PLATFORM: AS AN EARTHLY ARCHITECTURAL GROUND

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ABSTRACT

PLATFORM: AS AN EARTHLY ARCHITECTURAL GROUND

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This thesis deciphers architectural platform as both a spatial and theoretical element that redefines the relation between architecture and ground. It proposes that ground is not a given condition but a constructed one, made through drawing, representation, and inhabitation. Within this frame, platform is not simply a structural base; it is an epistemological element that makes earth legible by articulating ground, mediating systems, and enabling inhabitation. It is theorized as an interface which is a generative condition through which architecture constructs its relation to the earth. As such, it offers a conceptual perspective for reconsidering how architecture grounds itself in both material and representational terms. The thesis develops along three trajectories: a theoretical and historical survey of architectural ground; tracing of platform as spatial construct; and a situated study of platform as an architectural element that forms ground through repetition and modulation. By shifting attention from form to ground, and from object to operation, the thesis proposes a critical framework for understanding architectural space. Thus, platform is proposed as an element through which architecture reflects on its disciplinary foundations and confronts how it draws, occupies, and transforms ground.

Keywords: Architectural ground, surface, platform,

ÖZ

YERYÜZÜ BAĞIMLI MİMARİ ZEMİN OLARAK PLATFORM

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Doktora, Mimarlık
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Bu tez, mimari platformu hem mekansal hem de teorik bir araç olarak çözümleyerek mimarlık ile zemin arasındaki ilişkiyi yeniden tanımlar. Tez, zeminin verilmiş bir koşul değil, çizim, temsiliyet ve kullanım yoluyla aktif olarak inşa edilen bir yapım olduğunu öne sürer. Bu bağlamda platform, yalnızca yapısal bir taban değil; zeminin okunabilir, işlevsel ve mekansal olarak kurgulanabilir hale geldiği epistemolojik bir araç olarak ele alınır. Bu çerçevede, platform yalnızca yapısal bir taban değildir; yüzeyleri eklemleyerek, sistemler arasında aracılık ederek ve yönelim ile yerleşimi mümkün kılarak zemini okunur kılan epistemolojik bir araçtır. Platform burada edilgen bir destek değil, mimarlığın yeryüzüyle kurduğu ilişkiyi inşa eden üretici bir koşul olarak kavramsallaştırılır. Platform, zemini hem kaydeder hem de dönüştürür: kesitler üretir, kot farklılıkları tanımlar, yönlenme, erişim ve karşılaşmayı örgütler. Bu yönüyle, mimarlığın zemine hem maddi hem de temsili düzeyde nasıl yerleştiğini yeniden düşünmeye olanak sağlayan kavramsal bir mercek sunar. Tez üç ana eksen etrafında gelişir: mimari zemine dair kuramsal ve tarihsel bir çerçeve; platformun mekânsal bir kurgu olarak incelenmesi; ve platformun tekrar, modülasyon ve sahneleme yoluyla zemini kuran bir mimari öğe olarak konumlandırılması. Biçimden zemine, nesneden sürece yönelen bu düşünsel kayma sayesinde tez,

mimari mekanın ele alınış biçimine dair eleştirel bir kuramsal çerçeve sunar. Platform, mimarlığın kendi disipliner temelleri üzerine düşünmesini ve zemini nasıl çizdiği, işgal ettiği ve dönüştürdüğü sorusuyla yüzleşmesini sağlayan bir unsur olarak önerilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mimari zemin, yüzey, platform

To my parents Şule and M. Sonad Soysal

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:
WHY, HOW, WHICH PLATFORM?

Ground is not a fixed or natural condition. It is constructed, negotiated, and continuously redefined through processes of abstraction, inhabitation and transformation. Through abstraction, ground is rendered legible and projectable: surveyed, measured, and inscribed with representational logics that translate the irregularities of terrain into architectural and cartographic systems. Plans, sections, and maps do not merely describe ground; they constitute it as a formalized field open to design intervention. Through inhabitation, ground acquires meaning as it is occupied, traversed, and lived. Paths are worn, thresholds established, and surfaces differentiated through daily practices that embed memory. Ground is constructed through dwelling, ritual, and gathering. Through transformation, ground is cut, filled, layered, and reassembled; it is worked upon by both natural and artificial forces recasting it as an unstable and contingent medium.

Through abstraction, inhabitation and transformation, this thesis starts with theorizing ground as a layered, constructed and dynamic medium. Within such theorization, platform[1] emerges not simply as a horizontal surface, but as a spatial and theoretical element that reveals how architecture mediates its relationship with the earth.

[1] Initial frame of reference of this thesis is formed as a part of the graduate course, ARCH 616 Architectural Research II, and the term "platform" is highlighted by Ayşen Savaş during the course discussions in 2019-20 Fall Semester as a part of the PhD program in Architecture at METU.

If platform as a surface operates as a layered element ornamented with in-between conditions. Thus, it is neither fully of the earth nor entirely abstracted from it. It mediates between terrain and form, earth and construction, acting as a threshold through which architecture situates itself in relation to the ground. This study claims that the introduction of platform as more than a surface helps the production of stable grounds for architecture through earthly relations. It does so through concrete constructional operations: setting finished floor levels against existing grades; carrying out cut-and-fill to create compacting subgrade and laying base courses to distribute loads; fixing edges with plinths, curbs, and retaining runs; stepping or ramping at level changes to form thresholds; thickening the section with bedding, membranes, and wear layers keyed to joints and modules; integrating services through access panels and corridors; and accommodating tolerances with reveals and bands. The dynamism of platform emerges from these moves that are translated irregular platform into a dependable surface while keeping contact with the site's material behavior, so stability arises from the platform's managed interfaces between ground, structure, and use.

These are what I would call "earthly relations", are formed not by treating ground as fixed or given, but by making its connection to the earth legible and operable. With the introduction of architectural platform, ground is both made and revealed. Platform contributes to the production of stable grounds by mediating between the unstable, contingent conditions of the earth and the abstract, formal logics of architecture. This mediation takes place through three interrelated operations: by articulating the ground (abstraction), enabling inhabitation, and mediating between different systems (transformation).

By articulating the ground, architecture, daily life, and the dynamic interface transform uneven ground into an operable surface. All these conditions produce cuts, levels, holes or elevations that render the earth intelligible and inhabitable. This is not only a spatial operation that draws a distinction between natural topography and architectural ground, but also a social condition of legibility and order. In this sense, the platform is a ground-making element. By enabling inhabitation, platform

introduces a defined horizontal datum which creates spatial and perceptual stability. It anchors architectural form and orients the body in space. Platform supports the conditions for access, rest, encounter, and movement, thus grounding not only the building but also its modes of inhabitation. It becomes a public or domestic stage upon which activities unfold. Finally, by mediating through different systems these operations modulate a thick interface between material and environmental conditions and infrastructural systems. Rather than denying or erasing the complexity of the earth, they frame and negotiate the ground, rendering its variability legible and operable within the architectural framework. In doing so, it enables architecture to engage with the material and environmental conditions of site without being overwhelmed by their contingency. These operations do not resolve these conditions but compose a spatial order through which they can be addressed, redirected, or integrated.

In all of these articulations, platform engages with the multiplicity of the earth. Through formal, material, and operational acts, platform stabilizes ground by composing a sustained and legible relation to it. Such practices operate across scales, shaping the physical terrain, structuring spatial sequences, and framing perceptual experience, so that ground becomes both inhabitable and intelligible. This is what is meant by "earthly relations": not a return to an unmediated nature, but the construction of an interface through which architecture can ground itself, negotiate its site, and stage its modes of inhabitation.

This thesis positions platform as an architectural element which reveals how ground is made visible, operative, and contestable. Ground, when thickened and flattened through platform, becomes legible as spatial logic. Ground is increasingly mobilized not only through physical operations, such as cutting, filling, paving, but also through representational means. Platform makes this mobilization visible.

Platform reveals the ground by framing, isolating, and articulating it as a constructed condition rather than a given one. It does so by introducing a deliberate architectural threshold: a surface that simultaneously rests upon and separates itself from the earth.

This distancing is an act of distinction: by lifting or cutting into the terrain, platform draws attention to the ground's physical, symbolic, and representational dimensions.

First, platform makes the ground visible as a problem of construction. Through leveling, stepping, or elevating, it exposes the earth's irregularities and forces their negotiation. What would otherwise remain implicit becomes operative: gradients, soil conditions, and elevations are not bypassed but confronted. Second, it reveals ground as a spatial figure. It is no longer the background condition on which architecture is placed, but a thickened, worked surface capable of composition. Through edge definitions, sectional changes, and material articulations, platform turns ground into distinct and legible condition. Third, platform reveals ground as a representational and epistemological surface: a drawing, a cut, a map. In architectural plans, platform is often the first figure to register the act of grounding, marking the initial delineation between earth and form. It thus reveals the acts by which ground is abstracted, manipulated, and made projectable. In all of these articulations, platform renders ground operative. It brings the ground into architectural thought as a spatial, theoretical, and material condition to be actively worked with.

In the simplest sense, platform can be defined as "a raised level surface."[2] However, such definition of platform is deceptively simple. It evokes a flat surface raised above another surface, a stage, a launchpad, a base for operations. In architectural history, platform appears in varied forms: the stereobate of ancient temples, the stylobate of classical orders, the plinth of modernist pavilions, and the modular units of utopian megastructures. Yet platform is more than a static element; it is a spatial one that organizes access, visibility, movement, and ritual. As such, it mediates between architecture and earth, between constructed form and the conditions of possibility

[2] Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara, "Platforms: Architecture and the Use of the Ground", e-flux, 2019, https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/conditions/287876/platforms-architecture-and-the-use-of-the-ground/

that precede and support it. The word "platform" itself could be traced to sixteenth-century French, *plateforme*[3] which could directly be translated to English as "ground plan" and "flat shape."[4] The original meaning of *plateforme*, as both flat surface and drawing, reveals that platform has always been twofold in its disposition: simultaneously a material articulation and a representational device. This dual status allows platform to function as a threshold between terrain and thought, between earth and architecture. It connects the act of flattening earth with the abstraction of ground plan. This semantic and architectural genealogy underpins platform's epistemic role in the thesis. In its various articulations platform serves as a site of projection and ground-making, both physical and metaphysical.

Instead of treating platform as a static support or a secondary surface, the thesis positions it as a potential epistemological tool in which architecture reflects on its own methods of grounding, staging, and inhabiting space.[5] This triad unfolds a sequential yet interdependent logic: grounding marks the establishment of spatial and theoretical conditions; staging organizes these conditions into a legible and operative configuration; and inhabiting enacts them through lived experience, completing the architectural cycle from abstraction to occupation. Grounding, as part of this thesis, refers not merely to physical contact with the earth but to the epistemological and representational processes by which architecture posits its own site of operation. Platform articulates this by formalizing a relationship to terrain, through leveling, elevating, or cutting into the ground, thereby rendering the earth

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[3] (French *plateforme* – originated from Greek platús which could be translated as "flat" and Latin fôrma which is "shape, figure, from" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2020)

[4] Ibid.

[5] Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara also dwells on platforms in their work, especially in their book, *Platforms: Architecture and the Use of Ground,* they offer a selection of platforms. However, unlike this thesis' claim that platform is an epistemological tool in which architecture reflects on its own methods of grounding, staging, and inhabiting space, they dwell on platform as a possible political act, a pause, against expansionist logic of the capitalist city.

intelligible and operable within architectural discourse. It is an element of initial inscription, where architecture begins to define its domain. Staging builds upon grounding by organizing how that domain is structured, navigated, and exposed to view. Platform does not simply support action, it frames it. Through its scalar modulations, sectional articulations, and edge conditions, platform becomes a spatial and symbolic element that frames the possibility of events. Drawing from theatrical, scenographic, and urban precedents, the thesis traces how platforms configure spatial narratives, set up conditions for gathering, performance, or encounter, and make architecture's operations visible. Inhabiting completes the cycle by emphasizing the lived, social, and environmental dimensions of the constructed ground. Platform is not only the site upon which bodies act but also that through which bodies experience space relationally. By foregrounding inhabitation, the thesis situates platform as an interface where spatial abstraction meets embodied practice. This includes not only human presence but also environmental and temporal dynamics, occupation patterns that inscribe platform with use and meaning.

Platform becomes an interface which allows architecture to acknowledge the processes by which it shapes, displaces and reconfigures terrain. Thus, platform becomes a critical element through which to rethink ground in architecture. It is more than a formal or tectonic element; it is a spatial and theoretical mediator that stages the relationship between architecture and earth. In this sense, platform enables architecture to articulate, shape and encounter the ground. It makes visible the ways in which terrain is leveled, measured, occupied and rendered intelligible. Thus, platform is no longer just a surface that architecture stands on, but it becomes a way in which architecture thinks through ground.

This thesis does not argue for a new typology of platform, but instead traces how platform operates and articulates itself across architectural acts of drawing, construction, and inhabitation. It traces platform as a critical element through which architecture makes its own acts visible. This shift from object to operation is essential to repositioning architectural ground, as material and symbolic construction. Even though the thesis focuses on formal aspects of platform, it inevitably touches upon

possibility of social and cultural relationships it forms. However, these aspects of platform are secondary to the thesis. It is developed through platform's etymological roots which is twofold in its disposition. Its etymological roots both includes its simplest material definition "a raised level surface"[6] and as drawing. In this sense, within the scope of this thesis, platform functions simultaneously as a material articulation and a representational condition, to operate as an epistemological element.

The chapters of this thesis are structured to develop the argument across multiple scales and theoretical registers. Rather than unfolding in a chronological or typological order, they are composed strategically, each chapter building upon the previous to deepen the conceptual trajectory. The second chapter, "Ground," begins by framing ground as neither a passive surface nor a fixed datum, but as a condition continually shaped through spatial practices, representation, and inhabitation. From this point, the chapter turns to architectural treatises, where ground is articulated as a disciplinary concern, given formal and theoretical expression in Vitruvius' *De Architectura*, which aligns architecture with *firmitas* (durability) and the technical preparation of terrain, and in Alberti's *De Re Aedificatoria*, where ground is subjected to geometric reasoning, measurement, and alignment.[7] These frameworks shift ground from a lived condition to one ordered through drawing, proportion, and rational design, establishing the basis for its architectural treatment as both conceptual field and constructed medium. The third chapter, "Platform as an Architectural Ground," shifts the focus to platform as a spatial and theoretical

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[6] Op. cit.

[7] This part progresses through the readings done through keywords (platform as one of them) as part of the graduate course, ARCH 616 Architectural Research II, conducted by Ayşen Savaş in 2019-20 Fall Semester as a part of the PhD program in Architecture at METU.
Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Ingrid D. Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert.

element through which ground is organized, articulated, and rendered operable. Platform is approached not just as a structural support, but as a condition that enables access and occupation. It mediates between site and form, abstraction and materiality, making ground legible, repeatable, and open to transformation. Platform, in this context, carries both representational and spatial capacities, allowing architecture to compose its relation to ground through positioning, cutting, leveling, and staging. The fourth chapter, "Platform as an Earthly Architectural Ground," moves toward the relationship between platform and earth: where earth is not a smooth surface, but a thick, resistant, and stratified medium. This chapter is not framed in ecological terms; instead, it traces how platform engages with earth as a material and territorial condition, dense with histories and latent formations. However, it inevitably borrows from ecological discourse to produce its own architectural vocabulary of platform as an earthly architectural ground. Here, platform is articulated as a deep surface: an active ground that organizes architectural operations across material and scalar registers.

Taken together, these chapters construct a layered argument in which ground is not assumed but produced, and platform emerges as a conceptual element through which architecture engages, composes, and grounds itself across constructed and unconstructed environments.

1.1 Ground

The following chapter, "Ground," introduces a theoretical and representational rethinking of the term. It begins with anthropologist Tim Ingold's notion of the topological "meshwork," where ground is understood, in anthropological terms, not as a fixed surface but as a continuous field of relations which are formed through lines of movement, growth, and material entanglement.[8] Ingold's theorization

[8] Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines* (London: Routledge, 2015).

dissolves the distinction between surface and depth, proposing instead a world in which ground is always in formation, always relational.[9] In this sense, ground is never neutral; it is always inflected, always responsive to the pressures of design, program, and terrain.

The chapter then turns to cartographic theories of ground. Here, ground is treated as a representational element: measured, drawn, and abstracted through the tools of cartography. Rather than simply depicting the earth, mapping techniques articulate ground as a legible and projectable field, framing it within disciplinary conventions that both reveal and constrain its possibilities.[10] Through this perspective, ground becomes a site of projection and planning, structured by systems of measurement, property, and infrastructure.

The chapter concludes with a hermeneutic reading of classical architectural treatises[11] by Vitruvius, Alberti, Serlio, and Palladio, focusing specifically on the roles of the *stereobate*, *stylobate,* and *crepidoma* in the formation of architectural ground. These elements, traditionally viewed as bases or foundations, are reinterpreted here as mediating elements that negotiate between the earth and the

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[9] Ingold dwells on this continuous formation and relationality by introducing acts of weaving, threading and knotting.

[10] Jill Desimini and Charles Waldheim, eds., *Cartographic Grounds: Projecting the Landscape Imaginary* (Cambridge: Harvard GSD/Princeton Architectural Press, 2016.

[11] This hermeneutical reading and tracing of the treatises follows the framework of the graduate course, ARCH 616 Architectural Research II, conducted by Ayşen Savaş in 2019-20 Fall Semester as a part of the PhD program in Architecture at METU.
Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Ingrid D. Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988); Sebastiano Serlio, *On Architecture*, trans. Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books of Architecture*, trans. Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).

formal order of architecture. Far from being inert supports, they operate as operational elements: establishing datum lines, regulating proportions, and defining thresholds of transition. In Vitruvius's *De Architectura*, the *stereobate* is not only a structural necessity but a device that marks the distinction between natural ground and the constructed order above it, ensuring stability while defining the platform from which the architectural form rises.[12] Alberti, in *De re aedificatoria*, similarly emphasizes the role of the base as an instrument for proportioning and ordering, its placement carefully determined to integrate visual harmony with practical function.[13] Serlio's *Tutte l'opere d'architettura et prospetiva* expands this logic into scenographic applications, where the base becomes a stage that choreographs approach and perspective.[14] In Palladio's *I quattro libri dell'architettura*, the *stylobate* and *crepidoma* are described with an attention to modular placement and spatial arrangement, each step both supports the structure and composes a progression that frames entry.[15]

In this reading, the *stereobate*, *stylobate*, and *crepidoma* are traced as carefully placed interfaces between earth and architecture: their placement mediates vertical load, positions the eye, and structures the path of entry. The upward progression across these elements forms a deliberate succession of movement, one that marks the transition from the terrain of the earth into the order of architecture. This progression while accommodating ascent; also marks a shift in spatial condition, from the contingency of ground to the codified geometry of the architectural order. Ground,

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[12] Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Ingrid D. Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Book III, Chapter IV.
[13] Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), Book VII.
[14] Sebastiano Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture: Volume One, Books I–V*, trans. Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), Book II.
[15] Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books on Architecture*, trans. Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), Book I.

in this sense, emerges as an active and constructed layer within architectural thought and practice: one that is made legible, operable, and symbolically charged through the mediating work of these elements.

1.2 Platform as an Architectural Ground

The third chapter, "Platform as an Architectural Ground," begins with the Neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük and unpacks articulation of platform across public and representational dimensions. In Çatalhöyük, platform appears as a primary spatial organizer of domestic life. Interior platforms structured sleeping arrangements, ritual activities, and burial zones integrated into subfloor strata, rendering ground as a stratified and inhabited layer. The site operates as a domestic necropolis, where the rhythms of everyday life and the presence of the dead are spatially and materially interwoven. These compacted earthen platforms, built up incrementally over time, embodied both dwelling and memory, turning the act of living into a recursive engagement with accumulated material and cultural layers. This reading draws on the extensive archaeological research led by Ian Hodder between 1993 and 2018, whose excavation reports reveal the architectural, social, and ritual significance of platforms as thickened zones of domestic and symbolic intensity. Rather than separating architecture from the ground, these platforms were the ground: indistinguishable from the domestic envelope yet loaded with symbolic weight and spatial logic. Hodder's interpretive framework allows for platform to be understood as an active spatial condition: one through which cultural practices, temporal depth, and material inhabitation are inscribed directly into the architectural ground itself.[16]

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[16] Ian Hodder, *Çatalhöyük Excavation Reports*, 1993–2018, available at the Çatalhöyük Research Project Archive, Stanford University and British Institute at Ankara. See for example: Ian Hodder, ed., *Çatalhöyük Excavations: The 2000–2008 Seasons* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2014), www.catalhoyuk.com.

From this early instance, the chapter traces articulation of platform into a spatial element of increasing formal, symbolic, and public significance. At Çatalhöyük, the interior platform structured domestic life through a layering of daily activities, ritual gestures, and burial zones, producing a shared surface where the living and the dead coexisted. Platform, in this context, articulated a ground of continuity: organizing life not through separation but through accumulation and shared inhabitation. Even though there is a significant shift, this spatial logic reemerges, transformed yet resonant, in Aldo van Eyck's post-war playgrounds in Amsterdam, where platform once again operates as a medium of collective life. Although distant in time and purpose, both cases work through a shared grammar of ground-making. Built in residual urban spaces, these low concrete platforms hosted modular play elements, organizing open-ended interaction rather than predetermined function.[17] Van Eyck's platforms operated at the threshold between architecture and the city, offering a democratic field of encounter that resisted enclosure. Their minimal elevation produced a shift in attention and behavior, framing platform as an invitation rather than a separation. Here, platform becomes an operative ground that activates participation, imagination, and collectivity.

In contrast, Mies's platform concentrates these accumulated logics into an act of precise spatial differentiation. In his projects such as the Barcelona Pavilion and the Neue Nationalgalerie[18], the plinth operates as a measured cut and lift: a subtle displacement from the earth that simultaneously anchors and detaches the architecture above. This shift produces a pause, a moment of suspension, through which the autonomy and constructedness of architecture are made visible.[19] Yet even in its abstraction, Mies's platform retains the operative role seen in earlier forms: it

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[17] Vincent Ligtelijn, *Aldo van Eyck: Works*, ed. Francis Strauven (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1999).
[18] Simon Menges, "Neue Nationalgalerie," *Archiv Neue Nationalgalerie*, Berlin, 2021.
[19] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 7.

frames approach, structures access, and stages experience. Through material precision and horizontal emphasis, platform is transformed from an inhabited surface into a conceptual and spatial threshold: mediating between continuity and detachment.

Mies's plinth articulates platform as a precise architectural element: one that frames, separates, and idealizes form. In its restraint and exactitude, Mies's platform enacts a controlled autonomy, allowing architecture to declare its detachment from contingency while still remaining grounded. This spatial logic of abstraction and suspension is shifted and radically transformed in the speculative works of Superstudio. Projects such as the "Histograms" and "The Continuous Monument" displace platform from tectonic specificity into a conceptual and critical field. Here, platform is no longer a measured base for form but a boundless surface: an element that absorbs and neutralizes difference.

The "Histograms" of Superstudio propose gridded terrains of programmatic indeterminacy, where typological identity dissolves into repetition.[20] "The Continuous Monument," in turn, unfolds an unbroken surface across the globe, flattening cultural and geographic specificity into a singular, totalizing ground.[21] Where Mies's platform isolates architecture through precision and pause, Superstudio's platform overwhelms it through continuity and scale. Yet in both, platform articulates a threshold: one that reflects architecture's desire to regulate its relation to earth, form, and context. Superstudio's platforms operate simultaneously as critique and proposal, confronting modernism's complicity with capital, technology, and urban expansion.[22] In this context, platform becomes an

[20] Peter Lang and William Menking, *Superstudio: Life Without Objects* (New York: Rizzoli, 2003).
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

epistemological element that reveals the disciplinary limits of architecture: projecting a surface that is at once utopian and dystopian, absurd and analytical.

Serlio's scenographic constructions, particularly those in *Il Secondo Libro*, offer foundational instances of platform as a representational and projective element within architectural thought.[23] His perspectival stage sets for comic, tragic, and satiric scenes do more than visualize theatrical space; they construct urban grounds: platforms that organize space, structure visibility, and reflect public narrative. In the comic and tragic scenes, platform appears as a gridded, rectilinear surface that underlies the perspectival composition, functioning as a visual and spatial base that stabilizes architectural depth and frames action.[24] Platform in these scenes is a representational element: an abstract ground through which architectural order and narrative coherence are jointly produced.

The satiric scene, while still composed through one-point perspective, introduces a distinct disruption at the level of the ground. Unlike the measured and orthogonal platforms of the other scenes, here the surface becomes irregular, undulating, and inconsistent, visibly resisting the rational geometry of the structures it supports.[25] This thickened and unstable platform unsettles the visual logic of the scene without abandoning perspectival alignment. It introduces friction between ground and projection, exposing the representational limits of architectural staging. Even within the articulated space of theater, platform is a constructed and variable condition which is capable of supporting order or undermining it.

Viewed within the broader theoretical narrative developed in this thesis, Serlio's scenographic platforms mark a transitional moment. Like domestic platforms of

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[23] Sebastiano Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture, Volume 1: Books I–V of 'Tutte l'opere d'architettura et prospetiva'*, trans. Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), esp. Book II and Book III.
[24] Ibid., Book II, "On Perspective," fols. 26–32.
[25] Ibid., Book III, "On Antiquity," fol. 42–45; for the satiric scene, see also Book II, fol. 28 verso.

Çatalhöyük, they provide a ground for ritualized presence and shared spatial practices. However, it is now rendered through drawing rather than earth. Van Eyck's post-war playgrounds revisit this shared surface in the modern city, where platform enables collective encounter without formal prescription. Mies's plinths refine platform into an operation of separation and framing, while Superstudio's speculative projects extend it into critical fiction, exposing the political and spatial consequences of repetition and abstraction.[26]

These contextually and historically distinct instances of platforms come together through a repeatable grammar of ground operations. To elaborate this grammar, series of diagrammatic platform sections are produced to show how platform becomes ground itself. Çatalhöyük compacts and replasters floors to make a level field for sleep, work, and burial; Serlio draws a stage floor whose boards and steps script urban ground; Van Eyck builds low plinths, sandpits, and stoops that gather play without prescribing it; Mies raises museums and pavilions on plinths that separate approach from interior and align views; Superstudio extends the field as a continuous grid where movement, pause, and service can be assigned anywhere. Serlio's scenographies prefigure these articulations by demonstrating how platform operates between spatial order and representational construction. His drawn platforms organize perception, support performance, and project public imaginaries. Even as architectural form recedes in favor of perspectival illusion, platform remains the stabilizing, and as in the instance of satiric scene sometimes destabilizing, ground upon which relations are staged. In this sense, Serlio's work anticipates platform's evolving role as a spatial and theoretical mediator across constructed environments.

Across these instances the constants are the same: level is produced; edge is drawn to create thresholds; access is organized; and projection links representation to construction. Materials, programs, and eras differ, but the shared operations, making

[26] Lang and Menking, *Superstudio*, 52–67.

a field, setting edges, choreographing approach, and tying action to representation, are what bind them.

What connects these otherwise disparate instances is platform's capacity to operate beyond material support, but instead as a spatial and theoretical medium through which architecture reflects on how it positions itself in relation to ground, how it frames occupation, and how it gives form to spatial thought. Rather than acting as a static base or secondary surface, platform is reframed as a generative condition: one that enables architecture to articulate and enact its modes of grounding, staging, and inhabiting space.

These instances show how platform evolves from an embedded domestic surface to an abstract, symbolic, and operational element. In each instance, platform is treated as a spatial proposition that configures visibility, action, and meaning. The chapter concludes with a close reading of the architectural ground plan as the projection of platform into drawn space. Here, platform becomes not only a built element but a representational operation: mobilized through drawing to articulate program, spatial hierarchy, and conceptual intent.[27] While the previous instances, from Çatalhöyük's inhabited strata to Serlio's perspectival scenes, reveal how platform structures lived, constructed, and imagined environments, the plan renders this condition legible within the conventions of architectural representation. In the plan, platform is no longer only a built surface or tectonic operation; it is a representational element through which architecture theorizes and organizes spatial potential. As a drawing, the plan does not merely depict space, it also gives form to it. Platform, in this context, becomes the underlying condition that makes spatial logic communicable, operational, and capable of transformation.

Within the architectural plan, platform articulates hierarchy, access, and circulation. It structures thresholds and adjacencies, delineates zones of encounter and retreat,

[27] Robin Evans, *Translations from Drawing to Building.*

and sets up spatial relationships long before they are constructed. In this sense, the plan functions as a conceptual ground: an abstract yet operative surface that stages the unfolding of form, program, and inhabitation. Platform, projected into plan, activates this field: reconfiguring architectural space as a set of interrelated spatial potentials. Whether thickened, gridded, raised, lowered or implied, platform in plan reflects architecture's capacity to ground itself through drawing: to think spatially through representational means.

This understanding of platform reframes it as a generative construct through which architecture engages critically with its own spatial operations. Platform enables architecture to question how it establishes relations with earth, how it structures the act of inhabitation, and how it stages relationships between bodies, materials, and space. It does so by operating simultaneously across spatial, representational, and conceptual registers: materially, it shapes access, and encounter; representationally, it frames architectural drawing, especially the ground plan, as a site of projection and organization; conceptually, it foregrounds the act of mediation itself, between earth and form, surface and volume, occupation and abstraction.

Platform actively shapes how architecture is conceptualized by enabling the abstraction of ground into operative form: it transforms ground into a constructed logic that allows architecture to position itself within a site, a context, or a disciplinary tradition. It shapes how architecture is represented by functioning as a spatial element within drawing, both in plan and perspective, that makes spatial hierarchy, order, and access visible and legible. And it shapes how architecture is lived by structuring bodily movement, social encounter, and ritual engagement, whether through the compacted earthen platforms of domestic life, the public openness of urban thresholds, or the measured separations of elevated plinths. Across its varied manifestations: as built surface, spatial threshold, or drawn projection; platform offers a means of thinking through architecture itself. It is within this capacity to reflect, organize, and project that platform reveals its epistemological capacity: fundamentally shaping how architecture comes to understand, construct, and inhabit space.

1.3 Platform as an Earthly Architectural Ground

This fourth chapter extends the preceding argument by positioning platform as an earthly architectural ground. Where the previous chapter emphasized its spatial and representational articulations, this chapter deepens the inquiry into its epistemological capacities. Platform is not only a mediatory element through which architecture grounds, stages, and inhabits space; it is also the medium where earth's thickness: historical, material, and symbolic; becomes operative. The concern here is not to redefine ecology, nor to produce a catalogue of surfaces, but to situate platform within the resistant and stratified condition of earth, showing how it articulates, mediates, and enables inhabitation across environmental, representational, and lived registers.

The first part unfolds through an ecological genealogy. Ecology is not taken as the object of the thesis but as a horizon of resonance that sharpens how ground may be read as relational, systemic, adaptive, and planetary. From Alexander von Humboldt's sectional diagrams of Chimborazo, which framed earth as a layered and relational field,[28] to Charles Darwin's formulation of adaptation as a continuous negotiation between organism and environment,[29] through Arthur Tansley's concept of the ecosystem as dynamic interaction,[30] and Vladimir Vernadsky's articulation of the biosphere as a planetary system,[31] to Ian McHarg's method of overlays that transformed ecological data into operative surfaces,[32] Félix Guattari's proposition of

[28] Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland, *Essay on the Geography of Plants* (1807).
[29] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859).
[30] Arthur Tansley, "The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts and Terms," *Ecology* 16, no. 3 (1935): 284–307.
[31] Vladimir Vernadsky, *The Biosphere* (New York: Copernicus, 1998 [1926]).
[32] Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature* (Garden City, NY: Natural History Press, 1969).

the three ecologies: environmental, social, and mental;[33] ground is continually reframed as an active medium rather than inert substratum. These moments provide theoretical bearings for a vocabulary of platform: threshold, interface, adaptation, layering, meshwork. Through them, platform can be grasped not as static foundation but as constructed terrain: worked, represented, and inhabited.

The second part develops this trajectory into the notion of "deep surface." Here, Giuliana Bruno's rethinking of surface as a spatial screen saturated with affect and memory[34] is placed alongside Ayşen Savaş's pedagogical elaboration of "deep ground" and "deep-seeing" as operative ways of working with layered material and historical conditions.[35] In this sense, depth is not measured vertically but experienced as thickness: a stratigraphic field where horizontal laying and vertical accretion converge. Ingrid Halland's critical formulation of "deep surface" further dissolves binaries of surface and depth,[36] while Barfod emphasizes how temporal and bodily imprints fold memory into ground.[37] Together, these perspectives foreground

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[33] Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Continuum, 2000 [1989]).
[34] Giuliana Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).
[35] Ayşen Savaş, Selahattin Önür, Bengisu Derebaşı, and Buket Erol, eds., *StudioLog 2022–2024: ARCH 401–402 Architectural Design Studios—[2022–2023] Öykü Madeni; [2023–2024] Urla Quarantine Island Post-Trauma Center* (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, 2025), https://archweb.metu.edu.tr/en/announcement/401-402-architectural-design-studios-2022-2024, 8.
Ayşen Savaş, Agnes van der Meij, Seray Türkay, and Melek Pınar Uz, eds., *Studio Log: ARCH 401–402 Architectural Design Studios [2012–2013]: Fall // Fragmented Urbanism; Spring // DOHA Exploring Artistic Landscapes* (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, 2013), https://archweb.metu.edu.tr/system/files/projects/studiolog_kunye.pdf
Ayşen Savaş, Funda Baş Bütüner, Sezin Sarıca, and Nesli Naz Aksu, "Projecting the Deep Ground," *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 17, no. 3 (2022): 6–19, published online May 17, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1080/18626033.2022.2195224.
[36] Ingrid Halland, "Deep Surface: Introduction," *Metode* 1 (2023): 4–9.
[37] Julie Barfod, "The room that I am, the room I give birth to," *Metode* 1 (2023).

platform as a "deep surface": at once support and archive, operative field and affective medium.

