomach. This was, at least, a genuine revelation of the sources of the deliberately pointless manoeuvres which he hopes will simulate the accumulation of charming 'accidents' that such Nordics consider Italy to be.

The city-states of the Italian Quattrocento sought escape from two agencies that, they believed, inhibited the birth of a rational political culture. One was the **blood-line politics of Nordic feudalism** that invented states 'quartered at birth' all over Europe and the Holy Land. The other was the **superstitions that attended monotheistic Christianity**. Their ambition, as succinctly described by Burckhardt, in his 'The State as a Work of Art', was a state with a **unitary boundary, a capital city with access to sea-trade, merchants using money which the state could tax for revenue, and a ruler whose professional skill could so order his Court that it created the skills required for the arts of governance, that is to say philosophy, the arts needed for commerce and diplomacy, which included war**. The ruler, Number One, or Principe, as he came to be termed, was, an **entrepreneur, or self-appointed despot**.



Maximilian I, the Holy Roman Emperor, parading a feudal pageant of his disputed and chaotically-administered quasi-fiefdoms.

Lacking, possibly, the wit, and almost certainly the hubris, to invent 'de novo', the culture of this rational state, the Italian Quattrocento turned, with not a little nascent 'nationalism', to their own, (but temporally remote) Roman past. **The myth of a Golden Age**, already established within Classical ethology, was projected to **enflesh the State**, and especially the Court, in a vital tissue. Such was the power of Classicism, and the Italian ambition to escape from a long history of foreign oppressors, that the Renaissance invented a cult of extraordinary force.

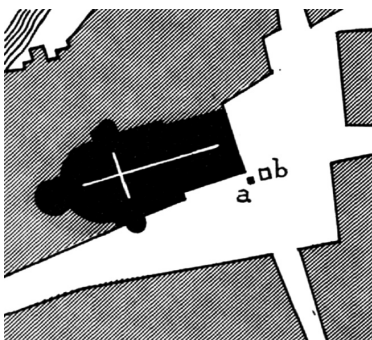


41. S. Filippo Neri in Via Giulia.

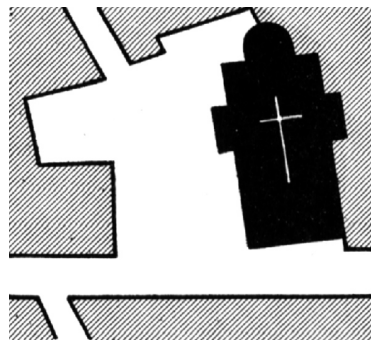
S. Filippo Neri (aka. Filippino), is not one of the grander churches of Rome, but it is one of the more emphatically buried under the soft stucco effluvia of the 'cataclysm of domesticity'.

Every church and palace that I entered in Rome frustrated my attempts to view it 'in the round'. As Camillo Sitte, noted in his 'City Planning according to Artistic Principles', published in 1889, the 'temples' (as he wisely named them), of these Humanist cities **did not stand isolated in the centre of regular plazas**. They were, instead, buried into one of the sides of **vague and irregular openings in the dense labyrinth of a mediaeval town**. Sitte, in love with what he called 'the picturesque', noted this curious practice with approval and condemned the gridded streets and isolated monuments of his contemporaries.

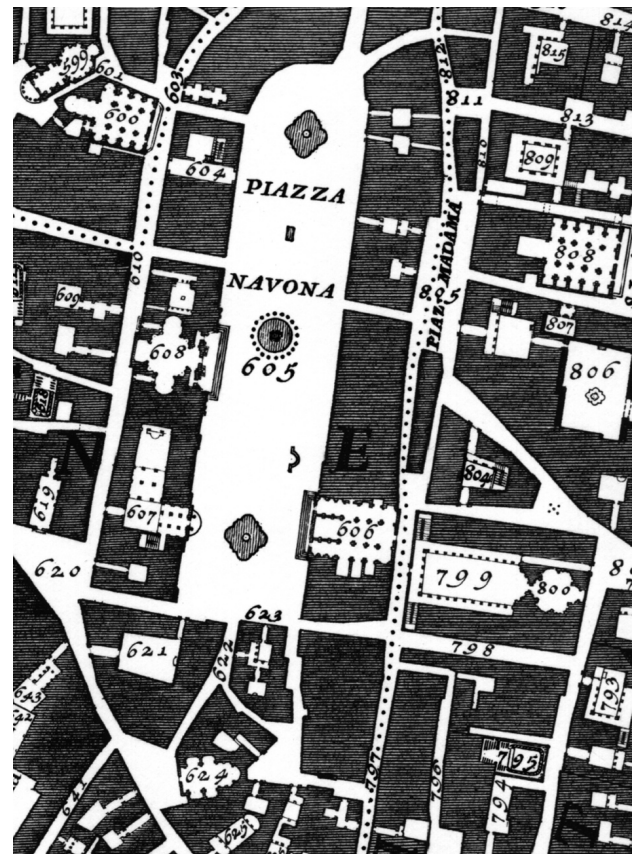
For my own part, this Italian practice had the most striking effect. Frustrated in my desire to see the exterior of the magnificent interiors of the 'temples' buried in the dense chaos of the Campo Marzo, I was forced to entertain them in my imagination.



Sitte shows a 'Temple' embedded on two of the four flanks, into the sides of the Piazza del Santo in Padua



Sitte shows that S. Cita in Palermo is embedded on only one side.

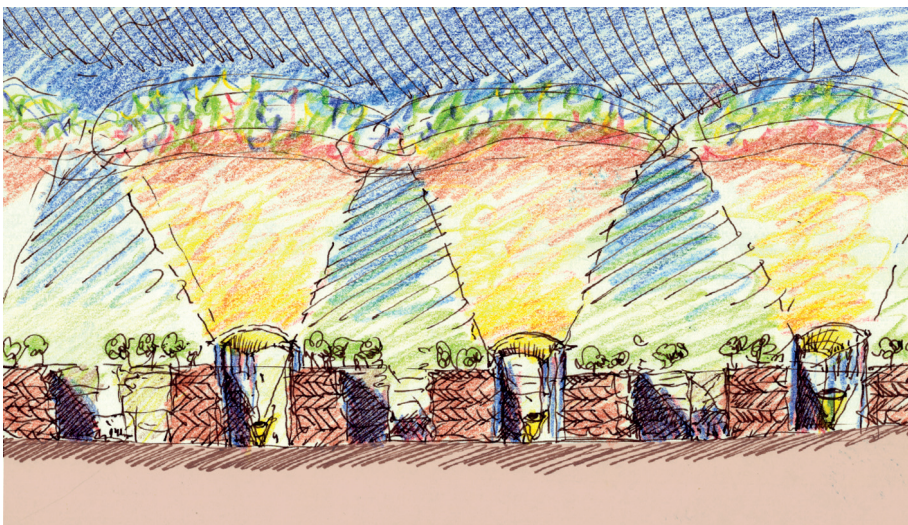


A section from the 1748 'Nolli' Plan of Rome shows, as if to prove Alberti's 'archaeologising' strategy, only three items. 1. The 'isola'-blocks themselves, 2. The 'fluvial' streets cut by the departing Okeanos, and 3. the Temples of the Eta d'Oro 'buried' by the 'cataclysm of domesticity'.



The 'golden germ', in the centre of every 'cassone' in the gilded trabicae of the Classical ceiling, prepares the mind's eye for what is revealed when it is cut away to show the 'cargo' of the Rafted Entablature. In Annibale Carracci's 'Loves of the Gods', a second raft is supported on marbled 'pillars' of Herculean youths. Framed picture-planes stand in front of 'distanced' windows into a deeper space. Mythologised narratives weave powerful ambiguities.

This act of 'day-dreaming' was assisted by the painted ceilings which are to be found everywhere in this old part of the city. For they projected, through what looked like holes in the roof, this very world of the 'Golden Age'. This was a terrain in which all of the qualities that normally conflict in the person of earthly mankind were resolved in a congruence of Nature and Reason. Its inhabitants were naked because they had no need for the dissimulation bestowed by garments. Their behaviour was at once savage and proper, because directed by a powerful narrative, whose 'reason', however cloaked in mythic mystery, could not be doubted. Had not Hellenic myth been employed by Freud himself to decipher the 'Reasoning of Man'?



Camillo Sitte, when he visited yet another of his beloved Mediaevo-Humanist towns, would buy a map and climb to the one of its tallest towers or steeples. From thence he would trace out the confused patterns of its urban physiognomy. Prisoner of the very Enlightenment rationality against which he fought, it was the worst thing he could have done. Such cities can not be understood from the air. He did not have the advantage of a 20C mind. Prior to the compositional revolutions of Cubism, Sitte could only trust in the devices of Quinquecento perspective. The high ground of the 20C imagination is not surveyed by the camera obscura, analogue of the optic nerve. It is the eye of the imagination that governs Modernist 'sight'.

These ceilings, along with the powerful, highly sculpted Architecture that framed them, coalesced, in my mind, into an 'Epiphanic Cinema', a highly-coloured cloud-canopy which had its permanent lodging in the skies above Rome. It existed, in my head, like a distant landscape which reveals its hazy outlines to an explorer who surveys it from the high ground of a memory that has been 'externalised', enfolded by this epiphanic graphic Art.

