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Codex Sebastianus

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Architecture

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Abstract

This thesis is the use of history and drawing as the basis for a process that will aid in the construction of an architectural fiction. The defensive city wall as a topic of enquiry forms its point of departure. An investigation of texts both literary and historical is considered through the making of a drawing whose contents in turn act as the generator for a narrative. The text and accompanying drawings of this story describe the circumstances surrounding Renaissance architect Sebastiano Serlio's reception of an extraordinary commission at the behest of the wealthy French patron, François d'Angoulême. While on the grounds of his estate, Sebastiano encounters a number of its strange inhabitants including a virtuous gardener, the chateau's cryptic gatekeeper, a fifteen hundred year old army general, and a delusional birdman.

To Maria Jose Vidal

I wish to acknowledge Stephen Fai, Renée Hynes, Enrique, Maria, Lorenzo & Enrique Jr. Valenzuela, and Adam & Cristina Trepanier for their continued support.

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Introduction

This thesis is not intended to be a work of scientific inquiry and is therefore void of any supposition. Equally, it is not a work of phenomenological inquiry, though that is not to say that either method of investigation is invalid, it is just to say that it is not one or the other. Rather, it is the use of history, drawing and narrative as the basis for a process that will aid in the construction of an architectural fiction. And while it tells a story of architecture, it is not necessarily a story about getting a building built.

The defensive city wall as a topic of investigation forms the point of departure for this work. For me, it is an architectural curiosity whose origins in time, though to some extent recent, are difficult to situate exactly. The subject is approached candidly, as an interest whose potential for fruitful architectural speculation seems palpable. It is not tied to any personal overarching doctrine and as a consequence, is an inquiry that takes a suitably oblique approach.¹

A familiarity with the wall comes through the reading of a multifarious collection of texts both literary and historical. They are acquired either directly through suggestion, ascertained indirectly through personal exploration, or on rare occasions and perhaps most pleasingly, uncovered serendipitously.

These works include quantities of Roman writer and architect Marcus Vitruvius Pollio's *Ten Books on Architecture*, the biblical story of Eden, accounts of ancient Mycenae by the Greek geographer Pausanias, a modern archaeological survey of Rome's third century Aurelian defences, Homer's epic poem of war, the *Iliad*, the architectural treatise of sixteenth century Italian architect Sebastiano Serlio, and an amusing story about birds by Greek playwright Aristophanes.

Concurrent to this reading of texts is the construction of a drawing (*Fig. 7*). It is meant to persist as a catalogue of thoughts, conjectures, reflections and imaginations on what is read. Within the accrual of graphite are impressions of Vitruvius, paradisiacal garden's, and apotropaic tokens.

For the duration of this thesis, the drawing remains limited to a single, heavy cotton sheet; a material chosen to sustain a predestined density. The layering of graphite and pigment, the perpetual accumulation of markings and the evidence of erasures (*Fig. 36*) are analogous to the story of defensive city walls, themselves a varying and compacted assembly of matter over time.

What is drawn consists primarily of a collection of axonometric projections gathered in the form of a walled city or settlement, its position, a nondescript site. A number of implicit programmatic functions (entry, inhabitation, gathering, contemplation) and explicit architectural components (bridges, towers, moats, canals) are present in the variety of its structures. This is a consequence of my bias as a student of architecture, that is, my desire to think of buildings.

However, any effort to design or locate program with any specificity, a library or temple for example, has been suspended. The drawing intends to provoke speculation as to the nature of its content. What are the circumstances surrounding the origins of these irregular structures? What is their role in the overall scheme of the composition? I am like an archaeologist (now armed with a knowledge of walls) who has uncovered some anonymous assembly of buildings or ancient manuscript depicting them. From this speculation emerges the idea of a narrative.

This thesis is presented as a work of historical fiction. The drawings and text on the pages that follow have been derived from the story of sixteenth century Italian architect Sebastiano Serlio and his roughly nine year relationship with French king François I. Serlio is most noted for his illustrated architectural treatise (*Tutte L'Opere D'Architettura*) whose first book appeared in Venice in 1537. Of its projected seven books, six were published. Until ascending to the position of François I's architectural advisor and settling at the king's country estate at the age of sixty-six, Serlio struggled to acquire lasting patronage in his lifetime.

This recognized account (made familiar through the research) is the structure with which I develop a narrative. Its material is gathered from the drawing and aforementioned collection of texts.

Freeing me from the anxiety of making contentious or definitive statements are the characters (historical figures) presented in the story. In a way, they speak for me.² They act as masks, the bodies through which a diversity of ideas is presented, inviting “the reader into an enjoyment of the game as a co-conspirator.”³

The story is a weaving and layering of histories both factual and fictitious. In some instances this is clear while in others it is not. For example, the Bernese apartment house at 6 Brungasse that opens the story is an authentic address. This is the location I inhabited during a three-month study term roughly three years ago. Its caretakers are in fact Barbara Müller and Beat Oppliger.

Furthermore, a shop dealing with rare and unusual objects does exist (or existed at the time of my stay) very near 1 Münsterplatz. However, to me, the identity of its proprietor is unknown. Whether he is or is not the dear friend of Beat Oppliger, I cannot say.

Five additional panels (*Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5*) built of fragments from the original drawing are located at various points throughout the narrative. They are composed of bits excavated from the surface of the densely occupied sheet (*Fig. 6*), cleaned of any errant debris and reassembled into new arrangements in an effort to begin a process of rethinking what has been drawn. I think of them as seminal ideas from which future narrative possibilities or elaborations of the existing narrative might develop.

Notes

¹ West *Architecture Doubt Uncertainty* 3.

² Eco *The Name of the Rose* 511.

³ West *Architecture Doubt Uncertainty* 3.



Codex Sebastianus

On the night of 3 January 2007, I arrived in Berne, Switzerland where for the first three months of that year, I was to study as a graduate student of architecture. For the duration of my stay, I would occupy a small, one room flat at 6 Brungasse, a narrow street situated within the Old Town's Zähringerstadt district. A delicate woman by the name of Barbara Müller ran the modest sized apartment house alongside her partner Beat Oppliger, a jovial man who in all matters concerning the payment of necessary expenditures, I found myself dealing directly. We became well acquainted as a result of the frequency with which we met and he, in subconscious or perhaps wholly conscious acts of paternity, took great interest in my studies and enjoyed very much the stories of my experiences in his beloved city. And as a consequence of his curiosity, it was often that he made recommendations of places to visit while there. But what brought about the circumstances I now find myself obliged to discuss was the particular suggestion of a shop dealing with rare and unusual objects located very near 1 Münsterplatz, where Berne's regarded Münster Cathedral sits heavily on the surface of a cobbled square.

In this shop, whose proprietor Heinrich Willkommen happened to be the dear friend of Mr. Oppliger, sat a strange volume acquired from a Lyonnais dealer and antiquarian a now forgotten number of years ago. By all accounts, (which remained suspiciously limited to that of the French businessman) discovery of the compendium came at the hands of a wandering Italian poet by the name of Jacopo di Dante. Containing the quantity of sheets was a tiny window set within the wall of his old apartment in Lyons whose location, long concealed by a mat, was revealed to the young Florentine by his deceased father in a dream. Badly damaged by mould as a result of the wall's dampness and ready to rot away had they sat there any longer,ⁱ the sheets were sold for a pittance to the antiquarian, considered a specialist in the restoration of the many varieties of paper. And after having flattened its creases, removed all traces of foxing, mildew and mould, lightened the tone so as to revive its original colourⁱⁱ and secured the sheets in leather binding, the book made its way to Mr.

Willkommen's shop through the usual avenues of business, the details of which are inconsequential.

Through a conversation between Heinrich and Mr. Oppliger, where the subject of my visit (in a way unknown to me and at this point irrelevant) surfaced, it was decided that I would be interested in its contents: the writings and drawings of a 16th century architect by the name of Sebastiano of Bologna. The subject of the work, a narration of the architect's time on the grounds of French nobleman François d'Angoulême's estate and his reception of a commission and subsequent design for a walled city while there, became my singular obsession over the course of my three-month stay in Berne. And for all of the time I spent with the document, making notes, examining its contents and seeking to learn more about its origins, I was unable to ascertain any commentary on or equivalent facsimile of the unusual collection. Not even among the fifty thousand antique architectural volumes of Werner Oechslin's famed library in Einsiedeln could I locate a single reference or citation. Though Mr. Willkommen was unwilling to part with the volume (at least at a price reflective of the accumulated savings of a travelling student), he was gracious enough to allow me to assemble a duplicate version of the document in an effort to proliferate its study or perhaps more modestly to endure as a remnant of my time in Berne.

Note on the Facsimile

Presented in the pages that follow is a reproduction of Sebastiano's discovered writings and drawings. Adjustments have been made to the antiquarian's original composition of sheets. The writings have been organized into two primary periods of time, previous and subsequent to the architect's reception of François d'Angoulême's commission for a walled city. Each part has a number of sections and subsections that have been titled and dated in an effort to further categorize its content. Specific dates, where present on the original documents, have been denoted (*). In those cases where they are absent, they have been surmised through the body of the text. A number of Sebastiano's exploratory drawings (5), positioned throughout the discovered sheets, remain in the order in which they were encountered in the Lyons version including their original captions. Following the text, I have placed a 1:5 reproduction of Sebastiano's only known design for the city. This drawing has been divided into twenty-five full-scale plates for those who wish to pursue a more detailed examination of the meticulously constructed scheme. They are organized with a key map and coordinate system of letters (rows) and numbers (columns). Concluding this facsimile, are two plates (XXVI, XXVII) depicting what appear to be designs for one of the city's many structures. However, on this, I can only speculate.

I intend to recount, in as much faith as my senescent mind will allow, the events that occurred during my time on the grounds of François d'Angoulême's estate where I was the recipient of that most exceptional commission. The drawings following this account represent the culmination of my thinking as an architect. Not before and not since have I realized a work that brings me so much in the way of happiness.

Sebastiano of Bologna, November 1552

Part I

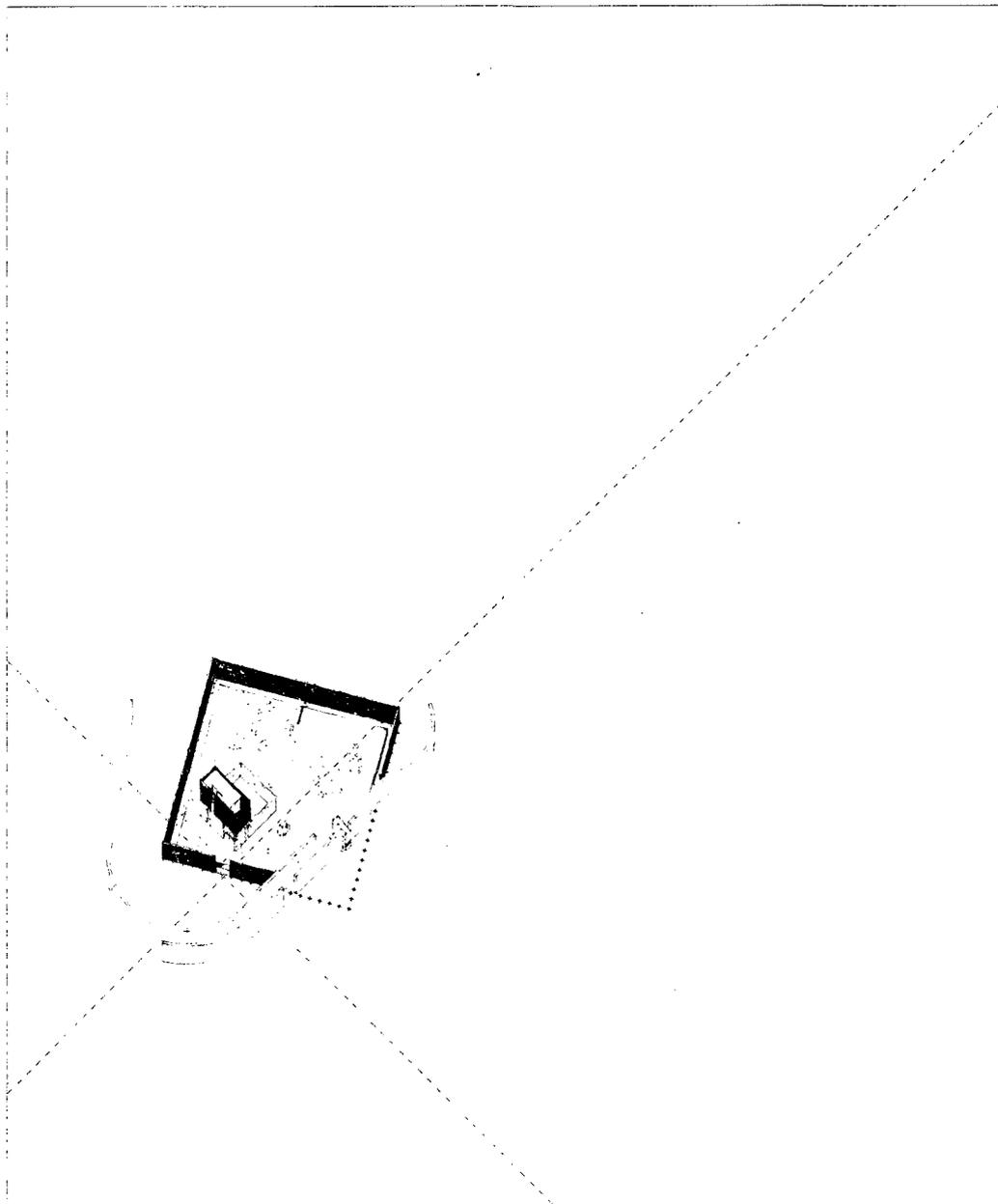


Fig 2. *The hero-founder*

In the winter of 1539, I received a letter written on behalf of the wealthy patron, François d'Angoulême, requesting my presence at his famed chateau on account of a recent publication of the first book of my architectural treatise. Entitled, *Regole generale di architettura sopra le cinque maniere de gli edifici, cioe Thoscano, Dorico, Ionico, Corinthio, et Composito*,ⁱⁱⁱ it was actually positioned as the fourth book (Book IV) in a larger series. He offered me both an elusive three hundred gold *scudi* and the opportunity to continue work on the remaining books of my treatise, of which I intended there to be seven, without interruption and in the independence of solitude on the grounds of his estate. In a peculiar position nearing the end of the letter, as almost an addendum, there was mention of a project that he for the moment felt it necessary to discuss with me in private. At the time however, I passed this off as nothing more than a mild curiosity.

Admittedly, it was the generous purse of three hundred gold crowns that initially aroused my interest in his request that, as if through divine intervention, found my door early that winter. However, it was also to my advantage that a number of important architectural treatises had already been published in France through the support of François, whose fascination with printing was of considerable notoriety. These works included Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*, the French translation and publication of Diego de Sagredo's *Medidas del Romano (Raison d'architecture)*, and Albrecht Dürer's work on fortification *Zu Befestigung der Stett, Schloss und Flecken*, published in Latin (*De urbibus arcibus castellisque*).^{iv}

Of course the prestige of such an offer, coming as it did from the celebrated François and regardless of the lavish funds attached to it, would have warranted genuine excitement from any man as humble in origin as myself. After all it was from my father's unassuming efforts as a leather-worker in Bologna that I was nourished and afforded every opportunity I had, and still to this day, appreciatively enjoyed. And though I lamented the fact that François had been the primary protagonist in the Italian wars in which so many of my countrymen were reluctantly forced into battle, he did at the same time extend a hand to so many others

offering opportunity. This included my dear friends Benvenuto Cellini and Francesco Primaticcio, who under his benefaction went on to create such marvellous things.

This man's reputation as patron of the arts and 'father of letters' was well known and the exquisite assembly of artists, architects and learned men gathered at his chateau quickly accelerated this reputation to lands far beyond the bounds of his already expansive territory. Even a man as eccentric in character as Leonardo of Vinci did he manage to lure to his isolated palace positioned as it was at the centre of the immeasurable 'Forêt de Biere' where he was free to work in solitude on his inventions and various other endeavours. Some even say that as a gesture of gratitude towards François, a man so famous for his love of books, Leonardo built and gifted him an ingenious mobile library that he could take with him on his many travels to places of war or noble obligation.

Now myself, being a man sixty-four years removed from his birth and pushed evermore unwillingly towards his death, felt compelled to accept this offer despite any misgivings I may have had regarding the aforementioned Italian wars. At this age, my preoccupation was with my work and there was little taste left in this fatigued body for politicking. In fact, not only would the quiet serenity of the chateau have afforded me the opportunity for concentrated reflection on the treatise that for so many years had been my most fundamental priority, it was my hope that this commission would reinvigorate my thinking, which for too long had been engrossed in searching for just such a patron and as a result was considerably dulled.

It was not shortly after arriving at the chateau that it became apparent to me that a more peculiar place could not be found. Whatever preconceived notions I had regarding his estate, it was not long before they were extinguished and my view of François, a man whom I had only become acquainted with through various books and hearsay, proven incorrect.

Almost two years separated my reception of that letter from François and my arrival on the grounds of his chateau. And though the delay was rather tedious, it was not all together fruitless for it was during this time that I was able to complete the second book (Book III) of my treatise. This volume, which I titled *Il terzo libro nel quale si figurano e descrivano le antiquita Roma e le alter che sono in Italia e fuori di Italia*^v was dedicated to the ancient monuments of Italy. Now, while the great benefaction of François allowed such a work to come to light by providing me both the assurance of necessary funds and the promise of its publication, it was the teachings of my mentor, architect Baldassare Peruzzi that in my formative years directed my intellect with reason and purpose. I can credit his guidance, now some twenty years past, in making my work worthy of at least modest consideration.

During our time together in Rome, we worked so assiduously, pouring over the countless works of antiquity in search of some eternal architectural truth. In fact, more like archaeologists than architects, we measured and documented every building and detail we encountered regardless of its complexity or size. Of their dimensions and proportions, Baldassare insisted that more would be learned from the ancients if we measured them with the units originally employed. And endlessly, as if possessed, we drew, experimenting with a variety of drawing techniques.^{vi} But before I get too far from the story, I will end in saying that I have not found any other important personality who has shown the brilliance and knowledge in our time as my most understanding teacher.^{vii} It has been five years now since Baldassare's death and it would have been my wish for him to come with me to this chateau where we could have conceived of this architectural treatise together.

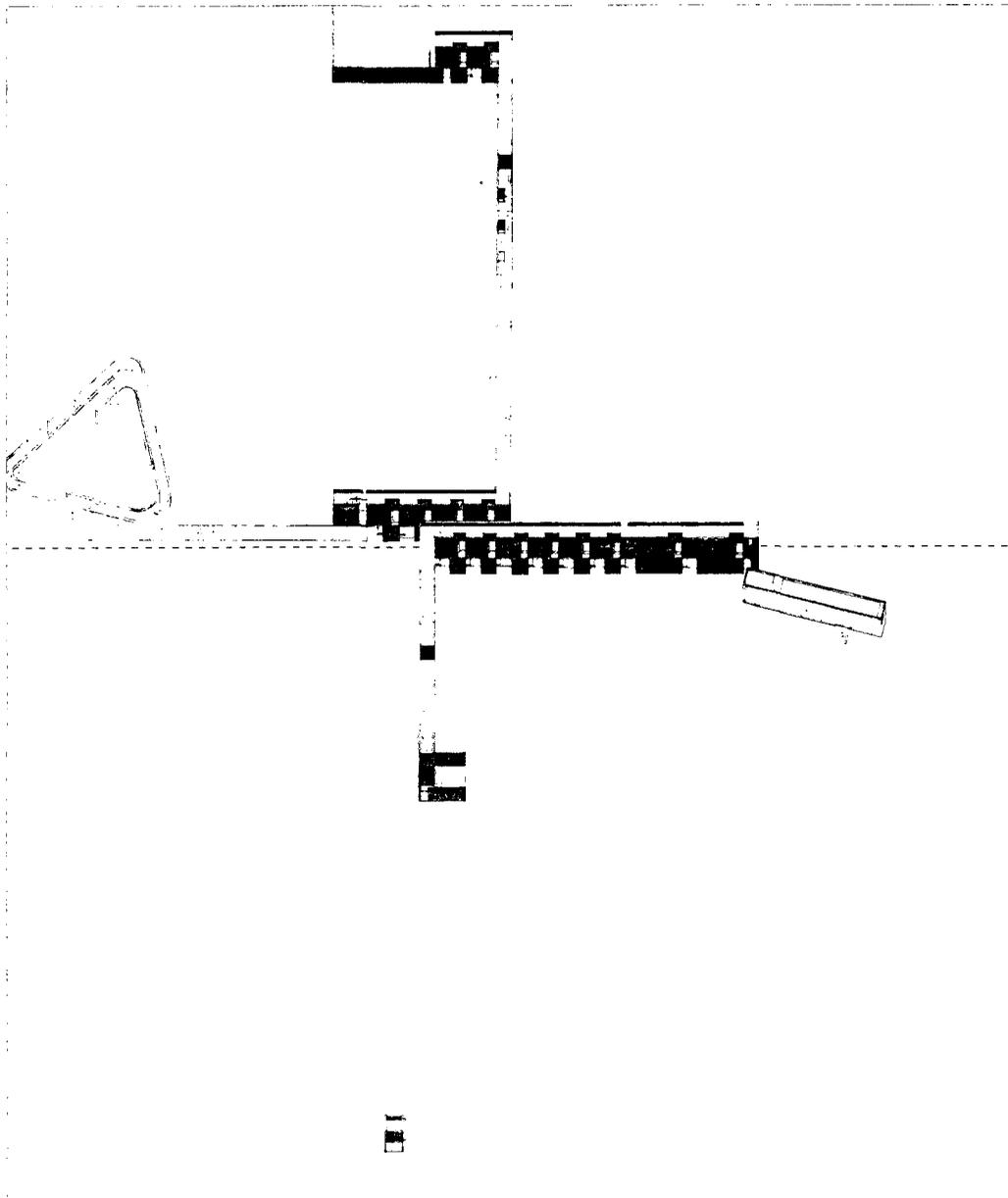


Fig 3. *Two young boys sustained by a she-wolf and a woodpecker*

*Arrival, 6 December 1541**

To reach the chateau, one first had to pass through the labyrinthine *Forêt de Biere*, an expanse of antediluvian woodland, which after countless hours of complicated travel, I had not yet cleared. And though my journey to François's estate consumed many months, I endured very little in the way of hardship finding travel there to be rather agreeable up until this point. Admittedly, as my progressions through the forest increasingly bare its abnormalities, the enthusiasm that directed me at the outset of this expedition faded to a crippling anxiety. The savagery of this place, from its impenetrable snarls of shrubbery and thickets to its barren plateaus of silt, I assimilated to chaos, the undifferentiated and shapeless void of pre-Creation.^{viii} No hand had yet modified its nature. As I expected the chateau to emerge through the next clearing, its transforming hands bringing order to this chaos, it did not come. In fact, it was not until the moment when almost all hope of reaching my destination had finally been extinguished that I was the recipient of a bizarre but nevertheless fortuitous turn of events.

From a stand of beech trees not far from where I stood and lurking about their trunks, could be seen an inelegant creature whose erratic motions, though unfamiliar, did not suggest hostility. It approached my position rather unhurriedly, as if cautious of my presence but simultaneously afflicted by an overwhelming sense of curiosity. As the being entered a range whereby my vision still managed well with detail, it was revealed to me that this creature was in fact a huntsman disguised as a bird. While his approach to concealment seemed altogether absurd, my thoughts were primarily focused on this encounter, which since entering this pitiless wood had now only just arrived. And as the trepidation washed from my face, exposing a long concealed grin, he began to speak.

"Ah, my plumage amuses you, does it? I used to be a man once, you know, that's why it looks a little odd."^{ix}

"Oh no, I wasn't laughing at you."^x Came my reply, still oblivious to the peculiarity of the situation. I recognized the fanned crest and radiant pink of his camouflage as that of the *Upupa epops*, a type of wild bird.^{xi} We continued our discussion.

“I am Euripidaristophanis. What business brings you here?”

