



The Eye and the Mouth.
S. Francesco in Cortona.

**FACING IT ALL: MIGHTY FACES AND
THE WESTERN FAÇADE**

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The problem of presenting a convincing exposition of symbolic intent that is seldom specifically stated is made difficult by the modern conviction that architecture, apart from its figurative sculptures, has always been created (exclusively) for utilitarian and creative reasons.

—Baldwin Smith, *Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages*

If it weren't for your eyes there wouldn't be skies in our little place ...

(*Ociju tvojih da nije ne bi bilo neba u malom nasem stanu ...*)

—Vasko Popa, *Poems*

The Super Face on the Surface

The faces of the Gorgon Medusa and the god Janus are two of the most prominent of all mighty mythical faces in the history of Western architecture. Their vestiges are embodied in architecture. While the *gorgoneion*, the severed head of the “beautifully checked” monster, Gorgon Medusa, is immediately recognisable, the presence of the double-faced appearance associated with Janus is less obvious. How did these two “super faces” become endeared to architecture, or was it vice versa? The focus of this inquiry deliberately shifts from the façade as the building’s own face to the nature of the association of architecture with the faces of two apparent “outsiders,” Gorgon and Janus, *against* the face of the façade.¹ As Eye and Mouth, the two are forms of communication both with and within built structures. There is only one other mighty iconic face in Christian architecture, which in some ways parallels, reflects, corresponds to, and occasionally replaces certain aspects of both the *gorgoneion* and Janus—the face of Jesus Christ. The other faces are portraits, sometimes self-portraits, or masks.

The “super faces” achieved relative independence from their respective heads and bodies. It is through the absence of the body, and the sublimation of the whole *presence* into the face, that the Face was empowered. The *gorgoneion* in particular is a paradigm of this process, the very embodiment of the unspeakable horror of the *bodiless head alive*. The two seem elementally different “characters” with distinct positions and functions, save for their shared role as guardians and for their pronounced “faciality.” Frontal appearance (“faciality”) is the only possible representation of the Gorgon, while it is only one of the possible representations of Janus, who appears both as a bi- or quadri-frontal humanoid figuration and as a two or four “façaded” shelter over clearly directed communications.

In architecture, the *gorgoneion* is always explicit, applied and eminent; Janus is almost always implicit, imminent. As opposed to Janus, the *gorgoneion* is convoluted in ideation and expression: somewhat rough and rigid, yet with a resolutely direct “impact.” Originally, it was an apotropaic head added to the building; and although it was applied as an “ornament,” an “extra,” it functioned as an “extra” with a definite purpose—an essential extra. To understand this purpose—that is, to understand *gorgoneion*—the concept of amulet needs to be understood. Janus “faces,” on the other hand, became intrinsic to architecture. His are the faces inscribed within various passages of built structures, where they direct the flow of people and elements.² In their common role as guardians,

1. A sympathetic architectural face—an oculus and a doorway/mouth standing against a distinct background—is an archetypal representation of the primordial Eye and Mouth. In order to understand the influences of the *gorgoneion* and Janus this image needs to be kept aside as much as possible.
2. To question these faces, to follow the idea of Janus, means to explore the relationship between Janus space and Janus image, which is simply impossible to thoroughly present in this article.

The Eye shield from Lekythos of the "Achilles painter," mid fifth century BC.

(Robin Osborne, *Classical Landscape with Figures: The Ancient Greek City and its Countryside*)



3. To research on the complicated subject of Janus we owe the "scientific" and "technical" term *ianiform*, which refers to the bifrontal or quadrifrontal representations of divinities, to the arched doorway, and to gateways or passages. Note that "divinities" implies that this form was not exclusively reserved for Janus, although this persisted as only his trademark. Cook presents the thesis that the *ianiform* god is essentially a sky-god: A.B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, vol. 2 (New York: Biblio and Tannen, 1964), 323-400.
4. *Janua* (the feminine noun), a gate or main entry, complements *Janus* (the masculine noun). As a rule gender homonyms are not related semantically; however, in the case of *Janus/Janua* they are definitely related. A corresponding pair of divinities is *Ianus/Iana*, that is *Dianus/Diana*.
5. Homer, *Odyssey*, xi.627-640. There seems to exist a hierarchy based on the possibility of communication with guardians that corresponds with a hierarchy of the accessibility of places they guarded. The Gorgon allowed no communication and no negotiation; nobody passed by her. With the Sphinx, in contrast, there was at least a verbal communication with an option to clear the obstacle with a proper password which worked as a key, opening the passage and enabling forward movement. Her mouth, nevertheless, was also put to work on unlucky guessers. *Janus* is on the completely opposite end. His role was to make communication not only possible, but smooth, "civilised."
6. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xiv.775-804; *Fasti*, i.259-274; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i.9.17. There are difficulties in locating the event as it seems that the common confusion between *Janus Quadrifons* and *Janus Geminus* appears again. Varro even mixes *Porta Janualis* with *Janus Geminus*. *De Lingua Latina*, v.165.
7. Tobin Siebers, *The Mirror of Medusa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 7.
8. Generally, the Greeks related the sight, eye and fire, believing that flames were

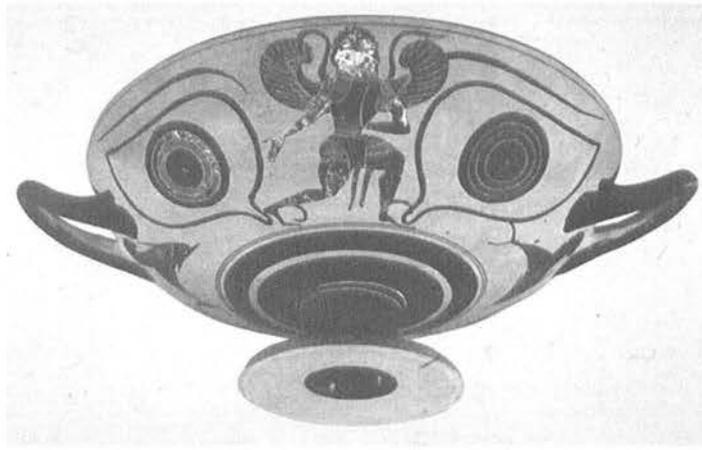
both the *gorgoneion* and *Janus* consisted of the eye and the mouth; by sublimation, they came to stand for the Eye and the Mouth respectively.

Visiting the buildings of classical antiquity, the Renaissance, or eighteenth and nineteenth century revivals of these without encountering a single *gorgoneion*, and most likely a whole plethora of *gorgoneia*, is unimaginable. *Ianiforms*³ are equally abundant. Sifting through the vestiges of the *gorgoneion* and *Janus* among the preoccupations of Early Moderns necessarily results in a charming, yet fragmented view; and attempting to detect their reverberations at the threshold of the third millennium is a truly challenging, if not impossible enterprise. On this occasion we will inquire into some of the complexities of the involvement of these "super faces" in architecture while tracing them into the Renaissance. Approaching them from their common role as guardians will facilitate understanding of their divergence. This can be unravelled only through the introduction of the "auxiliary" semantics of the eye and the mouth, and the invaluable concept of the amulet.

Preface: The Eye, the Mouth and the Amulet

The familiar images of the *gorgoneion*, the ultimate bogey, and *Janus/Janua*,⁴ the civilising watcher, carry layers of conceptual and figural significance of the Eye and Mouth. Stare and utterance—rougher relatives of gaze and voice—were necessary ingredients for the making of ancient supernatural guardians whose underlying role was essentially amuletic: a remote deterrence of real and potential malfunction, and preservation of the existing order. To capture the senses, send a warning, and threaten execution, both the Eye and Mouth were needed, though not necessarily together and not necessarily simultaneously. The guardian might have been heard, if not seen, or both heard and seen. When suddenly the thousands of shadows from the halls of Hades rustled, and an eerie cry arose, Odysseus quickly interrupted his conversation with ghosts of the famous and ran away in sheer panic that that might have been an announcement of the appearance of the Gorgon's head.⁵ Even *Janus*, the civilising communicator, burst in anger at an unauthorised opening of the doors, throwing up through the *ianua* (Mouth, Gate) a legendary hot torrent that literally swept away the hostile intruders.⁶

The incredibly universal belief in amulets, the belief that invisible forces, especially the malicious ones, could be fought against and even warded off, so often executed in forms considered superstitious and primitive, is an essentially progressive and heroic idea in its insistence upon active resistance to forces perceived as far superior to human strength. Tobin Siebers pointed sharply to the link between relic and amulet, and to the amuletic logic expressed as "the same counters the same," which explains the ambiguity also contained in the ancient guardians.



Starring kalyx with open mouth at the bottom. (P. Heesen, *The J. L. Theodor Collection of Attic Black-figure Vases*)

As human and animal remains petrify, the relic, amulet and talisman are born. These devices are hardly distinguishable from one another, and in practice their differences disappear. Debating whether one device protects people while another defends buildings, property and human possessions, or whether one commands more general influence than another is futile ... Relics, amulets and talismans embody those forces that they supposedly counteract, and are effective because they direct evil against itself. Certainly, the ambivalent logic of the amulet is baffling, and rightly so, for its purpose in general is to create confusion.⁷

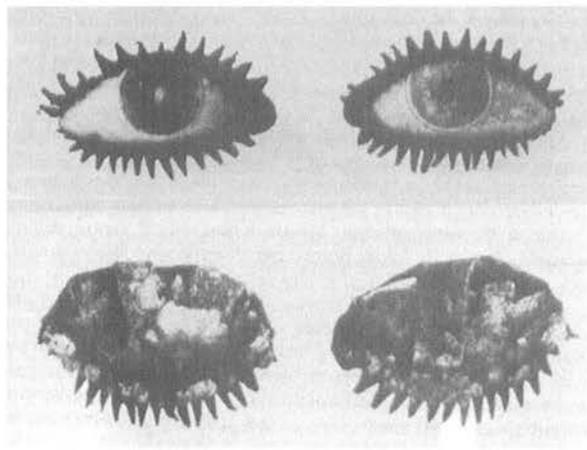
Whether the cause or the consequence, the mechanism of confusion seems to be behind the placing of Eyes and Mouths of guardians in extraordinary positions. Thus, besides the common analogy with “holes in the walls,” there are in architecture other, less apparent yet still remarkable eyes and mouths of guardians and protectors. A number of potent ideas related to the “presence” of and communication with “live eyes” mingle and converge here. There is the eye that sees everything (the eye of the good god, the eye of light and blessing); the eye that monitors as mediator; the eye that watches to protect directly; and the eye that wards off, that prevents and overwhelms malefaction, and therefore has an important role in the regulation of social norms. The mouth though could expire a prophetic *pneuma*, or be the one that swallows, dismembers or throws up.

Generally, the open eye, like the opening of eyes, is one of the clearest and most essential manifestations of life; the classification of gazes is secondary to this fact. In short, someone is always “expected” behind the open eye. The eye’s own vigilance and excitability, including the contraction and expansion of the iris,⁸ reinforced its life symbolism in general. Also, the extreme physiological vulnerability of the organ of sight and its susceptibility to all kinds of external impact (including attack) was well recognised, and associated with psychological vulnerability, and permeability. This ambiguous status of the eye as the instrument and receptor of “influences,” a membrane between “in” and “out,” is central to all the marvels of eye communication and miscommunication. The image of a single eye, and certainly of a pair, or more,⁹ could transform an entire context into a face.¹⁰ It explains the grotesque depictions of giant (eyed) phalli in Greek art;¹¹ the eyes given to the Egyptian *djed*; and Greco-Etruscan vessels, among which the eyed kalyxes are the wittiest.¹² Eyes on prows referred to the agility of the ship, assumed to be an organism both by and with its crew.

