

1-2. I'd like to further the conversation about the digital future with images of actual, non-virtual space and the pre-industrial past. Images that are allegories and concrete embodiments of past conflicts in which we can see present-day documents, scavengers and audiences.

3. Walls and screens—my topic is décor, but not idle amusement. After the June 12, 2009 presidential election in Iran, websites began appearing where videos of protests inside the Islamic Republic were made accessible. Within 300 days of the election there were over 60,000 videos on YouTube alone—either ostensibly eyewitness documents or video-essays that incorporated eyewitness videos. There are many issues in play here, but I would like to focus on people acting as archivists to make documents about crowds accessible to a variety of publics—which might include crowds in actual space.

To get some perspective I propose to step back from the Internet to northern Italy, when the screen was a wall.

4. This is an exterior wall of a church in Brescia. Note the odd block of stone with the inscription. The block comes from an ancient Roman building. The 12th century masons building the church found it and used it. This kind of recycling of old building material is called “*spolia*.”

5. *Spolia* was an old tradition by the 12th century. Beat Brenk has described how recycling in the 4th century can be seen in important public structures such as the Arch of Constantine. According to Brenk, this recycling was not necessarily motivated by reasons of economy, or convenience, but there was probably an intention to communicate a message of political continuity and legitimacy, as well as to provide aesthetic variety.¹

6. Brainwashed as we all have been by Antique Roadshow into thinking almost any artifact of the past might be an insanely valuable commodity, using antiquities for bricks seems thoughtless in the extreme. But the builders of the late antique and the medieval eras were not thoughtless—they just thought differently. They did not view the ruins of antiquity as commodities from a lost, alien world, but as materials of their, present-day, world.

¹ Brenk, Beat. 1987. *Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics versus ideology*. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41, : 103-9.

Spencer's translation of Du Bellay: "Triumphant arcs, spires neighbors to the sky, / That you to see doth th' heaven itself appall, / Alas, by little ye to nothing fly, / *The people's fable, and the spoil of all.*"

7. Moreover, the medieval worker prying stones loose from an partially ruined Roman villa felt he was exercising his right to exploit the resources of his environment, in the same way he felt free—within restrictions—to catch a fish in the local river. Both fishing and *spolia* are instances of the Right of Commons—that is, the private appropriation of resource from the commons, from the State, or from a private rightsholder. For example, in 1217, *The Great Charter of the Forest* affirmed the right of English Free-Men to pasture their pigs in the King's forests. This is not trivial. Common people in the middle ages were able to live because of such rights—the right to take stone and gravel, the right to take firewood, the right to pasture sheep, the right to cut turf, These rights have been so obliterated that we don't even know their names anymore.²

8-9. What happened to Rights of Common was the Renaissance. The Renaissance viewed the artifacts of antiquity with especially different eyes.

² Linebaugh, Peter. 2008. *The Magna Carta manifesto: liberties and commons for all*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

For example in 1489, workers in the same town of Brescia dug up more fragments of stone inscriptions from the Roman era. Rather than incorporating them into whatever building was currently under construction, this time—according to a local historian—the Brescians “*understood their value, and conceived the idea of setting them in public buildings, thereby providing not only for the beautification of those structures, but also for the preservation of those precious monuments of antiquity.*”³

10-14. So the 15th century Brescians inserted this inscription of Quadratus in the exterior of the Monte Vecchio. On public display, it attracted attention. A few decades later Alessandro Totti printed a drawing of it. A few centuries later the *Monumenta antiqua* printed a copy of a 16th century drawing of it.⁴ And six centuries later I’m showing it to you on this screen. This is not a block of masonry, this is History.

15-16. Similarly, in 1546 a group of workers digging in the Roman Forum discovered fragments of a list of consuls and generals that had originally been part of the Parthian Arch of Augustus (19 BCE).

³ Greenhalgh, Michael. 1989. *The survival of roman antiquities in the middle ages*. London: Duckworth.

⁴ *Brescia romana: materiali per un museo 2,1 2, Catalogo della mostra* ; 1. pt., Studi sulle testimonianze romane a Brescia. 1979. Brescia: Grafo.

The *Fasti Consulari* fragments were immediately appropriated by Cardinal Farnese as historic treasures. Within two years the fragments were installed in a courtyard of the equivalent of city hall, in a setting designed by the most famous artist/designer in Europe.

17-18. Similar *epigraphic walls* were subsequently built throughout Europe from the Czech Republic to Scotland, from the Elizabethan era to the Fascist era.

19-27. What had happened to cause this shift from *spolia* to epigraphic walls? According to Erin Panofsky, what had happened was the Renaissance, namely Petrarch:

“Where all Christian thinkers before him had thought of [history] as a continuous development, beginning with the creation of the world and leading up to the writer’s own lifetime, he saw it sharply divided into two periods, the classical and the ‘recent’”

So that

*“The ‘distance’ created by the Renaissance deprived antiquity of its realness. The classical world ceased to be both a possession and a menace. It became instead the object of a passionate nostalgia”*⁵

28-34. At the same time the rise of print culture reduplicated this shift within the sphere of literature. From antiquity through the scholastics and the troubadours, the cultural record, consisting mostly of literature, was understood to form a resource from which a writer appropriated stories, characters, situations, turns of phrase, and diction. The appropriator was expected to demonstrate erudition and good taste and ingenuity, but copying—“stealing”—had no negative associations whatsoever.

The dissemination of printing and the consequent development of authorship as a profession created a new attitude. Henceforth appropriating somebody’s words was appropriating somebody’s capital. Hence the distinction between your words and my words had to be vigilantly patrolled, and visually demarcated. And so in 1555 Pierre de la Ramé published his *Dialectique*, in

⁵ Panofsky, Erwin. 1972. *Renaissance and renaissances in Western art*. New York: Harper & Row.

which prose citations were identified by inverted commas, and the quotation mark was born.⁶

25. My point is that Panofsky's discussion of the different ways the middle ages and the renaissance viewed the past is valid today. In the place of "Medieval" insert whatever Right of Commons force you like—Google, YouTube, Archive.org. In the place of "Renaissance" insert the commodifiers: the Recording Industry Association of America, the Motion Picture Association of America, most large, publicly-funded museums, libraries and archives.

36-38. However there is one point of agreement: the point of scavenging artifacts—in both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance—was to get them before the public. The concept of the public might have been narrow or broad, but the public, the people were the point. And they were publics in actual public space. And this is where, to conclude, I want to bring the discussion up to the present.

⁶ Antoine Compagnon, "1555, 13 September: Pierre de la Ramée Receives the Privilege for Publishing his *Dialectique*, the First Philosophical Work to Appear in French," in Hollier, Denis, and R. Howard Bloch. 1989. *A New history of French literature*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

39-43. While the canonical image appeared back in 1983, the *reality* of media screens in public spaces has taken a while to catch up.

There was a memorable moment in 1997.

Then the first true architectural media skin in 1999.

And in 2005 Clear Channel Outdoor began installing roadside billboards, first in Cleveland, then around the U.S. By 2007 it offered the services of an integrated nation-wide U.S. digital billboard network—essentially public TV sets with no off button that show only commercials. They are widely hated—along with their indoor relatives in elevators and at supermarket checkout counters—but seem here to stay. (There are about 1800 in the U.S. today.⁷)

44. And there are other kinds of public screens. If the home video revolution of the Eighties de-socialized the movie experience, new kinds of open-air screenings have re-socialized it. Hinted at in utopian projects of Archigram. The 1978 Kool Jazz Festival deployed live video projection in the outdoor concert venue.