The final part returns to Çatalhöyük as a situated instance that materializes these theoretical concerns. Its domestic platforms, built through repetitive layering and reworking of earth, condensed burial, ritual, and everyday inhabitation into stratified surfaces. Matting impressions, successive plasters, and cumulative rebuildings transformed ground into a palimpsest of life and memory: an earthly architectural ground where articulation, mediation, and inhabitation were inseparable. As Ian Hodder states, excavation reveals processes rather than static forms,[38] making Çatalhöyük an instance where the theoretical propositions of ecology and deep surface are concretized in lived practice.

By situating these instances within this unique theoretical framework, the thesis introduces platform as a spatial and theoretical element through which architecture actively grounds itself. Within the overall framework of the thesis, this perspective allows for a reading of built environments and architectural representations as negotiations between the material contingency of earth and the formal, institutional, and perceptual orders that architecture imposes upon it. By moving between anthropological, archaeological, historical, speculative, and built instance, the thesis situates platform within a deep temporal and disciplinary horizon, revealing its capacity to operate simultaneously as a constructed surface, a representational element, and an epistemological framework. Within the framework of the thesis, socio-political implications of platform as an earthly architectural ground are omitted. However, it is important to note that when platform is defined as earthly, socio-political implications are inevitably inherent in its architectural ground-making capacity. This positioning is not intended to establish a singular definition, but to foreground platform's generative multiplicity, its ability to organize,

[38] Ian Hodder, *The Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Çatalhöyük* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2006).

articulate, and project ground across different scales. As such, the argument that unfolds here is less about prescribing a typology than about exposing a condition: one in which ground is understood as an active, mediated, and constructed field, and platform as the architectural ground-making through which that condition is made legible, operable, and open to transformation.

CHAPTER 2

GROUND

> *At least we now know what the ground is not. It is not a stage, it is not a platform, it is not a floor, it is not a baseboard, and it is not the sea. What, then, is it?*[39]

Anthropologist Tim Ingold's last statement in "Ground" chapter in his book, *The Life of Lines* is significant in terms of forcing one to rethink what has already been stated in relation to ground in architecture. In this sense, each statement, each interpretation rather becomes a form of speculation in an artificially introduced framework. Then, what is ground? How do we relate to ground? How do we form the ground?

Ground is open to speculation, and each instance of its use introduces a new definition, yet no single, rigid formulation can define it permanently. In this sense, and following Ingold's closing reflections, the definition of ground cannot be definite. This indefiniteness in definition comes from an ongoing process of change. Ground is continually exposed to forces beyond architectural control, erosion, sedimentation, subsidence, and seasonal shifts alter its form over time; it is deliberately intervened through surveying, grading, excavating; and constructed to reconfigure its contours and elevations. Its articulation is resistant to fixing it, even the most precise measurement or drawing captures only a moment within an ongoing process of change. Physical state of ground is therefore always in flux, rendering any definition necessarily provisional and contingent upon temporal and material conditions. Multiple definitions, arising from different modes of grounding, are

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[39] Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines,* (London: Routledge, 2015), 40.

possible but neither definitive nor ultimately true. This chapter takes ground's multiplicity of definitions as an operative condition, exploring these multiple definitions of ground through the perspective of its formation. In doing so, it draws the formation of architectural space into direct relation with the formation of ground, a relation that becomes central to defining the platform as an "earthly architectural ground".

For Tim Ingold and Antoine Picon, ground is an active and evolving medium, continually shaped by environmental processes, human actions, and the technical means through which it is surveyed, represented, and constructed. Ingold situates ground within the continuous interplay of natural forces and lived movement, where processes such as erosion, sedimentation, and seasonal change are inseparable from the paths worn through daily use.[40] Picon situates ground within its entanglement with infrastructure and territorial organization, showing how engineering, mapping, and material operations actively reconfigure its form and function.[41] Together, these perspectives theorize ground as continually produced through the combined agency of environmental dynamics, human occupation, and technical apparatus.

In this sense, ground is a working medium. Ingold advances a rethinking of this latter dimension, presenting ground as an active, generative medium continually reshaped through processes of weathering, movement, and human intervention.[42] He defines the earth through a concept of "meshwork" of entangled lines and paths, in which ground is constituted through dwelling rather than imposed upon.[43] This ontological shift repositions ground from a passive substrate to a responsive, temporal medium that co-evolves with the practices inhabiting it. Such a perspective reframes ground as more than a geometric or structural datum, revealing it as a medium through which

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[40] Ibid., 132-34.
[41] Antoine Picon, *French Architects and Engineers in the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 22–28.
[42] Ingold, *The Life of Lines*, 132–34.
[43] Ibid.

spatial and experiential formations emerge in reciprocity with the shifting material conditions of the earth.

Then, ground can also be understood as a "meshwork" that generates relations through acts of "inhabiting," "tracing," "weaving," "claiming," and "imprinting."[44] These acts reproduce ground as surface, terrain, and landmark simultaneously: as surface, through the physical modification and maintenance of a plane for movement or occupation; as terrain, through the articulation of slopes, textures, and elevations that structure spatial experience; and as landmark, through the accumulation of distinctive features, paths, clearings, thresholds, that become points of reference in memory. In this sense, ground is articulated through a "meshwork" of lines and paths, threads of movement and dwelling that are continuously shaped by bodily engagement and physical processes of the environment.[45] Life unfolds along these lines; far from being a closed surface, ground is porous, responsive, and perpetually in the process of becoming.[46] It is porous in that water, air, and roots permeate its layers, altering its composition and stability; responsive in that it shifts under pressure, compacts under weight, and deforms through repeated use; and in the process of becoming because these interactions, both natural and human, continuously articulate its structure, gradients, and textures over time. Walking, in this regard, becomes a primary mode of engagement, shaping varied relations with ground and enabling the formulation of multiple definitions. This resonates with the mobilization of soil in design processes, where material is shifted, layered, and transformed to produce new assemblages. Within such articulation, ground can no longer be conceived merely as a surface but is redefined as an active "living thickness."[47]

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[44] Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007), 75–78.
[45] Ibid., 79.
[46] Ibid.
[47] David Peleman et al., "Exploring the Soil: Not a Sentimental Journey", *OASE* 110, no. 1 (2022): 9.

Rather than a static surface fixed prior to intervention, ground can be theorized as a continuous and modulating field shaped by gradients, shifts in elevation, and the distribution of forces across its extent.[48] It is constructed, negotiated, and continually redefined through three interrelated processes: abstraction, inhabitation, and transformation. Through abstraction, ground becomes legible and projectable: surveyed, measured, and inscribed with representational systems that translate its irregularities into operational form. Through inhabitation, it acquires spatial meaning as paths are worn, thresholds marked, and surfaces differentiated through repeated use. Through transformation, it is physically altered, cut, filled, layered, and reassembled, by both environmental forces and human intervention. Form does not originate on such a field fully determined; it develops through reciprocal interaction with these dynamic conditions, responding to the variability and temporality inherent in ground.

Within this framework, ground becomes an active participant in spatial formation. To comprehend it necessitates working directly with its material behavior: registering changes in stability, tracing the lines worn by movement, and observing the interplay between human and nonhuman activity.[49] Where building meets ground, this negotiation occurs as finished floor levels meet existing grades; plinths, steps, and ramps reconcile the difference; foundations and retaining walls fix new ground lines; sub-base build-ups, membranes, and drains thicken the section; and later openings for services, patches, and overlays leave joints and saw-cuts that subsequent work must register. Each intervention sets new thresholds and edges that subsequent work takes as interfaces, so architecture continually writes onto, and reads from, the same ground. Ground thus becomes a site of negotiation: a palimpsest

[48] Ingold, *The Life of Lines*, 132–34.
[49] Ingold, *Lines*, 79–81.

in which environmental forces, histories, and constructed interventions accumulate and transform over time.[50]

The structure of this chapter reflects these issues by tracing how ground is constituted, represented, and historically framed in architectural discourse. The first part, "Topological Ground," borrows from Ingold's theory of ground as a "meshwork" in which ground is constituted through acts of weaving and threading.[51] The "meshwork" as introduced by Ingold, presents how continuous material interaction, walking, cultivating, building, intersects with the shifting material conditions of earth to produce spatial form without relying on a fixed or pre-determined plan.[52]

The second part, "Cartographic Grounds," traces the abstraction of ground through representational practices. Drawing on contemporary approaches such as those proposed by Jill Desimini and Charles Waldheim, it considers mapping not as a static description but as an operative tool that participates in the making of ground.[53] Here, surveying, measuring, and projecting are understood as creative acts that translate the irregularities of ground into legible, projectable frameworks.[54] This part articulates how abstraction functions as both a conceptual and material operation, influencing how ground can be occupied, transformed, and reimagined.

The third part, "Architectural Ground," turns to the formation of ground within architectural theory and history. Through a hermeneutic rereading of architectural treatises, it reconstructs the ways in which ground has been theorized as a formal, structural, and symbolic component of design. This part traces how earlier notions of geometric datum, proportional ordering, and formal articulation coexist with more

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[50] James Corner, "Terra Fluxus," in *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, ed. Charles Waldheim (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 21–33.
[51] Ingold, *Lines*, 75–79.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Desimini and Waldheim, *Cartographic Grounds*.
[54] Ibid.

dynamic and process-based understandings of ground. By doing so, it situates platform within a lineage of architectural thought, showing how the act of grounding is both a historical inheritance and a site for contemporary reinterpretation.

2.1 Topological Ground

Tim Ingold's introduction of weaving and threading in his book *The Life of Lines* is a profound elaboration of formation of topological grounds. Within his work the ground is a process of becoming through coming together of threads of movement, growth and interaction.[55] Ground is not perceived as fixed base where the life occurs but composed of interwoven lines, in the process of becoming; it is a "meshwork" that is formed through an ongoing entanglement of threads.[56] Such reorientation opens up a discussion for architecture. Instead of the logic of discrete objects and bounded plots, it offers a process in direct relation to lines, rhythms, and dwelling. These concepts can be traced physically in recurrent routes; thresholds emerge where flows intersect, passage widths follow daily rhythms, and repeated passage gives rise to steps, ramps, and edges.

In this sense, the weaving moves beyond a metaphor and becomes an ontological tool. With reference to this, living and non-living systems extend themselves along different trajectories that intersect, tangle, and bind with each other. Thus, ground is no longer an inert surface which preexists but the very outcome of the intertwining of these occurrences and entanglement of different systems of living and non-living. It emerges as a relational medium, a living ground, through a continuous weaving of events.

Therefore, with reference to Ingold, ground is a continuously woven "meshwork" in the process of becoming. In this sense, relating can be taken as two different modes;

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[55] Ingold, *The Life of Lines,* 3.
[56] Ibid., 21.

one is the "network" and the other is the "meshwork". In a network, the nodes are connected by pre-determined links, in which elements are discreet and connections are external. However, the "meshwork" offers a more constitutive approach. With "meshwork," entities emerge by their entanglement with each other. Thus, thread is a way of being in movement, in becoming; in return, the ground is a tapestry of lives and processes, in which boundaries are porous. Weaving becomes a way in which this differentiation is articulated.

Ingold, defines the "trace" as "any enduring mark left in or on a solid surface by a continuous movement."[57] Frequented paths trail the routes of everyday life. To walk on the surface of the earth is then directly related to the act of inhabiting. In such sense, tracing of ground, by walking, is part of the wider formation of rituals and ceremonies in everyday life. Thus, walking becomes a way in which one directly relates itself to the ground through the formation of multiple and layered narratives.

Ingold dwells on the act of weaving, especially with reference to Gottfried Semper's *Four Elements of Architecture*, in which the surfaces are produced.[58]

> Threads may be transformed into traces, and traces into threads. It is through the transformation of threads into traces, I argue, that surfaces are brought into being. And conversely, it is through the transformation of traces into threads that surfaces are dissolved.[59]

When taken as such, platform is also becomes an act of "weaving". Thus, platform is not a static plane but an assemblage of interlaced trajectories, circulations, sightlines, programmatic flows, and structural elements, that intersect and reinforce one another.

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[57] Ibid., 43.
[58] Ibid., 42.
[59] Ibid., 52.

Platform, in this sense, materializes the entanglement of movement and form: it records the traces of occupation while also generating new paths and patterns of inhabitation. Its edges are porous, allowing for exchange between what lies on and around it, while its surface integrates layers of use, construction, and adaptation. In this way, platform embodies the same "meshwork" logic as weaving, functioning as both a register of past actions and a framework for future ones.

2.1.1 Ground as a Knotwork

Emerging from a topological understanding of ground, "knotwork" becomes an important point of reference for the formation of places. For Ingold, "knotting" is a process in which the trajectories of movement and growth intertwine, entangle, and coalesce into distinct yet dynamic articulations.[60] With this continuous process of "threading" and "weaving," the "knots" are formed. The "knots" are the moments in which places are articulated.[61]

> The knot is not a container. Containers have insides and outsides; in the topology of the knot, however, it is impossible to say what is inside or outside. Rather, knots have interstices. Their surfaces do not enclose but lie 'between the lines' of the materials that make them up.[62]

Thus, "knots" occur between events and ground moves beyond being a merely flat or continuous surface but rather becomes a living fabric of entangled lines; in which lines are knotted to form places of habitation. These moments in which "knots" are formed are moments of intensities.

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[60]Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011), 70.
[61] Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007), 12.
[62] Ibid., 15.

In his *The Life of Lines*, Ingold depicts knots as "tangles of lines," where each "knot" arises as a convergence of movement.[63] In a way, a "knot" is localized entanglement of a form, in which lines thread through one another in such a way that their mutual binding constitutes a site of encounter, memory, and dwelling. Thus, "knots" are not simple additions to ground; they emerge through a movement across it. Ground can be considered a living fabric of lines that intermittently "knot" into landmarks, settlements, terrains.

"Weaving" and "threading" describe the conditions of ground's continuous becoming, but it is through knotting that points of habitation arise.[64] A "knot" gathers and concentrates movement; it offers a pause or a thickening within the otherwise continuous flow. A "knot" may appear as a clearing, a plaza, a village, a ruin. It is a place where pathways meet, fold, and loop back, creating the conditions for recognition, repetition, and return.

Such theorization of ground suggests that terrain is a field of "knotwork," a dense mesh of relationalities.[65] Each feature of the terrain, from hills to constructed form, is the outcome of human and non-human entanglements. To dwell is to become entangled, to participate in the ongoing knotting of the ground.

Such a notion of knotting can be observed in the work of Pier Vittorio Aureli and DOGMA. Their insistence on clear, autonomous forms does not imply a disengagement from ground but a specific kind of entanglement. It is a strategic knotting that intensifies the relation between figure and terrain. Their *Platforms for Sharjah* (figure 2.1) knots into the open field, reconfiguring its flows and occupations without erasing its open character. It is a thickened path, a durable entanglement, rather than an imposition of ground.[66] DOGMA's introduction of these three-stepped

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[63] Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines*, 14.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] DOGMA (Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara), *Living and Working* (Zurich: gta Verlag, 2013), 45–53.

platforms (figure 2.1), both introduces a changed material condition and a thickening to differentiate and disrupt the continuity of city's ground to define a knot in which public gatherings can take place.



Figure 2.1. *Primary*, Platforms for Sharjah, DOGMA (Sharjah Architecture Triennial, 2019)



Figure 2.2. Threshing Floor, Naxos Greece, 4th century, B.C. (DOGMA, 2019)

Therefore, integrating knotting into the topology of ground allows an understanding of place, terrain, and architecture. Ground is not only “woven” or “threaded;” it is knotted. It is a living fabric of entangled paths, where landmarks emerge as localized concentrations of movement and memory. Architectural and territorial acts, then, are not merely placements upon a passive field but participations in its ongoing knotting, gestures of relation, gathering, and care (figure 2.2). Threshing floor (figure 2.2) as illustrated by DOGMA shows how the simple act of changing materiality of ground and a formation of threshold with the introduction of an edge that defines space without a vertical enclosure.

2.1.2 Terrain as landmark

Terrain emerges as a structure of inhabitation. It could be considered as a fabric, punctuated through landmarks that guide, stabilize, and situate occupation. In

DOGMA's *Living and Working: Toward a Critical History of Domestic Space,* it is stated that;

> It is a mistake to think of the presedentary life of hunter-gatherers as devoid of any sense of permanence and territoriality. Hunter-gatherers had a strong sense of association with territories which was organized not by possession of land but by the focus on landmarks such as paths, tracks, sacred sites, haunts, water holes, and mountains.[67]

Here, terrain itself becomes a landmark, a place of inhabitation. Pier Vittorio Aureli, in *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, situates form and terrain as inextricably linked: as mutually defining conditions.[68] The specific contours, elevations, and boundaries of terrain shape the possibilities for architectural form, while architectural interventions, in turn, clarify, emphasize, or reframe those geographic features. Thus, architecture emerges as an act of marking and distinguishing ground, giving identity to a place through clarity of form and figure. In this sense, with its prominences, voids, and figures, terrain offers points of inhabitation that are both literal and symbolic. It becomes a topographical landmark.

Aureli dwells on the dialectical relationship between the isolated architectural figure and the amorphous field of the city's ground.[69] He argues that architecture finds its meaning through differentiating itself from the surrounding terrain, its capacity to stand apart and by acting as a marker amidst flux.[70] However, such distinction is not an arbitrary one, it is formed through its relationship with the terrain. Thus, the architectural space emerges through a reading, a drawing-out, of potentials already present in terrain.

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[67] DOGMA, *Living and Working*, 6.
[68] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 7.
[69] Ibid., 13.
[70] Ibid.

Then, to create landmarks is not merely to build monuments but to participate in the "reweaving" of ground. It is to articulate points of habitation that are grounded in the singularities of terrain, emerging through the careful reading of its contours, the alignment with existing paths and flows, and the amplification of features that already hold spatial or mnemonic significance. In doing so, the landmark does not obscure the terrain, but intensifies and makes legible the relationships embedded within it.

2.2 Cartographic Grounds: Projecting Ground

Cartographic representation has been deeply implicated by the shift from geometric to topological thinking.[71] While traditional cartography tends to flatten the ground into a surface divided into parcels, coordinates, and administrative zones, the notion of cartographic grounds, articulated by Jill Desimini and Charles Waldheim offers a more nuanced and generative approach to the representation of the ground.[72] As part of their edited volume *Cartographic Grounds: Projecting the Landscape Imaginary*, they introduce different modes of projection that do not merely represent ground but rather participate in its production. Techniques such as contour mapping, sectional drawing, layered orthographic projection, and composite imaging register not only the measurable geometry of landforms but also the traces of hydrological systems, vegetation patterns, infrastructural networks, and material deposits.[73] By integrating these temporal and processual dimensions, the act of mapping becomes inseparable

[71] In mapping, geometric thinking treats ground as a metric surface: georeferenced coordinates, fixed distances, angles, areas, and scales that stabilize parcel lines and contour intervals, whereas topological thinking records relations of connection and separation: path and watershed networks, adjacency between habitats and parcels, and continuities/discontinuities across thresholds, so what matters is how elements link, branch, or cross, rather than their exact dimensions.
[72] Jill Desimini and Charles Waldheim, *Cartographic Grounds: Projecting the Landscape Imaginary* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2016), 7.
[73] Ibid.

from the shaping of ground itself. Each projection influences how the ground is perceived, valued, and ultimately transformed through design intervention.

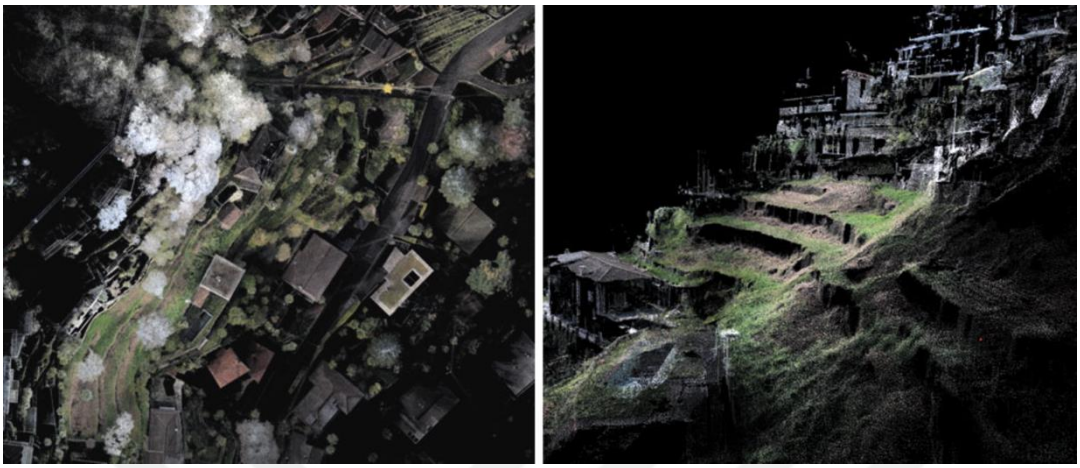


Figure 2.3. Atelier Girot, *True Color Point Cloud in Brissage, Ticino, Switzerland,* 2013 (Atelier Girot, 2013).

In order to reflect a deeper engagement with the thickness and complexity of ground, Dessimini and Waldheim offer a framework which recovers a series of drawing techniques: "contour," "datum," "grid," "section," and more.[74] Each method isolates and reveals a specific dimension of the ground: "contours" register the undulation of landforms and the flow of water; "datums" establish reference points that link the surface to systems of elevation, measurement, and construction; "grids" expose latent alignments and spatial orders; and "sections" cut through the surface to reveal subsurface strata, infrastructure, and material composition.[75] Through these methods, cartography exposes the interdependence of form, process, and occupation, making visible the ground's hidden structures and temporal transformations, and thereby moving far beyond mere illustrations of location[76] (figure 2.3). In Desimini and Waldheim's framework that they introduce in their *Cartographic Grounds*, cartographic ground is conceived as a layered and dynamic field assembled through

[74] Ibid., 11.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.

operations such as "excavation," which reveals and redefines subsurface conditions; "accumulation," which builds up material layers and sedimentary histories; "erosion," which reconfigures form through the gradual removal of matter; and "inscription," which embeds "lines," "boundaries," and "symbols" into the surface. Together, these processes operate across temporal scales, continually shaping ground not as a static object but as an evolving record of material and spatial transformation.[77]

Such reconceptualization of mapping aligns with Ingold's critique of the abstract, planimetric map. Ingold calls for a reorientation of cartography from a geometric to topological thinking, parallel to his theory of ground as "meshwork"[78] Like Desimini and Waldheim, he argues that maps should not be viewed as end-products but as acts of tracing: ways of threading dynamic paths of inhabitation into the world rather than freezing them into coordinates.[79]

In the most profound sense, landscape architecture and urban design operate as forms of cartographic practice. Their relationship with ground depends on making visible the intricate patterns of connection, flow, and occupation that shape a site over time.[80] They "project," in both senses of the word: they put forward propositions for spatial change, and they draw forth latent relationships already embedded within the ground's physical and cultural fabric. In this way, the projective act of cartography becomes generative rather than merely descriptive. It is a means of articulating ground's potentials: its capacity to host activities, to gather social life, and to differentiate space without reducing it to fixed boundaries or abstract divisions.[81]

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[77] Ibid., 12-35.
[78] Ingold, *The Life of Lines*, 21.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Op. cit.
[81] James Corner, "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention," in *Mappings*, ed. Denis Cosgrove (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 213–52.

Parallel to this, platform as an architectural element offers a spatial counterpart to such cartographic thinking. Instead of functioning only as a "raised level surface," platform participates in the formation of spatial relationships: it organizes movement, frames views, mediates between levels, and stages interactions between bodies and earth. Where building meets earth, platform works through concrete elements, landings set to recurrent routes, thresholds that take up level changes and porous edges, so paths become steps and ramps and pauses gather at crossings. Over time, service openings, overlays, and added fixtures leave seams that subsequent work treats as thresholds and interfaces, keeping the ground both operative and adjustable.

The operations presented in *Cartographic Grounds* foreground the interweaving of material and representational practices. A contour, for example, is more than a line of elevation; it is a trace of bodily and environmental experience, a memory of water, a path of least resistance (figure 2.3). Walking is the pace of a slope; in construction, it sets formwork heights, riser counts, bench widths, and cut–fill limits; in routing, it guides tracks and terrace edges along lines; as record, it carries terrace and long-used crossings. Choosing the interval and drawing break lines are design acts that tune how the ground's rise and fall are read and where platforms step. Within this context, Ingold's reflections on geographical discoveries are significant:

> In brief, the navigator hast before him a complete representation of the territory, in the form of a cartographic map, upon which he can plot a course even before setting out. The journey is then no more than an explication of the plot.[82]

In such instance, the relationship between ground and cartography becomes an important point of reference to comprehend the knowledge produced by the act of imprinting and inhabiting on earth. Similarly, the datum reveals how systems of

[82] Ingold, *Lines: A brief history,* 15.

measurement shape the relationship to land: structuring how elevation, depth, and alignment are registered, and how infrastructure, law, and labor leave enduring marks on the earth.[83] This occurs through surveying practices that fix positional references, construction processes that translate those references into built form, and regulatory frameworks that formalize spatial divisions.[84] In this way, the datum functions not merely as a technical tool but as a framework through which the material, spatial, and administrative organization of ground is continuously articulated. Each contour drawn, datum established, or layer superimposed reflects an engagement with the physical conditions of terrain and the sequences of activity that shape it, producing an archive of interactions between ground and its various agents.[85]

2.3 Architectural Ground: Theoretical and Historical Framework

The negotiation of ground can be considered as one of the foundational acts of architecture. Ground in architecture and its theory is a material condition and a conceptual problem. It is shaped, idealized, abstracted, and theorized through cultural, political, and philosophical operations that give form not only to buildings but to the possibility of the formation of space. This thesis does not claim to develop a fixed framework for ground, but inevitably engages with the issues that arise in relation to it. From ancient temples raised on stepped platforms to modernist pilotis that suspend the building above terrain, ground has remained a contested and generative site. This part of the thesis develops a critical inquiry on architectural ground through its historical and theoretical elaboration, particularly as articulated in architectural treatises, and reframed through contemporary philosophical inquiry in the work of Gilles Deleuze, whose concepts of smooth and striated space, the fold,

[83] Desimini and Waldheim, *Cartographic Grounds*, 31.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

and the plane of immanence provide analytical tools to reconceptualize ground as a dynamic, continuous, and modulating field.[86] Smooth and striated space articulate two modes of spatial organization, one open, continuous, and intensive, the other segmented, measured, and bounded, which together reveal how ground can transition between fluidity and control in architectural form and territorial organization.[87] The fold, as Deleuze develops it, suggests that surface and depth are not opposed layers but continuous variations of the same substance, allowing ground to be read as ever-transforming where forces, forms, and matter co-articulate space.[88] The plane of immanence, meanwhile, offers a way to think of ground as a non-hierarchical field of relations, where material, spatial, and temporal conditions interact without recourse to a transcendent ordering principle.[89] Within this framework, ground emerges from the interplay of events, forces, and movements.

In architectural treatises, as in Vitruvius' *Ten Books on Architecture*, Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*, Serlio's *On Architecture*, and Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture* ground is approached as both an empirical reality and symbolic order. These treatises constructed an act of building which is inseparable from the nature of the ground. Whether through Vitruvius' emphasis on the *stereobate* and foundations, Alberti's articulation of the *area* as a defined site of projection, or Palladio's use of platforms to structure architectural and territorial relations, ground is articulated with meaning.

Thus, ground is understood as a spatial condition shaped through differentiated relations, intensities, and processes. In *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze develops a topological ontology in which space is not Euclidean and homogeneous

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[86] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Bloomsbury Revelations, 2013).
[87] Ibid., 474-500.
[88] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: Bloomsbury Revelations, 2015).
[89] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (London: Bloomsbury Revelations, 2014).

but folded, mobile, and continuously differentiated.[90] Ground is conceived as a generative medium, a "plane of immanence" upon which events and forms emerge.[91] Within this framework, the Deleuzian fold, elaborated further in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, provides a conceptual tool to grasp how ground operates as an active force of modulation.[92] The fold proposes a continuity of topological relations in which architecture does not stand upon earth but folds with it, emerging through its material and spatial dynamics. With this framework, architectural ground becomes a site of negotiation between multiple trajectories: geological, political, ritual, and social.

Therefore, classical treatises and historical formations of architectural ground, as in the *crepidoma* of the Greek temple or the *podium* of the Renaissance villa, can be reread not only as formal elements but as diagrammatic operations on ground. The temple platform, for instance, does not only elevate; it separates, stages, and provides the groundwork for the relation between the divine and the terrestrial. It is about movement and inhabitation. From the ziggurat to the Greek temple, architectural ground is a spatial articulation.

The following part of this chapter takes architectural treatises as a repository of ground-thinking. Through a hermeneutical reading of Vitruvius, Alberti, Serlio, and Palladio, it excavates how ground is described, drawn, measured, structured, and conveyed. The *stereobate* becomes an important element in which the ground is framed as a site of action and meaning. "Mound," as one of the four elements of architecture theorized by Gottfried Semper, is also an important frame for the transformation and manipulation of ground. This part of the thesis, by revisiting

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[90] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Bloomsbury Revelations, 2014), 230–233.
[91] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 36–38.
[92] Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, 6–9.

foundational texts with the tools of contemporary theory, aims to reposition architectural ground as a conceptual medium, open to various forms of negotiation.

2.3.1 Architectural Treatises and the Elaboration of Architectural Ground[93]

The following part focuses on four treatises, Vitruvius' *Ten Books of Architecture,* Leon Battista Alberti's *On the Art of Building in Ten Books,* Sebastiano Serlio's *On Architecture* and Andrea Palladio's *The Four Books on Architecture.* This is a hermeneutic re-reading which claims to trace the possibilities of platform as a potential epistemological tool in which architecture reflects on its own methods of grounding, staging, and inhabiting space. This perspective allows these foundational texts to be revisited not merely as historical documents, but as active sites where the conceptual and material dimensions of architectural ground are negotiated.

To begin with, Vitruvius introduces architectural projections by stating that

> [i]t is an adjustment according to quantity (in Greek ποσότης). By this I mean the selection of modules from the members of the work itself and, starting from these individual parts of members constructing the whole work to correspond. Arrangement includes the putting of things in their proper places and the elegance of effect which is due to adjustments appropriate to the character of the work. Its forms of expression (Greek ἰδέαι) are these: ground plan, elevation, and perspective.[94]

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[93] This hermeneutical reading and tracing of the treatises follows the framework of the graduate course, ARCH 616 Architectural Research II, conducted by Ayşen Savaş in 2019-20 Fall Semester as a part of the PhD program in Architecture at METU.

[94] Vitruvius, *Ten Books of Architecture,* trans. Morris Hicky Morgan, (New York: Dover Publications, 1960), 27.

Before the introduction of architectural projections: ground plan, elevation and perspective, Vitruvius relies upon how different elements of architecture, although distinct in their essence, interact with each other to form an ordered whole. Within this framework, platform can be understood as both a physical and conceptual mediator, an interface, linking these projections to the material and spatial act of grounding architecture.

Another important issue related to the topography could be elaborated through the act of constructing. The basis of construction lies on the manipulation of the earth. The implications of manipulating the topography, especially in terms of construction, can be traced in Vitruvius' writing. How one should build lies in the character of the earth, the *topos*. In Vitruvius' writing the issue of the context is dealt with through the emphasis on the nature of the earth. In this sense, how one should build is explained in detail with reference to the nature of the existing ground. The text consists of detailed methods of construction in different sites and situations. When Vitruvius introduces his triad for building, which consists of durability, convenience and beauty, he connects durability directly with the construction of foundations. "Durability will be assured when foundations are carried down to the solid ground and materials wisely and liberally selected […]"[95] Thus, the building's relationship with earth is highly important for its stability throughout time. Vitruvius elaborates this issue especially through temples. He states that

> while transmitting to us the proper arrangements for buildings of all kinds, they were particularly careful to do so in the case of temples of the gods, buildings in which merits and faults usually last forever.[96]

[95] Ibid., 31.
[96] Ibid., 95.

> Above ground, let walls be laid under the columns, thicker by one half than the columns are to be, so that the lower may be stronger than the higher. Hence they are called "stereobates;" for they take the load.[97]
>
> If, however, solid ground cannot be found, but the place proves to be nothing but a heap of loose earth to the very bottom, or a marsh, then it must be dug up and cleared out and set with piles made of charred alder or olive wood or oak, and these must be driven down by machinery, very closely together like bridge-piles, and the intervals between them filled in with charcoal, and finally the foundations are to be laid on them in the most solid form of construction.[98]

With these explanations of how the foundations of the temples should be laid and the introduction of the element *stereobate,* Vitruvius starts to build up on the knowledge of construction in direct relation to ground. In this sense, the topography starts to be manipulated in order to lay down the groundwork to start building. Thus, *stereobate* as an architectural element becomes the very initial step of both construction and accumulation of the knowledge of architectural grounding.

After the introduction of *stereobate,* Vitruvius introduces *stylobate* as an element which regulates the overall configuration of the temple structure. The way in which the columns are located are in direct relation to the *stylobate.* Finally, Vitruvius introduces *crepidoma*

> The steps in front must be arranged so that there shall be always an odd number of them; for thus the right foot, with which one mounts the first step, will also be the first to reach the level of temple itself. The rise of such steps should, I think, be limited to not more than ten nor less than nine inches; for then the ascent will not be difficult. The treads of the steps ought to be made

[97] Ibid., 109.
[98] Ibid., 110.

> not less than a foot and a half, and not more than two feet deep. If there are to be steps running all round the temple, they should be built of the same size.[99]

With reference to this passage, the *crepidoma* is not presented merely as a technical or structural component, but as an element embedded with ritual and social considerations. Its dimensions and proportions choreograph the bodily act of ascent, ensuring that each step is deliberate and harmonious with the temple's ceremonial approach. The measured rise and tread transform the act of ascending platform into a spatial experience that frames arrival and encounter. In this way, the *crepidoma* anticipates the broader role of architectural platform as a designed threshold between the domain of the everyday life and the elevated space of ritual.