These were by no means simple thoughts. The idea of a “living eye” explains both the attention paid to the artistry of making “live statues” guided by the ideal of the re-production of life through movement, and a permanent obsession with *automata* as movable imitations of life. *Kolossi* (souls) and *daidala* (statues) were made as “twins” of real people before Daidalos¹³ provided them with *live eyes* and “breathed life” into numerous *automata* that he created. The sparkle of the eye was

captured in the pupil; see M. Detienne & J.P. Vernant, *The Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 101 n. 99. In representations of Medusa, whether painted or sculptured, her irises and pupils were often colored red or purple; see J.D. Belson, *The Gorgoneion in Greek Architecture* (Ph.D. Diss., Bryn Mawr, 1981), 28. They also regarded the egg, with its obvious similarity to the eye, as a life essence, the container of soul and a form of head; see G. Hersey, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1988), 36.

9. Multiplication and repetition are common poetic figures (in the original meaning of crafting or putting together) and serve as reinforcement of the “eye” idea, maybe as its quantitative measure.
10. The most expressive and mobile organs in the head, the eye and the mouth each and alone are sufficient to indicate a “generic face” if the perimeter of the background is delineated [] ; [:] ; combined, they could even do without the outside frame ;) . “Eye experts” Deonna and Rizzini believe that the “eye represents the whole face, the eye IS the face” (I. Rizzini, *L’occhio parlante: per una semiotica dello sguardo nel mondo antico* [Venezia: Istituto Veneto de Scienze, lettere ed arti, 1998], 4). The mouth comes close. A well-known literary example is the grin of the Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*.
11. The phallus was also a *fascinus* and a symbol of life through fecundity, which (partially) accounts for phallic apotropaia. See Geza Roheim, “The Evil Eye,” in Alan Dundes, ed., *The Evil Eye: A Folklore Casebook* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1981), 217-218.
12. These drinking vessels hid at the bottom a solid circle, the open “mouth” which, together with the drinker’s eyes, resulted in a humorous mask over the drinker’s face that was fully visible only to the drinker’s companions positioned directly across from him and only when the vessel was raised and drunk from.



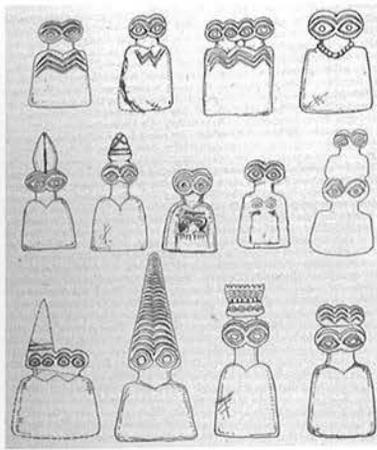
- The drinking vessel turned into a mask, which supposedly addressed the issue of measure in drinking, and consequences of drunkenness. J. A. Jordan, *Attic black-figured eye-cups* (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1988), 5.
13. Daidalos *ommatosas*, "he who opens eyes." Rizzini, *L'occhio parlante*, 154. This includes the labyrinth, if seen as a flow, a movement of space, an illusion of freedom.
14. In "The Meeting of Eyes" Coomaraswamy discusses the significance and technique of the "exchange of glances" in a number of examples. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Selected Papers 1* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 233. On the other end of this same concept is "blinding," the destruction of eyes, meant as a negation of existence. An example is the desecration of religious images.
15. Greek *baskania*, enchanting.
16. So, for example, the Egyptian *udjet*, a symbol for the eye of Horus, which signifies a divinity in general, was used to stave off illness and bad luck. It also stood for the eyes of Horus and Osiris, the Moon and the Sun: "The winged sun disk was placed above all the doors into the temples, that the image of Horus might drive away all unclean spirits from the sacred building." A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, trans. H. M. Tirard (London and New York: Macmillan and co., 1894) 272. The overshadowing wings pointed to the special sacredness of the doors beneath them.
17. The preponderance of eye representations on artifacts belonging to the old Mediterranean cultures, among which Brak idols stun in number and importance, has inspired theories of the existence and veneration of a common "Eye-Goddess" throughout the Mediterranean. O. G. S. Crawford, *The Eye Goddess* (London: Phoenix House, 1957); Gayle Elizabeth Wever, *The Spurious Eye-Goddess and her Megalithic Associates* (Philadelphia, 1968). On the Great Goddess in general see Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess: Unearthing the Hidden Symbols of Western Civilization* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989).

represented by inlaid precious stones or enamel, often with prophylactic values of their own. Clearly, behind the "eyeing" of objects lies a desire to enliven them. This includes depictions of the omniscient divinity's omnipotent gaze, as exemplified in the tradition of iconic portraits executed so that the eyes appear to always follow the spectator and meet his eye.¹⁴ All these aspects coexist in the supernatural guardian's "eye." Brooched on the surface, the eye became a real *fascinus*,¹⁵ both enchanter and counter charm and a prophylactic gaze against the effects of the evil eye.¹⁶ A common belief that some exceptional individuals might turn harmful intentions into reality by means of the gaze alone is emblematic of the power entrusted to the eye.

Prior to the modern split of the subject so closely theorised by Sartre and Lacan, it was through mechanisms of ocular enchantment, known to literally every culture, that the common discomfort of the subject turning object was channeled and regulated. The discomfort caused by violating glances ranged from benevolent to life threatening. Not only did ancient societies express their eye-obsession through eye imagery,¹⁷ but vision continues to be an obsession of modern, and particularly postmodern philosophy and art theories.¹⁸ Only with the real proliferation of writing did the mouth lose its high regard as a big-story teller or a prophecy utterer, a role reserved for the very few (we might recall that Pythia was nothing but a voice steaming from the hole—some say a crack—in the ground); the mouth was always the biggest source of social "comfort" and "discomfort." *Spell*¹⁹ denotes saying, discourse and chant, charm, tradition, and also the second part of Gospel—the powerful Word; to "cast a spell," as in the remote delivery of a mouth-originated product, was awarded to the eye as an "honorary degree" in extraordinary rhetorics, but never ceased to be the primary domain of the mouth. The recognition of the "speaking" eye's rhetorical ability prompted a codex of gazes—the eye that persuades, the eye that listens, the erotic eye and the fascinating eye—and created the *hypokrisis*, a literal figure of speech in which the expression of the face and especially of the eyes followed the speaker's voice, gestures and general tone, harmonising all elements into an eloquent speech.

The *jettatore* of Italian popular culture translates literally as *caster* (of magic word)—that is, the fascinator, the Evil Eye specialist, the one who sublimated the magic word into the eye and who could direct it silently and remotely. The mouth is a source of both the orderly and the disorderly, the expected and the abrupt, the articulate and the inarticulate, praise and curse, truth and lie, chant and enchantment. As a semi-permeable, or better, a selectively permeable, membrane it was undoubtedly comparable to the main entrance, the gate, the only inter-rupture in the level of the city-walls drawing; the only non-sacred part of the walls.

The equation of an entrance with a mouth is a topos both in literature and in the visual arts, while other architectural apertures such as the "oculus"²⁰ (including the rosette, which is only a



Brak eye-idols after Mallowan.
(Crawford, *The Eye Goddess*)

Detail from marble sarcophagus, St. Lorenzo in Panisperna, Rome, mid Antonine. Doors with two gorgoneia, two lions' heads and two corner watchers. Similar to false doors on funerary monuments.
(*Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*)

centrally positioned vertical oculus), the bull's eye, and even windows in general are quite naturally seen and talked about as "eyes," as a consequence of their opening to the world in a double direction and receiving or projecting divine light (depending on the theory). The Mouth, nevertheless, is an entrance *par excellence*. It is either a clearance or hindrance on the way between inside and outside, a source of all utterances as well as a gustatory centre, and therefore associated with openings, places of testing and exchange, disappearance and reappearance (devouring is a theme in itself). The Romans used the word *ostium*, a derivative of *os, oris* (mouth) to designate both the entrance to the private house and the harbour, and called their major port at the outlet of the Tiber simply *Ostia*, the Mouth. There is a mouth of hell (but a Gate of heaven, *janua Coeli*); a mouth of a volcano, river, or jar. The appropriation of the mouth/door analogy is present in the common idea of the female genital as *ostium muliebris*, "feminine mouth."²¹ *Ianua* is a gate of primary entrance. The mouth/door divides the underworld (of which the Gorgon is a guardian) from the upper world, internal from external, "space within" from "space without."²² Moreover, the vault of the mouth, the palate, is built into the idea and a word for the palace.

Face 1: The Gorgoneion

Medusa, the Gorgon who suffered such pain.

—Hesiod, *Theogony*

The ambivalence of the eye was resolved through the institution of the Evil Eye and its counter-effect, a weapon against malevolence, the talisman.²³ The *gorgoneion* became an embodiment of both.

In the whole history of the Eye, it was only Medusa, the only mortal among the three Gorgon sisters, who had eyes that petrified, which earned her immortality among mortals. Ironically, the Gorgons were protected by their "handicapped" sisters, the Graiae, who shared a single eye and a single tooth, rotating these among themselves, and not vice versa. This purely custodial eye in transit was the representation of the quintessential guardian, an "all eye," absorbed in the act of guarding, watching (over). Floating on an evasive, exchangeable background-face, this eye was masterfully separated from the corporeal and turned into an abstraction of the perceptual, the entryway of and to information.²⁴

The *gorgoneion* "exists" almost exclusively figurally as an icon, a well-known narrative condensed into a picture. Curiously, the head of Gorgon is older than the Gorgons, who only provided a mythological setting for the "younger" Medusa-story.²⁵ Medusa's reduction from mighty Mother

18. An excellent review can be found in Martin Jay's *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); the collection of essays *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight*, eds. Jay and Teresa Brennan (London, New York: Routledge, 1996); Cathryn Vasseleu, *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas, and Merleau-Ponty* (London, New York: Routledge, 1998); Beate Allert, ed., *Languages of Visuality: Crossings between Science, Art, Politics and Literature* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996); David Michael Levin, ed., *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), and many more.
19. Of course, it also means to "scrutinise," to dwell upon in detail. Slavic *urok*, spell (*urec'i*, to spell) consists of both a hidden "eye" (*ok(o)*) and "to say" (*u-reci*, which also invokes *rec*, word).
20. *Oculi* are usually understood as central horizontal apertures although they could also be vertical or slanted, such as those on cupolas and tambours.
21. H. C. Trumbull's anthropological analysis of the semantics of women and the door brought him to the conclusion that "the earliest altar was at the threshold of the woman, and of the door." H. C. Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1896), 252. A mesmerising eighth century Indian example is the Aditi-Uttanapad altar from Alampur.
22. To Ruth Padel's triad of unseen, "within spaces"—the underworld, the house and the mind—the uterus needs to be added. "Making Space Speak," in *Nothing to do with Dionysos?: Athenian drama in its social context*, eds. John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, c1990), 343-6.
23. From the Greek *telesma*, incantation; Latin *amuletum* (from *amolior*, to baffle)—a magical figure. Defined in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as "a magical figure cut or engraved under certain superstitious observances of the configuration of the heavens, to