Thus it was that I could 'tune-in' to the project of Alberti and summon up the city of Rome as it existed in the Golden Age - a bald terrain of the singular monuments that appeared on the maps drawn for tourists to the Eternal city. There had even been such a time (in the 12C) when there were more cows in the 'Campo Vaccino', than Roman citizens in her ruins. My powerful urge to accumulate external views of her glorious monuments resulted in the imaginary excavation and dispersal of the shapeless, soft, muddy, morass of Romes domestic appendages. I walked her crowded, noisy streets, aromatic with burnt petrol and the perfumes of food, while imagining monocellular monuments shining in verdant fields.



A map of Rome drawn in the 15C that shows, just like my reverie, only the major monuments,

For in this original 'Age of Gold' her seven hills would be cloaked only in temples whose 'citizens', (for they needed no other shelter than Natura Naturans), were the naked giants and heroes of myth. For these were already 'present, installed like an over-arching atmospheric plasma, by the Fresco-Projectors, into the conceptual superstructure of the city.

If one mounted the flanks of the Pincio one saw, stretched out below, the deep chasms of the streets of Rome. The roofs of the city, level with one's elevated eye, were verdant with roof gardens above which rose the winged and otherwise animated statues of the entablatures. Only the domed and pinnacled superstructures of the largest temples emerged above this verdant plain.

Charged, with the mythic cargo of the superstructure projected from the ceilings, the lifespaces of the Golden Age seemed to have landed, like rafted arks from a flood, complete with their mythic 'colonists', onto the 'entabled' rooftops of Rome.

Yet these, in their turn, justifying the peculiar name of 'Attica', struck one as the primordial, or original, ground level - so strict are the rules governing the elevation of the entablatures of the city. Rome seemed either buried in a level plain of mud, or excavated from the accumulated debris of some loose and liquid 'cataclysm of domesticity'.



I could walk in the narrow, comfortable, streets of the Campo Marzo and 'see' the buried monocellular monuments as, in my imagination, I cleared away the 'Cataclysm of Domesticity' that hid their bodies from view.



When the eyes of the Imagination open they can 'see' the ashes of the Cone of Hestia heaped into the pyramidal form of the 'pyra'-pyre. They rested on the fresh boughs of the sacrificial fire. These in their turn were carried on the columns outlining the 'Camera Lucida' that the ritual of the Time of Inception had created and which this structure supported and guaranteed. The inset, coloured, 'thought-bubble' shows the Raft in transit towards the locus of the submarine 'Heap of History'.



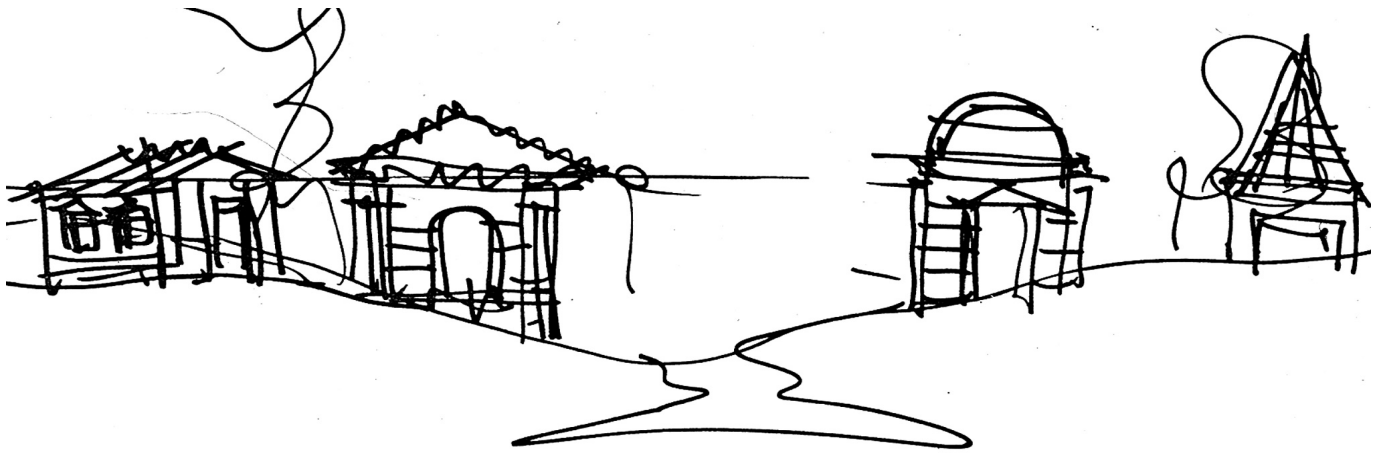
The 'Procession to Delphi' by Claude Lorrain can be used to illustrate a vision of the seven hills of Rome in the 'Age of Gold'. The monocellular monuments are divested of the Cataclysm of Domesticity which seems, in real life, to have buried them, on their seven hills, up to their entablatures.



Seeing only street-facades, the mind seeks to disencumber the numerous 'Temples' whose only appearance to the deeply-cut streets are a single facade of huge scale that was clearly designed to admit personages of mythic dimensions.



Such is the rigorous regulatory discipline of the height of the Roman cornice, that the view over the city establishes a level plain. Roof gardens, condemned by Seneca as 'Oriental', were reserved by law for drying laundry. Their cultivation, nevertheless, makes of the Roman roof a second ground level. Verdant, open to the sky and animated by rooftop statues, the epithet of 'Attica', confirms this as the locus of the 'originals' - as the Renaissance always denoted anything Hellenic. What else could they be to



The Temples prescribed by the system of Alberti are like the huts of giants. These Monuments from the Age of Gold are simple things but they are huge, having doors many times higher than are needed to admit creatures the size of living men. If they could be excavated out of the morass of soft domestic matter which had buried them, it would be found that as in any Arcadian scene, they occupied the flanks of a valley down which flowed, in its ancient bed, the river Tiber - A drawing, above, made by JO explaining his ideas to Sabina Arcieri, a Roman.

In his book: "Rome, the Biography of its Architecture from Bernini to Thorwaldsen", published by Wasmuth, in 1975, Christian Elling talks, on page 370, of Rome as follows:

"When wandering in the city, one sometimes feels as if it were a movement through defiles in a low plateau which have been worn away by erosion. the streets have, it feels, the organic structure of a canyon and they follow a course seemingly full of obstacles".

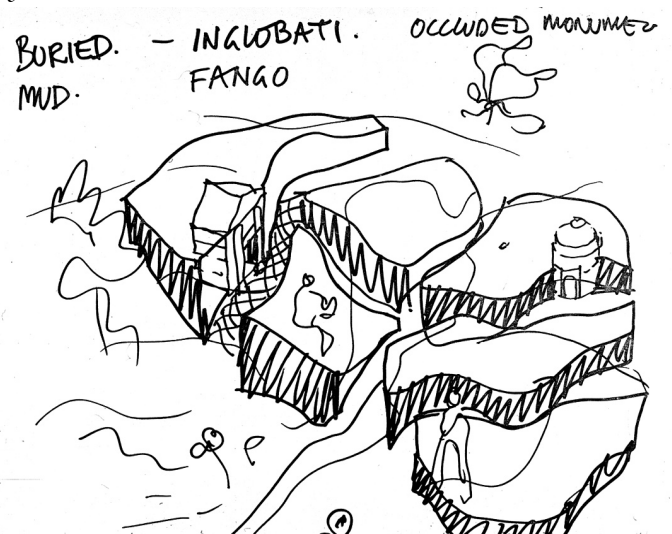
Later, on the same page, Elling writes:

"The reader will perhaps find this description of its nature put too strongly and not in keeping with the benevolent intimacy of the Roman Street. There are other old towns that are cut up into a confusion of aimless alleys, of withdrawn squares and unexpected retreats, but they do not in any way encourage the observer to comparisons with geological phenomena. However, one must remember that it is not only the solid geometry of the streets, but also the substance of the structures themselves which determines the character. And in Rome, the architecture which has been shaped on the basis of time and space, possesses a fuller textural effect than we find anywhere else in the world. All honour to the Baroque for having modelled Rome into a plastic mass of balanced consistency.

The material which makes thorough use of stone and mortar and stucco, is satisfying in all respects, tough when it is soft, hard when it solidifies, easy to smooth, impossible to break. It never flakes like flint, its edges never scratch like broken glass.

If the fabric of this material were to be crushed, the process would be covered by the French term *ecraser*, not by the verb *briser*.

Out of this perfect matter, streets can easily be moulded; their walls give way and then stand fast. It is significant that while the French word "*carre*" describes the concept on the drawing board (a four-sided figure), the Italians conceive a detached block of houses as an island and use the word for it (*isola*, Latin *insula*); their conception is clearly intelligible for their islands are cliff-like and are hence sculptural."



What had once been the verdant floor of a soft green valley, when Rome had been its Arcadian self in the Age of Gold, was now only the rocky bed of narrow streets. This small floor was all that was left, running this way and that through the soft body of the City. (drawing made by JO explaining his ideas to Sabina Arcieri, a Roman)

Elling seems to want to persuade us that Rome is not really what one would describe as a town made up of an assembly of buildings, but a city **conceived as a Natural formation**. He wants us to imagine that some "Agency" has visited this sedimented site and **sculpted, scooped, moulded and shaped** this "perfect civic material", into a great City. It is a strange, and one must say 20C vision of the idea, also common to Gustave Glotze's decipherment of the Greek Polis as a **'drowned' valley ringed by mountains**, that a **complex cultural artefact could be mapped as congruent to some geomorphological analogue**. More specifically, both Glotze and Elling share the idea of a space **carved out by the agency of a river, or rivers, of water**. This surely is also a telling commentary on the idea of the flow of the **'stream of time'** as the agent pressing forward against the obdurate mass of the mountain to **open its infinitely static mass to 'History' or the flow of tragic, or Somatic, narrative**.

