

**A PLACE IN THE CITY
TO CELEBRATE THE CYCLES OF NATURE**


by


Juan del Alamo

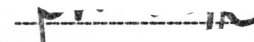
Thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

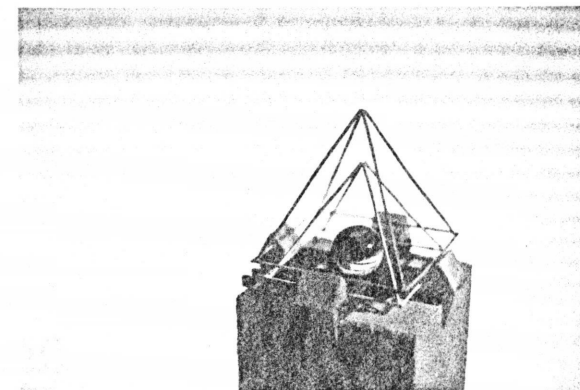
MASTERS OF ARCHITECTURE

APPROVED:


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Blacksburg, Virginia

Abstract

A Place in the City to Celebrate the Cycles of Nature

I live in a place out of balance, surrounded by a society based on youth and a climate-controlled 68 degrees. The cities are one of extreme scales and of a homogenous nature. The Seasons pass by with no clue except for maybe a change in our wardrobes. The social side of our human condition presses itself on us until our individuality is crushed or until we go numb. Alternatively we can spiral into our uniqueness while growing more and more delinquent of the responsibility owed to the whole. Corporate Icon Skyscrapers, Oppressive Anonymous Housing Blocks, and MacDonal Kings will continue to exist and are not necessarily evil in and of themselves, but they must be balanced out with portals back to our souls and doorways out of the profane and into the sacred.

Statement of Intent

Our cities, in their present state, can be seen to correspond to the mythical model of chaos: the condition of undifferentiated formless modality. Through an act of will we can recreate the center and regenerate our ties to the greater whole of which we are part: nature.

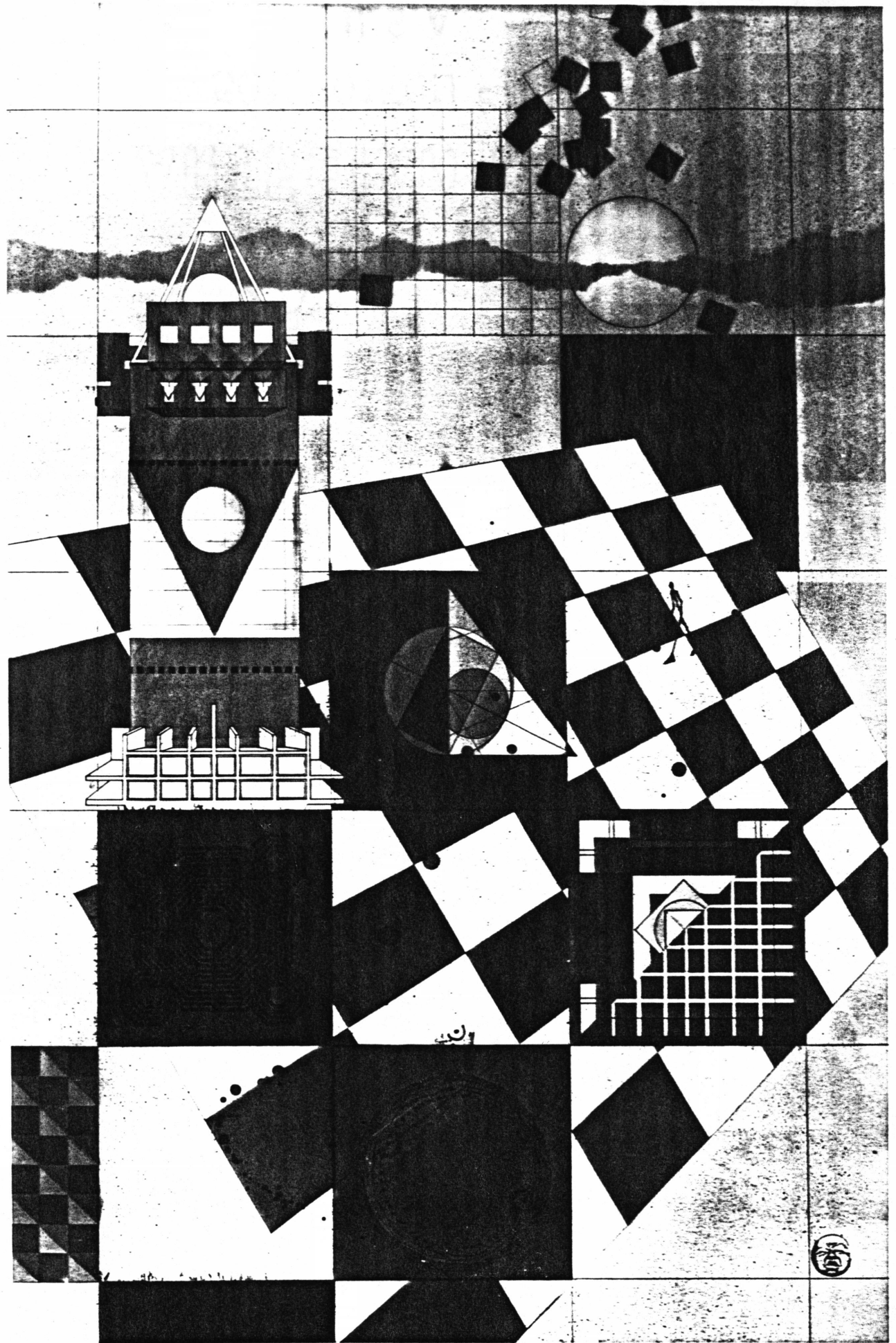
The object of this project is to create a microcosm that through the observation and experience of calculated phenomenas, recreates the link between an individual and the macrocosm of nature.

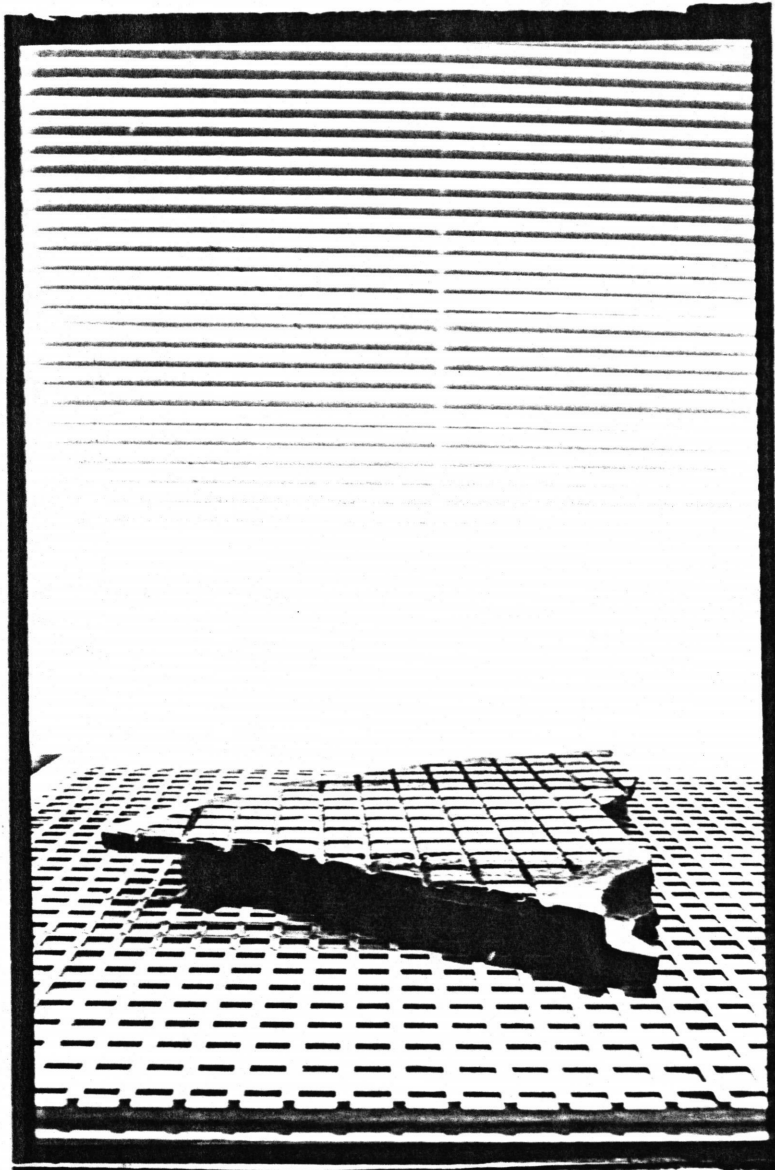
If the world is to be lived in, it must be founded — and no world can come to birth in the chaos of the homogeneity and relativity of profane space"

Mircea Eliade

The Sacred and The Profane

NEW
COS. 12/15/68
EVIDENCE
MAY 1968





Acknowledgments

to _____ for creating the structure

Dedicated to _____, with a thank you to my parents

Experience A: Architecture as Icon

_____ would lecture on the origins of architecture with a group of bricks on the podium. One brick would be moved to the edge and as he would pause in his speech and pivot the brick upward, sometimes the brick would fall over but more often the brick would rock itself erect; and at this moment would it be transformed into a marble obelisk on the banks of the Nile.

Experience B : Architecture as Space.

Lighting a match in Blacksburg's wind was never easy, yet the act of huddling together and cupping our hands around the flame would usually keep it alive.

