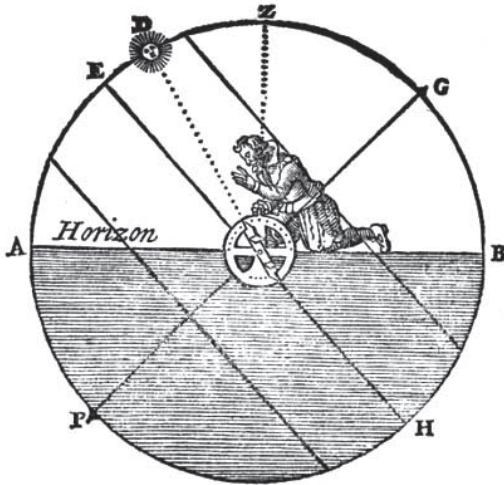


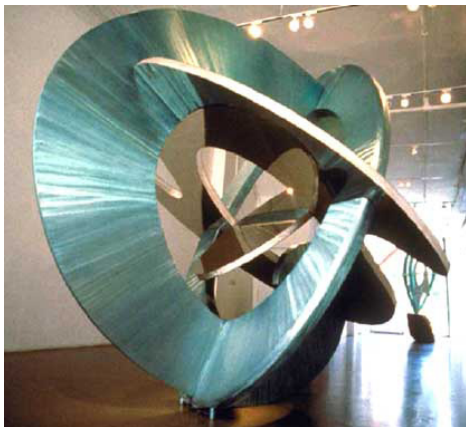
# site model, original sense

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Ancient surveying and town foundation practices reveal a strikingly complex array of factors traditionally considered before laying out buildings or even consecrating the site. Fustel de Coulanges describes many of these in *The Ancient City*; Joseph Rykwert summarizes them in his book, *The Idea of a Town*. Our site survey will be guided by a 'site model' developed in Surrealistic fashion as a *maquette* abbreviating selected interests in the site and directing investigations/interventions towards specific elements and themes. The basic model will combine aspects of measuring instruments, such as the gnomon, astrolabe, augur, groma, and theodolite, with some found properties of the site, organized centrally by a series of sliding and interlocking planes mediating the critical antipodal elements of high and



Astrolabes were among the first instruments devised to define local conditions via the 'universal' variables of sun, stars, and horizon.



Owen Morrel, 'Gnomon', 1998, St. Paul Western Sculpture Park. Morrel's work frequently studies cosmic relationships mediated by 'instruments'.



'Harpuspices' was the ancient tradition that combined auspices, surveying, and city foundation

## 1. blindness and invisibility

Every site is a combination of visible and invisible factors; similarly every site is a means of mediating effects of blindness, 'panopticism', second sight, blind-sight, or the ever-present interpellation of surveillance, real or imagined. To some degree blindness and sight are ascribed to qualities of light and dark, day and night, here and there. In your site model, which is also an instrument for *measuring* the site as well as defining your work, concentrate on tangible issues where synesthesia is also a factor. See all related 'marelles' on these topics.

## 2. operators

What is an operator? It is the event/encounter (*tuche*) where the artifact 'takes the place of' the representation. This has many possible interpretations. In the real world of the history of cities, operators were tied to myths involving the location, consecration and foundation of cities, traditionally by twin brothers one of whom is sacrificed following the 'logic' of Castor and Pollux. The operator is something that allows a spatial construction to happen that is 'forbidden' by Cartesian (transitive) spatial rules: a Möbius band effect that combines opposites in a way that insures good fortune and health for the city and its inhabitants. In our project, the operator takes the form of any model, construct, or other intervention that establishes a 'garden' within the limits of the assigned spatial fields.s

## 3. the sliding planes

Each site model shall be built around a series of sliding planes. These may be made of various materials and can incorporate images, scales, and other references to the site's physical qualities, global-cosmic relationships, social uses, and cultural contexts. The planes may be fixed or moveable, but they must make some reference to the idea of variability found on site.

The planes may be fastened to allow movement, suggested or real. Openings cut in upper levels can reveal materials on lower elements. The planes may refer to the use of the model as a site-measuring instrument, magic device, or recording device. Whatever the reference, the object of reference must be an actual property or potential of the site, not a characterization or speculation that is gratuitously applied. The model must be tangibly linked to the process of observing the site and collecting data.

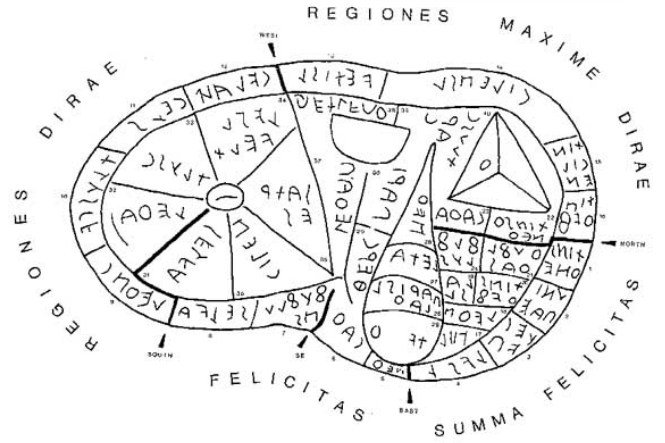
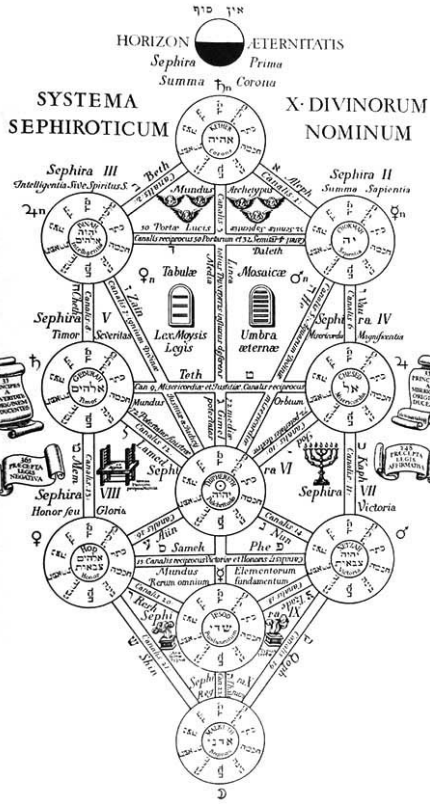
## 4. zenith/nadir