⁷ USA Today, 3/22/2010. <http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-03-22-visual-soup_N.htm>

45. Starting in the late Eighties and Nineties, these technologies and venues are appropriated by municipal authorities and business associations for the purposes of urban renewal.

46-50. Not just movies. Spectators gather on the beach at Waikiki to view a live broadcast from the Keck observatory of a satellite probe smashing into a comet.

At the Vatican, the Jumbotrons perfectly appropriate in scale and effect within Bernini's scenography. (See Norman Klein)

Or 10,000 people gather in the Field of the Holy Ghost in Hamburg in 2006 to watch TV together.

Crowds assembled outside the church of Saint-Roche in Paris in 2008 watching Catherine Deneuve's eulogy for Yves Saint Laurent on giant video screens?

51. Again, there are a many issues in play in these situations. As with the city fathers of Brescia and Cardinal Farnese, municipal politics and PR loom large.

But on the other hand, we might be seeing a situation Dennis Kennedy describes as, “*The condition of assisting at the spectacle overpowers the meaning of the spectacle itself.*”⁸

52. Or, recalling the Iranian protest videos, we might be seeing Arjun Appadurai’s vision of an archive as a *collective project*, that is an “*aspiration rather than a recollection.*”⁹

Or, in Spencer’s words, “*The people's fable, and the spoil of all.*”

⁸ Kennedy, Dennis. *The Spectator and the Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁹ Appadurai, Arjun, “Archive and Aspiration,” in Brouwer, Joke, et al. *Information is Alive*. Rotterdam; New York: V2/NAi Publishers ; D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2003. p. 22.s*

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AEC	BEANG
RFC	FE TON
CGN	GGEN
DHEID	AHEID
XIX	XVII
EAF	BAE
EBN	CAC
GCC	DCC
ADC	EDARM
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CFC	GFC
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EHC	BHC
FHC	CAC
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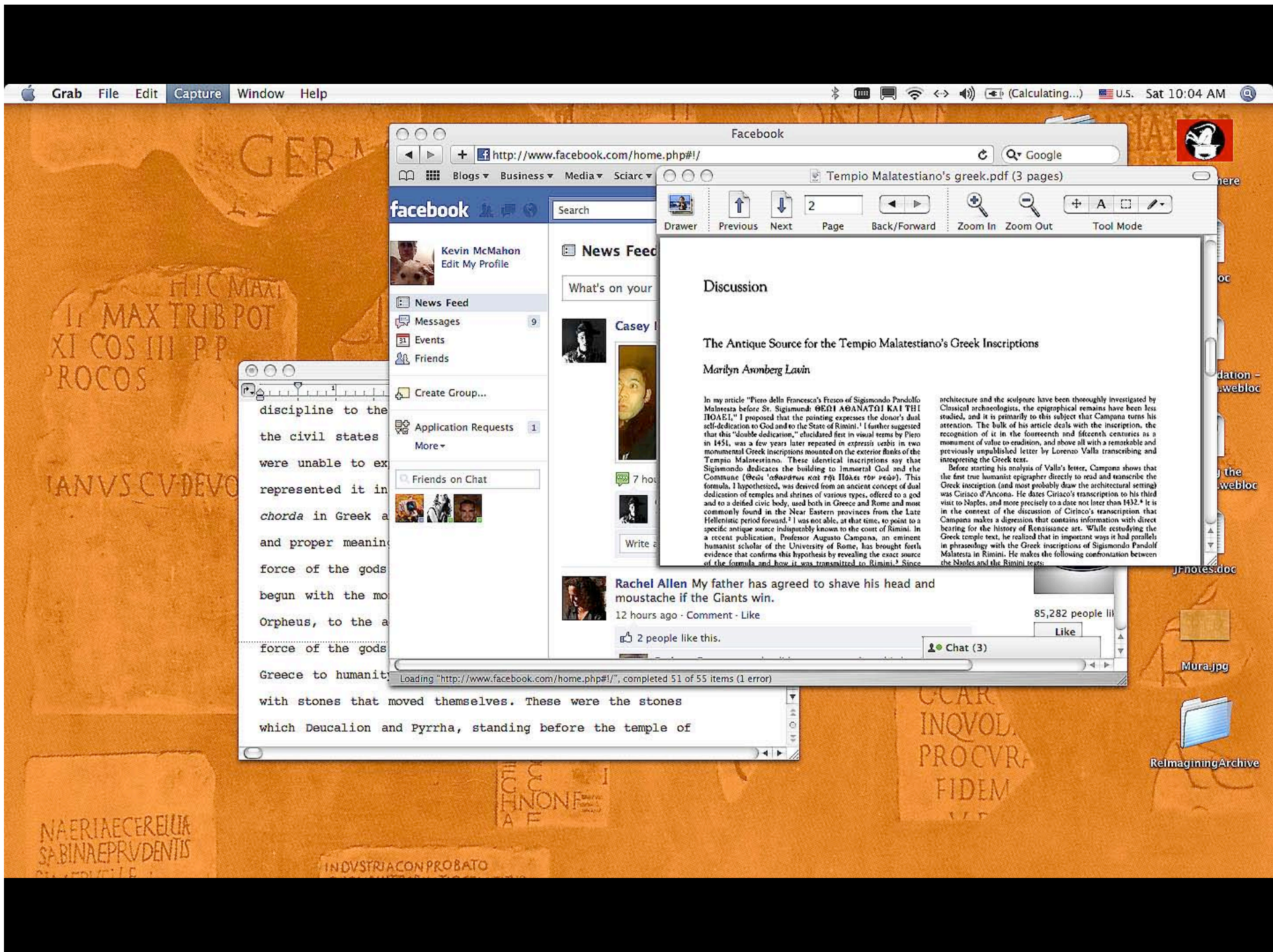
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INDUSTRIACONPROBATO





Brescia, Santa Maria in Solario, 12th c.



Arch of Constantine, Rome, 315 CE



**Casa dei Crescenzi, Rome, 12th c.
Topkhana Mosque, Rajasthan, late 13th c.**



Right of commons vocabulary:

Boot

Cartbote

Common in soil

Common of herbage

Common of marl

Common of must

Estover

Firebote

Hedgebote

Housebote

Pannage

Piscary

Ploughbote

Snap wood

Turbary ...

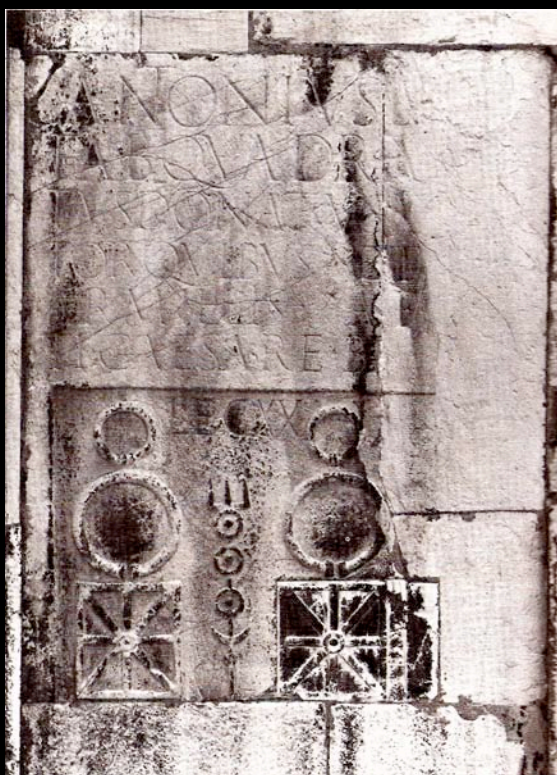
Brescia, Santa Maria in Solario, 12th c.