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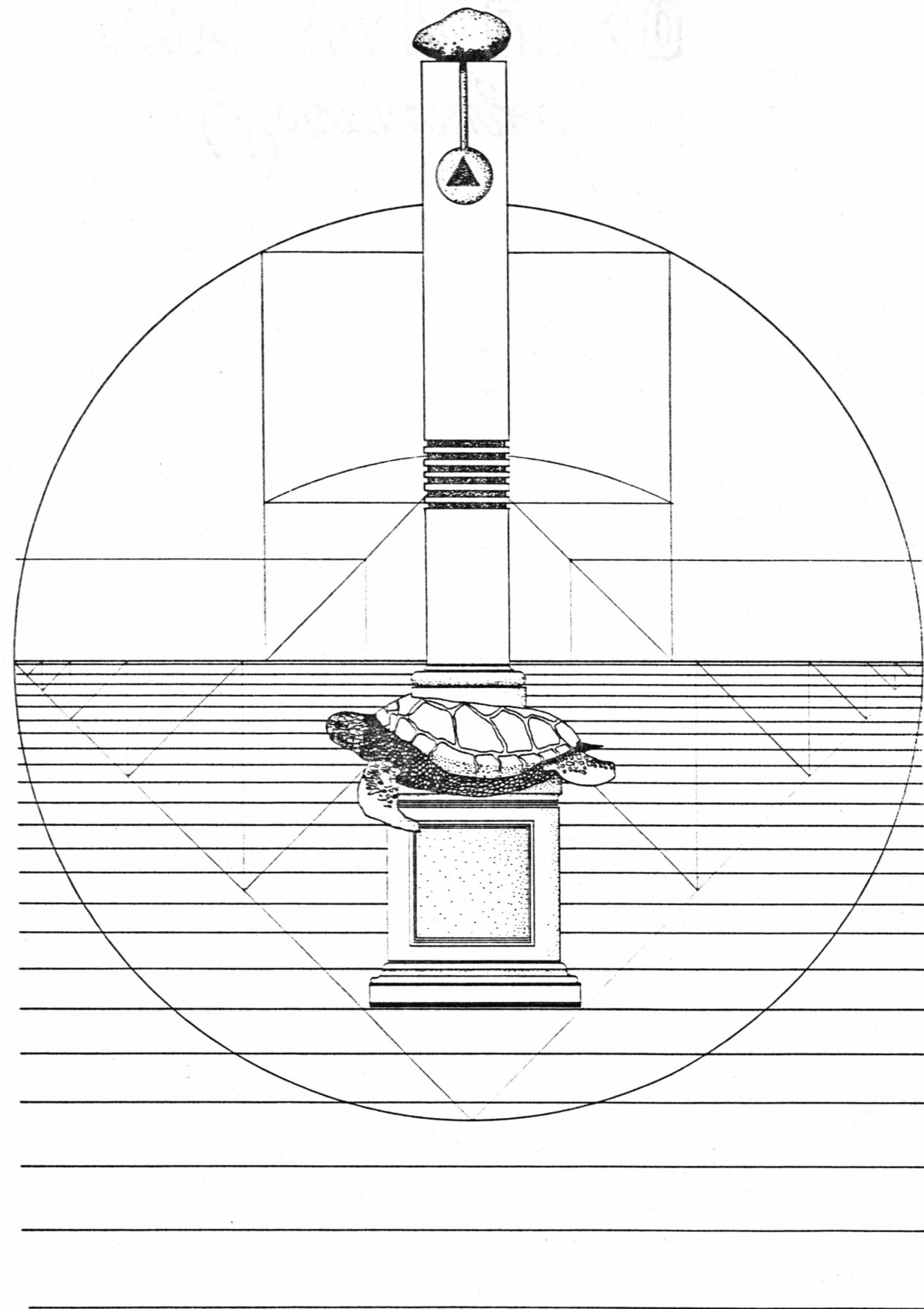
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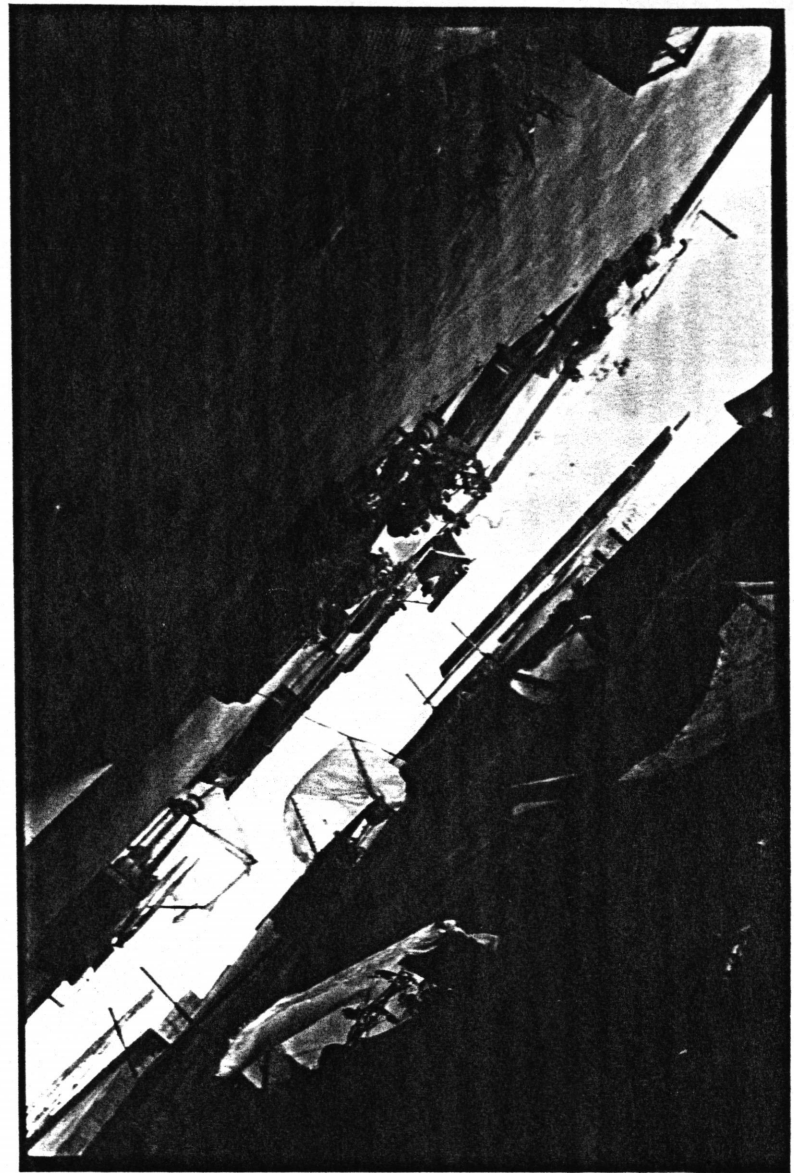
Introduction

"It is a particular 'modern' view that treats the metaphysical factors of human existence as hermetically sealed from the physical, and is part of the contemporary habit of compartmentalizing or atomizing human experience and activity ...the metaphysical not only permeates the physical but is the 'cause' and 'maintainer' of the physical"

Time Stands Still

Keith Critchow

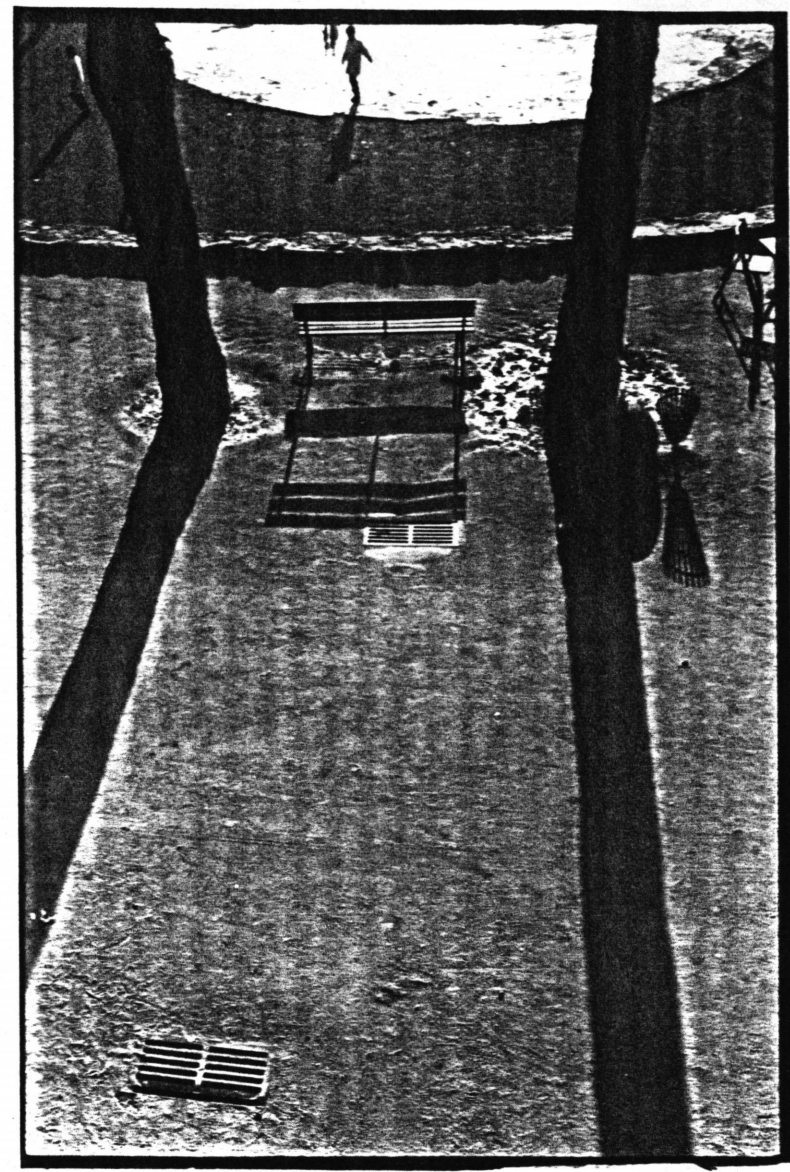




"... visually things are not located in an independently existing space, but that space, rather, is a quality or relationship of things and has no existence without them."

William M Ivins

Art and Geometry



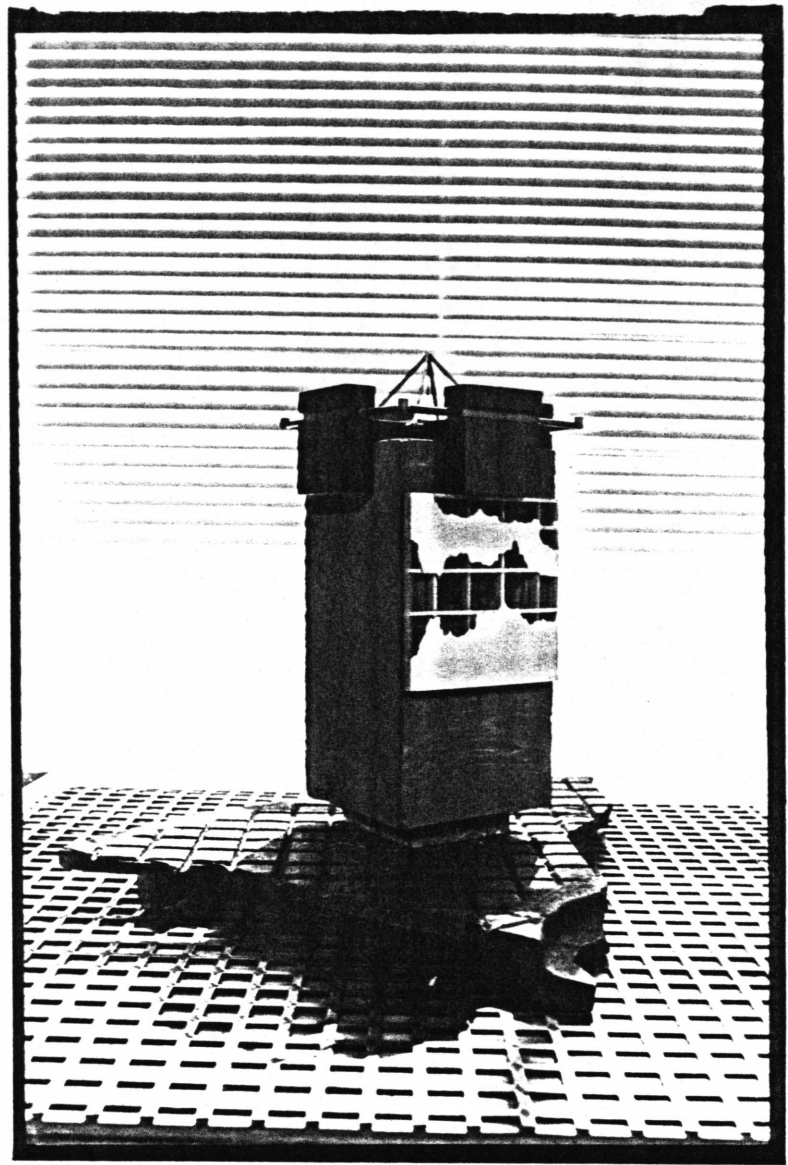
"... Attaining the center is equivalent to a consecration, an initiation; yesterday's profane and illusory existence gives place to a new, to a life that is real, enduring, and effective."