My own decipherment, while encouraged by the 'poetic' of Elling, and the moving black and white photographs of Rome in the mid 1940's - entirely void of automobiles - had to go further. As an Architect that built, and needed a rationale for building, I could not be satisfied until I obtained a rationale that explained the mechanism of the Mediaevo-Humanist city as intentionally formed by the sophisticated iconic literacy of its time - applied to the Italian ambition to create the rational state free from religious superstition and feudal aristocracy.



The old streets of Rome are paved in blocks of black basalt. When these are set on the diagonal, which distributes the stress of wheels more evenly.



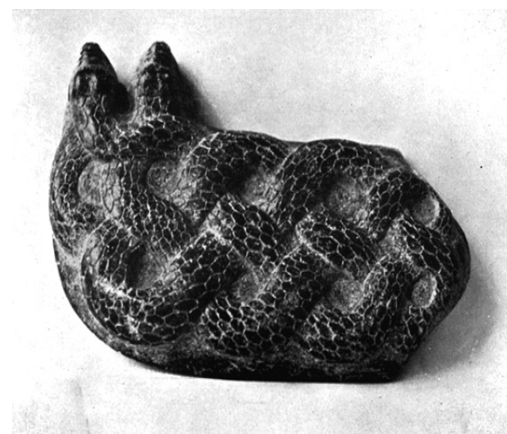
The bearded snake which represents the chthonic 'good spirit' of an Ancient Roman household. The bloodline's 'domus' rests on the abyssal icons of water and time.

The contrast between the undulating floors of Rome, paved in blocks of tufa laid on the diagonal, and the level plains of her verdant, sunlit, 'Attica', en flesh' by design' the separate worlds of gods, or beings of a mythic dimension, and those of 'fallen' man.

For it can be no accident that these rumpled floors of dark, volcanic, stone which go black in the rain, have an iconic congruence to the flow of water in a channel, and the scaly back of a snake.



My drawing of the 'isolae' of a city forming an irregular 'hypostyle' of column-blocks. Their sedimented bodies have been eroded by that forming 'agency' to which Elling alludes, and which I decipher as the flow of the "River of Somatic Time". The peculiar pavings of the Mediaevo-Humanist city would be explicable as both enfleshing these ideas with the analogy of naturally-flowing water, as well as the more recherché icon of the reticulated serpents of Infinity.



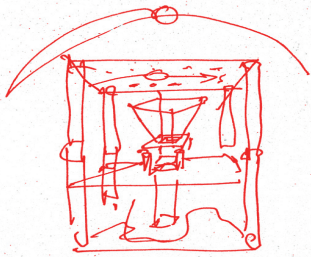
The steatite cover to a lamp from Sumeria recalls that, at the lowest levels of Jericho, limestone pavings were found in the pattern of interlocking snakes. The reticulated snake is the origin of the mathematical sign of Infinity. Here we may allow it to decipher the pavings of Rome, as an enfleshment of the 'oceanic' infinitude of the net of streets in which sit the isolae of its city-blocks.



The paving around Rome's Horrea Tiburtina (Trajan's market) gives an uncanny prefiguration of the black asphalt and white pre-cast concrete flagstones of today.

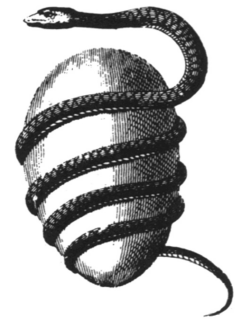


The ruins of the Clivo Argentario make it very clear how different is the 'river' of the street from the closed, cubic, form of the buildings, with their thick brick walls.



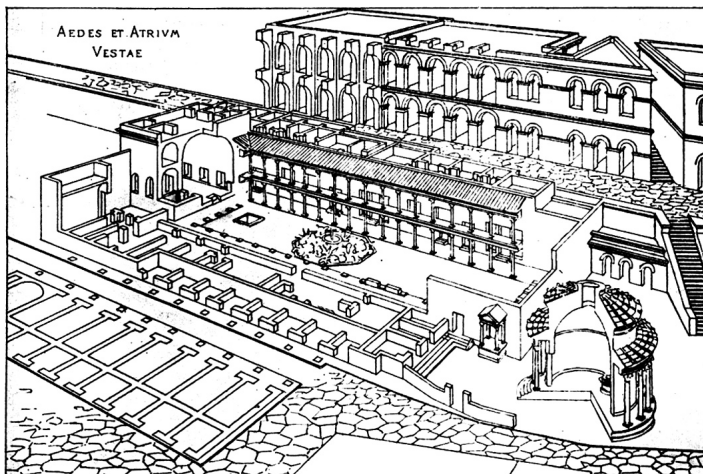
Cubic atrium as micro-cosmos.

The protagonists of the Renaissance, in both their enthusiasm to revive Pagan culture, as a cloak for the Rational State, and their inheritance of the physical traces of Ancient Rome, could be expected to revive the idea of the city as a 'sacred' terrain - that is one which is built to enfold ideas. There is as much congruence between the black 'scaliness' of the Roman road, made from dark tufa, and the watery serpent of oceanic infinity, as there is distinction between it and the creamy whiteness of the Travertino pavements on which the 'insulae' sail their cubicular worlds.

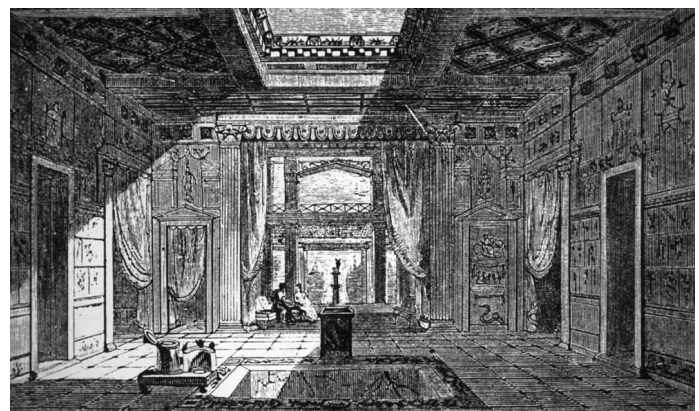


A Serpentine (watery but cyclically renewing), Time was figured as situating (ie surrounding), the Space of Being.

The 'building blocks' of the Ancient city were each an 'egg' of created space. These were also seen, very literally, as the housings of each family as genitally-constructed beings. Even the 'universal city' of Roman Empire itself never achieved any more sophisticated legal construction than that it was, in its totality, the 'House' of the Emperor, (an extended Palatinate) and the blood-relations which constituted the Imperial dynasty.



Each 'insula' of the Ancient city was formed of orthogonal rooms which would, when possible, have been modulated by the rhythmical 'measure' of an 'Ordine' - an Architectural Order whose purpose was to bring harmony into the divisions of the house and its spaces. This would have rendered its interior entirely different to that of the flowing, serpentine chaos of the street. The axial verticality of the round temple of the Vestals guarded the sacred hearth of the city, from which all domestic hearths would be re-lit, and the symbolic hearths of all Coloniae, or daughter cities, also kindled.



The ancient house was a microcosmos. A vertical axis fixed it in space. That which was above was open through the 'compluvium', or skylight. That which was below was open to the Atrium via the 'impluvium' or central pool. The sun's beam traversed the 'space of the created world' which existed between the two inhuman extremities that were both owned and populated by gods, demons and monsters. The 'domus' was both a modest bungalow, convenient for daily life, and a stage on which this was lived in the full presence of a Reality as conceived at the ultimate scale. It was a device for rendering 'serious' the most banal of lives. There was no need for mock-heroics to enter 'real (royal) time'.

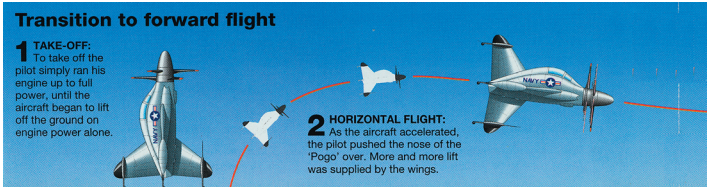


The Roman coffered ceiling was revived by the Renaissance - here in one of the Palazzi Massimi. Firstly such a ceiling is not a physical support to the roof. It is *hung* from its trusses. Secondly, as one may easily decipher from it being part of what is always termed a 'trabeated' architecture, this ceiling is a 'trabica', meaning, in Latin, a raft (from which we may derive the English 'rafter'). We are looking up at the underneath of a golden raft!

The floor of the Calidarium, hot-room for the baths in the 'House of Menander' in the ruins of Pompeii, shows a comic view of the deep-space of Okeanos. The wavy border may here, be taken to represent water. But, on the ceiling to the left this 'River Meander' presents the idea that the space of Being, whether of Man or the Gods, is bounded by the low of an rhythmically endless Time. This became the 'Ourobouros' and the sign for Infinity.