“My name is Sebastiano of Bologna, *Professor di Architettura*. I am trying to reach François d'Angoulême who has kindly offered me accommodation under the roof of his chateau. There I will devote myself to completing my books on architecture, which through a lack of means, I was unable to publish in Italy. Although he has been occupied in these past years with war, he has not ceased from his other noble actions, paying liberally all those who work for him labouring hard in the various beautiful arts.”^{xii}

For a brief collection of seconds he contemplated my words. And as he directed his gaze toward the frozen grey sky, he let out a miserable shriek from the bowels of his feathered gut.

“Epopoi popopopopopoi!”^{xiii}

His eyes came back to mine while in a hushed tone as if afraid of being overheard, he gave account of his hysteria. “Oh François! My poorest François! You know, we battled your countrymen at Pavia. It was there that François suffered the great humiliation of defeat and capture. But it was not as they say a fault of ill-conceived stratagem or the timely intervention of the Spanish arquebusiers. That is a lie. In fact it was the fault of the birds.”

Being that he brandished a pistol, I did not see it fit to interrupt.

“Are you familiar with their sky city? Its walls measure six hundred feet high and are wide enough for two horses to pass on top. Birds, just birds managed to build it up to that height! The cranes came from Libya with foundation stones in their crops, the corncrakes shaping them with their beaks. Ten thousand storks carried the bricks and geese used their feet as shovels to put mortar in pans, which were brought up by herons. Rather ingenious really.^{xiv} But now when men present sacrifices to the gods, the gods have to pay a duty on our offerings otherwise the birds do not grant them transit rights through their city. We have been cut off!”

In fear of offending an armed man dressed as a bird, I responded with manufactured frustration, “So François fell at Pavia because his prayers for aide were held ransom by the birds!”

“Precisely!” Answered Euripidaristophanis with resounding satisfaction. He concluded with haste, “Now if you will excuse me, I am on a hunt for these miserable creatures and must be on my way. It is rumoured that they intend to expand the walls of their city and have been recruiting ducks as bricklayers from a nearby grove. You will find the chateau not far from here if you continue south, in the direction of that sandstone outcropping. Godspeed.”

And with that he disappeared into the dense brush of the forest as suddenly as he had arrived.

Against the extensive wood, sitting as it did at the heart of that chaotic and unknown wilderness, stood the chateau, a tranquil and ordered universe. Its gatehouse was approached by a long road lined on either side with a perfectly planted row of cedar hedges, their foliage meticulously wrapped in burlap. To one side of this delineation, a small lake fed the modest length of a protective moat. On the other, sat the chateau’s great garden filled with a countless variety of trees, which in this oppressive cold lay dormant but in the warmer seasons would provide both food good to eat as well as pleasure for viewing. At some distance, I could see faintly what appeared to be a lone gardener moving busily about the lifeless flora. And while this roused my interest, at this time my travelled body was focused solely on reaching its destination. For after what seemed like an eternity, I was finally greeted by the distinguished gatehouse, which marked the end of the road (or the beginning of the chateau).

Just above the portal, carved deep into the grey stone of the structure read the words – *Anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit.*^{xv} And if this struck me peculiarly, it paled in comparison to the strange fellow that greeted me upon knocking on the heavy wooden door of the main gate, flanked as it was by two large, square towers. Unexpectedly, from a small trap door placed high in the tower to the right of the archway, (which for reasons not known to me was broader than that to the left) appeared a man who descended a now uncurled rope ladder. Though he seemed rather young, there

was an aura of antiquity about him. His broad chest and shoulders made him an imposing figure despite his being shorter than me by a head.^{xvi}

Now before I had a chance to speak, he addressed me rather abruptly, "My name is Nobody. That is what I am called by my mother and father and by all my friends..."^{xvii}

continuing without pause, "... I guard the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture..."^{xviii}

Composed as though the combination of his arrival and greeting were of a usual circumstance, I began with equanimity, "My name is Sebastiano of Bologna..." However, as the gatekeeper quickly shifted his attention to my now confused horse, which he began to examine as if suspicious of its silence, it was clear that he had no interest in these trivial formalities. Lowering himself to the ground, he carefully scanned my mare's broad underside and after sufficient study asked monstrosly, "Should we break it open and see what the belly contains?"^{xix}

I, playing his game, though my patience wearing thin, responded "I assure you there is nothing in there except a diminished supply of grass. We have come from a considerable distance and are now thankful in being very near the noble François d'Angoulême whom at this hour is expecting me. You guard this portal well, but there is little to fear from a man my age, I am as docile as a sheep."

With great speed he leapt from the ground, his contortions the arcane movements of some mythological creature, half man, half beast. And suddenly, as if his cryptic utterances were meant as a riddle, the words I just spoke illuminating its hidden truth, he scaled the tower from which he descended, retreating back into his perch high above the gateway. Its massive wooden door opened slowly on account of some unseen mechanical happenings directed by its keeper, revealing a long, vaulted passage into the chateau's entry court. This threshold, facing two ways as the nature of a vault implied, brought me graciously from outside to inside, from chaos to order.^{xx}

The dark narrow space of the gateway, with its peculiar landscape of hinges, panels, impostes and thresholds formed a bridge over a forbidden tract of earth.^{xxi} This was implied by the words cut carefully into the sandstone above the doorway. By entering through the gate, I had engaged in an act of covenant with those inside the walls of the chateau.^{xxii} Within the oval shaped courtyard into which I emerged, a woman standing at the top of an elaborate staircase was awaiting me as if it was her singular purpose. The words flowed prettily from her lips as she began to speak,

*By that hid way my guide and I withal,
Back to the lit world from the darkened dens
Toiled upward, caring for no rest at all,*

*He first, I following; till my straining sense
Glimpsed the bright burden of the heavenly cars
Through a round hole; by this we climbed, and thence*

Came forth, to look once more upon the stars.^{xxiii}

And with that she welcomed me into her nourishing bosom where for the next twenty-one days I would wait undisturbed, in a kind of dream.

*Reception, 27 December 1541**

In a magnificent room (whose proportions were more suited to that of a long passageway) fittingly identified as the Galerie François, a reception officially marking my arrival to the chateau was unexpectedly but nevertheless magnanimously arranged. A remarkable and uproarious horde filled the breadth of this meticulously crafted hall, its walls an intricate combination of stucco and woodwork. Deserving of attention and comment here by virtue of its wondrous, excellent, strange and outrageous nature, this assemblage included; ushers and valets, messengers, musicians – a young man dressed as a girl playing the lyre, pasty-cooks, bread-carriers, spit-turners and sauce-makers, a belligerent horse with a human body, neck, and head, in place of its neck and head, liver-diviners, augurs, François's sister Marguerite (the vivacious woman that welcomed me upon my entry into the chateau) being escorted around the hall on a wagon yoked to which were a pair of firm, prize-winning athletes, a high-ranking commander being chased three times around the room by a swift footed prince, squires, secretaries, grooms and pages, gentlemen of the chamber (of which one was wrapped in a veil of beautiful anemone), a group of one-eyed giants wielding large, sandstone boulders, masons, crenels and bulwarks, two young boys sustained by a she-wolf and a woodpecker, two more arguing vigorously over sacred offerings of fruit and sheep (an argument which I would later discover led to an act of fratricide), carvers, surgeons and barbers, painters, the chateau's chief librarian, that apotropaic creature Nobody (whose inquisitions for the time being shifted from horses to the underside of tables), and the solitary gardener I first perceived upon my arrival and with whom, in the opening hours of the next morning, I would have a rather peculiar conversation.

It pained me to discover however that the noble François would not be free to attend the occasion on account of an escalation in tensions between himself and a powerful man whose moniker, Charles of Luxemburg, was considerably detested amongst those gathered in this room. The savage murder of two men employed as diplomats by François while navigating the river Po and on their way to Constantinople for official business, implicated several

troops commanded by Charles. And this had many whispering of an impending war whose timing, admittedly for reasons of self-interest, could not have come at a worse moment.

To be delicate about my anxiety so as to avoid being coarse, the realization of my treatise hinged on the continued benefaction of François under whose accommodation, only a modest twenty-one days had thus far accrued. At this point, I was generally acquainted with the frightful events that occurred at Pavia where my most virtuous patron suffered the great *humiliation of capture*. Now if a similar misfortune or worse were to occur as a result of this newly developing conflict, what might become of my treatise whose remaining books were still many years away?

The gracious nobility in my company, gathered kindly as they were for this occasion, advised me not to be concerned. And though they assured me that a meeting between my patron and I, which they led me to believe was soon forthcoming, would appease any apprehension that might subsist, it nevertheless worried me greatly. Again however, my penchant for elaborating the direction of the story has gotten the better of me and it would be wise at this time to return to an uncomplicated place. After all, there had not yet been any declaration of war and in the relative safety of the Galerie François, a most humbling banquet was before me.

Of all those gathered there that evening and perhaps coincidentally, it was Euripidaristophanis, the odd man I first encountered in the woods several weeks previous that initially commanded my attention. Still dressed in his brilliant camouflage, which for this occasion was immaculate showing no signs of the hunter's toil, and walking awkwardly by his side were two similarly clad men, *obscurum per obscurius*. They moved flamboyantly amongst those assembled, stopping sporadically to engage them. And as his eyes caught mine in the midst of this observation, he gestured with an almost imperceptible nod, reciprocating that we had been previously acquainted. The subtleties of this understanding however were not altogether eluded by those in attendance as an ancient voice fell unexpectedly upon me from a position in close proximity to my left.

“Good evening, Sebastiano. Do not be surprised that I have acknowledged you by name. We have been informed for many months that you would be coming to settle here at the chateau and it is a pleasure now to finally meet you. I can even say that I have managed to obtain a copy of your work on the ancient monuments of Italy, a subject I consider myself to be somewhat familiar being that in origin I am a freeborn, Roman citizen.^{xxiv} My name is Marcus Pollio, theoretician and Commander of Artillery for Emperor François’s peerless men at arms.”

He raised his weathered finger pointing it discretely in the direction of the triad containing Euripidaristophanis and selecting him from amongst them queried,

“So you have met that man?”

Leaving me no time to interject, he carried on without postponement.

“You see, to me, Nature did not grant such imposing stature, age has ruined my face, and bad health has carried off my strength. Therefore, because I am bereft of such defences, it is through the help of my intellect that I attain approval. And you, an old man like myself, understand that all of the gifts granted by fortune are just as easily taken away by her, whereas knowledge, coupled with intelligence, never fails; it stands steadfast to the very end of life.^{xxv} It pains me to witness this company of fools profess, full of confidence in their ideas and cleverness, of the birds and their sky city...”

Toro toro toro torotix

Kikkabau! Kikkabau!

Toro toro toro toro lililix!^{xxvi}

His thoughts were interrupted suddenly by the vociferous and incoherent squawking of Euripidaristophanis and his troop as they engaged in a particularly raucous discussion with the belligerent horse (with a human body, neck, and head, in place of its neck and head) standing nearby. Recognizing this distraction as an opportunity from which to develop Marcus Pollio’s previous monologue into conversation, I opened with some hesitation,

“Do you mean to tell me there is no sky city?”

“Such nonsense! What has become of your specialized knowledge and seasoned judgment?^{xxvii} I cannot fault these three for their senselessness, but you should know better

then to believe in such fantasy. Do you take delight in these deceptions? How, pray tell, can stones and bricks float in the air? These things do not exist nor can they exist nor have they ever existed...^{xxviii}

He relented in his chastising finally cognizant of his hostility and in an effort to regain some reconciliation began again with caution,

“My apologies Sebastiano. You know, Philosophy completes the architect’s character by instilling loftiness of spirit, so that he will not be arrogant, but rather tolerant, fair, and trustworthy.^{xxix} Though I have endured this fairy tale recurrently for many years, it would seem that I have much to learn from your demonstration of tolerance. This is after all a celebratory evening and while I stain your judgment with flawed acumen, you stand there in silence without admonishment.”

I welcomed this admission of wrongdoing with a smile while Marcus Pollio went on to recount the story of Pavia and how a series of misfortunes, including the tragedy of Euripidaristophanis and the capture of François, all revolved around the misconception of a wall.

“Perhaps it would interest you to discover that Euripidaristophanis was once a considerably dexterous writer of comedies. That is of course before the war. I came to this fact during our time together at Pavia, where we fought the Spanish-Imperial army alongside the valiant François. Rumours persist about his life before the conflict; that he was twice brought to court over the political nature of his works, that he wrote over forty plays of which all are lost, and that he for a time held office in Athens.^{xxx} However, knowing very little myself, I cannot say what of this is genuine.

The two of us were positioned at Mirabello, a countryseat of the former dukes of Milan just north of Pavia,^{xxxi} where I commanded the artillery. At my disposal were the same ill-tempered brass cannon’s that exacted remarkable damage at the battles of Ravenna and Marignano^{xxxii} years earlier and to one of those fine engines, I had Euripidaristophanis placed. Now, while well-protected earthworks encrusted with guns formed a perimeter around our main camp just east of the city,^{xxxiii} I was of the opinion that our situation at Mirabello was particularly tenuous in that we lacked any comparable network of defence.

Understanding the consequences of such a weakness, I proposed that a defensive wall trapezoidal in plan be constructed to further solidify our position, an idea that was very warmly received by François and several of his highest-ranking officers.

My instructions for the perfect enclosure were as follows; Of its thickness, the wall was to be built wide enough for two armed men walking along its top and coming towards each other to be able to pass side by side without difficulty. Its foundation would be greater than the projected width of the above ground portion and be dug down to solid ground and in solid ground, insofar as this was possible. On the inward side of the substructure, there would be a second foundation set far enough inside the exterior wall that whole cohorts of troops could be stationed for defence along the top of the completed earthwork. Cross walls would bond the exterior and interior foundations to each other. Of its materials, we would make use of the locally available stone. Furthermore, rods of scorched olive wood, a medium resistant to rot and decay over time, would be used in both the curtain wall itself and its substructure providing everlasting fixity.”^{xxxiv}

Marcus Pollio’s description recalled the ancient walls of Lucius Domitius Aurelianus, which after more than a thousand years remained unfaltering, protector of my beloved Rome. He continued,

“And finally, that a temple would be built to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva – gods traditionally involved in protecting the city – atop a small hill near the centre of our camp. From this elevated location they would have the vantage point from which to see the greatest possible extent of our protective wall hence ensuring its wellbeing.”^{xxxv}

However, it was not long after work on the structure began that news of dissention amongst a small group of highly influential commanders reached my ears. Sceptical of a temple’s practicality, these fools managed to persuade François to abandon the idea on the grounds that it was an unaffordable frivolity. Thus, the resultant wall was a kind of imperfect construction. And though it is with the great aid of retrospection that the outcome of this war has now been laid bare, I never wavered from a belief that our defeat would arise from the inability of these dissenters to look beyond the idea of the enclosure as more than just a mundane assembly.

Imperial sappers breached the wall in the early morning hours of 24 February 1525 using only picks and rams so as not to make a sound. In such silence did they work that their whispers would have even eluded the ears of the lovely Thisbe. Under a veil of darkness and without the watchful presence of the gods to aide us, they were free to make a mockery of our defences. We awoke the next morning shocked to discover troops filing into columns through three openings in the northern end of the east wall.

With great courage but little thought, François – followed closely by the French men-at-arms – charged straight at the imperial army’s front lines, an act that effectively silenced a majority of the guns under my command. The discovery of more than a thousand Spanish arquebusiers lying in wait behind the foremost rows of the enemy brought their bravery to naught. As they attempted to flee the field, the Spanish marksmen fired unrelentingly, picking them off one by one. Nevertheless, a meagre contingent of men led daringly by François pushed ahead undeterred, despite being greatly outnumbered. And I will say with little doubt that the futility of this surge must have earned François pity from the gods as, though he was ultimately captured and subsequently imprisoned for one year in Madrid by that malevolent sovereign Charles of Luxemburg, his life was spared while many others were easily overcome.

I managed to involve the small number of our gunners that still held good position and this included Euripidaristophanis. A misfiring of his cannon sent a stray missile in the direction of our profane wall, which it hit cleanly, expelling fragments of stone in every direction. He, along with two others, became the victims of a simple error of judgment. The dislodged rock found the sides of their brilliant plumed helmets knocking them to the ground without consciousness. Pulling them safely from the chaos, it was only after several days that they became sentient. Convinced upon waking that the birds were at fault for François’s defeat and capture, it was a dismal scene, these three suddenly *non compos mentis*. I have not since seen a hint of normalcy from them...”

For a second time, he was interrupted by the noisy trio whose wine fed discussions with the belligerent horse had now escalated into a shouting match on the verge of a brawl.

“You will have to excuse me while I see to these dullards. Besides, I have already taken enough of your time this evening and there are many here that would still like to make your acquaintance. I look forward to discussing the balance of your treatise with you when it is further along. Good night, Sebastiano.”

And with that he disappeared into the thickness of the crowd as suddenly as he had arrived.

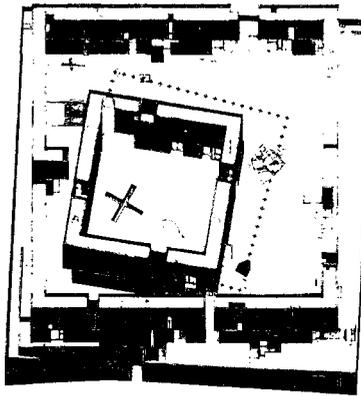


Fig 4. *The theorists*

Heading back to my quarters in the early hours of the subsequent morning, the reception having only then just come to an end, my mind remained tireless, full of contemplation at the words of that curious anecdotalist Marcus Pollio. In particular, it was his account of the wall that continued most notably to persist, lingering as a fascination with which I had formulated many questions. Why did he consider the wall sacred and holy? What of its gates? Was it because the wall must be considered holy in order that men fight and die manfully in its defence?^{xxxvi}

Yet to me, his ideas seemed like old ideas. Was it not the achievements of those very same brass engines, which he himself had been made commander, that have for years had architects conceiving of an idiom of defence that is without precedence in the history of fortification? And while his preoccupation at Pavia was with the gods of antiquity and their respective temples, the outmoded walls of countless towns were being stripped of their elaborate machicolations and burdensome merlon crowns in an effort to keep if only one step ahead of their antagonists. Even a man as enamoured with the work of the ancients as my late mentor Baldassare Peruzzi took kindly to the assignment of modernizing Siena's medieval walls (at about the same time in fact as the battle at Pavia and thus of a similar heritage) with a variety of bastion types both inventive and audacious.^{xxxvii} But in spite of my appetite for conversation, these speculations would have to await our next encounter. For at this quiet hour the chateau was silent, its company having just laid down after a long night's merrymaking.

I reached the second floor wing in which my individual quarters were contained after having effectively navigated the chateau's many extensions, compartments, articulations and appendages. The length and position of the narrow annex, protruding as it did from the body of the chateau toward the vast Forêt de Biere, was that of a great promontory thrust perilously into a chaotic abyss. Its edges were defined by three contrastive landscapes. Staring straight into the immensity of that primordial forest was its southern façade; cut out of which were three handsomely proportioned openings. Its eastern face, partially overlooking the chateau's main gatehouse, commanded excellent views of François's magnificent estate and garden, which even under a delicate veil of snow suggested both balance and order. It was the work of man who binds the parts of nature together by his art.^{xxxviii} Lastly, its western edge, running perpendicular to the Galerie François and together with a third wing and small lake, formed the bounds of a large courtyard, the Cour de la Fontaine. How wonderful was the nurturing of the soil, the marvellous assembly of buildings and the skilful control of waterways. For man is really the vicar of God, since he inhabits and cultivates all elements and is present on earth without being absent from the ether.^{xxxix}

Now, as I began lowering my heavy body down to its bed in an effort to end the night, I caught the dim flicker of a lamp moving enthusiastically about the wrapped hedges and carefully cleared pathways of the great garden through one of my room's east facing windows. On account of the present darkness and from this distant position, it was impossible with any certainty to discern the identity of this shadowy figure, though there was little doubt in my mind that this was the activity of that solitary gardener I first

perceived upon my arrival to the chateau. Nevertheless, I considered assurance necessary. At this point my curiosity had been aroused and I felt compelled to discover the motivation behind this characters busyness at such a peculiar hour.

Aided by the light of my newly fuelled lamp, I approached the brutish mass of the garden's low enclosing wall. Contained within its thickness was the narration of its genesis, the addition and subtraction of material and the expansion and contraction of its boundaries over time. Included in this accumulation of discarded architectural bits were a quantity of massive, unwrought, north-eastern Peloponnese limestone boulders - each stone being so big that a pair of mules could not move the smallest from its place to the slightest degree^d, several rigorously proportioned Corinthian capitals of blue-grey Carrara marble bearing the insignia of an architect from Monte Asdrualdo, an abundance of fist sized sandstone cobbles with a hue similar to that of the rocky escarpments of the bounding *Forêt de Biere*, and an old, mason's *Amussium* fashioned of a piece of impossibly smooth iron. This collection of deformations was analogous to the laboured hands of a Venetian glass blower whose processes of creation are made visible in them.

Providing admittance to the garden's interior was a narrow doorway surmounted by a heavy stone lintel. Sitting atop this support, the eyes of a beautifully sculpted cherub seemed to follow me as I moved through the diminutive portal. Upon descending two shallow steps, I was welcomed by a cobbled path leading directly into the depth of the great estate. And from this central artery there stemmed a number of lesser tributaries providing access to the countless sections and subsections of the garden.

Not far along this central thoroughfare stood the individual I observed from my window now engaged in the task of sweeping a snow covered portion of pathway. Though it was difficult to perceive a face in much detail within the cavernous hood of his solemn habit (which seemed to me a strange choice of apparel), I managed to catch sight of a man whose look of tranquillity spoke of the kind of ease one obtains through the undertaking of reverent works. Undeterred by my presence, he lifted his eyes temporarily only to confirm that his ears had not deceived him. The quiet muttering in which he was engaged stopped momentarily as he did so but began again as he returned to his work. While it was obvious he was uninterested in my company, I decided to interrupt him a second time.

“Excuse me. Might I ask what you are doing out here in the cold at this unusual hour?”

The words drifted from his mouth in a quiet tone, his breath made visible by the frozen air, “*Et sumsit Dominus Deus hominem quem fecit et posuit eum in paradiso ut operaretur et custodiret.*”^{xli}

While I recognized this language as Latin, it was of a seemingly antique variety making it (at least for a man as humble in origin as myself) difficult to translate with any degree of precision. From this archaic collection however, I was able to interpret with some approximation the concluding segment of his response, that he was placed in this ‘paradise to work (or ‘to cultivate’) and guard it (or ‘him’)’. Confused by the ambiguity of such a statement, my primary reaction was to think aloud.

“I am afraid you will have to grant this old man a pardon for having failed to recognize what you mean to signify in the word ‘paradise’ as there are those who take it either corporeally or spiritually. Perhaps you are familiar with the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the first five

books of that lost Hebrew biblical text, the Pentateuch. Within, a derivation of the word paradise first appears as *paradeisos*, an ancient Greek term denoting an enclosed park or pleasure ground.^{xlii} And though it was that great Greek historian Xenophon who was first to use it in Western literature indicating a well-watered field containing both trees and flowers and surrounded by a wall,^{xliii} I should say that its origins are Persian, coming from the old word *paridaeza* meaning enclosure.

Of course there are others, like that important Jewish thinker Philo, who take it in spiritual terms while still others take it in both senses. So which of them are you? If you see it exclusively in a corporeal sense, then against what evil or hostile men do you guard this 'paradise', which I take you to mean this garden? Surely it is not a fear of any invader from the vicinity, or of one who would assail its borders protected as they are by that low wall. Perhaps it is from beasts? Though, if unpleasant creatures were any reason to be vigilant, how could one solitary man protect the enormity of this garden against them? It would be an incredible feat for any individual to keep it free of such beasts,^{xliv} even in the dead of winter when most lay dormant."

Having paused from his work, he seemed to enjoy my struggle to decipher the meaning in his words, much as a teacher takes pleasure in observing a student who labours over an obscure passage, drawn to its thorough investigation and full of curiosity.^{xlv} But this intermission did not last long as he quickly returned his attention to the tasks with which he was previously engaged. And with renewed vigour as if making up for lost time, he marched straight into the darkness of the garden leaving me, now with more questions than answers, to return to the chateau alone.