"... nothing can endure if it is not "animated", if it is not, through a sacrifice, endowed with a "soul"; the prototype of the construction rite is the sacrifice that took place at the foundation of the world..."

"... the consecration of the center occurs in a space qualitatively different from profane space. Through the paradox of rite, every consecrated space coincides with the center of the world, just as the time of any ritual coincides with the mythical time of the "beginning"..."

Mircea Eliade

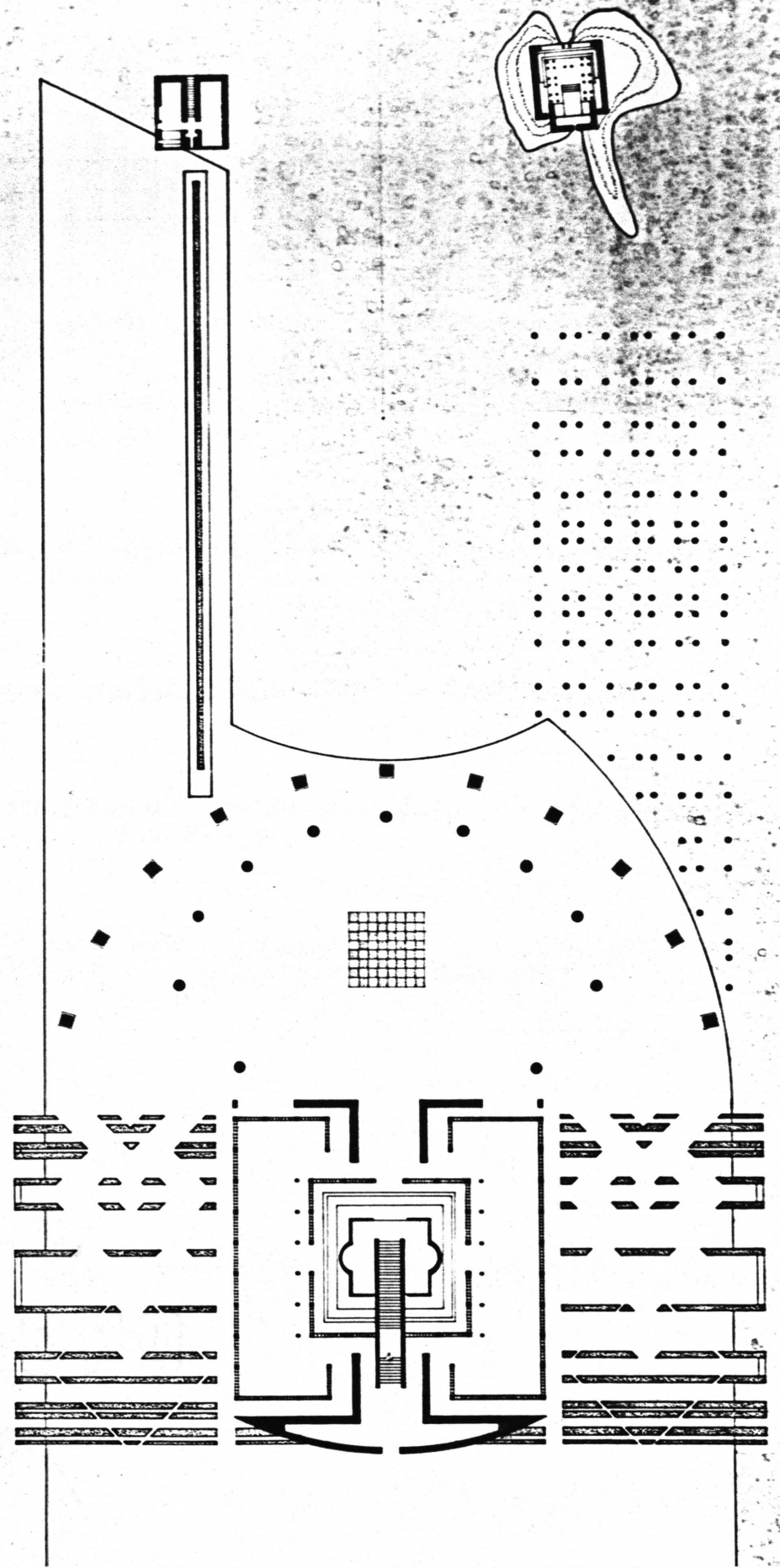
The Myth of the Eternal Return



"What a people has no symbolism for, it can neither think about nor express."

William M Ivins

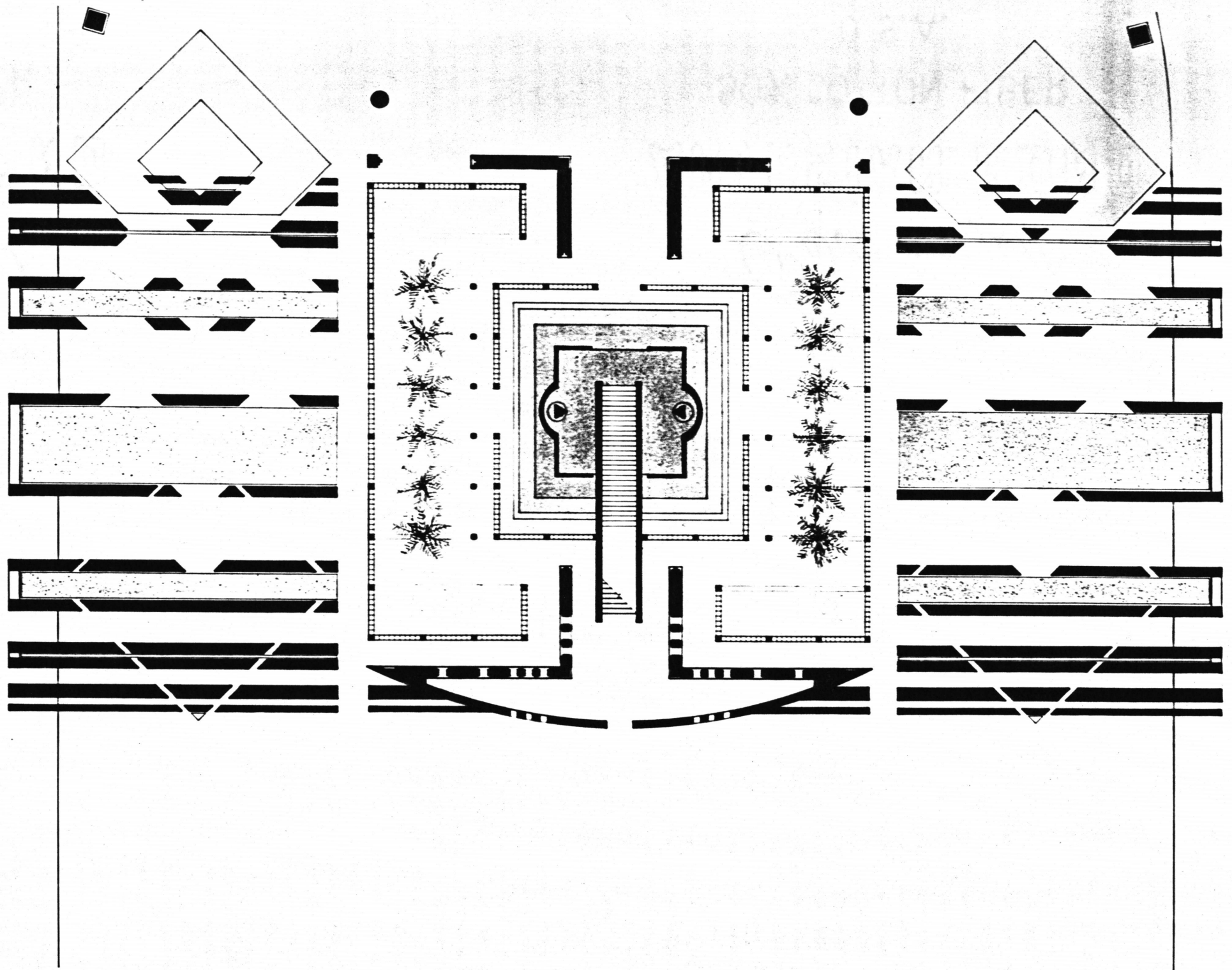
Art and Geometry

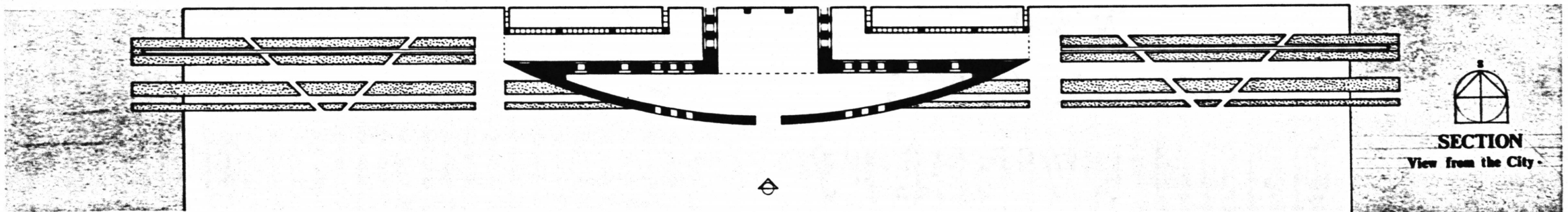
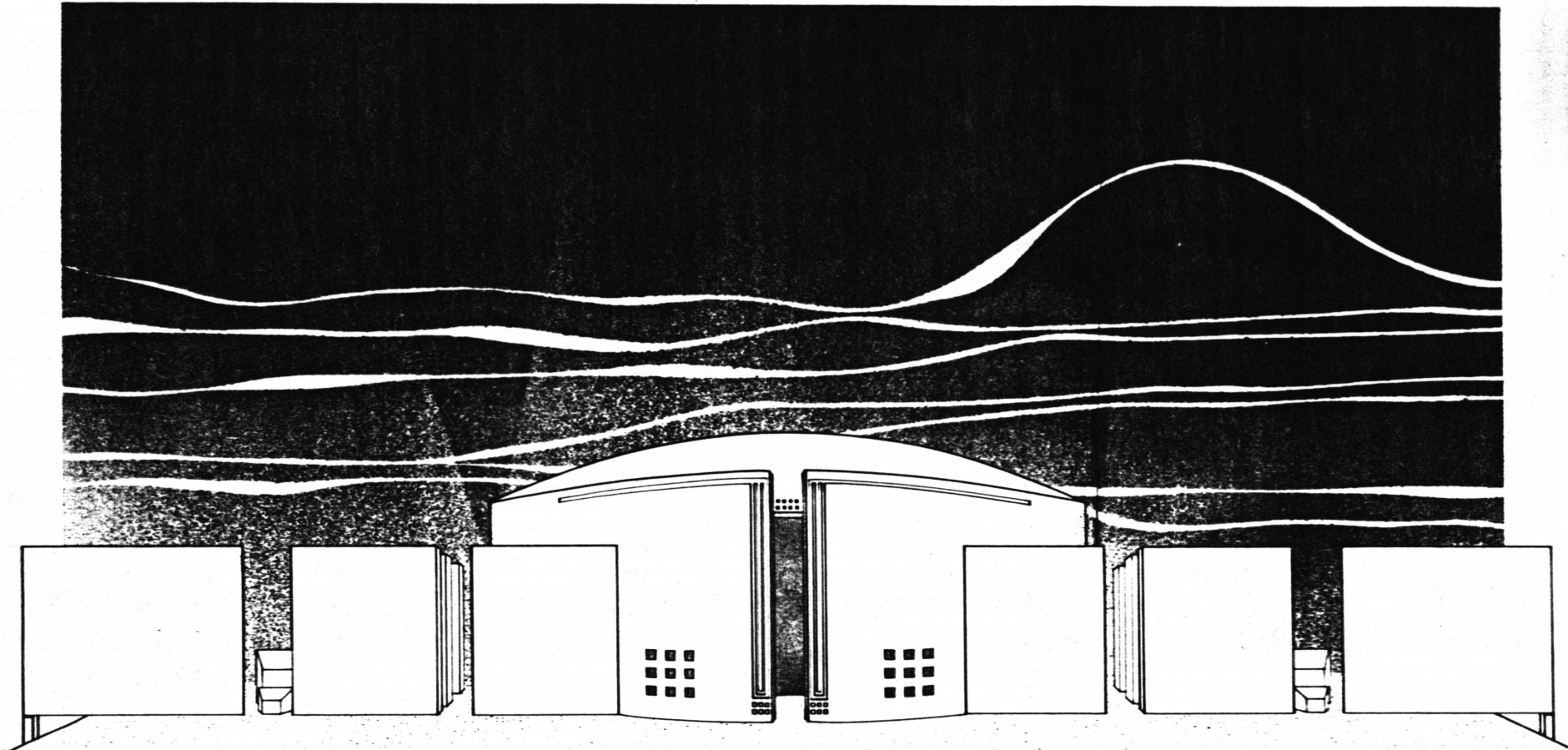