Brescia, Tempio Capitolium, 1480s? Renovated early 19th c.

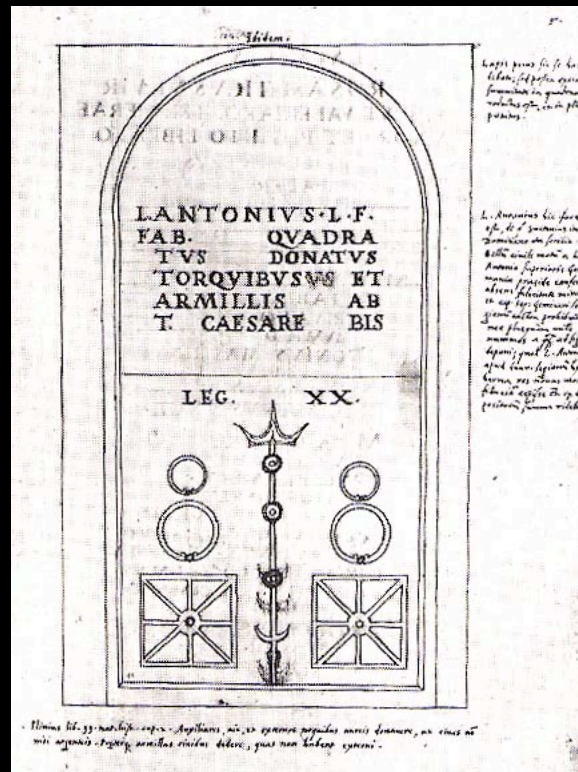
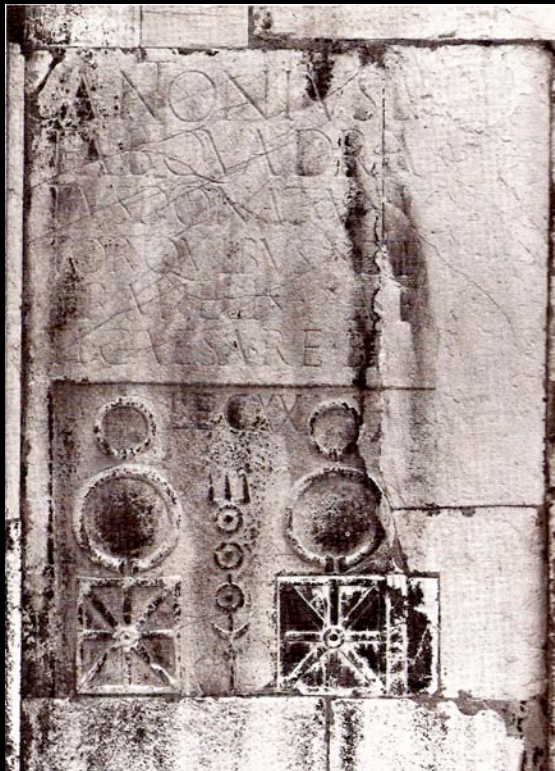


Brescia, exterior wall, Monte Vecchio, CIL.V.4365

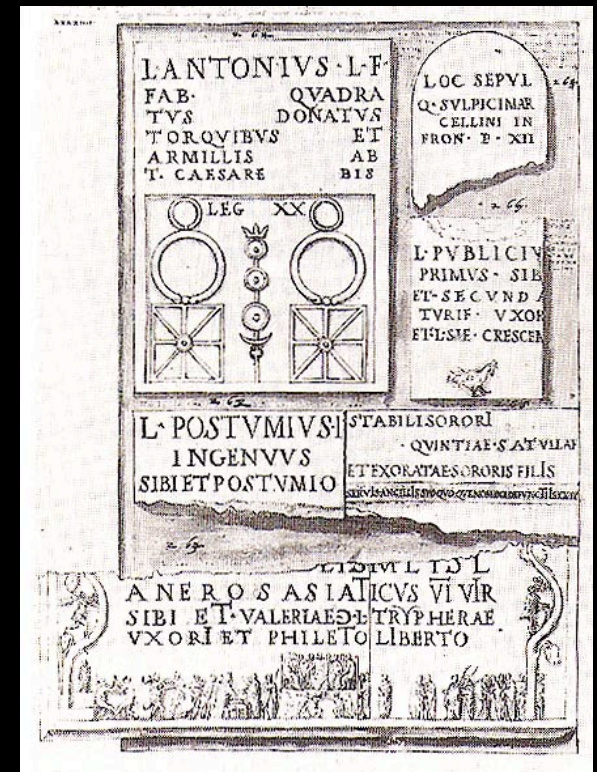
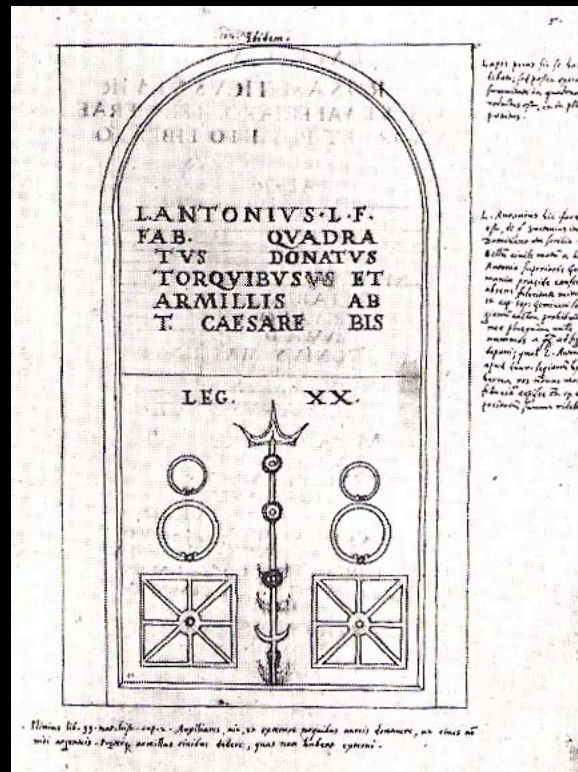
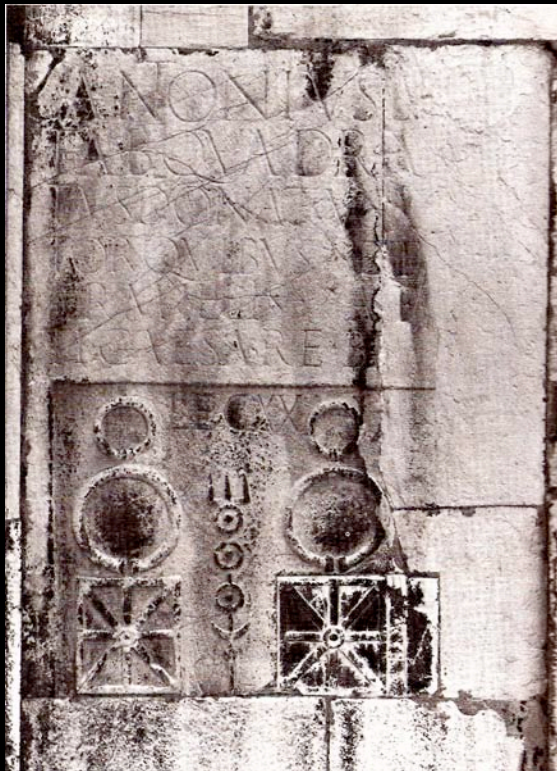