- which wonderful effects were ascribed; the seal, figure, character or image of a heavenly sign, constellation or planet, engraved on a sympathetic stone, or on a metal corresponding to the star, in order to receive its influence. The talisman was supposed to exercise extraordinary influence over the bearer, especially in averting evils as decease, sudden death and the like. A charm; a symbol supposed to assure health and good fortune; an amulet."
24. Even for Perseus who learned how to get to the Gorgons only after he seized the monoculus and tooth while they were in transit.
25. It is now generally believed that the *gorgoneion* is "older" than the Gorgon, i.e. the Gorgon myth, and that it developed from a trophy. Mask-heads of the goddesses from Neolithic times were found in the number of localities. See Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 206-208. Old, matriarchal deities were never completely superseded, but rather brought subversively into newer patriarchal societies and adjusted to suit. The androgynous Athena is an excellent example, particularly so in the light of her closeness to the Gorgon's head.
26. *Guardare* in Italian still denotes both watching over, guarding, and looking at (Fr. *garder*, to keep, from; MH German *warten*, to watch). The synonymous "custodian" is preserved from Latin, where *tutela*, *praesidium*, *excubiae* have similar meanings. Some English dictionaries still include—towards the bottom of the list—a definition of "to guard" (previously) meaning "to adorn with laces, borders, or bindings, especially as a protection for the edges" (*Webster Universal Dictionary*, 1937).
27. Medusa's head received considerable attention in psychoanalysis—a disturbing image was taken as an image of the disturbed. An excellent critical presentation of psychoanalytic interpretations is given by Hazel Barnes in "The Look of the Gorgon" in *The Meddling Gods: Four Essays on Classical Themes* (University of

Goddess to a mighty amulet demonstrates the work of those very forces she counteracts. As an apotropaic device the *gorgoneion* was widely applied to all kinds of objects, personal, private and public, including buildings. The image of the Gorgon could be seen in Greece on tympana, metopes, antefixes, acroteria, cornices, simas, revetment plaques, ceilings and ceiling coffers, columns, doors and on floor mosaics. Aristophanes mentions that a *gorgoneion* was found near the hearth of most Athenian households. One version of the Medusa legend has Perseus burying the head of Gorgon at Argos' agora; and larger than life-size stone *gorgoneia* were excavated at both Argos' and Athenian agoras, which suggests that she might have been a tutelary deity of these locations. Nevertheless, the majority of architectural representations of Gorgon are concentrated on and around roofs, seemingly the only possible place for ornaments in Greek architecture, although the frequency and popularity of the Gorgon motif indicate its more intricate architectural role. The *gorgoneion* was almost exclusively a part of funeral architecture among Etruscans. This application was revived in Hellenistic and Roman times when it was present on both the real and false doors of tombs (always at eye level and often serving as door pulls).

Further, the iconography of the *gorgoneion* and the Gorgon was adopted on numerous objects of war and everyday life: shields, helmets, coins, chariots, ovens, pots, vases, trays, pendulums, mirrors and waterspouts; her recognisable face stared out from the bottoms of pitchers and cups. By this time she was a domesticated, rationalised, canonical image of an amulet rather than a representation of an inexplicable horror; she was already liberated from the unbearable burden of the unthinkable.

The *gorgoneion* literally figures on and in architecture; it is extraneous to its medium and completely independent from it. It is rather the medium itself which depends on the *gorgoneion* for its inauguration and its proper function as long as the device is believed to be operational. It is an essential supplement which historically underwent a process from an original "essential extra" to plain "added extra." From the modern point of view that draws a strict division between necessary structure and unnecessary ornament, the *gorgoneion* is just a gadget, a stand foreign to more complex, holistic worldviews. The *gorgoneion* is a gadget *sine qua non*, and a decorative horror on its way to becoming a "necessary angel." The only modern gadget vaguely comparable would be the real and/or "fake" surveillance camera, which is certainly thoroughly devoid of any charm.

The mythical guardian²⁶ engages psychologically by shocking, obstructing, confusing and distracting, while on the social level it controls boundaries dividing right from wrong, correct from incorrect, "in" from "out"; it acts as a regulator of moral norms in society.²⁷ The watchful guardian protects by functioning as a "mind reader," a higher intelligence capable of detecting and destroying



View of the nave of Hagia Sophia with cherubs, after Guillome-Joseph Grilot, *Relation nouvelle d'un voyage a Constantinople* (Paris, 1686). (Cyril Mango and Ahmet Ertug, *Hagia Sophia: A Vision for Empires*)

Marble statue of headless Athena with the prominent gorgoneion from the fronton of the temple of Apollo Daphnephoros, ca. 510 BC. Chalcis Museum. (*Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*)

harmful intentions and their couriers, while simultaneously protecting the threatened; or, in Jane Harrison's terms, as a maker of "an ugly face" "at you if you are doing wrong ... for you if you are doing right."²⁸ When Gorgon/Medusa recovered her original beautiful face, she lost control of social space, or better, she lost control in society. Another official, more religiously and politically correct guardian—another bodiless, winged head, this time of an angelic intelligence—a cherub or seraphim (four-faced and six-winged) could then take her place.

Regardless of iconographical and etiological plurality²⁹ and the fact that it embodies all trophy heads³⁰ as well as ritual masks and the religious terror associated with them, the *gorgoneion* does not stand for anything else but itself—it is a breathtaking, mind arresting image of the irrational and the unspeakable. It is a perfect own Other. As such, the Gorgon has a key into the worlds of our own deepest fears, if we allow her to access them, if we dare glance at her, and she flashes those worlds back to us in a most efficient way—personalised. Unavoidably, she creates a variety of views and interpretations of herself. Her association with a mirror is but a representation of what is known as projection in psychology.

Everything related to Medusa is ambivalent or, at least, ambiperceptible, and, of course, Gorgon/Medusa (hi)stories abound with inner discrepancies and variations, before and after the crucial encounter with Perseus, the executioner who used "the bodiless head alive" twice as a weapon of mass destruction before delivering it to his dispatcher, Athene. He simply pulled it out of that very special, silver pouch³¹ to overwhelm his adversaries.³² Did he hold it by its snake curls? Athene mounted the *gorgoneion*, the head of her own "sinned" priestess—or her Libyan competitor³³—to her aegis,³⁴ never to be disassociated from her again. Athene's enemy became her protectress, her trademark, her other (or primary?) self.³⁵ This identification persisted.³⁶ Thus not only did the goddess of reason in her blind revenge fail to eliminate Medusa, but she propagated and perpetuated her. The Gorgon was captured on the shield and cunningly defeated through the use of oblique reflection of its mirror-polished surface. And she finished on another, or maybe even the same shield, fused to it. Gorgon's appearance in this context (on the shield) is striking for its gradual change of depth: from the realm of an unreal existence she is literally brought to the surface and neutralised there just to continue to emerge through that same surface until re-realised in another realm, in all three dimensions. The mirror-shield, a true blade for Medusa, is stasis—a plane of separation, transition and re-emergence—becoming. The only real separation between the mighty dead Medusa and the protected is, at the same time, their connection—the plane on which she occurs, a surface for a face, a façade.

An intriguing, unaddressed question is what happened to Medusa's dead body. Her body be-

Nebraska), 10-21; the theme was also discussed by DuBois (*Sowing the Body*), Cixous (*The Laugh of the Medusa*), Bucu-Glucksmann (*La folie de voir*), and others. In general, the richness of dimensions found in the Gorgon/Medusa theme has constantly provided inspiration in art, literature and critical thought, resulting in a sizeable bibliography far beyond the scope of this sketch.

28. J. H. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 188. Also a ritual mask.
29. Various studies interpret the *gorgoneion* iconographically in connection with the sun, and eclipses, zoological (lion) and vegetal "faces," the Dionysian, and/or other masks, and Dyonissos himself. For a brief review of the theories, see Thalia Phillis Howe, "The Origin and Function of the Gorgon Head," *AJA* 58 (1954): 209-221.
30. *Tropaion*, a "monument to victory" is the stem for apo- and epitropaion. Among many other *baskania*, the Gorgon's head was the ultimate tropaion Evil Eye, as it was the most desirable, "top of the line" apotropaion (counter charm) after it was appropriated, although none of the Gorgons were known to have ever petrified anyone before. It certainly epitomised the head of a feared, respected and defeated enemy. The belief that its possession and public display augmented the strength of the victorious was itself based on the persuasion that the vital powers of the defeated were eternally preserved in such a head. This is shared by many peoples but the pre-Greek and Greek belief in *ker* as human essence located in the head has been studied at length. R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought about the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 26, 395-410; and Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*. Chapter V in particular presents the Gorgon as a Ker



- manifestation.
31. *Kibisis*, a piece of equipment which adjusted itself to hold anything, supplied by Athene and Hermes, together with the sickle (*harpe*), the helmet of darkness which made one invisible, winged sandals and a mirror shield to reflect the Gorgon. The whole setting, all actors and the equipment were "theatrical." Perseus' own name reveals him as Etruscan "*phersu*," a masked character, from which Latin "*persona*" derived. In many ways, including his famous winged head sculpture, Hermes is similar to the Gorgon.
 32. First Atlas, who tried to protect Medusa; then the sea monster defending Andromeda (in some versions he killed the monster by the sword in fair battle); the whole "gang" of Andromeda's suitors; and finally the tyrant Polydectes together with all the wedding guests.
 33. Norma Lorre Goodrich, *Priestesses* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990), 176. According to the literary sources of Pindar (*Pythian Odes* xii.16), Apollodorus (*The Library*, ii.4.3.) and Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, iv.792-802) she was initially the most beautiful of the three sisters but changed into a queenly monster, an image of horror, as a result of Athene's envy. The "queen" meaning of Medusa, the Latinised form of the Greek *medeon*, *medeosa*, a ruleress, guardian, was explained by an older generation of etymologists.
 34. Herodotus was the first to etymologically connect *aegis* with a goat (the origin of *aigis*, *idos*, *h* in *aix*, goat), and to hypothesise on the *gorgoneion* as a goat head and skin (worn by Libyan women) stretched over a metal shield. *The Histories*, iv.189. In the meaning of "rushing stone," "hurricane" (Aeschylus in Liddel & Scott's Greek-English Lexicon) it supported the "natural phenomena" theories like Rocher's in which the Gorgon is seen as a symbol of thunder clouds or Gadechens' expansion of the same direction in which, besides thunderstorms, all kinds of natural turbulences

came a backdrop, imminent "behind the scene," a body of the shielded, a polymorph structure clad with some façade. The separation of the formidable head made possible a substitution of her winged body with a custom-made body—on an "as needed" basis. The protected body is everything behind the plane to which the head is attached, whether a furnace, sarcophagus, floor mosaic, tympanum or buckle. There is no specific term which denotes this unique bondage between organic, living matter and inorganic material (in this case, the shield of Athene).³⁷ The remnants of that meaning³⁸ are found only in *amalgam*, a metathesis from the Greek *agalma* (live sculpture), which nowadays designates a soft, pliable mixture, originally containing mercury, the sole "live" metal.