The Vestibule and the Walls of Purification

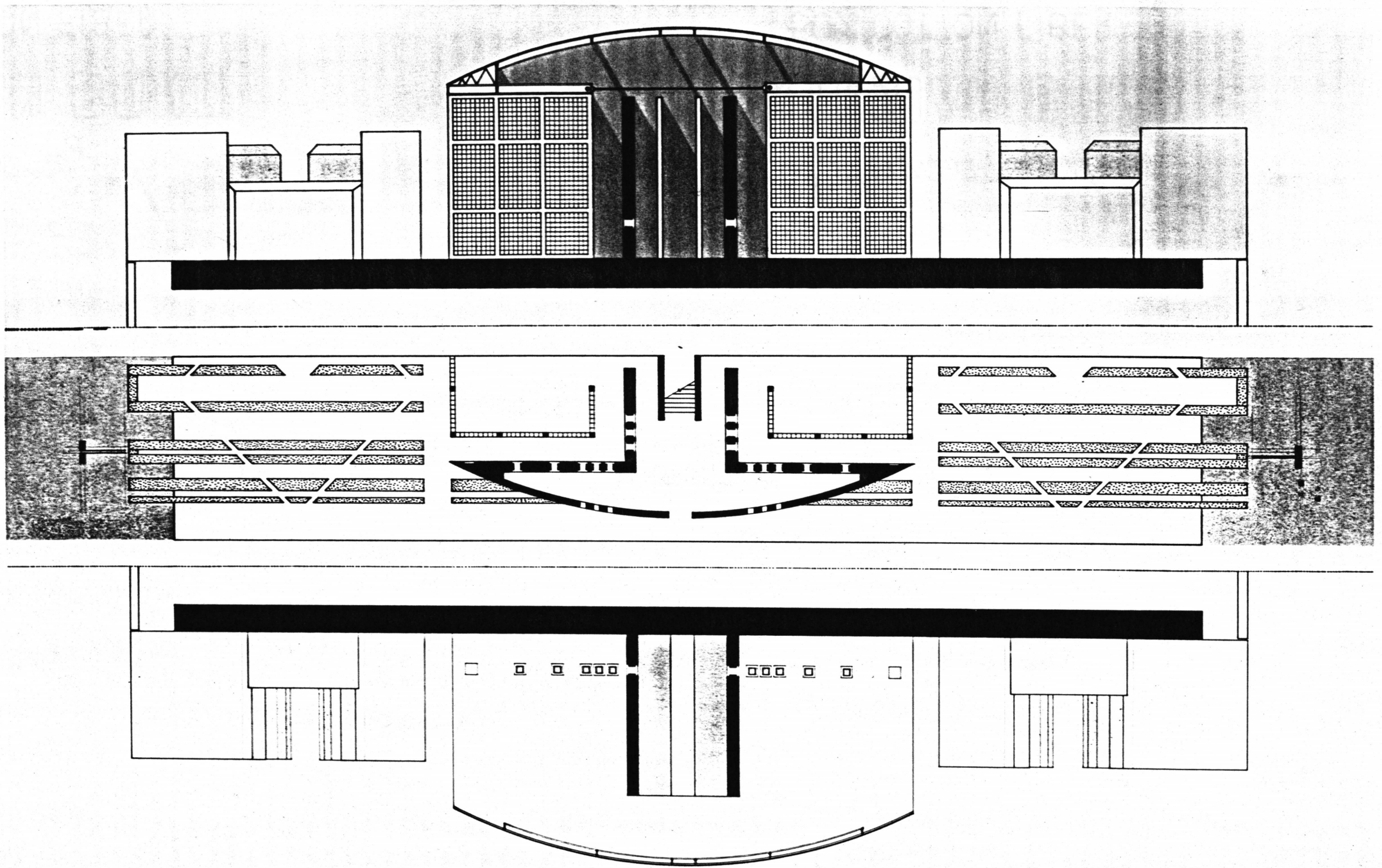
The temple offers a barrier to the city; from between walls of dark granite a marble curve projects as one approaches, the portals of entry become apparent. A decision must be made as to which to choose.

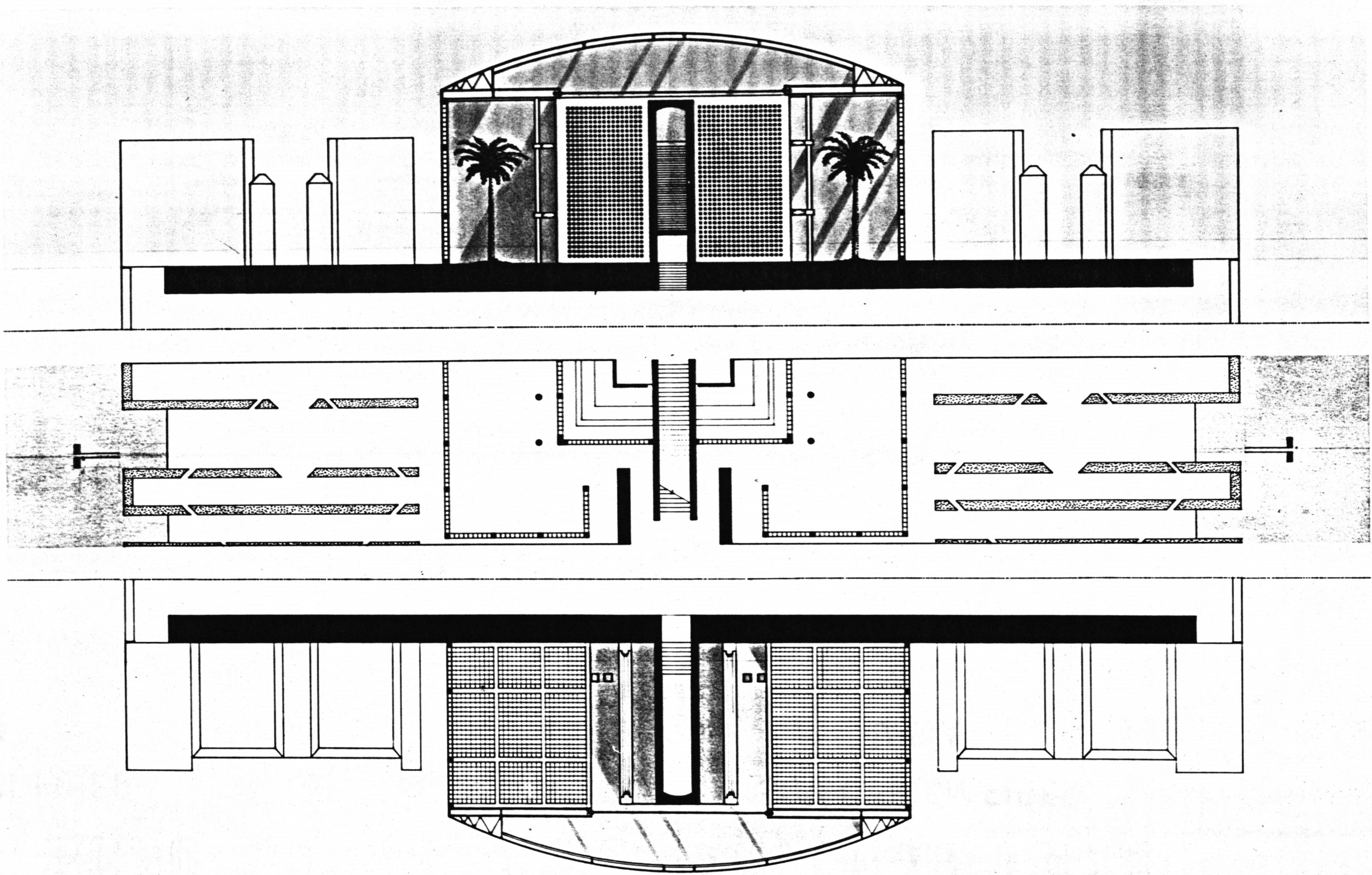
The center portal, a slit in the marble, leads one through a network of spaces where one is always between two walls of different natures. At the center of the labyrinth there is access to the sky if approaching from the north, and to the sea if approaching from the south. The East and West corridors lead one parallel to the glass block walls of the vestibule and progress perpendicular to a series of parallel granite walls that enclose alternating court yards of marble or sea gravel and moss. Progressing south the walls begin to enclose less and open up to views of the plaza and temples beyond.