Part II

Finding myself continually in the solitude of the chateau it was more often that I was seen in the company of wild beasts than that of men.^{xlvi} Yet this isolation was of little concern. About its cloistral setting I could devote myself to the kind of concentrated thinking that for too many years had been consumed with but trifling concerns. And in the narrow cavities of time that appeared between an exacting pattern of writing and drawing, I even managed designs for two works to be built on the chateau's grounds at the behest of Marguerite. The first, a small grotto at the western most edge of the estate and the second, a large, barrel vaulted gallery just east of the main gatehouse with views of both the oval entry court to the north and François's great garden to the south.^{xlvii}

Over the course of nearly six months and with the greater part of my attention devoted principally to the various architectural undertakings with which I was now engaged, thought of François and the circumstances impeding our first acquaintance had all but disappeared. That changed unexpectedly however with the arrival of a second letter in the seventh month of that year bringing his long silence to a fitting end. And much like the letter that preceded it, enclosed was a request of an extraordinary nature.

Gentle Sebastiano,

It is with absolute sadness that I write to inform you that in a matter of days, I will be leaving for Paris to present a proclamation of war. However, certain transgressions have made this situation unavoidable. After making every effort to end the years of bitter hostility between us, to try conciliation instead of force, that unprepossessing Burgundian Charles of Luxemburg, has finally handed me an injury so great, so detestable and so strange that it cannot in any way be forgiven, suffered or endured another moment.^{xlviii} The killing of my dear friends Antonio Rincon and Cesare Fregoso while sailing the river Po and on their way to Constantinople to engage in acts of diplomacy with the Turkish came at the hands of Charles's brutish troops; a crime the magnitude of which this strict measure of retaliation is now warranted. I assure you that had it not been in my interests to gather allies and secure the funding necessary for just such

an endeavour, this declaration would have come much sooner. I cannot say with any confidence when I will be returning from this conflict, though it is doubtful that its resolution will be accompanied by much in the way of haste.

Nevertheless, you have little with which to be concerned. My benefaction will not cease in the face of this disturbance and you will remain at the chateau free to continue work on your most important treatise. In the dedicatory letter of your third book, you were kind to praise my intellect as gifted in the theory and practice of the many branches of learning.^{xlix} I read this volume on the works of antiquity with great pleasure and I, much like you in fact, have often thought about the grandeur of the ancient Romans and their fine judgement in construction, which can still be seen in the ruins of the very many buildings of great variety not only in ancient Rome but also my beloved France. And though you have yet to measure the antique marvels of this fine kingdom, you will see how dear to the Romans these lands were and are quite right in saying that they would require a separate volume for themselves alone.^l

*I should say that my love of knowledge and respect for all men of letters was a gift given to me by my mother, the departed Louise of Savoy. Rather anomalous was the liberty with which she directed the education of her children, guarding the task carefully and deeply resenting any restriction of her independence.^{li} Assembled over the years within the thick castle walls of my childhood home in Cognac,^{lii} was a fine library filled with countless books including many that my mother had specially commissioned. I can still recall reading with much happiness an excellent volume on ancient mythology titled, *Commentaire sur le livre des échecs amoureux*. There was another on the great cities of history, of Troy, Mycenae and of the square city of Babylon and its one hundred gates, all of bronze.^{liii} As children, my friends and I would besiege and defend the walls of model towns, our minds filled with images of these famous citadels and their associated heroes, I the swift footed Achilles, they the horse-taming Trojans.*

But for too long have these memories been relegated from the lofty portions of my brain, replaced by the trivial pursuits of the politically inclined, of fiscal reform and peasant unrest. You know, I have grown to loathe my visits to Paris. Well, it is not that I have anything against the city as such: it is as grand and happy a place as ever a man paid a fine in. But there it is: the Parisians

yammer away in the lawcourts for the whole of their lives. And I am looking for a place without lawsuits, where I can settle down and live in peace.^{lv}

There was a time when I could find this about the halls and gardens of my darling chateau, hiding as it does at the heart of such a brooding forest. Alas, no longer can I escape this noise; even here it follows me around from room to room. My court has grown from five hundred and forty officials, a large number by any measure, to over six hundred in only eight years! This of course does not include those hangers on that, though omitted from my wage bill, still manage in their glutinous ways to attach themselves to the mass of my excrescent court. Without embellishment I can say that if it were not for the presence of learned men like you, whose work is so elegant in its appearance, so well illustrated, so perfect in the proportion of its measurements, and so clear in its ideas that there is no part that needs to be improved,^{lv} I would derive little pleasure in coming to the chateau at all.

Now, it is approaching three years since our first correspondence and though you may have forgotten the particularities of that letter having already attained its offerings, there was mention of a project nearing its conclusion that I would have hoped we might discuss in the flesh about the solitude of the beautiful Forêt de Biere. But being now only days away from an altercation I fear will almost certainly endure and knowing what perils stalk the fields of battle, I feel compelled to disclose to you the phantasy that has occupied a guarded corner of my mind so wonderfully since the days of my adolescence in Cognac; it is the vision of a walled city.

Some time ago, an invitation was extended to that ingenious Vinciani Leonardo to come to my estate where, much like you, he would be free to pursue his artistic endeavours and carryout work on the various other inventions and peculiar machines with which I had long held such fascination. It was in his excellent hands that I first placed my visions for a magnificent city of walls. To be built on the shores of the river Soudre near the town of Romorantin,^{lvi} I desired that these walls deviate from those presently at the mercy of an ever-improving arsenal of siege craft, the elaborate superstructures of medieval fortification.^{lvii} Nor did I wish for them to resemble the walls of their successors; the sunken bastion of gigantic, squat proportions and sharply angled geometry.^{lviii} Rather it was my desire that the inhabitants of this city populate the enclosing walls

themselves, like monks and nuns about a great cloister. Imagine the citizens of Rome hiding away in the thickness of their Aurelianic defences, how impressive a sight that would be!

Yet in spite of Leonardo's considerable efforts, the work was unfinished at the time of his death; its existence limited to a series of architectural details and exploratory plans on parchment. Hence, I am requesting that you continue this project and prepare a quantity of drawings for its design in hopes that I may one day realize this long-standing dream. I trust that when this conflict has ended you will have given this matter just consideration and I look forward to sharing my opinions with you. Pray for my safe return Sebastiano.

Nutrisco et extinguo,

François

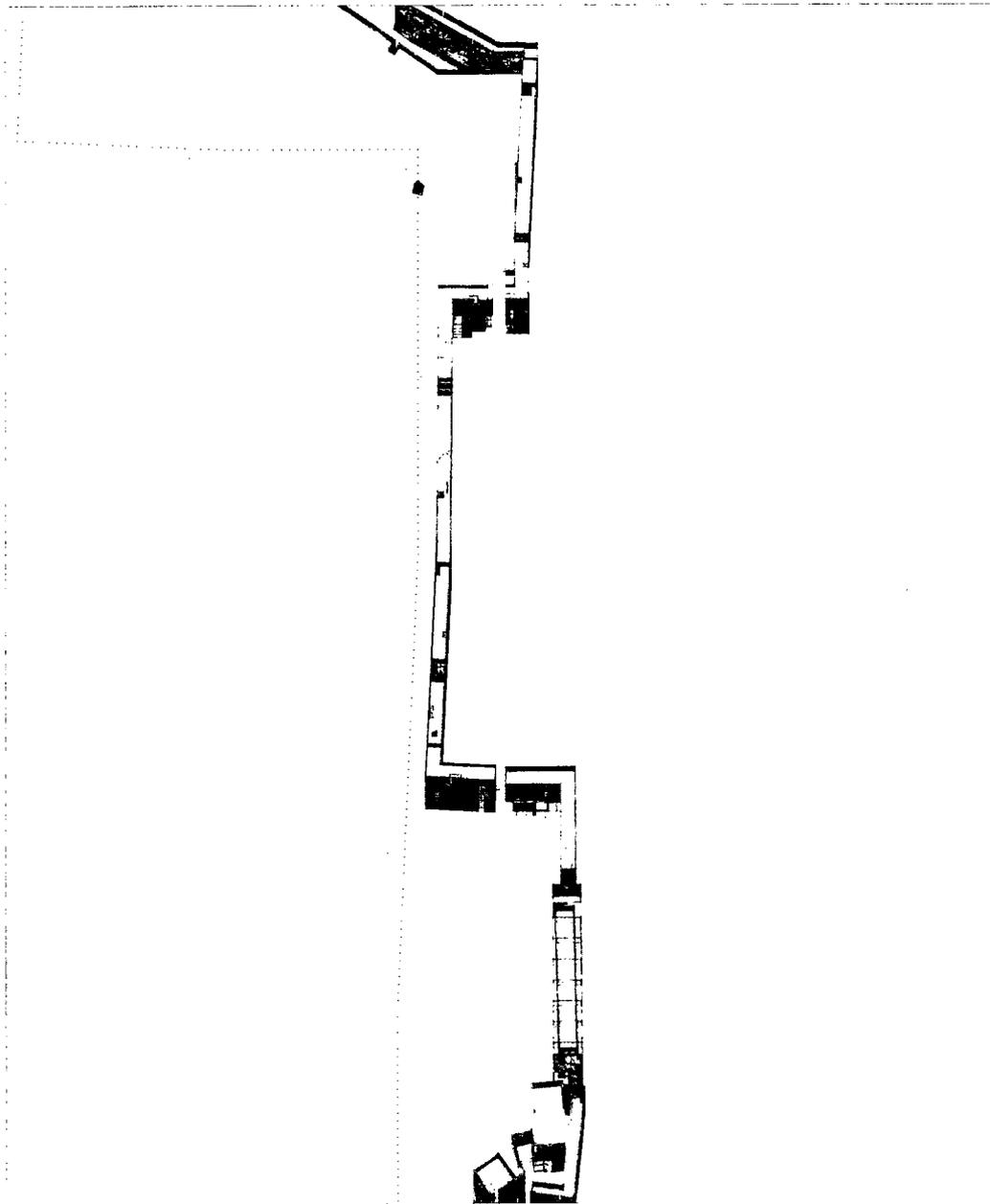


Fig 5. *The rationalists*

The completion of the first (Geometry) and second (Perspective) books of my treatise, *Il primo [secondo] libro d'architettura*, came in the third year of François' campaign against the imperial army of Charles of Luxemburg. Complicating matters were the aggressions of that arrogant Englishman Henry VIII whose forces entered the war against François one year previous, invading his lands from the north on account of some very old but nevertheless unsettled differences. And while the entirety of his domain was inundated by chaos, life about the grounds of the chateau remained blithe its usual serenity intact. In fact, so favourable were the conditions in which I found myself that of the outstanding three books of my treatise, not a single volume remained unattended.

Nearing its end was my fifth book (*Quinto libro d'architettura nel quale se tratta de diverse forme de tempii*), a work on the different forms of sacred temples according to the Christian custom and the ancient method^{lx}. And to varying degrees of completion were the concluding two books; the sixth,^{lx} on domestic architecture from the meanest hovel to the most ornate palace was about two-thirds finished while material for the seventh,^{lxi} similarly concerned with the subject of dwelling but to include a discussion on the restoration of old houses as well as the erection of buildings on irregular sites,^{lxii} was in large part already decided on.

Yet the extent of my activity was not only limited to the realization of this disquisition. For it was during this time that I advanced work on two wholly independent volumes. The first was an effort of original scholarship entitled *Extraordinario libro di architettura* and dedicated exclusively to the subject of doors whereas the second was a parchment version of a text by the Greek historian Polybius on Roman fortification, *Della castramentatione di Polibio*.

To say that my dedication to these various writings and their associated drawings was duplicitous would only serve to mislead one's opinion of my character. After all, and with particular emphasis on my treatise, they represented the culmination of many years of reflection and struggle. But it was impossible to deny the fact that, in the three years since

the start of the war, François's unusual request for a city of walls had become my devouring obsession. I found myself drawing as if possessed, the hours consumed by the task of thinking with my hands. It was a process of cause and effect whereby the realization of one thought formed the foundation of the next. And like those great Carthusian monks behind the walls of their secluded *Grande Chartreuse*, I had become a recluse within the confines of my quarters devoting myself solely to the creation of François' clandestine vision. On this day however, I would suspend that invigorating work, abandoning my seclusion for a meeting with the chateau's chief librarian who was to take my two books to Paris for printing.

For the duration of my stay, construction about the grounds of the chateau was perpetual. Its protracted accrual of segments was analogous to the growing, barnacle like accumulation of walls, small houses and fortified towers of that legendary quasi-town of Loreto^{kiii} or the *faubourgs*^{kiv} of an earlier period that would establish themselves about the gates of medieval cities everywhere. And though there were times when this activity contradicted its placid nature, it was rare that I found myself diverted by the commotion. Yet the unusual events I was to witness as I journeyed to the library to deposit my works would manage to command my attention so as to endure in my remembrance of the chateau.

The library formed the southern boundary of what was to be an immense and skilfully proportioned square courtyard adjoining the western most edge of the Galerie François. Thus two of its four sides, a wing running perpendicular to the length of the Galerie François and the Galerie d'Ulysse (which housed the library) were already completed, leaving its western and northern boundaries yet to be constructed.

Entrenched into the soil of the courtyard's centre, sat a massive, white marble plinth. Standing atop this unspectacular stone base, a dark bronze horse and rider both exceeding what would be considered normal proportions, stared straight in a westerly direction. The fine detail of the rider's curly hair and thick beard greatly contrasted the coarse grey stone of the two bounding structures.

Now, standing about a long, shallow trench forming the estimated position of the courtyard's northern most edge, an absurd assembly of men and beasts were engaged in a particularly cacophonous discussion. Congregated on either side of this furrow stood two boys whose size and beauty were more than human.^{lxv} Joining them was a she-wolf and woodpecker, and a cow (on the inside of the trench) and white ox (on the outside of the trench) yoked to which was a curved bronze plough.^{lxvi}

Observing this assembly was a small number of immaculately dressed men and women whose uncontrollable snickering and talk of scandal could be heard from my proximate position. I decided to inquire as to the nature of the gathering with which they (and much like myself) were so consumed.

"Pardon my interruption, but might I ask what those two boys are up to?"

Turning to greet my question was a man of generous build. His head was rightly proportioned for his height of about six feet, the nape of his neck unusually broad, his hair brown, smooth and neatly combed, his beard of roughly three months' growth darker in colour, his nose long, his eyes hazel and bloodshot, and his complexion the colour of watery milk.^{lxvii}

"Those two brothers are having a dispute concerning the site of the northern gallery. You see, at first they agreed to settle their quarrel by the flight of birds of omen. From that small mound just ahead they watched, sitting far enough apart so as not to interfere in each other's observations. And where that young man, the greater of the two in both stature and strength of body, is said to have seen six vultures, the other claims to have seen twelve!"^{lxviii}

"Vultures? Why not eagles, owls or hawks?"

"But how should a bird that preys on a fellow bird be clean? Vultures do not maltreat anything that has life, and as for birds, it will not touch them even when they are dead, since they are of its own species."^{lxix}

"I suppose it is also true that on account of a vultures rarity their appearance may present itself to some as a divine sending. At any rate, if it is true that one saw six and the other twelve should not the matter be settled? Why do they continue their debate?"

“Well, as the victor began digging the trench where the gallery’s foundations were to run, the vanquished, believing the vision of twelve vultures was a fabrication, ridiculed some parts of the work and obstructed others. At last, when he leaped across it,^{lxx} a grievous crime in the eyes of his brother, he received the bitterest rebuke. And now the two stand at an impasse, on the verge of fisticuffs.”

“Surely this is no crime, bad behaviour perhaps but a crime? Does it not all seem a bit outlandish?”

“Perhaps, but these are not men of a usual pedigree. It is senseless to think of their actions in rational terms. Only after having translated things into mythical terms^{lxxi} do they consider the rational side of things. While you and I may understand that certain numerical relationships relate to greater truths, their truths are revealed through the will of the gods, in the flight of birds for example. To them, this line is sacred; it is a union between heaven and earth. They see the earth as mother and heaven as father.^{lxxii} To plough the land is an act synonymous with fertility where earth is opened and impregnated with seed, heaven pouring sperm like water into her and producing.^{lxxiii} In a sense, every time the ground is tilled, a hierogamy takes place; the earth is the great mother whose fertility is increased by tilling and ploughing.^{lxxiv} Therefore, this ritual is a holy marriage by which earth and sky are united making this line sanctimonious in nature. To cross it is to perpetrate an act of blasphemy.”

As he concluded his explanation, the two boys wrestled each other to the dirt, their tempers having finally boiled over. And while the she-wolf sobbed at the dismal scene, the woodpecker with its hardened beak laboured in vain to separate the tangle of angered limbs.

The turmoil facing François at the beginning of that year (the sixth since I first arrived) brought me to the realization that my time at the chateau was in all likelihood nearing its end. Two circumstances reinforced my belief in this idea.

On 28 January, just over two weeks previous, word reached the chateau of Henry VIII's death. And while the news was met with considerable jubilation amongst those members of François's court that had long seen Henry as a cruel antagonist, its effects on the psychology of my great benefactor were rumoured to have been rather disquieting. There were accounts that the contents of a melancholic letter supplementing the announcement and written by Henry on his deathbed afflicted François with a kind of incurable depression from which he fell into a lasting fever. This was the popular hypothesis of a fanatical group of French patriots who believed that Henry's sadistic nature was boundless, even in the face of death. Yet amidst all the hearsay surrounding this unforeseen fatality and its adverse effects on François' wellbeing, it was clear that at the beginning of that year, he had become a desperately sick man.^{lxv}

Sadly, the perilous state of my noble patrons health had some opportunistic men salivating over the prospect of ill-gotten gains. They were the suitors about the halls of Odysseus. But for me, a man having already witnessed seventy-two long and difficult years, the notion of losing the stability of François' benefaction only served to cause me great distress. And if the failing health of a man twenty years younger than I would provide me with any benefit, it was a reminder that I too was mortal. *Sic transit Gloria mundi*. Any disruption in my work now would only serve to set me back at an age when any such delay could be ill afforded.

There was also the matter of his finances. Though a relative peace had now been established between all warring factions, four years of conflict proved to have devastated François' monetary reserves. It was believed that the campaign cost him in excess of twenty million *livres*, an alarming number by any measure. In an effort to regain some fiscal stability he pursued every known expedient from selling offices to borrowing from the merchants of

Lyons.^{lxxvi} But the interest that came with these loans would only prove to complicate matters in the months ahead.

Now, with the first five books of my treatise complete and the remaining two somewhere in the vicinity of completion, it was conceivable, however unenthusiastically I regarded the possibility, that another patron could be found were I forced to leave the chateau. It was true after all that there were a number of noble men and women with whom I had become well acquainted since first arriving. Yet what I feared would die with us both and for whose conception I had assembled a collection of drawings I considered to be the culmination of my ability, was François's fantastic vision for a walled city at Romorantin. Even if his evaporating wealth only worked to confirm its theoretical nature, the opportunity to break the silence of these drawings, to discuss the ideas that had invigorated my thinking for so many years seemed to me a meaningful conclusion to this peculiar venture. However for now there was little I could do but carry on with my work and hope that my stay here might persist, without interruption, a little longer.

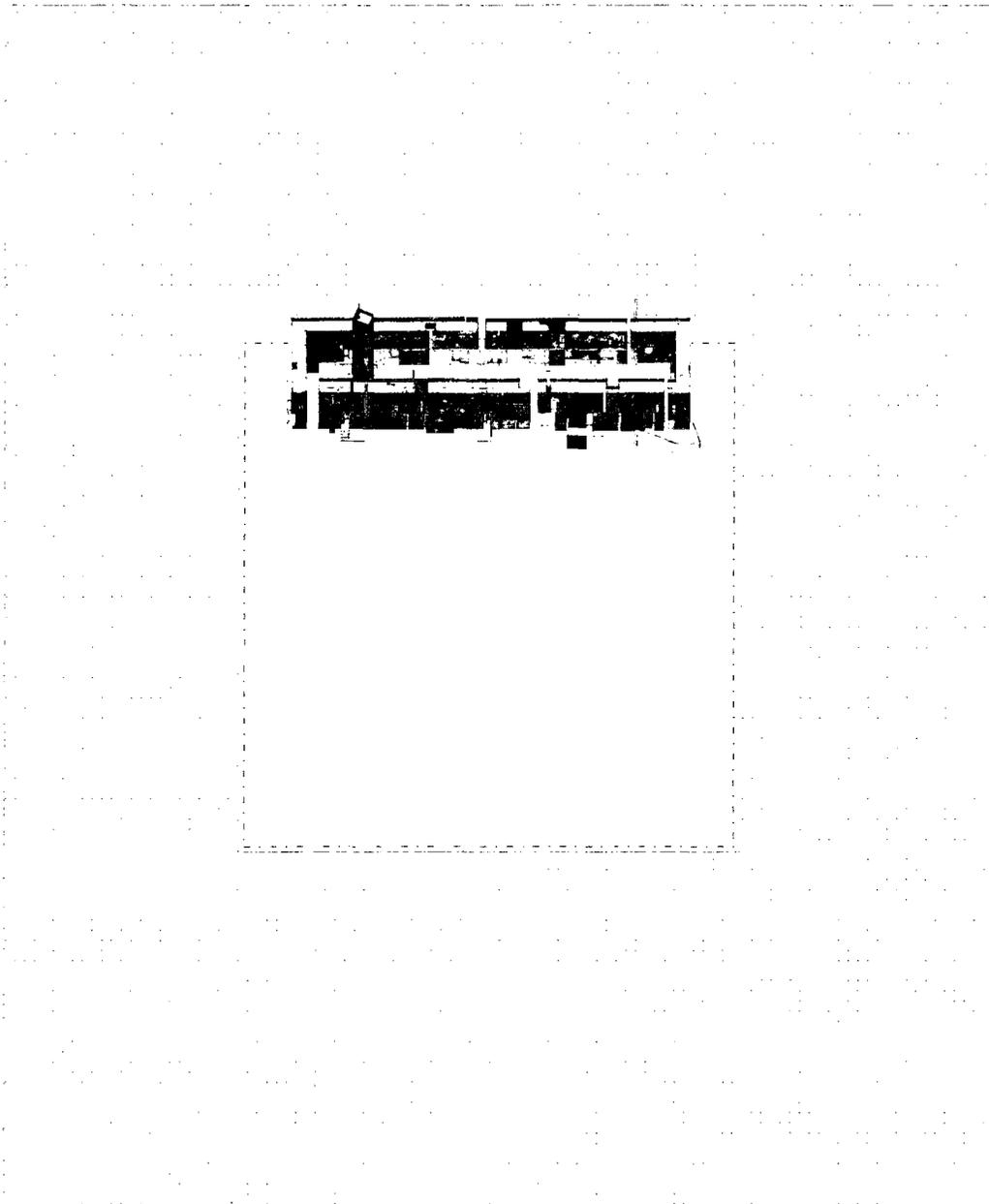


Fig 6. Tyrant prince

Death, XX March 1547

In the hours preceding the pronouncement of his death, it was reported that François was disturbed by visions. Clutching a crucifix, his speech virtually indistinct,^{lxxvii} he was said to have muttered the following words,

“Et finxit Deus hominem pulverem de terra et insufflavit in faciem eius flatum vitae. Et factus est homo in animam viventem. Et plantavit Deus paradisum in Eden ad orientem et posuit ibi hominem quem finxerat.”^{lxxviii}

Finally, having gone blind from the sickness and without speech, he made the sign of the cross over his bed several times and took his last breath. This account reached my ears less than two months after first receiving word that he had become ill; at the age of fifty-two, François was dead. Yet for me, there was no immediate change. While I regretted the fact that I had been unable to thank the man personally for his many years of loyal patronage, my experience of him had always been that of a ghost. For several months, it was difficult, even for someone as intimately familiar with the grounds of the chateau as I, to perceive a difference in its usual activity. In fact, for one full year following François’ passing, I remained on the grounds of the chateau, carrying forward with my work (though admittedly to varying degrees) under the guardianship of Marguerite; a gesture so kind that I dedicated the publication of the fifth book of my treatise to her and the great majesty she possessed.^{lxxix}

It was not until the late stages of that summer that signs of change began to appear. François’s fourth child and second son, Haganrih,^{lxxx} assumed control of his numerous assets and this included the chateau. The noticeable difference in his character from that of his father’s was marked by his desire to purge the court, curbing its entertainments so as to devote more of his time to grave and virtuous thoughts.^{lxxxi} Furthermore, a rise in nationalistic sentiment following François’s tragic death brought about a kind of virulent hostility toward Italian artists^{lxxxii} leading to an influx of French painters and architects on the grounds.