The Gorgon was not evil herself, but rather ugly, terrifying.³⁹ The ethical ambiguity of the *gorgoneion*, the *pharmacos*,⁴⁰ good and bad at the same time, killer and saver, was resolved aesthetically. Even in a beautiful or melancholy type, the dazzling power of its horrifying facial features was represented with visceral curves seemingly in constant flux expressing both agony and fury. If shown full figure, even when her body was depicted sideways the head was always frontal rather than in profile,⁴¹ and always staring at the viewer. The spectator's eye is focused by labyrinthine figural entanglement.⁴² Thus Medusa became a necessary spectacle but the destructive gaze was ours, not hers. From our architectural standpoint, she could transform a building's surface into a "necessary theatre." Her connection to the theatrical is multifarious and too complex to fully discuss here. Much in both the shape⁴³ and "life" of the theatre is "gorgonean." The *gorgoneion* demands *theatron*. Spectators' gazes are her *raison d'être* and her the specialty, like that of a great performer, is to capture and engage onlookers' attention. There is great expectation. Everything on the *gorgoneion*'s disc-like visage seems to be in motion, ready to arrest and whirl in, rather comparable to the orchestra, the face of Odeon, where somewhat tamed dythirambic chorus dances were performed. Without the audience the *gorgoneion* is only a medallion. With both her expression and utterance being extraordinary and dramatised to the limit of comprehension, the *gorgoneion* is well suited theatrically. In the theatre, the domain of the eternally masked god Dyonissos,⁴⁴ the *gorgoneion* holds ground as the ultimate, active mask capable of eternalising scenes, as scenographia. (This is a whole other, yet related, subject.) Both her expression and utterance are extraordinary and (over)dramatised beyond comprehension, but theatrically suitable. The Gorgon/Medusa is anything but mute. Her sounds were linked to the unintelligible, whether unarticulated prophetic voice, or uncontrollable, wild beast-like shrieks, and sounds produced by sudden, violent tempests and eruptions in nature.⁴⁵ In his Twelfth Pythian Ode Pindar credited Athene directly for the invention not only of the instrument but also of the musical theme for aulos/flute, *nomos polukefalos*—the famous song of many heads, "the glorious wooer of contests to which people flock," when she bound into a tune the dirge of the Gorgons for their decapitated sister, Medusa.



Face 2: Janus

Now learn the reason for my shape though already you perceive it in part. Every door has two fronts, this way and that, whereof one faces the people and the other the house-god; and just as your human porter, seated at the threshold of the house-door, sees who goes out and in, so I, the porter of the heavenly court, behold at once both East and West.

—Ovid, *Fasti*, I, 134-9

Janus is the most architectural of all gods; and the most facial.⁴⁶ The combination of his attributes, his object-form—the arch, and his role as “mover,” a master of passage, including the passage of time, account for his significance in architectural considerations. Translated, his arch becomes a barrel vault; when rotated around the central axis, it results in a dome.

Janus’s faces are intrinsic to architecture. They are the faces inscribed within various passages of built structures, directing the flow of people and elements. He is commonly represented by his two faces, not front and back but two fronts, like the outcome of equal arguments, double truth, co-existence rather than prevalence. They are the story of direction, points of departure and arrival, the image of relativity or relationship. Movement is the only prerequisite for the awareness of the other face at the end of the tunnel, a face that reveals itself only after passage is completed. It is only thickness that distinguishes Janus the arch from Janus the barrel vault: a relative value, expressed through the time of the passage.

Janus and Vesta, sometimes presented as husband and wife, were the only personified sacred objects in the Roman state religion, which is a relic of the most remote beginnings of their sanctity. Since he supposedly WAS an arch and a doorway and she WAS a hearth and an altar, together they formed the essence of both domestic and public houses, and of the symbolic atrium of the Roman state, the forum.⁴⁷ He was always invoked at the beginning, and she wrapped up the end of all prayers. The antiquity and importance of Janus was preserved in this foremost position in prayers long after he lost religious supremacy to Jupiter. Roman belief made Janus a god of all beginnings,⁴⁸ and the god of all gods.⁴⁹ The year began with him as *Januarius*, as did every day with *Ianus Matutinus*. As he presided over the calendar, seasons, months and days, his control over time was emphasised and his ancient fertility role was maintained in the agricultural aspect of months and seasons. Both point to a supreme deity. Primordial, Aion-like time was embodied in Janus and cultivated in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, when he was commonly known as the king of the mythical Golden Age of Italy, the *Aeta Aurea*. If there is a real duality in Janus, it does not lie in his two- or four-facedness, but in his parallel and continuous “existence” both as an object and as a

are included: sea waves, the roar of the ocean, volcanic eruptions—all dynamic sublime in nature.

35. In the Attic form of the myth presented in Euripides’ *Ion*, Athene personally slays Medusa and affixes her head on her shield.

36. Athena’s symbols (and tools) revolve around eyes—appropriate for the old snake eye-goddess from Knossos—and she was commonly represented by or as a snake. Her extra-uterine offspring with Hephaistos, Erichthonios, is a snake-form. The Greeks related snakes to the chthonian and to the soul, the ancestry. On earliest coins and medals, Athena’s eye is intentionally enlarged; the obverse displays either her bulging-eye owl (a bird allegedly non-existent in Crete), the *gorgoneion* or Pegasus, offspring of the Gorgon. *Gorgo*, gray-eyed, is among Athena’s attributes as well as *glaukopis*, shining- or light-eyed. Light coloured eyes, rare in the Mediterranean, were attributed exceptional power, including a capacity for the Evil Eye. Athene is also known as *Gorgopis*, “the Gorgon-faced.” Carel Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1951), 128. Her helmet and her aegis could both be seen as forms of a mask, as was the Gorgon’s “face.”

37. Professor Marco Frascari first brought this successful organic/inorganic union to my attention in one of his seminars in the Ph.D. program at the University of Pennsylvania in 1991.

38. There are numerous words in every language expressing various degrees of the concept of joining living matter together (for example, grafting, symbiosis, hybridisation, planting or transplanting). As well, there are those which centre on “mixing” non-organic substances (blend, alloy, combination, compound, composition, fusion, merger, design, etc.). None is a specific, proper expression for the assemblage of the living head to the brazen shield.

39. Jean-Pierre Vernant explored the Gorgon in relation to terror as a dimension of supernatural in “Une face de terreur,” *La mort dans les yeux* (Paris: Hachette, 1985), 39-72. It builds



on Otto's division of the sacred into *tremendum* and *fascinans*. *Tremendum* is "incalculable and arbitrary" wrath, the holy anger of just or jealous gods, which persuades the fearful sinner. *Fascinans* is the uniquely attractive "and the creature who trembles before it, utterly cowed and cast down, has always at the same time the impulse to turn to it, nay even to make it somehow its own." R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 31. The experience corresponds to "dizzy intoxication," irresistible Dionysian divine ecstasy, and divine love for god's creatures. The duality of *fascinans* as the divine possession and evil obsession reflects the double meaning of *fascinus*—the evil and prophylactic eye.

40. Potentially poisonous. Athene allegedly gave two phials of Medusa's blood to Aesculapius, who used it for medicinal purposes. The legend also states that from her blood, dripping from Perseus' *kibisis* on his way back to Greece poisonous Libyan snakes were born. With the blood taken from the left side of her body Aesculapius could raise the dead, while the blood from her right side could destroy instantly. "Others say that Athene and Aesculapius divided the blood between them: he used it to save life, but she to destroy life and instigate wars. Athene had previously given two drops of this same blood to Erichthonios, one to kill, the other to cure, and fastened the phials to his serpent body with golden bands. Athene's dispensation of Gorgon-blood suggests that the curative rites used in this cult were a secret guarded by priestesses, which it was death to investigate—the Gorgon head is a formal warning to prayers." Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, vol. 1 (New York: Penguin Books, 1955), 175.

41. Gorgon's exceptional frontality coincides with the theatrical and with Greek archaic and classical aesthetics of the frontality of buildings. A winged creature, although chthonian in character (as most guardians are), Gorgon's domain is the air, which provides her with the possibility to always position herself frontally.

seemingly independent humanoid, an ideal ruler, a founder of Italy and inventor of everything worth inventing.⁵⁰ Alberti reminded us that *pater Ianus* was the first to build temples in Italy⁵¹ and speculated on the open theatres "in good old times when the image of Janus appeared on coins."⁵² The hearth, Vestals and *pater Ianus* are in their "proper," traditional places and relations in Alberti's dinner piece "Suspition."⁵³

Starting from Varro and Cicero, the etymological root for *ianus* has been seen in the Latin *eo, ire* (to go).⁵⁴ Geometrically and conceptually Janus seems to be highly abstract and, although extremely complex, it is a very smooth, somewhat linear, but truly flowing idea. The meaning of *Ianus* is tied to the acts of going, passing and travelling; hence the connection to thoroughfares, passages, and conduits which materialise in bridges, gates, arches, vaults, domes, ports, porticos, galleries and conveyors like aqueducts and sewers.

As a "simple god of doorways" he encompassed the arch itself (*ianus*), its infill—a gate, a doorway (*ianua*)—and, together with "built-in" protection in the form of personal or abstract guardianship, constituted a complete mechanism of entering and exiting.⁵⁵ As a gate and passage, *Ianus* is embodied in the triumphal arch and involved in the *imperium* and the *triumphus*. Known as "opener" and "closer," he was presented, when fully anthropomorphised, with a key and staff, the latter identified as hawthorn⁵⁶ which was thought to bestow blessing and keep evil away.

As the starting point, *Ianus* was naturally associated also with the end point, *terminus*, which brought him into the category of herms, boundary stones (*terminus* being one of them) and crossroad markers. *Ianus* was known as *rector viarum*, he who presides over roads. The face of the *Ianus*-arch most likely originated in the intricate relationship between marking and protecting passages by herms. *Ianus*' faces are most likely the faces of boundary markers and road pointers.⁵⁷ The position of a domestic herm when inside the house was next to the domestic altar, the hearth of the house, while the one outside was next to the entrance; they belonged to the women and men of the house respectively. Public buildings were similarly marked. The transposition of the herm into an arch resulted in faced arches and openings; but there must have been something "natural" in the overlap that made it widely acceptable both visually and semantically. This lies in a formal anthropocentrism: the curve of the arch being reminiscent of a forehead, and an archform tending to accommodate the round shape of a face. Thus, the double face of *Hermes* the herm was transposed on the two sides, front and back, of the passage marker, fitting nicely into the *ianus* corridor or way. In modern terms, *bifrons* would mark a two-way street. A realisation that the "front" and "back" in thoroughfares are reversible, depending on direction, resulted in the recognition of a passage as a two-fronted phenomenon and its symbolic representation by *ianus bifrons*. Accordingly, *quadrifrons* stood for a crossroad. *Ianus*'s faces became visages of transition achieved through passage; what is often seen as the dual identity of *Ianus* are marks of the beginning of a voyage and of its end, both reminders of the transformation occurring "along the way" and the reconciliation of its extreme points. That the

faces are imminent representations inscribed into Janus forms is attested to by the closeness preserved in the Italian words for vault (*volta*)⁵⁸ and face (*volto*).

Many scholars, beginning with St. Augustine who understood Janus as the world, *mundus*,⁵⁹ objected to the division of beginnings and ends between two deities, suggesting that the two inseparable faces should refer to Janus and Terminus respectively, with the argument that the Janus-world sustains both the beginnings and ends of things. Augustine wondered, “What folly it is to give him only half power in work when in his image they give him two faces!”⁶⁰ When he is a heavenly orb, Janus’ arch is the “heavenly mantle.” As a supreme celestial deity, called Dianus, Janus is paired with Jana or Diana, and in this combination they are interpreted together as the moon, Luna, or as both the sun, Sol, and Luna, one of the oldest, elemental, most pervasive, and graphically “facial” beliefs.