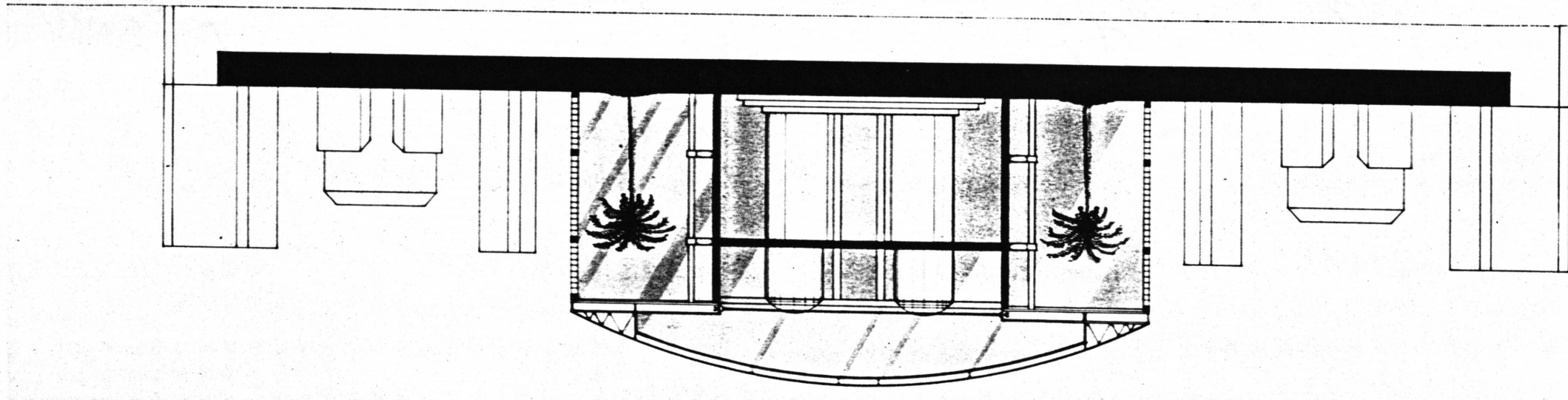
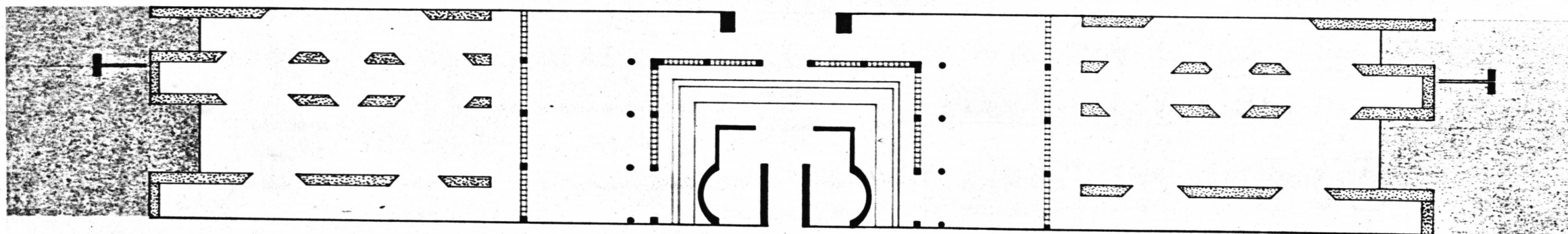
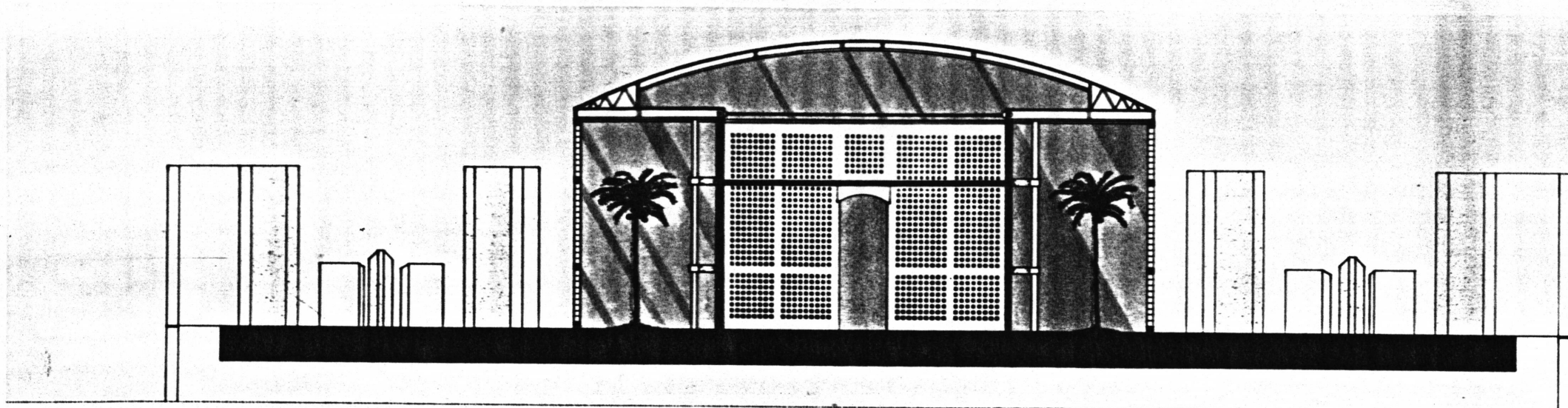