Only a culture, like that of the post-WWII, Welfare State, in which we were raised, that **deliberately sought a Profession of Architectural illiterates**, would teach its lifespace-designers that the function of the Compluvium was to admit rainwater and the Impluvium to catch and store it, when any archaeologist knows that pipes and channels took rainwater from all roofs to an underground cistern where it was safe from pollution! The physical role of the roof opening was to admit light, rather than rain, and that of the pool was to cool the Atrium and render it tranquil. Nor can the 'Art' which covers the surfaces of Roman buildings be understood unless its (rather easy to understand) iconography is deciphered. What else does the iconic engineering of these floors and ceilings inscribe except the making, and bounding, of space by time? The same fluvial patterns, named after the River Meander) ring the golden rosette of the sun above, as they do the charming occupants of Okeanos, the watery infinity below.

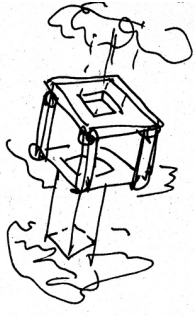
But what is a coffer? What is the golden floret in its centre? Are they contra-rotating propellers, like those on the Convair XF-1 'pogo', designed to heave the craft aloft, like the magic carpet it resembles? **'Coffre' means chest in French. The Italian equivalent is 'Cassone'. Both mean a box (a cubic container) in which one stores valuables.** But what good is a treasure-chest without a bottom? Clearly the 'treasure' is above us, carried by the 'trabica' in what, if we consider the shape of the pyra-midical, and pedimented, roof above, we can denote as an 'ark' - in the sense that 'pyra' is Greek for both fire and a monumental cone of ashes, such as one has on the hearth. We can call this, keeping to an Hellenic iconography, for the moment, an ashy 'Cone of Hestia'. Hestia was the Olympian guardian of the Hearth who was invoked at the beginning and end of every sacrificial incantation. Her Roman equivalent is Vesta.



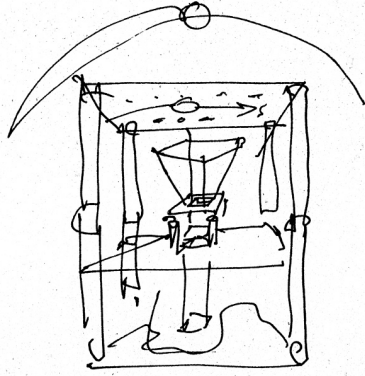
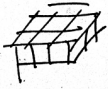
A direct assault upon the problem of the airport runway. Hugely powerful, noisy, dangerous and hard to land (one did so looking backwards over one's shoulder), the Convair XF-1 has gone into history as a heroic failure.

Therefore a second, and architecturally most illuminating, decipherment of the floret, is the germ of fire at the centre of the ashy cone, which forms the hearth-fire of the Founders, which they rafted over sea and air (for, as Indra Kagis McEwen argues in 'Socrates' Ancestor', such roof-rafts also 'fly'), to carry the 'civic fire' from the mother-city, or original foundation, to become the focus (etymology: fire) for its new (colonial) home.

It will puzzle the Modern architect that the background to this symbolic sun, or hearth-fire, is not daylight blue but the deepest blue, indeed almost black, of night. This is because the third, least literal, and so more 'interesting', meaning of the floret is 'the light in the darkness', or what the Persians call "the Fire in the Rock (y) Mountain)". Such congruences of meaning are also confirmed by the family crest in the centre of the Pal. Massimo ceiling. The Italian for such coats of arms is 'stemma'. This means, literally, the stem, or bearing trunk, of the family tree. The rafted ceiling has landed on the house with the cargo of the 'golden germ' of the family Massimo, 'genitori' and bloodline of the 'Famila'. The space of this 'saloni' is a theatre, that I call a 'camera lucida' which is not merely a passive product of this 'colonising' act. By 'publishing' its shining emblem it 'enfleshes' it in the only space and time that is undeniably real - that of our own Being in the Everyday Quotidian.



-the room of the earth - cubic space as the ground do urban living.

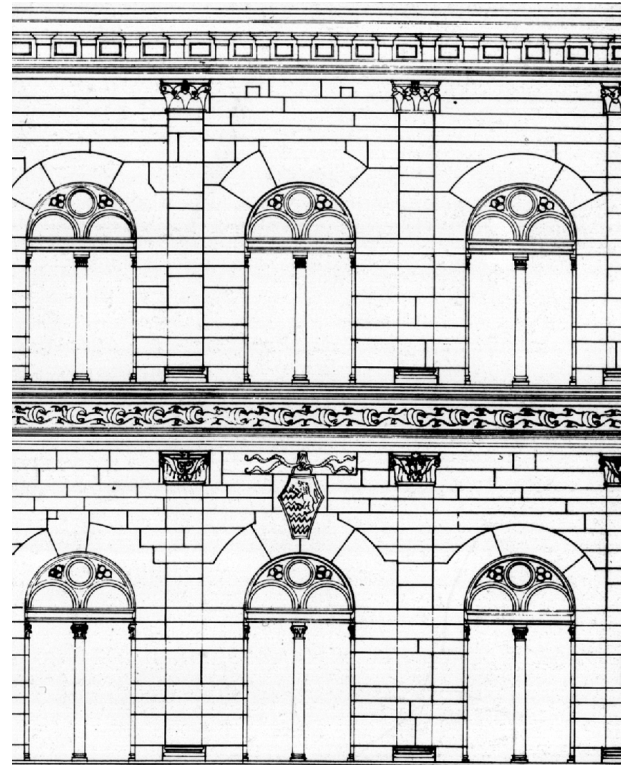


The Renaissance was very clear concerning the power of a trabeated cube to receive any inscription - even up to that of a macro-cosmos. The six picture-planes framed by the members of an Architectural Order were understood to be able to reveal the 'reality' that lay behind appearances. The columns and beams of a Trabeated Order so 'steadied' these views of allegory and myth that their embodiments became a 'reified' population of 'familiar'.

Alberti, in the Palazzo Rucellai, introduced the novelty of a trabeated facade. It 'telegraphs' the interior theatre of his inscribed cubic space of perspective through the heavy walls of the Dark Ages. Alberti burns the cultivated 'power-beams' of the 'trabes' into the heavy stone walls of the paranoid Gothic stone fortresses of dark, Mediaeval, Florence. Alberti's deeply-cut 'stonework' detail entirely disregards the fine joints between the physical limestone blocks used by the masons.

The Rucellai cut 'Philo-Sofia' into brutally armoured walls of rock.

Alberti downgraded 'stone' to the role of a 'clay' fit only to take the impression of the trabeated support-framing of his magnificent engine of philosophy. He even manifested, on the exterior of the huge fortresses of the bankers of Florence, the wiry framework of beams and columns that would 'steady' his 'agents of philosophy', the narrative compositions of painters and sculptors. On the inside, buried in this pulsating hallucination of 'Antiquity', the mythic personae unveiled their 'love of the truth about Man'.

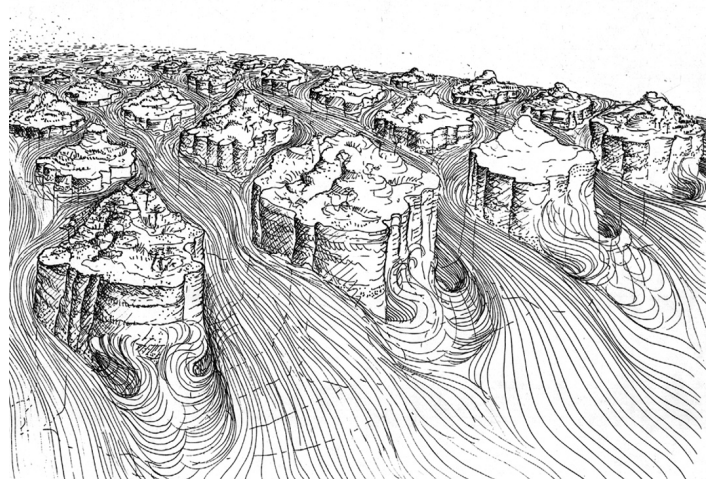
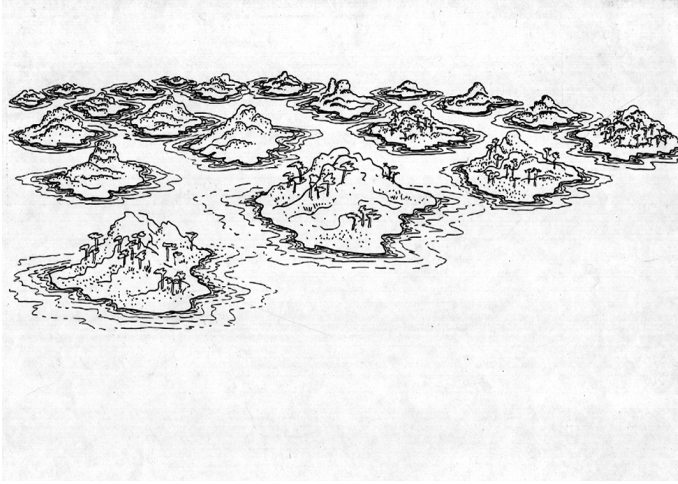


The deeply-cut grooves do not follow the lines of the physical blocks of stone. Alberti inscribes culture onto brute matter - for those iconically literate enough to read his 'texts'.

A Roman clay tablet, dredged from the lake of Nemi, shows the streets of a City, surrounded by its wall. It can be 'read', by a 20C eye, as if it was a rusticated Ground Floor topped by six floors of facade.