In a comparable manner to Vitruvius, Leon Battista Alberti introduces the term *area* in order to expand the issue with the context. In Joseph Rykwert's interpretation the term is referred to as "all that is covered by the building; aspects of the locality; the arrangement of the plan; foundations, and even parts of the walls above ground."[100] It is to be concluded that the term is directly related with the relationships that building constructs with reference to its context. Further explanation of the term could be found in Alberti's first book on "Lineaments"

> The *area* may be either on a level surface, on a slope, or on top of a hill. If it is on a level surface, a mound should be formed, so as to place the building on some kind of podium, which will ensure it greater dignity and also present several inconveniencies: floods caused by swollen rivers of heavy rains are likely to deposit mud in flat places, which gradually raises the level of the

[99] Ibid.
[100] Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), 20.

> ground; the surrounding plane is also raised simply through the negligence of man, who fails to clear away the rubble and refuse that gather daily.[101]
>
> In choosing the *area*, whatever advice we gave on the locality should also be respected; for just as the locality is a particular part selected out of some larger territory, so too the *area* is a precisely limited and defined section of the overall locality taken for future building. For this reason the *area* will display almost the same advantages and disadvantages as the locality; but nonetheless in this account certain precepts will appear, some of which might seem to concern the *area* specifically, while others relate not only to determining the actual *area* but also to questions about the locality as a whole, such as the following.[102]

With the introduction of the term, "podium," Alberti suggests a construction of a manipulated, architectural ground to be built on. Again, the introduction of the podium as an architectural ground is directly related with the context, topography. The guiding character of the topography in terms of construction may also be traced through Alberti's description of the ground in his third book,

> The ground has many layers, some sandy, some gravelly, others stony, and so on; and below these, its position ever changing and uncertain, lies a hard, compact layer of earth, extremely suitable for bearing the weight of buildings. The nature of this layer may itself vary, there being scarcely any similarities between the various types: some may be hard, almost impregnable to iron, others thick, some black, others white (latter are commonly thought the weakest of all), some composed of clay, others of tufa, and others of a mixture of gravel and clay.[103]

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[101] Ibid., 25.
[102] Ibid., 19.
[103] Ibid., 63.

Thus, how the architectural ground interacts with the existing topography creates a basis for the construction. In a similar manner, Alberti's description of *area* through lineaments works in both ways to also define the lineaments. In the following part on lineaments in his book one, Alberti explains such a relationship between the two.

> Every outline is made up of lines and angles; lines make up the outer perimeter, which encloses the whole extent of the *area.* Any part of the surface within this perimeter that is contained between two intersecting lines is called an angle. When two lines intersect, four angles are formed; if any one of them equals the other three, they will be termed right angles. Those which are smaller than right angles are called acute, and those greater, obtuse. A line may be either straight or curved: there is no need here to deal with lines that spiral like a snail shell or a whirlpool. The straight line is the shortest possible line that may be drawn between two points. The curved line is part of a circle. A circle is the line made by one of two points moving on one plane, so that throughout the operation its course remains not farther or closer than the initial distance set between it and the other, the fixed and central point, which it circumscribes.[104]

With reference to this description, it is possible to conclude that the *area* contributes to defining relationships between lineaments. Lineaments create a frame of reference to define *area* in terms of geometrical relations. This dual relationship is also evident in the following part in which Alberti explains the geometrical methods to define the foundations.

> Our usual method of defining the foundations is to trace out several lines, known as baselines, in the following manner. From a midpoint at the front, we extend a line right to the back of the work; halfway along it we fix a stake into the ground, and through this, following the rules of geometry, we extend

[104] Ibid., 19.

> the perpendicular. We then relate all the measurements to these two lines. This works wonderfully in every way: the parallel lines are easily drawn, the angles can be defined accurately, and the parts conform and correspond exactly to one another.[105]

With reference to the methods Alberti offers in his book, it can be concluded that the *area* becomes an important frame of reference in the formation of architectural ground. It becomes a basis for production of architectural knowledge in which further relationships could be formed. Furthermore, after dwelling on the issue of understanding the *area* and the lineaments, Alberti dwells on the ground plan and how architectural projections are bound to it:

> […] [architect] takes his projections from the ground plan and, without altering the lines and by maintaining the true angles, reveals the extent and shape of each elevation and side – he is one who desires his work to be judged not by deceptive appearances but according to calculated standards.[106]

In this sense, Alberti offers a sequence in which the act of building starts through understanding contextual relationships offered by the *area.* Afterwards, by introducing lineaments and the ground plan, he offers a point reference for a framework for the art of building. Thus, architectural ground is both a constructed condition and a conceptual framework.

The relationship between ground and representation is also articulated in Sebastiano Serlio's definition of perspective as "bodies raised above the plane."[107] In this sense, his definition of perspective positions it not only as an optical system but also as a theoretical element for understanding ground in architecture. In a similar manner,

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[105] Ibid., 62-63.
[106] Ibid., 25.
[107] Sebastiano Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture (Books I-V of Tutte l'Opere d'Architettura et Prospetiva),* trans. Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 37.

through his theatre stage depictions (figure 2.4) Serlio expands and represents "public ground," the urban context. While the "tragic" scene is dominated by objects such as an obelisk and a gate which represent Vitruvian architecture, "comic" scene is an agglomeration of buildings without a sense of proportion that does not have a clear understanding of orders.[108] The way Serlio defines the users and characters in "tragic" and "comic" scenes also underlines the public aspect of their ground as a connector.

> The stage buildings for [tragedies] should be of characters of high rank, because disastrous love affairs, unforeseen events and violent gruesome deaths (as far as one reads in ancient tragedies, not to mention modern ones) always occur in the houses of noblemen, Dukes, great Princes or even Kings.[109]
>
> The stage buildings for [comic scene] should be private houses; that is, belonging to citizens, merchants, lawyers, parasites and other similar characters.[110]

In this sense, the ground of the theatre stages becomes the place in which all of these different characters come together in the city. The ground plane of the theatre is thus an artificial construction of public ground, an architectural space where distinctions and commonalities between characters are materialized and made visible.

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[108] Pier Vittorio Aureli, "AA Phd Open Seminar Series," (Presentation, AA, London, 2012).
[109] Op. cit., 88.
[110] Ibid.

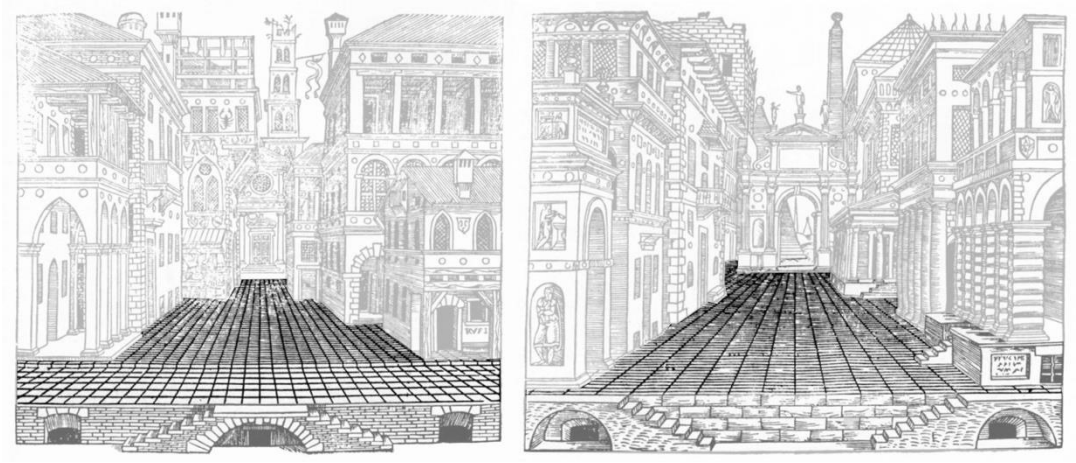


Figure 2.4. Sebastiano Serlio's comic and tragic scenes

Andrea Palladio's *Four Books on Architecture* is significant in terms of putting forward his ideas in relation to his own built work. Thus, he not only dwells on how one should build but also presents his own works in order to formulate his arguments. He begins to construct his arguments by dwelling on the foundational aspects of the act of building. In his Book I he begins with the condition of the existing ground and furthers his argument through possible ways in which the ground regulates this act.

> But when nature does not help us with foundations, they will have to be devised by artificial means; then one will either have to build on firm ground or in a place which is gravelly, sandy, has shifting ground, or is soft and marshy. If the ground is firm and hard, one will dig as deep as the experienced architect deems necessary and as the type of building and the firmness of the ground require.[111]

With reference to this statement, it can be said that the ground not only regulates the act of building, but it also becomes regulated. Furthermore, his differentiation of

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[111] Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books on Architecture (Quattro libri dell'architectura),* trans. Robert Travernor and Richard Schofied (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997), 11.

building in urban and rural context[112] is also significant since it shows that the ground is not only a physical condition but also a social one. In this sense, the ground embodies both physical and social relations. Physically, bearing capacity, soil type, and level differences determine foundation depth, plinth height, and terrace formation; socially, street datums, property lines, and habitual routes of access are registered and given form by thresholds, steps, and courts, which organize public/private edges and sequences of approach.

Colin Rowe's comment on Palladio's work in his "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa" is an important indicator of how Palladio interacts with the ground. Rowe states that

> Throughout his *Quattro libri*, Palladio consistently equips both his plans and elevations with their numerical apologetic; but the cryptic little figures which he appends to his drawings seem always to be more convincing, or at least more comprehensible, when they relate to the plan.[113]

This statement is also intertwined by Rowe's argument in which he states

> The base plays the part of a projecting, consistently supporting solid upon which the house rests; but, while the *piano nobile* and attic are rusticated, the base is treated as a plain surface and a feeling of even greater weight carried here is achieved by this highly emotive inversion of the usual order.[114]

For Rowe, Palladio's bases act as regulating planes: projecting, supporting surfaces mediating between building and context. The base is treated as a plain surface, even when upper levels are rusticated, producing a heightened sense of weight through

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[112] This could be traced with reference to the chapter titles in Book II, "On the Design of the Houses in the City," "On Planning Buildings on Estates."
[113] Colin Rowe, "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa", in *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1976), 9.
[114] Ibid., 7.

the inversion of conventional orders as in the instance of Villa Malcontenta (figure 2.5).



Figure 2.5. Villa Malcontenta (Foscari 2000)

Pier Vittorio Aureli, in his book, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, extends this reading and interprets Palladio's work as framing of landscape which in a way make architecture intelligible as form.[115]

> In all his work, the encircling territory is not a passive ground waiting to be activated by the imposition of a figure, but a specific site made of existing natural and artificial elements of which the object – the villa – becomes theatrical frame. In this sense, Palladio's villas are not simply objects enclosed within a reconstructed context (like the Medici villas in the Florentine hills or Pirro Ligorio's Villa d'Este), but are specific objects that

[115] Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 53.

> frame and redefine the existing landscape as an economic, cultural, and political counter to the city[116]

With reference to this, Aureli defines platform as a purely architectural element which in his interpretation acts as a counter force to the expansionist aspect of urbanization.

Another important aspect of Palladio's work is how he reinterprets different elements beyond their contextual relations. While explaining how steps should be oriented Palladio refers to the ascension of steps in temples. However, his description does not imply any symbolic aspect as in the temple platform. His approach is rather anachronical.

> The ancients made it a rule to make the steps uneven in number so that when starting to ascend with the right foot one will finish with the same foot-which they took as a sign of good luck and greater reverence when they went into temples. But one should not provide more than eleven or thirteen at most; and on reaching that point, if one has to go higher, one should build a landing, which is called a require, so that the weak and tired will find a place to rest, and if anything happens to fall from above it will have somewhere to stop.[117]

This functional approach is reiterated in his description of a villa in Vicenza, where the pavement of the ground floor is raised five feet: not for symbolic elevation, but to accommodate service spaces below and to optimise views.

> The pavement of the ground floor is raised five feet above the ground; this was done not only to place the cellars and other places necessary for the running of the house below – which would not have been possible if they had been completely underground because the river is not very far away – but

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[116] Ibid., 64.
[117] Palladio, *The Four Books on Architecture*, 66.

> also so that the story above might derive greater advantage from the beautiful site in front of it.[118]

Rowe also comments on this aspect of Palladio's work:

> Palladio sought complete clarity of plan and most lucid organization of conventional elements based on symmetry as the most memorable form of order, and mathematics as the supreme sanction in the world of forms. In his own mind his work was essentially that of adaptation, the adaptation of ancient house; and at the back of his mind were always the great halls of the Imperial thermae and such buildings as Hadrian's villa at Tivoli. He had several schemes of archaeological reconstruction of Greek and Roman domestic buildings based on Vitruvius and Pliny, incorporating elements which in Greek and Roman practice would have been found only in public buildings, but which he regarded as general. Indeed, Rome for him was still supremely alive; and, if ancients have adapted the temple from the house, their large scale planning was, no doubt, similarly reflective.[119]

Rowe interprets this as part of Palladio's broader project of adaptation: appropriating elements from Greek and Roman public architecture for domestic settings, guided by symmetry, mathematical proportion, and clarity of plan. In this sense, the architectural ground in Palladio's work becomes both a compositional frame and an active mediator: grounding the building materially while situating it in a specific cultural, political, and topographical order.

These four sequential treatises are significant for framing platform as an architectural ground. Vitruvius lays a foundation in which the natural ground is a determining factor that regulates the overall structure of a building, situating construction knowledge in relation to the material and topographic realities of a site. Alberti

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[118] Ibid., 81.
[119] Rowe, "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa", 13-14.

extends this premise by introducing the term *area*, embedding platform within a system of measured relationships between locality, geometry, and the act of building. Serlio's definition of perspective foregrounds ground as a primary element that regulates spatial and social relations, and his theatre stage depictions propose artificial platforms that stage the urban realm as a shared, legible field of encounter. Palladio's reinterpretation of architectural elements, in turn, demonstrates how platform can be recontextualized and adapted, enabling the reproduction and transformation of architectural knowledge across diverse settings. Taken together, these treatises position platform as a potential epistemological element through which architecture reflects on its own methods of grounding, staging, and inhabiting space: methods that shift between material construction, representational ordering, and the cultivation of specific social and spatial conditions.

2.3.2 Gottfried Semper's *Four Elements of Architecture* and the Formation of the Mound as an Architectural Ground

Gottfried Semper's *Four Elements of Architecture* is an important frame of reference to define architectural ground. His introduction of "mound" as, one of the primary elements of architecture creates a foundational point of reference for this thesis. Initially, with reference to primitive hut, Gottfried Semper in his *Four Elements of Architecture,* puts forward four fundamental elements for architecture. Francis Mallgrave interprets these four elements as "motives" and "ideas" since each one of these elements are defined with reference to the formal development of architecture.[120] In terms of the four elements, Semper considers the "hearth" as the central element of architecture by attributing a moral role to its existence.[121] The

[120] Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper: Architect of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 185.
[121] Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings,* trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 102.

"hearth" becomes "the spiritual center of the whole"[122] which embodies a social character through the act of gathering. With reference to the protection of the "hearth*"* from natural forces, three elements are introduced which are the "roof", the "enclosure" and the "mound".[123] The "mound", as one of the four elements, "the earthen platform surrounded by the pile work as a terrace,"[124] was formed because of the need to raise the "hearth" from the damp earth.[125] The further implementation of the element is evident in masonry in which the "mound" manifested itself as the foundation of the architecture in the *stereobate* of Greek temple.[126] This idea found its roots in one of Semper's lectures through the statement that "the primitive hut retained… its sacred significance from old traditions and became the supreme task of architecture in the form of the temple."[127] In a similar manner, he states that

> [a]lthough architecture produces original formations and is not an imitative art like painting and sculpture, it has over the centuries created its own store of forms from which it borrows the types for new creations; by using these types, architecture remains legible and comprehensible for everyone.[128]

Again, Semper's approach is significant since he introduces the four elements in order to explain the shaping of these forms through social and structural motives. The four elements are not static in terms of their attributes, but rather they change

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[122] Gottfried Semper, "The Basic elements of Architecture", in *Gottfried Semper: In Search of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), 199.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Wolfgang Herrmann, *Gottfried Semper: In Search of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), xii.
[125] Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper*, 180.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Gottfried Semper quoted in Herrmann, *Gottfried Semper*, 171.
[128] Gottfried Semper, "Influence of Historical Research on Trends in Contemporary Architecture", in *Gottfried Semper: In Search of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), 193.

through interaction in different contexts. Mallgrave also interprets these elements as "thematic processes generating formal development."[129]

Semper's perspective on the "hearth" and the other three elements is also highlighted by Kenneth Frampton. However, instead of the "mound" used in the translation by Wolfgang Herrmann, Frampton uses the term "earthwork" to define the same element. The origin of the word mound is rather obscure; however, in 1550s it was used as "hedge, fence" and "an embankment, a dam" and after 1726 it was used as "artificial elevation of earth."[130] Earthwork is defined as "a large artificial bank of soil, especially one made as a defense in ancient times;"[131] the Old English origin of the word suggests "work on the land."[132] Both of these terms are significant since they underline an artificial state in which ground is manipulated and remade.

Frampton argues that Semper makes a clear distinction between the ontological and the representational character of these four elements in which the "hearth" and the infill wall is considered as representational due to their symbolic character whereas, the "earthwork", the "framework" and the "roof" is considered as ontological.[133] However, as Frampton highlights, the distinction could not be as definite as Semper puts it. Depending on the context, each element is interchangeable in terms of its ontological and representational character. While explaining the relationship of these four elements Semper puts an emphasis on the "mound", by defining it as a terrace. In his words,

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[129] Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper,* 185.
[130] "Mound | Origin and Meaning of Mound by Online Etymology Dictionary", Online Etymology Dictionary, 2020, https://www.etymonline.com/word/mound.
[131] "Earthwork", Lexico Dictionaries | English, 2020, https://www.lexico.com/definition/earthwork.
[132] "Earthwork | Origin and Meaning of Earthwork by Online Etymology Dictionary", Online Etymology Dictionary, 2020, https://www.etymonline.com/word/earthwork.
[133] In Frampton, the earthwork is used instead of mound and the framework is used instead of enclosure. Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture,* 16.

> [a]t first glance the mound or terrace appears as secondary and necessary as only in the lowlands, where solid dwellings had already been erected; yet the mound joined at once with the hearth and was soon needed to raise it off the ground. Allied with the buildings of a pit, it may have also served as a support for the earliest roofs. Moreover, it is probable that man, not as an individual but certainly as a social being arose from the plains as the last mud-creation so to speak. The legends from times immemorial of all nations, which often conceal the idea of natural philosophy, agree on this point.[134]

His explanation also suggests that the mound has a potential to be representational depending on its context. This also gives a symbolic character to the ontological aspect of the mound.

Mesopotamian excavations were an important influence on Semper's work. Through their settlement patterns he formulated the evolution of the four elements. The transition of Assyrian settlements from nomadic tents to permanent settlements embodies Semper's elementary motives.[135] Their settlements were initially located upon the canal and the embankment terrace for securing their hearths.[136] "Fortified camps" were important type of settlement which influenced their town plans. These settlements were located around an elevated core.[137] Mallgrave explains the layout of the Assyrian cities as

> [a] plan of encampment carried over into the layout of Assyrian cities, where the ring of courtyards also became modified vertically by terraces. The town planners separated the aulic precinct from each successive or secularized layer by a system of walls or periboli. The space between the two outer rings was set aside for the tents of the nomadic traders, harking back to the past.

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[134] Semper, *The Four Elements*, 102.
[135] Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper,* 187.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

> Yet as the walls and terraces came to dominate this scheme, the roof (that element introduced by the mountain invaders) atrophied; it only survived symbolically on the temple atop the ziggurat.[138]

With reference to this configuration, Semper argues that "the house probably never lost the character of light construction on a solid substructure."[139] The evolution of the house, *oikos* has led to the formation of the temple of the god, ziggurats.[140] For Semper, Assyrian ziggurats can be considered as an extreme evolution of the use of terraces. Initially, the terraces were built as a way of protection from yearly floods. However, the existence of a temple on top of the colossal structure implies more than just a protection from extreme weather, he suggests that it becomes the representation of what is holy and sublime.[141] He describes the structures found in Khorsabad and Nimrud as

> [a] colossal pyramid on a square substructure with a small temple on its top would have been incomprehensible because of its lack of direction and the disproportion between the load and support; it would not have deserved to be called a monument in an artistic sense had it not been encircled by an extensively and richly articulated system of terraces, of which the temple formed not the center but the fulcrum point.[142]

Stereotomic and massive character of the ziggurat creates a sharp distinction between the ground and the terraces. The mound in this instance works as both a connector with its materiality and a boundary with its symbolism. This intricate relationship could be traced in the restored drawings of the Ziggurat of the Ur (figure 2.6, 2.7).

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[138] Ibid.
[139] Gottfried Semper, "Structural Elements of Assyrian-Chaldean Architecture", in *Gottfried Semper: In Search of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), 211.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Semper, *The Four Elements*, 117.
[142] Ibid.

The plan depicts the ascending terraces and the relationship of the stairways that leads to the temple. The section reflects how the temple is physically separated from the ground through the terraces.

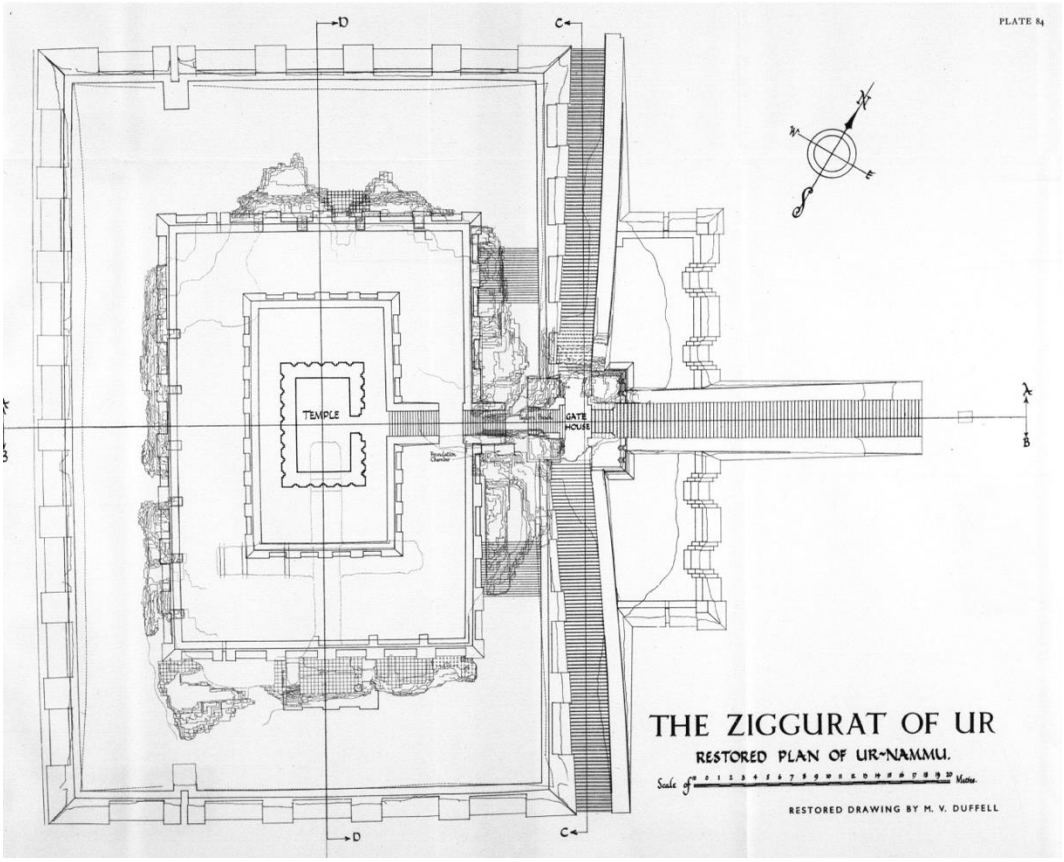


Figure 2.6. A Restored Plan of the Ziggurat of Ur (Woolley 1939).

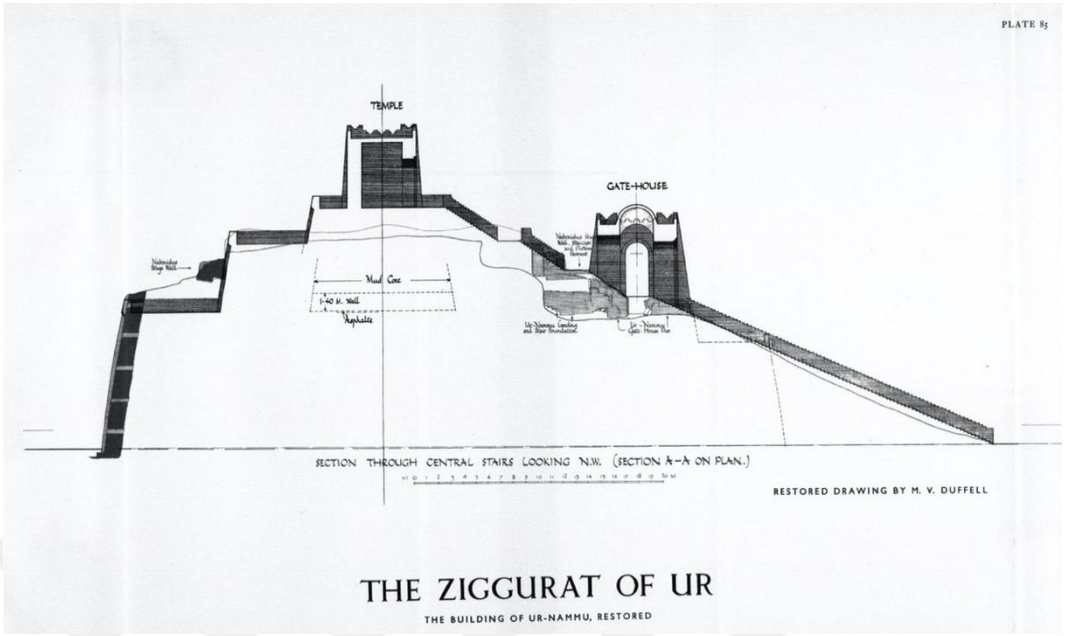


Figure 2.7. A Restored Section of the Ziggurat of Ur (Woolley 1939).

2.3.2.1 Greek Temple Platform

The character of the Greek temple platform calls for that of platforms of the ziggurats. However, when the two structures are considered, the Greek temple has a more refined character, especially in terms of its precision. Also, when tracing and putting forward a framework for the methods of construction, Vitruvius continuously refers to building methods and techniques of Greeks prior to Romans. Thus, the Greek temple platform is used as a basis for the discussion of platform for the upcoming part of this thesis.

The Greek temple is earthbound in terms of its relationship with the ground. This relationship could also be traced in Vitruvius' writing. For the placement and the construction of the temples he states that;

> while transmitting to us the proper arrangements for buildings of all kinds, they were particularly careful to do so in the case of temples of the gods, buildings in which merits and faults usually last forever.[143]

In a way, this could be interpreted as the counter-play between what is man-made and what is natural, and the result is the balance of these two distinct elements through architecture.[144] In Scully's words, the placement of the temples is "the counter-relationships between solid landscape and temple shapes."[145] He furthers his argument by stating that

> [w]e must now go further to recognize that, not only were certain landscapes indeed regarded by the Greeks as holy and expressive of specific gods, or rather as embodiments of their presence, but also that the temples and their subsidiary buildings of their sanctuaries were so formed in themselves and so placed in relation to the landscape and to each other as to enhance, develop, complement, and sometimes even to contradict, the basic meaning that was felt in the land. From this it follows that the temples and other buildings are only one part of what may be called the "architecture" of any given site, and the temple itself developed its strict general form as the one best suited to acting in that kind of relationship.[146]

In this sense, the ascending temple platform does not seek any expansion to become part of its surrounding landscape, but rather detaches and distinguishes itself by creating a sharp contrast.

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[143] Vitruvius, *Ten Books*, 95.
[144] Vincent Scully, "The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 23, no. 2 (1964): 89.
[145] Vincent Scully, *The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods; Greek Sacred Architecture* (New York: Praeger, 1969): 6.
[146] Ibid., 3.

The presence of the temple is directly related with its placement and how its platform interacts with the ground. Platform as an architectural element strengthens the existence of the temple by creating a threshold between the transcendental nature of the temple and the ground. It creates an interface in which both is manifested. Stepped *crepidoma* establishes measured ascent, with retaining edges holds the worked earth and exposes the cut and a threshold; the *stylobate* sets a level datum for the colonnade against irregular terrain; while still bearing on the ground through foundations and substructure. In Semper's terms, the "earthwork" isolates and proclaims the temple body, yet *crepidoma*, *stereobate* and *stylobate* make the terrain legible. This issue is also evident in Semper's comment on how the isolated character of the temple as a whole suggests authority in terms of its statement against and in relation to the natural ground.[147]

> […] these remarks miss what is perhaps the most important attribute of the period and place: the intense experimentation and dialogue involving "fusion and fission" of heterogeneous elements from regions occupied by Greeks or non-Greeks – a process that contributed to the emergence of different kinds of architectural composition, as well as a canon or koine.[148]

In order to further the discussion on platform as an architectural ground, the general configuration of the Greek temple is significant. In a Greek temple, a large platform is raised on a stone structure, and it is reached through steps that surround the whole platform. This stone structure is usually a *crepidoma* which ascends through three-steps. *Crepidoma* is rather an artificial intervention which mimics the landscape, the mountains. The temple is artificially raised by a masonry structure. This stone structure creates a sharp contrast between the temple and the landscape. However, instead of being just a self-contained architectural element, steps are rather more

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[147] Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture,* 210.
[148] Alexander Tzonis and Phoebe Giannisi, *Classical Greek Architecture - The Construction of the Modern* (Paris: Flammarion, 2004), 89.

relational forms.[149] Thus, they acquire meaning through their relationship with the surrounding built environment.

> Processions were used to resolve problems of identity and territory between communities with pre-existing sanctuaries and centers, as in the case of the famous sanctuary dedicated to Demeter in Eleusis. This was linked to that in Athens in the vicinity of the Agora through the famous Sacred Way, and by the ritual of the Eleusinian procession.[150]

These monumental steps suggest different uses in terms of their placement and length. Mary B. Hollinshead in her book, *Shaping Ceremony: Monumental Steps and Greek Architecture,* puts forward three different uses for the monumental steps together with possible human behaviors they enhanced. The three uses suggested by Hollinshead include retaining walls, routes of access and grandstands for viewing events.[151] With reference to these uses, she states that

> [s]teps make uneven terrain convenient for humans. They are pathways and destinations for climbing and descending, for sitting and standing. As pathways, steps create processional routes toward and within cities and sanctuaries; as destinations, they serve as grandstands for viewing and participating in communal events. Some steps imply movement, while others suggest static behavior. In fact, the dimensions of steps express a direct relation to body posture, so that we can often tell whether their users are sitting, standing, or walking. By examining monumental steps in Greek architecture, we can derive behavior from architectural form, and trace interactions between human activities and the built environment.[152]

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[149] Mary B. Hollinshead, *Shaping Ceremony: Monumental Steps and Greek Architecture* (Madison WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), 82.
[150] Op. Cit, 164.
[151] Hollinshead, *Shaping Ceremony,* 82.
[152] Ibid., 3.

Hollinshead's work becomes a significant departure point in order to put forward possible implications of the *crepidoma* beyond its self-contained formal attributes. In this sense, steps become an important element which both control access and frame space.[153] The steps become substantial extensions which control the overall regulation of the built environment. Through the varied uses Hollinshead outlines, supporting terrain, structuring movement, and accommodating spectatorship, architecture can be understood as reflecting on its own methods of grounding, staging, and inhabiting space. In supporting terrain, steps physically negotiate the coming together of architecture and ground, making visible the act of stabilizing and shaping the site; in structuring movement, they choreograph how bodies approach, ascend, and traverse architectural space, turning circulation into a staged experience; in accommodating spectatorship, they frame spaces of gathering and observation, transforming inhabitation into a collective, spatial event. In addition to these attributes, through social patterns, monumental steps acquire inclusive functions and public role.[154] In this sense, temples are used as demarcating the circulation networks within the *polis*, a way to elaborate and control identities and processions.[155] Thus, the temple platform becomes a part of a communal tradition as in the Eleusinian procession.

> The ancient Greek word for sanctuary is *temenos,* from the verb *temnein,* "to cut." Indeed, sanctuaries in Ancient Greece were portions of land set apart from their surroundings by walls or boundary stones, the entrance being controlled by a gate (*propylon*). These markers indicated the portion of space within which special regulations of behavior had to be observed.[156]

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[153] Ibid., 4.
[154] Ibid., 81.
[155] Tzonis and Giannisi, *Classical Greek Architecture,* 164.
[156] Ibid.,160.

In this sense, the *stylobate* and the *stereobate* becomes important elements that define platform and its boundary. While *stereobate* is an important element that regulates the way the temple ascends, the *stylobate* regulates the overall configuration of the temple by containing the columns (figure 2.8). Acropolis in Athens is an important instance which contains these relations both between and within the temples.