It is a common misconception to see in Janus a Roman god without a Greek or Eastern correlative.⁶¹ The Greeks had a corresponding divinity in Hermes, the god of communication, crossings and doors (*propylaios*, *prothuraios* [before the door], *strophaios* [the pivoter]); and also in Apollo (*thuraios* [of the door], and *ageiros* [opener]). Hecate, too, had matching attributes. All often appeared polycephalic. In addition, many other cultures nurtured polycephalic or multifacial, all-seeing, omnipresent door and road related divinities.⁶² Most scholars agree that Janus, although a Latin name, was an Italic, if not Etruscan deity. Janus’ presumed Etruscan origin, as the founder of Janiculum, a part of the Etruscan territory on the opposite side of the Tiber from Rome, was a source and centre of Tuscan pride in their Etruscan heritage from the fourteenth century on. Renaissance scholars, artists and antiquarians identified Janus with Etruscan Vertumnus, a polymorph from Propertius’ elegy.⁶³ In my opinion, Janus was a *numen* presiding over the *possibility* of passing, moving from one thing and place to another, from one day to another, and he was the ruler of the quality of that passage. It is in Janus’s power either to make the passage unobstructed, safe and smooth, or to block and obstruct it, as a god of real life could do.

Interface ‘R’

In his treatise *On Painting* Alberti proposed a character who would make a psychological “summary” of the scenes represented by *historiae*, and he suggested as one of the *historia* commentator’s possible moods a Gorgon-like expression that “*menaces with an angry face and flashing eyes so that none should come near.*”⁶⁴ Both Alberti, the modernist—the advocate of variety but *ne quid nimis*—and Alberti, the Augustinian priest, reserved little explicit attention for *gorgoneia* in his writings or on his buildings. Yet his acceptance, even recommendation, of a “gorgonean” mood suggests that Alberti did not consider a typical Gorgon expression *a priori* inappropriate for public display.⁶⁵ At least, not in principle. His position on the related issue of influencing spectators was positive, since

42. As a method of grabbing visual attention, this is used with other mandala-like figures. The theory of eye-catching force of amulets which defeat fascination with fascination was first formulated by Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 8 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 427.

43. The “hustle and bustle” of theatron proper (originally only the audience), a classical vision of spontaneity and “freedom of expression” in antiquity corresponds to either the Gorgon’s unpredictable, tangled curls or, seen from the opposite side, a wavy beard of Dyonissos. Both as an event and as a form the theatre is a rather appropriate building which could represent the dazzling head of Gorgon/Medusa.

44. Here I see Dyonissos as a generic mask, the image of the ephemeral (one never knows which form his next appearance would take nor where he would resurface). Gorgoneion is a single mask, but alive. His variety and her sameness both “indulge” in unpredictability, stressing the limitation of rationality.

45. Some “vocal” theorists explain her facial spasm and bulging eyes as the result of her screaming effort. Some relate Gorgon’s origin both etymologically and etymologically to fricative sounds. Rocher explains the Gorgon as cloud, lightning and the sound of thunder based on the Sanskrit stem “garg” which others thought referred to throat, gurgling and guttural noises (not storms in particular). Gargoyles and Gargantua are Gorgon’s “relatives”; they come from the same stem.

46. Not taking into account the obscure Greek goddess Praxidikae, exclusively represented as a face-mask and believed to be an epiphany of Persephone and somewhat related to the pomegranate, her fruit and the fruit of the underworld. Both are certainly related to the Gorgon’s head.

47. This position is advocated most strongly by Rocher.

48. In one of the oldest documents of Latin culture, the *Salian hymns*, Janus is addressed: “O Planter God, arise. Everything indeed have I/ committed unto (thee as) the Opener. Now art/ thou the Doorkeeper, thou art the Good Creator,/ the Good God of Beginnings. Thou’lt come especially./ Thou the



- superior of these kings." Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, vii.26.
49. "... Sing ye to the Father of the Gods, entreat the God of the Gods." Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, vii.27. "I sit at heaven's gate with the gentle Hours; my office regulates the goings and the comings of Jupiter himself." Ovid, *Fasti*, i.125-7.
50. The bringer of "civilisation," he is synonymous with both discursive and natural arts, a cultivation of useful crafts, fine arts and cultured conduct. He taught people, for example, wine, cheese and wreath making.
51. L. B. Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. J. Rykwert, N. Leach and R. Tavernor (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 7.2. I have used this translation throughout.
52. *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, 8.7.
53. *The Dinner Pieces*, Book III, in the English translation by David Marsh (Binghamton: Renaissance Society of America, 1987), 62-4. Marsh actually commented on the obscurity of Janus's connection with Vestals, 241 f. 6.
54. "... and derived the name from *ire*. Hence the name '*jani*' for archways and '*januae*' for the portals of secular buildings." Cicero, *De natura deorum*, ii.68. Most linguists still agree on this point. Ernout and Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine: histoire des mots* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1985).
55. The jurisdiction over the doorway was further divided among Cardea (*cardines*) the hinge, Limentinus (*limina*) the threshold, and Forculus (*fores*), the door wing. Arquis and Fornix also stood for arches, and Fornax (*fornax*) was a divinity of the furnace.
56. Whitethorne, *spina alba*. Ovid, *Fasti*, 6.
57. This role provides one of the close ties between Janus and Hermes, and not the only one. Like Janus, Hermes is the god of roads and communication whose sacred number is four. The most famous Janus-herm is the *quadrifronts* on pons Fabricius. *Jani* stand to Janus as herms to Hermes.
58. Meanings of time and turn still present in *volta* coincide with Janus's jurisdiction over time and space and provide an etymological connection with Vertumnus, with whom Janus was often identified in the Renaissance.
59. St. Augustine, *De civitas dei*, vii.7 entitled "Whether it is reasonable to

he regarded it a natural role of pictorial arts. The aim of "praise and admiration" (speaking of *historiae*) was achieved through the agent of "capturing the eye of whatever learned or unlearned person is looking at it and *moving his soul*," by means of "agreeably and pleasantly attractive *historiae*."⁶⁶ Nor is there any indication that Alberti considered *gorgoneia* as talismans, let alone efficient ones, nor that he believed in them.⁶⁷ Therefore there was neither direct nor indirect theoretical prohibition on Alberti's part for the use of *gorgoneia* and representations of the Gorgon (at least for a classical, "bello" type) or any other type of ornament, as long as it was clearly an element of ornamentation. As for the actual Gorgon face, it is most likely that Alberti simply was not particularly interested in the motif and preferred to design his own version of the face on and for the façade.

Alberti's mention of "ornamental masks" on the outer red clay tiles (*De re Aedificatoria*, 7.10) may be a reference to *gorgoneia*, since they were habitually used as end-tiles (*anthemia*), but it could also have been some other face (satyr, Dyonissos) or just a theatrical mask. Since he branded all monstrosities (1.9) and exaggeration as unpleasant to the eye, it is possible that he considered the Gorgon a graceless and unseemly monster and therefore inappropriate or useless for his aesthetics of beauty and grace. Perhaps he simply placed all *gorgoneia* in the category of masks or trophies (6.13 on the column) or maybe even in the "uncommon gifts of nature" (adorning the wall and roof, 6.5). He did mention separately, though, water spouts in the form of lions' heads (7.9). Masks, in Alberti's division of architecture, certainly belonged to ornaments, "a form of auxiliary light and complement to beauty" (6.2), delight and enchantment responsible for the overall grace of a building.

The corner faces on the capitals of small order flanking the western entryway of Saint Andrea in Mantua were doubtless male masks: a series of winged heads of bodiless guardians—cherubs, a christianised version of the *gorgoneion*—were rhythmically positioned on both the exterior and interior fascias. They stood at the places corresponding to those where Gorgon heads commonly appeared in antiquity, and, I believe, with a similar role. Alberti employed but did not invent this cherub: Brunelleschi had already devised a cherub head in the medallion as a repetitious motif on the fascias of both Sagrestia Vecchia and Capella Vecchia, a wonderful piece of graphic design tying together different buildings for the same patron.⁶⁸ A very similar band, this time two pairs of cherubs flanking a medallioned sheep/Christ, was used on the interior cornice of Saint Andrea⁶⁹ and an identical one inside the Pazzi chapel.⁷⁰

Donatello operated with the same medieval cherub on his extraordinary Madonna for the altar of Sant'Antonio in Padua, a work displaying the influence of antiquity both in form and in motif. The Virgin is portrayed in the typical guise of the mother goddess, Cybele, although she stands, rather than sits in front of her Egyptianised throne, for which Donatello designed front legs by "contracting" lions, commonly flanking the throne, and the leg of the seat into a single feline leg with a sphinx's face, meant to serve as an armrest. Her hieratic attitude was of the Byzantine type; her coiffure classical; and although she wore Cybele's usual crown it was of an unusual kind, with axially projecting cherubs. She had another matching cherub on her chest, at the same spot where *gorgoneia* stood attached to the aegides of both Athene and Zeus. Since Donatello identified the

Mother of Gods and the Mother of God so keenly, the design had to be not only deliberate but also erudite.

Clad in marble intarsia—which, together with mosaic, Alberti tells us, “imitates the picture”—the façade of Santa Maria Novella stands between Alberti’s theoretical “how-to” descriptions for the panel revetments and paving methods from *De re aedificatoria* (6.11) which he considers similar (“almost all that we said about revetment applies equally to paving”) and painting (“the architect, if I am not mistaken, takes from the painter architraves, bases, capitals, columns, facades and other similar things”⁷¹). Except for the articulated, recessed entrance, the use of *opera sectile* (an arrangement of small pieces that could be cut, as for pavement) enabled Alberti to turn the façade into an ekphratic expression, an extraordinarily crafted curtain not unlike a decorative box or book cover (reliquary), although less flamboyant colourwise than its usual rhetorical counterpart.⁷² Alberti was “thrown” into this marble intarsia finish by the existing façade and his response was contextual. Not only did he decide to strike accord with the material of the existing church façade, ensuring that the finish and the pattern resonated with Brunelleschi’s duomo (and Giotto’s campanile), but also with the baptistery (still considered an ancient temple of Mars), San Miniato al Monte, and even the existing (and preserved) old façade of the “mysterious” Badia Fiesolana, with which he seems to have been involved.⁷³ Alberti certainly was aware of this resonance, which he extended to San Pancrazio not by chance but by design, thus integrating his patron’s religious enterprises into the best of the Florentine building tradition.

The focus of the tympanum of Santa Maria Novella, the radiant child’s face directly above the pre-existing oculus of the façade has been the subject of numerous interpretations. Who is the child? What is the meaning of the image? The Rising Sun, ancient or hermetic Sol, some other celestial “intelligence,” Alberti’s and/or Rucellai’s guardian angel or the Supreme Being, the only God that Alberti, the priest, would have acknowledged? Whatever the “correct” answer,⁷⁴ the bodiless face is an emitter or transmitter of ethereal blissfulness. The same ray-emitting face, this time framed by an oak wreath, appears in San Sebastiano on the three panels presently blocking the three central doorways. The middle one is covered by the Gonzaga stemma in original stone treatment. The superimposed panel, then, identifies the patron as the enlightening face. Although the analogy with the glowing face of Santa Maria Novella would identify it with Giovanni Rucellai, Alberti could have intended some other option, or several simultaneously, which I believe was the case. Literally layered over each other are a bodiless sun-face, a shield and a stemma, the latter a shield of the family/house and therefore standing for the family leader and the whole family, “protecting” and appropriating everything to which it was attached. Converging traditions, the interchangeability of representations and the mingling of concepts of Helios with gleaming eyes, Sol Invictus as Jesus, the hermetic Sun, the halo of God,⁷⁵ and a portrait of the patron of the building are side branches in the line of “evolution” from the Gorgon’s head to archangels and their replacement with the head of Jesus and the representations of the Supreme Being, the “main branch” I want to emphasise.