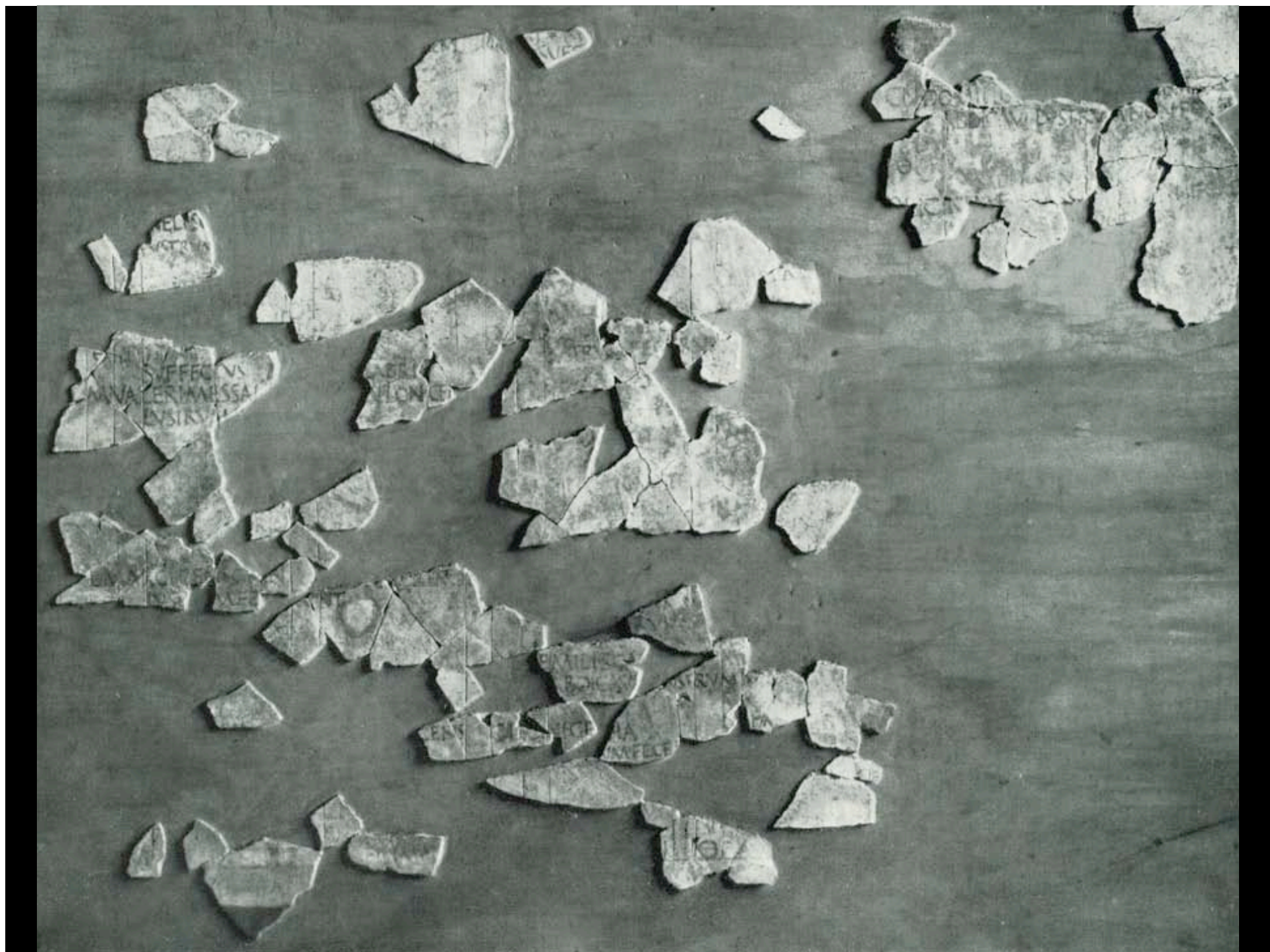
Brescia, exterior wall, Monte Vecchio, CIL.V.4365