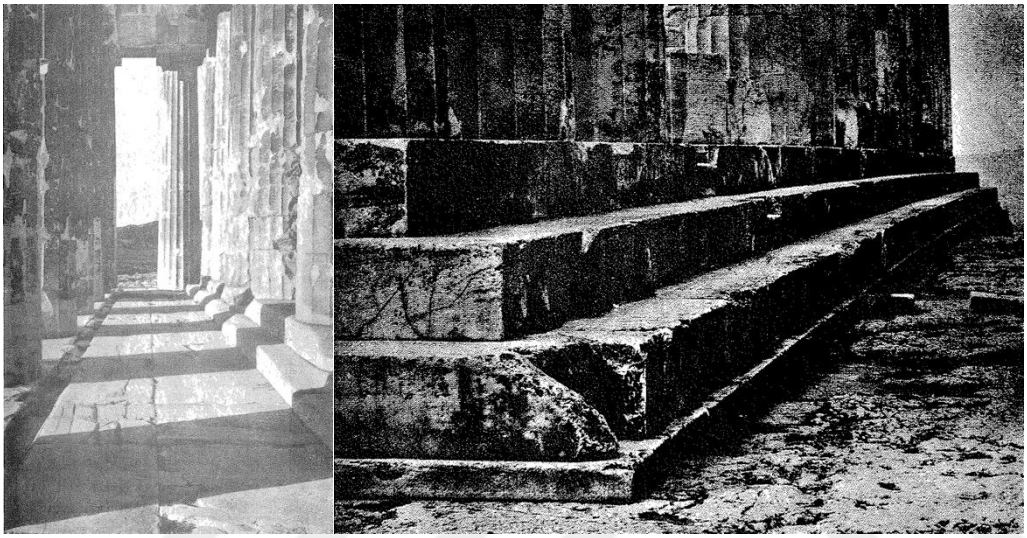


Figure 2.8. Parthenon (Le Corbusier, 1911).

Acropolis in Athens reflects the aspects of the temple platform that regulate and connect. These relationships are embodied in the built environment. In this sense, the Eleusinian procession is an important instance in which the Acropolis becomes part of a communal pathway. The sacred way is cut through temple platforms which mark and lead the procession.

> Processions linked the territory not only with the *polis* at large, but also with the constituent parts of the *polis* – the major streets, the agora, the acropolis, and the city sanctuaries – and as such were occasions to bring together the members of the community and to display publicly the membership, composition, and hierarchy of the groups that composed it. Special rituals marked important points in the procession and their succession along the

route created a sequence of landmarks – both religious and political – that were connected with special events.[157]

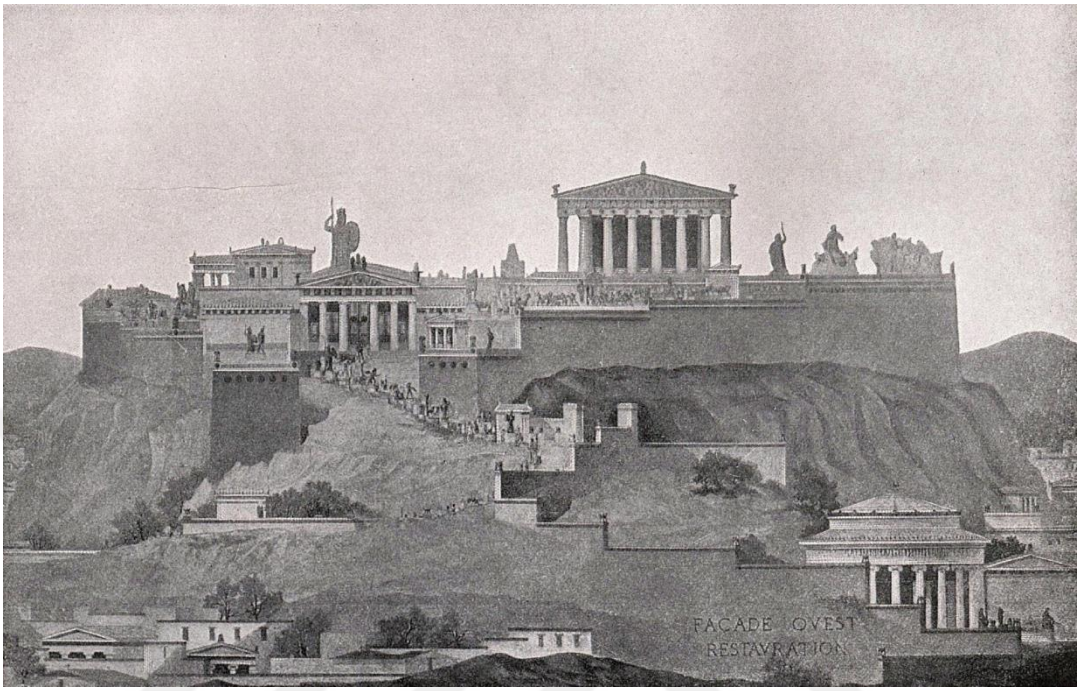


Figure 2.9. Elevation of the Acropolis in Athens (west side) (Anonymous).

As in the elevation of the Acropolis in Athens (figure 2.9), temples delineate the topology of the site as a series of constructed platforms. The ascension becomes evident. This is also parallel with the definition of the *temenos* which is derived from the ancient Greek *temnein*, which means to cut.[158] Temple platforms of the Acropolis regulate the topography as a whole.

Thus, platform becomes a regulatory element in which contextual and social relations are embedded and transferred. This is also evident in Le Corbusier's description of the Acropolis. He describes the Acropolis in direct relation to ground.

[157] Ibid., 165.
[158] Ibid., 160.

> Temples were raised on the Acropolis that are of one mind and that swept up the desolate landscape and made it serve the composition. So from all along the horizon's rim, the thought is one. That is why no other works of architecture with this grandeur exist. We can speak of "Doric" when man, having raised his sights and completely sacrificed the accidental, has attained the uppermost region of the mind austerity.[159]

His sketch of the Acropolis (figure 2.10) is also significant in terms of highlighting the ground being leveled through architectural intervention. Platforms dominate the whole Acropolis by creating an ascension and a procession. They create a strong statement against the topography through the act of flattening and thickening. Flattening translates the irregular, sloping terrain into a continuous and intentional surface, erasing the incidental variations of the natural ground in favor of a measured, architectural plane. Thickening, by contrast, gives this plane a constructed depth, both structural and symbolic, that transforms it into more than a mere surface, allowing it to contain spatial programs, support circulation, and project a sense of permanence. Together, these operations reveal the potential of architecture to remake the ground as an ordered, inhabitable, and processional field.

[159] Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture (Vers une architecture)*, trans. John Goodman, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2007), 234.

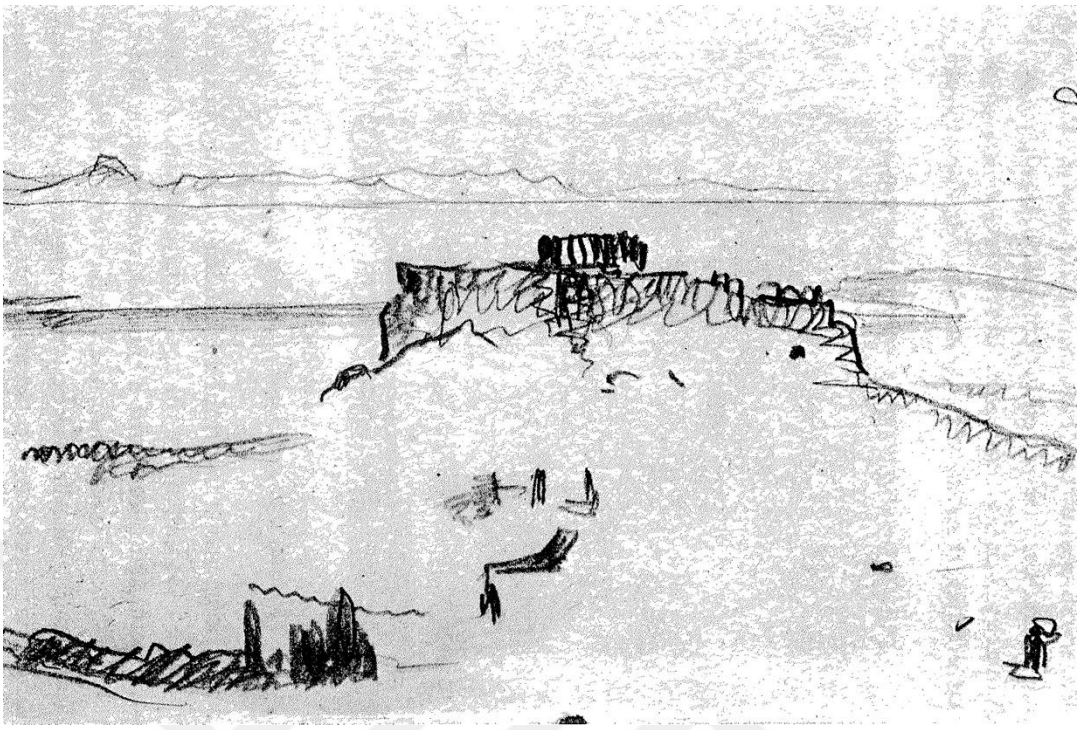


Figure 2.10. Le Corbusier’s sketch of the acropolis, Athens (Le Corbusier, 1911).

Tzonis and Giannisi also present the Acropolis as a ground for experimentation, in which the knowledge acquired through the act of building is actively realized. The platforms that compartmentalize the Acropolis operate as individual elements within a larger, coordinated system of relations. These relations extend not only inward, linking the structures to one another through alignments, axes, and proportional correspondences, but also outward, orienting the ensemble toward the surrounding topography, the city, and distant horizons. Through these reciprocal connections, each platform becomes a testing ground for refining construction techniques, manipulating topographical conditions, and choreographing movement and views. In this sense, the Acropolis embodies a cumulative architectural knowledge in which every platform is both a product of prior experimentation and a site for new interpretations of how ground can be shaped, staged, and inhabited.

CHAPTER 3

PLATFORM: AS AN ARCHITECTURAL GROUND

This chapter traces platform as a specific ground condition: a deliberate structure whose form and placement are inseparable from the ground it transforms. Platform shapes occupation by establishing level or elevated surfaces that direct patterns of movement and define areas of activity; it shapes visibility by creating vantage points, framing views, and controlling sightlines; and it shapes inhabitation by marking edges, thresholds, and alignments that structure how space is approached and perceived. The architectural platform is not neutral. It alters the ground by cutting, filling, or leveling to change its physical condition; it transforms its material and symbolic dimensions by substituting natural ground with constructed ones and by imparting new meanings through form, scale, or ritual use; and it establishes new orders of spatial organization by determining circulation patterns, setting hierarchical relationships between spaces, and defining the boundaries that structure patterns of occupation and movement.

Platform is a material and spatial element whose physical form and spatial role are inseparable from the ground it modifies, but also it potentially detaches from that ground. Platform may take the form of raised surfaces, leveled ground, or articulated thresholds, yet it is never conceptually flat or functionally uniform. Platform delineates areas of function by creating measurable changes in height that distinguish adjacent functions, by using edges to mark transitions between functions, and by using repetition to reinforce spatial boundaries. By creating edges and through repetition, platform make distinctions legible without relying on enclosure, allowing different functions to coexist on a shared surface while remaining perceptually and functionally distinct. In each instance, platform produces a differentiated ground by altering surface materiality, introducing contrasts in texture or elevation, and

establishing alignments that structure circulation and assembly. Platform is a constructed ground, not simply positioned upon earth but made with it and through it, incorporating the site's material conditions into its very structure. Platform registers the act of spatial delineation, and the accumulation of memory embedded in architectural ground. Platform operates as a contingent element, conditioned by the physical, cultural, and temporal circumstances of its making, such as the available construction techniques, the intended functional patterns, and the symbolic values attributed to specific sites.

Tracing platform reveals that architectural ground is a construct produced through spatial and material intervention. Ground is shaped through inhabitation, drawing, and accumulation. Through inhabitation, recurrent routes and routines precipitate steps, ramps, and thresholds emerge as platforms; edges appear where habitual patterns are concentrated. Through drawing, surveys, grids, contours, and sections set floor levels, plinth heights, riser/landing sequences, textures, and joints; on site, strings, stakes, chalk lines, and formwork transfer these decisions to the earth. Through accumulation, overlays, patches, anchors, and added fixtures leave seams; sub-base build-ups thicken; new thresholds and edges act as interfaces that subsequent work continues rather than erases. Platform serves as an interface both the element and the trace of this process, embodying the physical modifications and the enduring marks of occupation. It does not simply support space from beneath; it enacts spatial conditions directly. Platform produces thresholds by introducing shifts in elevation or changes in material that register the transition from one spatial domain to another, between different functions. It defines inhabitation by aligning surfaces and edges to specific alignments, sightlines, or circulation patterns, thereby structuring how space is approached. It marks distinctions by establishing perceptible differences, whether through form, texture, or height, that separate functions while maintaining their spatial continuity. In this sense, platform functions as a spatial and theoretical element that configures spatial use and inscribes material order.

This chapter is divided into three parts, each articulating a distinct instantiation of platform. The first part, centered on the Neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük, is not treated as an isolated prehistoric instance but as a spatial logic that informs the readings that follow. Platforms emerge in Çatalhöyük not through formal design but through embodied repetition: successive rebuilding of dwellings on the remains of earlier structures gradually thickens the occupied surface, producing elevated terrains that serve simultaneously as roofs and ground. These layered surfaces support circulation, gathering, and ritual without the need for enclosed separation. Ian Hodder's reflexive archaeological methodology, developed during decades of excavation at Çatalhöyük, provides a critical interpretive parallel.[160] In Hodder's work, excavation is not simply the removal of soil but the uncovering of a complex set of relationships, material, temporal, and spatial, while maintaining an awareness of the interpretive frameworks that shape understanding.[161] This reflexivity aligns with the architectural reading of platform as both medium and trace: in Çatalhöyük, the accumulation of material over time is inseparable from the practices that formed it, and any "plan" is embedded in the lived process of making and remaking the ground. Thus, Çatalhöyük offers a precedent in which ground is produced through continuous inhabitation, and this logic, of layering and reuse, provides a model for reading platform's operations in both the city and the plan with greater precision.

The second part, emerging through the unpacking of Çatalhöyük's spatial logic, traces platform as an urban archetype, extending the principles of layering, repetition, and shared surface into the context of the city where they operate as both spatial constructs and public infrastructures. Platform functions as a more than public surface, both through symbolic abstraction and direct spatial engagement. From classical *stylobates* to modern plinths, platform intervenes in the city by organizing

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[160] Mark Gold, "What Happened Here?," *Stanford Magazine*, May 2013, https://stanfordmag.org/contents/what-happened-here.
[161] Ian Hodder, *The Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Çatalhöyük* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010).

collectivity through horizontality: elevating, leveling, or extending ground to create shared conditions for assembly. It separates and joins by introducing measurable thresholds, frames and exposes by shaping views and approaches. In Van Eyck's playgrounds, platform often appears as a subtly raised or delineated surface that slows movement, inviting pause and interaction; these surfaces define zones for play without enclosing them, creating open frameworks for collective engagement.[162] Van Eyck's playgrounds encourage informal, fluid occupation and improvisation. In both instances, the operations of elevation, delineation, and shared surface echo the accumulated and inhabited layers of Çatalhöyük, translating the logic of built ground from a continuous domestic terrain into the scale and symbolism of the modern city. Public platform stages collectivity by regulating presence, view, and movement, embedding patterns of interaction into the very surface of the settlement. Just as the urban platform translates the inhabited and layered ground of Çatalhöyük into the scale of the modern city, the drawn plan translates these spatial operations into a measured abstraction, projecting the relationships of elevation, delineation, and shared ground into a framework that precedes and informs construction.

The third part, building on the operations articulated in the urban platform, focuses on how platform is represented in architectural drawing, where its spatial and material implications are first developed and projected. The ground plan is considered as a spatial and epistemological construct that produces architectural ground. In the context of drawing, platform appears as a thickened and articulated line, a constructed ground inferred from measured edges, contours, and boundaries. This occurs through the delineation of horizontal extents, the notation of level changes, and the graphic articulation of edges that imply material thickness and spatial separation. The plan actively constructs platform as a conceptual and operational interface by translating these measured elements into a coordinated set

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[162] Francis Strauven, *Aldo van Eyck: The Shape of Relativity* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura, 1998), 387–404.

of relationships that define circulation, and spatial hierarchy before physical construction begins. Platform in drawing operates as the trace of intervention by registering the decisions that alter the existing conditions of a site, such as shifts in level, changes in surface extent, or the introduction of new boundaries, and arranging them into a coherent spatial order. Through this process, the drawing establishes the relationships and sequences that will translate into built form, enabling the transformation of ground into space. From Vitruvius' *ichnographia* to contemporary topological surfaces, the drawn plan embeds platform as the foundational act of demarcating ground, making it inhabitable and modifiable. Platform gives architectural ground density, allowing the plan to operate beyond geometry and into the domain of spatial articulation. Whether through *stylobate*, plinth, or datum, the drawn platform renders architectural ground visible and legible, preparing its construction through measured abstraction.

This chapter does not propose a unifying theory of platform. Instead, it traces specific instances in which platform mediates between earth and constructed form. Platform as an interface mark transitions between domestic and collective use, between constructed and residual ground, between abstract projection and material assembly by introducing elevation breaks, edge conditions, and surface shifts. Between domestic and collective use, platform sets thresholds, stoops, landings, forecourts, that widen entries, adjust level, and calibrate access and visibility; between constructed and residual ground, platform establishes precise perimeters through steps, curbs, and retaining lines that register cut–fill joints and differentiate paved from earthen surfaces; between abstract projection and material assembly, platform thickens drawn datums into buildable elements, turning lines into slabs, curbs, and steps that locate structure, circulation, and services. In doing so, it complicates the distinction between site and system, figure and field, foundation and surface. In order to elaborate these relationships, series of diagrammatic platform sections are produced that diminishes vertical enclosures and separations. These diagrammatic sections focus solely on horizontal aspect of platform to articulate how platform as an interface produces spaces.

In this sense, platform articulates the relation between built form and ground through repetition, and differentiation, mediating between what is constructed and what is occupied, what is inherited and what is made. Çatalhöyük, as the point of departure, demonstrates this mediation: successive rebuilding upon earlier house remains, what Hodder terms "history houses," incrementally thickened the occupation surface into a continuous, elevated roofscape that doubled as ground for movement and gathering; circulation proceeded across these roofs, while raised interior platforms and hearths articulated functional differentiation and ritual practice without enclosure.[163] Layered surfaces there collapse the distinction between plan and constructed form, revealing architecture produced through inhabitation and positioning platforms as relational. In this sense, Çatalhöyük anticipates the public and representational operations developed in the subsequent parts: elevated roof surfaces translate into urban platform, and internal thresholds align with the abstract delineation of the ground plan. The articulation of platforms at Çatalhöyük thus makes legible a generative condition of ground: formed, articulated, and inhabited through platform.

3.1 Platforms of Çatalhöyük and the Production of Architectural Ground[164]

Platforms of Çatalhöyük are traced by treating this Neolithic settlement in present-day Konya, Turkey, as a spatial logic that informs the readings that follow. The site

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[163] Ian Hodder, ed., *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), esp. chap. 7, "History houses," 163–86.

[164] "Platform as a Volumetric and Earthly Ground: The Case of Çatalhöyük" paper is presented at *AHRA 2022 Convening, Building Ground for Climate Collectivism Conference*, Pratt University, November 19, 2022. It will also be published as a book chapter with the same title as part of the edited volume *Building Ground for Climate Collectivism.*
The site is last visited by the author during the summer of 2022.

consists of a dense agglomeration of enclosed, single-room dwellings. Excavations began in 1961 under James Mellaart and were resumed from 1993 to 2019 under Ian Hodder. This tracing draws primarily on excavation reports[165] and interpretive volumes produced by Hodder and the Çatalhöyük Research Project,[166] and on public accounts that profile Hodder's reflexive, long-term excavation and conservation program, underscoring the site's significance as a millennia-inhabited Neolithic settlement with roof-entry houses, circulation across roofs rather than streets, and burials beneath house floors, supported by a multi-disciplinary research framework.[167] Treating Çatalhöyük as a spatial logic is articulated through tracing the operations by which architectural ground is produced: successive rebuilding consolidates occupation layers into continuous, elevated surfaces that act simultaneously as roof and ground; circulation is displaced onto the interconnected roofscape rather than streets; within dwellings, raised platforms and hearths organize functional differentiation without enclosure; and burials beneath house floors situate habitation within a stratified, accumulated ground.

Çatalhöyük's spatial organization reveals platform as architectural ground in communal and domestic settings. Roof planes operate as shared surfaces for circulation and assembly, producing an elevated network across the settlement. Internally, dwellings do not have conventional vertical partitions; differentiation occurs horizontally through raised surfaces (figure 3.1, 3.5). These platforms

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[165] Some of the mentioned reports are Ian Hodder, *Inhabiting Çatalhöyük: reports from the 1995-99 Seasons* (London: McDonlad Institute for Archaeological Research and British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 2005) and Ian Hodder, *Humans and Landscapes of Çatalhöyük: Reports from the 2000-2008 Seasons* (London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 2013).
[166] Ian Hodder, ed., *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Ian Hodder, ed., *Çatalhöyük Excavations: The 2000–2008 Seasons* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2013).
[167] Mark Gold, "What Happened Here?," *Stanford Magazine*, May 2013, https://stanfordmag.org/contents/what-happened-here.

mediate between built form and earth and articulate functional differentiation within a continuous domestic interior. Çatalhöyük thus demonstrates how ground-based repetition of everyday practices shapes architecture: here, platform operates both as an ordering principle and as a material agent in the formation of space.

Robin Dripps reflects on repetition in his essay "Groundwork," stating:

> When actions repeat, they are not objectified or taken out of context, but instead become something continually taking on new meaning through participation in a larger pattern of recurrences whose cyclical nature has no discernible beginning or end.[168]

From this perspective, Çatalhöyük can be read as part of a broader temporal cycle, where platform operates on both at the scale of the settlement and the individual household.

Çatalhöyük's ground is a slowly accumulated architectural medium formed by continuous rebuilding, burial, and domestic maintenance. In this sense, the ground of Çatalhöyük is a living palimpsest of inhabitation. Each new platform is raised atop earlier structures, producing a thickened vertical surface where spatial use, memory, and material become indistinguishable. Platforms at Çatalhöyük are recursive grounds: historical, embodied, and sedimented.

3.1.1 The Site as a Collective Platform

The settlement is composed of closely packed residential units with no ground-level entrances. Access was achieved through rooftop openings, using ladders. These rooftops which were continuous and accessible, functioned as communal spaces,

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[168] Robin Dripps, "Groundwork," in *Site Matters: Strategies for Uncertainty Through Planning and Design*, ed. Andrea Kahn and Carol J. Burns, second ed. (New York, New York: Routledge, 2021), 78.

forming an infrastructural platform that facilitated circulation and collective activity (figure 3.1, 3.2, 3.3).

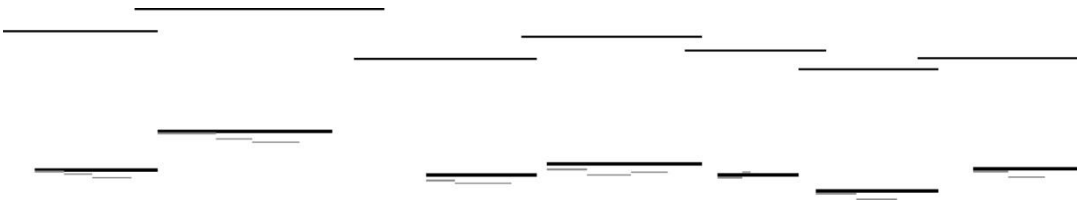


Figure 3.1. Partial Diagramatic Site Section of Çatalhöyük's Level V (produced by the author)



Figure 3.2. A Mural from Çatalhöyük[169], 6000 BC, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations (author's own archive)

[169] The mural is interpreted as a potential site map of Çatalhöyük settlement

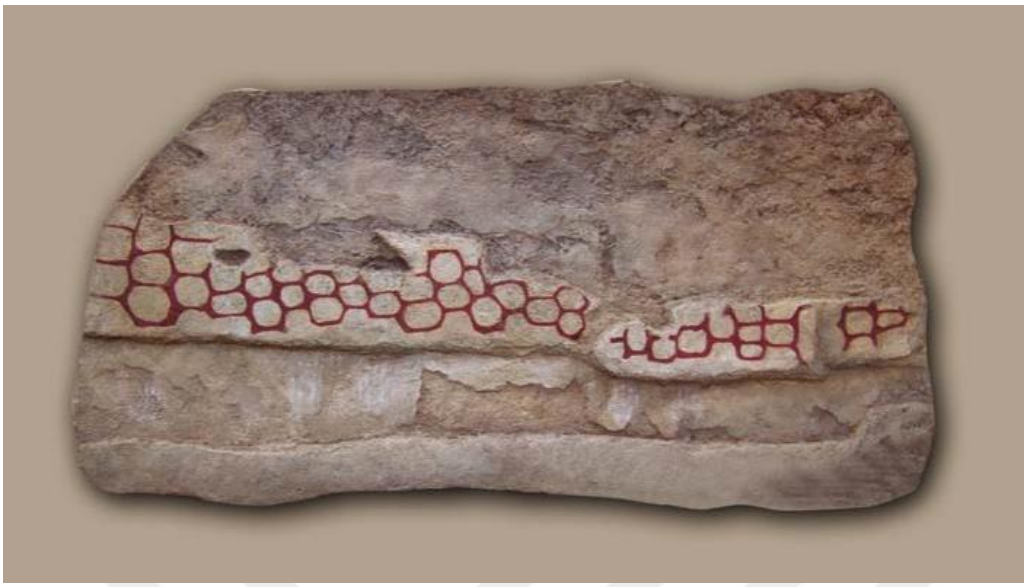


Figure 3.3. A Mural from Çatalhöyük Redrawn for the EXPO Shangai 2010 Turkish Pavilion designed by Ayşen Savaş (Savaş 2010)

Excavation data suggest that Çatalhöyük as community was egalitarian.[170] There are no designated public buildings or specialized communal spaces.[171] Dietary evidence shows minimal difference between the nourishment and habits of men and women.[172] Hodder notes that:

[170] Recent studies show that potentially, Çatalhöyük was more of a matriarchal society. Particularly in "Female lineages and changing kinship patterns in Neolithic Çatalhöyük," genetic evidence shows that within the household structure, female offsprings remained in the same unit, and mostly female burials included more grave goods compared to male ones (Yüncü et. al. 2025).
[171]Such as religious or administrative. Due to the high densities of burial in some buildings, Mellaart initially defined them as shrines, however, recent excavations show no indication of such specification (Hodder and Pels, 2010).
Ian Hodder, "Peopling Çatalhöyük and Its Landscape," in *Inhabiting Çatalhöyük: Reports from the 1995-99 Seasons* (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2005), 25.
[172] Ibid.

> [r]itual and burial are in particular become focused in the house, and social differentiation, insofar as it exists at Çatalhöyük, is based on production and rites that are house-based rather than collective.[173]

This interpretation emphasizes that social and spatial distinctions are rooted in the domestic space. Each household is an autonomous unit shaped by its specific routines and rituals. In their book *Platforms*, Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara highlight Çatalhöyük as a key example of how architecture emerges from the ground through repetitive domestic practices.[174]

The surfaces of rooftops at Çatalhöyük, functions as a shared ground of movement and negotiation. Unlike modern cities structured by streets, plazas, and monuments, Çatalhöyük's public life takes place horizontally which is distributed across the rooftops, accumulated from the repetition of dwelling units. The rooftop becomes a kind of infrastructural commons: a transitional space between households, formed by adjacency and sedimentation rather than delineation (figure 3.1). Thus, a public platform that is both an interface and threshold between adjacent dwellings emerges through the continuity of the roof field in which entrances open onto shared planes, edges align into paths, and repeated crossings consolidate the roofscape as collective ground.

3.1.2 The Domestic Platform

Within individual dwellings, spatial organization directly reflects patterns of daily life. A common feature is the use of varying floor levels to delineate function (figure 3.5). Platforms within the individual dwellings are both distinguished by their

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[173] Ibid., 29.
[174] Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara, *Platforms: Architecture and the Use of the Ground* (Milano: Black Square, 2021), 4.

different elevations and through different surface treatments.[175] Some surfaces of platforms were white plastered and kept particularly clean compared to others which indicated a hierarchy in function (figure 3.4, 3.5, 3.6). Burials are frequently located beneath these plastered and clean platforms, away from hearth and production areas that usually disturbed the clean environment designated for them, marking their symbolic and ritual significance.[176] The house thus encapsulates both life and death, maintaining a generational relationship with the earth below. Even though each dwelling was unique in their composition, they were usually oriented from south to north. South side most commonly included the hearth and the entrances while burials were located on the north side away from the hearth which potentially produced most dirt.

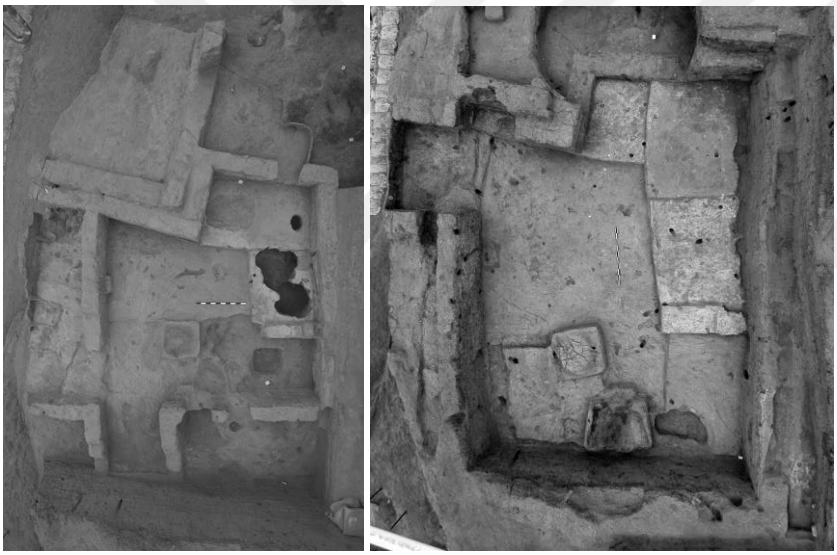


Figure 3.4. Photo of house 65 and 56 (catalhoyuk.com)

[175] Op. cit., 20.
[176] Ibid.

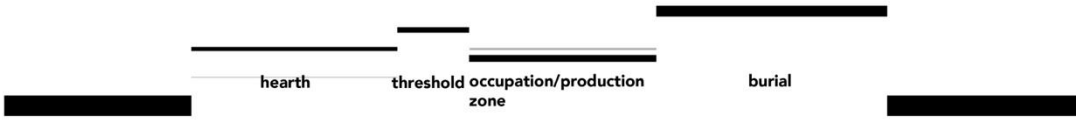


Figure 3.5. Diagrammatic Section of Platforms of Typical House in Çatalhöyük – South to North (produced by the author)



Figure 3.6. Instances from Çatalhöyük, North Mound (Author's own archive 2022)

The architectural complexity of these houses reflects Çatalhöyük's character as a "house society" by concentrating production, storage, and ritual within the dwelling through accumulated installations and surfaces, hearths, platforms of differing height and finish, wall paintings, and side rooms for productive and storage tasks, together with roof-entry ladders, episodic floor renewals that thicken surfaces, and burials beneath platforms. According to Hodder and Pels:

> as buildings become more elaborate and have more installations, they need or can support relatively more storage and productive space. This might occur as they become dominant in the social-ritual spheres and also become dominant in terms of production and storage. So we might expect that, as buildings become more elaborate, they have more side room productive and storage space.[177]

They further argue that Çatalhöyük diverges from typical house societies in three key respects: first, that atomization occurs at the level of the house rather than the individual; second, that differentiation between households arises primarily through the division of labor; and third, that historical continuity shapes social identities at the household level.[178]

These three forms of differentiation, ritual, labor, and history, contribute to the conception of the house as a "moral person": a social entity constituted through time and practice, rather than a fixed physical structure. This framework supports tracing platform as a contingent architectural medium, simultaneously domestic, social, and symbolic. As an interface platform's anthropomorphic qualities[179] mediate between the individual, the collective, and the earth's surface by articulating lineage to house through burials beneath floors; concentrating ritual on repeatedly white-plastered and carefully maintained surfaces; coordinating sleep, work, and storage on raised levels that differentiate function without partitions; connecting households across the

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[177] Ian Hodder and Peter Pels, "History Houses: A New Interpretation of Architectural Elaboration at Çatalhöyük," in *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 175.
[178] Ibid., 181.
[179] By "anthropomorphic qualities" here, it is meant the capacities by which platform acts analogously to a body: setting posture (level and orientation), articulating joints (thresholds, steps, ramps), bearing and distributing weight (foundations, plinths), and receiving contact so that traces of use remain (wear, repair, deposition).

roofscape as a shared terrain of movement; and thickening through cycles of rebuilding that accumulate memory and function in ground. Hodder and Pels state that:

> These three dimensions of differentiation can be interpreted to work together to produce the house as a 'moral person' (analogous to the way in which modern people talk, e.g., of 'legal persons' who are not congruent with any human being as such) – but as a process, an identity constituted over time, rather than a fixed category.[180]

Therefore, the architecture of Çatalhöyük demonstrates how platform is both a structural and a culturally saturated element through which life becomes grounded: physically, ritually, and socially. If the house becomes a "moral person" through acts of ritual, labor, and memory, then platform is the architectural interface upon which this personhood is enacted and sedimented. It hosts burial, sanctifies the act of sleeping, delineates zones of purity and use, and absorbs the tactile patterns of daily work. In this sense, each domestic platform is both functional and biographical. It accumulates an identity through its capacity to hold repetition, distinction, and temporality. It is the stage upon which life is differentiated, layered, and remembered.

Tracing Çatalhöyük reveals a spatial structure in which collective life and domestic ritual converge; platform becomes an interface that establishes continuity between household and site, individual and collective. Yet this continuity does not remain confined to the Neolithic context; it anticipates a more general architectural condition in which platforms emerge as more than shared surfaces of encounter extended across the city rather than embedded within the house. This transition from household ground to public platform frames platform as a public archetype: a designed field that invites, structures, and conditions public life. Its logic persists

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[180] Ibid.

across time and geography; building on the unpacking of Çatalhöyük's spatial logic, the next part traces how platform, as architectural ground, becomes public, organizing collectivity and mediating between figure and field.

3.2 Platform as a Public Archetype

Platform as an architectural ground can be considered as spatial and conceptual construct simultaneously. As such dual construct, platform historically functions as a support for collective life, a surface for interaction and a field for architectural improvisation. It is a stage on which architecture reveals its public role. This part of the thesis unpacks platform as a public archetype. It frames platform as a spatial element: open and adaptive.