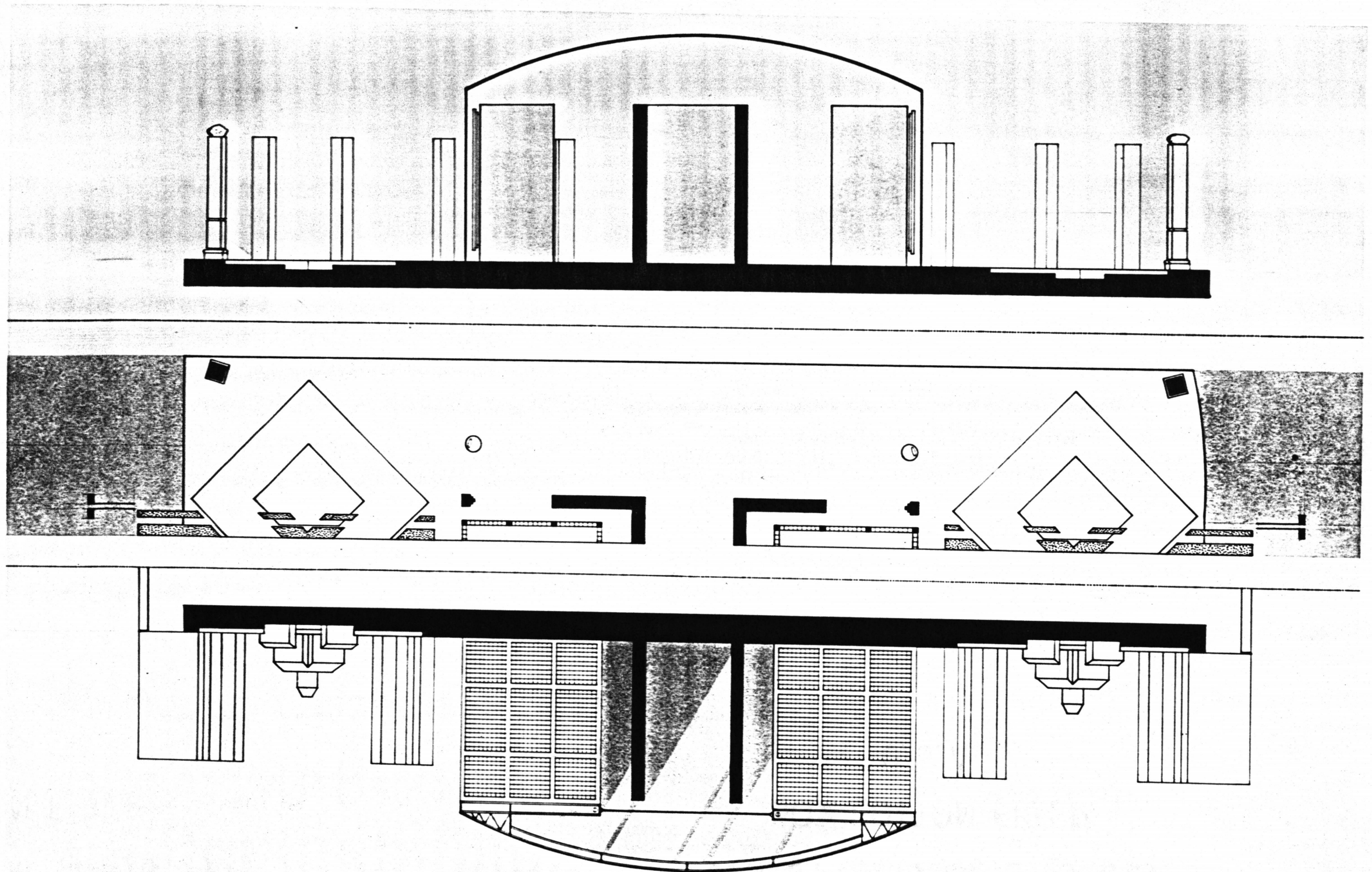


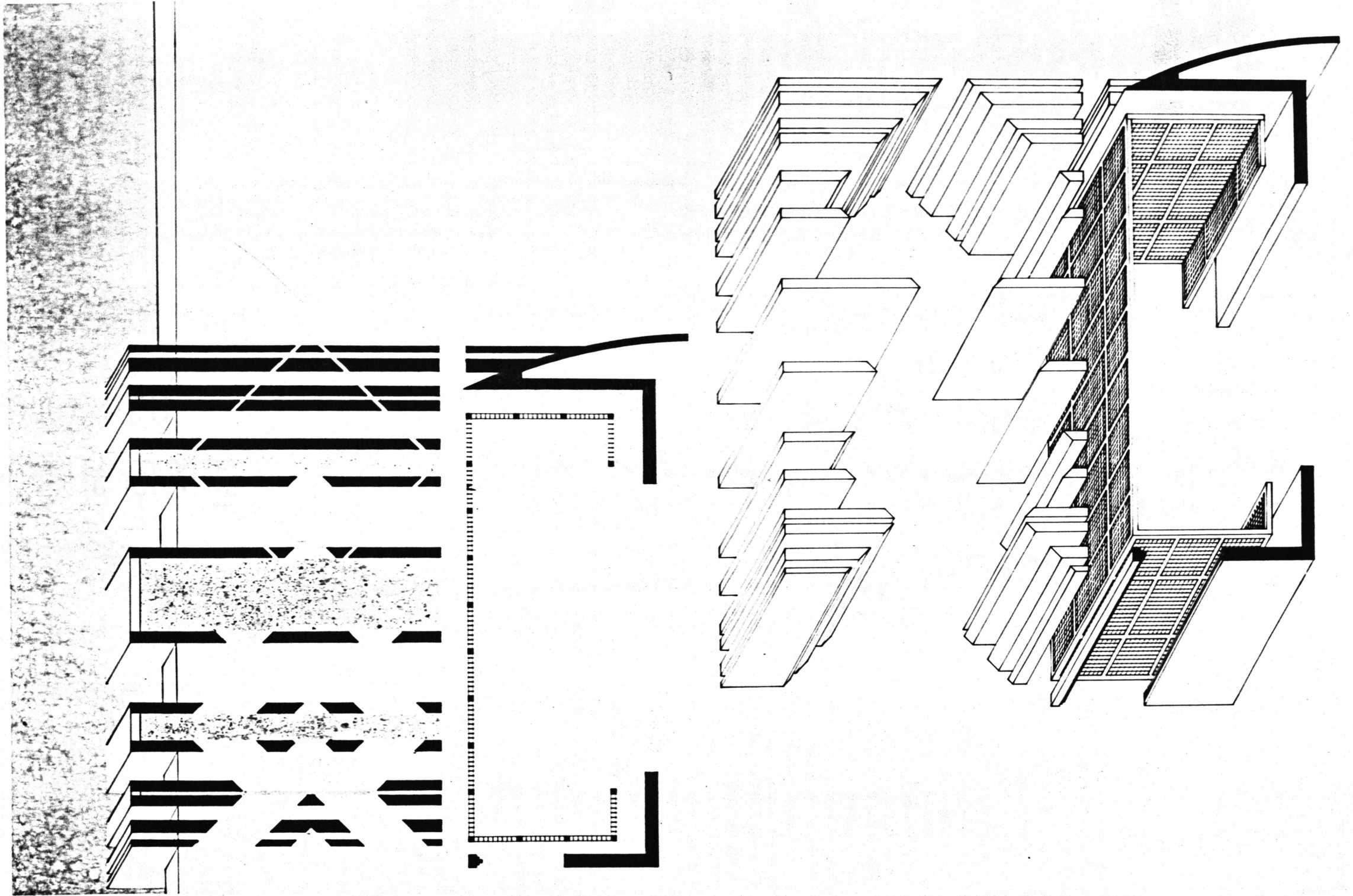
SECTION
View from the City





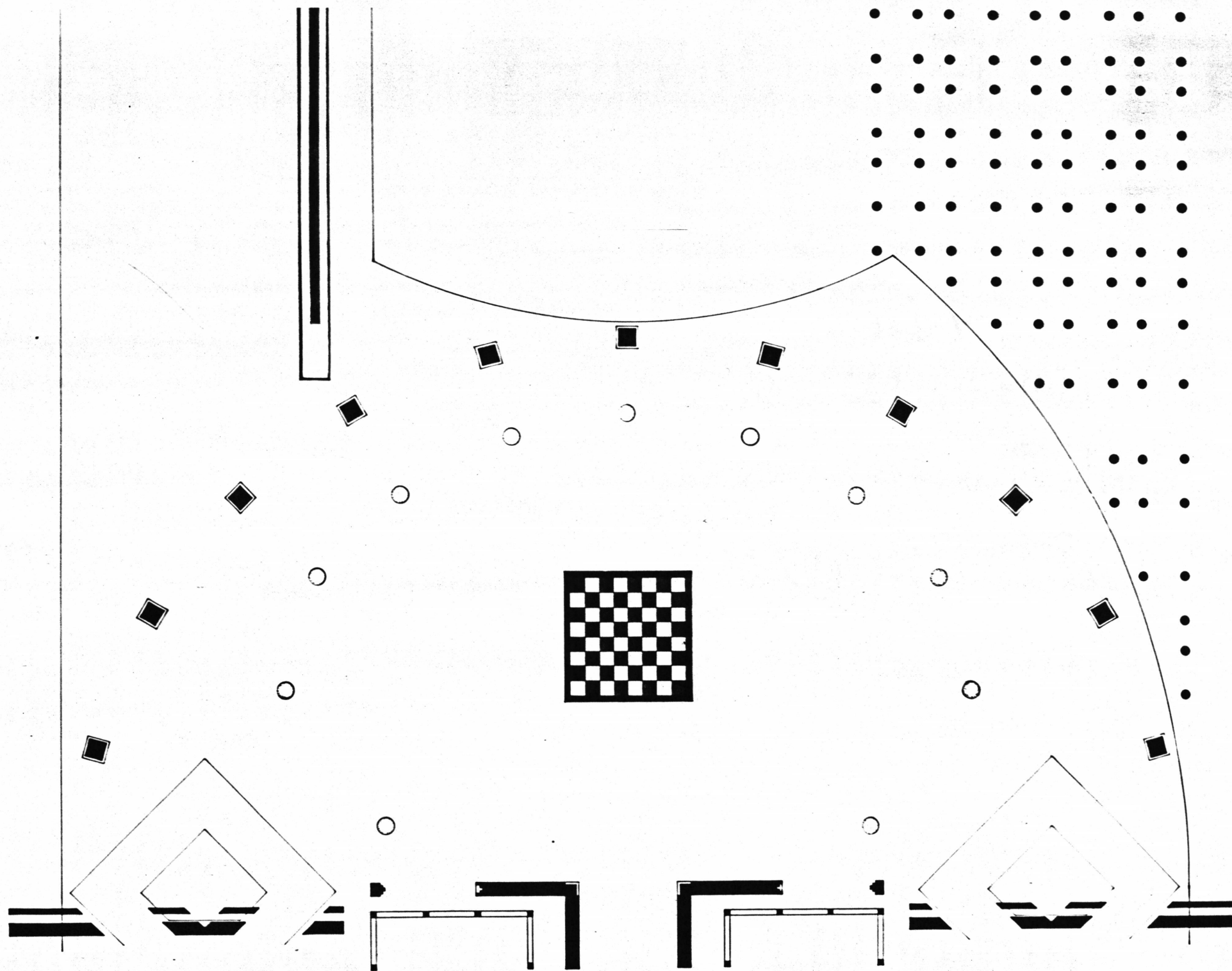


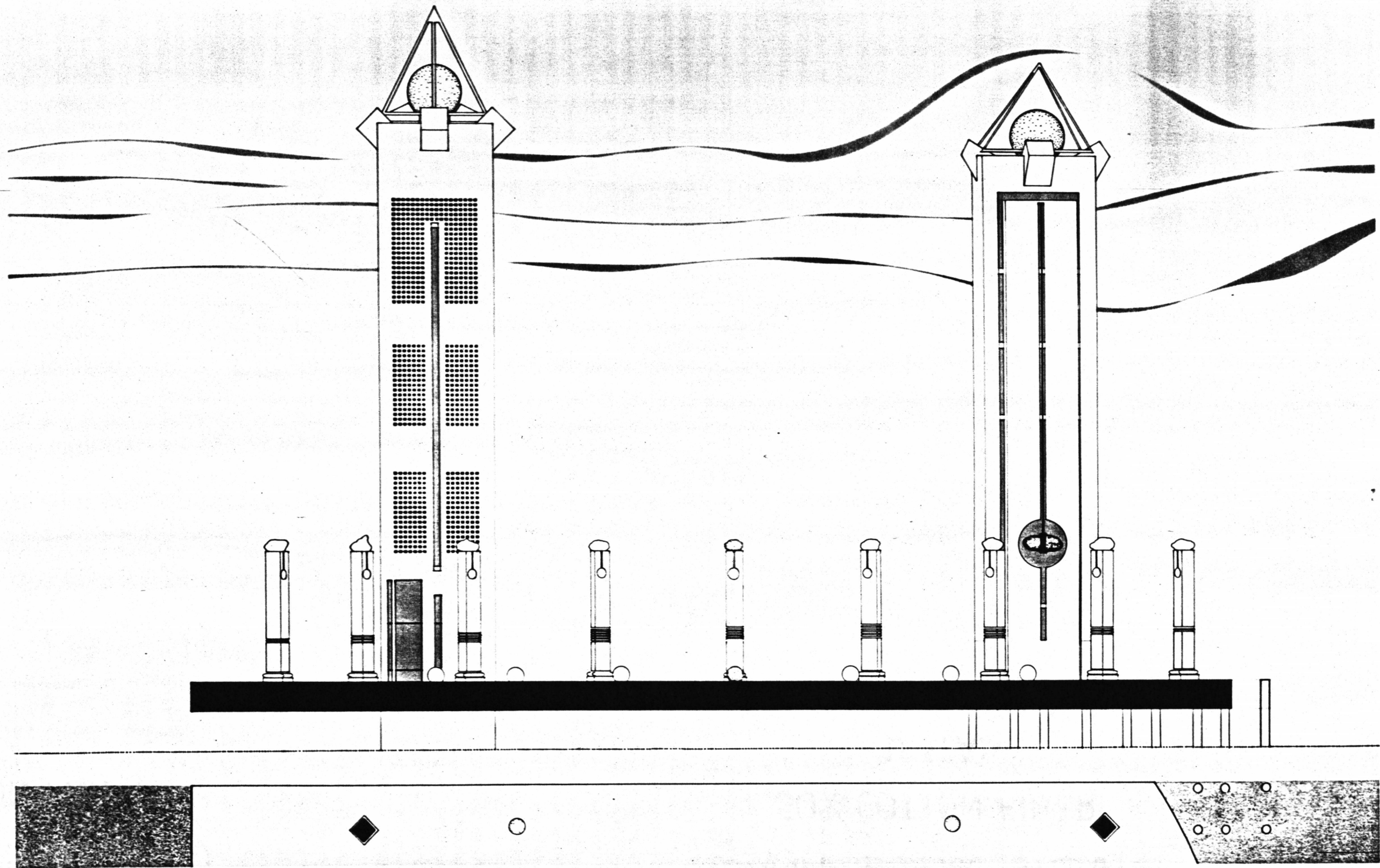


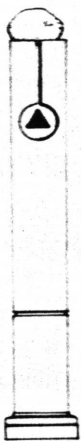
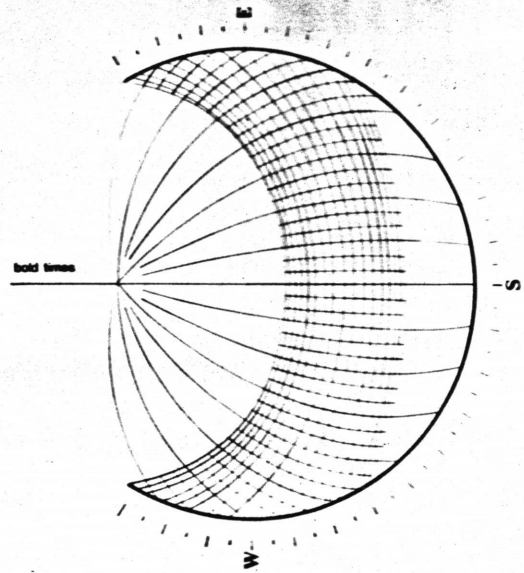
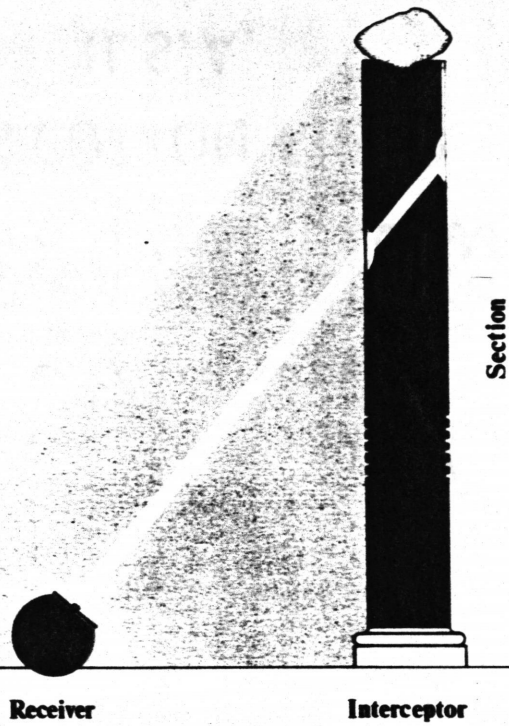
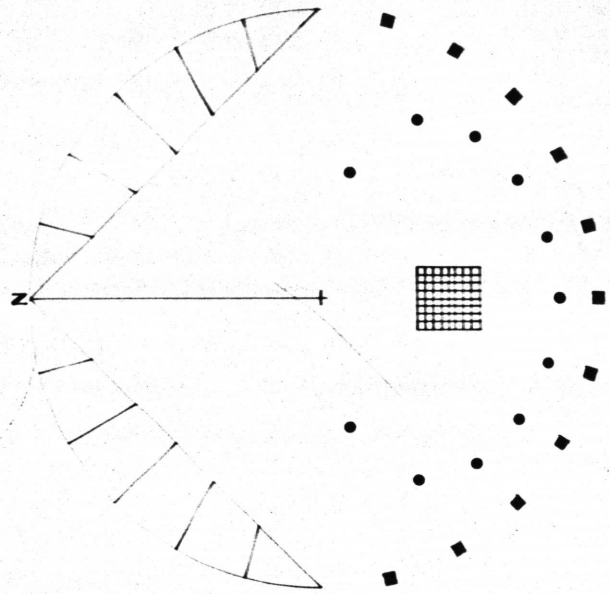


Plaza of the Equinox

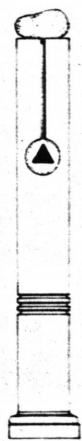
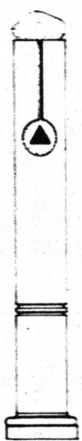
The city lies behind now; the complex of geometrical spaces that has been transversed clears the mind allowing for an ordering of thought. From out of these walls one steps into an inhabited sun dial: a semi-circular plaza of marble with concrete obelisks and spheres. Twice a year the alignment of the site and the sun synchronize; the obelisks are transformed into light interceptors, and the spheres into the receivers of a beam of light made visible by the casting of a shadow. At each hour of daylight during the equinox, light passing through the interceptor hits the receiver, perpendicular to a stainless steel disk. A triangle of light is made visible for a moment in time and then disappears back into the shadows. Twice a year the precision and wonder of nature becomes manifest as a triangle of light.