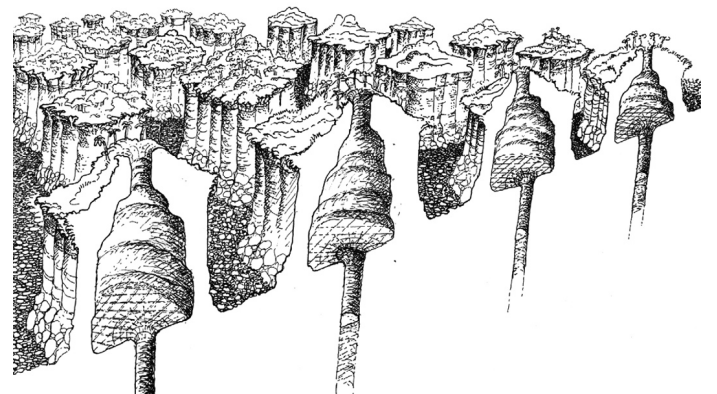
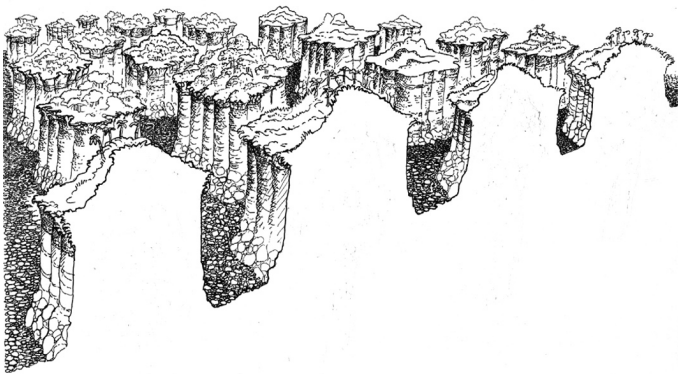
Alberti used whatever stones were readily available. His Architect-designed stonework is a pattern whose function is not to demonstrate the haptic 'craftsmanship' of the builder, but to allow the columns and beams of the Architectural Ordine to stand out clear and separate from the beefy Romanesque arches. The Rucellai can be read as the street-facades of a Classical town collapsed onto a single 'picture-plane'. A trabeated arcade is pushed into the plane of the rusticated wall and its arched openings. Indeed such is the 'force' of the impact that the pilasters are recessed behind the face of the 'stones'.

This massive masonry body of sheer, raw, rock, was used by the system of Alberti much as Reason by Christianity, that is to say to contradict itself. Its very material formlessness was accentuated, as Elling discerned, in order that an act of intellectual structuring might be made more clear. The Architectural nuggets of the Age of Gold were buried, seemingly at random, as shown on the Nolli Plan, in a civic sea of chaos. I intuited this strange procedure and gave it a rational structure of narrative. But even this was hard to comprehend. So I employed the 'Tricorso' system to narrate and then exfoliate my visual metaphors. Using these I began to tell an 'istoria' - whose interest, like any 'theoria' was not so much its truth, as its ability to inspire some 'understandings' derived from its contemplation - and even more so, its employment.



In the time of the Golden Age itself the gods lived like Man before he was born. They bathed naked, in the time of 'oceanic dreaming', swimming in those warm, beating surfs which lapped the islands of his pre-natal fantasies. Rousseau proposed that men would never be happy until they became 'savages' once more. Freud confirmed the 'liquid physiognomy', of this state of infantility. All cultures of philosophical sophistication have been able to delineate the pre-natal state of bliss.

The greatest trauma ever suffered by the individual took place. A distant tremor turned into a catastrophe. the sea began to flow away, rushing past the islands. Those happy swimmers who were in it were swept past their previous homes. They saw the leafy summits of the islands rise above them, out of reach at the top of cliffs running with water. Faces peeped over their edges. The hapless swimmers waved up at them, calling for help as they were swept away.

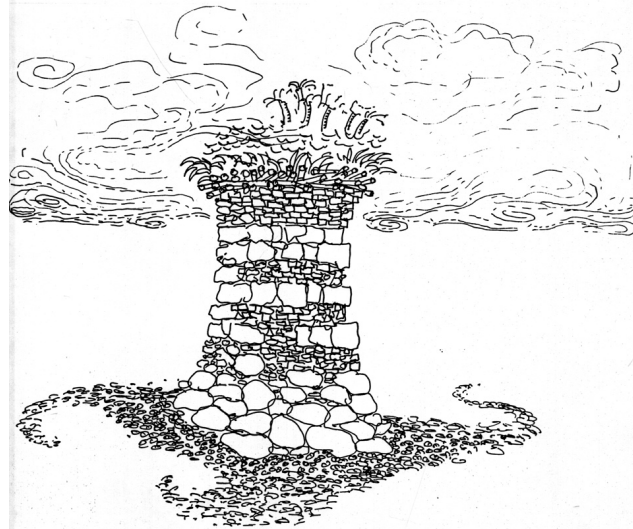


The stranded swimmers felt the stones of the floor in their backs. The Ocean had rushed away, taking even the air with it. The sky was black and they gasped for breath. Then the noise of surf returned. Carried on air they heard the sound of voices. They filled their lungs and began to float out their own speech upon this airy 'Ocean of the Voice'. It echoed off the towering cliffs around them. But what were they, naked and shivering, to do? They walked this way and that until someone discovered a little crack in the bottom of one of the mountains that were the bases of their erstwhile island-homes, and went inside.

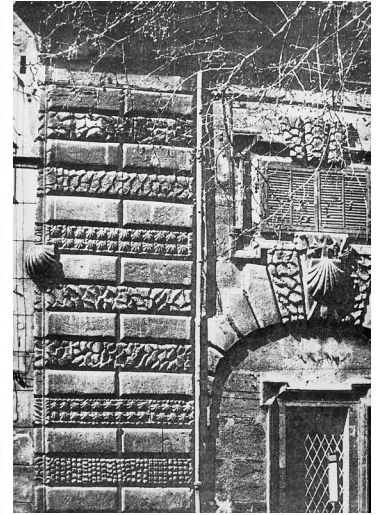
They were astonished to find that, all the time that they had been swimming around in the warm sea, there had been, inside these islands, a hollow cave. This had a hole up into the sky and another down into the deeps. Some maintained that this was not so. They argued that it was the oceanic disappearance itself which had created the caverns. They pointed to the fact that their veined and marbled walls recalled images of their previous life. But this discovery had the effect of encouraging others, who could not find any such patterns, to begin cutting and drawing scenes, on their rocky walls, of their happier, more 'Arcadian', days.



The walls of Rome fill with the susurrations of voices floating on this new ocean of Air. Each night they register the rising of the flood of dusk that sinks, at dawn, to lose its inky flows down scaly passage-ways.



The drawing shows the primordial verdure of the island nesting on its rooftop surrounded by the serpentine footprint of the departed Ocean.



The stucco of the Palazzo ---, in Palermo, is encrusted with barnacles, shells and other prima facie evidences of a prior submarine state. Soft as Elling had described it, water had a hand in its 'inscribing'.

Every evening the shadows climb up the narrow canyons of the Roman streets until night drowns the city. In the morning the sun rises up upon its its verdant roofs. Slowly the city emerges from the ocean of darkness. Women wash down the tiled balconies with clattering buckets and the sides of of the buildings run with water. Rain, which was the presage and agent of the Flood, glistens on the streets, recalling the emergence of the world from the Deluge.

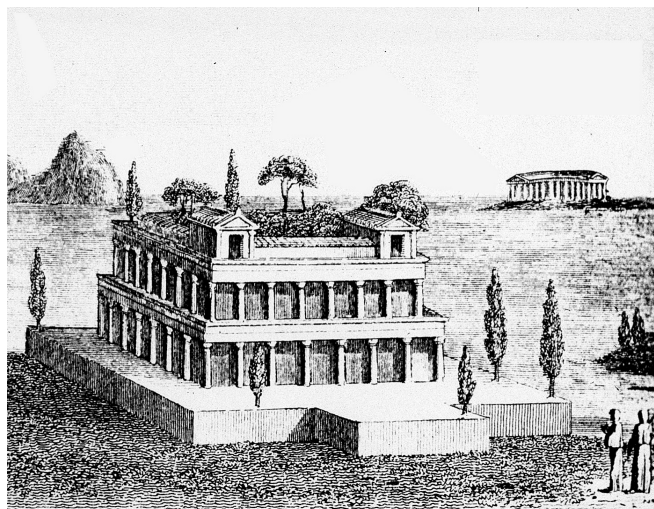


A House in the Via del Governo Vecchio has its First floor floating on a Meander moulding. In Rome each floor is grounded in the secure Infinitude of Okeanos.

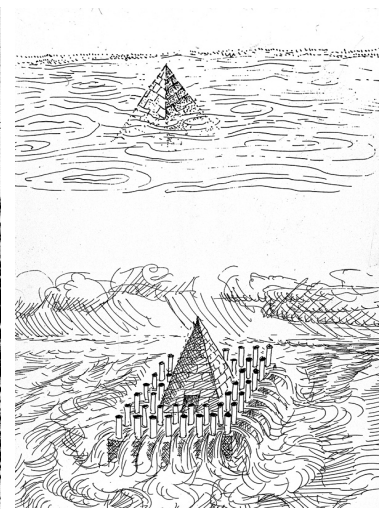
Diurnal dusk and dawn is physical. The Flood is mythical. Separately they mean nothing. Together they make for 'understanding'.