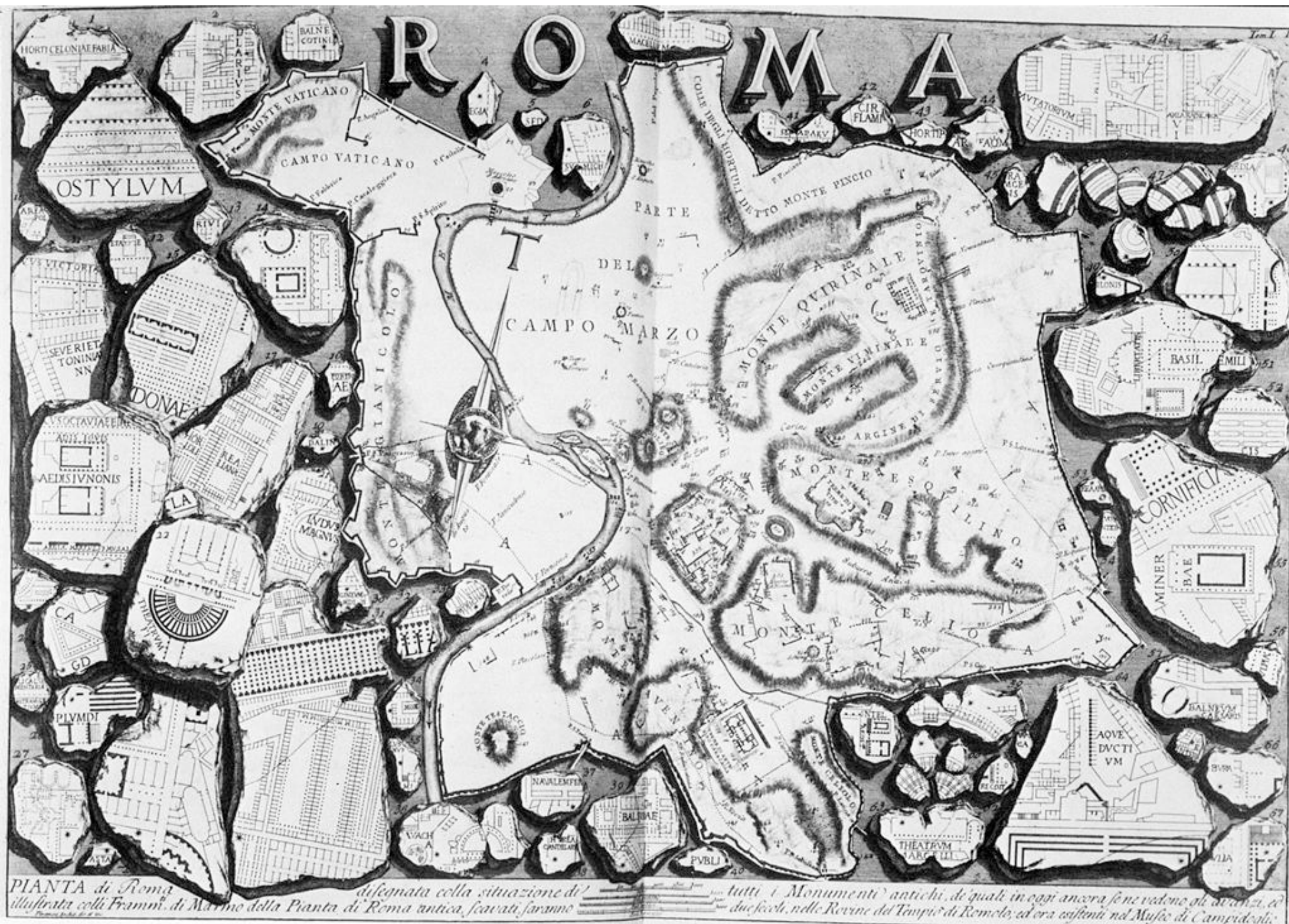
Alessandro Totti, c. 1569



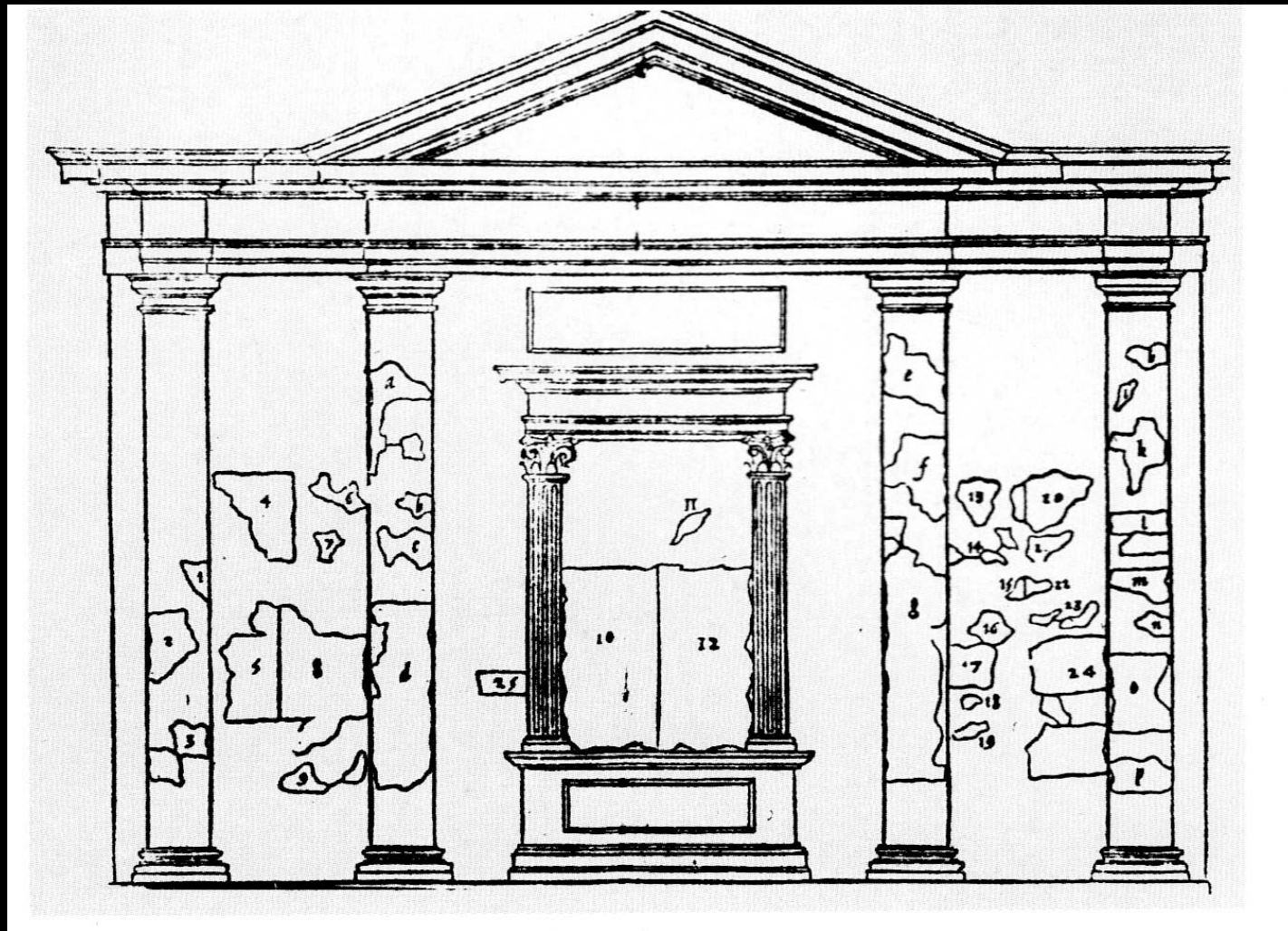
Brescia, exterior wall, Monte Vecchio, CIL.V.4365
Alessandro Totti, c. 1569
(After) Sebastiano Argonese, 1774