When the official announcement came that I was to leave the estate in April of the subsequent year, my disappointment was deferred if only by my frantic efforts to assemble a suitable course of action. With two books of my treatise remaining to be published, it seemed that the obvious choice was to head south to Lyons, a city recognized as a centre for printing. Of course, the drawings I had assembled for a walled city on the river Soudre, a project that continued to stalk the peripheries of my mind, were to accompany me wherever I decided to settle. Yet what was to become of these sheets when I arrived at my next destination; I did not know.

*Departure, 3 April 1548**

Against the extensive wood, sitting as it did at the heart of that chaotic and unknown wilderness, stood the chateau, a tranquil and ordered universe. Emerging from the vaulted opening of the main gatehouse only to disappear promptly upon reaching the thickness of the forest was a broad road lined on either side with a perfectly planted row of cedar hedges. Early signs of foliage appeared from its snarl of brown limbs. To the right of this delineation, a small lake fed the modest length of a protective moat while to the left, sat the chateau's great garden filled with a countless variety of trees both pleasant to the sight and good for food.^{lxxxiii} At some distance I could see the lone gardener moving busily about the waking flora, stripping the shrubs of their humourless burlap veils. And following what only seemed like a brief collection of seconds, I arrived at the high barricade of trees marking the beginning of the forest (or the end of the chateau).

Plates

- Fig. 7 -

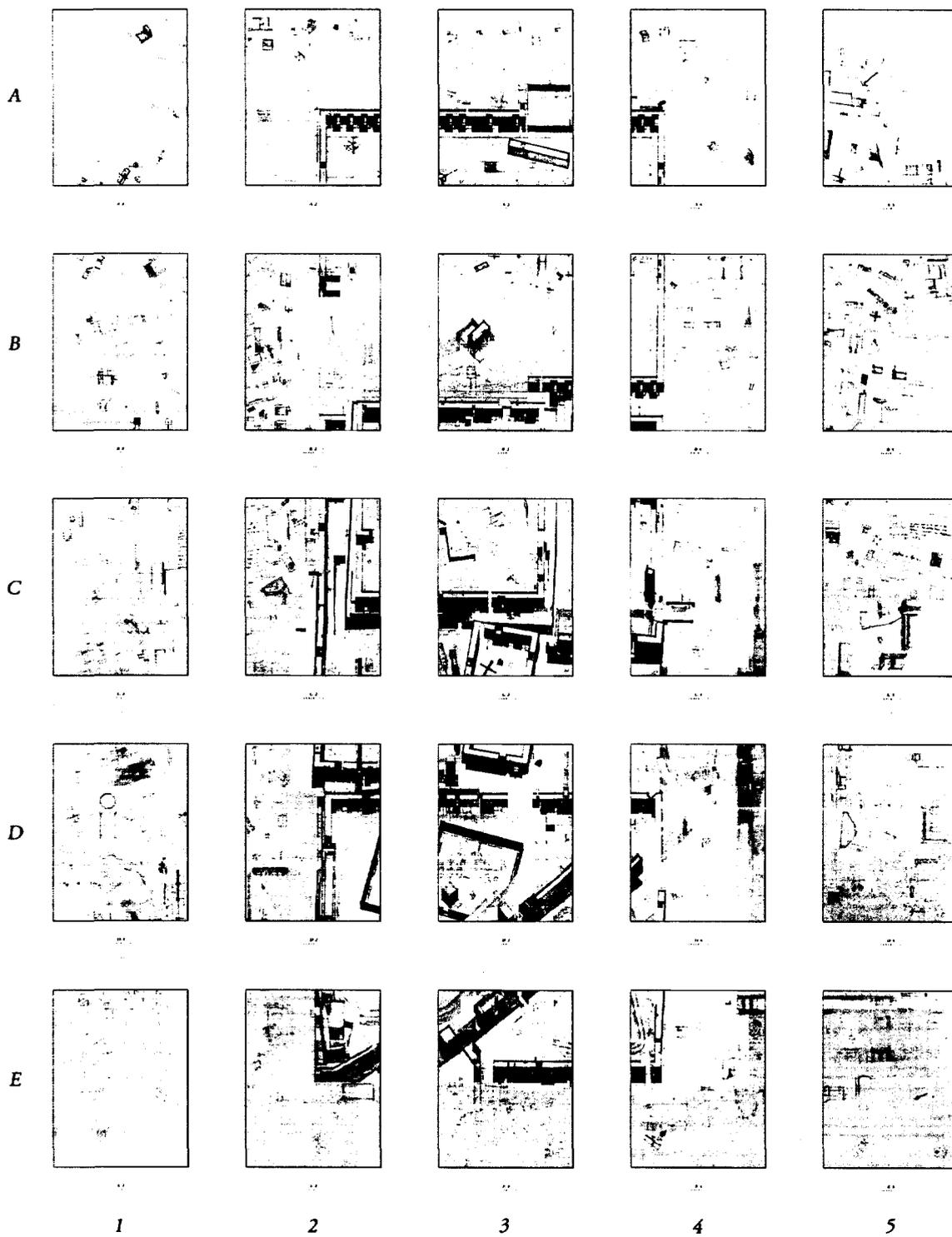


NEW TOWN OF ROMORONTIN

SCALE: 1:5

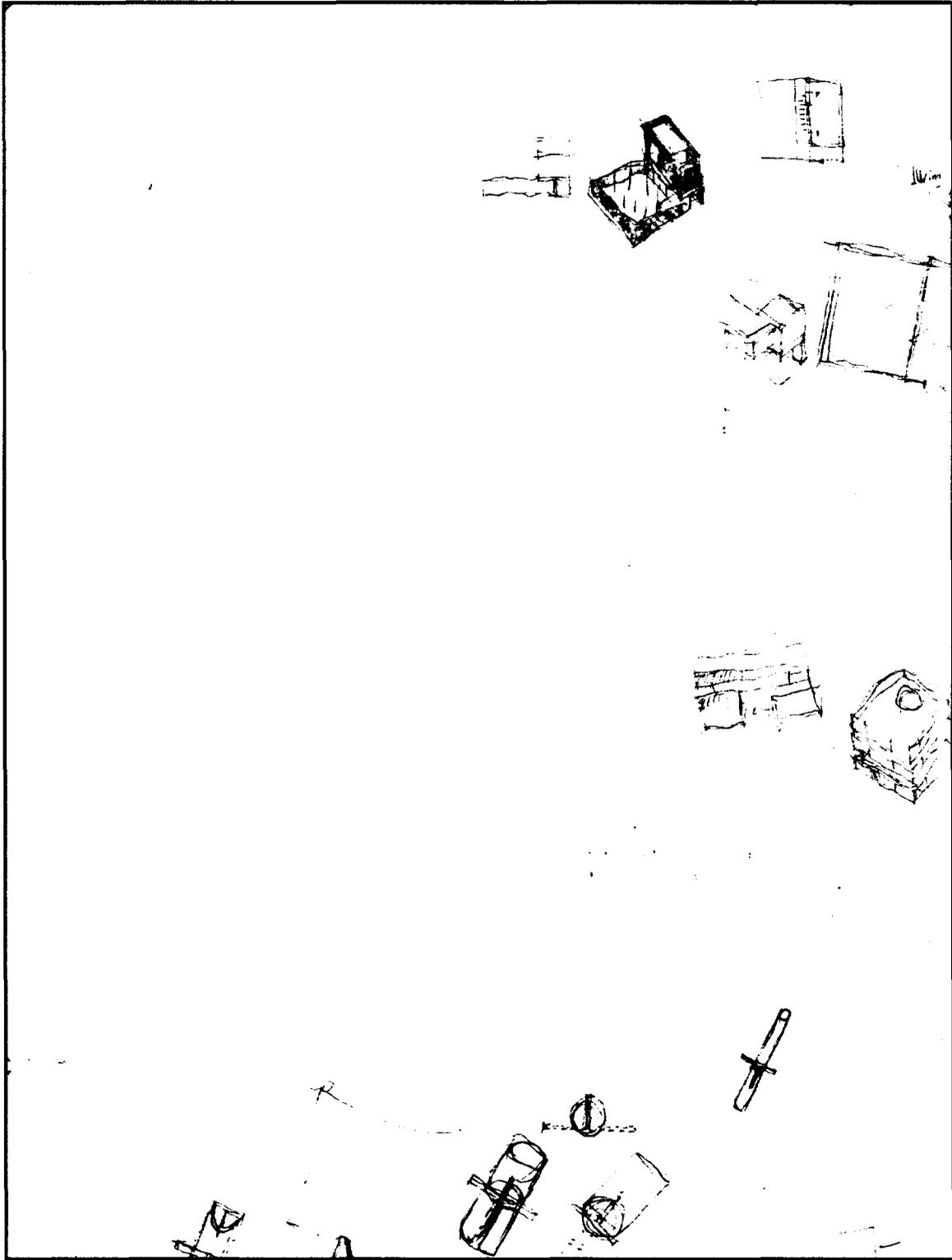


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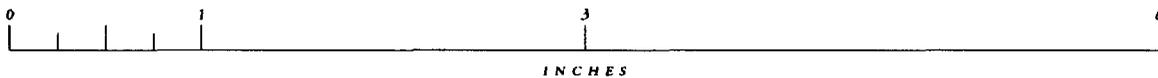