In the 19C, the Tiber used to flood all the way up to the portico of the Pantheon. The Hypostyle stood in the Ocean.



Seneca moralises against roof gardens, describing them as unnatural but admitting that they increased the value of a property. 2000 years later, with cities of thousands of built-up 'isolae', are we prepared to be a little more sophisticated and understand the brilliant inventions of Alberti? (not to mention auto-watering).



The Island Block, rises within the two infinities of Hypostylar Forest and Ocean in the form of a pyra-pyramid/ primordial mountain or 'heap'.



The tomb of the Equites Singulares shows two chambers, one above the others. The vegetation on its upper surface is an iconic bonus provided by an indifferent history.

For many years, I kept these insights to myself, considering them too eccentric to be credible in an architectural culture whose spanner-wielding Haptics could gain no purchase upon the linkages of the mind. Yet it was depressing to return from the most powerful urban design culture ever invented by man, to a Britain that seemed eternally gripped, like a mouse in the jaws of a bulldog, with the intellectually puny, as well as pragmatically futile, ambition of elevating a pantheistic geomancy of cottagers into a welfare-state modernity.

So it was not until I read, in 1990, Mark Jarzombek's book, "On Leon Baptista Alberti", published by MIT in 1989, that I found, on the last three pages of his 188, a scholarly confirmation of my own understandings. Jarzombek proposes that Alberti accepted that the world of men would always be corrupted by power and money. His strategy was to introduce philosophy, that is to say truth, or the love of it, by stealth. His method was to reveal the locus of Philosophia as that of the mythical Golden Age. To embody this locus, and so give some place where philosophy might feel at home in the corruption of the world, Alberti prescribed that its 'space' was to be formed by Architects. As a guide to my practical-minded profession he wrote 'De Aedificatoria'. Jarzombek reports Alberti advising that Practitioners should "read no other books", for "Philosophy would only confuse them".

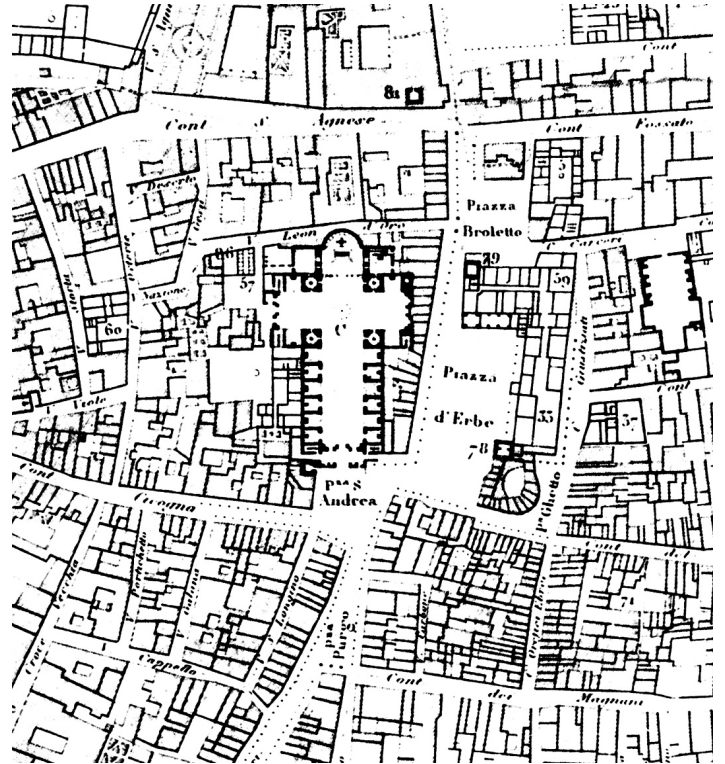
This task of engendering the love for truth was then passed to the painters, sculptors, musicians, poets and other engineers of the epiphanic rites which would en flesh the Age of Natural and Savage Reason within the Rational State, the Ideal City and its main engine - the Princely Court of the Renaissance.

All of this was 'rational' enough, given his project. Alberti's master-stroke was to build the new proscenia, the stage for these rites, for which he normally had to clear a working space in the crowded fabric of the Mediaeval city, and then to allow the domestic debris of the chaotic and 'corrupted' world to close over his new Temples to Reason,. Jarzombek argues that Alberti wished it to seem as if his novel locations, the Palaces of Reason herself, had been inherited from "in illo tempore", that 'earliest time' of the Golden Age, and had then been buried by the very political and cultural disasters which had brought man to his present low estate!



The Duke, on the advice of Alberti, allowed the 'old' arcaded shopsof Mantua's Piazza d'Erbe, or city vegetable market, to be re-built all along the Southern flank of the vast new basilica. This 'buried it from any local view from inside the plaza. Little would have been seen except the very top of its hugely expensive dome. A lithograph from the 1830's..

Jarzombek instances Alberti's design for San Andrea in Mantua. He maintains that the Mediaeval bell tower, hard by the Roman 'triumphal arch' on S.Andrea's Western end, was preserved so as to make it seem that the city had grown-up around, and at a later date, than Alberti's grand ruin. Even more incredibly to the modern mind, the shops of the Piazza d'Erbe, Mantua's central vegetable market, were allowed to be rebuilt along the whole Southern flank of the spanking new basilica. The muddle of the Middle ages was deliberately allowed to swamp the gigantic, orderly, grandeur of 'Ancient' Rome. The enfleshment of the Golden Age sought its authentication in a myth of temporal primacy which appeared to be older than, and so prior to, the very Christianity of the Saint and Church itself. San Andrea plays to the Latin myth that Western Christianity emerged like honey from the corpse of Rome. Whereas it was Constantine, in Byzantium, who established the original cult. The Papacy did its best to appropriate the Oriental origin of the cult by acquiring its point d'origine, Jerusalem. Its main success was to hasten the destruction of the actual source of Christianismos by sacking Constantinople with the Fourth of its politically-doomed 'Crusades'.



The literally heroic scale of the 'Antique Temple' of S. Andrea can be judged, as always, by the size of the 'front door' just next to the putatively 'later' bell tower. It is 'backyarded' by the new Plaza shops!

The space inside the great pseudo-Roman temple of Alberti's S.Andrea quite dwarfs all others. Its regularity seems from another culture - that of Alberti's 'Philosophia' - far distant from dynastic politics and religion's obscurities.

But the a-historical, universalised, corpse of Hellenism, bleached into ruins by the bright Italian sun of Reason, could transmute and overcome all such merely 'historic' reality. The 'Antiqued Classicism' of the Renaissance became a mechanism that was at hand to 'certify' whatever Institution it was called-upon to secure, house, and establish. By 'burying' its new, rationalised, home under the decayed evidences of the 'Dark Ages', Alberti's brilliant urban planning strategy secured 'philosophia' a provenance that locked away its various institutional oases beyond the reach of any merely secular effect. For they were founded 'Outside of Time' in the ineffable perspective of the Age of Gold. Upon this mythically-grounded fulcrum, Alberti's temples endeavoured to move the tribal, superstitious, muddle of Mediaeval, Gothic society towards a Rational State of Political Order.

In contrast to the compulsion of the Nordic urban aetiology, which now thinks of a city as a nerveless sludge of economic osmosis (whose only conceptual ambition is to become 'picturesque'), the Mediterranean city starts as a psychically honest act of colonisation by a human agent who is given the exemplary status of 'mythic founder'. This psychic nakedness, which, in that the proper subject of man is Man, goes by the name of philosophy, was what I found in the public culture of Rome. The medium of this public philosophy, which remains entirely foreign to the Nordic world, is a cast of protagonists who inhabit a 'parallel universe' to that of men. They are as distant from us as gods, yet, with the lifespace-design system of Alberti, they enter into the most intimate civic and even domestic familiarity with the living. The mortal citizens of such a lifespace find themselves provided with the means of that mutual 'decipherment' which Alberti wished to introduce under the guise of 'truth by stealth'.

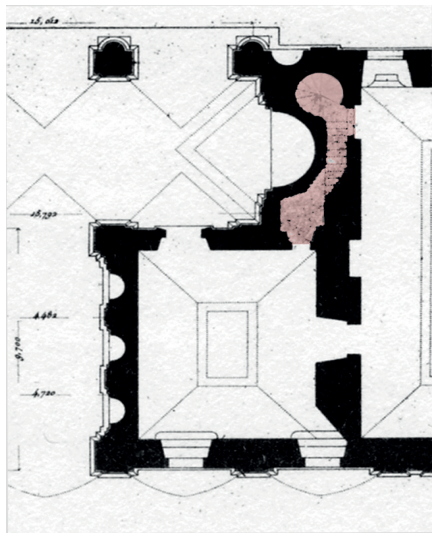
Did not Freud, and every generation of artists and philosophers for the last 2500 years, when puzzled by human nature, turn for inspiration to the cast-lists of mythic beings and their revelatory narratives?



Innocent faces, wreathed in snakes and wings lurk (cut in the basso rilievo that Donatello invented and Alberti favoured), within the thick spandrels of the palace of the Papal Chancellery.



There is no shortage of thick walls in the Castle of St. Angelo. For they are those of an ancient Roman mausoleum, adapted to serve a more modern end. The 'angel' squats within the plane of a painted column. Behind him, as if framed in a furnace of gold, stand persons with 'magic boot's'. Clearly the users of these buildings were either literate classicists or superstitious oafs who actually believed everything they saw.