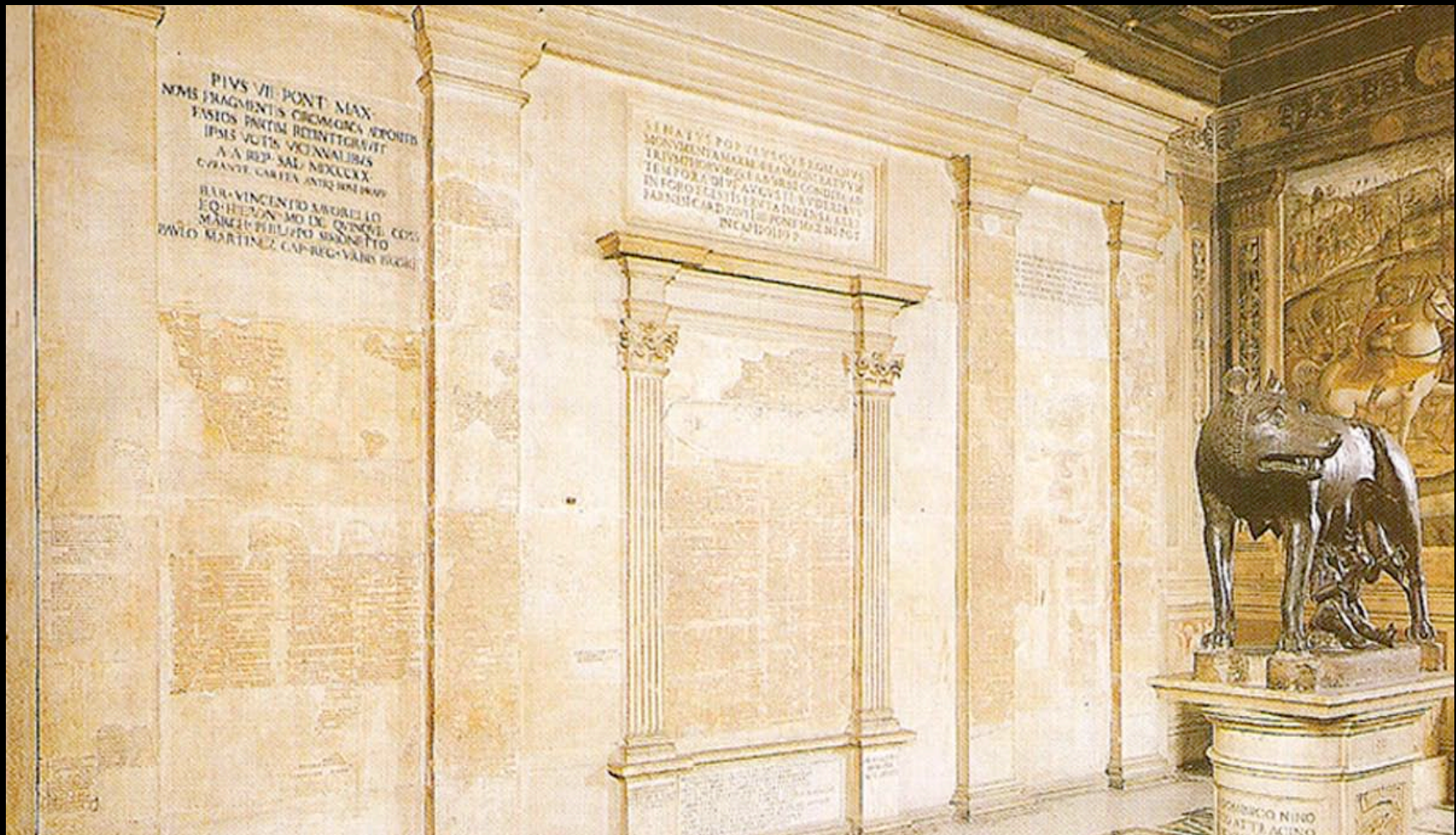




**Rome, Capitoline, Fasti Consulari,
Michelangelo's design for the original installation, c. 1548**



Rome, Capitoline, Fasti Consulari, Current (1586) installation



Rome, Sta Maria in Trastevere, portico by Fontana, 1702,
renovated 1865-9



Bainbrigg's wall, 17th c., Appleby, UK (reconstruction)

Rome, Mostra Augustea del Romanità, 1937



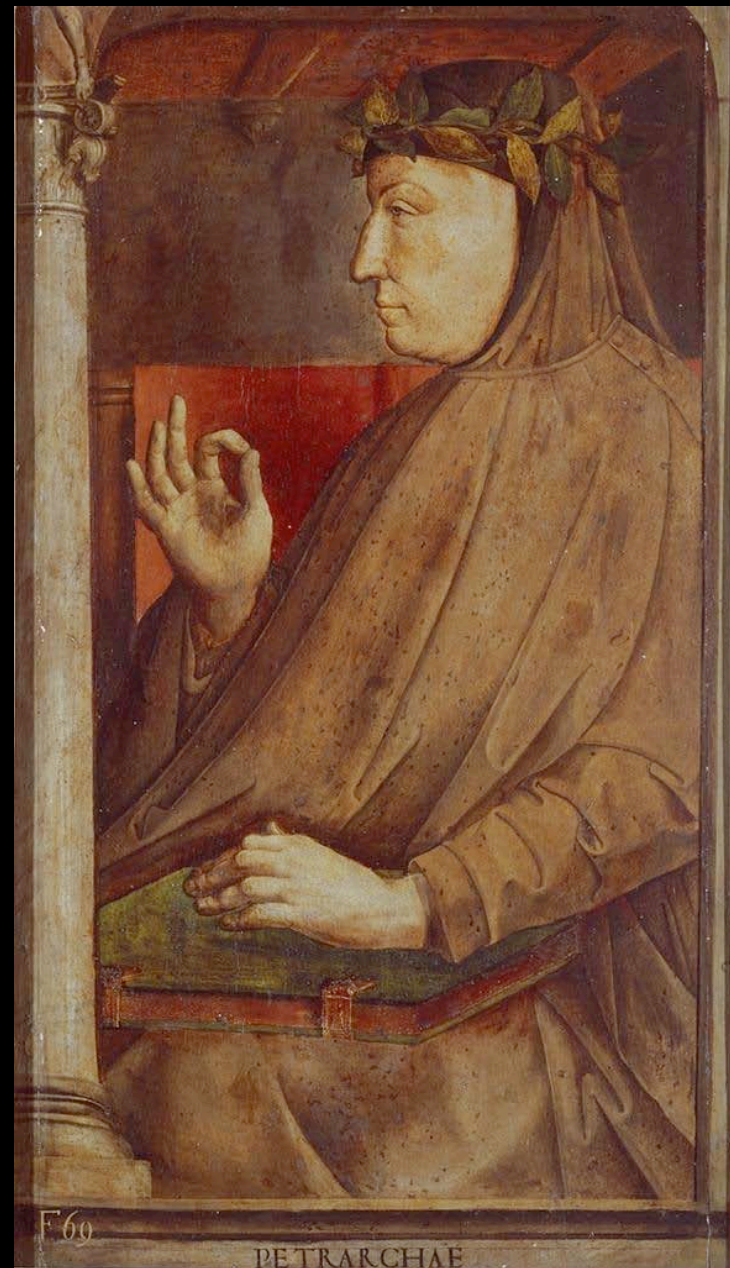


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Editions

IN-26

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Erwin Panofsky
**Renaissance
and
Renaissances**
in Western Art