KEY MAP

- Fig. 9 -

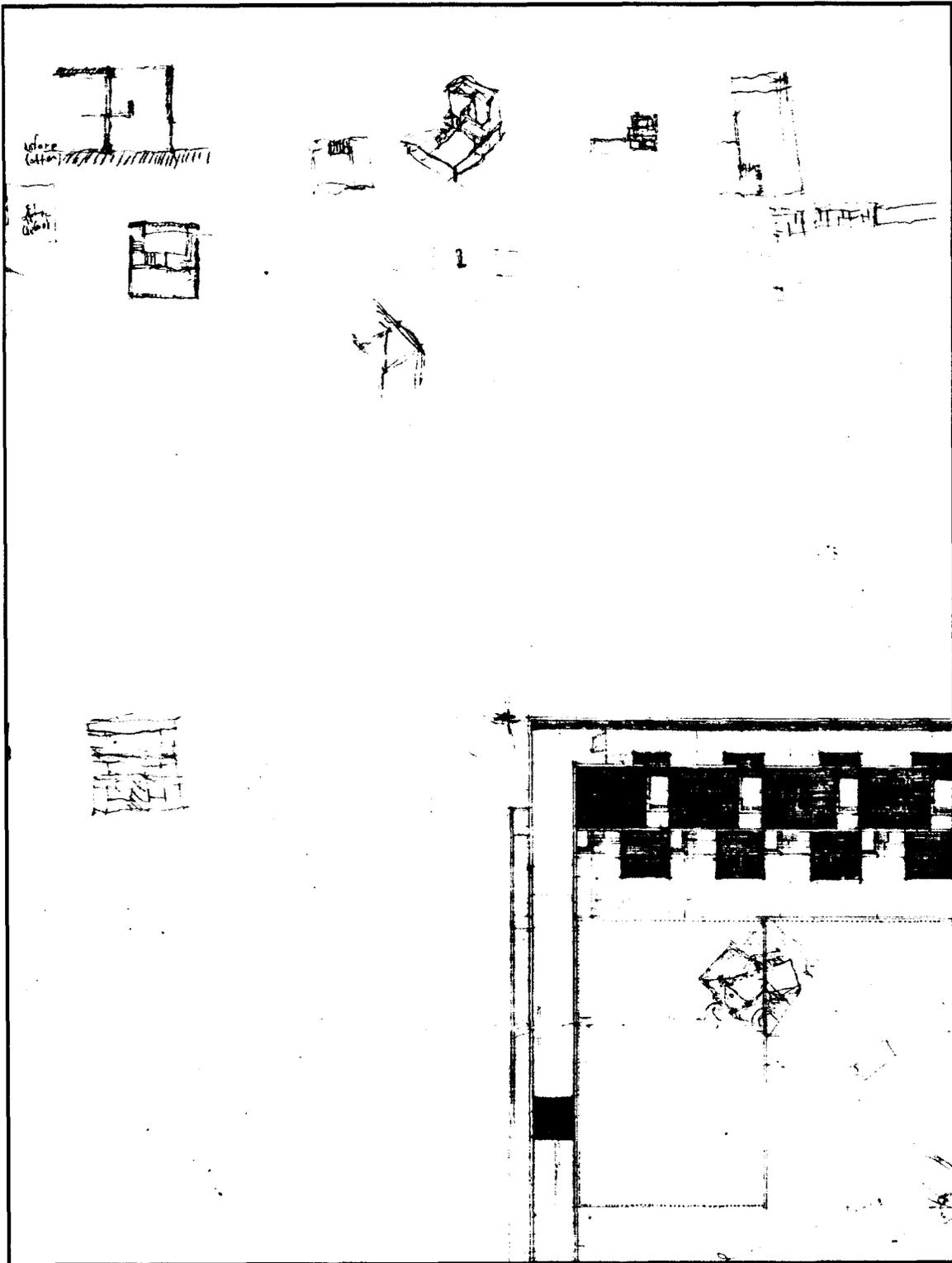


A 1
SCALE: 1:1



INCHES

- Fig. 10 -

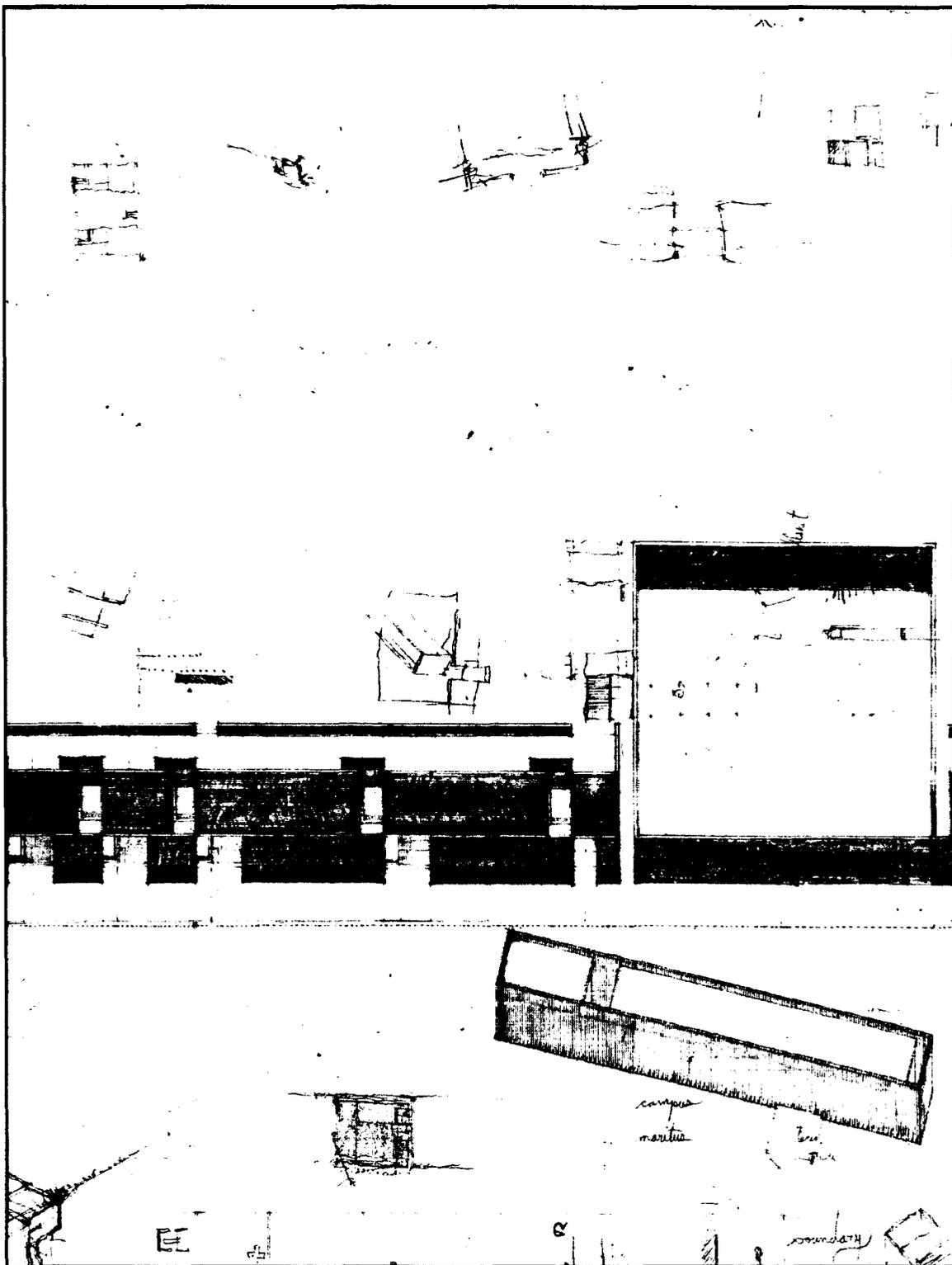


A 2
SCALE: 1:1



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- Fig. 11 -



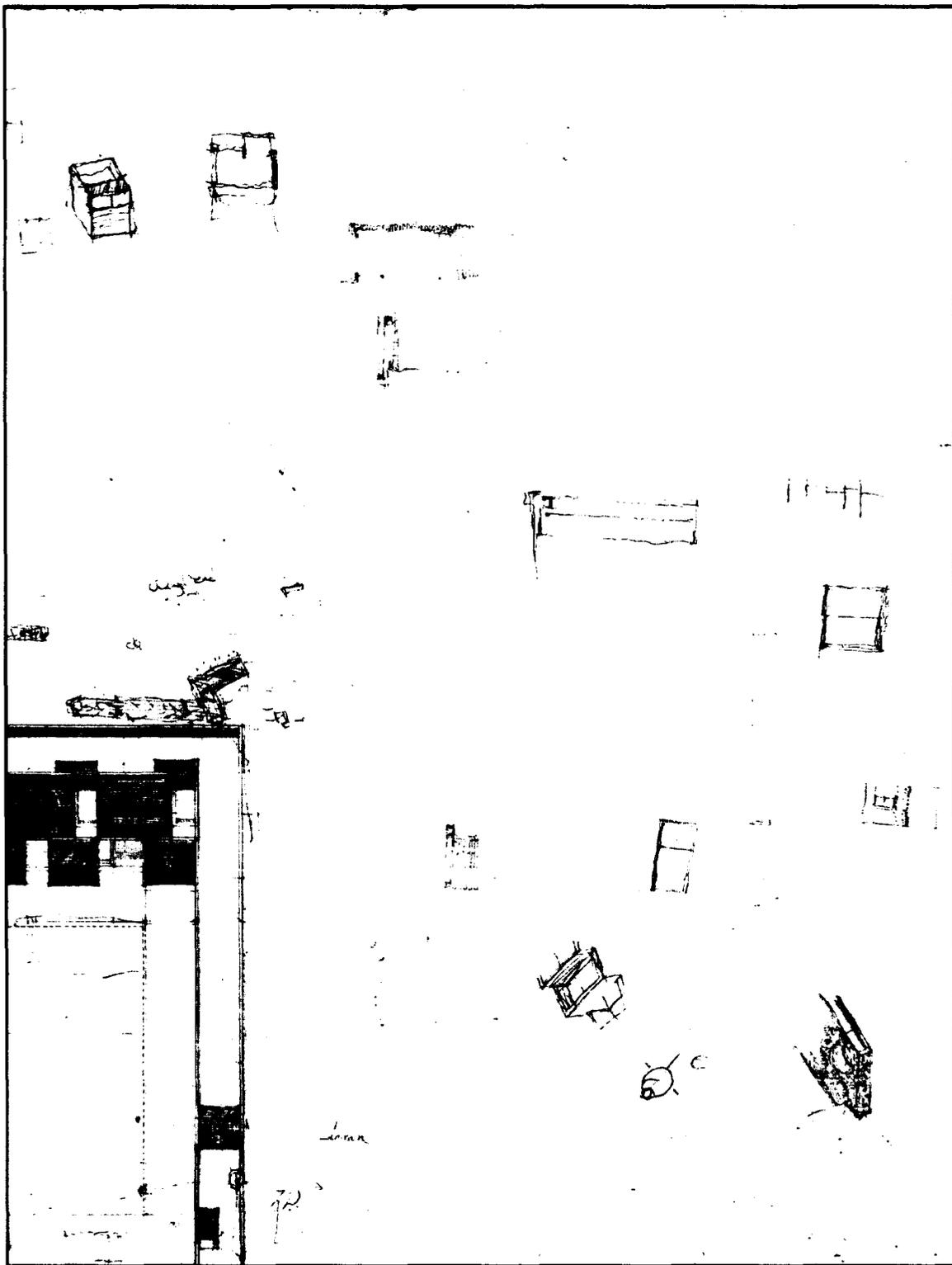
A 3

SCALE: 1:1

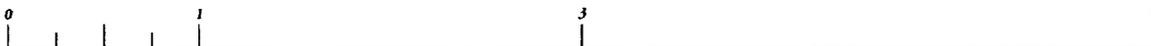


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- Fig. 12 -

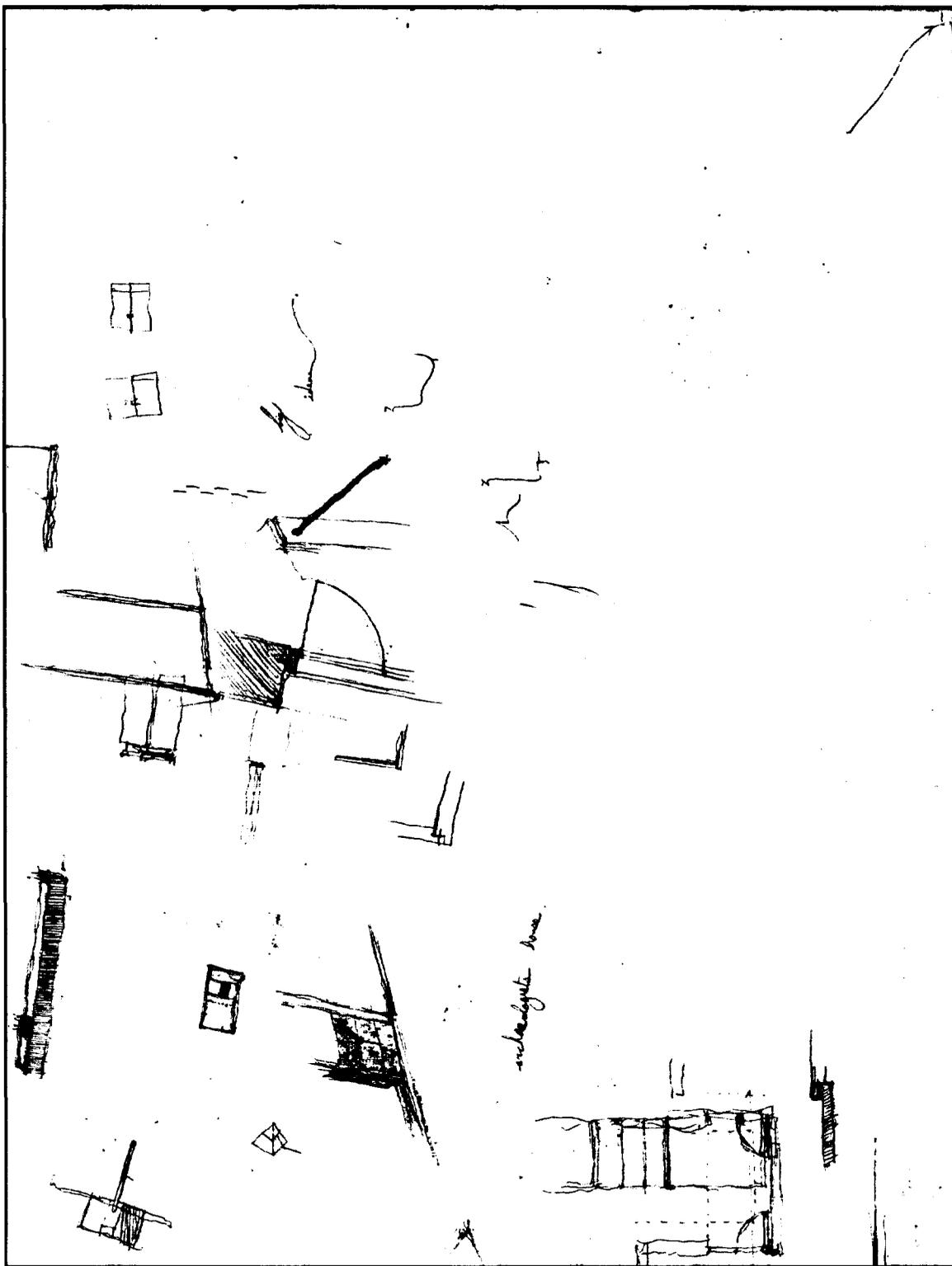


A 4
SCALE: 1:1



INCHES

- Fig. 13 -



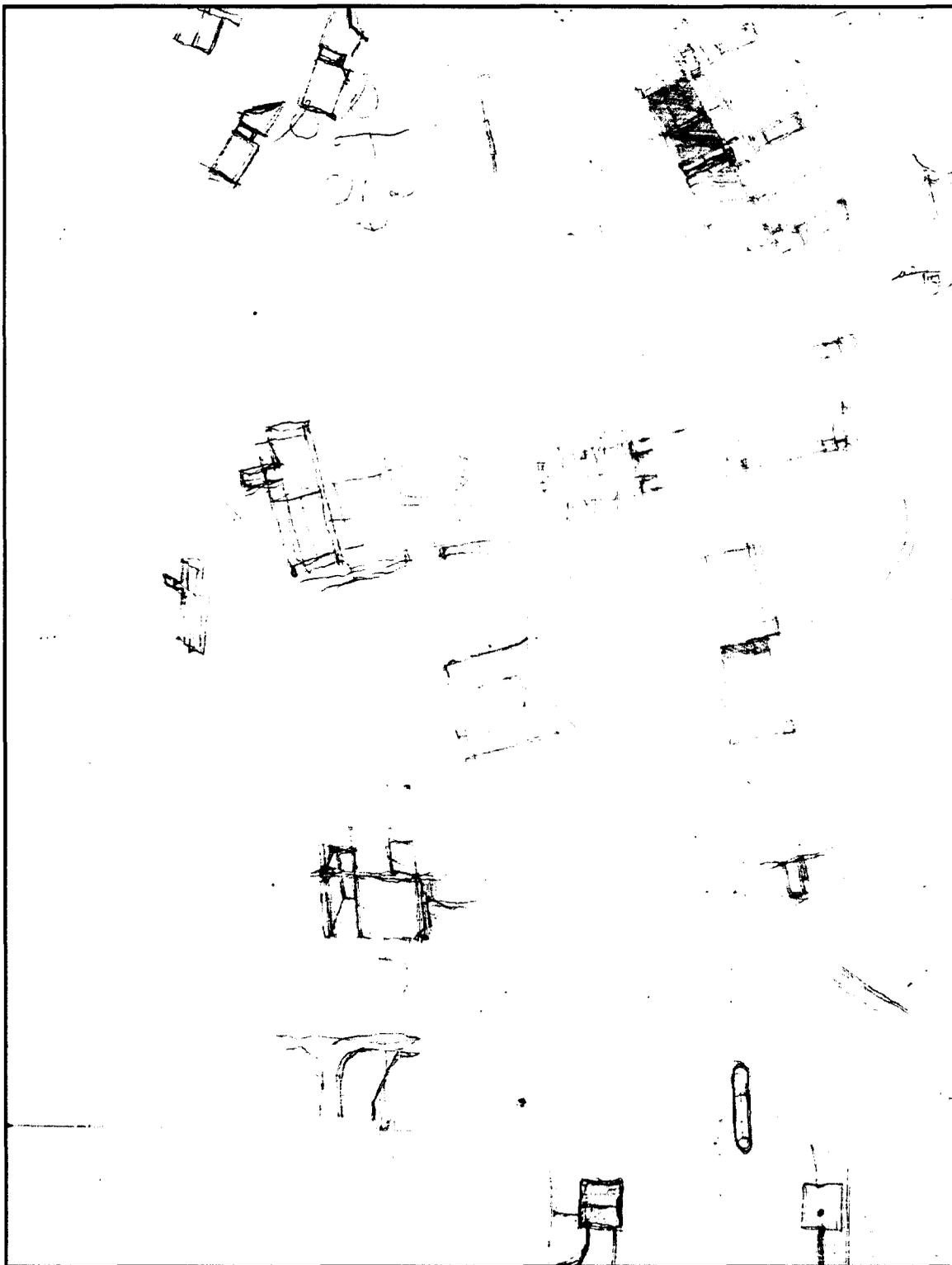
A 5

SCALE: 1:1

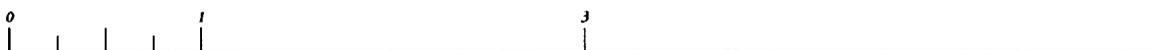


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- Fig. 14 -

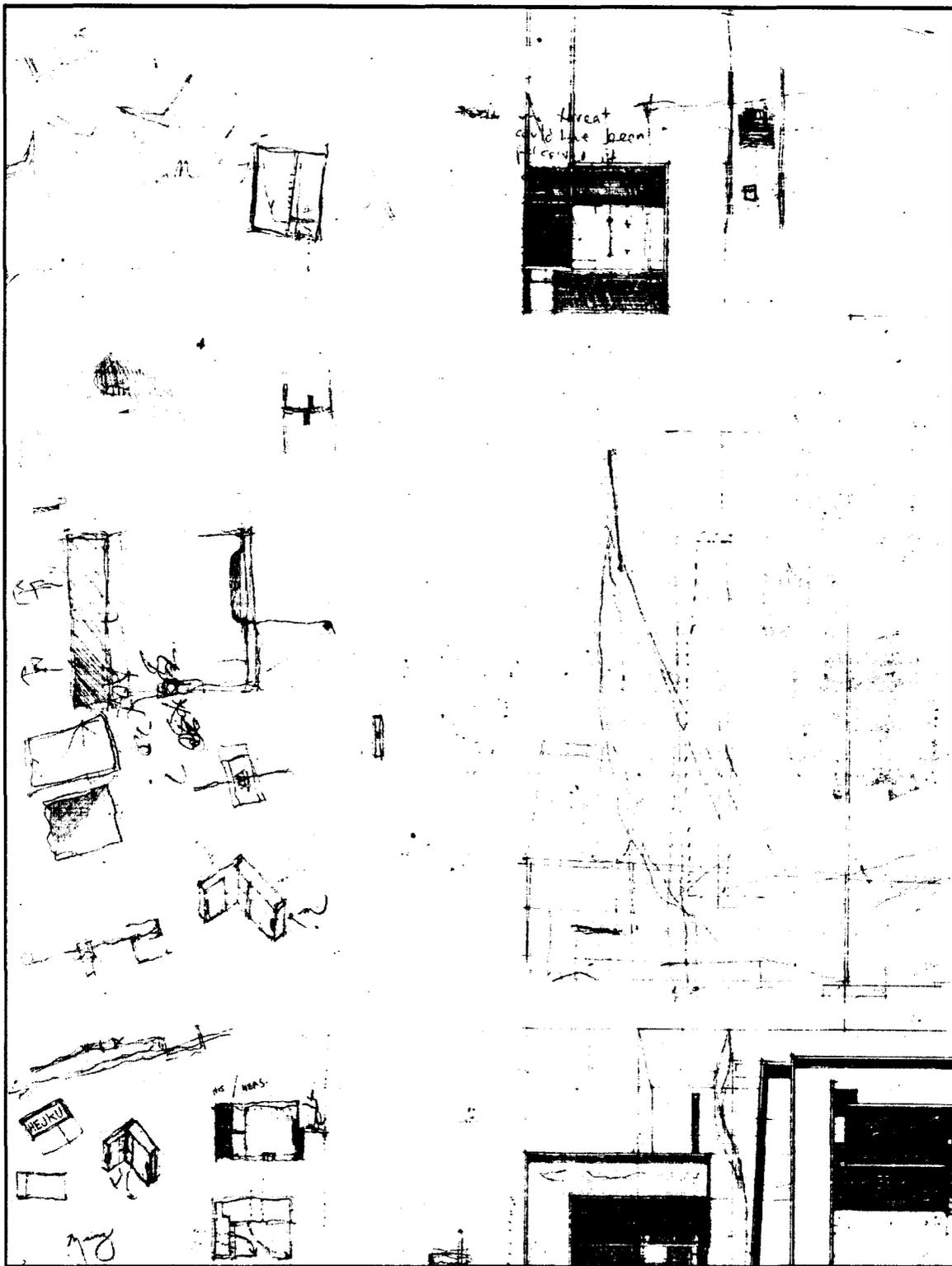


B 1
SCALE: 1:1



INCHES

- Fig. 15 -



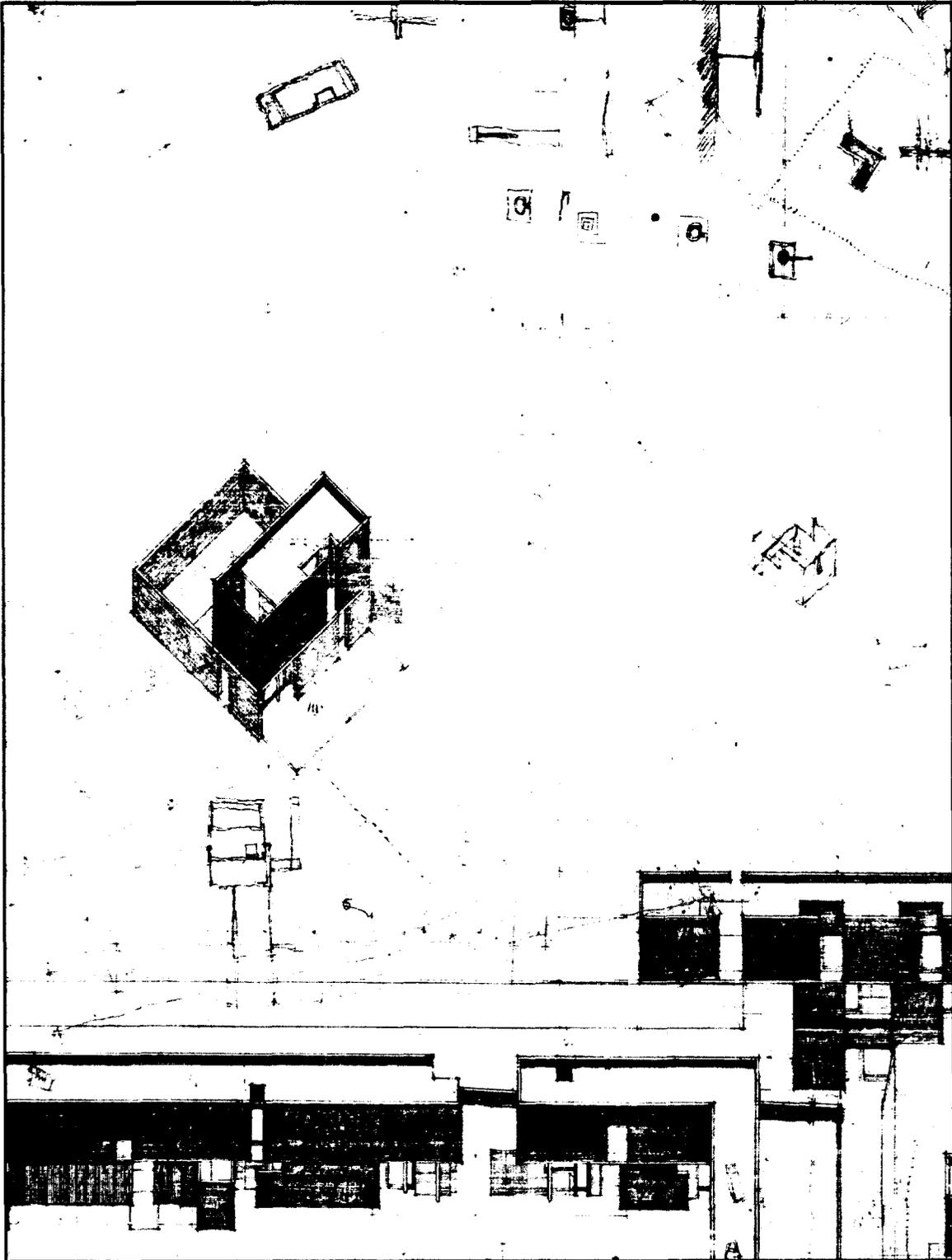
B 2

SCALE: 1:1



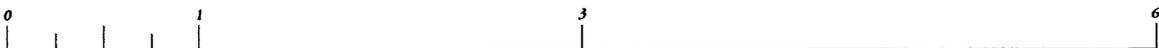
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- Fig. 16 -