The means by which this 'parallel population' are "Entered into the Lease" (to use the phrase of Corbusier) is simplicity itself. They are painted into perspectivised extensions to the rooms in which people move and meet. The invention of perspective geometry had two sides to its coin. The one enabled accurate ground surveys, artillery fire and the construction of complex fortifications. The other allowed painters to construct doors, apertures and entries that seemed to give onto the superhuman and transcendental terrains of the 'parallel population' of Classical myth. Such paintings would never remain plausible if done on the paper walls of the Japanese. Only a massive masonry poché whose interior interstices are filled with soft, thick, dust can receive the imprint of the perspectivist's epiphanies.

'Poché' is the term used by the French Beaux Arts to describe the over-thick walls of Renaissance buildings - thick enough to take spiral stairs and corridors.

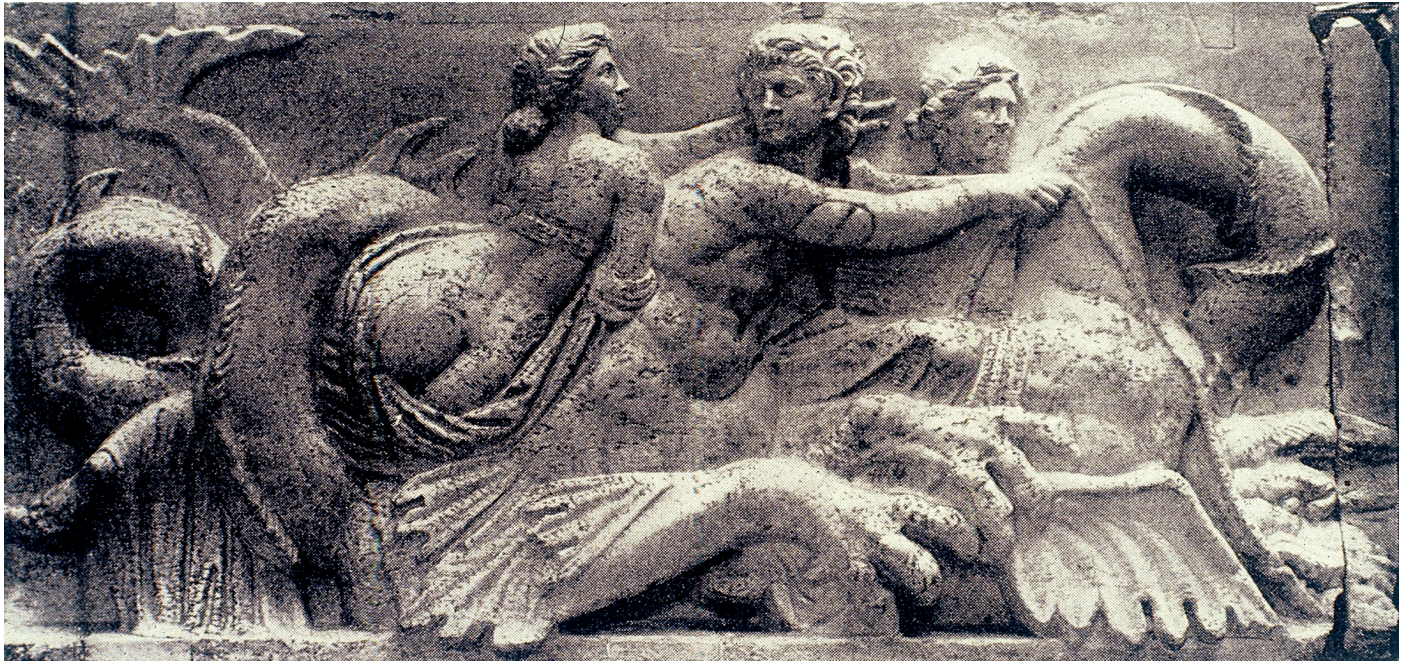
A curious, but important detail, which is always overlooked in modern attempts to validate perspectivised architectural decoration, is that the walls of Roman buildings are so thick that one can, literally, place passages and stairways into their depth. The living, everyday, human citizens of this world of thick, and occasionally hollow, walls could, when they see a mythical being framed in some painted aperture, literally believe, in some part of their mind in which disbelief can be suspended, that there was room inside the walls of their palace for such fabulous creatures to move around and live within their own parallel, but intimate, 'domestic', universe.



Two of Perin del Vaga's Tritons seen through a port-hole in the surface of the Castel S. Angelo. The snaky forms en flesh the idea of a chthonic world of submarine passions.



More Nereids and Tritons 'publish' a territory of ideas akin to the subconscious. Such images chasten the intellectual trivia of Reason.



A Triton and Nereids, "carved in the Hellenistic East", that was looted by Rome and used in a monument to a Censor. The marine mythology is manifest again in this magnificent work. Mediterranean cultures find it easier to live with images of this power because they are accustomed to ideas existing as a class of beings 'in themselves'.

The 'parallel population' of mythical beings that was inscribed and installed by the painters and sculptors, for whom Alberti wrote *De Pictura*, could appear out of all sorts of local, un-announced, holes in the physical envelope of constructed space. Or they could take over a whole frescoed wall or ceiling. The Ancient Classical Culture had no qualms about rendering a view downwards as well, into the slimy and slippery world of Okeanos. This became difficult for the Post-Christian Renaissance as they were still unsure as to the possibility of The Other Place, down below. Artists could not find Clients who either wanted to look into, or walk upon, in any casually mundane sense, scenes of Hell and Purgatory.

The wall, as wall, rather than as its main function of 'picture plane', performed an interesting minor function. It served, by not being extended to the ceiling, to both screen and reveal a territory that lay 'beyond the wall'. This is characteristic of periods of culture in which the territory of the ontologically existential was banished out of the immanent into the transcendent. Ultimate 'reality' in Rome, and in the Renaissance, lay outside the sphere of the mundane. Whereas the painting of Ancient Greece, and of the Gothic, shows immanent reality alive with the sacred.



VUE DU VESTIBULE D'UNE MAISON HABITÉE, JADIS PAR MICHEL-ANGE BUONARROTI, située au pied du Capitole, via d'Arco Celsi... s. s.

A house - said to have belonged to Michaelangelo Buonarroti. The effective height of the walls stops at the springing of the vault. The 'horizon', above this shielding line, teems with a 'parallel population' of mythemes.



This Roman painting from Herculaneum honorifically guards and frames a door with four columns. Behind the door a circular baldachino, framed by tented drapes, signals the existence of a vertical narrative. This and the masks on the top of the wall signals the existence of a sacred space to which access is by the (painted) door. The fresco denotes the space of ultimate reality, which is to say the space of the sacred, as lying outside the mundane space of the room. .

The marvellous lifespacedesignsystem of Alberti was finally destroyed by the very tendencies in human nature that it was created to combat. The Counter-Reformation of the Sixteenth century, in the service of the Catholic Absolutism of the Hapsburgs, and Bourbons, flooded the Temples of Reason with Aristocratic and Feudal imagery backed-up with a runaway recourse to religious superstition. The project of 'philosophy by stealth' was itself, and not so stealthily, subverted. It was only two centuries after Alberti, Machiavelli, and the generation that attempted to grow a rational politics in the darkness of the Middle Ages, that their machine was taken over by the forces of unreason. The response of the Enlightenment, which sought to restore the project of a rational politics, was to excavate the Temples, along with the imagery of their reactionary Aristocratic and Religious owners. Alberti's engines of philosophy were exposed within that cordon sanitaire of space that the 19C Camillo Sitte decried, sensing the loss of their uncanny urban energy.



Baroque Rome, or 'Babuino' as its namesake was called in my fictional Protagonist's tour of the six lifespaces, would, if divested of its internal decorations, and especially its ceiling-paintings, be nothing but a dense city interrupted by a collection of dark and dirty barns buried somewhat inconsequentially into its domestic fabric. It is the painters, not the Architects, who consummate Rome's lifespacedesign. In 1912, under the shadow of the impending World War, Aby Warburg finally had the courage to imply that Art was worthless if Man was illiterate. Art was not produced for merely formal or 'arty' reasons. The Art of the Renaissance had been made to promote sets of ideas, at various levels of complexity. To gawp at it without any inkling of what its purposes were was to treat them no better (and perhaps worse) than looking at a sunset. An absolute minimum was to know the 'plots', mythical or otherwise, of the Ancient Hellenes, the Romans, and the Biblical Hebrews and Christians. To deny this, and talk only of a Classical Architecture of 'materials, space and light', as if these painted and sculpted surfaces either had no 'meaning', or could never acquire meaning, was an act of ethical barbarism, for which the West (or at least the cities of the West), would pay.

One may study, in Rome herself, the grisly suicide of Western painting. Ceiling-panels along the main corridor of the Vatican Library were painted at periodic intervals. That of the 18C was in grisaille. The figures are ghosts, drained of all blood. Those of the 19C are wooden dolls with rouged faces, academic but inanimate. The corridor then ends. The bodies in the ceilings painted in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries pulse with a vitality which is erotic with thespian energy. It is not the scripts of the paintings that changed. They were still the Hellenic and Biblical myths. It is the ambition of the graphics that died. They no longer strip naked to promote truth. Their ambition is, instead, to promote obscurity by the display of arcana whose purpose is to promote an irrational politics. The reward for this betrayal of the power of Humanist lifespacedesign technique was its destruction by the Enlightenment. Yet the ruin was surprisingly slow, taking until the end of the 19C to signal the final collapse of Western graphics. It was not until the end of the 20C that Reason, herself, through the development of both Science, Art and Philosophy, (which always includes novel techniques), that there developed an iconography which could restore Architecture to her previous role of supporting and foregrounding a decipherable, intelligible, and scriptable lifespacedesign of spaces and surfaces.