Medieval

Medieval

Renaissance

Medieval

Renaissance

Continuity with past

Medieval

Continuity with past

Renaissance

Discontinuity with past

Medieval

Renaissance

Continuity with past

Discontinuity with past

Artifacts as common property

Medieval

Continuity with past

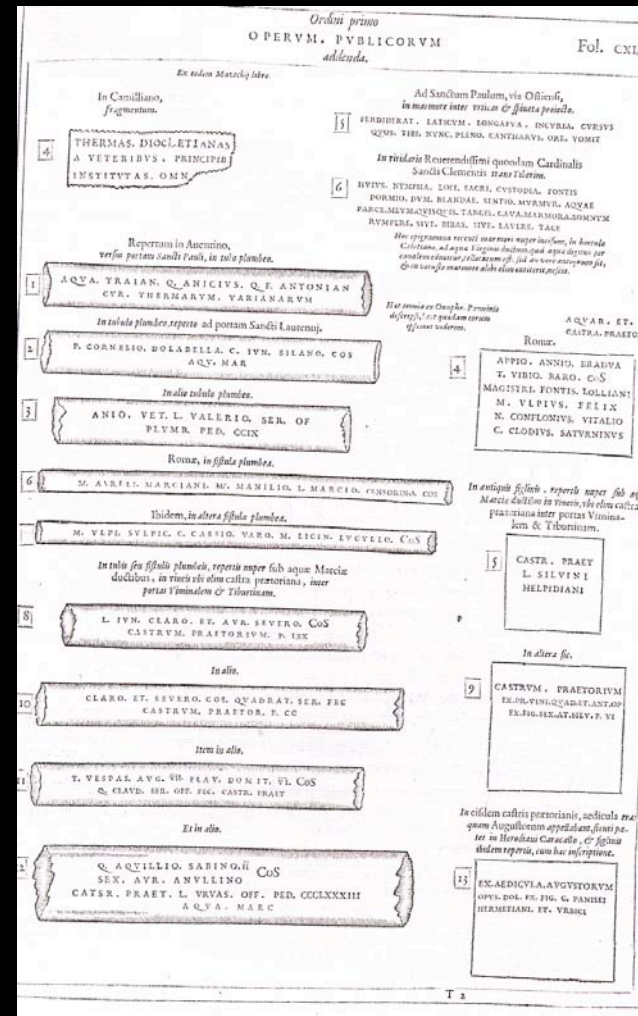
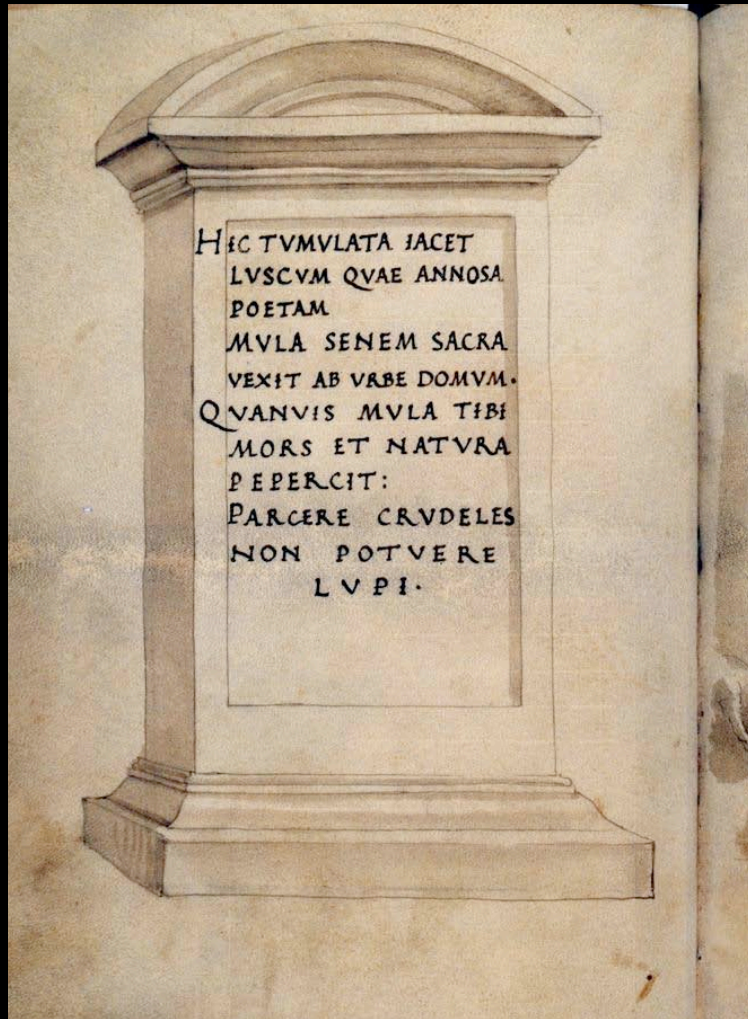
Artifacts as common property

Renaissance

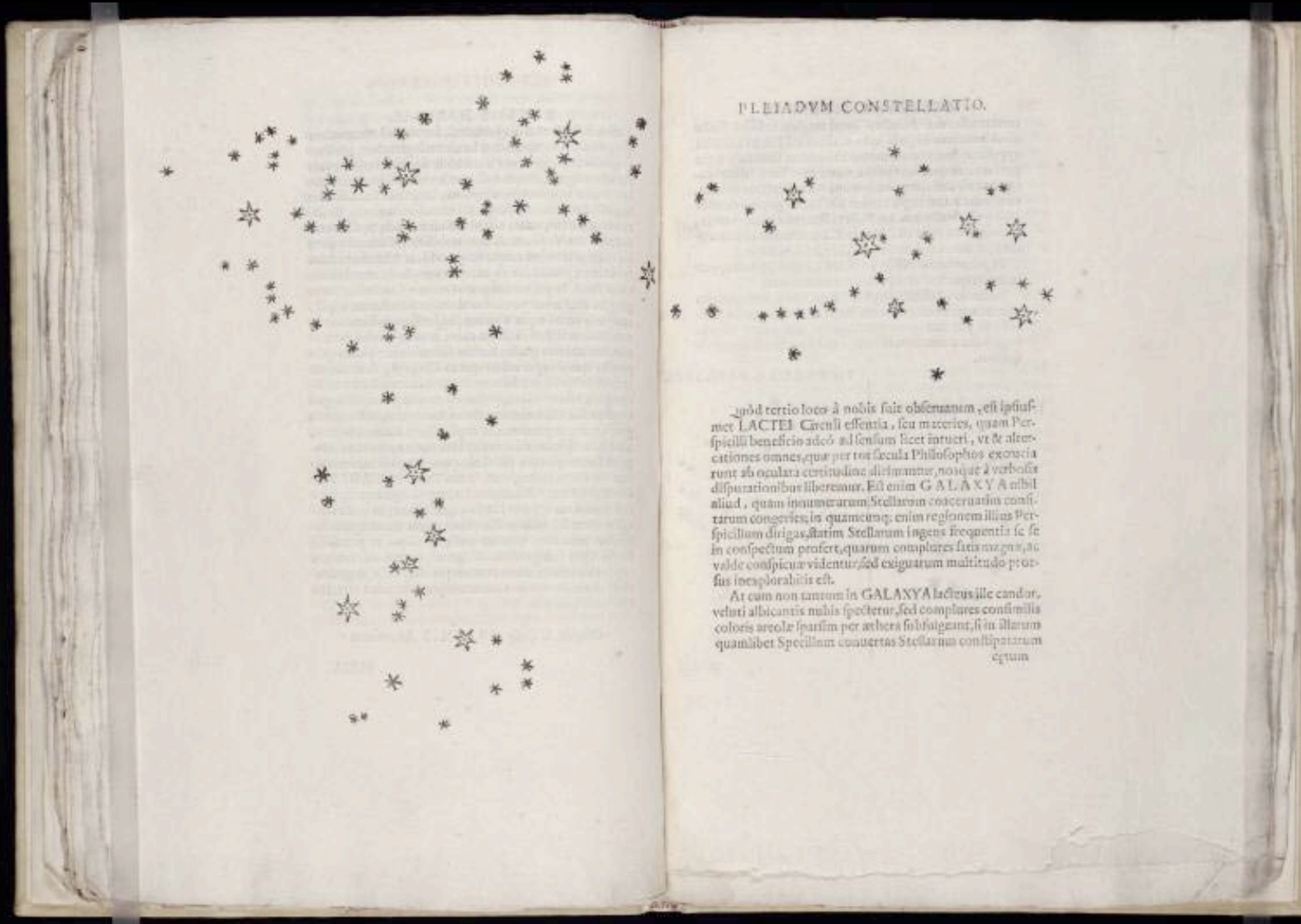
Discontinuity with past

Artifacts as cultural commodities

(script by) Bartolomeo Fonzio, 1400s
Martin Smet, *Inscriptionum antiquarum*, 1588