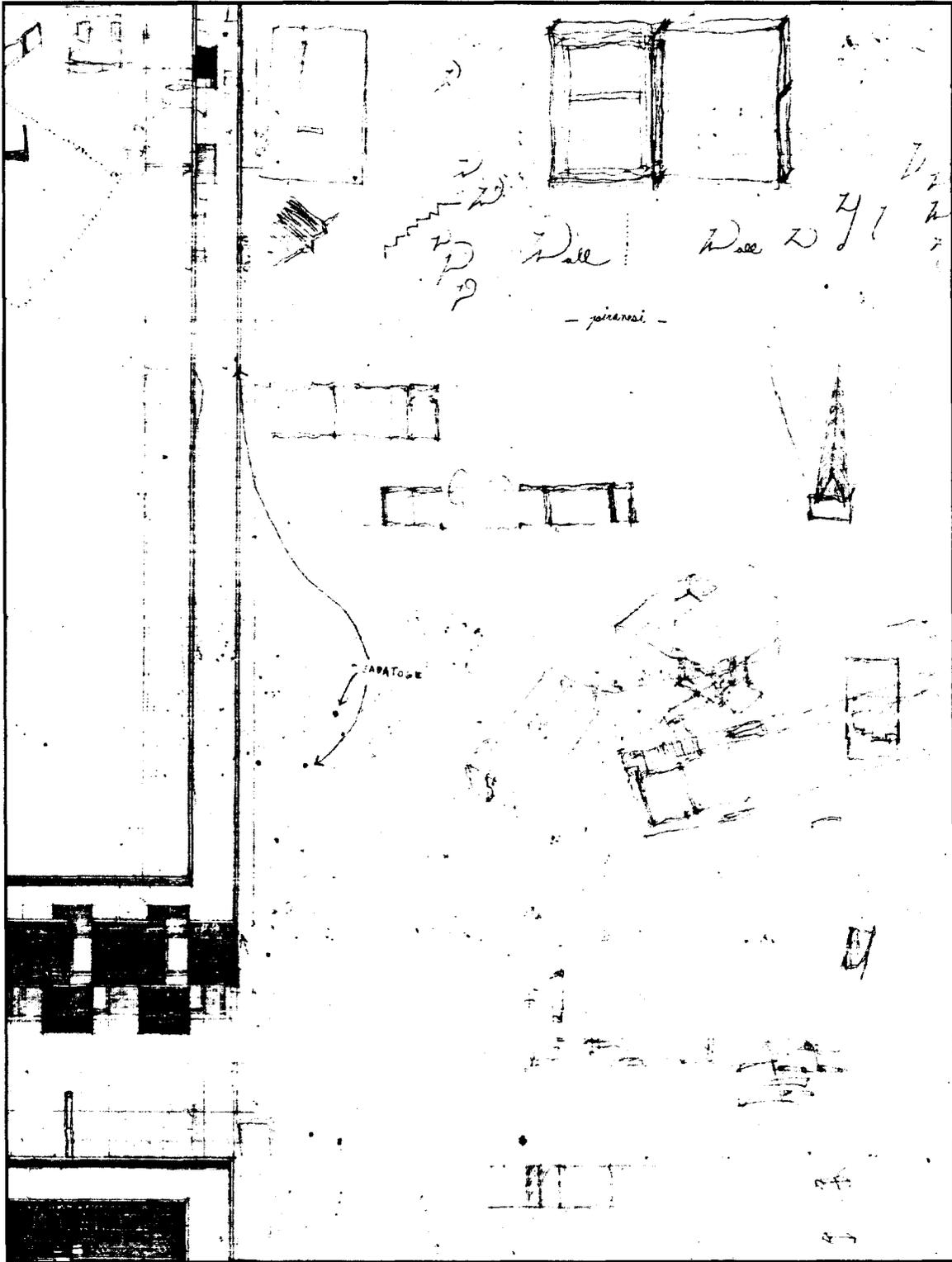
B 3

SCALE: 1:1



INCHES

- Fig. 17 -



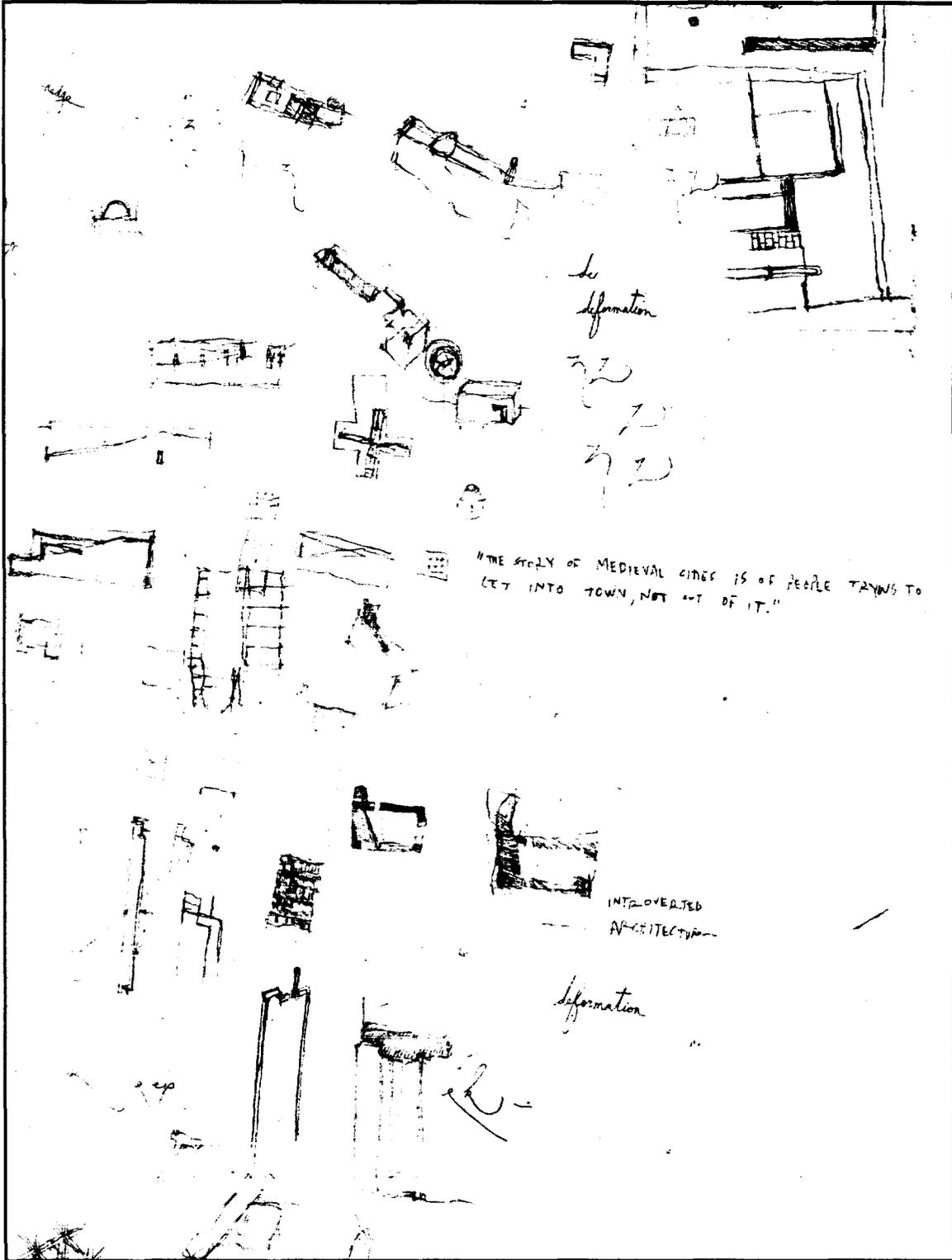
B 4

SCALE: 1:1



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- Fig. 18 -



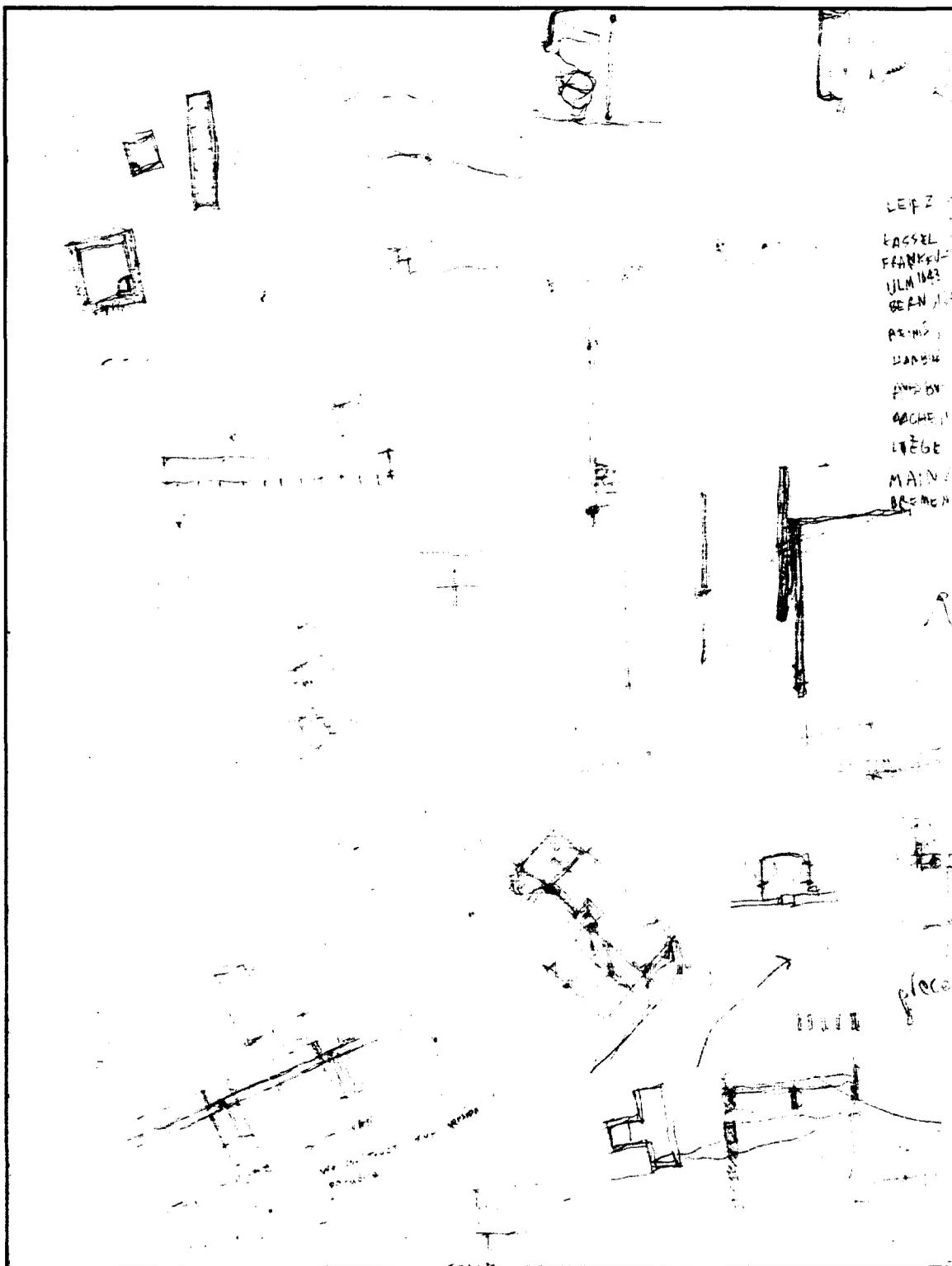
B 5

SCALE: 1:1

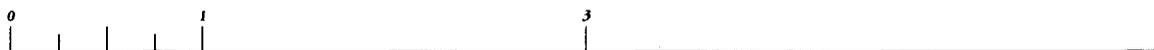


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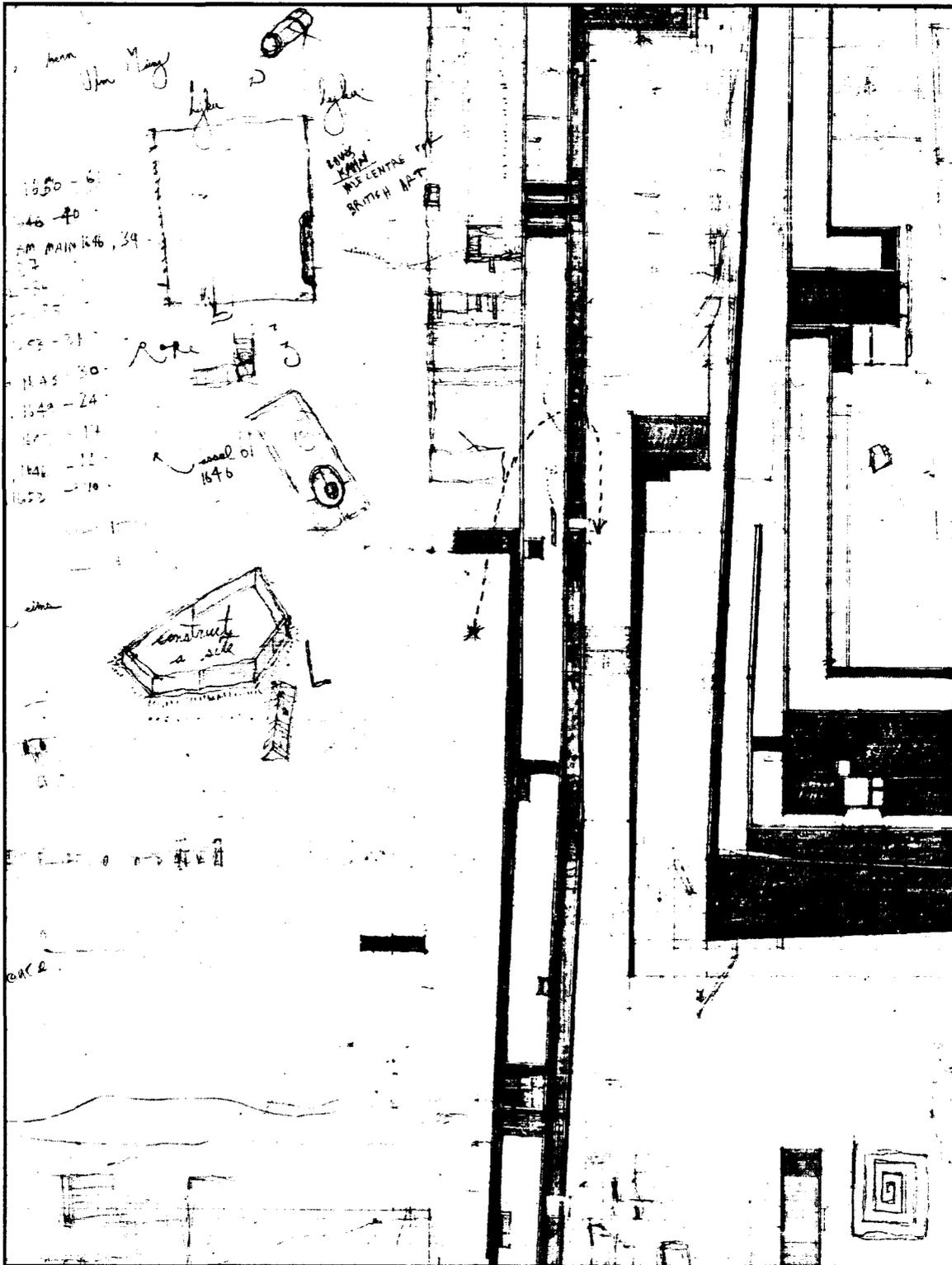
- Fig. 19 -



C I
SCALE: 1:1



INCHES



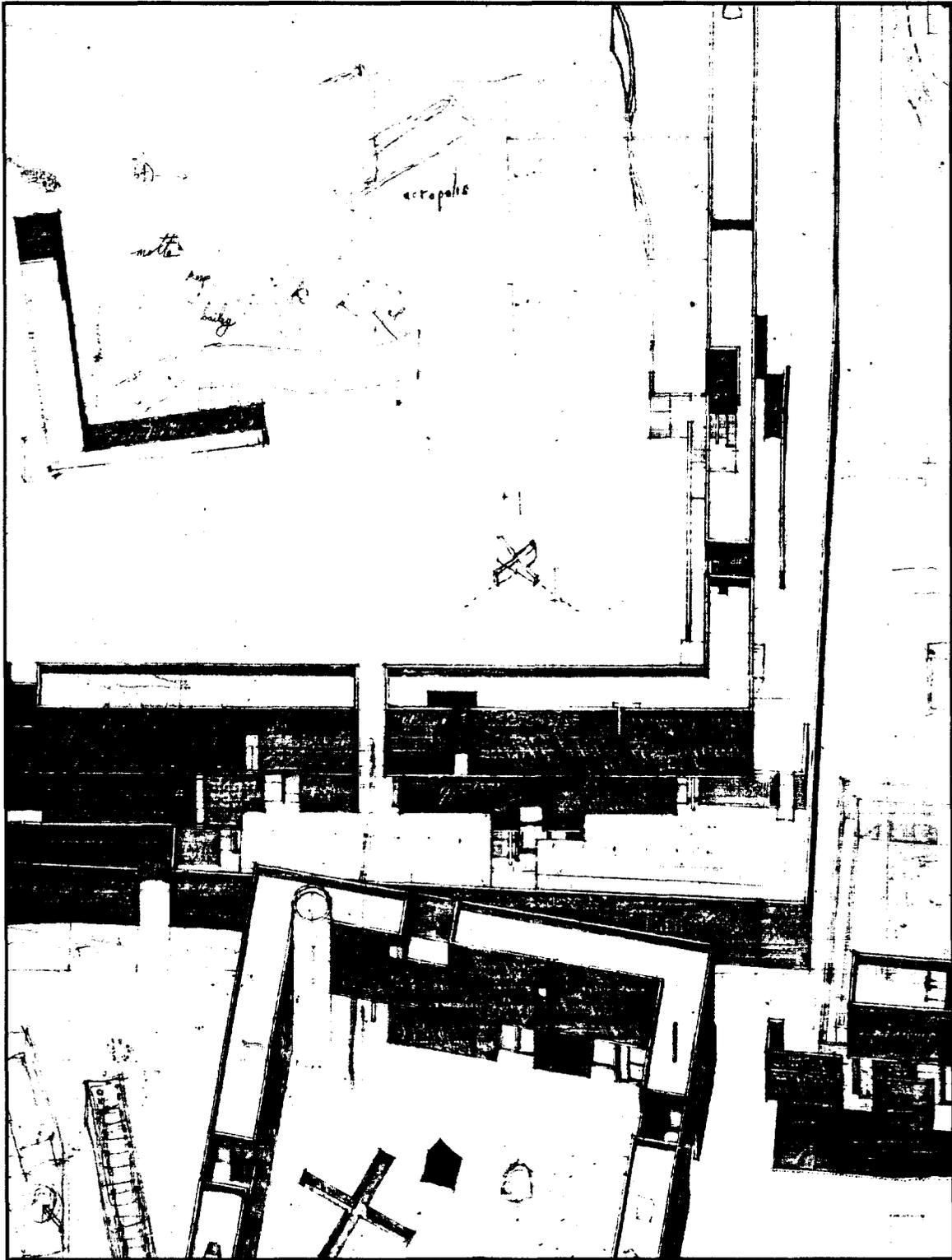
C 2

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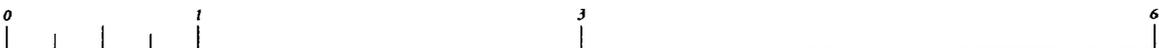
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- Fig. 21 -



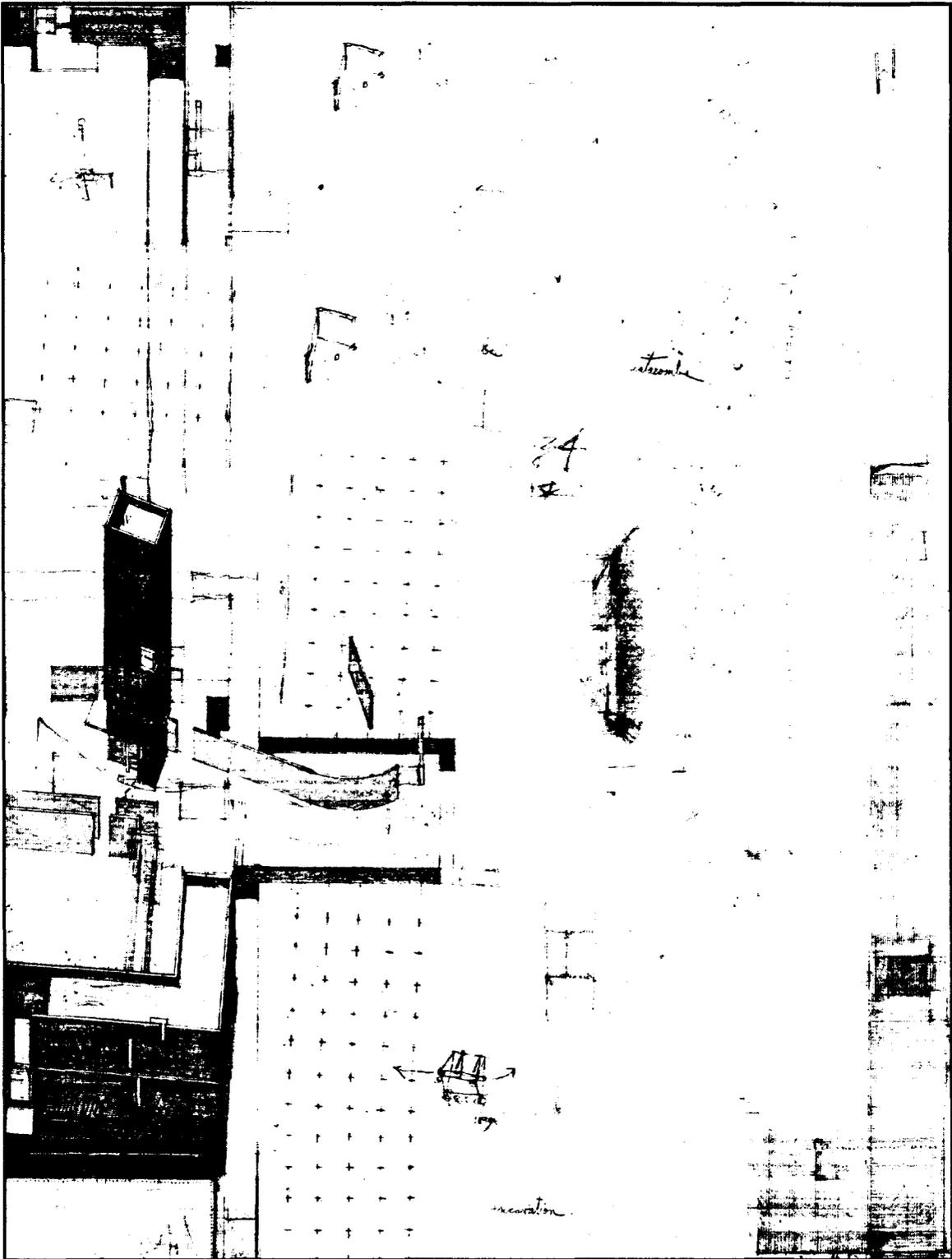
C 3

SCALE: 1:1



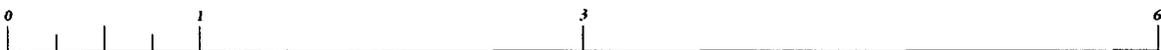
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- Fig. 22 -



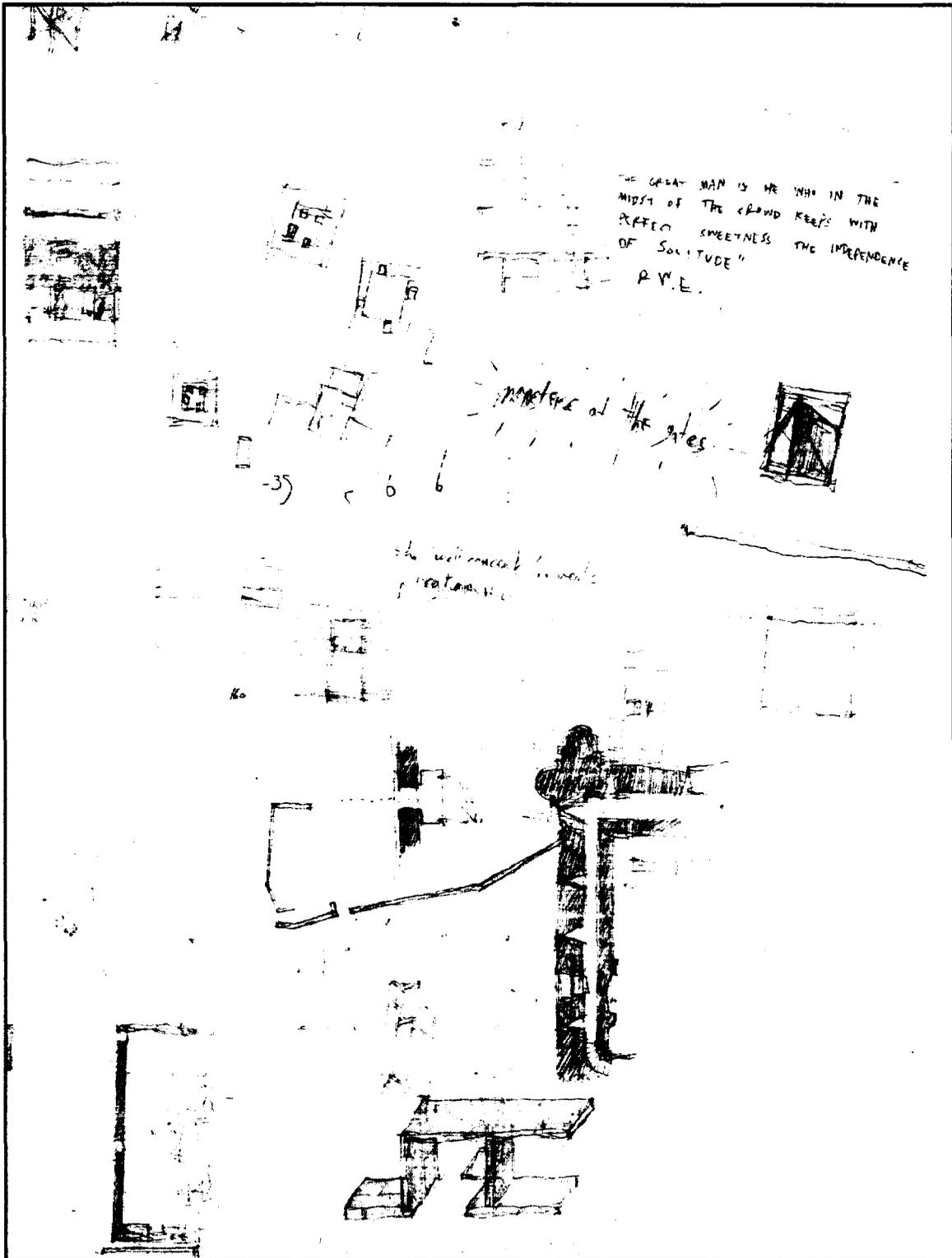
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- Fig. 23 -