Platform operates as a horizontal mediator that elevates, separates, and situates. It frames both objects and bodies, articulates a relational ground for transformation, and often functions as a threshold between built form and earth, both designed and found. It does so by instituting a horizontal datum and measurable edge that relate objects, bodies, and site: abstracting irregular terrain, regulating stance and view, and setting sequences of approach; by leveling and standardizing surface finish so assemblies can be added, removed, or reconfigured in relation to the persistent datum; and by mediating between built form and earth through steps, ramps, and landings that articulate access and material contact, converting terrain into an accessible surface. Through such perspective, platform becomes a public ground: a shared architectural element that allows difference without fragmenting coherence.

Within the scope of this part, each instance traces platform as a precise spatial element. In Mies van der Rohe's work, the plinth functions as a measured elevation and boundary that regulates access, visibility, and encounter. Extending this operation at the scale of the neighborhood, Van Eyck's brick and gravel planes in the Amsterdam playgrounds recompose residual ground into spatial propositions for collective use, using low thresholds and patterned horizontality rather than

enclosure. As an abstract extreme, Superstudio's *Histograms* and *Continuous Monument* project the same logics of elevation, delineation, and repetition to a planetary field, turning platform into a medium of critique. These platforms are not interchangeable: each operates under its own spatial, material, and discursive logic, yet they are linked by shared operations that render public ground a site of architectural articulation.

Instead of taking these platforms as symbolic gestures, this part traces them as operative grounds: surfaces that organize, expose, and redistribute the spatial logic of the city. Platform becomes an element through which institutions are monumentalized, rituals are staged, and informal occupations are made legible. In each instance, platform intervenes in the city not through mass but through surface. In order to elaborate those surface relationships, series of diagrammatic sections are produced, which depends only on the surfaces of platforms. In this sense, platform is an element whose implications are primarily spatial, with social relations mediated by these spatial articulations. It does so by defining a horizontal datum and edge that reorder approach, stance, and view; concentrating transitions at steps, ramps, and landings to produce thresholds and intervals; differentiating surface elevation and finish to allocate functions without enclosure; extending a continuous plane that links discrete objects while holding them apart; and rendering occupation legible through alignments, repetitions, and traces: operating as a field condition rather than a volumetric enclosure.

3.2.1 Platform as Architectural Order

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's work reflects platform as an architectural ground. In his work, he employed elevated platforms as integral architectural elements that established a plane of order, abstraction, and encounter. In the Barcelona Pavillion (figure 3.7, 3.8), the travertine base raises the building off the ground, creating a *temenos*. Here, platform is not only literal but also conceptual. Platform stages the pavilion as a space of ritualized movement, material reflection and a philosophical

repose. The produced platforms can be traced in figure 3.8 which solely depends on linear reproduction of the section.



Figure 3.7. The Barcelona Pavilion, Mies van der Rohe (Fundació Mies van der Rohe Barcelona)



Figure 3.8. Diagrammatic Platform Section of The Barcelona Pavilion (produced by the author)

The precise modulation of elevation through steps and paving stones initiates a procession into space rather than a direct entrance (figure 3.8). The visitor does not approach architecture frontally but diagonally, with perspective shifting through the

act of movement. Platform frames this experience, controlling the speed of encounter and the framing of views. It simultaneously withdraws the building from the street and produces its spatial legibility. Such configuration can be seen as a reminiscent of the way the processions were organized in the Greek temple platform. While in the Greek temple, platform acquires a transcendental role, in Mies's work platform acquire an institutional role.

His Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin (figure 3.9, 3.10) reflects the public expression of this compositional logic. The museum, built on a large platform stands as an archetype of how platform can be both monumental and democratic. The raised plinth defines a boundary between the museum and the *Kulturforum* in which a ritual threshold is produced as a reminiscent of Greek temple platform. He defines a ground which both relates and detaches itself. A series of low steps ascends and arrive onto a wide, open terrace, before the transparent pavilion above. Thus, platform establishes a pause that further gives transition. This detachment can be traced in the section in figure 3.10.

Such a deliberate elevation transforms the act of entry into a public gesture. Plinth moves beyond being a physical support and becomes a surface for gathering in which public life is choreographed. In place of a vertical enclosure, platform accommodates a place for lingering, circulation and rest through horizontal relations (figure 3.10).

The museum's glazed upper hall sits atop a subterranean exhibition level, underscoring the plinth's role as both separator and connector. The wide terrace enables circulation around the structure, framing it as an object in space and allowing it to perform as a public promenade. In this way, Mies transforms platform into a metropolitan stage.



Figure 3.9. Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Mies van der Rohe (Simon Menges, Archiv Neuenationalgalerie)

Figure 3.10. Diagrammatic Platform Section of Neue Nationalgalerie (produced by the author)

Platform here is neither residual nor background; it is the element through which the museum present itself to its urban surroundings. It facilitates both detachment and visibility, enacting platform's double role as both a boundary and a connective device.

Aureli interprets Mies's use of plinth as a finite statement against the expansionist forces of urbanization. He argues that

> the simple, bounded form of the plinth (which can be interpreted as an abstract version of the Greek stylobate) is the precondition for nearly all Mies's designs. If, as Neumeyer argues, the pavilion-like quality of Mies's buildings seem to follow Karl Friedrich Shinkel's attempt to elevate the freestanding architectural object as an analogous form encompassing

> bourgeois space (as opposed to the imperial claims of baroque architecture), the plinth give this appropriation of self-defined limit.[181]

Thus, Mies's work is interpreted as a formal confrontation, a political statement against the expansionist logic of urbanization. Aureli's interpretation is significant since he offers a framework for reading platform within the architectural context.

3.2.2 From Plinth to Commons: Platform as Participatory Ground

The line between infrastructure, landscape, and collective space is blurred through proposals of platforms as public ground. Platform here is a programmable terrain that enables interaction, accessibility, and public engagement through the introduction of soft ground by landscape interventions, planting beds, soil mounds, permeable gravels, and water-retaining strips, that modulate the hard datum of the platform, slow movement, and produce sittable edges; continuous ramps and gentle gradients that knit entries, overlooks, and pauses into an accessible sequence; and seasonal textures, shade, and maintenance practices that invite lingering, caretaking, and collective use.

One such instance is The High Line in New York (2009), designed by Field Operations, Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Piet Oudolf (figure 3.11, 3.12, 3.13). The project repurposes as elevated freight rail line, which is a residual infrastructure, into a linear urban promenade. It can be considered as a platform for strolling, resting viewing, and gathering. It is part garden, part boardwalk, part social condenser. It offers a spatial ambiguity, it is not a building, nor a park, nor a street, rather it is all at once.

The High Line operates as an interface that is neither residual nor imposed. Its structure is continuous yet punctuated by planted clearings, seating niches, and

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[181] Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, 36-37.

overlooks that interrupt the linear datum, offering varied conditions for occupation and interaction. The architectural act lies in thickening and flattening the infrastructural trace through Piet Oudolf's naturalistic, matrix-based planting, long-lived perennials and grasses arranged in layered drifts for four-season structure, set within narrow soil beds integrated with the deck; these landscape interventions modulate the hard surface, slow movement, and produce edges for pause and encounter (figure 3.11, 3.13).[182] The planting strategy, informed by the self-seeded vegetation that colonized the rail line after abandonment, translates that spontaneous railscape into calibrated public ground.[183] Alongside Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro's sequencing of access points, overlooks, and programmatic intervals, the softscape and paved planks operate together as a continuous-yet-variegated platform.[184]

[182] Piet Oudolf and Rick Darke, *Gardens of the High Line: Elevating the Nature of Modern Landscapes* (Portland: Timber Press, 2017).
[183] Friends of the High Line, *High Line Plant Guide* (Spring/Summer 2010).
[184] Diller Scofidio + Renfro, "High Line," project description; see also American Society of Landscape Architects, "Honor Award: The High Line," award narrative.

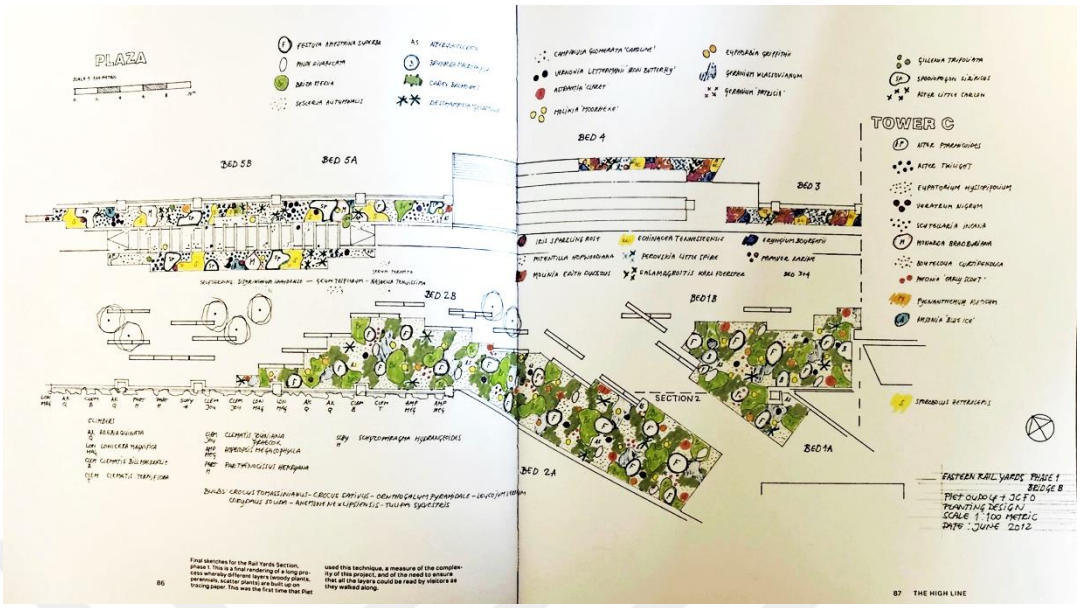


Figure 3.11. Piet Oduolf's proposal drawings for High Line (Oudolf 2023)



Figure 3.12. The High Line, New York (author's own archive, 2022)



Figure 3.13. Partial Diagrammatic Platform Section of the High Line (produced by the author)

Similarly, the NEMO Science Museum in Amsterdam (1997) by Renzo Piano, transforms its sloped roof into a stepped public platform that invites pedestrian occupation (figure 3.14). The roof terrace accessible by a stairway serves as a place to sit, stroll, overlook the harbor, and informally gather. Platform, here, becomes a public promenade. Such a gesture connects the institutional interior with the urban exterior.



Figure 3.14. NEMO Science Museum, Amsterdam (author's own archive, 2023)

The museum's roof is a deliberate articulation of platform as public interface. It produces a spatial continuity between city and institution, folding the building into the urban topography. The slope is not symbolic but experiential which transforms movement into view, rest into encounter. Platform here stages public leisure, mediating the role of the museum as both institutional and public.

These instances trace platform as a public institution, open-ended, inclusive, and continuously in use. In this sense, they do not operate like the traditional typologies of the square or the boulevard; rather, they establish a horizontal plane as a field for unprogrammed use. They can be read alongside Aldo van Eyck's playgrounds, where low thresholds, patterned horizontality, and distributed small elements (rings, frames, mounds) invite multiple readings and uses: slight level shifts and open edges allow simultaneous paths, pauses, and encounters to co-exist without enclosure, and repeated surfaces support improvisation by admitting play, rest, and passage on the

same ground. Through such uses of platform that accommodate multiplicity, ground is reclaimed as a scene of becoming; platform, in these instances, operates as a spatial infrastructure of participation, where ground is thickened, distributed, and made relational.

Aldo van Eyck's urban playgrounds, developed across Amsterdam from 1947 to 1978 situated in vacant lots, courtyards and residual urban spaces. It was part of an initiative which proposed to give a playground to every neighborhood of Amsterdam.[185] These playgrounds transformed underused ground into platforms for play, encounter and becoming. Van Eyck's playgrounds did not impose a program, instead, they offered a spatial grammar which included sandpits, circular steppingstones, metal hoops, climbing domes placed on leveled, delineated platforms of brick, gravel or sand (figure 3.15, 3.16, 3.17).

[185] Vincent Ligtelijn, *Aldo van Eyck: Works* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1999), 35.

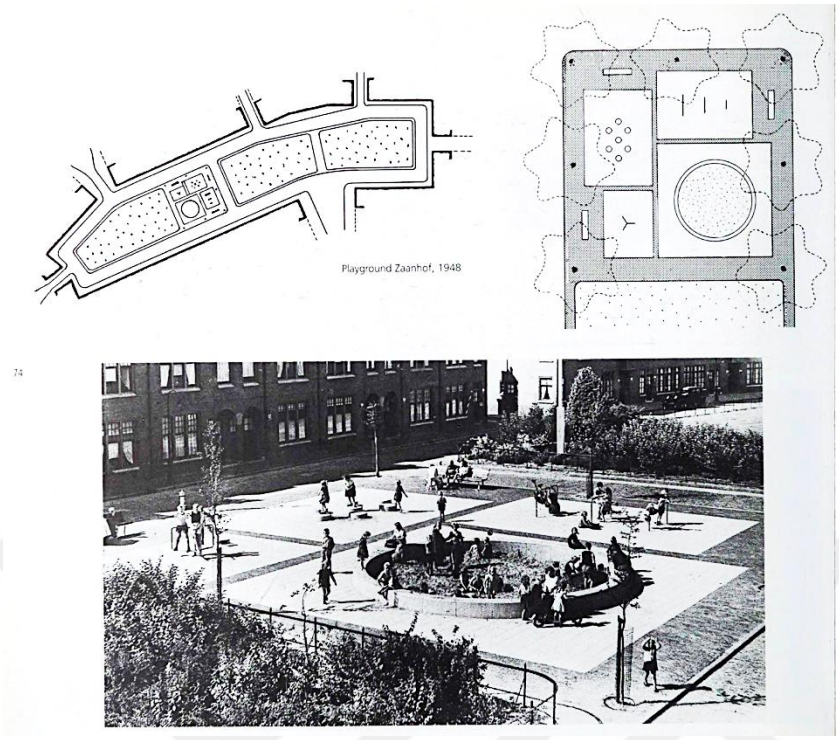


Figure 3.15. Playground Zaahof, Aldo van Eyck, 1948 (Ligtelijn, 1999).

Figure 3.16. Playground Zaahof's Diagrammatic Platform Section (produced by the author)

Platform here is an architectural element that transforms indeterminate parcels of urban residue into active public grounds. Its function is not additive but foundational. The delineation of the ground through curbs, pavers, or edge treatments defines a

spatial order where activities are made possible. The act of drawing the ground: flattening it, edging it, surfacing it, is itself becomes a form of platform-making (figure 3.16).



Figure 3.17. Stepping Stones from one of the Playgrounds, Aldo van Eyck (Ligtelijn, 1999).

Through his playgrounds, fabric of the city becomes a field of expression, in which architecture becomes a medium for dialogue and becoming. His playgrounds exemplify a space of inclusivity, open-endedness, and mutual formation. It opens up a crack within the fabric of the city by manipulating the ground.

Platform in Van Eyck's work holds neither programmatic fixity nor monumental weight but proposes instead a syntax of spatial relations. His modest interventions reconfigure public ground through the act of leveling, patterning, and framing. The playground becomes a public platform through accessibility, continuity, and the refusal of enclosure.

3.2.3 Space as Stage: Platform as a Performative Ground

Hilde Heynen, in her, "Space as Receptor, Instrument or Stage: Notes on the Interaction between Spatial and Social Constellations" dwell on the relationship between "spaces and social processes"[186] in relation to three different models: space as a receptor, space as an instrument and space as stage. In regard to the third model, "space as stage" she states that:

> The third model, which encompasses aspects of the first two, envisages the built environment as a stage on which social processes are played out. In the same way as the staging makes certain actions and interactions possible or impossible within a theatre play, the spatial structure of buildings, neighbourhoods and towns accommodates and frames social transformations.[187]

Reading platform through this perspective positions it as an architectural stage that supports material structures, symbolic and social acts. Platform, taken together with this model, conditions participation. In architectural instances such as open-air stages, protest platforms, and thresholds, the act of stepping up or being framed upon a horizontal datum alters how bodies are read and how actions acquire symbolic force. Platform's operation lies not in what it holds, but in how it positions, by setting a horizontal datum and measurable edge that relate bodies to site; introducing level changes that create gradients of visibility; aligning planes and edges with lines of sight and movement to establish facing and stance; concentrating access at steps, ramps, and landings to sequence entry and pause; and differentiating surface finish and texture to register places to stand, gather, or cross.

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[186] Hilde Heynen, "Space as Receptor, Instrument or Stage: Notes on the Interaction between Spatial and Social Constellations," *International Planning Studies* 18, no. 3–4 (2013): 343.
[187] Ibid.

3.2.3.1 Sebastiano Serlio's Scenography: Three Stage Depictions

As discussed in the previous chapter, Sebastiano Serlio's theatrical stage depictions can be interpreted as representations of urban ground. Through these depictions (figure 3.18), Serlio articulates and visualizes a form of "public ground," situating the urban condition within the spatial language of theatre. The "tragic" scene is marked by emblematic architectural elements such as an obelisk and a gate, which align with Vitruvian principles. In contrast, the "comic" scene presents a more chaotic composition, an irregular clustering of buildings lacking clear proportional logic or adherence to classical orders. Serlio's characterization of figures within these scenes further emphasizes the public function of the ground plane as a space of encounter and interaction.

> The stage buildings for [tragedies] should be of characters of high rank, because disastrous love affairs, unforeseen events and violent gruesome deaths (as far as one reads in ancient tragedies, not to mention modern ones) always occur in the houses of noblemen, Dukes, great Princes or even Kings.[188]
>
> The stage buildings for [comic scene] should be private houses; that is, belonging to citizens, merchants, lawyers, parasites and other similar characters.[189]

In this context, the theatrical ground becomes a constructed surface that stages urban life: a shared "public ground" where disparate individuals and architectural forms coexist. Rather than portraying a volumetric or layered conception of space, these scenes flatten the built environment onto more than a singular surface that supports both structures and human actions. Platform here does not distinguish between city and stage, instead it collapses them. It is a representational element that allows

[188] Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture (*1996), 88.
[189] Ibid.

multiple architectural forms and social roles to coexist without vertical hierarchy. The urban plan becomes scenographic through its platformed ground.

Notably, the often-overlooked "satiric" scene offers an alternative reading: its platform can be interpreted as possessing a thickness, unlike the two more formal scenes. However, the gridded surface is still evident in satiric scene, but compared to the other two ground becomes articulated instead of the placed buildings. Compared to satiric scene, tragic and comic scenes assume urban ground as a neutral and static base in which buildings erect. This is also parallel with Serlio's definition of perspective which is "bodies raised above the plane."[190] In the satiric ground, Serlio anticipates irregularity, material instability, and spatial negotiation. Its broken geometries and ambiguous forms reflect a type of urban ground that is neither purely formal nor purely organic, but responsive. Instead of looking into these three stage depictions as separate, it is possible to read them as a whole. This way, different layers of urban ground could be seen together.

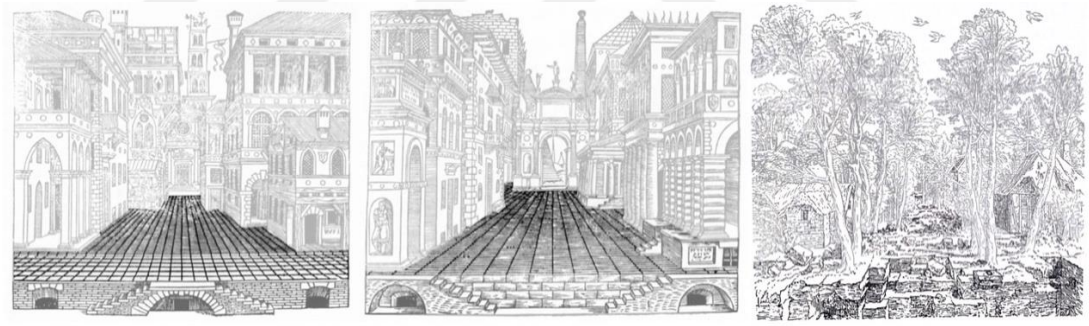


Figure 3.18. Sebastiano Serlio's comic, tragic and satiric scenes (*Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture,* 1996)

[190] Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture,* 37.

3.2.4 Urban Grid[191]

In passage to the semi-sedentary and sedentary life, as anthropologist Tim Ingold highlights, the domestication of land as a "surface" becomes an important act of appropriation.[192] This appropriation is functional, regulating the irregularities of ground. By "domestication of land as a surface" irregular terrain of ground is converted into a structured ground prepared for repeated tasks: clearing and stripping, leveling, cutting and filling to create even areas, compacting, laying hard layers, setting edges, marking thresholds and routes, establishing simple measures for sowing, drying, and storage, and instituting maintenance cycles (replastering, re-rolling). These operations make the ground inhabitable, supportive of loads, divisible into plots, and ready for return use over time, thus turning land into an organized surface of work and life. Agricultural production, requiring level threshing floors, stable drying and storage bases, and service paths, compels systematic leveling, compacting, and paving of the ground; in Semper's terms, such modified earth

[191] A short genealogy of grid could be formulated as: In "Appropriation, Subdivision, Abstraction: A Political History of the Urban Grid," Aureli gives a brief genealogy of the urban grid and its political origins, starting from Roman expansion to modern capitalist urbanism. For Ludwig Hilberseimer, grid was a rationalist ordering system which relied on geometry and functional order. For him, the grid was egalitarian in ways that it repeats itself and offers infrastructural clarity. In *Delirious New York,* Rem Koolhaas dwells on the Manhattan grid, arguing that the grid offers a potential for form to be detached from the content. In more recent discourse, Stan Allen and James Corner attempts to reclaim the grid through the grammar of "field conditions" and "landscape urbanism". Allen with reference to his "mat urbanism" envisions a grid which does not have a rigid structure but have a thickened non-hierarchical infrastructure; responsive to environmental and historical variation (Allen, 2014). In a similar manner, Corner treats the grid as a form of mapping device that is a performative instrument for activating latent potentials within the site (Corner, 1999). Both Allen and Corner approach the grid with the possibility of dissolving its rigidity into more flexible and adaptive matrix.

[192] Aureli and Tattara, "Platforms: Architecture and the Use of the Ground."

condenses in the "mound," where soil is transformed into architectural ground.[193] Gottfried Semper's introduction of the mound as one of the Four Elements of Architecture thus interprets a social and cultural evolution from mobile to permanent settlement. Modification of land through terraces is more than a physical act: retaining walls and leveled benches fix boundaries visibly in the landscape; labor investment inscribes tenure; channels and access paths rank movement and irrigation; and serial benches subdivide slopes into legible plots, together producing social appropriation and division.[194]

Later on, this appropriation of land by paving and threshing takes a more refined form with the introduction of urban grid which not only appropriates the land use but also social relations which operates in different scales. Marx's interpretation of ground as an "instrument of labour" could also be read in relation to this aspect of land appropriation.[195] Pier Vittorio Aureli introduces urban grid by referring to three acts which are "appropriation, subdivision and abstraction."[196] The act of subdivision of land becomes a permanent way of subdividing through abstract mechanisms. This artificial intervention materializes itself as a way of social control. In this sense, the human relationships are also abstracted through the introduction of urban grid. In relation to the use of urban grid, Aureli states that,

> in the course of history, this highly artificial system ultimately naturalized the possession of land to the point that we now take for granted that the urban

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[193] Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, trans. Harry F. Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[194] Op. cit.
[195] Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines*, 37.
[196] Pier Vittorio Aureli introduces these three acts through his article "Appropriation, Subdivision, Abstraction: A Political History of the Urban Grid" (2018).

> world is an immense grid of lines that parcels the earth into myriad indoor and outdoor enclosures.[197]

Therefore, urban grid could be taken as an artificial modification which operates both in physical context and in social by introducing a control mechanism, a frame. In this sense, the ground, with the introduction of urban grid, can no longer be seen just as a "constellation of landmarks,"[198] but it could be seen as a "constellation of [appropriated] landmarks" with the introduction of platform as an interface.

In "Appropriation, Subdivision, Abstraction: A Political History of the Urban Grid," Aureli introduces urban grid as "a template for coexistence."[199] It is defined as the appropriation of land through subdivision in which the relationships formed between humankind is abstracted.[200]

> As a social force, abstraction is therefore the mechanism that transforms the grid from an order first traced on the ground to an apparatus whose ordering impact invests and orients the totality of human relationships.[201]

In this sense, the grid can be considered as propagating organizations within the urban surface. Furthermore, such simple marking suggests a rather artificial intervention which later turns into a rather physical act. Something which is rather artificial finds its way to the physical possession of land.

Even though distinct, platform and urban grid can be seen as interconnected architectural elements. They both abstract ground, by imposing datums and linework

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[197] Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Appropriation, Subdivision, Abstraction: A Political History of the Urban Grid," in *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture within and against Capitalism*, ed. Pier Vittorio Aureli (New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2018), 139-140.
[198] Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines*, 40.
[199] Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Appropriation, Subdivision, Abstraction: A Political History of the Urban Grid," *Log* 44 (2018): 139.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid., 40

that translate irregular terrain into measurable surfaces and parcels. They enable repetition, through modular spacing, serial alignments, and recurring surface treatments. They produce fields rather than individual objects, by extending continuity across multiple plots and organizing use through edges, intervals, and thresholds rather than walls. While the grid subdivides space into units, parcels, blocks, bays, platform organizes a field of use, leveling and thickening ground to accommodate sequences of movement, assembly, and rest without enclosure. Such coupling of platform and grid can be traced with reference to how the alley and the grid of METU Campus work together to form these relations.

3.2.4.1 The Alley and the Grid of METU Campus[202]

As Ayşen Savaş[203] writes, the campus merged the ideas developed in CIAM (1928–1959) and the formal codes of the International Style, which in turn created a unique

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[202] A partial and a different reading of this part of the thesis is presented titled as "Platform: as an Architectural Ecotone" critic|all V "e(time)ologies," in TU Delft, 2023. Within the scope of this work the campus was rethought as a possible ecotone, especially in terms of its formation. Since the main approach of the thesis does not take on an ecological perspective, it is not fully integrated to this part. Since the integration of spatial, environmental, and social systems are inherent in the formation of the campus, it potentially produces what might be described as an architectural ecotone. The term ecotone is used here as twofold both as a metaphor and an intermediary and an interface that functions as hybrid space. The concept of the ecotone, a transitional space between ecosystems, can be read together with the above-mentioned interfaces. Ecotones are defined as "places of transition, ecotones are essentially spatial relational constructs wherein one system impacts, influences, animates change to another. As a zone of interface, an ecotone attains its specific set of ecological features by the force of interactions among the adjacent ecological systems. The distinctiveness of any one ecotone gains definition from the unique interactions between systems, rather than by traits associated with a "place in and of itself." Ecotones have dynamic qualities, altering in width and position over time, responding to changes in the environment" (Kahn 2021). Ecotones are not thin boundaries, but thick interfaces rich in biodiversity and interaction. Together with architectural ground, this concept opens possibilities to think of platforms, thresholds, and urban surfaces as zones of negotiation between built and unbuilt, human and nonhuman, stable and emergent. Such ground is not given, but continuously produced through overlapping ecological, social, and infrastructural processes. The METU campus functions in much the same way. The artificial forest and institutional platform together generate a porous edge condition between nature and culture, between the institutional core and the external environment. This resonates with Felix Guattari's concept of the "three ecologies," mental, social, and environmental, as overlapping and co-constitutive fields (Guattari 2000). The METU campus is not a closed system; it is continually shaped by, and responsive to, forces beyond its boundaries, such as, political shifts, urban pressures, and climatic conditions. It is in a flux which continuously impacts and transforms its surrounding environment beyond its borders. It operates in different scales such as social, political, and environmental; and in return it is affected by outside forces and systems. It can be defined as a dynamic edge in which includes different three-dimensional networks. Constructed and planted ground of the campus itself can also be defined as a platform. It is both dynamic and porous not

environment.[204] The idea was to "cultivate the ground"[205] through a formation of society. The campus plan was organized around a central pedestrian spine, "the alley,"[206] which operates not simply as a circulation axis but as an infrastructural and

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just environmentally but also socially. In this sense, the formation of the campus can be considered as "weaving together of political and ecological structure" as Dripps suggests in her article "Groundwork" (Dripps 2021).

[203] The METU Campus is a highly researched instance, this thesis takes it as one of its key instances to reread its platforms and the campus itself as a platform. It relies on the previous research made, especially, through its documentation in the courses conducted by Ayşen Savaş both at METU Faculty of Architecture and TU Delft, Faculty of Architecture.

In 2017, the METU Faculty of Architecture received a grant from Getty Foundation in Los Angeles as a part of "Keeping it Modern" conservation programme. The core team for the project included: the architectural team, Prof. Dr. Ayşen Savaş, Bengisu Derebaşı, Fatma Serra İnan, Eyüp Özkan, Sezin Sarıca, conservation planning advisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Aktüre, structural assessment, Prof. Dr. Ahmet Türer, Assist. Prof. Dr. Bekir Özer Ay, material assessment team, Assist. Prof. Dr. Çagla Meral Akgül, Assoc.Prof.Dr. Ayşe Tavukçuoğlu, Sepehr Seyedian and environmental assessment team, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ipek Gürsel Dino, Şahin Akın. Together with the report, "Research and Conservation Plan for the METU Faculty of Architecture Building Complex," a series of publications and exhibitions are produced with the idea of "conservation through documentation and raising international awareness" (Savaş 2018). The first exhibition entitled "METU Documented" was organized at METU Culture and Convention Centre, in 1999. Some of the key exhibitions were: "METU Campus Documented: Travelling Exhibition (TU Delft, 2019)," "METU Lodgings: Representing Itself (METU, 2018)."

[204] Ayşen Savaş, "Campus Utopias I: Middle East Technical University Ankara, Creative Rereading," *OverHolland* 14, no. 22 (2023): 45, https://doi.org/10.7480/overholland.2023.22.242

The "Campus Utopias" graduate research course was conducted in 2021 in collaboration with TU Delft, Department of Architecture and METU Department of Architecture.

[205] Ibid.

[206] Ayşen Savaş, "Three Modern Campuses, Three Revolutions, Three Experiments," *OverHolland* 14, no. 22 (2023): 19, https://doi.org/10.7480/overholland.2023.22.241

Within the scope of this article, Savaş focuses on three campuses within three different revolutionary contexts: UNAM in Mexico, METU in Turkey and ENA in Cuba. She focuses on three distinct elements of these three campuses, for UNAM she focuses on the Olympic Stadium which is unique in terms of its site, which is a

social platform (figures 3.19, 3.21). As a spatial medium, the alley functions much like what Keller Easterling calls an "infrastructure space": a latent but active organizational field that prefigures the behavior and distribution of architectural, social, and environmental elements. [207] Along this spine, arcades connect buildings, pools punctuate moments of relief, and lawns open up gathering spaces. The alley collectively forms what might be called a topological program of three-dimensional encounters. [208]

The alley mediates circulation and becomes a site of embedded social relations. As a platform, it enables interaction: broad landings and steps invite sitting and small gatherings; arcades and shaded thresholds support informal teaching and study circles; the continuous paving allows processions and demonstrations to assemble and move; plinth and planter edges serve as meeting points; and slight level changes define niches without enclosure, conditions through which appropriation and resistance can occur without preassigned uses.

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former volcanic site redesigned through architectural intervention, heavily dependent on landscape intervention, for METU, the alley was taken as a main experiment zone, which was the very first construction within the site that worked as a spine that articulates the whole campus, and for ENA, the arcades were taken as the regulatory elements of the whole campus (Savaş 2023).

[207] Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (London: Verso, 2014).

[208] Op. cit.

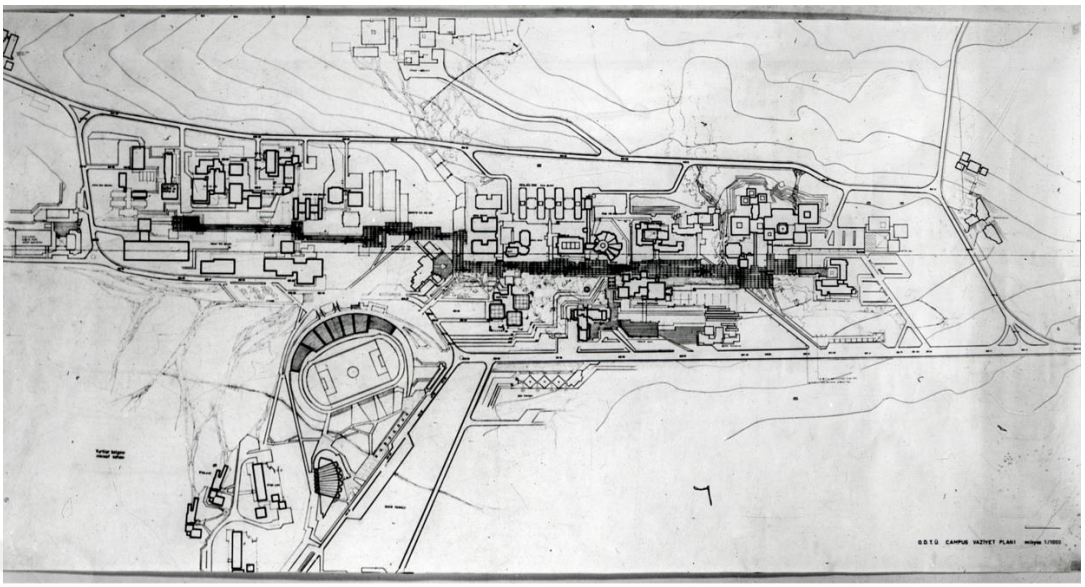


Figure 3.19. Site plan of the METU Campus by Altuğ-Behruz Çinici (Salt Research, Altuğ-Behruz Çinici Archive)



Figure 3.20. Partial Diagrammatic Platform Section of the Alley (produced by the author)



Figure 3.21. Two instances from the alley. (Salt Research, Altuğ-Behruz Çinici Archive)

Far from being a neutral or static element, the alley acts as a platform. It is not merely a flat plane but a multi-scalar system, an interface that links architectural form, environmental process, and institutional culture. It registers infrastructural flows, mediates material rhythms, and structures social life. It can be considered an "assemblage" in the Deleuzian sense: a dynamic configuration of heterogeneous parts that function together without being reduced to a single form or function. The alley at METU functions as a regulatory framework that shapes spatial experience and institutional life. Its alignment and treatment facilitate movement, structure encounters, reinforcing the identity of the university as a structured social system.