What did Alberti intend with the two exuberantly radiant “pupils” under the “ears” on both

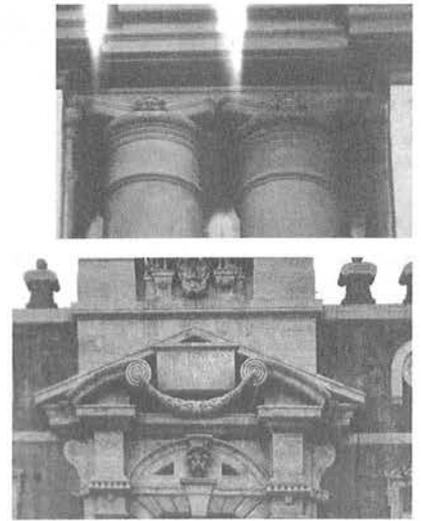
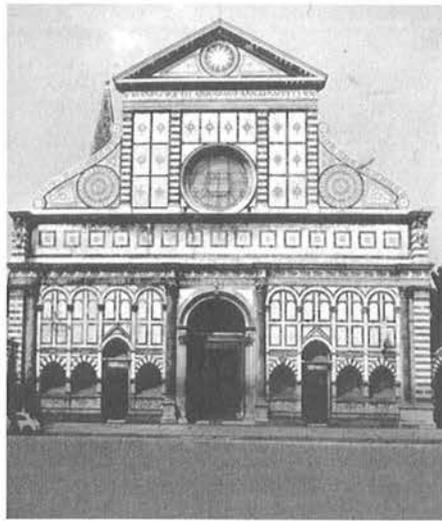
separate Janus and Terminus as two distinct deities.”

60. St. Augustine, *De civitas dei*, vii.7.
61. Ovid’s “For Greece hath no divinity like thee” (*Fasti*, i.90) reinforced this belief. On the Mesopotamian origin of the two-faced god see H. T. Bossert, *Janus und der Mann mit der Adler- oder Greifenmaske* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut in het Nabije Oosten, 1959).
62. R. Pettazzoni, *L’onniscienza del dio* (Einaudi, 1955); Cook, *Zeus*, 323–400.
63. Propertius, *Elegies*, iv.2, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard University Press, 1990).
64. On the movement and guidance in *historia*: “In an *historia* I like to see someone who admonishes and points out to us what is happening there; or beckons with his hand to see; or menaces with an angry face and flashing eyes so that none should come near; or shows some danger or marvelous thing there; or invites us to laugh or to weep.” L. B. Alberti, *On Painting*, 78. I have used Spencer’s translation (Yale University Press, 1966 edition) throughout.
65. That Alberti intended *historiae* to be “told” on the buildings is explicit in “along the face of the wall inscriptions and carved *historiae* should be added in square or circular panels”. *De re aedificatoria*, 8.6.147.
66. Alberti, *On Painting*, 75. One of Alberti’s central themes is the idea of “pleasing” which explores subject/object relations and implies influencing.
67. Alberti mentions examples of the arcane and magical use of ornament (among ancients, of course, and not contemporary) when he discusses the extraordinary as a method of adding dignity to places in *De re aedificatoria*, 6.4. His last example is Plutarch’s account of a statue in Pellene which “if taken out of the temple by a priest, would fill everything, whatever it faced, with terror and great anxiety, because no eye could look at it without fear” and concludes that “these anecdotes are included for entertainment” (6.4).
68. That this was intended as a unifying element for the two Medici chapels was written in the “testamento dal 1429” and quoted in E. Battisti, *Phillippo Brunelleschi* (Milano: Electa, 1989), 82. Less certain is the authorship of the ornaments in San Lorenzo where a similar motif is used above the column capitals between the naves; eight

ALBERTI. S. Maria Novella.
Photo: Gordana Kostich-Lefebvre

MICHELANGELO. Palazzo Conservatori.
Detail of capitals.
Photo: Gordana Kostich-Lefebvre

MICHELANGELO. Porta Pia. The guardian.
Photo: Gordana Kostich-Lefebvre



lovely cherubs appear on every "cap" of the column on both sides of four medallioned sheep.

69. Alberti connected all his commissions for Rucellai by using the same continuous band of repetitious Rucellai emblems on buildings' fascias: a pulsation of sails blown by Fortuna's wind in bas-relief on the Palazzo Rucellai and in marble incrustations on the Santa Maria Novella and Loggia Rucellai. These were modern designs in comparison to ornamental treatments in both classical and gothic architecture, although resulting from both. (Other Rucellai emblems—a ring with three crested feathers or three intertwined rings—form a separate soffit or combine with the sail.)

70. The motif of a single "Medicean" medallioned cherub appears on the exterior fascia of the Pazzi chapel, but since at least the Pazzi exterior decorative system was probably completely done by Giuliano da Maiano, this has to be taken with great reserve.

71. *On Painting*, 64.

72. On this aspect of Alberti's work and the place of his ekphrastic architectural allegory in *Della tranquillità dell'anima* in the tradition of similar descriptions, as well as on Alberti's related views on the ornament, including the knowledge of and use of various marbles and semi-precious stones, see C. Smith, "Leon Battista Alberti e l'ornamento: rivestimenti parietali e pavimentazioni," in *Leon Battista Alberti*, eds. Rykwert & Engel (Milano: Electa, 1994), 196-215.

73. Eugene Johnson, *Saint Andrea in Mantua: the building history*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), 59-60; Amedeo Belluzzi, "La Badia Fiesolana," in *Filippo Brunelleschi: la sua opera e il suo tempo*, vol. II, (Firenze: Centro Di, 1980), 495-502.

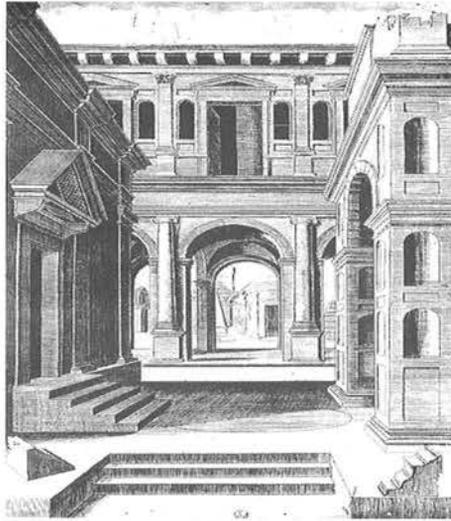
74. To mention just two intricate interpretations from more than a dozen: Bardeschi, Dezzi, "Facciata and

sides of the central oculus? It is possible that he created the two discs only as a graceful infill for the given space, a geometric exercise in hermetic doctrine, or some other abstract exploration of nature. But Alberti's own "winged eye" could itself have observed that "nature herself seems to delight in painting, for in the cut faces of marble she often paints centaurs and faces of bearded and curly headed kings."⁷⁶ Couldn't he have projected these pupils as his building's eyes?

In this context the "invention" of a remarkable new theory on the relationship between architecture and talisman, inspired and formulated by a general aspiration towards ideal beauty, should be mentioned. Alberti expressed it in the general section on the ornament in *De re aedificatoria*, in one of his most ambitious and exalted inquiries: "What other human art might sufficiently protect a building to save it from human attack?"⁷⁷ And the answer was, "None but architecture." This was not a rhetorical preface to the physical architecture of superior military defence, a grave concern in Alberti's time, but an introduction to the utopian heights of the power of holistic beauty. With this comparison of the most concrete and practical with the most abstract and ephemeral of architectural preoccupations, Alberti deliberately⁷⁸ set a tension between utility and beauty in order to underline the strength within intangible "compartment" and visible ornamentation. The whole building was thus turned into an amulet, its splendor becoming the fascinator.

"Beauty may even influence an enemy," Alberti explained, "by restraining his anger and so preventing the work from being violated. Thus I might be so bold as to state: no other means is as effective in protecting a work from damage and human injury as is dignity and grace of form."⁷⁹ To contrive a building of such a beauty, ornamented so tastefully as to inspire such admiration even in the enemy was not only a building's best protection but also architects' best recommendation. The idea of an architecture empowered by its own inner and outer harmony, resulting in an emanation capable of literally moving the enemy to spare it from destruction, had its parallels in other arts.⁸⁰ Naturally, the formulation of an essentially Orphic concept of an ideal, live beauty and its absolute effect—propagated in the Renaissance through Plato—brought onto the scene Orpheus himself and the old parallel of architecture and music. The perfect musician performing magical music, enchanting, taming and transforming friends and foes alike was now paired to this utopian, self-defending, magical architecture.

Art and enchantment were re-united, and if this was an *exemplum* of the ultimate standard for beauty, it contained as much desire for the magical effect as did "traditional" talismans. Considering the amount of Renaissance discourse among leading philosophers dealing, one way or another, with talismans, no change in standards could render obsolete "orthodox" talismans, including guardian



Inside out.
FILIPPO LIPPI. Annunciation, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Barberini.
(Maria Pia Mannini and Mario Fagioli, *Filippo Lippi: catalogo completo*)

SEBASTIANO SERLIO. From *The Five Books of Architecture*, Book III.
(Sesto Seminario Internazionale di Storia dell'Architettura, *Vincenza 31 agosto-4 settembre 1987*, a cura di Christof Thoenes)

heads. A modern preoccupation with the search for the optimal relationship among building elements relieved the apotropaic burden from building attachments. The elimination of unseemliness⁸¹ freed both the ornament and the artist from some of the unwieldiness and from the obligation towards existing building norms. On the authority of his observation of classical buildings, Alberti encouraged a certain openness towards the intermingling and translation of motifs. Like metaphors (and probably like the well-known examples of Donatello) they were transferable, free to move from one medium and from one scale to another. "For their spherical vaults the architects of antiquity borrowed ornaments used by silversmiths for their sacrificial bowls. For barrel and cross vaulting they copied the patterning commonly found on bedspreads.... to produce a result which could not be more graceful."⁸²

It was Michelangelo who transformed both *gorgoneia* and cherubs into angry male masks clearly of his own design, and found ample uses for them.⁸³ A "mask" study from the Royal Library, Windsor most likely was a study for more than one mask,⁸⁴ including the pedimental Janus visage with a Gorgonean expression for the "outside" face⁸⁵ of Porta Pia envisaged, properly, not only as different but also as considerably more intimidating than the tamed, matching "inside" face, turned towards the city. Michelangelo transformed a gate into a house for a gate—the gate-House, a real Janus bifrons structure. His concentration on the portal resulted in a face with open mouth and that painterly,⁸⁶ perspectival middle gate behind—a throat opening. It is not surprising that this inspired the entrance of palazzo Zuccari in Rome and maybe even the "bizarre" walk-in head of Bomarzo Park. Porta Pia is a building with a theatrical façade, rather than a hole in the wall; its gate, Ackerman noted, "belongs more to the street than to the walls."⁸⁷ But isn't a façade always theatrical, always a spectacle, and a gate sacred even prior to being ceremonial, belonging by definition to the road, direction, street and not to the wall, defenceless but defended? The city gate also was the most democratic piece of the city. It belonged to everyone.