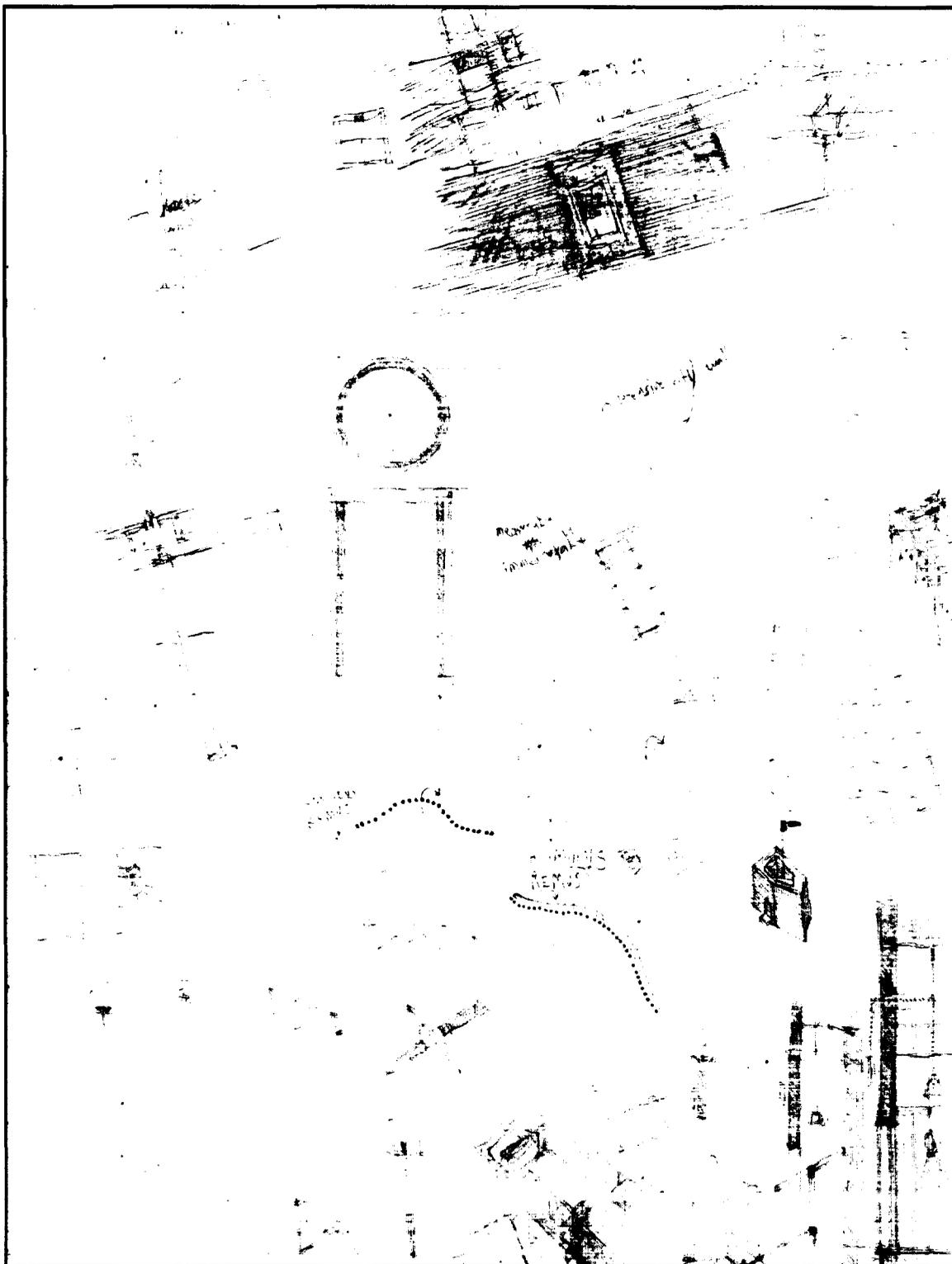


C 5
SCALE: 1:1

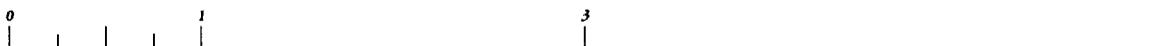


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- Fig. 24 -

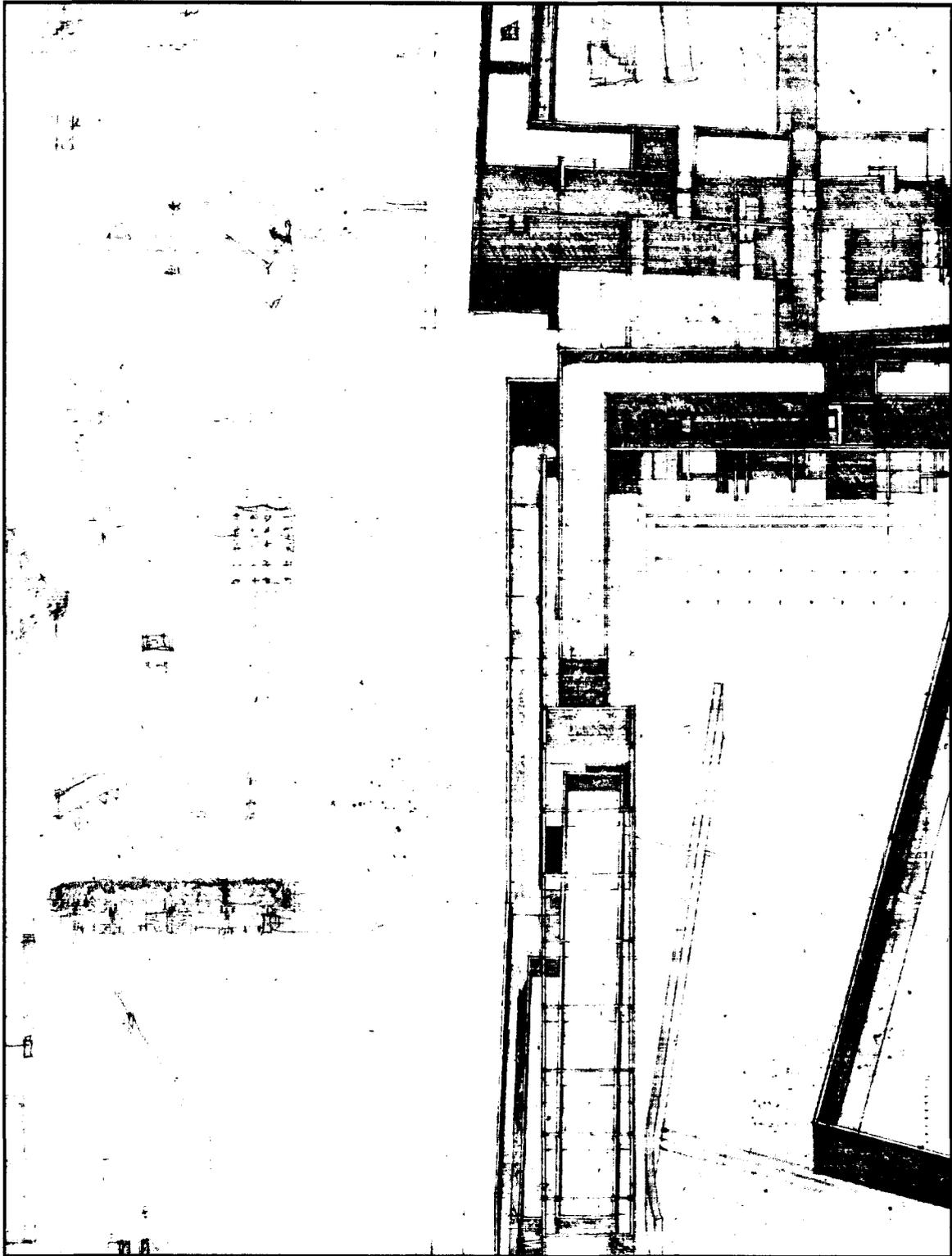


D 1
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INCHES

- Fig. 25 -



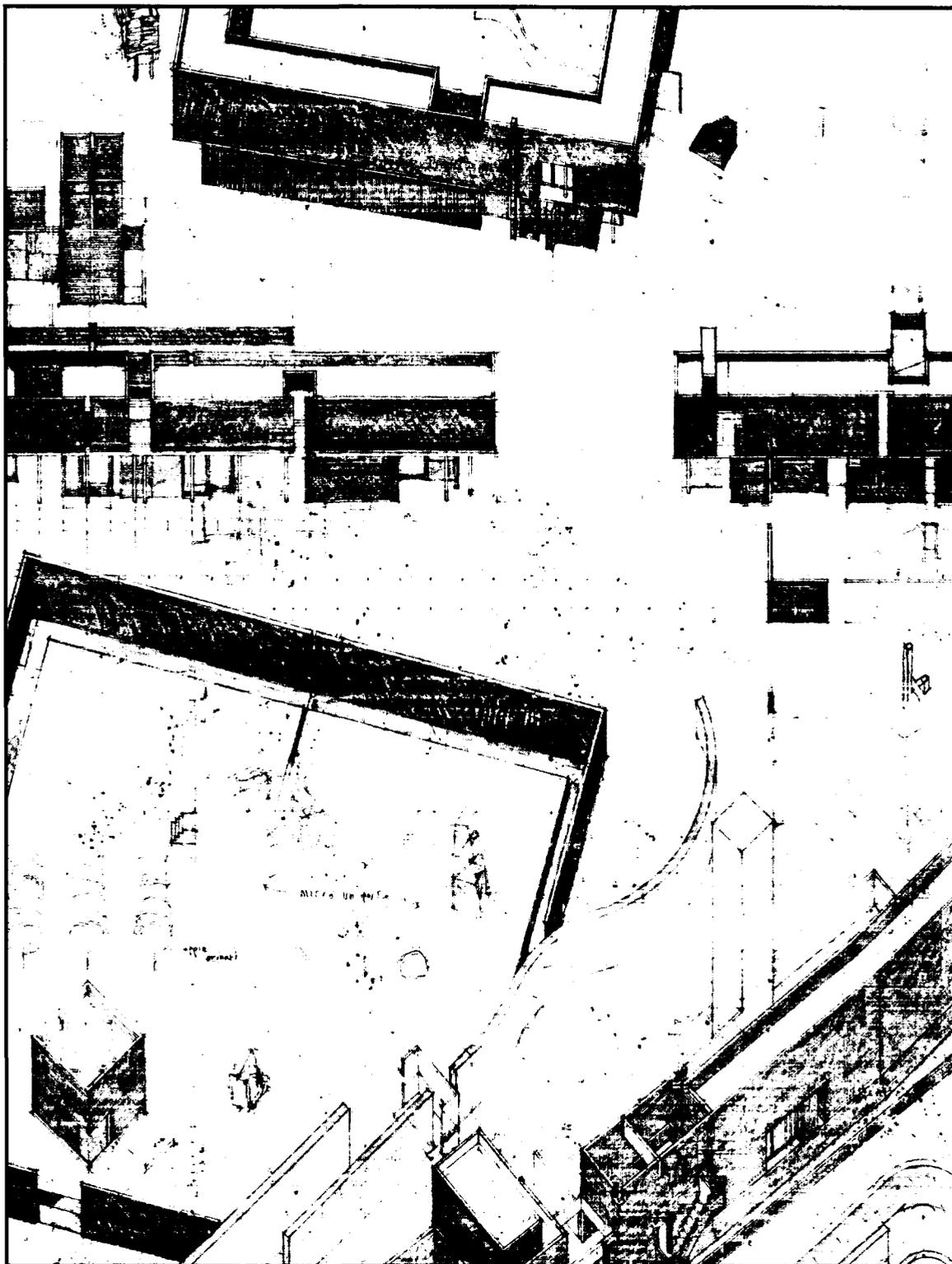
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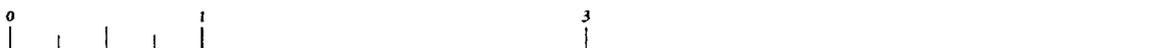
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- Fig. 26 -



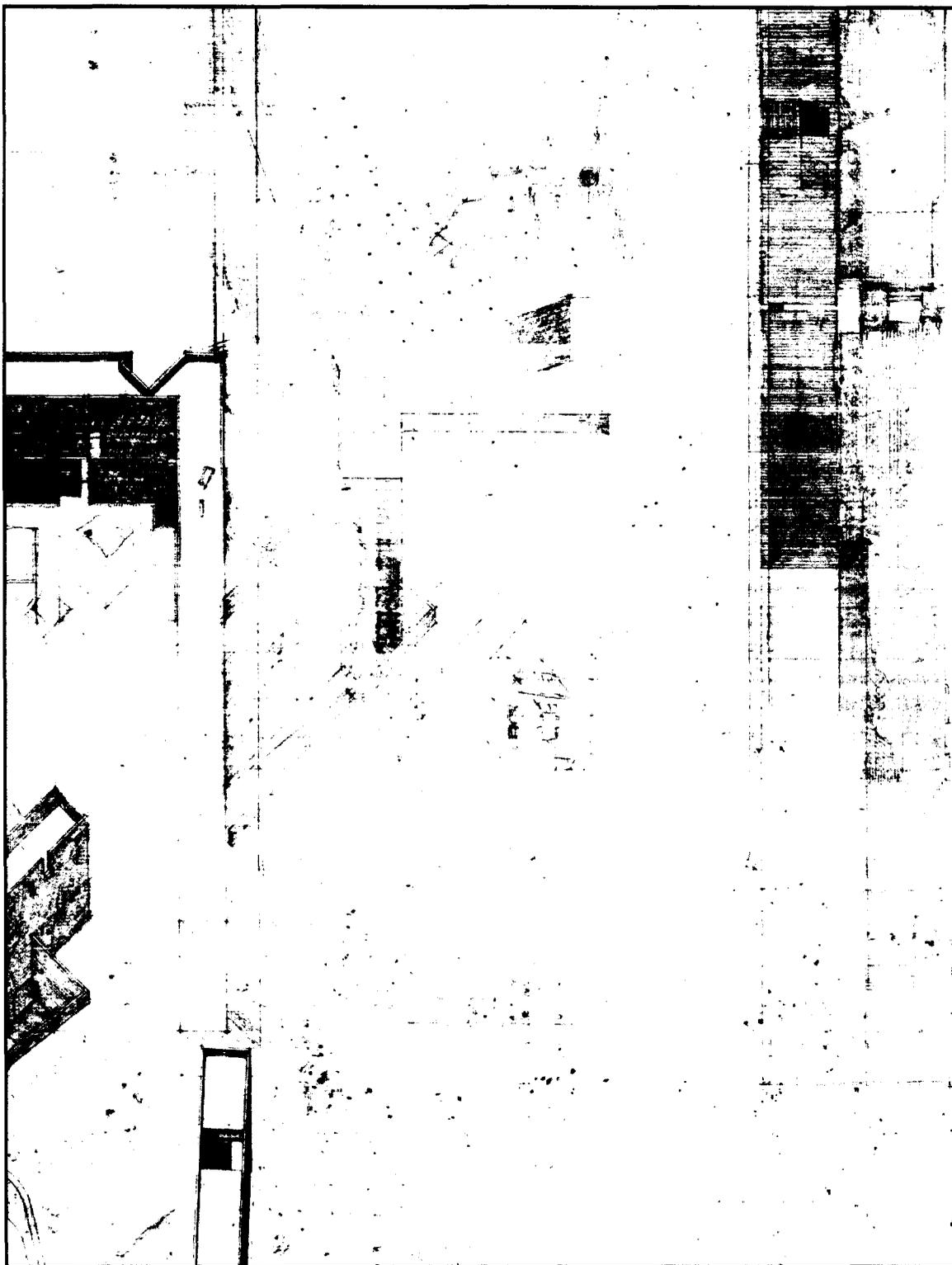
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- Fig. 27 -

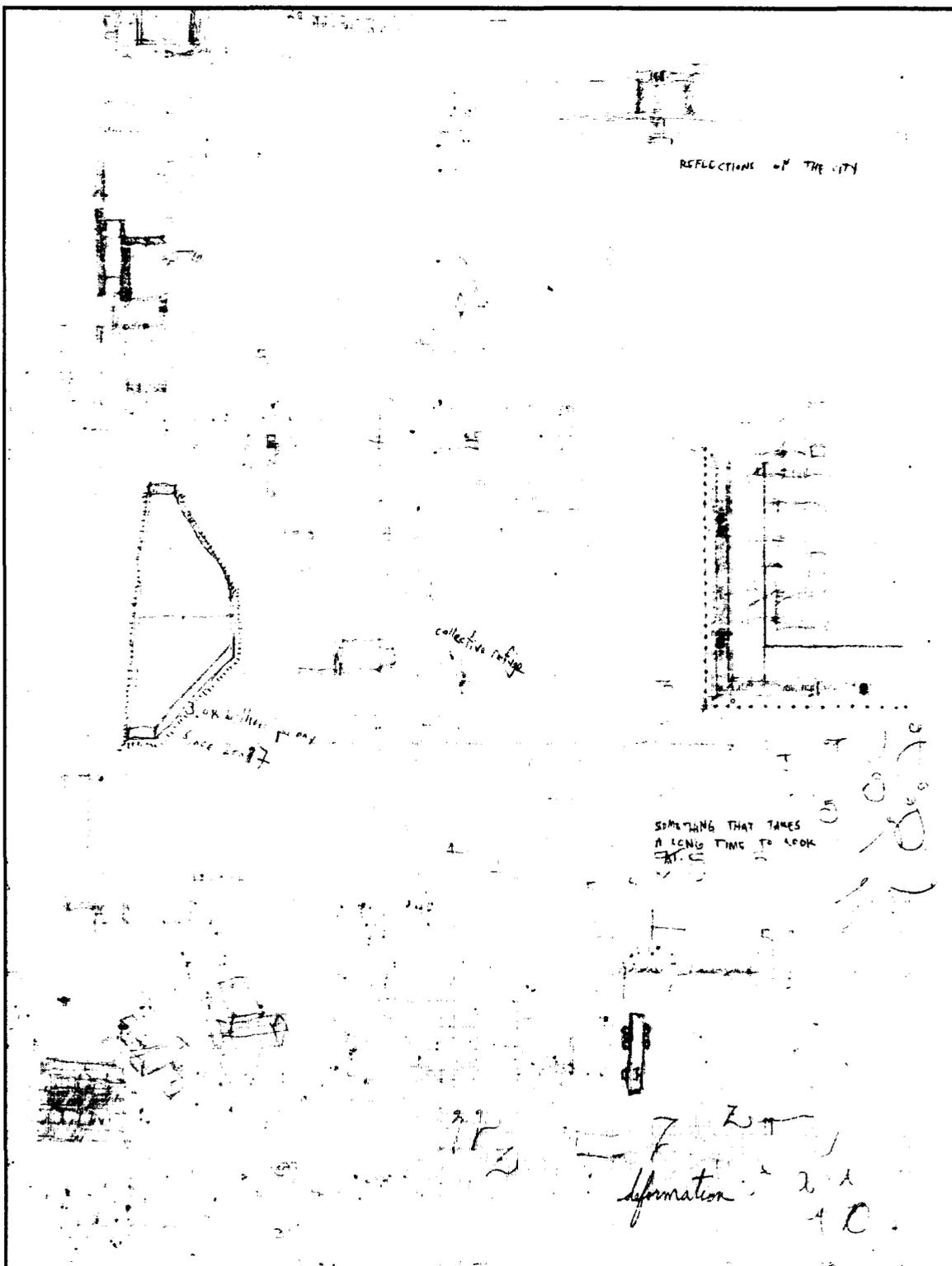


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- Fig. 28 -

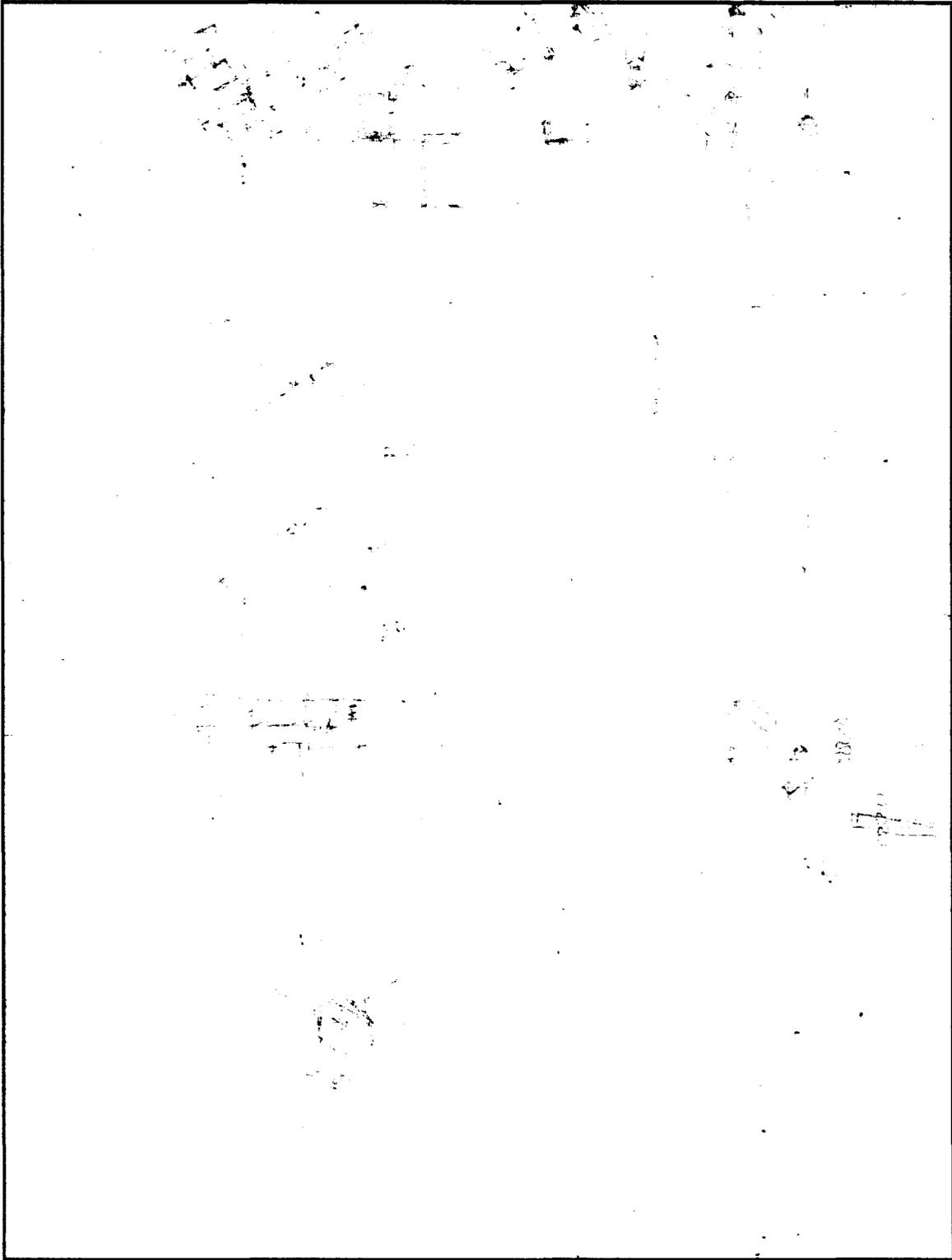


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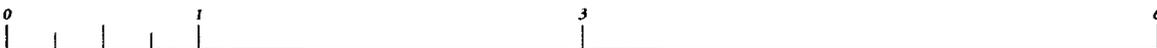


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- Fig. 29 -

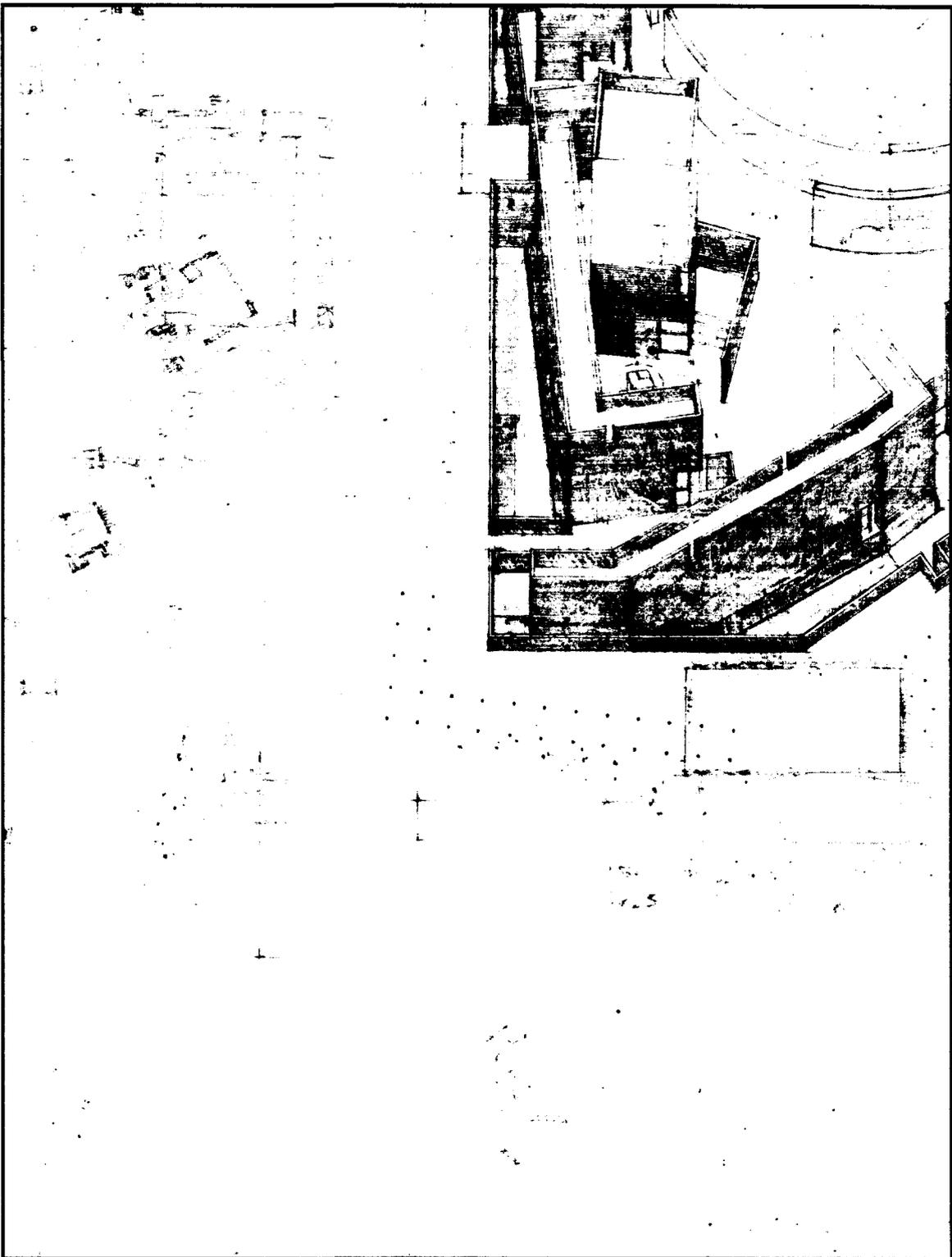


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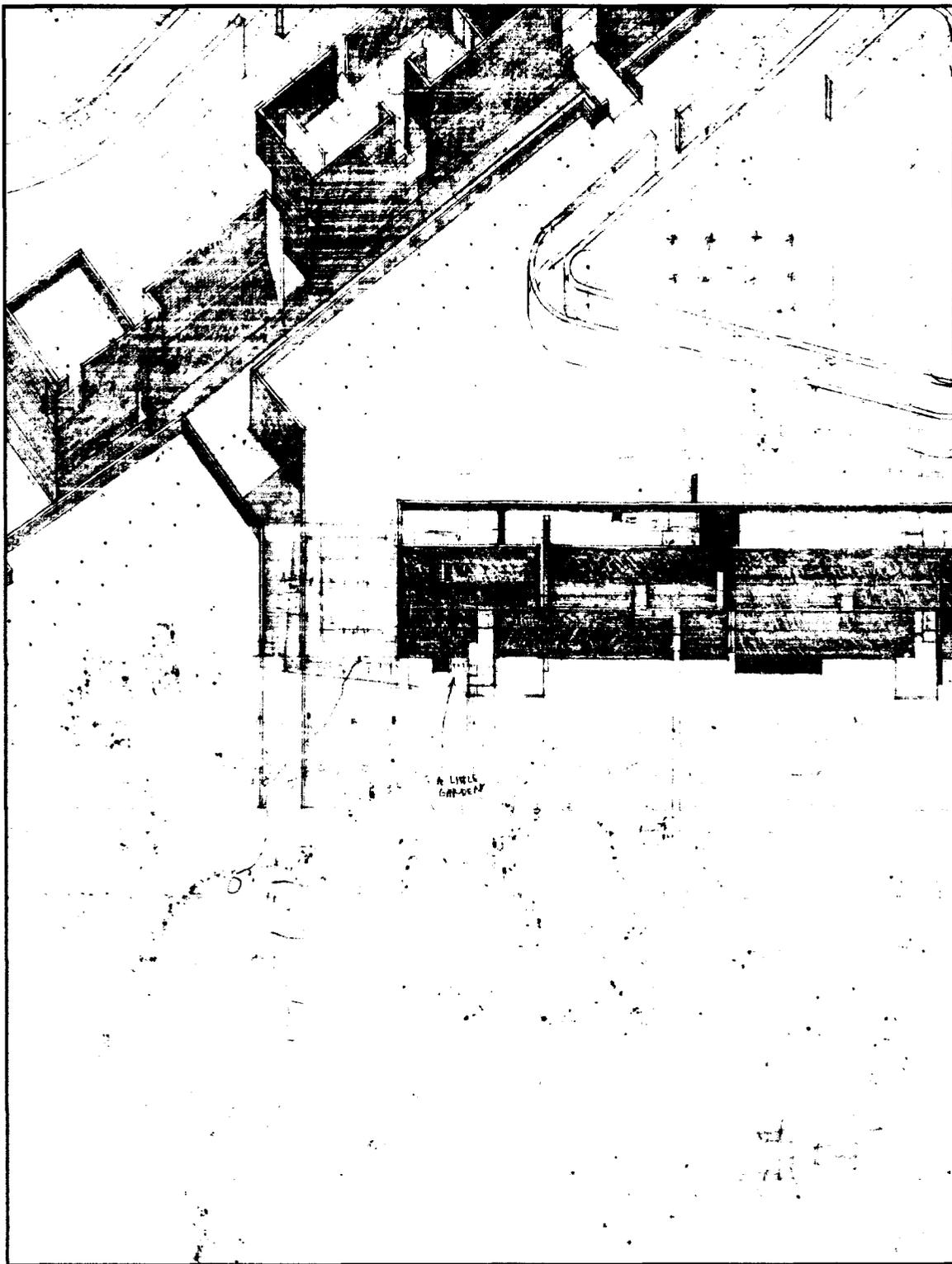
- Fig. 30 -



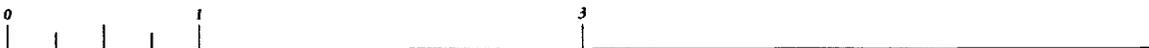
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- Fig. 31 -



E 3
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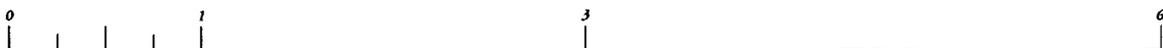