The alley works together with the grid for the regulation of the overall campus. As part of the campus planning, a rectilinear 100 × 100 m grid was laid out.[209] Platforms of the campus work in direct relation to this grid, producing three-dimensional spatial relationships. In this sense, working together with the grid, platforms enact the

[209] Ayşen Savaş, "Campus Utopias I: Middle East Technical University Ankara, Creative Rereading," *OverHolland* 14, no. 22 (2023): 52.

interfaces and thresholds within the campus, at grid intersections platforms thicken into landings and small squares; along grid lines plinths, steps, and ramps extend floors to form edges and thresholds; where the grid meets slope, terraces set paced transitions. By connecting the buildings and becoming an extension of both faculty buildings and the alley, platforms become the ground, mediate between different systems, and enable inhabitation (figures 3.19, 3.20, 3.21).

The relief of the campus grid reproduced by Sezin Sarıca and Damla Erkoç (figure 3.22) is significant in terms of tracing the relationship between the grid and platforms. Their relief model represents the formation of the campus as a series of platforms that work together to support circulation, and inhabitation, and to organize program distribution, thickening at intersections, stepping along slopes, shaping thresholds and level transitions, and aligning landings with building plinths and entries (figure 3.20).

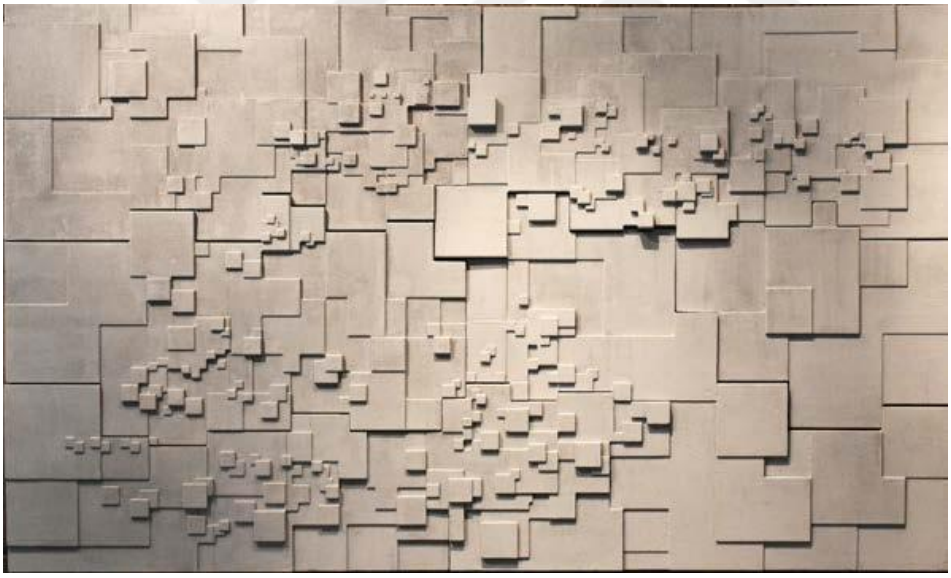


Figure 3.22. The relief of the grid of the campus reproduced by Sezin Sarıca and Damla Erkoç (Savaş 2023).[210]

[210] As stated by Ayşen Savaş this work is a "Spatial unity-in-variety relief model by Sezin Sarıca and Damla Erkoç. In a relief model, lines expand to transform two-

In this sense, the alley of the METU Campus can be read as a constructed system that organizes life through the reconciliation of platforms and the grid. It mobilizes the architectural ground as an organizing medium, and in doing so challenges binaries of natural/artificial, inside/outside, and institution/landscape. To reimagine the architectural ground as such a system offers a possibility to displace some of the most persistent assumptions embedded within architectural and urban practice. The ground becomes a site of contested emergence, a thickened medium of co-becoming. Reconceived as such, platform can become an architectural ground for negotiation, multiplicity, and encounter.

In this sense, the METU campus stands as a paradigmatic instance of platform. Its platform articulations mediate environmental processes, support collective life, [211]

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dimensional shapes into three-dimensional forms. It suggests a method for raising lines above a flat surface so that they appear to stand out slightly from it. The twodimensional 'figure–ground', expands into diverse spatial compositions inspired by Rudolf Lutz's relief work (1895-1966)" (Savaş 2023).

[211] ABC School Turkey, which is part of a larger network of The Architecture Lobby (TAL), is initially formed through a group of academics, positioned in in-between positions (consisting of PhD candidates who are research assistants, part-time instructors) working in different universities in Ankara who are all affiliated with METU. (Other institutions include Atılım University, Başkent University, Bilkent Unviersity, Çankaya University, Medipol University and TED University) The group started to formulate its discussions through series of questions, which afterwards turned into "Uncomfortable Questions in Architecture" under the theme of "Hacking the Institution" The collective's pedagogical strategy began with a workshop held at METU, which included three different groups (which are academics, students, working architects) on October 12th, 2024. This event is then, integrated into the graduate course ARCH 571 offered by Güven Arif Sargın at METU in Fall 2024-25 semester. Through open-courses held in different universities in Ankara, the ABC School Turkey evolved into a potential pedagogical platform which formed a rather discursive terrain of architectural education in Ankara. During the spring semester, with the recent events in Turkey, the group took part in a larger part of gatherings held in the faculty. The events in the faculty were spatially grounded in a raised platform which was initially constructed as part of the *Urgent Design Studio* (a design-build initiative/relief formed after the earthquakes in February 2023). The site of this general gatherings

and encode perceptual rhythms. Through its infrastructure, affective geometries, and temporal responsiveness, METU enacts the performative, stratified, and relational conditions of ground architecture through the coupling of platforms and grid.

3.2.5 Radical Grounds

Superstudio and Archizoom Associati, both operating within the Florentine avant-garde, reconceptualized platform as an anti-monumental, infrastructural and speculative element for reorganizing collective life.

Superstudio's *Histograms* (1969), depict cubic volumes placed on pristine fields, each structure a blank form raised on a low plinth (figure 3.24, 3.25). These histograms are architectural platforms that refuse figuration, program or ornamentation. They appear simultaneously timeless and futuristic, modular, repeatable, and stripped of semantic content. They explain histograms as:

> We prepared a catalogue of tri-dimensional non-continuous diagrams, a catalogue of histograms of architecture with reference to a grid transportable in diverse areas or scales for the edification of a nature both serene and immobile in which we might finally recognize (re-know) ourselves. From the catalogue of histograms followed effortlessly objects, furniture, environments and architecture… But all these things didn't matter much, nor have they even mattered much. The surface of such histograms was homogeneous and isotropic; every problem of space and every problem of sensibility having been accurately removed. The histograms were also called 'the tombs of architects.[212]

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was both physical and metaphorical platform. Here, the architectural platform became an operational ground for emancipatory action.

[212] Superstudio, *La Superficie Neutra*, 1972 quoted in Peter Lang and William Menking, *Superstudio: Life Without Objects* (New York: Rizzoli, 2003), 19.

The neutral platform here functions as a utopian support system which becomes a base for endless reconfiguration. These platforms do not support buildings in the traditional sense; they suspend them. Platform is abstracted from both landscape and context. As a result, it becomes an index of repetition which its horizontality is not grounded in site but in concept. It is a surface from which architecture detaches, or within which it dissolves.

In *The Continuous Monument* (1969-71), this logic is extended to the planetary scale. A gridded, mirrored surface stretches uninterrupted across cities, landscapes, and oceans (figure 3.26). The mirrored platform absorbs and reflects the environment without anchoring itself to it. This continuous ground resists differentiation, hierarchy, or enclosure. It becomes a critique of zoning, monumentality, and symbolic form. Platform, here, becomes not a base for architecture, but its replacement.

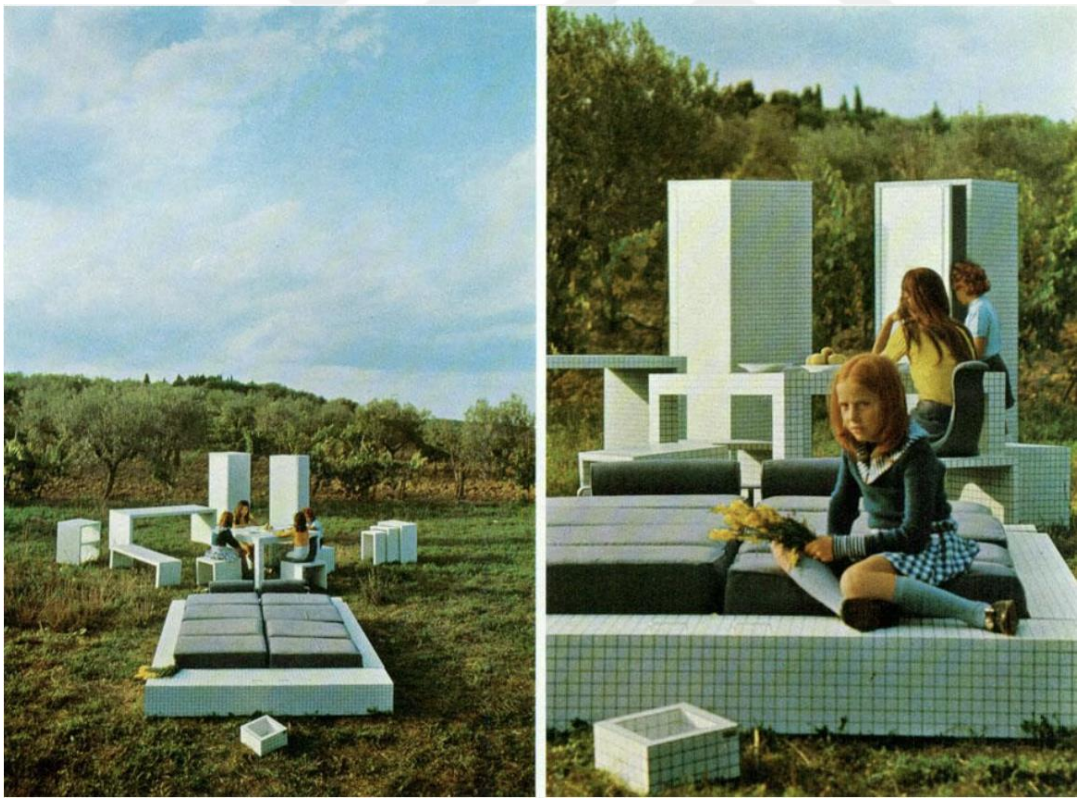


Figure 3.23. *Histograms*, *Misura Furniture*, Superstudio, 1969 (Domus, 1972)

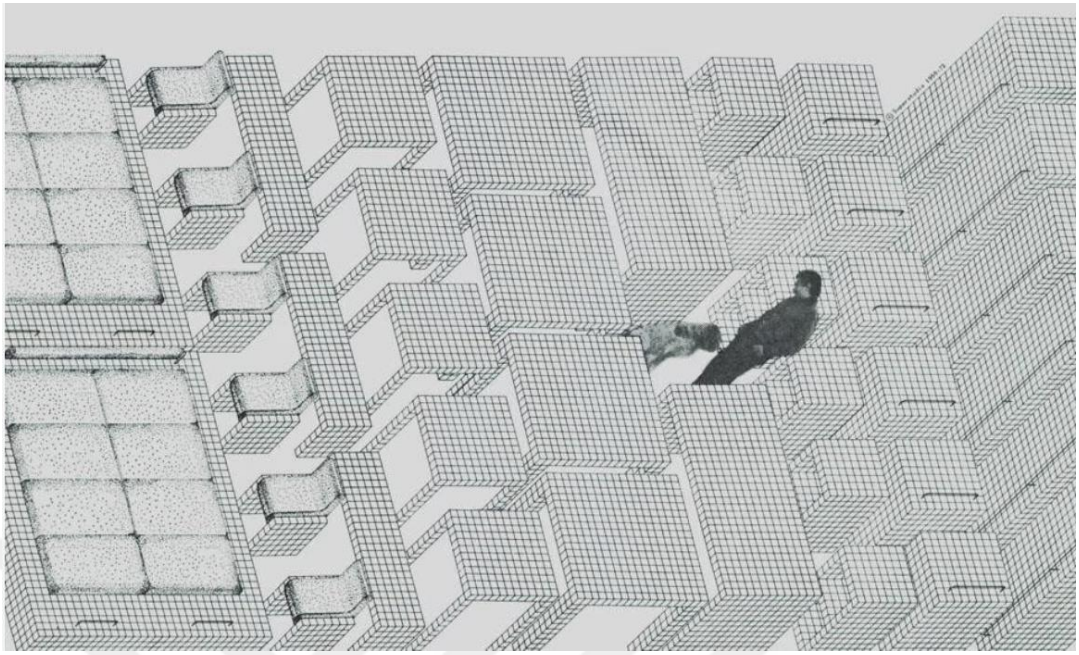


Figure 3.24. *Histograms, Misura Furniture*, Superstudio, 1969 (Domus, 1972)

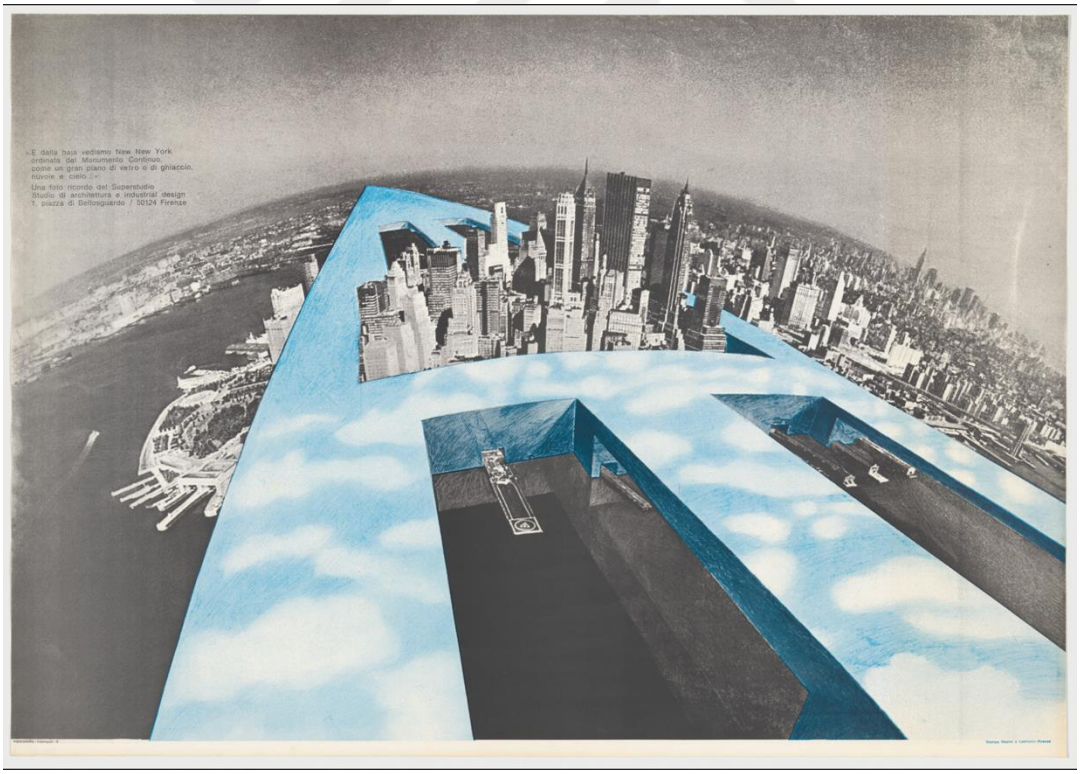


Figure 3.25. *The Continuous Monument*: New York, Superstudio, 1969 (MoMA Archive)

Another such example is Superstudio's *Supersurface* (figure 3.27). Alex Wall describes their work as follows:

> The Florentine group Superstudio envisaged a continuously developed, artificial surface. In their project *Supersurface 5*, the formal device of the grid was inscribed across a pure, planar landscape, providing both a metaphor and an instrument for the networks of energy and information that could extend to every corner of the earth.[213]

Such expansion of grid as an artificial intervention further imposes a continuous horizontal urban surface in which flexible networks are enabled. This continuous horizontal surface also suggests an urban system in which urbanism is dynamic and temporal. Instead of a static form of urban context, it presents a process, a "network across vast […] regional surfaces."[214] Supersurface operates both as a speculative field of energy exchange and as a perspective of platform without architecture. It renders ground as medium, transforming architectural space into programmable interface. With such intervention and depiction, the grid is no longer a compositional tool, it becomes the logic of platform itself.

[213] Wall, "Programming the Urban Surface," 235.
[214] Ibid., 234.



Figure 3.26. *Supersurface*, Superstudio, 1971 (Superstudio 1971)

Through *Supersurface*, Superstudio proposes a plug-in service network "global circuit board"[215] which eliminates singular architectural objects and turn urban ground into an uninterrupted and continuous landscape. In doing so, Supersurface extends platform into the infrastructural imaginary. Its horizontality resists both form and place. The surface becomes a speculative condition, a ground that remains forever open, yet never local.

Archizoom's *No-Stop City* (1969-72) complements this vision. The city is rendered as an endless interior in which walls dissolve, ceilings are continuous, and the ground becomes a modular infrastructural platform (figure 3.28). In this scenario, architecture is reduced to systems of lighting, ventilation, and distribution. Thus, spatial difference collapses into a homogeneous field of potential.

Platform in No-Stop City is not a neutral floor but a radical ground condition. It absorbs the functions of infrastructure, circulation, and urban form into a single continuous system. The grid becomes a spatial operator through which platform

[215] The Museum of Modern Art, "Continuous Monument: On the River," MoMA, accessed July 3, 2025, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/869.

facilitates the erasure of hierarchy, figuration, and typology. Unlike previously discussed platforms that elevate and frame, here platform levels and erases. It becomes a field for potential but not identity.

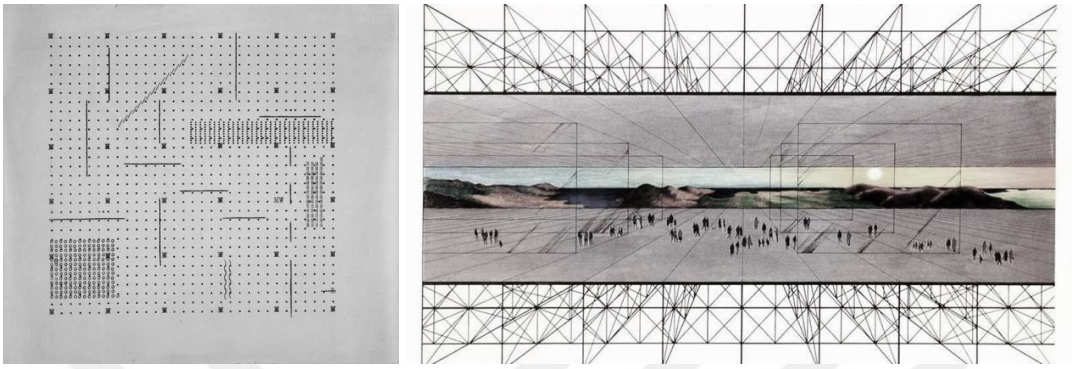


Figure 3.27. *No-Stop City*, Archizoom, 1969 (Centre Pompidou Digital Archive)

In the seventh chapter of Landscape as Urbanism, Waldheim refers to Archizoom's *No-Stop City*. He interprets Archizoom's work as a description of horizontal field conditions of modern metropolis which is a surface shaped by economic and ecological flows.[216] Here, grid as an artificial platform becomes the instigator of events. In a way, the grid is reformulated through infrastructural concerns. Thus, No-Stop City's ground is not figurative but procedural. It is a field of services and flows, and platform is the enabling layer that supports this redistribution. It does not monumentalize occupation but diffuses it. Architectural platform here becomes infrastructural software, which is ambient, continuous, and generative of new urban logics. It articulates not through form but through provision.

In such flattened condition, platform is no longer a physical support. In this instance, platform becomes a source of uniform space which organizes coexistence through modularity and metric repetition.

[216] Charles Waldheim, "Seven: Agrarian Urbanism and the Aerial Subject," essay, in *Landscape as Urbanism*, ed. Charles Waldheim (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 124–38.

3.3 Ground Plan as a Platform

The ground plane is more than a physical support; it is a complex conceptual, representational, and operational element that mediates between architectural form and ground. Platform is a horizontal mediator, a constructed ground, that enables access, rest, and action. Platform enacts this through a continuous ground plane that anticipates openness. Parallel to this, the architectural ground plan is an intermediary tool that intersects drawing, thought, and construction. The ground plan operates as a complex site of conceptual framing and social organization. In a similar manner to the ground plan, platform organizes collective possibility. It does not dictate function but enables it; it is open to appropriation by fixing a level datum and more than durable surface, marking edges and thresholds, and providing distributed points of access and service so that furniture, crowds, and temporary structures can be added or removed without reconfiguring the ground: allowing ritual, leisure, protest, and play to occupy the same plane at different times and scales.

In this sense, platform is the condition that renders the ground plan operative. It is both the spatial element in which the plan can be enacted and the epistemological frame that makes ground legible, measurable, and inhabitable. In the previous part, sections are used to elaborate platform's horizontal capacity, this part of the chapter turns to ground plan to enact such capacities. Just as the ground plan projects future space, platform acts as the spatial projection of that drawing. As a latent structure, platform both receives and transforms the logic of the plan: level lines are realized as datums and terraces; line weights become thickness and edge; hatches translate into material stratifications; dimension strings become modules and bays; and alignments resolve into paths, landings, and clearances arranged in sequence. By setting level, edge, and access, while integrating tolerances, drainage, and services, platform makes the articulation of ground visible as a constructed, operative field.

The ground plan has evolved through Vitruvius' *iconographia* to the operational diagrams of contemporary urbanism. In architectural sense, ground plan could be considered as the basis for the building's representation in which the other parts

erect. In this sense, "[a]rchitecture provides an instance of the opposite tendency, taking information from flat representations to create embodied objects."[217] The ground plan is both an artifact of design and a record of cultural intent.

As such, architectural platform becomes an element through which the abstractions of the plan are given a physical threshold. It frames the shift from representation to construction, as a grounded transformation. Platform materializes the base condition of the plan while simultaneously participating in its abstraction, making it possible to move from drawing to occupation without dissolving the critical distance between them.

> It would be foolish it seems to me, to characterize architecture as abstract, since a house is no more abstract than a chair or a biscuit; but it makes a great deal of sense to call the process of its conception abstracted.[218]

In such sense, ground plan becomes where this abstraction meets materiality, where geometry encounters habit, and where the image of space confronts the lived experience of place. Ground plan not only participates in shaping buildings; it also has broader epistemological implications by establishing conventions of measurement, projection, and classification that structure how space is conceived, taught, and reproduced. Through the ground plan, architecture confronts presence and absence, form and void by rendering solids and spaces as distinct fields; using cut lines and line weights to declare thickness, edge, and enclosure; specifying thresholds, clearances, and reserves that keep portions intentionally empty; and permitting figure–ground reversals in which what appears "void" organizes movement, light, and collective use while "form" stabilizes boundary and support.

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[217] Robin Evans, "Architectural Projection," in *Architecture and Its Image* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1989), 19.
[218] Ibid., 21.

This confrontation is already evident in one of the earliest architectural configurations of settlement: the domestic platforms of Çatalhöyük. Unlike later orthographic planning traditions, Çatalhöyük's spatial logic does not rely on the abstraction of ground through drawing. Instead, it constructs architectural order directly through platformed differentiation of the earthen interior (figure 3.29). Raised surfaces demarcate sleeping areas, burial zones, and hearths. Space is divided not through walls, but through modulated height, use, and proximity. These platforms serve both as spatial regulators and as prefigurative plans: they record habitual action, regulate access and visibility, and inscribe collective rhythms into form. In this context, the plan is neither figurative nor representational. It is lived and enacted through platform. Thus, dwellings in Çatalhöyük demonstrates that even in the absence of drawn plans, the architectural ground can still function as a planning instrument. Platform, here, is the first act of abstraction: a horizontal surface carved from terrain that begins to organize space, time, and relation.



Figure 3.28. Çatalhöyük Building 52 (catalhoyuk.com)

3.3.1 Ground Plan: A Genealogy

Architectural platform, as both a physical and conceptual construct, forms a foundational threshold between earth and edifice, between material site and formal projection. It is the mediating ground through which geometry and order are inscribed upon the earth. From the *stylobate* of the Greek temple to the raised podiums of Palladian villas, platform constitutes a support structure and is an element of elevation: both physical and symbolic. It allows architecture to differentiate itself from nature while remaining rooted in it. This dual condition makes platform a generative site for tracing how abstract ideals such as symmetry, proportion, or order are translated into built form: a leveled datum permits measured regularity; edges and stairs fix axes and centers; paving grids set proportional modules; alignments script approach; and step hierarchies and terraces materialize ordered sequences in space.

Platform operates as more than a surface upon which divergent spatial conceptions, administrative, and speculative, are staged. In this sense, platform does more than to lift the building from the earth; it articulates architectural knowledge by converting graphic representations into ground operations, grids become edges and paving modules; line weights become thickness and boundary; level notations become datums, steps, and terraces; figure–ground drawings become sequences of void and mass. In doing so, platform shows how architecture thinks through drawing, imagines its relation to the earth through reshaping terrain and alignment, and mediates between abstract projection and concrete surface by stabilizing geometry.

3.3.1.1 Geometry and Order

The genealogy of the architectural ground plan could be traced initially with Vitruvius' *De Architectura*. He formalizes the *ichonographia*, as the orthographic projection of building's footprint, alongside *orthographia* (elevation) and *scaenographia* (section). For Vitruvius ground plan is more than just a drawing; it is

where the geometry is rationally imposed onto terrain; in which rooted in proportion and symmetry, and the ordering of nature. The plan expressed the harmony between the parts of a building and the whole, reflecting not only utility but universal ideals of beauty and order.[219] In such sense, the Greek temple platform can be taken as a reflection of such relations in ground plan expresses.

Leon Batista Alberti expands this framework in his *De Re Aedificatoria*. He defines architectural intervention through "lineaments" that exists independent of material execution. The ground plan, as a subset of lineaments is the initial abstract state of construction.[220] Thus, the plan becomes the intellectual ground of architecture, in which a projection of idealized geometries that precede and organize physical reality.

Such philosophical approach finds its physical embodiment in Greek temple and especially, in its platform, in which the precision of plan is reflected in its symbolic and functional order. The Greek temple is earthbound in terms of its relationship with the earth. This relationship could also be traced in Vitruvius' writing. For the placement and the construction of the temples he states that;

> while transmitting to us the proper arrangements for buildings of all kinds, they were particularly careful to do so in the case of temples of the gods, buildings in which merits and faults usually last forever.[221]

In a way, this could be interpreted as the counterplay between the imposed ground plan and the earth, and the result is the balance of these two distinct elements through

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[219] Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Ingrid D. Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Book I, Ch. 2.
[220] Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 6–9.
[221] Vitruvius, *Ten Books*, 95.

architecture.[222] Scully also argues that both the forms and the sites of the Greek temples show similarity, in terms of what they define as holy.[223]

In order to further the discussion on platform as ground plan, the general configuration of the Greek temple is significant. In a Greek temple, a large platform is raised on a stone structure, and it is reached through steps that surround the whole platform, *crepidoma* (figure 3.1). In this sense, the *stylobate* and the *stereobate* becomes important elements that define platform and its boundary. While *stereobate* is an important element that regulates the way the temple ascends, the *stylobate* regulates the overall configuration of the temple by containing the columns. The regulatory character of the *stylobate* is evident in Vitruvius' description of the construction of podium around the temples. "[Podium] should be so constructed that its plinths, bases, dies, coronae, and cymatiumare appropriate to the actual *stylobate* which is to be under the bases of the columns."[224] As stated by Vitruvius, *stylobate* determines the order of the overall elements of the temple (figure 3.30). As the *stylobate* rests upon and simultaneously levels the terrain, platform operates as an abstract interface that enables the imposition of geometry on an irregular site.

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[222] Vincent Scully, "The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 23, no. 2 (1964), 89.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Vitruvius, *Ten Books*, 111.

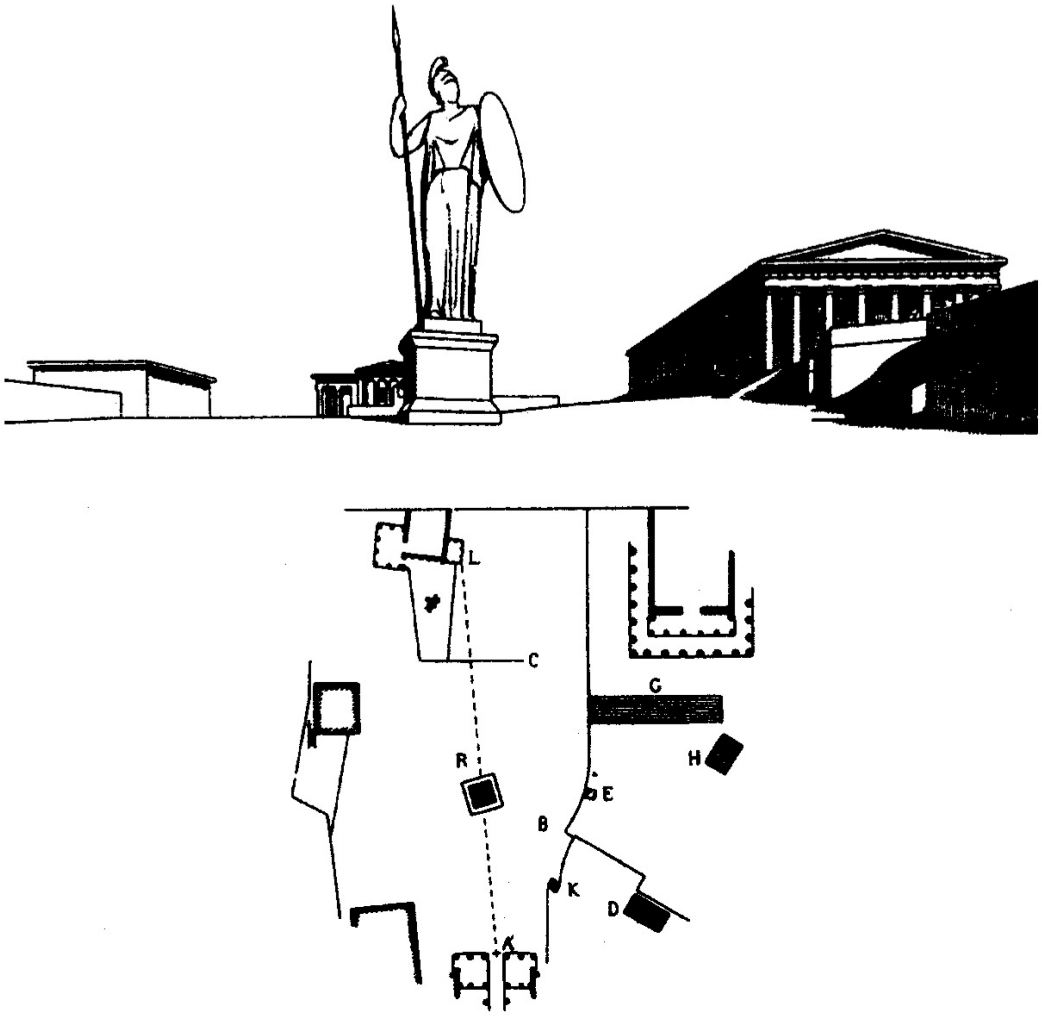


Figure 3.29. Auguste Choisy, "The Acropolis, First Sight of platform," from "Le pittoresque dans 'art grec," Histoire de 'architecture, 2 vols. (Vidler, 2000)

3.3.1.2 Ideal Geometry and Speculative Terrain

In Andrea Palladio's *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*, the plan assumed a new centrality in architectural theory. Palladio's villas and their symmetrical, centrally planned layouts expressed not only functional efficiency, but an aesthetic of balance rooted in classical antiquity. In his work, the plan becomes a compositional tool of rationalization (figure 3.31), ordering both space and landscape through architectural proportion and axis. As Colin Rowe argued in "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa,"

Palladian plans operate as geometric instruments that project proportional relations across house and site, clarifying how plan geometry structures both movement and prospect.[225]

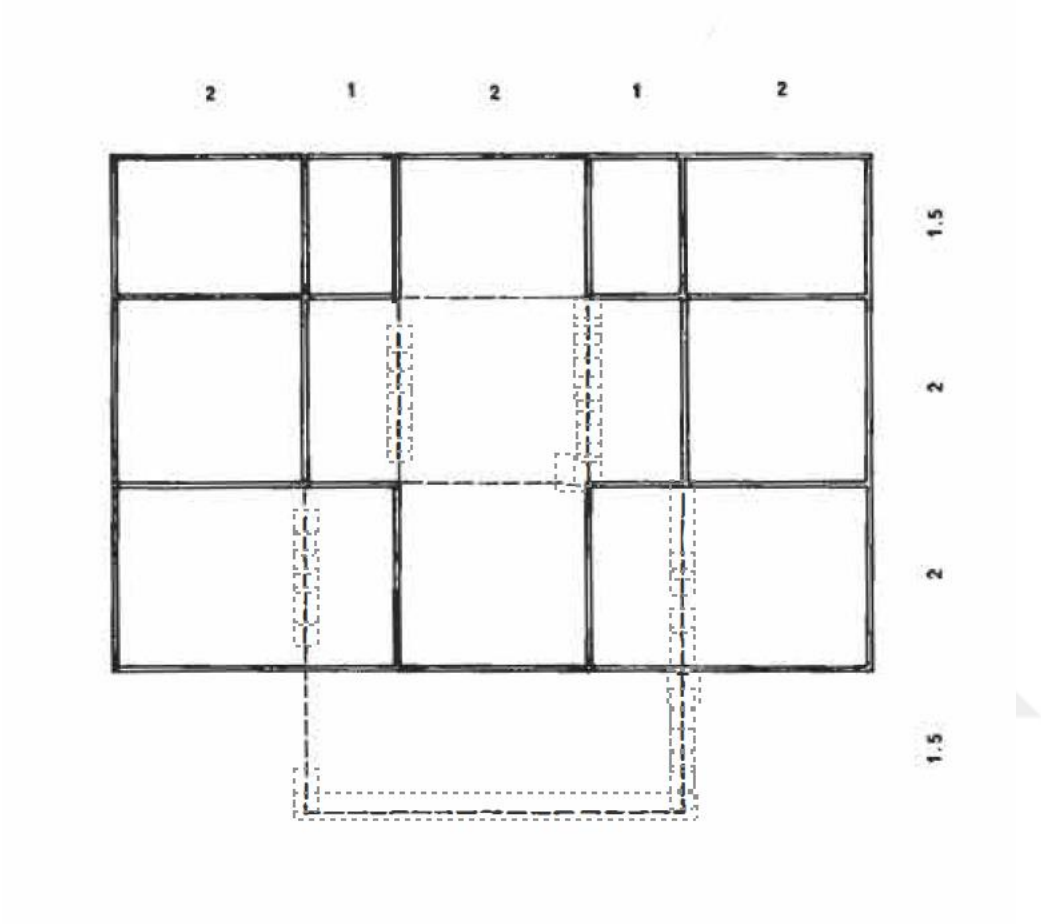


Figure 3.30. Villa Malconcenta, Palldio ("The Mathematics of an Ideal Villa," Colin Rowe)

His Villa Rotonda near Vicenza, with its centralized plan, based on a Greek cross overlaid by a circular domed hall, transforms domestic space into a legible geometric figure. The plan mediates between rural life and architectural monumentality, suggesting that geometry can ascribe significance to the ground; as Colin Rowe

[225] Colin Rowe, "The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa," *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976).

notes, Palladio's proportional operations extend from room to site, aligning approaches and prospects so that the ground participates in the architectural order.[226]

This classical clarity is disrupted by Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma* (1762), an imaginative reconstruction of ancient Rome rendered in an overwhelming cartographic plan (figure 3.32). [227] Piranesi's drawing is a speculative and fragmentary map that refuses compositional unity.[228] It treats the plan as a palimpsest of accumulated ruins, conjecture, and eroded forms. The plan, here, is no longer a rational diagram but a terrain of historical speculation and loss.