With or without doors, a framed entry was a predominant Renaissance image. While entries or passages, both private and public, received a special treatment universally, Renaissance treatises excelled on the topic of doors and gates. This theoretical treatment commenced, of course, with Alberti; but entries were also given true prominence in designs, starting again with Alberti's modern application of triumphal entries on façades. This interest in the symbolism and morphology of the gate culminated in Serlio's "*Extraordinary Book*" of gateways⁸⁸ which was also a proclamation of

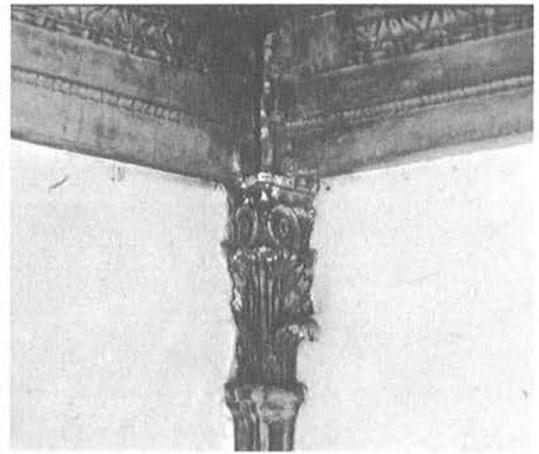
Sole in Leone: Leon Battista Alberti: astrologia, cosmologia e tradizione ermetica nella facciata di Santa Maria Novella," *Psicon*, I (1974); Gabriel Blumenthal, "Una profezia astronomica di Leon Battista Alberti," *Labyrinthos*, v. 7-8 no. 13-16 (1988-1989): 63-80.

75. Typical and contemporary would be the representation of a round sun-face on a golden halo with continuous hair/beard/rays all around the face in the centre of the composition of "The Coronation of the Virgin" from the Carrand triptych in Bargello, attributed to Giovanni di Francesco (most likely the painter of the Rucellai frescoes in the *altana*). The three little faces which form a triangle to the arch that houses the whole scene are also typical and could be traced at least to the Etruscan porta Marzia of Perugia.

76. Alberti, *On painting*, 62. The "faces of bearded kings" were traced to the treatise on minerals by Albertus Magnus (*De mineralibus* i.3.1), by Filarete who elaborated the same theme with the examples of the panels at San Marco in Venice (direct knowledge) and Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (learned about through testimony). Filarete, *Treatise*, iii.17r. Filarete recommended seeing a particularly expressed figure "in the form of a hermit with a beard ... and with his hands joined together so he appears to be praying" on the panel for the Venetian chapel of the doge (iii.17r). The sentence that follows in Alberti about the Pyrrhus gem on which nature carved all nine muses with their symbols is from Pliny, *Natural History*, xxxvii.1.3. Filarete repeated this same example (together with many more) in Book XIX where he followed Alberti closely but where he stressed again his "own" Venetian "case" (156r). On clouds and animals "made by nature appear in a strange way" on marbles. Leonardo upgraded the theme into invention: "Among other things I shall not scruple to deliver a new method of assisting the invention, though trifling

DONATELLO. Chapel of the Annunciation, S. Croce, Florence.
(M. Bugarelli and M. Ceriana, *All'Ombra delle volte*)

ALBERTI. S. Pancrazio, corner detail.
(F. Borsi, *Leon Battista Alberti: Opera Completa*)



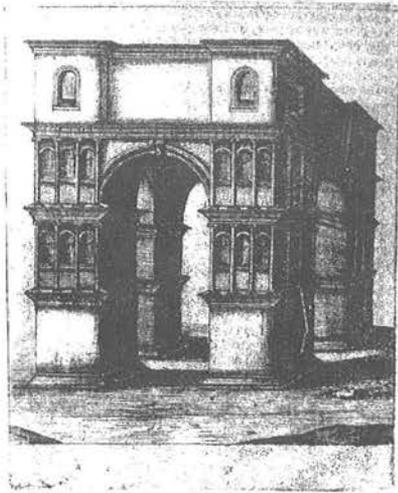
in appearance, may yet be of considerable service in opening the mind, and putting it upon the scent of new thoughts; and it is this. If you look upon an old wall covered with dirt or the odd appearance of some streaked stones, you may discover several things like landscape, battles, clouds, uncommon attitudes, humorous faces, draperies &c. Out of this confused mass of objects, the mind will be furnished with abundance of designs and subjects perfectly new." From *Treatise on Painting*, quoted in J.-C. Lebensztejn, "In black and white: Alexander's Cozen's new method (1785)" in N. Brayson, ed., *Calligram* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 131.

77. *De re aedificatoria*, 6.2.
78. Alberti certainly knew how idealistic his aspiration was just by looking around himself. He also must have known about St. Augustine's condemnation of general pagan ruthlessness and desecration of the temple refuges. *De civitas dei*, i.1-8.
79. *De re aedificatoria*, 6.2.
80. But a building of such stunning beauty to transform malevolence to benevolence? In the story of Amphiön it was music that charmed stones to move and order themselves into a wall. The stories of St. Jerome and the lion; the narrator of the *Stories of 1001 Nights* and the squeamish sultan; and the sheep whose ballet enchanted a blood-thirsty wolf from Andric's wonderful fable *Aska and the Wolf* all come to mind with the theme of the triumph of art over life-threatening force. Alberti's enhanced aesthetic demand was not exclusively a rhetorical device and he picked up the theme again speaking about the "incredible esteem in which painted panels have been held" and, on the authority of Pliny, presented the example of the painting of Protogenes that ransomed the whole city of Rhodes from the enemy when Demetrius, fearing that his army might destroy the picture during the sacking of

the gate as a type. Entryways were subjected to rigorous measuring and "ordering," carefully compared, classified and codified; and matched not only with "orders" but also with existing, modern examples which were surveyed and compared among themselves. Driven by a joy of perspectival renderings, paired with the revived interest in classical theatrical scenes, studied from Vitruvius, Renaissance artists expounded the theatricality of architectural settings. Naturally, the doorway, the gate and the passage were focal points in the perception of space and its representation.

The corner view is always considered a privileged observation point: looking out, it covers a wide visual angle of at least 270 degrees; inside, it provides seclusion and a good "perspective" for a discrete, guarding eye. This is why some of the oldest faced herms, such as Janus quadrifrons from Pons Fabricius, face diagonally from their square base herm body (four is a number sacred to Hermes). But the most unusual among multifaced diagonal capitals are those of the Cavalcanti tabernacle in Santa Croce (1428-33) with a pair of extraordinary identical "quadrifrons" faces topped by a Corinthian abacus and placed on two square columns covered by a relief of scale-like, smooth-edged leaves. Faces are positioned diagonally to the orthogonal shaft axes; nothing might escape their visual cross examination. Are the spiral ends of the diagonal volutes of Corinthian and Italic columns guardian eyes as well? Is the famous Brunelleschi corner pilaster detail, a diagonal voluta of the Corinthian capital (one sixteenth of the capital size) from the San Lorenzo and Pazzi—and repeated by Alberti in San Pancrazio—just a turning corner or a pair of focused eyes in their "proper" place?⁸⁹

There is a particular architectural "resurrection" of Janus in the Renaissance which must be included in this inquiry, although space allows only an extremely sketchy picture. It revolves around the Janus Quadrifrons on the forum Boarium,⁹⁰ the only standing structure of this kind in Rome both then and now. This double gatehouse was understood as a building, referred to commonly, interchangeably as *Templum Iani* or *Templum Vertumni*. It was relentlessly studied and drawn in the fifteenth and especially the sixteenth century and was almost without restriction included in Renaissance pictorial maps of Rome from the start.⁹¹ From Giuliano and Antonio(s) da Sangallo to della Volpaia, Dosio to Ligorio, from field sketches to fantastic reconstructions, the monument served as a case study for antiquarian architects.^{92,3} Although clad in marble, this structure is in many ways humble by comparison with other "antiquities"⁹³ of the time, especially in its modest dimensions (seven metres for the upper width of the arches; six and a half metres at the bottom). Why and how



A view of Janus Quadrifrons from *Gallus Romae hospes*, published in 1585 by Louis de Montjosieu under the pseudonym Ludovicus Demontiosius. (Philip Jacks, *The Antiquarian and the Myth of Antiquity: The Origins of Rome in Renaissance Thought*)

The Quadrifrons today.
Photo: Gordana Kostich-Lefebvre

did it generate such an interest? There are at least two immediate answers to this question: one is physical, the other theoretical.

The first is that its rather unusual compactness and spatial simplicity made it attractive for drafting exercises.⁹⁴ The second concerns the overlaying of topographic, historiographic and iconographic reconstructions of *iani* in relation to other fragments of Rome, a work undertaken by antiquarians in their attempt to discover, understand and re-interpret their own past. Their mistakes were fair. Classical, poetic literary “bits” were matched with contemporary speculations, resulting in searches for *Iani medius, imus and summus*, for example, the meanings and positions of which are as misty today as they were then. The happy rule of the eponymous king/pater from Janiculum—guardian Janus, the keyholder—and his association with the ship,⁹⁵ as well as his identification with biblical Noah originated and persisted in popular persuasion long before Annius da Viterbo framed it within literary tradition.⁹⁶ The obvious similarities with St. Peter and the pontifex of the Vatican hill, the twin of Janiculum, were just a matter of “authorisation.” And that came through the theoretical views of the learned humanist and Augustinian Prior, Egidio da Viterbo, the leading theologian under Julius II and still in office during the pontificates of subsequent Medici popes. In his writings Janus appeared as a bridge⁹⁷ between old and new time (the third and fourth eras in Egidio’s historical system), Rome and ante-polis, rulers on earth and in heaven. Heinrich Pfeiffer introduced a theory of Egidio’s probable (whether direct or indirect) role in creating the program for Raphael’s stanze, elaborating the philosophical expertise and subtleties which surpassed the knowledge of Raphael, Bramante, Calvo and their circle and for which they supposedly needed additional guidance.⁹⁸

What interests us most here, however, is the possible Janus Quadrifrons setting for the *School of Athens* which was first proposed by Hülsen almost a century ago.⁹⁹ Raphael’s structure with four open arches is actually not monumental at all, but of dimensions close to those of a quadrifrons.¹⁰⁰ Yet, within the structure, in perspective, Raphael showed a slight curvature indicating a domed cover above the level of the arches. The presence of the cupola in the painting, not otherwise a feature of the quadrifrons, was the main argument for rejecting the Janus Quadrifrons as a setting for the famous philosophy scene. Nevertheless, the four-arched structure was considered unfinished on the upper level and the medieval Frangipani addition allowed speculation. Raphael could have believed that there originally was a cupola; or maybe he just wanted to cover the Janus space with the heavenly dome, that is, Janus the mighty orb himself. Of course, the competitive proposal for the setting, the one most scholars favour, was a reflection of the project for St. Peter. The perceived

town decided, instead, to abandon the whole campaign. (*On painting*, 65.) This, it should be noted, was a picture in the king’s own mind, something he had never seen; therefore he honoured his own mental creation of an orally transmitted visual impression.

81. *De re aedificatoria*, 6.5.

82. *De re aedificatoria*, 7.11.

83. Like the heads on the columns in the Laurentian library, and masks on its floor; little *maschera* peeking down from capitals of Conservatori bay finished during his life time etc. See G. C. Argan & B. Contardi, *Michelangelo architect*, trans. M. L. Grayson (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1993), 132-3; 125; 237-8 respectively. Michelangelo’s revival of the use of herms is not unrelated.