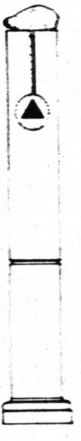
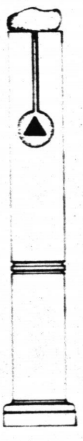
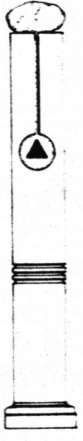
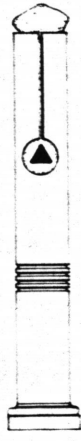




Face in Shadows - 15° East



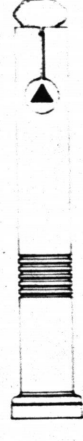
Face in Shadows - Due South



Face in Shadows - 15° West



Proportional Model - 1:8



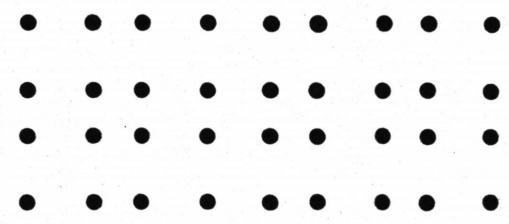
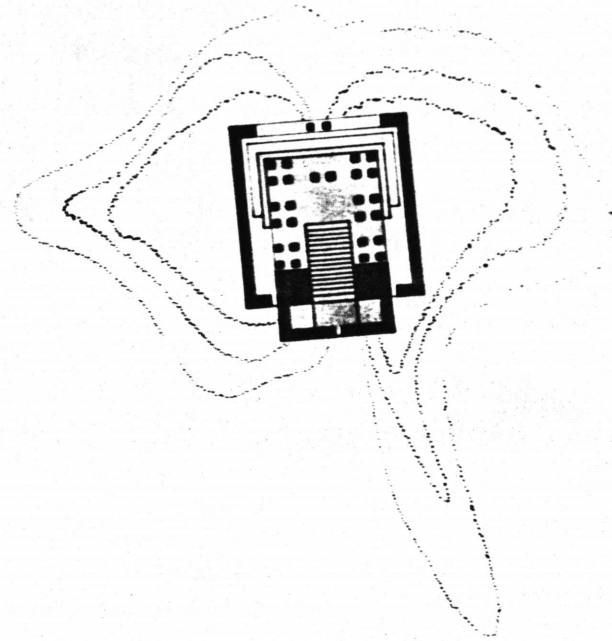
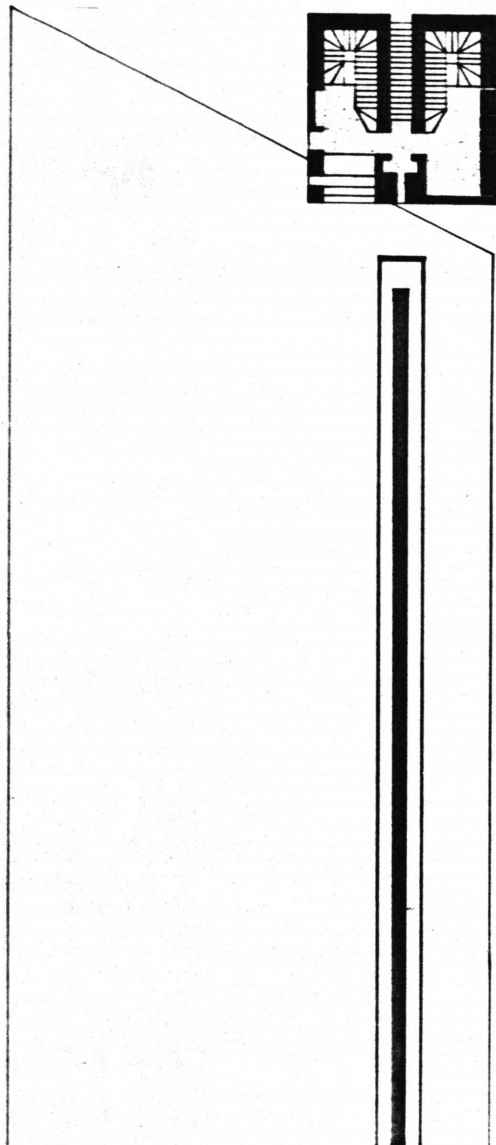
Face to Sun - Typical

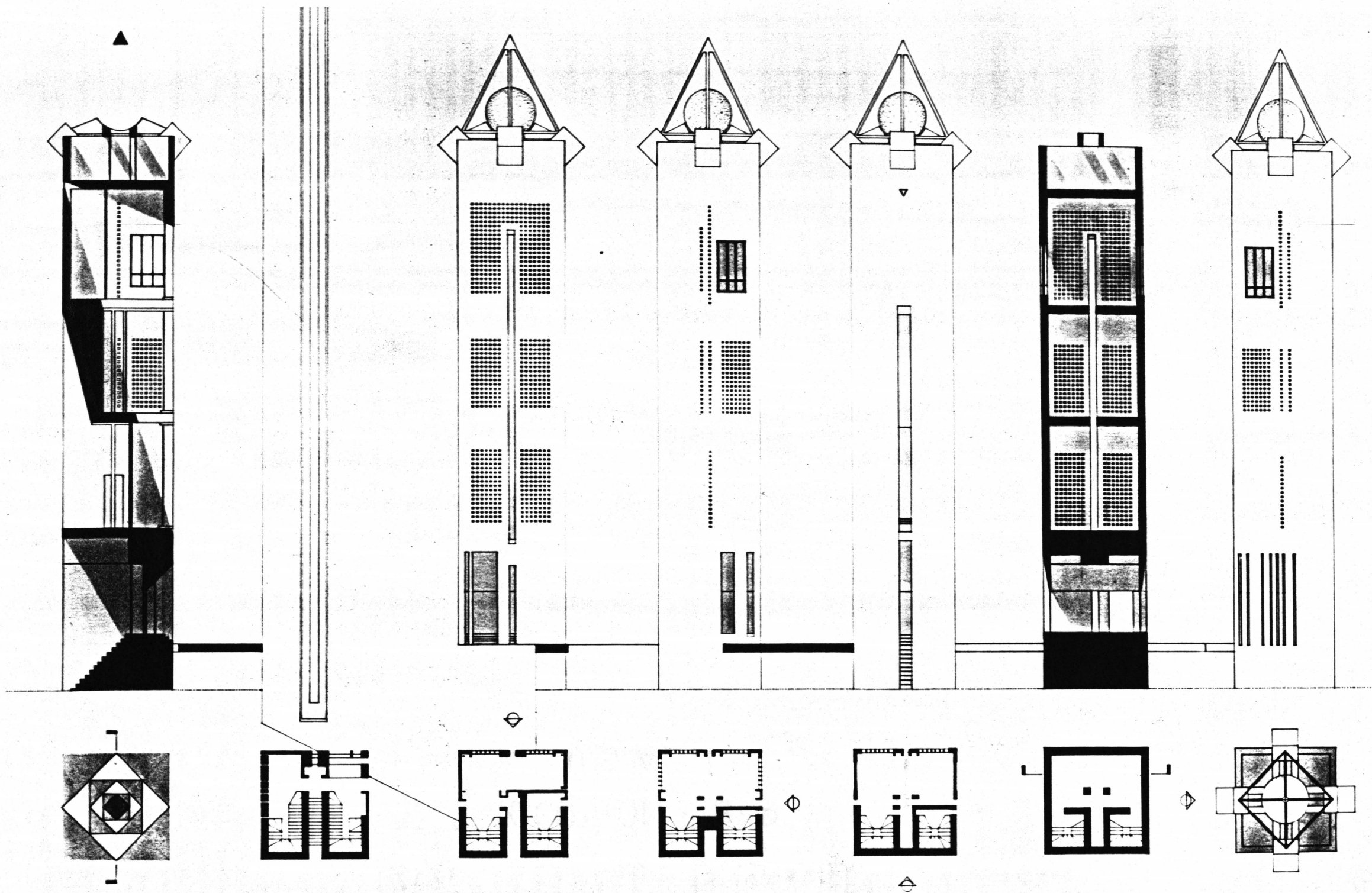
Temple Complex

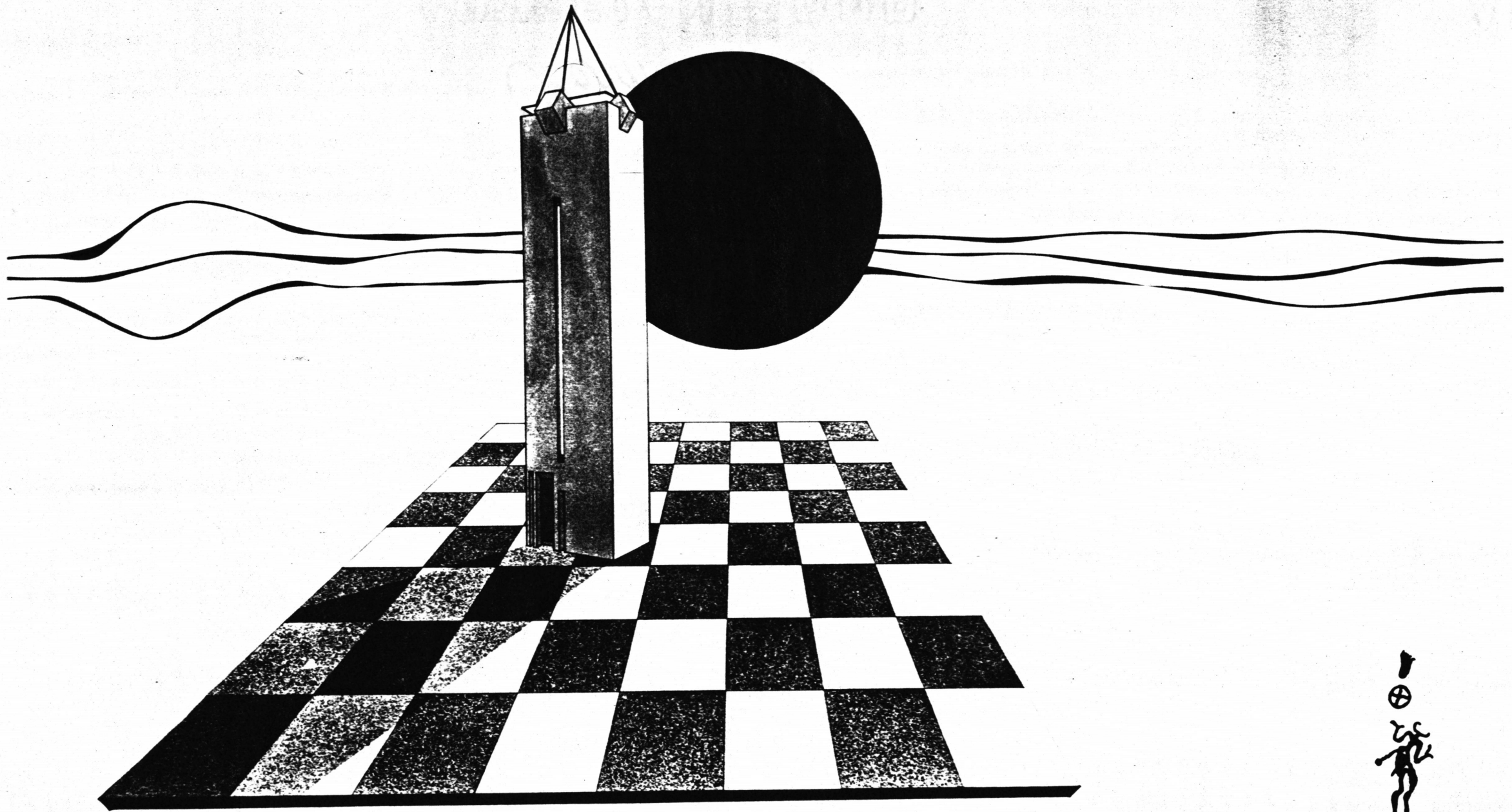
Between the Plaza of the Equinox and the Sea rise two towers, similar yet different, they are homes to the oracles of the Sun and the Moon.