[226] Ibid.
[227] Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *The Campus Martius of Ancient Rome*, ed. John Pinto (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1978).
[228] Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 34.



Figure 3.31. *Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma,* Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1762 (https://www.piranesimultimediale.it/piranesi/media/Il_Campo_Marzio_dell_antica_Roma.jpg)

Piranesi's chaotic urban depiction contrast starkly with Enlightenment projects like those of Étienne-Louis Boullée and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, where the plan becomes a metaphysical language. In Boullée's unbuilt Cenotaph for Newton, the ground plan supports a colossal sphere meant to represent harmony, a return to Vitruvian ideals

on a planetary scale. The architectural plan here is both physical and symbolic, material and philosophical.[229]

In these instances, platform becomes an element of projection. It bridges the speculative dimension of the plan with the promise of architectural realization. Whether in the elevated podiums of Palladian villas[230] or the monumental bases of Boullée's *architecture parlante*[231] platform acts as an enabling surface through which abstraction takes spatial presence. Its horizontality absorbs and contains the heterogeneity of earth, rendering it operable by geometry. It does so by setting a level datum; extending plan's grid as a sequenced path; fixing approaches and prospects through aligned landings and thresholds; and smoothing irregular ground so measured relations in drawing are sustained as spatial relations in use. The speculative plan, then, depends on platform as an interface between representation and form.

3.3.1.3 Plan as a Social Diagram

Robin Evans, in his seminal essay, "Figures, Doors and Passages," explores how architectural plans shape the conditions of social life. He demonstrates that the distribution of rooms and thresholds in domestic architecture is not merely spatial but cultural, regulating privacy, encounter, surveillance, and segregation.[232] He interprets the ground plan as a diagram of social relationships encoded in built form by simultaneous reading of plan schema and the painting. In regard to such reading, he states that:

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[229] Emil Kaufmann, *Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1952)
[230] Andrea Palladio, *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura* (Venice, 1570).
[231] Op. cit.
[232] Robin Evans, "Figures, Doors and Passages," in *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 55–91.

> In the foregoing I have tried to avoid treating buildings as if they were paintings and writings. A different kind of link has been sought: plans have been scrutinised for characteristics that could provide the preconditions for the way people occupy space on the assumption that buildings accommodate what pictures illustrate and what words describe in the field of human relationships.[233]

Evans's analysis of seventeenth century English houses shows how the increasing separation of servants and owners, guests and family members, was orchestrated through the plan. For instance, the spatial layout of Coleshill by Sir Roger Pratt reflects the social protocols of visibility and access. Doors, corridors, and circulation paths becomes instruments of social control (figure 3.33).[234]

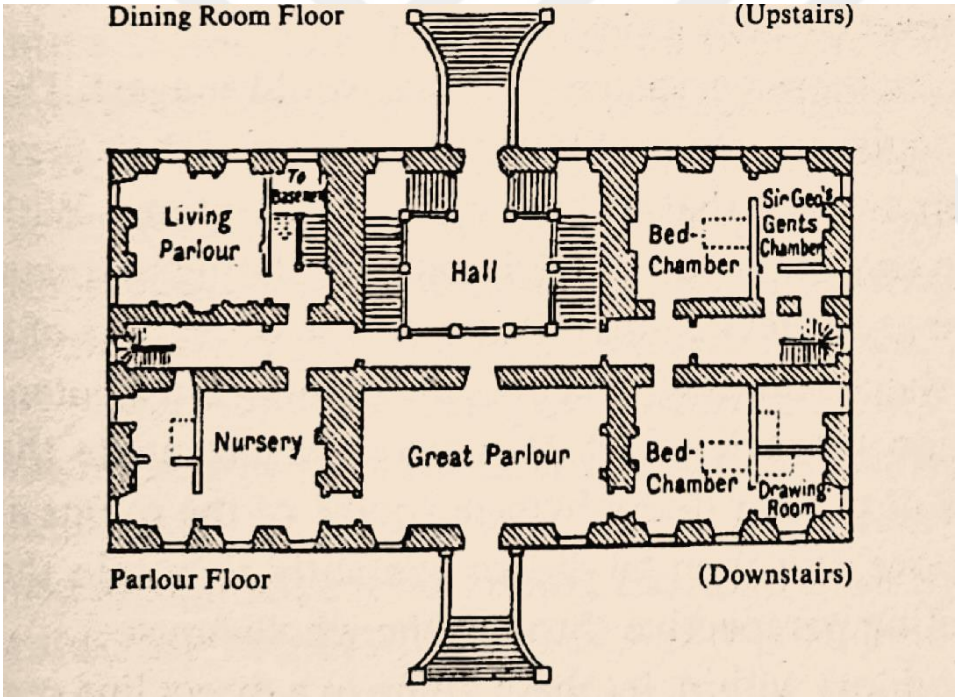


Figure 3.32. Coleshill Parlour Floor Plan by Sir Roger Pratt (Evans 1971)

[233] Ibid., 82.
[234] Ibid.

If the plan projects social relationships, platform enables them spatially. The architectural platform, rather be it the raised parlor, the landing, or the stage-like surface of an entry hall, serves as a situational device that mediates between visibility and privacy. Like the thresholds that Evans describes, platforms organize perception and access. They create zones of encounter or exclusion without enclosing space. The plan prescribes relationships; platform enacts them in elevation.

His insights resonate with Beatriz Colomina'a critiques. In her *Privacy and Publicity*, Colomina offers a reconfiguration of the understanding of modernist domestic architecture by presenting how it became enmeshed in the media apparatus of the twentieth century. The modern ground plan, she argues, is not merely a spatial diagram but a mechanism of visibility and performance. The transparency of the domestic interiors designed by Le Corbusier or Mies van der Rohe, where walls give way to glass and movement flows through open plans, reflects not just a functionalist aesthetic but a profound shift in the politics of space.[235]

While Evans traces shift in spatial hierarchy and circulation, Colomina clarifies how the plan, especially through transparency and framing, reorganizes visibility and staging within the domestic interior. Taken together, the plan emerges as a spatial framework that exceeds mere layout: it sets gradients of privacy and exposure, determines sequences of approach and pause, configures adjacencies and service routes, and stabilizes relations between interior and exterior through frames, apertures, and continuous floors. Correspondingly, platform converts these diagrammed relations into ground, through raised thresholds, landings, and level planes that regulate stance, access, and co-presence. The ground plan thus orders movement and sight lines across rooms and thresholds, while platform provides the datum and edges that sustain these organizations in use.

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[235] Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 5–23, 73–87.

3.3.1.4 Plan as a Modernist Generator of Space

The emergence of modernism brought about a renewed faith in the plan as an agent of transformation. Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* situates the ground plan within the broader evolution of spatial sensibility. From the axial compositions of ancient Egypt to the dynamic spirals of Baroque Rome, Giedion reads shifts in plan logic as symptomatic of broader changes in how societies conceive of space and time.[236]

In a similar manner, Le Corbusier states that "[t]he plan is the generator."[237] In *Vers une architecture*, he argues that the ground plan initiates the architectural act, organizing functions, light, movement, and perception. Le Corbusier's "Dom-Ino" system and free plan reinforce the idea that architecture begins with the rational organization of space on surface. Yet this is not merely a formal statement, it is part of the moral and hygienic project which aligns with the broader context of modern life, industry, and the body.

His design for Villa Savoye, for instance, demonstrates such logic of free plan in action: by separating the structure from partition, he gives way to the spatial fluidity, transparency and a new choreography of movement (figure 3.34).[238] Thus, in his work, modernist plan becomes a "machine for living" and a map of societal progress.

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[236] Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition,* 5th ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 62–75.
[237] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (New York: Dover, 1986), 45.
[238] Ibid., 51-55.

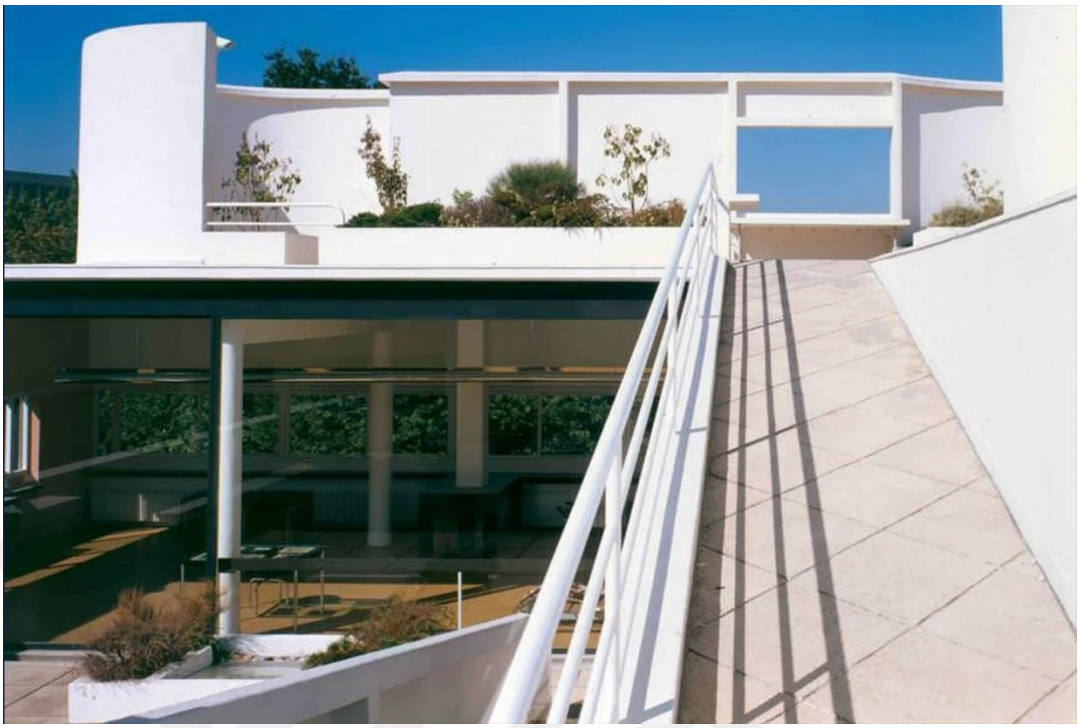


Figure 3.33. Villa Savoye, Poissy (Fondation Le Corbusier, Paul Kozlowski)

The modernist platform, pilotis, terraces, and roof gardens, becomes integral to this project. It articulates a new ground condition, one detached from the earth yet engaged with it through systems of movement, occupation, and view. In Villa Savoye, the continuous ramp and elevated floor form a ground-in-air, a platform that replaces the traditional base with a more than fluid surface. The modern ground plan thus unfolds upon platform that reconfigures the relation between human activity and the earth below.

3.3.1.5 Typology and Collective Memory

Aldo Rossi, in his *The Architecture of the City*, proposes the idea of the ground plan as a repository of collective memory. Urban types, like courtyards, streets and

blocks, persist across history, their plans embedded in the fabric of the city like archeological remnants.[239] Through typology[240], plan connects past and present.

Rossi's design for the Gallaratese housing complex in Milan embodies this idea. The plan evokes classical typologies, such as cloisters and arcades, not to copy them but to re-inscribe them into modern urban conditions.[241] Similarly, his proposal for the Modena Cemetery (1971) uses planimetric rigidity to encode permanence and ritual into the landscape of death, where axiality becomes a carrier of civic memory.[242] The repetition and variation of forms within these plans become architectural strategies to embed duration within space.

In such framework, typology becomes a mode of continuity that places architectural ground as a potential anchor within history. Typological reasoning does not pursue novelty but seeks resonance with a collective spatial unconscious.[243] Thus, the plan becomes a site of sedimentation, an archive of forms that resist erasure even as they adapt to new uses and meanings. In this context, for Rossi, the legibility of the plan becomes a cultural power which provides a spatial legibility across time.

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[239] Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, trans. Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982).
[240] In etymological sense, the word type initially is derived from Greek *tùpos* which means to leave a mark and later Latin *typus* which means figure, symbol, emblem. With reference to Quatremère de Quincy, typology is not referred to as a specific model which needs to be copied directly but a building's formal structure embedded within (Aureli 2022). Quatremère de Quincy dwells on imitation in this respect. For him, the origin is to be sought in nature and the nature is what gives the spectator the principles, not the exact form to copy. Thus, his perspective on imitation does not depend on formal issues but rather on the process of making of architecture. The process implies principles instead of rigid rules.
[241] Ibid., 122-125.
[242] Aldo Rossi, *Scientific Autobiography* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 44.
[243] Rossi's approach resonates with the work of Giorgio Grassi, who also emphasized the role of the plan in sustaining urban identity. His insistence on formal discipline and historical reference positioned the plan not as an invention but as an ethical and civic gesture. The architectural ground plan in this sense becomes a repository of values: permanence, continuity, and memory.

Platform, within typological thinking, can be understood as the material and symbolic support of collective rituals. Its elevation reinforces duration and distinction. Rossi's cemeteries or civic housing projects often sit on or configure platforms that ground the plan historically. Platform becomes the interface through which memory is formalized. By marking a distinction from the immediate landscape, it isolates and emphasizes the typological act, making the repetition of the plan not only legible but monumental.

3.3.1.6 Operational Fields

In *Points + Lines* (1999), Stan Allen argues that the plan should be rethought as an operative field rather than just a compositional figure as in the duality of figure-ground.[244] Working at the intersection of architecture, landscape, and infrastructure, Allen develops the concept of "field conditions," where elements are not composed around a center but distributed across a responsive, adaptive ground. The plan in this context becomes a diagram of effects, which continuously anticipates movement, climate, and ecology rather than just depicting form. It is a set of performative instructions as a response to complex and changing systems.

Such shift is parallel to broader theoretical developments as in the concept of Gilles Deleuze's concept of the diagram as a "map of forces" and Bernard Cache's notion of the plan as a topological surface in constant transformation.[245] The plan is no longer static but open, no longer closed but contingent. With reference to this, architecture engages the ground not as a base to be mastered but as a dynamic

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[244] Stan Allen, *Points + Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 58–64.
[245] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 34–39.

medium[246] to be negotiated. The ground plan is generated through repetitive modelling of terrain, vegetation, and infrastructure. Therefore, the drawing does not emerge as a conclusion, but as an interface which is a working surface between disciplines, between data and design.

The operative plan, in this context becomes a multidisciplinary instrument, positioned within the medium of different systems of thinking, environmental thinking, and digital fabrication. Hence, the ground plan becomes generative of not only form but of process.

The architectural ground plan produces space, shaping how one lives, remembers, and inhabits the earth, and is, in turn, shaped by those practices. It mediates between thought and earth, abstraction and embodiment. Platform operates as an interface for this mediation, setting datum, edge, and access through which projection meets ground and occupation returns to drawing. The ground plan is a site of friction and translation, of projection and negotiation: both a field of possibility and a record of constraint, where past and future converge in the act of drawing. Thus, the architectural plan is not simply a projection, but a conceptual terrain, with platform as its interface.

[246] This approach aligns with practices in landscape urbanism and ecological design, where planning must consider gradient systems, hydrology, and microclimates.

CHAPTER 4

PLATFORM AS AN EARTHLY ARCHITECTURAL GROUND

The relationship between platform and earth is framed as a thick, resistant, stratified medium. This chapter defines platform as an earthly architectural ground. The term "earthly" does not denote a natural origin; instead, it refers to the condition of earth as thick with history, environment and worked substrate shaped through excavation, compaction, and surfacing. Within this condition, platform articulates the ground, mediates between different systems, and enables inhabitation: articulation organizes cuts, levels, and surfaces into a legible field; mediation relates structural, circulation, and service logics without privileging one; inhabitation establish routes, thresholds, and settings for use.

The conceptual formulation outlined in the preceding chapter articulated platform as a medium through which ground is made operative, inhabited, and representable. It unpacks Çatalhöyük as a point of departure by showing how its domestic platforms, built up through recurrent earthen layers, articulate ground within the house, mediate between everyday life, hearth and burials and enable inhabitation through rooftop access, ladder-thresholds, and repetitive room sequences. With reference to the frame set through Çatalhöyük's platforms, the other instances introduced are traced. Taken together, these instances were mobilized not to compile a historical catalogue but to frame platform as a contingent operation of ground articulation, one that intervenes between earth and form, site and symbol, in terms of repetition, and differentiation, mediating between what is constructed and what is occupied, what is inherited and what is made.

Where Chapter 3 emphasized platform's spatial and representational articulations, this chapter extends the inquiry into platform's epistemological capacities. Here, platform is not only considered as an "earthly" one that operates within the complex

field of material cycles, affective perception, and institutional transformation. The shift from platform as architectural ground to platform as earthly architectural ground thus constitutes not a conceptual leap but a deepening: a turn toward the operational thickness of ground as an active element. In this sense, platform articulates the earth, mediates between different systems, and enables inhabitation across these epistemological registers.

In this expanded frame, the notion of ground shifts from a delimited surface or stable substratum to a dynamic field of negotiation. It becomes a field where environmental and symbolic systems are woven. This resonates with the closing formulation of Chapter 3, where platform's capacity to "differentiate, frame, and inscribe" was articulated as extending beyond physical support into operational and representational dimensions. In relation to the previous chapter platform is repositioned as a spatial mediator. Through this theorization, platform is read as ground which is built, lived and constructed.

Initially, this chapter begins with a reading of an ecological genealogy which provides an essential background for the thesis, yet it is not its primary object. Ecology offers concepts and frameworks that sharpen how ground may be understood, as relational, systemic, adaptive, and planetary. It is not a means for solving ecological crisis, nor is it reduced to a metaphor. Through the introduction of ecological genealogy platform is traced as a constructed terrain through its capacity to configure occupation, modulate flows, and support epistemic clarity. In this reading, platform becomes an earthly architectural ground, mediates between different systems, and enables inhabitation across ground.

Extending this genealogical reading, the discussion turns to surface to specify how platform's articulation, mediation, and inhabitation are registered as "deep surface." It is constructed to be walked upon, assembled over, and looked across, yet its flatness often contains a depth in the sense of epistemic and affective density. This chapter approaches platform as a "deep surface," with reference to Giuliana Bruno's rethinking of surface not as the antithesis of depth but as its active correlate. For

Bruno, surface is not a superficial limit; it is a "spatial screen" that mediates between materiality, affect, and memory.[247] She states that:

> The surface is here configured as an architecture: a partition that can be shared, it is explored as a primary form of habitation for the material world.[248]

Surface, in this sense, is the medium through which the visual and the tactile meet, where memory leaves traces, and where perception is modulated.

This perspective makes it possible to theorize platform as an earthly architectural ground. As argued in the previous chapter, platform is not defined by elevation alone; it is enacted through repetition, engagement, and inscription. Read through the notion of "deep ground," developed by Ayşen Savaş in her fourth year design studios in METU Department of Architecture, platform becomes a stratigraphic register in which horizontal laying and vertical accretion interweave to disclose embedded infrastructures, material cycles, and cultural traces.[249] Her emphasis on "deep-seeing" foregrounds ways of apprehending, and working with, the layered material, historical, and infrastructural conditions of sites, shifting ground from a static base

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[247] Giuliana Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 6.
[248] Ibid., 3.
[249]Ayşen Savaş, Selahattin Önür, Bengisu Derebaşı, and Buket Erol, eds., *StudioLog 2022–2024: ARCH 401–402 Architectural Design Studios—[2022–2023] Öykü Madeni; [2023–2024] Urla Quarantine Island Post-Trauma Center* (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, 2025), https://archweb.metu.edu.tr/en/announcement/401-402-architectural-design-studios-2022-2024, 8.
Ayşen Savaş, Agnes van der Meij, Seray Türkay, and Melek Pınar Uz, eds., *Studio Log: ARCH 401–402 Architectural Design Studios [2012–2013]: Fall // Fragmented Urbanism; Spring // DOHA Exploring Artistic Landscapes* (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, 2013), https://archweb.metu.edu.tr/system/files/projects/studiolog_kunye.pdf
Ayşen Savaş, Funda Baş Bütüner, Sezin Sarıca, and Nesli Naz Aksu, "Projecting the Deep Ground," *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 17, no. 3 (2022): 6–19

to an operative field of projection and intervention. In this sense, depth is not a fixed measure but a boundless thickness, a deep surface where sky and earth meet in practice. Drawing on Ingrid Halland, deep surface can be understood as a critical site where material, perceptual, and conceptual layers converge, dissolving simple surface/depth binaries.[250] As Barfod notes, such surfaces register temporal and bodily imprints, folding memory into architectural ground.[251] Taken together, these stances frame how the deep surface of platform emerges through occupation, weathering, ritual, and representation, distributed, legible, and how platform becomes the ground, mediates between different systems, and enables inhabitation over time.

The deep surface, then, must be read at two scales: as a material field and as an epistemological condition. Architectural platform mediates these scales. It offers a more than a surface to walk, a surface to build upon, and a surface to read. It is at once support and projection, archive and interface. This makes it distinct from either foundation or skin: its articulation is not hidden, nor entirely revealed. It is negotiated in time.

In this sense, to consider platform as an epistemological element is not just to metaphorize its surface as a place of knowledge accumulation. Rather, it is to acknowledge that platform is where architecture's epistemic and operational modes converge. It is a drawing made material; a plan made inhabitable. It encodes the logic of site, the sequence of ritual, the scale of the body. Platform is where line becomes threshold, where measure becomes path. It is not a diagram of order, but a medium of spatial reasoning. In thinking platform as epistemic ground, this chapter moves from the metaphor of ground as support toward a conceptualization of ground as an

[250] Ingrid Halland, "Deep Surface: Introduction," *Metode* 1 (2023): 4–9.
[251] Julie Barfod, "The room that I am, the room I give birth to," *Metode* 1 (2023).

organizing condition. Platform is not neutral; it is embedded with logics of access, participation, visibility, and use.

Within the scope of this chapter, Çatalhöyük is revisited as a situated instance for reading platform as earthly architectural ground as a closing argument. In doing so, the settlement serves as the material and historical condensation of the theoretical concerns unfolded throughout the chapter: the ecological genealogy traced in the first part finds concrete form in the ways its platforms interwove burial, ritual, and everyday life as layered ground; the deep surface elaborated in the second part is made tangible in the plastered floors, matting impressions, and successive rebuildings that accumulated memory as operative thickness; and the epistemological register of ground is enacted through the conversion of planimetric order into stratified construction, where burial, hearth, threshold, and roof circulation inscribed spatial reasoning into earth itself. By returning to Çatalhöyük, the chapter demonstrates how platform articulates, mediates, and enables inhabitation not only in abstract conceptual terms but in lived practice, anchoring the proposition that platform is always already an earthly architectural ground.

Taken together, the trajectory of this chapter moves from conceptual framings to material instantiations. Ecology provides the horizon of resonance, deep surface specifies the operative field, and Çatalhöyük anchors these perspectives within lived practice. The chapter thus unfolds as a progression: from genealogy to "deep surface" to site, showing how platform can be read as an earthly architectural ground that is at once constructed, represented, and inhabited.

4.1 Towards a Possibility of Ecological Discourse of Platform

The genealogy of ecology provides an essential background for the thesis, yet it is not its primary object. Ecology offers concepts and frameworks that sharpen how ground may be understood, as relational, systemic, adaptive, and planetary. From Humboldt's diagrams to Vernadsky's biosphere, ecological discourse has repeatedly

articulated the earth as an active medium of interconnection. This thesis draws on such formulations, but it does not aim to redefine ecology itself. Instead, it positions ecology as a horizon against which a different task unfolds: the development of a vocabulary of platform through which ground can be read as earthly and architectural.

The concern here is therefore not to construct an "ecological genealogy of platform," nor to subsume platform under environmental discourse. The ecological turn is unavoidable, since any relation between earth and architecture is also a relation to soil, water, atmosphere, and life. But platform, as developed here, is not reducible to ecology. Its primary concern is architectural physicality: the ways in which ground is cut, raised, thickened, and drawn into operative surfaces.

This orientation is grounded in the instance of Çatalhöyük, the Neolithic settlement on the Konya Plain. Excavations have shown that its houses were organized around raised domestic platforms, which structured burial, ritual, production and everday life. These platforms thickened the ground, binding earth, life, and memory into one surface. More than functional elements, they enacted a spatial logic for platform: a way of organizing inhabitation, orientation, and relation through constructed ground. Rather than treating ground as neutral support, Çatalhöyük demonstrates that ground was always already a worked surface, a stage where social and material processes overlapped.

At this intersection, platform can be understood as both threshold and interface. As threshold, it marks the passage between earth and architecture, translating uneven terrain into articulated surface. As interface, it stages exchanges between material processes and spatial orders, allowing environmental forces to be mediated by architectural form. Platform is neither pure nature nor abstract geometry but a ground where these domains overlap. Its role is to expose, stabilize, and transform earth into habitable condition: always between, always mediating.

What follows is not a history of ecology rewritten for architecture, but an account of how ecological thought provides moments of resonance from which a vocabulary of

platform can be developed. This vocabulary includes threshold, interface, adaptation, layering, "meshwork," and deep surface. Each term contributes to a language through which platform can be read as earthly architectural ground which is constructed, represented, and inhabited.

4.1.1 Alexander von Humboldt's Diagrams

The first point of resonance between the genealogy of ecology and the vocabulary of platform lies in the work of Alexander von Humboldt. Humboldt's writings and diagrams transformed natural history into a relational field, articulating ground as a surface of interconnection. His *Essay on the Geography of Plants* (1807), published with Aimé Bonpland, included the cross-section of Mount Chimborazo (figure 4.1).[252] This drawing arranged vegetation zones, altitudes, and climates into a single sectional image, establishing a way of seeing nature as layered, relational, and continuous.

[252] Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland, *Essay on the Geography of Plants* (1807); Humboldt, *Cosmos: A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

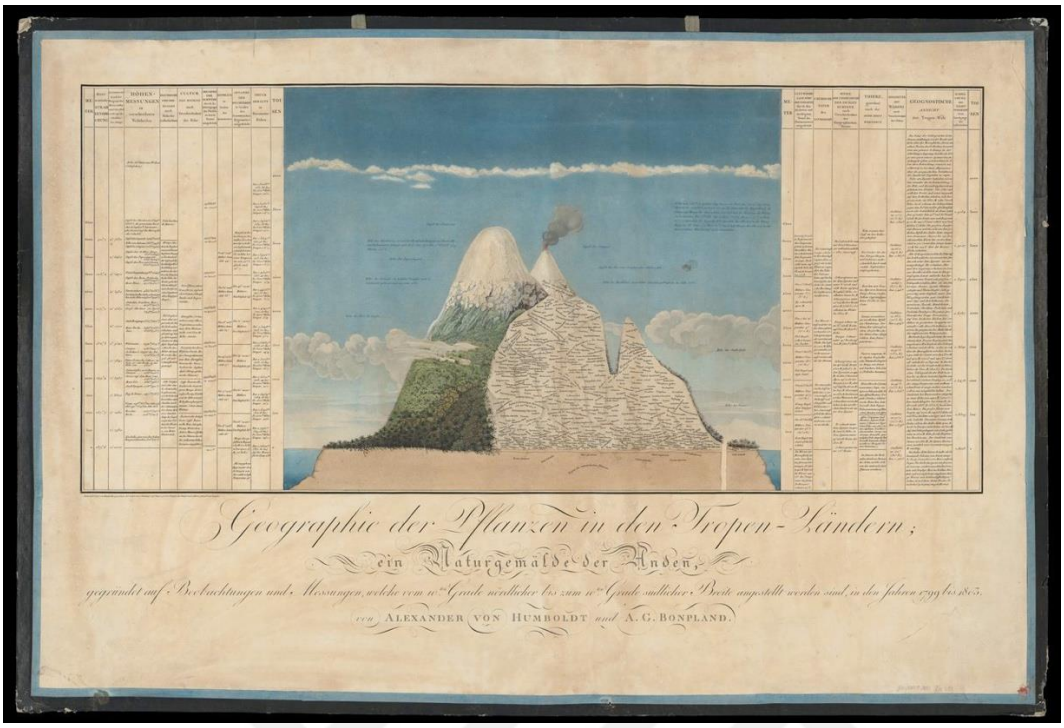


Figure 4.1. Alexander von Humboldt, Cross-section of the Chimborazo (Humboldt, 1807)

The Chimborazo diagram was not a neutral illustration but an operative surface. It acted as a representational platform: a cut through the earth that aligned heterogeneous data and staged them in spatial relation. In this sense, it anticipates platform as threshold and interface. As threshold, the diagram translated the irregularity of mountain terrain into articulated strata; as interface, it mediated between material processes such as climate, vegetation, geology and the abstractions of scientific knowledge. Humboldt's Chimborazo section is precisely such an operation: it cuts into ground and, in doing so, produces a new relational surface. The drawing becomes a platform in its own right, mediating between empirical measurement and spatial imagination.

4.1.2 Darwin, Haeckel, and Olmsted: Platform as Adaptive and Social Ground

If Humboldt articulated ground as representational surface, Charles Darwin redefined it as a temporal and adaptive field. In *On the Origin of Species* (1859), Darwin described life as a continuous process of variation and adjustment, where organisms respond to shifting environments through subtle, cumulative changes.[253] Ground, in this view, is not a static container but an evolving condition, it becomes an adaptive platform where survival unfolds across time.

Ernst Haeckel provided the theoretical language that formalized this shift. In *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen* (1866), he coined *Ökologie*, defining it as the study of the "the science of 'the household of nature'."[254] Ecology became the science of circulation and balance, a systemic field of interrelations. When read architecturally, this resonates with platform as systemic ground: a medium that organizes flows and sustains equilibrium, anticipating infrastructural and metabolic understandings of architectural ground.

Frederick Law Olmsted translated these ideas into spatial practice. His designs for Central Park (1857–76, with Calvert Vaux) and the Emerald Necklace in Boston (1878–96) were not merely picturesque compositions but socio–ecological platforms.[255] Earth was cut, shaped, and replanted to provide drainage, ventilation, and circulation; at the same time, these terrains staged encounters among heterogeneous urban populations. Olmsted's parks were civic thresholds where the

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[253] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859).
[254] Peg Rawes, "Introduction", in *Relational Architectural Ecologies: Architecture, nature and subjectivity* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1. Rawes, "Introduction," 1.
[255] Frederick Law Olmsted, *Writings on Landscape, Culture, and Society*, ed. Charles Beveridge (New York: Library of America, 2015); Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

city overlapped with the environment, and interfaces where ecological processes and social life were deliberately entangled.

4.1.3 Systems Ecology

In the early twentieth century, ecology moved toward systemic and territorial frameworks that expanded its scope across scales. Arthur Tansley's introduction of the "ecosystem" in 1935 described a dynamic whole of organisms and their environments in interaction.[256] The ecosystem is not a bounded object but a systemic platform, a field where flows of energy, matter, and relation overlap in continuous exchange.[257]

Vladimir Vernadsky's *The Biosphere* (1926) extended this systemic imagination to the planetary scale.[258] Life was not passive occupant but an active geological force, continually transforming the chemistry of the earth. The biosphere is at planetary scale, where atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and life overlap as a single, dynamic whole.[259]

Planning practice translated these systemic categories into representational and territorial forms. Patrick Geddes's valley section (1909) aligned geology, vegetation, economy, and settlement in a single cut through the landscape.[260] Similar to Humboldt's Chimborazo, the valley section was not only a descriptive drawing but also a diagrammatic section where natural and social processes overlapped in a shared frame.