84. Which Hersey compares to molding details in the Medici chapel in San Lorenzo, dent-masks *par excellence* (*The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1988], 107-9), but also comparable to the buckle masks on Guiliano’s armor, usually a *gorgoneion*.

85. Only executed by Virginio Vespignani in the mid-nineteenth century together with the whole exterior face.

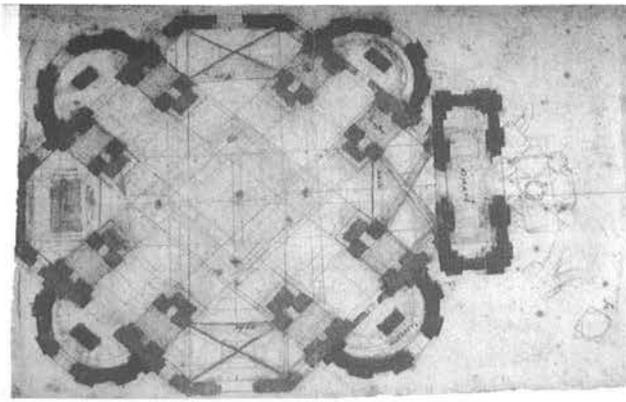
86. Critics have commonly characterised Porta Pia as painterly enterprise (Decio Gioseffi), a “lighthearted” (Argan) “pure scenography” (Ackerman).

87. J. Ackerman, *Architecture of Michelangelo* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 246.

88. Published in 1551. Serlio’s book IV on orders, from 1537, and book III on antiquities from 1540, are both, at least graphically, centred on entrances. Michelangelo would have known these publications prior to designing Porta Pia around 1560.

89. Here we come closest to the complicated issue of intersections, turning corners (*anguli*), angles and guardians or angels, and their perspectives, an entire subject in itself.

90. The history of this monument of uncertain date is outlined in various topo-



graphic dictionaries; it never was a temple but a shelter for cattle merchants. Another Janus Quadrifrons from Forum Nervae (its popular name, *Transitorium*, attests its importance as a traffic artery) is known only in Martial's and Statius's addresses to Emperor Domitian and seems to have been rebuilt by him. Most modern, as well as some classical scholars merge this monument with the Geminus (Quirinus) from the Argiletum, a nearby narrow depression way (Grimal, Lugli, Lanciani); during the Renaissance all three were sometimes confused. There was another geminus or quadrifrons at the foot of the Janiculum. In a plate with the monuments of Augustian Rome of his *Antiquae urbis Romae cum regionibus Simulachrum*, from 1527, Fabio Calvo represented the quadrifrons from Boarium but placed it in Regio VIII, *Forum Romanorum*, and marked it as *Arcus quatuor portarum*, the wording used by Servius (*Ad Aeneid*, vii.607. "*quatuor portarum unum templum*") for the Janus on *Transitorium*; on another plate he showed *templum Iani* as geminus at Janiculum. The Arch of Augustus, although a quadrifrons, was related to Janus only by Ligorio who suggested that the consular Fasti (fragments of which were discovered in 1546) were originally hung on it.

91. This could be followed through Valentini-Zucchetti, *Codice topografico della città di Roma* (Roma, 1940-53). A study of the significance of lining and knotting of various Jani with other monuments and within the Roman topographic setting in general as well as under different "programs," a truly multifaceted phenomenon with an array of delicately intertwined issues, has yet to be written. The most comprehensive related cultural background is given by Philip Jacks, *The Antiquarian and the Myth of Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

92. The list also includes Ripanda, Peruzzi, Serlio, Montano, Demontiosus, and numerous "anonymous" drawings in Florentine, Roman, and foreign (Flemish, French) manners and writing. The Quadrifrons could also be seen on the vedutas of von Heemskerck, Dosio and

incompatibility between the two edifices most likely comes from the idea of the grandeur and importance of St. Peter's church versus a humble, simple, pagan structure. Yet the idea of a free standing Janus Quadrifrons is built into St. Peter's as a scaled-up structure with a dome as an "adjustment." For an informed, able architect nothing would be more proper. The *templum Iani* would count as a centrally planned structure—a focus of architectural interest (if not a philisophico-architectural obsession) from Brunelleschi on, and a type that simply had to be domed. It was Egidio who provided the theoretically documented framework¹⁰¹ for the synchronisation of Pater Janus, the cultivator and *philosopher*,¹⁰² his material, arch presence, and the Neo-Platonist belief in the perfection of the circular form—ideas which nested in tradition and were intuitively grasped by many spatially and visually oriented as well.

The framing of Raphael's scenes in stanzas, through the arch, although seemingly "natural" and common, is particularly significant in the entire context of Janus, the arch.

Postface: the architect as a guardian

The entailment of sets of eyes embedded in the second plan for the church of the Florentine Nation in Rome, San Giovanni dei Fiorentini¹⁰³ (from 1559), is a very peculiar detail. It is unusual even for Michelangelo, whose architectural drawings habitually intertwined flesh and stone, exposing the source of the muscularity of his designs. That is why the presence of four, frontally drawn little eyes (shown very clearly with lids, so as to prevent any misreading) on the intersections of the main axes, and the diagonal cross formed by the connection of the apses, makes the project rather intriguing and unique. These are four single eyes, perpendicular to the direction of the entries, and paired across the diagonals of the inner square, resulting in the centre of the diagonal cross. The fifth eye, which is now barely perceptible on the drawing, was sketched in the very centre; it either faded or was erased. The eyes were drawn with the same pen which inscribed *archi*, *in bocte*,¹⁰⁴ *a travi*, *sacrestia*, *portico*, and *fiume* on the drawing and, regardless of whether they were input or a commentary/decision, "*gli occhi*" were a part of the same system of information: they were, most likely, the notes and symbols used in communication with the jury of Florentine overseers. Why were they there and what did they see? Turned inwards, they could indicate the main vistas into the building, openings in the structure above (literally *occuli*),¹⁰⁵ and/or, as in a common pendant structure, they could mark the place commonly reserved for the representation of a watchful guardian. To employ a body part in the architectural project in a systematic way, as a demonstrative tool, was not conventional.¹⁰⁶

A little pencil sketch on the same recto must have been scribbled after the presentation drawing (as was the pencil development on the verso)¹⁰⁷ and it is not likely to have "participated" in the

presentation. Rather, it is a part of a monologue that reveals the artist's design thinking in his further wrestling with the space. A tiny scheme presents both inscribed crosses more prominently. The two barrel vaults intersecting diagonally to the main entrance line (the Janus line) produced a central square with a projecting detail at all four sides (probably indicating openings) and the angle or corner on the Janus lines; there is no indication of the cupola above. Irreconcilable discord was created involving entry directions, vaulting above main corridors and a desire to barrel vault over the rotated cross. The "eyes" must have helped recognise the problem, testing the logic and integrity of the design and safeguarding it. These eyes winked a system of private, non-conventional drafting markings, a tool that brought into perspective upper levels of the project, as if tracing paper had been laid over it. Maybe they were two pairs¹⁰⁸ of architect's eyes, joined eyes of both an architect-guardian and the ancient apotropaic guardian, re-considering¹⁰⁹ and re-enforcing the "plan" above. After all, building is a dangerous matter and the inner forces often unknown. The whole sheet is a paradigm of the design process as well as of engineering and liability concerns.

This particular plan was a step towards a more condensed, statically immaculate, "winning" solution with equal treatment of the orthogonal and diagonal directions which on the "upper levels" could be resolved only with the cupola.¹¹⁰

An all encompassing conclusion is in contradiction with this inquiry, which insisted on the exposition of multiplicities. The hope is that it might allow the faces of Gorgon and Janus in architecture to resurface in their fuller merit, and maybe contribute to the understanding of intertwining of the oral (or literary) and the visual in the history of architectural ideas.

Du Perac.

93. There exist at least as many Quadrifrons drawings as those of Templum Pacis (basilica of Maxentius) for example, which was one of the largest and most impressive of Roman monuments.
94. Often together with other arches, mostly triumphal ones. The assumption is that the majority of sketches were originals and not copies from drafting books.
95. Through numismatic studies, well advanced at the time, antiquarians were familiar with the famous Romas as with Janus bicephalus on one, and the ship prow on its other face.
96. A fascinating character, the Dominican friar Giovanni Nanni (1432?-1502) was responsible for the creation of an utterly modern, zesty dissertation, an historical interpretation which included real and invented classical references combined with Hebrew, Christian and popular beliefs and resulted in an influential, although fictional, new and complete regional theory. Many, including Egidio da Viterbo (1469-1532), were furthering his ideas.

97. Here used metaphorically, although Julius laughed at Bramante's hieroglyphic proposal of himself as Julius Caesar over the double gated bridge (pont.[ifex] Il) intended to adorn the Belvedere, maybe disapproving of the fashionable technique as Gombrich suggests, precisely because of its popularity with his contemptible predecessor, the Borgia pope. See "Hyperotomachia," in *Gombrich on the Renaissance*, vol. 2 (London: Phaidon, 1985), 103.
98. Heinrich Pfeiffer, *Zur Ikonographie von Raffaels Disputa, Egidio da Viterbo und die christlich-platonische Konzeption der Stanza della Segnatura* (Roma: Universita gregoriana, 1975).
99. Hüelsen, "Die Halle in Raphaels 'Schule von Athen'," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*, 4 (1911): 232-4.
100. There is a possibility that the free-standing arch in the background of the picture is another ianus from the same Velabrum site, the arch of Septimius Severus known as *arco degli argentari*, built into the bell tower of the church St. Georgio in Velabro. Its location on

the painting is therefore somewhat "adjusted" by the painter, as were the "philosophers" if they were an illustration of Plato's *Protagoras* as suggested by Glenn W. Most, "Reading Raphael," *Critical Inquiry* (Autumn 1996): 161-71, 174.

101. The material for this particular Janus-centred Etruscan Revival was woven into the sermon Egidio delivered in St. Peter's basilica in the presence of Julius II on December 21, 1507. Afterwards the Pope requested that Egidio put the speech into writing and it survived in the version sent to the King of Portugal, Manuel II. This is the famous text in "Fulfillment of the Christian Golden Age under Pope Julius II: Text of a Discourse of Giles of Viterbo, 1507," by one of the foremost scholars on Egidio, John W. O'Malley (article in *Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought, and Religion*, vol. 25 [1969]: 265-338). Contrary to the tradition, Egidio repeated the sermon in the vernacular which gave his ideas even wider currency.
102. This particular role of Janus, so fitting for the theme of philosophy and its dual representation, was emphasised by Egidio in the same sermon.
103. Casa Buonarroti A 120r (C. 610r). Giulio Carlo Argan and Bruno Contardi, *Michelangelo architect* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 297; *The Renaissance from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo: the Representation of Architecture*, eds. Henry A. Millon and Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani (New York: Rizzoli, c1994), 472.
104. *Bocca*, mouth and *botte*, barrel met graciously in *botte*.
105. On the detail drawing for San Peter's tambour (Casa Buonarroti, 31A) Michelangelo autographed: "*questa parte que resta bianca/e' la faccia dove anno a esser gli ochi*"—"this part which stays white/ is the face on which eyes will be," referring to the circular openings.
106. Quite common though is a lateral eye used in demonstrative experiment to indicate a viewer.
107. The middle sketch on the verso of the same drawing is an exploration along the same lines, diagonally.
108. In my mother tongue there is an expression, "to open four eyes," which indicates the need for extreme attention and caution.
109. One of the meanings of the gaze as re-guard in French. See J. Starobinski, *The Living Eye*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 2.
110. CB A124r.