Galileo, *Sidereus Nuncius*, 1610



Medieval

Continuity with past

Artifacts as common property

Works as common property

Renaissance

Discontinuity with past

Artifacts as cultural commodities

Medieval

Continuity with past

Artifacts as common property

Works as common property

Renaissance

Discontinuity with past

Artifacts as cultural commodities

Works as property of author

Medieval

Continuity with past

Artifacts as common property

Works as common property

Freely available for allusion

Renaissance

Discontinuity with past

Artifacts as cultural commodities

Works as property of author

Medieval

Continuity with past

Artifacts as common property

Works as common property

Freely available for allusion

Renaissance

Discontinuity with past

Artifacts as cultural commodities

Works as property of author

Usable only as quotation

Medieval

Continuity with past

Artifacts as common property

Works as common property

Freely available for allusion

Renaissance

Discontinuity with past

Artifacts as cultural commodities

Works as property of author

Usable only as quotation

Public

Public

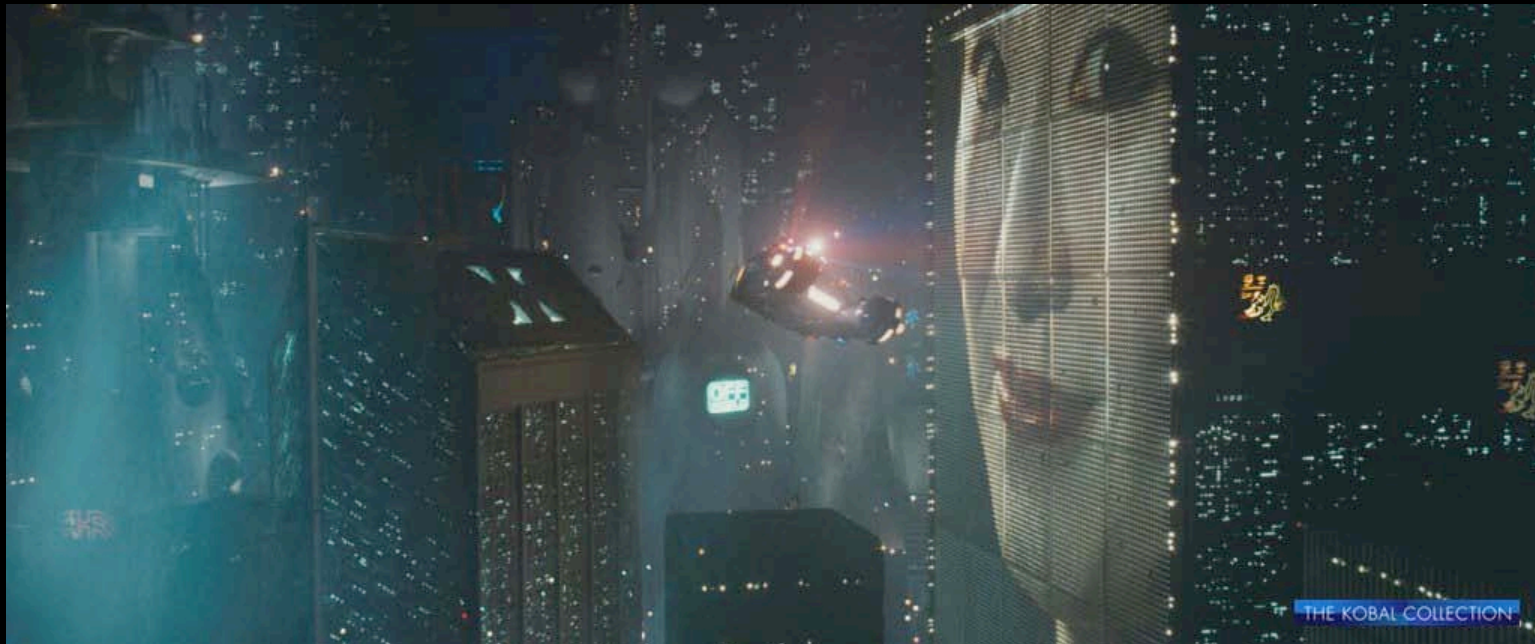
Walls

Walls

Screens

Screens

1983, Blade Runner



1985, Sony Jumbotron, Tsukuba World's Fair



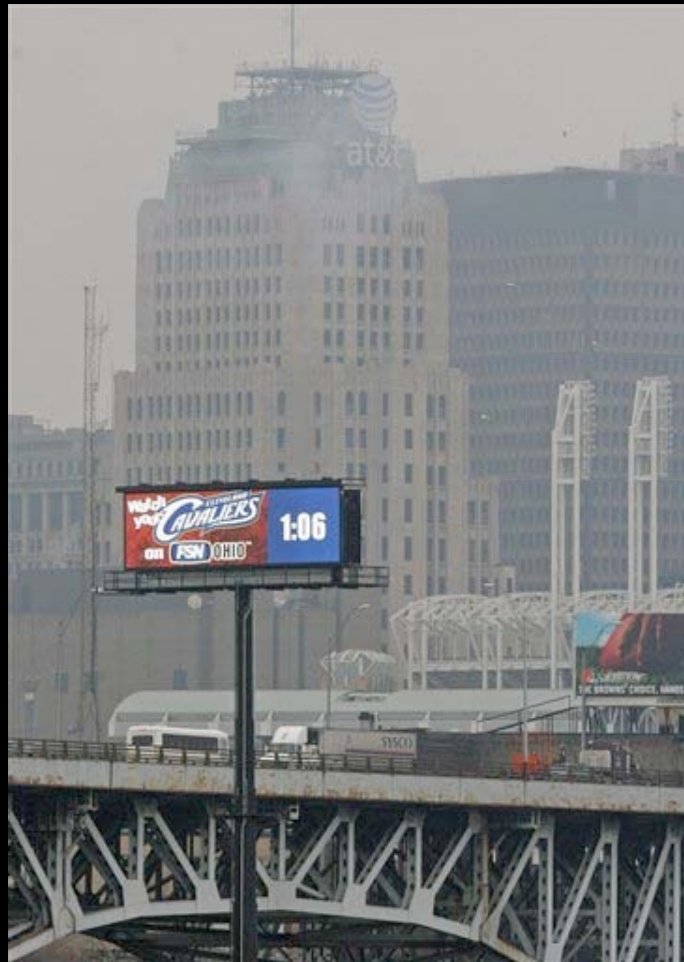
1997, Princess Di funeral broadcast in London, Frankfurt, NYC, Tokyo



1999, Nasdaq headquarters, New York



2005, Clear Channel Outdoor digital billboard, Cleveland



1970, Archigram, Instant City
1978 Kool Jazz Fest



Open-air movie screening programs
since 1989 in Zurich,
since 1990 in Paris,
since 1992 in NYC,
since 1993 in Düsseldorf, ...



**2005, Waikiki, broadcast from Keck Observatory view
of Tempel 1 hitting a comet**



2005, Vatican



2006, World Cup broadcast, Hamburg



2008, Yves Saint Laurent's funeral, Paris



2007, Birmingham; 2008, London; 2009, Los Angeles



Screening Rear Window at Somerset House, London





Kevin's last PowerPoint slide was a YouTube link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkrG7JsmRdI&feature=related>