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- Fig. 32 -

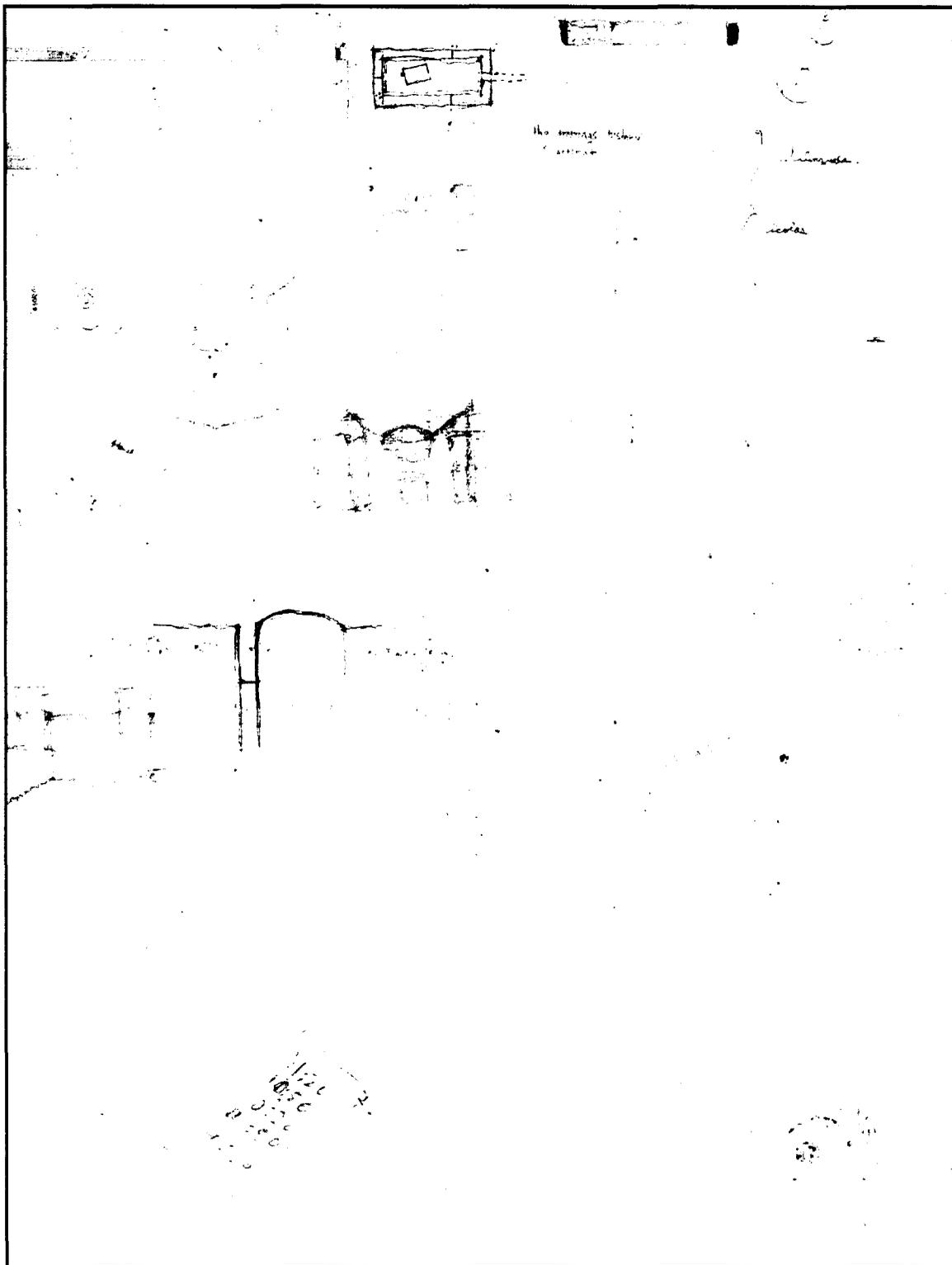


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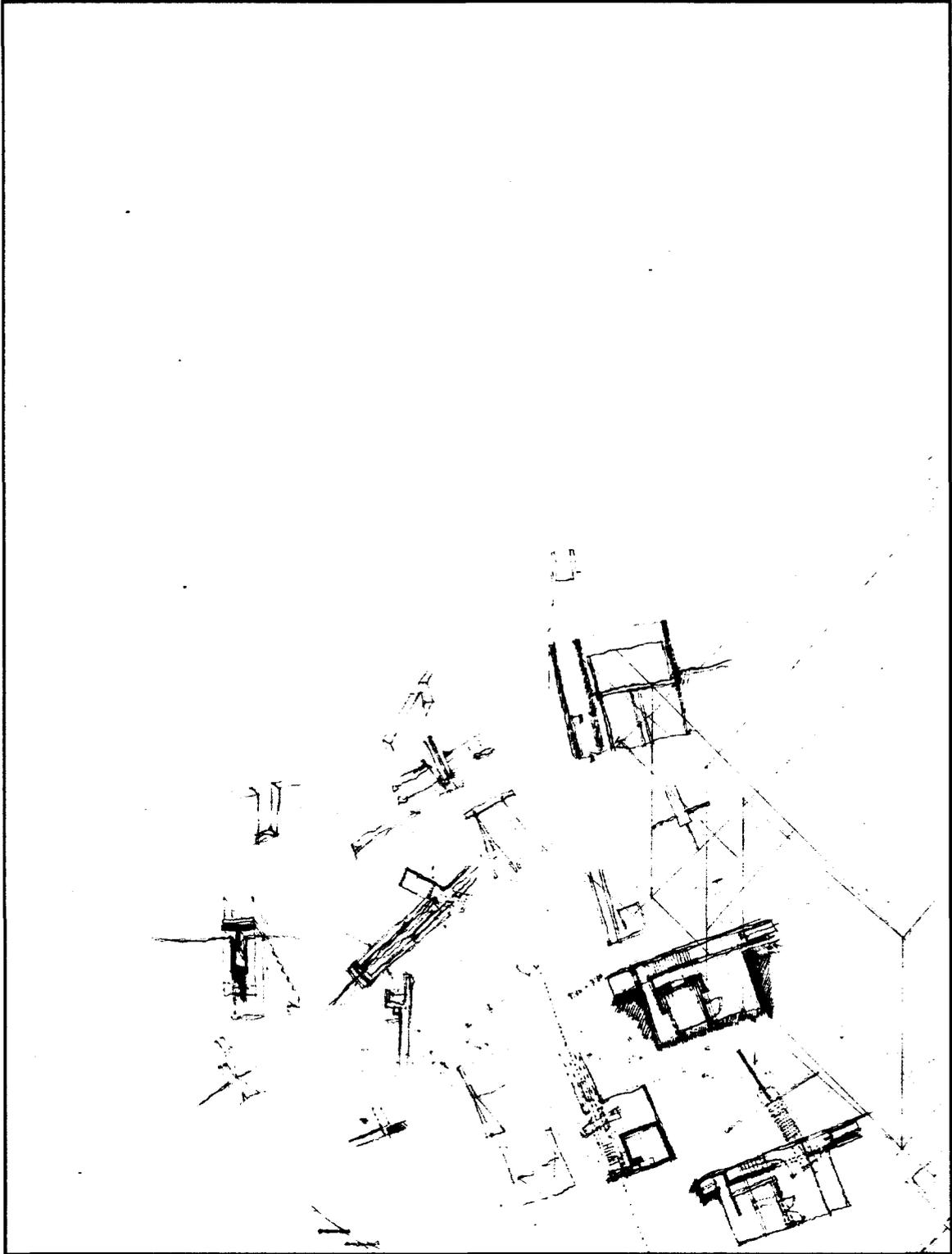
- Fig. 33 -



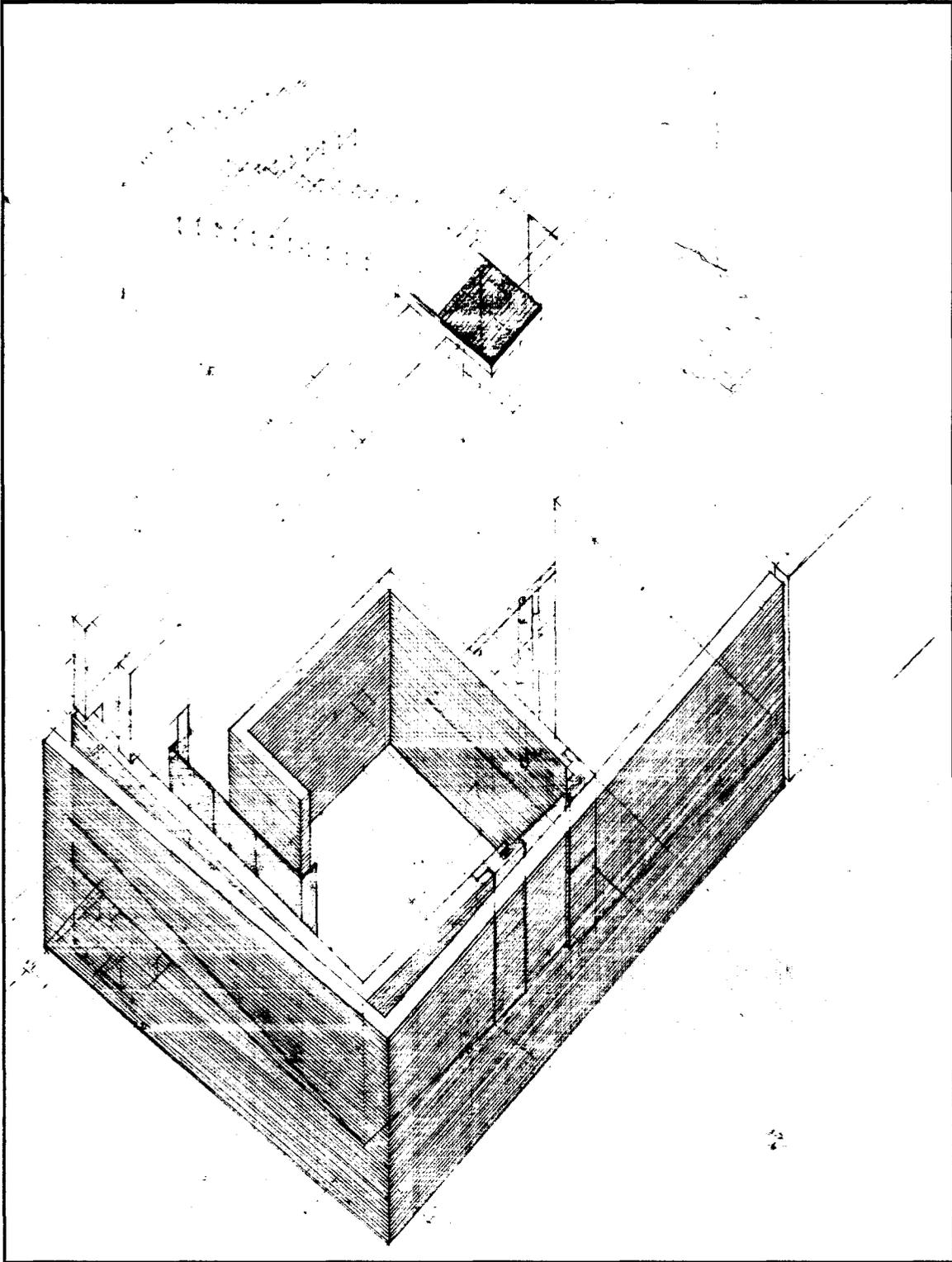
E 5
SCALE: 1:1



INCHES



XXVI



XXVII

Notes

- i Dante *The Divine Comedy, 1 Hell* 53.
- ii Hejduk *Victims* (33, Paper Restorer)
- iii On the Five Styles of Buildings, that is Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite (Book IV)
Serlio *Tutte l'Opere d'Architettura et Prospetiva*
- iv Rosenfeld *Sebastiano Serlio on Domestic Architecture: Different Dwellings from the Meanest Hovel to the most Ornate Palace: The Sixteenth-Century Manuscript of Book VI in the Avery Library of Columbia* 22.
- v The third book, *On Antiquity*
Serlio *Tutte l'Opere D'Architettura et Prospetiva*
- vi Wilson Jones *Palazzo Massimo and Baldasare Peruzzi's Approach to Architectural Design* 64.
- vii Rosenfeld *Sebastiano Serlio on Domestic Architecture: Different Dwellings from the Meanest Hovel to the most Ornate Palace: The Sixteenth-Century Manuscript of Book VI in the Avery Library of Columbia* 18.
- viii Glacken *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* 71.
- ix Aristophanes *The Birds and Other Plays* 158.
- x Aristophanes *The Birds and Other Plays* 158.
- xi Pollard *Birds in Greek Life and Myth* 45.
- xii The opening letter to French King Francis I in *The First Book on Architecture* (Geometry).
Serlio *Tutte l'Opere d'Architettura et Prospetiva* 3.
- xiii Aristophanes *The Birds and Other Plays* 163.
- xiv Aristophanes *The Birds and Other Plays* 192.
- xv John 10.1 *Jesus the Good Shepherd*
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- xvi Homer *Iliad* 69.
- xvii Homer *The Odyssey* 135.
- xviii John 10.9 *Jesus the Good Shepherd*
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- xix Graves *The Greek Myths: 2* 331.
- xx Rykwert J *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* 141.
- xxi Rykwert J *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* 139.
- xxii Rykwert J *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* 135 .
- xxiii Dante *The Divine Comedy, 1 Hell* Canto XXXIV 133 – 139 (289).
- xxiv Vitruvius *De Architectura* (Introduction) 5.
- xxv Vitruvius *De Architectura* 6.3.
- xxvi Aristophanes *The Birds and Other Plays*
- xxvii Vitruvius *De Architectura* 1.1.1.
- xxviii Vitruvius *De Architectura* 7.5.4.
- xxix Vitruvius *De Architectura* 1.1.7.
- xxx Aristophanes *The Birds and Other Plays*
- xxxi Knecht R J *Francis I* 165, 167.
- xxxii Adams & Pepper *Firearms and Fortifications* 10, 11.

- xxxiii Knecht R J *Francis I* 165.
- xxxiv Vitruvius *De Architectura* 1.5.3.
- xxxv Vitruvius *De Architectura* 1.7.1.
- xxxvi Plutarch *The Roman Questions of Plutarch* 131.
- xxxvii Adams & Pepper *Firearms and Fortifications* 32.
- xxxviii Glacken *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* 463.
- xxxix Glacken *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* 463.
- xl Pausanias *Description of Greece, Vol 1.* 383.
- xli 15. *And the Lord God took the man whom He made and placed him in Paradise to cultivate and guard it (or him).*
Chapter 2, Verse 15 of the Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*) text of Genesis used by Saint Augustine for his *De Genesi Ad Litteram*. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis: Volume 2* 329.
- xlii Scafi *Mapping Paradise* 33, 34.
- xliii Scafi *Mapping Paradise* 35.
- xliv Augustine *The Literal Meaning of Genesis: Volume 2* 48.
- xlv Augustine *The Literal Meaning of Genesis: Volume 1* 15.
- xlvi Rosenfeld Sebastiano Serlio on *Domestic Architecture: Different Dwellings from the Meanest Hovel to the most Ornate Palace: The Sixteenth-Century Manuscript of Book VI in the Avery Library of Columbia* 23.
- xlvii Rosenfeld Sebastiano Serlio on *Domestic Architecture: Different Dwellings from the Meanest Hovel to the most Ornate Palace: The Sixteenth-Century Manuscript of Book VI in the Avery Library of Columbia* 23, 24.
- xlviii Knecht R J *Francis I* 304.
- xlix The opening letter to French King Francis I in Book 3 (*On Antiquity*) Serlio *Tutte L'Opere D'Architettura et Prospetiva* (97).
- l The opening letter to French King Francis I in Book 3 (*On Antiquity*) Serlio *Tutte L'Opere D'Architettura et Prospetiva* (97).
- li Knecht R J *Francis I* 4.
- lii A small town on the left bank of the river Charente in western France
- liii Herodotus *The History* 114.
- liv Aristophanes *The Birds and Other Plays* 156.
- lv Serlio *Tutte L'Opere D'Architettura et Prospetiva* 250.
- lvi *Leonardo da Vinci: Engineer and Architect* 278.
- lvii Adams & Pepper *Firearms and Fortifications* 3.
- lviii Adams & Pepper *Firearms and Fortifications* 6.
- lix Serlio *Tutte L'Opere D'Architettura et Prospetiva* 393.
- lx This was unpublished and existed only in manuscript format.
Il settimo libro d'architettura nel qual si tratta di molti accidenti
- lxii Rosenfeld Sebastiano Serlio on *Domestic Architecture: Different Dwellings from the Meanest Hovel to the most Ornate Palace: The Sixteenth-Century Manuscript of Book VI in the Avery Library of Columbia* 22.
- lxiii Posner Kathleen Weil-Garris *Cloister, Court and City Square* 124 – 125.
It is believed that the Holy House in Loreto was the dwelling of the Virgin Mary, the site of her conception and birth. Furthermore, this simple stone structure was a silent witness to the Annunciation, Incarnation and Infancy of Christ. Tradition says that in 1291 angels removed the house from its site in Nazareth in order to save it from desecration by Infidel. It was first carried to Yugoslavia before being moved to Italy, somewhere along the Adriatic coast, where it was finally

deposited to its present location in 1294 along a public road on the peak of a high hill near Ancona overlooking the landscape and sea. Given the significance of events surrounding the houses history it became important as a site for pilgrims and pilgrimage. Its precarious location on a public road offered it very little in terms of protection. Thus the first architectural task was to fortify the structure. Four fortified towers linked by a wall were built to surround the relic. These towers were later used as foundations for the four sacristies of the present basilica. Documents from the 14th century tell us that along the wall of the fortification, loggias were attached to form a cloister for the shelter of clergy and pilgrims. By the middle of the 15th century a small church was built over the relic as well as other public buildings including a separate building for clergy and a “palazzo del commune” that housed officials from neighboring Recanati. Loreto by the end of the 15th century was not yet a town but a “...sacred precinct with a growing barnacle like accumulation of small houses around it.”

- lxiv Saalman *Medieval Cities* 23.
- lxv Plutarch *Lives I, Theseus and Romulus, Lycurgus and Numa, Solon and Publicola* Romulus, II. 6 –III. 4 (97).
- lxvi Rykwert J *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* 65.
- lxvii Knecht R J *Francis I* 83.
- lxviii Plutarch *Lives I, Theseus and Romulus, Lycurgus and Numa, Solon and Publicola* Romulus, IX. 2- 6 (115).
- lxix Plutarch *Lives I, Theseus and Romulus, Lycurgus and Numa, Solon and Publicola* Romulus, IX. 6- X. 2 (117).
- lxx Plutarch *Lives I, Theseus and Romulus, Lycurgus and Numa, Solon and Publicola* Romulus, IX. 6- X. 2 (117).
- lxxi Rykwert J *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* 33.
- lxxii Glacken *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* 36.
- lxxiii Glacken *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* 36.
- lxxiv Rykwert J *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* 132.
- lxxv Knecht R J *Francis I* 408.
- lxxvi Knecht R J *Francis I* 377.
- lxxvii Knecht R J *Francis I* 417.
- lxxviii
7. *And God formed man of dust from the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life. And man was made a living being.*
8. *And God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed.*
Chapter 2, Verse 7, 8 of the Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*) text of Genesis used by Saint Augustine for his *De Genesi Ad Litteram*. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis: Volume 2* 329.
- lxxix Opening letter of Serlio’s fifth book of architecture.
Serlio *Tutte L’Opere D’Architettura et Prospetiva* 395.
- lxxx Old High German *Haganrib*, ruler of an enclosure – *bag*, a hedging in, enclosure + *rihhi*, ruler, king
- lxxxi Knecht R J *Francis I* 422.
- lxxxii Introduction by Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks
Serlio *Tutte L’Opere D’Architettura et Prospetiva* xiv.
- lxxxiii Chapter 2, Verse 9 of the Old Latin *De Genesi Ad Litteram*. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis: Volume 2* 329.

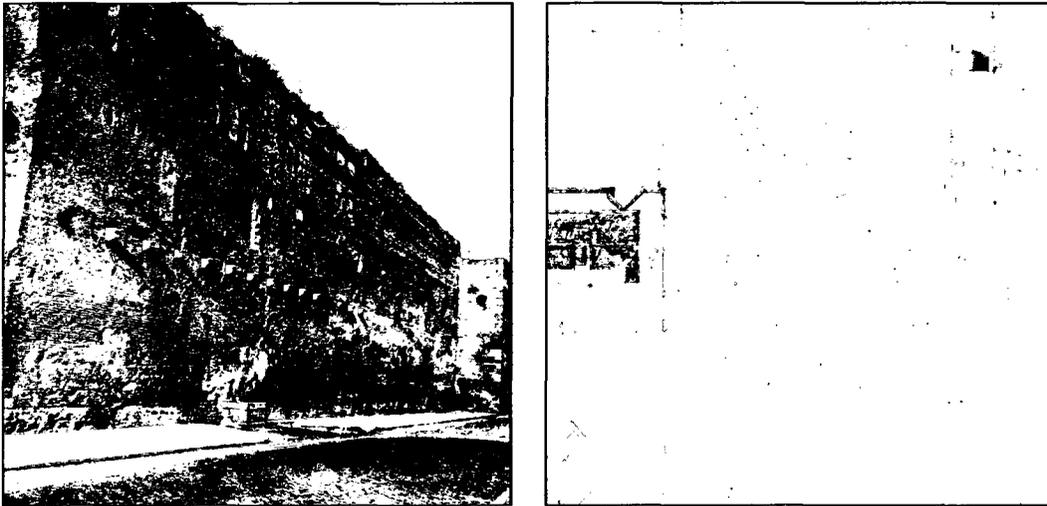


Fig 36. *Accumulations of material in the Aurelian walls of Rome and the drawing*

As an addendum to this thesis, I have been asked by a Mantovani architect to explain the way in which I came to fashion certain of my drawings; in particular, that two and a half foot by three foot four inch (or seventy six point two by one hundred and one point six centimetre) representation of a walled city attributed in the *Codex* to Sebastiano of Bologna.

I can say that it involved a number of formative regulations whose conception was the outcome of an early investigation into the subject of defensive city walls or more specifically, from enquiries pertaining to the wall as a material artefact. It was the aim of the drawing to be analogous to the story of defensive city walls.

(One heavy, cotton sheet) To begin with, I should explain why this representation was limited to a single sheet and not six point two for example. Without adornment, it was a way of assembling a visual record of thought's and findings throughout the duration of the work in one place. The accumulation of markings and erasures that are evidenced in the drawing tell a story of its making in much the same way that a similar narrative is made visible in the third century Aurelianic defences of Rome (*Fig. 36*).

Inevitably, the process of drawing and redrawing on a single sheet led to the weathering of its content, a degradation in the quality of its line and colour.

(The use of materials inclined to leave a trace) With the appropriate application of pressure, a compacted cone of hard and sharpened graphite (2H) will impress itself into the thickness of a soft cotton sheet so as to create a modest cavity in the depth of its surface. Once this datum has been breached, there is nothing that can be done to rectify the situation; this cavity becomes a part of the composition.

This technique was used as a way of embedding the drawing with permanence. A number of additional media were chosen to amplify this process including a range of ink's and pigments, which once applied can be muted but never fully removed.

(The use of colour) Generally, three colours were used in the making of the drawing, each denoting a material. Blue came to represent masonry and was inspired by the ancient walls of Babylon. Organic material, as wood on the structures or as hedge walls, was represented with yellow. Metals were rendered with red-orange.

(Detail and the erosion of line) As each structure in the arrangement was added, they were fully rendered to completion, including a denotation of their materiality (hatching and colour). From this 'final state', the various components of the drawing began a process of erosion as a consequence of the constant repositioning of a myriad of hand held drafting implements. Therefore, the lines and colours about the origins of the composition have acquired a degree of wear not present in other areas, notably the later stages of the work.

In constructing the drawing, a quantity of protective measures (covering, cleaning of drafting instruments) were purposefully neglected as a way to further enforce the idea of the drawing's narrative of assembly.

This concludes how I made certain of my drawings. And so I seek solace, for want of something better, in the hope that I may perhaps gain a little post-thesis [re]cognitio(n) for my work."

* Roussel *How I Made Certain of My Drawings*

** Roussel *How I Made Certain of My Drawings* 19.

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