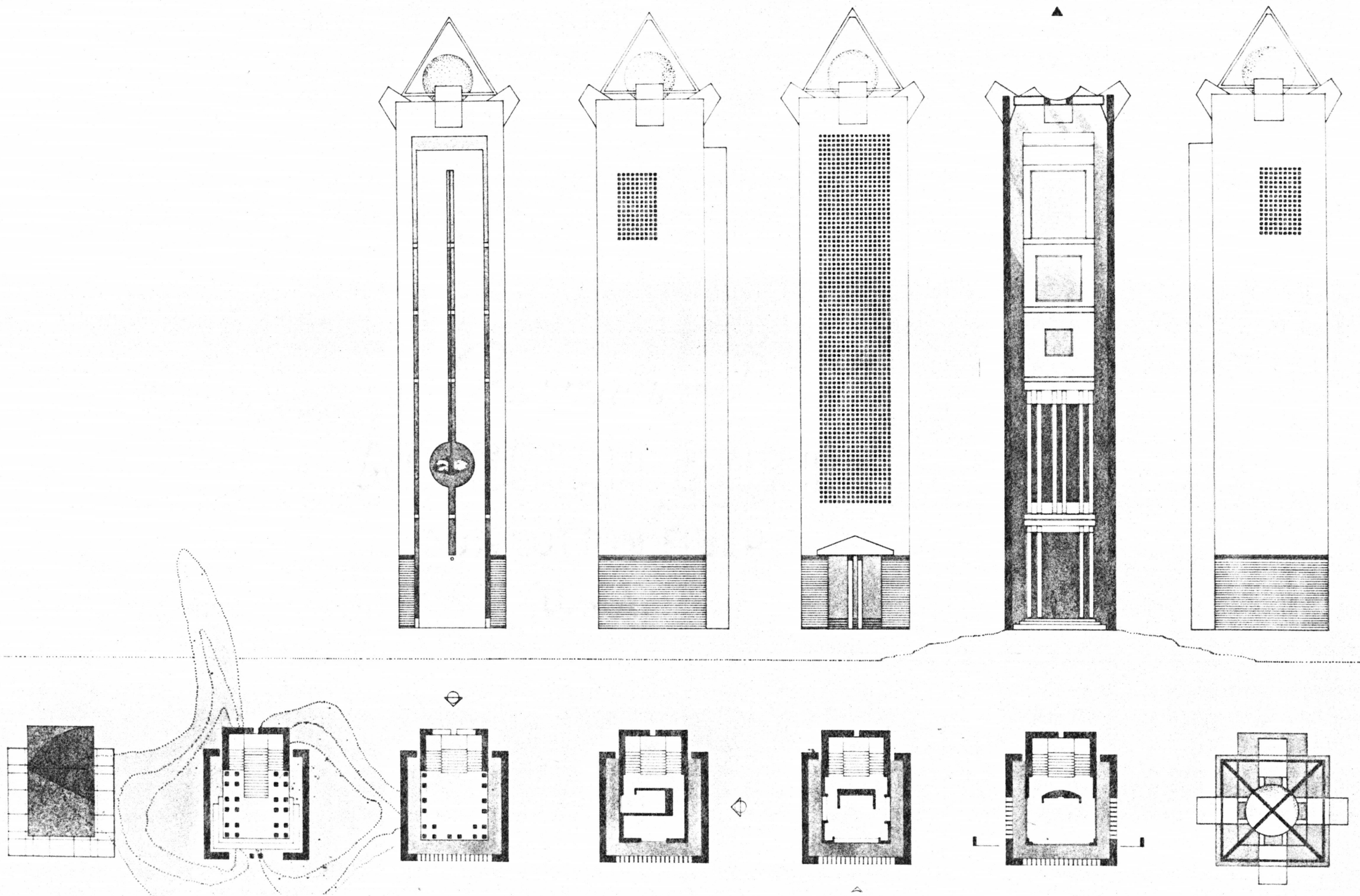
Connected by an extension of the marble plaza, the Temple of the Sun rises as a gnomon to meet the sun at noon. Daily a beam of light is allowed to pass through the volume of the gnomon and strike the granite beam marker. Yearly, the light enclosed by the shadow of the gnomon travels up and down the granite, marking the passing of the seasons; the longest shadow corresponding to the shortest day and vice versa. Daily at noon, the oracle can be consulted at the highest level of the temple, under a sphere of glass and gold.

Standing opposite to the Sun Temple, the moon temple rises from an island in the bay. In contrast to the shadow cast by the Sun Temple, the Moon temple is reflected in the waters that surround her. The approach is marked by an expression of geometry manifested as a field of piers. Entrance to the Temple is dictated by the rising and falling of the tide. Only when the island is submerged can the steps to the oracle be approached by boat and the oracle consulted.

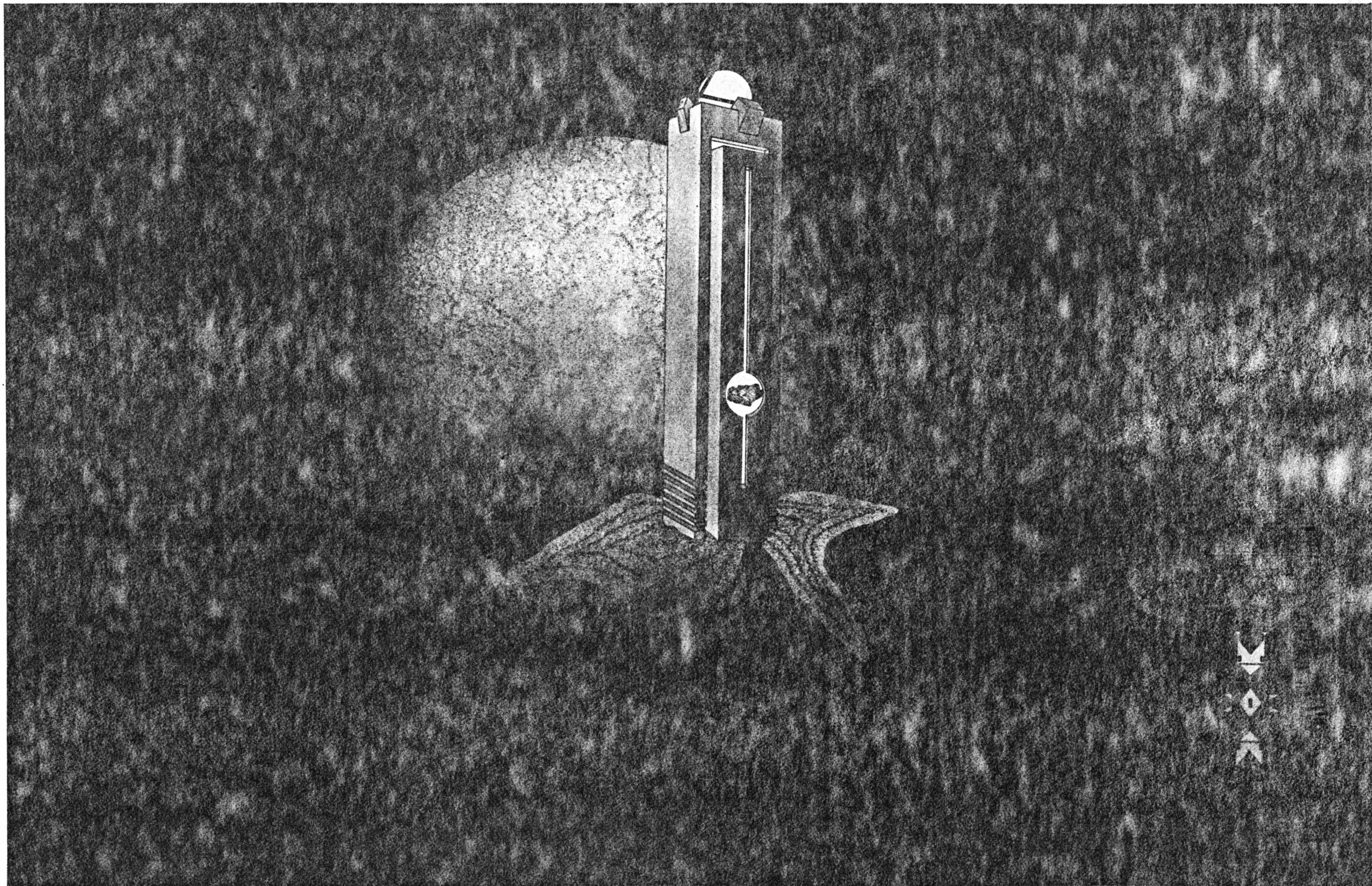








Democracy



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Lawlor, Robert

Michell, John

Neihardt, John G.

Pedoe, Don

Zevi, Bruno

The Sacred Pipe

Earth Rites

Labyrinths

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From Primitive to Zen

The Myth of the Eternal Return

The Sacred and The Profane

Art & Geometry

Echoes Of the Ancient Skies

In Search of Ancient Astronomies

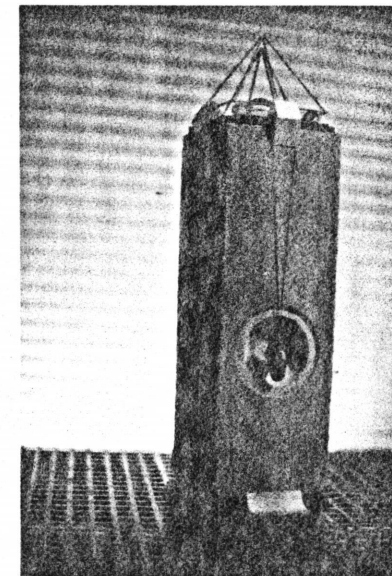
Sacred Geometry

The Earth Spirit

Black Elk Speaks

Geometry and the Visual Arts

Architecture as Space



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