My Protagonist was aware of this collapse. Did not the citizens of Neapolis term their ancient imagery 'Optogable', a corrupted remnant of the 'Optolex' that their children once learned before they learned to notate it with 'Writing'?

While exploring one of the ruins, which turns out to be unusually long, my Protagonist notices water coming up through the pavings. Running up the slope of the nave, against an increasing flow, he manages to escape drowning inside the submerging basilica and emerges at the head of a valley.

This is the beginning of his time in Nemi, the 'campagna' outside the city. Here he becomes the 'fool' to the Court of the Mythicals. He is taken up by a goddess who is amused by his Anglo-Empiricist way of deriving ideas from things, whereas, as she says, "Everyone knows that nothing can be a thing unless it has first been an idea". She takes him around the ruins of the temple that is half-fallen into the ravine. She explains its 'workings' and shows how to 'unpack' its blocks of stone and the contents that spill, in abundance, out of every one. Finally she takes him up to a cave and turns, to his alarm and distress, into a white marble statue before reviving and taking him flying up to a great height and dropping him in free fall. His adventures continue until he returns to Neapolis before accepting an invitation, resulting from the publication of his travels, to Grand Central, as the city of New York is named.

He finds himself in a beautiful machine whose smooth parts glide effortlessly over each other. Interviewed by Dr. Dick, the owner of "all these old skyscrapers that are too heavy to move by air-pads", he finds that his attraction is to have discovered how the Priests of Babuino achieved the unique economy of selling mere ideas when everyone else must trade in physical product.



He asks the 'Mythicals' if they live in their Temple. They look at him incredulously and reply that they live everywhere, simply turning themselves into stones, trees, rivers and clouds.



He finds the Architecture of the 'Attica' carried on the trabica of the entablature to be well-developed in 'Grand Central' (Central Park in the 1930's, above). This was not only in the old skyscrapers but in the new temple-megastructures, 'centres' with a garden on the roof above their inhabited columns. He learns a peculiar form of dancing and is then taken down to the park below. here he escapes and enters a river of healthful mud. When its 'patients' emerge they are caked black and almost invisible amongst the darkened trees. Nevertheless he is found, scolded and taken underground to the city powerhouse where 'solistry' is shown to him. The soles of the feet of the occupants of the 'pytho' of mud are secretly scanned for their emotional states. Being the only invisible part of the body it is thought that this will reveal an unguarded entry to their state of being. Unfortunately this device is not unknown and the pythonic frolickers make sure to be emotionally diverse when over it. Warned by a dream, in which blue-gloved hands try to re-arrange his brain, that his response to grand Central is suspected, by Dr. Dicks, of being politically-incorrect, he is helped to escape, in a laundry-van, through the multi-level underground roads to the house of the retired inventor of Solistry - and then on to a tented camp that is 'Woodstock'.



A party of friends, snapped at the 'real' Woodstock, is caked in mud!

*Here he meets a variety of refugees from Grand Central, amongst whom is the **Architect of the Temple-Megastructure Centres**, the underground **Powerhouse** and the **Solistry-machine**. He lives with them in their **collapsed lifespace**, playing **futile, semi-naked games** under **dirty plastic sheets**.*

He understands, while swimming with Noah Ball, the brother of Crystal, the differences between the diverse lifespaces he has travelled. He decides to return to London, "where", as he puts it, "every building is different, like things on a mantelpiece".

The Protagonist's task, of which he was happily unaware, was to rehearse, in each one of the **six 'lifespaces'**, the devices of the **hypostyle**, the **event-horizons** of the valley, the **entablature** with its **ark and attica**, the **column**, the **capital**, **rusticated masonry**, **arches**, **pavings**, **apses**, **naves**, **ceilings**, **walls**, **frescoes**, **porticoes** and all of the **many devices native to Architecture proper**. I embarked upon this lengthy fiction in the summer of 1984. When it was finished I realised that my intention had been to 'discover' whether these devices (all of them, **without exception, banned and banished** from usage by my Architectural education and the prevailing ethos of my professional colleagues), could be found in these critical places, all of them germane to the culture of contemporary **lifespace-design**. I laboured doggedly until my Protagonist did so 'discover' them. Moreover they 'appeared' not as the polished artifices of the proper medium, but as 'revealed' to him **in their originary guise**, to which the finished devices, as known to Architectural history, were merely the abstracted notation.

*In this way I 'discovered' the foundations of the Architecture which the West, however hard it tried, never adequately deciphered. For proof of this lack of understanding one has only to cite the West's **repeated failures to modernise its 9,000-year old 'traditions'**. The Architectural culture of the West almost totally collapsed with the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Reviving with an essentially Oriental 'Gothic' syntax and no iconic culture except that which was imposed on it by Christianising divines, it was again artificially-resurrected by the Italian Renaissance as the beautiful corpse of an entirely lost Hellenism of whose polychrome vitality St. Peter's Rome had no memory at all. Finally, just when constructive technology was achieving real progress, and the meltdown of 'styles' was fertilising the growth of a potentially penetrating theoretical understanding, the West exploded first into the '1914-'18 War and then into the final disaster of the '1939-'45. My own history as an Architect dates from this mid-century and the time of the erasure of Architecture from the conscious memory, that is to say the literature of the Profession. The West finally lost its Architecture, like an over-elaborated wardrobe that it failed to suit to the age of revolution and war that the 20c turned out to be. It is a failure that would be pathetic had its consequences not been so devastating.*

During the 1980s JOA completed, amongst other projects, those of Wadhurst Park, Harp Heating and the Isle of Dogs Pumping Station. These **propelled JOA into an Architectural stratosphere** in which we were invited to compete for Bracken House, the Extension to the National Gallery, a new Opera-House and the Queen's Stand at Epsom. We entered these competitions while working on many commercial projects. **Few came to the fruition of a real building**. But the fees kept us alive as we laboriously put together what turned out to be an entirely radical technique for **restoring the full architectural equipment** (whose conceptual foundations I had already explored in my fictional rehearsals), to a contemporary utility.



The Northern entry to Wadhurst: marble walls, polychrome concrete and the footprints of an hypostylar 'forest of infinity'.

In 1990, JOA were finally given the opportunity to put the whole of our long-practised 'design-culture' to the test of a large project.



The IOD Pumping Station was part-buried into the embanked river's edge. The door has 'floated up' between its white jambs.

AFTERWORD for the SEVENTH LECTURE: 'BABUINO'.

Falling for the City of Rome can be dangerous. It wrecked the perfect talent of Giorgio de Chirico, an early 20C painter of 'Classical' ideas. His inspirations from his birth in Thessaloniki never failed him until when, as he reported, he "came to Rome and heard (in his imagination) the sound of trumpets and clash of swords". After that his work became infantile, worse even than off-peak Salvador Dali. It was a sad loss to early 20C iconic culture.

Camillo Sitte was a big enough character to admit that he had failed, after a lifetime of on-the-spot research to decrypt the mysterious picturesqueness of the Mediaevo-Humanist city. In this he differed from the American Deconstructivists who, led by Peter Eisenman, invented elaborate ways of fracturing and 'distressing' the sheet-rock sheds prescribed by the 20C. Geoffrey Kipnis, a Physicist and Musicologist by training, used to work in Eisenman's office. He came, during the 1990s, to 'teach' city-planning at my alma mater, the Architectural Association School. While there, he gave a revealing lecture at the Royal Institute of British Architects. He informed us that he "had read all that there was to read of Architectural Theory and found it unimpressive". His conclusion was that "Architecture is the chrome fender on an automobile". His meaning was that it was merely a piece of "optional trim". Architecture could be disregarded at the scale of city-planning. In passing, during these revelations, he told us that it was Eisenman's ambition to replicate the (picturesque) quality of Italian Hill Towns. Italy was where such as these American Savants would retire during the long summer vac. They were no better than the furniture makers who fired lead shot into chair legs to simulate worm-holes. They betrayed the promise of the USA so cataclysmically inscribed by Jefferson.

No-one should be in any doubt of the sophistication of the thinking behind so-called 'Classicism'. It is light years beyond the brutally illiterate dis-Urbanisation of the Redevelopment of Central Areas that has made Britain, and all those who followed her example, the suburban shambles they are today. JOA were able to use 'Alberti's Methods', in the form of an 'occluded temple' in many of our individual works, as well as unbuilt designs. Others of his strategies, such as 'each floor being grounded on Okeanos', or of the 'Roof-garden as the original, ante-diluvian habitat, Arcadia, or of the street as the scaly black Ourobouros, serpentine river-network of Infinitude', or of the coffered ceiling as a view upwards, into the golden fire-flower that advertises the Adventitious Cargo and so on and so forth, to name but five of the many.

What was the origin of the frigid taboo the post-WWII Intellectual Establishment laid upon the inventive study of the bases of our so-called 'high culture'? It is time this 'postwar history' was closely examined and revealed, along with its authors, for the pusillanimous catastrophe that it turned out to be.