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[256] Arthur Tansley, "The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts and Terms," *Ecology* 16, no. 3 (1935): 284–307.
[257] Ibid.
[258] Vladimir Vernadsky, *The Biosphere* (New York: Copernicus, 1998 [1926]).
[259] Ibid.
[260] Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1915)

Lewis Mumford extended this insight into the theory of *regionalism*. In *The Culture of Cities* (1938) and *The City in History* (1961), he argued that the city is inseparable from its larger ecological and territorial context.[261] The region is a territory: the scale at which natural resources, infrastructures, and settlements overlap and co-constitute one another.[262]

4.1.4 Environmental Turn

In the late 1960s, ecological awareness entered architectural and planning practice with a new intensity. Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature* (1969) offered one of the clearest methodological articulations of this shift.[263] His technique of layered overlays: stacking maps of soil, hydrology, vegetation, and slope; produced composite surfaces that guided development decisions. These overlays operated as layered platforms, where heterogeneous data overlapped to form operative grounds for design.[264]

For McHarg, ground was not a neutral support but more than a surface of information: an active field in which ecological processes and human interventions had to be negotiated.[265] The act of overlaying made visible the overlaps of terrain, environment, and design, translating them into more than a surface from which decisions could be staged.

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[261] Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938); Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961).
[262] Ibid.
[263] Ian L. McHarg, *Design with Nature* (Garden City, NY: Natural History Press, 1969).
[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid.

4.1.5 Critical and Cultural Ecologies: Platform as Relational Ground

In *The Three Ecologies*, Félix Guattari reconceives ecology not as a single external system of nature but as a constellation of co-implicated fields: environmental, social, and mental.[266] His critique is directed at established disciplines that treat ecological crises as external problems, detached from subjective and collective formations.[267]

In the translator's introduction, it is stated that:

> The objective of the new ecological practices that Guattari outlines is to 'activate isolated and repressed singularities that are turning around on themselves.' It isn't a question of exchanging one model or way of life for another, but of 'respond[ing] to the event as the potential bearer of new constellations of Universes of reference'(1995a:18).[268]

For Guattari, the ecological crisis cannot be resolved without simultaneously transforming the ways we produce subjectivity and social relations. He states that:

> Despite having recently initiated partial realization of the most obcious dangers that threaten the natural environment of our societies, they are generally content to simply tackle industrial pollution and then form a purely technocratic perspective, whereas only an ethico-political articulation – which I call ecosophy – between the three ecological registers (the

[266] Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Continuum, 2000).
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ian Pindar, "Translator's Introduction," in Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2000), 9.

> environment, social relations and human subjectivity) would be likely to clarify these questions.[269]

His formulation offers a significant framework for rethinking the architectural ground. It is considered as a site where environmental systems, social structures, and mental modes of perception converge and co-compose.

This transversal thinking directly informs platform as an earthly architectural ground which is a zone of co-articulation across environmental, institutional, and perceptual frames. In this sense, ground is never singular; it is a thick, operational medium through which architecture stages negotiation between systemic forces and lived experience.[270] Thus, ground becomes an interface which acts as a relational field.

The premise of this view also aligns with landscape urbanist James Corner's proposition that ground be understood in processual terms. In "Terra Fluxus," Corner calls for a conception of terrain that embraces change, contingency, and infrastructural complexity.[271] Guattari's environmental ecology, which is framed as a metabolic and responsive zone, provides the philosophical scaffolding to treat architectural ground as active rather than inert.

In a similar manner, Chris Reed and Nina-Marie Lister in their edited work, *Projective Ecologies*, mirrors Guattari's call for transversality. Reed and Lister propose that ground be approached through "alternative assemblages between processes and forms," refusing the fixity of form and embracing the unpredictability

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[269] Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Continuum, 2000), 27-28.
[270] Ibid., 31.
[271] James Corner, "Terra Fluxus," in *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, ed. Charles Waldheim (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 21–33.

of environmental interaction.[272] When read alongside Guattari, these assemblages take on broader institutional implications: they respond both to environmental complexity and implicate social infrastructures and mental dispositions in shaping urban space.

As Robin Dripps suggests in her perspective of ground as generative edge, "natural edges are never thin and unambiguous, but instead thick, overlapping, and even generative."[273] When architecture responds to this thickness by articulating platform not as object but as mediator, platform becomes a "deep surface": materially present, environmentally responsive, and epistemologically rich.

This reformulation also draws upon Guattari's critique of environmentalism. A purely performative or materialist view of ground risks treating terrain as a system to be managed rather than an assemblage to be inhabited and transformed. Architecture, by engaging the ground through platform, has the potential to enable this transformation. It constructs both spaces of occupation and spaces for new modes of collective and subjective life. [274] Its implications for architecture are not speculative; they emerge directly from Guattari's insistence that ethical and aesthetic transformation must proceed from an integrated reading of ecology. The earthly architectural ground, as platform, is a proposition to rethink the base of architecture as an interface: a space of entanglement and emergence where the environmental, social, and mental are rendered visible, operative, and in relation.

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[272] Chris Reed and Nina-Marie Lister, "Parallel Genealogies," in *Projective Ecologies*, ed. Chris Reed and Nina-Marie Lister (Cambridge, MA: Harvard GSD and ACTAR, 2014), 26.
[273] Robin Dripps, "Groundwork," in *Site Matters: Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies*, ed. Carol J. Burns and Andrea Kahn (New York: Routledge, 2005), 108.
[274] Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, 54–55.

4.1.6 Contemporary Turns: Platform as Material Ground

Contemporary ecological and philosophical discourses extend the vocabulary of ground into material and relational registers. Tim Ingold's writings on lines and "meshworks" that has been discussed in detail in the second chapter describe the earth not as a fixed surface but as a weave of trajectories, movements, and practices.[275] Ground becomes a "meshwork", where inhabitation is constituted through overlapping lines of dwelling and movement.

Bruno Latour positions ground as a political and ontological domain. In his writings on the terrestrial, ground is where humans, non-humans, and technologies overlap in fragile constellations of relation, a plane of entanglement that resists reduction to either nature or culture.[276] Ground becomes, in this sense, a domain of negotiation: it holds together climatic processes, infrastructural systems, and political collectives, situating architectural platform within the contested field of the "critical zone."[277] Jane Bennett, in *Vibrant Matter*, advances a materialist ecology in which matter is imbued with vitality.[278] For her, the agency of matter is not inert but vibratory, a distributed force that shapes events as much as human intention.[279] Ground, through this perspective, is not passive substrate but active participant in events: it quakes, resists, erodes, and accumulates, continually altering the conditions of dwelling. In both Latour and Bennett, the terrestrial and the material are reconfigured as active,

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[275] Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines* (London: Routledge, 2015); Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London: Routledge, 2007).
[276] Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), 77–92.
[277] Latour, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), 85–112, on the "critical zone" as a fragile stratum of terrestrial existence.
[278] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), xiii–xv, 20–38.
[279] Ibid.

relational, and affective grounds, perspectives that sharpen how platform can be conceived as a medium that both responds to and registers these vibrancies.

4.1.7 Toward a Vocabulary of Platform as Earthly Ground

From Humboldt's representational diagrams to contemporary philosophies of material vitality, ground has been repeatedly reframed as active, relational, and systemic. Each of these moments has provided concepts that sharpen how architecture might think its relation to earth. Yet the purpose of this thesis is not to trace an ecological history in itself, nor to construct a genealogy of platform. Instead, it is to draw from ecology a vocabulary of platform: a language through which ground can be read as earthly architectural ground.

This vocabulary makes it possible to see platform not as inert foundation but as constructed, represented and inhabited ground. Platform can be read as threshold and interface, as adaptive and systemic medium, as territorial stage, as layered and operative surface, as transversal and relational ground, and as material surface animated by vitality. Each of these readings points to architecture's capacity to transform earth into a condition for inhabitation.

This trajectory returns, finally, to Çatalhöyük, where raised domestic platforms articulated a spatial logic for platform. At Çatalhöyük, earth was thickened into surfaces that organized burial, ritual, production and everday life. Ground was not neutral base but constructed material, layered with life and memory. The Neolithic settlement thus anchors the argument: it demonstrates that platform has always been the condition through which earth becomes architectural, through which dwelling and collective life take shape on worked ground.

In this sense, the thesis advances not an ecological redefinition of architecture but a vocabulary of platform as earthly architectural ground. Ecology provides horizons of resonance, but the vocabulary remains architectural: grounded in construction, representation, and inhabitation. Through this vocabulary, platform emerges as a

way of reading and working earth: an operation that exposes, mediates, and transforms earth into habitable condition.

4.2 Platform as a Deep Surface

Following the unpacking of architectural ground through an ecological genealogy, platform is further traced as a deep surface. This shift is not a complete break from ecology; however, this thesis does not form an ecological perspective. Instead, it borrows from its theory to unpack platform as an earthly architectural ground. Here, platform is unpacked as part of epistemological operations of surface. The concept of "deep surface" reveals how platform articulates, what it gathers, and how it mediates. Platform, as an earthly architectural ground, becomes a surface of interaction, not just structural but expressive and generative.

Ground as discussed in the second chapter of the thesis is a conceptual and material field thick with history and affect. This part of the thesis traces the potential of platform as a "deep surface", forming a spatial and epistemological condition in which depth is distributed. Meaning is enacted through relation rather than hierarchy. In this sense, platform simultaneously operates as a "deep surface" and an articulated ground, exposing its own epistemological and operative dimensions.

This understanding is reflected in the word's etymology. Surface, from early 17th century French is the combination of French *sur* which means "above" and *face*, from Latin *facia* which means "form" or "appearance" which could be translated as "form imposed on something." [280] Then, the origin of the word is marked by exteriority as the imposition of form upon a body, a threshold that both reveals and conceals.

[280] Primary definition of the word facia is "appearance, form, figure" whereas the secondary is "visage, countenance," (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2023).

However, surface is increasingly reconceived not as a container of form but as a relational medium. It is a site of convergence where bodies, forces, histories, and systems intersect. Benjamin Blackwell writes:

> Through attempts to outline a comprehensive definition of the term 'surface' almost always appear futile, the surface is often the point at which a material or a body is able to come into contact with others: surfaces usually occur at a point at which bodies meet.[281]

Instead of a rigid definition in which surface is defined only through what is above, Blackwell offers a definition that presents a rather interactive approach. With this surface becomes a place of multiple occurrences. Another significant approach that Blackwell offers is that the surface he defines is multiple.[282] However, he refers to the term not as multiplicity but as "manyfoldedness."[283] Taking this definition together with ground and platform, it offers a range of possibilities to speculate on the nature of relationships platform forms with/within, above and below ground. Thus, a holistic approach to platform becomes possible by defining it as a deep surface that contains manifolded inter/relations.

Another approach to ground could be taken from the anthropologist Tim Ingold. In his essay, "The Earth, the Sky and the Ground in Between," in Metode's *Deep Surface*[284] issue, he dwells on two figures to draw parallels between their stand on which to comprehend the ground. One of them is James Gibson who wrote *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* and the other is Nan Shepherd, who wrote *The Living Mountain* in 1977. While Gibson views ground as an interface, Shepherd views it as a palimpsest. Even though, these two approaches do not seem to come

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[281] Benjamin Blackwell, "Deep Layers of 'Flatland': Scaling up Nanomaterials," *Metode* 1 (2023): 15.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Blackwell refers to anthropologist Annmarie Mol while introducing the term 'manyfoldedness'.
[284] First volume of Metode journal is shaped around the theme of *Deep Surface*

together, they form a coherent frame in which platform is revealed as a "deep surface". In this sense, "[f]or Gibson, it is the ground, conceived as a solid platform of support that separates the air above from the earth below."[285] In such, solid separation, what is above and below ground is only exposed through the cracks and moments which only allow certain instances to be revealed. Here, flatness which can be taken as one of the attributes of a surface becomes significant. Bernard Cache states that:

> In the flatness of the stage that make choreography probable, just as it is the flatness of the stadium that increases the probability of athletics. The ground plane rarefies the surface of the earth in order to allow human activities to take shape.[286]

Flatness, then, offers a possibility of different narratives to occur above ground. Here, flatness is an enabler of action. The architectural ground plane, even when conceptually rarefied into a grid or slab, is what allows human activities, movement, performance, conflict, to take shape. Yet this enabling flatness is not truly flat in the metaphysical sense. It is always stratified, conditioned, informed. It is "deep" not because it sinks, but because it gathers.

In this sense, the earthly architectural platform is not a form imposed on the earth, but more than a processual surface through which temporal, social, and environmental narratives are enacted. Its flatness is calibrated, not to erase earth, but to make it legible and active in a new set of relations.[287]

> Thus, in the land just as on parchment, the past is not buried under the present but actually closest to the surface, while the present, undercutting the past,

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[285] Tim Ingold, "The Earth, the Sky and the Ground in Between," *Metode* 1 (2023), 3.
[286] Cache, *Earth Moves,* 1995, 25.
[287] Op. Cit. 11-15.

> digs deepest. The past comes up as the present goes down. This is not a layering so much as a *turning over*.[288]

Platform, then, functions as a register. It records movement, memory, decay, and repair. Its surface becomes archival: not in the sense of preservation, but in the sense of ongoing inscription.

Defining ground with a metaphor of palimpsest offers a depth that embody inter/relations in different layers and scales. When defined as such, platform offers a possibility for architecture to relate to ground in multiple scales and layers such as infrastructural, environmental, social, and cultural. It is also parallel with the shift to the concept of ground as a continuous horizontal surface. This allows city's operative ground to be formed in relation to different levels and scales that define an infrastructural system.[289]

Platform as deep surface thus reconciles the scalar gap between the intimate and the infrastructural. It enables relations between the local and the systemic, enabling architecture to articulate urban space through continuity, rhythm, and responsiveness.[290]

4.2.1 Deep Surface and Affective Materiality

Giuliana Bruno's *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* confronts the historical privileging of depth over surface in both philosophy and architecture. Through a feminist and materialist reading, she proposes surface to be not superficial but saturated with emotion, memory, and cultural inscription. She states that:

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[288] Ibid., 25.
[289] Ayşen Savaş et al., "Projecting the Deep Ground," *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 17, no. 3 (2022): 8.
[290] Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (London: Verso, 2014), 94–97.

> The surface is here configured as an architecture: a partition that can be shared, it is explored as a primary form of habitation for the material world. Understood as the material configuration of the relation between subjects and with objects, the surface is also viewed as a site of mediation and projection. By developing this particular theoretical architecture, I thus wish to make a turn in visual studies that can vitalize the surfaces that clothe the material of our objects.[291]

Bruno argues that the tactile and visual dimensions of surfaces, such as walls, façades, textiles, platform pavements, and plinth edges carry within them the traces of embodied experience and aesthetic meaning.

Bruno's theory of surface as sensorial architecture shifts attention from the structural to the affective domain. Surface, in her reading, is the activation of sensation. It is where touch, memory, and atmosphere meet. This view enables a theory of platform as an interface of affective exchange: a public and collective medium of use and presence.[292]

Bruno's theory of surface insists that thickness is a phenomenological one. Her surface is layered with haptic history, just as a platform is walked upon, marked, and inhabited.[293] Platform, as an earthly architectural ground, embodies this thickened surface. It is not only built upon but dwelt in. It records the pressures of bodies, the repetition of rituals, the traces of time.

Architecture, for Bruno, should move beyond the skin/depth binary and embrace the surface as a "spatial screen," a place of affective projection and material

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[291] Giuliana Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 3.
[292] Ibid. 23-27.
[293] Ibid., 30-34.

accumulation.[294] This conception of surface resonates with earlier discussions of platform as "deep surface". In this affective register, through scratches, stains, steps, and shadows, platform does not carry depth in opposition to surface but manifests depth. It is through these contacts that platform becomes a memory surface,[295] a spatial medium that stores experience.

In this view, platform becomes an instantiation of the "deep surface": an interface that connects, stores, and mediates affective spatiality. Platform is inscribed upon: inhabited and remembered. Thus, platform acts not only as a spatial condition but also as an affective ground that mediates the encounter between body and space, repetition and rupture. It is where atmosphere and intention converge, where temporality is sedimented into materiality.

4.2.2 Platform as Operative Ground

Platform offers a spatial construct through which the categories of ground and surface are collapsed and reconstituted. Neither skin nor foundation, platform functions as an operative ground, a material and conceptual element that organizes architectural relationships. In this sense, platform mediates between the tectonic and the territorial, the formal and the structural. As Stan Allen has suggested, architectural systems today must perform not only through form-making but also through operative strategies of organization, sequencing, modulation.[296] Thus, platform is not a background condition but a projective element which structures how space unfolds in time and through use. Unlike the "ground-as-terrain" or the

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[294] Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (New York: Verso, 2002), 242–248.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Stan Allen, *Points + Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 24–25.

"surface-as-envelope", platform is both figure and field, establishing architectural presence while simultaneously enabling spatial action.

As a field condition, platform generates gradients, edges, and densities without relying on discrete object-forms. It becomes a field of potentiality, open, repeatable, adaptive.[297] This is evident in the way platforms function not only physically but symbolically. They are instruments of hierarchy (through elevation), of ritual (through sequencing), and of abstraction (through repetition). Elevation produces conditions of visibility and gathering. Repetition, whether modular or topographic, gives rise to rhythm, ceremony, and scalar perception. As such, platforms are neither purely structural nor purely representational. They are more than surfaces, thickened to hold both use and institutional codes. Their depth is both excavated and layered, a compositional and experiential construct that simultaneously holds space and reflects the systems that shape it.

This layered depth gives platform its operative capacity. It holds climate and occupation, circulation and memory, all within a single architectural medium. Its horizontal orientation allows it to function as a medium rather than a container. It becomes a ground that gives form to indeterminacy, through responsiveness. [298]

4.3 Çatalhöyük as an Earthly Architectural Ground

Ian Hodder, in *The Leopard's Tale* states that:

> Before the current project started excavating houses in 1995 I rather assumed that we would just dig down and find complete houses rather like those in

[297] Stan Allen, "Field Conditions," in *Points + Lines*, 92–99.
[298] Keller Easterling, *Medium Design: Knowing How to Work on the World* (London: Verso, 2021), 67–72.

> Mellaart's reconstructions. But in fact what we found was very different. Rather than static things we found processes.[299]

His statement becomes significant to read Çatalhöyük a process in which was always in becoming. Everyday life was accumulated on the ground of the settlement. Platforms accumulated depth through the ancestry. Rebuildings were carefully made in relation to strong ancestral lines.

In this sense, Çatalhöyük makes explicit what the chapter has argued throughout: that platform is not merely a technical element of construction but an earthly architectural ground through which life, death, memory, and ritual are staged. The domestic platforms of the settlement condensed multiple operations at once. They articulated ground within the house by leveling, raising, and thickening earthen surfaces into distinct zones of use. They mediated between systems of life and death, accommodating the co-presence of hearth and burial, work and commemoration. They enabled inhabitation by organizing access through ladders, rooftop circulation, and carefully repeated sequences of space.

> Another way in which divisions were represented in this building is in the platforms of different heights and the impressions of matting covering the floors. The matting appears to show a spatial hierarchy, which ranges from very fine matting, through fine matting and coarse matting to no matting, where baskets or 'coiled' coasters were placed.[300]

The stratigraphic thickness of Çatalhöyük's platforms embodies "deep surface." Each new layer of plaster, each rebuild, and each infill contributed not to erasure but to accumulation: platform that carried memory forward while grounding new acts of dwelling. This depth was not vertical alone but distributed horizontally, across

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[299] Ian Hodder, *The Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Çatalhöyük* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 139.
[300] Ian Hodder, *The Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Çatalhöyük* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 119.

thresholds and sequences, as matting and surface treatment articulated hierarchies of movement, gathering, and ritual. In this way, platform at Çatalhöyük embodies the epistemological register of ground as both archive and interface: simultaneously a record of ancestral continuity and a medium for everyday inhabitation. This is also evident in the stratigraphic section (figure 4.2) in which each rebuild creates its own layers.

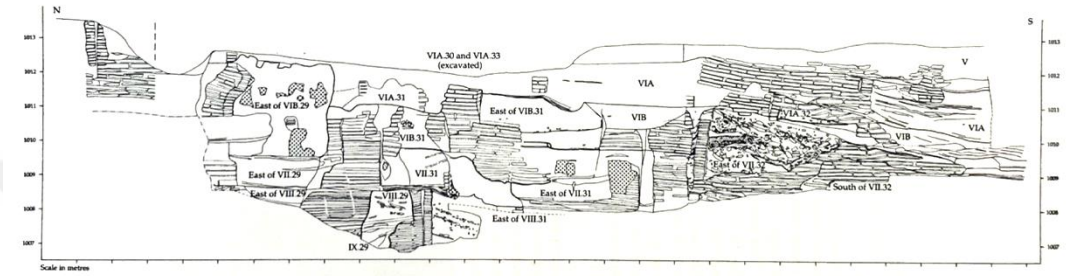


Figure 4.2. Stratigraphic Section of Çatalhöyük (Matthews and Farid 1996)

The evidence of matting impressions further demonstrates how platform itself became a site of differentiation and meaning. The gradations from fine to coarse matting mapped distinctions of value and ritual intensity onto the floor, marking subtle thresholds that ordered daily activities. These impressions inscribed use directly into the material ground, making platform a register of lived practice. Here, the surface of platform operates as Bruno describes: not superficial but saturated, bearing tactile traces that transform ground into a shared memory screen.

In Hodder's words: "[i]ndeed, Çatalhöyük is as much a cemetery as a settlement. It is as much a ritual centre as a centre of production."[301] Reading Çatalhöyük through this frame brings the thesis full circle. What appears archaeologically as a Neolithic settlement can also be understood theoretically as an early manifestation of platform as earthly architectural ground. The settlement's domestic spaces demonstrate how

[301] Ian Hodder, *The Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Çatalhöyük* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 99.

ground is never neutral: it is thickened, inscribed, and continually re-activated. Through repetitive construction and inhabitation, the community generated a "deep surface" that held together burial, ritual, and production, articulating an architectural order inseparable from the earth itself. In this sense, Çatalhöyük does not simply illustrate the argument; it anchors it, showing how platform has long mediated between inherited earth and inhabitation, between earth's resistant materiality and the symbolic orders that shape collective life.

In relation to the wider framework of the thesis, Çatalhöyük anchors the proposition that platform is always an earthly architectural ground. Where earlier sections traced ecological concepts of threshold, interface, layering, and meshwork, the Neolithic settlement demonstrates their spatial and material realization. Where the discussion of "deep surface" emphasized the convergence of material and perceptual layers, Çatalhöyük provides a historical instance in which such convergence is tangible: platforms marked by matting, stratified by burial, and reactivated through repetition. And where the epistemological turn recast platform as a drawing made material, the settlement shows precisely this: lines traced in plan, burial, hearth, ladder, threshold, translated into the thickness of earth and the rhythm of daily life.

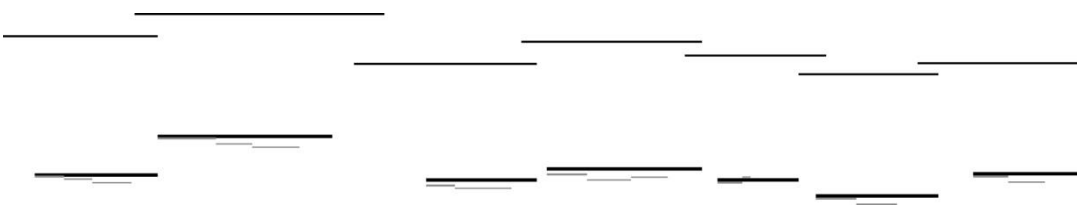


Figure 4.3. Partial Diagramatic Site Section of Çatalhöyük's Level V (produced by the author)

Thus, Çatalhöyük does not merely provide archaeological evidence but crystallizes the theoretical argument of both the chapter and the thesis. Its platforms embody the threefold operation: articulation, mediation, inhabitation; that has guided this inquiry. They articulate ground through construction, mediate between life and death, interior and exterior, roof and floor, and enable inhabitation by structuring movement, ritual, and memory. In doing so, Çatalhöyük discloses platform as an

earthly architectural ground: not a base upon which architecture is added, but a deep, operative medium in which architecture and earth are co-constituted.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The question that orients this thesis from the outset is deceptively simple yet conceptually dense: "what does it mean for platform to be understood as an earthly architectural ground?" At its most basic, platform is, as Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara defines it, "a raised level surface."[302] This definition may appear technical or descriptive, but it already exposes the stakes of the problem: to raise and to level is never a neutral act. It is an intervention into the most essential datum of existence, the ground, transforming irregular terrain into more than a surface of use, orientation, and visibility. In this sense, even in its simplest form, platform is both a spatial and theoretical operation. It reveals that earth must be worked, shaped, and rearticulated before architecture can take place and in turn, earth forms the ground of architecture.

By foregrounding Aureli's definition at the threshold of this conclusion, platform is immediately situated within its dual register: as more than a surface physically produced through cuts, fills, and levels, and as a condition that orders the possibilities of inhabitation. What may initially appear as a straightforward "raised level surface"[303] thus unfolds into an architectural element that mediates between earth and form, between ground and collective life. The very act of raising introduces separation and visibility, while the act of leveling introduces continuity and stability.

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[302] Pier Vittorio Aureli and Martino Tattara, *Platforms: Architecture and the Use of the Ground* (Milan: Black Square, 2021), chap. "Platforms: Architecture and the Use of the Ground," 4.
[303] Ibid.

Together they define platform as the ground upon which architecture not only stands but comes into being.

From this recognition, the thesis unfolds by situating platform not as a neutral support or technical base, but as a spatial and epistemological element that shapes how architecture grounds itself in relation to earth, representation, and inhabitation. What emerges is the proposition that ground is never given; it is constructed, articulated, and mediated through architectural operations. Within this framework, platform becomes the element through which these operations are condensed: at once material and representational, concrete and symbolic, spatial and conceptual.

The trajectory traced across the chapters: "Ground," "Platform as an Architectural Ground," and "Platform as an Earthly Architectural Ground," produces a framework for approaching architecture as a practice of grounding. Chapter 2, "Ground," redefines ground as an active and constructed condition. It is not a mute surface awaiting building, but a medium produced through cultural, material, and representational practices. Plans, maps, and sections make ground operative by projecting datums and grids, while canonical treatises from Vitruvius to Palladio grapple with the instability of terrain through podiums, levelings, and orchestrated approaches. The chapter establishes that representation itself is a form of ground-making, aligning with Latour's notion of terrestrial entanglement and Bennett's material vitality. Ground appears as relational, contested, and already mediated.

Chapter 3, "Platform as an Architectural Ground," develops this claim through a sequence of situated examples. Beginning with Çatalhöyük, where houses form a continuous surface of compacted mudbrick, architecture and ground merge into one inhabited platform. Domestic platforms organize life and death simultaneously: leveled for everyday use, cut and filled for burials, and stepped as thresholds of movement. Here platform is material, institutional, and symbolic at once. From this origin, the chapter traces platform's recurrent role in stabilizing and staging collective life, whether in Mies's plinths, van Eyck's playgrounds, or Serlio's

scenographies. At the scale of the city, the grid extends platform into a territorial order, while Superstudio and Archizoom radicalize it into abstraction. Across these instances, platform is revealed not as a typology but as a persistent operation that mediates between irregular terrain and ordered form. Yet, as Aureli and Tattara states, "it is precisely the subtleness of platform as a space that manipulates the most essential datum of existence – the ground – that makes this type of architecture an ambivalent form that both enables and restricts what happens upon it."[304] This ambivalence is central to the thesis. Platform renders ground inhabitable, but in doing so it also inscribes order, measure, and control. It generates the very possibility of collective life while delimiting its conditions.

Chapter 4, "Platform as an Earthly Architectural Ground," extends this argument into ecological and material registers. From Humboldt's diagrams to Darwin, Haeckel, and Olmsted, ground is articulated as adaptive and social. Systems ecology reframes it as a dynamic field of flows, while environmental and cultural turns expose its political and representational stakes. Contemporary approaches foreground operations: cutting, filling, leveling, paving; through which ground is materially worked and inhabited. This leads to the concept of deep surface, where platform is understood not as thin support but as layered mediation between geological strata, institutional orders, and cultural forms.

Together these chapters form a continuous argument. Chapter 2 establishes that ground is never given but always constructed. Chapter 3 shows that platform is the architectural element through which this construction takes form, beginning with Çatalhöyük and extending across scales from domestic to urban to speculative. Chapter 4 situates platform within broader ecological and material systems, revealing it as the means by which earth is thickened into inhabitable surface. The interrelation lies in their progression: from conceptual groundwork (ground as

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[304] Ibid.

active) to architectural articulation (platform as mediator), to depth (platform as earthly ground). Each chapter builds upon the previous, and thus, platform emerges as an earthly architectural ground: an element that makes earth inhabitable, relational, and representational. It does not conceal ground but renders it operative, revealing its depth, its processes, and its possibilities for inhabitation.

This thesis advances the proposition that platform is one of architecture's fundamental elements: the means through which architecture constructs its relation to earth. "Platform as an earthly architectural ground" displaces the notion that ground is ever given, passive, or singular. Ground is always constructed, worked, and mediated, and platform is the operation that makes this mediation spatial, material, and symbolic.

The argument developed across the chapters shows that platform transforms how ground is conceived. Ground is not simply the site where architecture takes place but is itself produced through architectural acts. Cutting, leveling, stepping, and paving do not merely prepare earth; they make it legible and inhabitable. In this sense, platform does not follow ground: it generates ground. Architecture begins with this act of generation, with the transformation of earth into more than a surface that supports, organizes, and presents collective life.

This transformation redefines ground in three interrelated ways. First, ground is not understood as given but as constructed. The compacted platforms of Çatalhöyük, the plinths of Mies, and the speculative surfaces of Superstudio each reveal that ground is the outcome of material and symbolic labor. Second, ground is not thin or flat but deep. It holds strata of soil and history, layers of representation and institution, and accumulations of cultural meaning. Platform engages this depth, making it visible and operative. Third, ground is not inert but relational. It emerges as a condition shaped by ecological processes, social institutions, and symbolic orders. Platform is the element that mediates among these registers, condensing them into inhabitable ground.

The epistemological claim of the thesis follows from this redefinition. Platform is not simply a thing built; it is a way of knowing and producing architecture. It operates as both interface and threshold. As interface, platform connects heterogeneous systems, environmental, material, institutional; so that they can interact and hold together. As threshold, platform stages passages between domains, inside and outside, earth and architecture. In both roles, platform makes visible that architecture is not erected upon earth as if from outside it but is embedded in processes of negotiation and mediation.

The thesis, thus, advances toward a vocabulary of operations that define platform as earthly architectural ground. At the core of this vocabulary stand interface and threshold, through which platform mediates between earth and architecture, material and representation, collective life and individual inhabitation. As interface, platform brings heterogeneous systems into contact, making visible the overlap of environmental processes, material interventions, and institutional structures. As threshold, platform organizes conditions of passage and transition, structuring moments of negotiation between domains, inside and outside, private and public, earth and architecture. Within these two primary dimensions, other operations such as cutting, filling, leveling, stepping, paving, and framing are situated as specific ways in which interface and threshold are realized. Cutting reveals depth and produces edges that take on threshold-like qualities. Filling generates continuity that enables new interfaces between terrains. Leveling creates shared datums through which thresholds are measured. Stepping articulates sequences of transition. Paving renders surfaces legible, extending interfaces into patterns of occupation. Framing establishes orientation, inscribing thresholds of vision and symbolic order. Together, these operations condense the role of platform as an earthly architectural ground: not a neutral base but an active mediation that translates earth into inhabitable surface and makes ground operative.

From this perspective, plan, surface, and ground converge in platform. The drawn plan is projected onto earth; platform materializes its lines into thresholds, axes, and

sequences; surface theory reveals its affective and symbolic depth. In platform, these dimensions are not separate but coextensive: representation, materiality, and inhabitation intersect in a single operation. Platform thus stands as an epistemological element, showing that to draw, to build, and to dwell are inseparable acts of grounding.

The architectural stakes of this argument are significant. By rethinking platform as ground, the thesis offers a new way of reading architectural history: as a series of negotiations with ground. From the early instance Çatalhöyük's spatial logic, architecture can be understood as a practice of making ground through platform. It also reshapes design thinking in the present. To design platform is to engage earth as material and institution, to frame the depth of surface, and to open possibilities of inhabitation that are both symbolic and practical.

In this sense, the contribution of this thesis lies in repositioning ground at the center of architectural theory. Platform is an active operation of grounding through which it becomes architecture. To theorize platform as an earthly architectural ground is to affirm that architecture does not simply rise from earth but constructs its very possibility. It is to recognize that every architectural act, whether leveling a floor, raising a plinth, or extending a grid, is already an act of ground-making.

By advancing the concept of platform as an earthly architectural ground, this thesis redefines how architecture is understood in relation to earth. Platform is not an element added to form but an element that makes ground operative. It constructs surfaces of inhabitation, organizes institutions of collective life, and mediates between environment and representation. Through its operations, ground is revealed as constructed, deep, and relational. However, this theorization can be and need to be further expanded through a socio-political stance. In order for architecture to become earthly and move beyond this theoretical stance it must also recognize the concrete relationships of labor, distribution of land and capital accumulation inherent in physicality of architectural ground.

The argument developed across these chapters demonstrates that architecture begins not with walls or roofs but with the making of ground. From Çatalhöyük to the urban grid, from the scenographic stage to radical projections, and from ecological genealogies to deep surfaces, platform consistently appears as the medium through which earth becomes architecture.

To theorize platform as an earthly architectural ground is therefore to affirm that architecture is inseparable from the processes of grounding. Every cut, every level, every step, every threshold is already an architectural act that constructs the earth as inhabitable. Platform, as the element that condenses these operations, reveals that architecture does not simply occupy earth but actively composes ground.

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