The issue of what is the highest point for a site and what is the lowest is a complex issue, since it may refer to the experience of the site as well as to physical properties, real and/or imagined. In the case of Eratosthenes, locating the nadir of a site a known distance from Syene, where the sun shown directly down a well on a specific day of the year, led to the calculation of the curvature of the earth, a considerable 'cosmic' feature. The curvature of a more localized area is of no less importance, since it effects the margin between transitive uses of the site and 'intransitive' ('irrational') uses. The main planar structures of the site model must refer to some proposed means of calculating/locating zenith and nadir and of computing the location, degree, and nature of the curvature.

## 5. relation to work

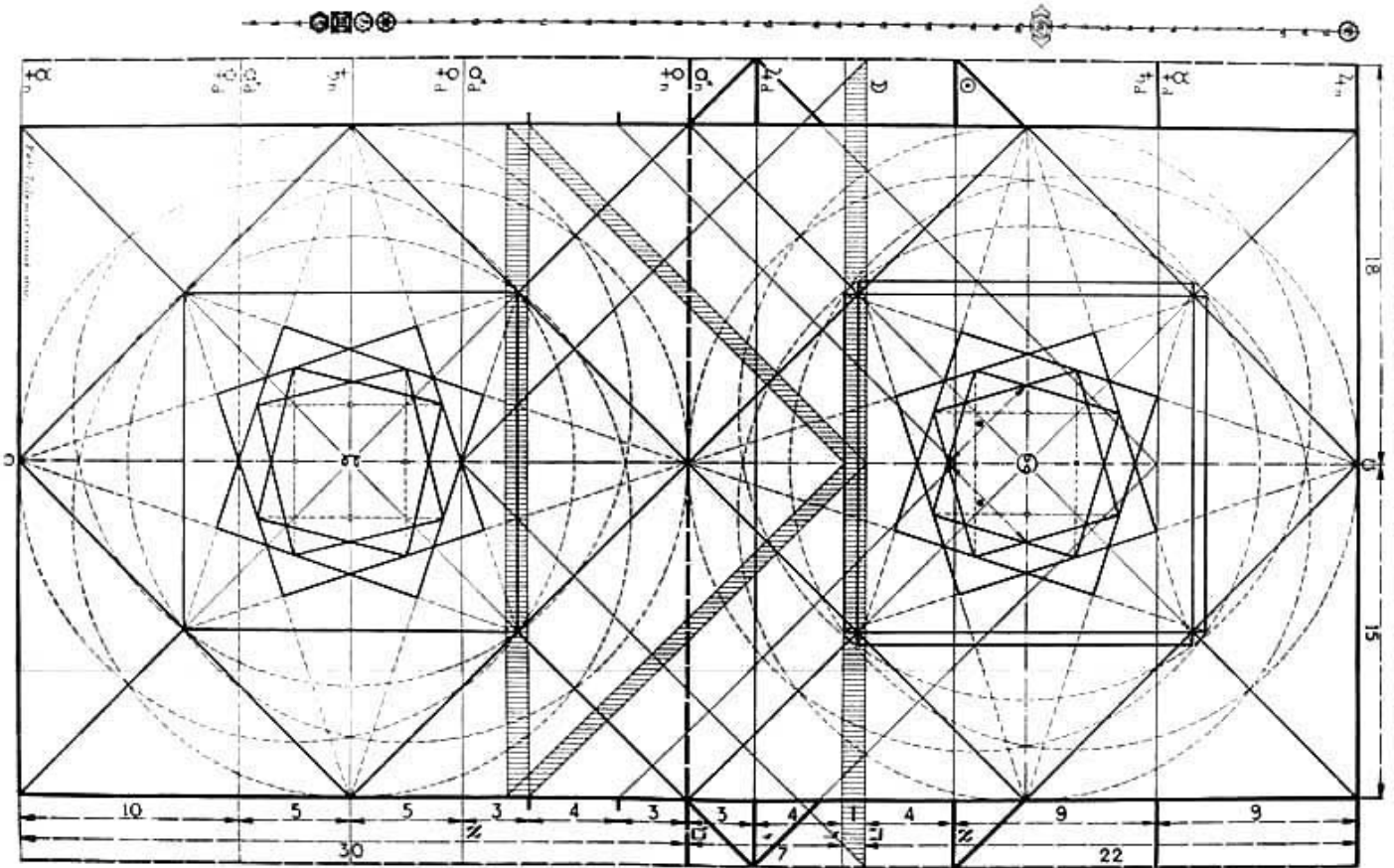
The site is, actually, the 'natural' site plus the presence of a *work*, meaning artistic work of the architect who, working in the landscape, attempts to reveal the aspects of place latent in the natural site through interventions, inversions, and provocations that lead to an 'encounter with the Real' (*tuche*) that is the essence of the artistic-poetic experience of place. The site is thus both the material presence and possibility of the physical site as well as the 'event' of the encounter of art, the process of reception, which is itself the construction of an 'inside frame' or Lacanian 'partial object', with spatial-temporal specifics customary in all works of art.

site model



The sephiroth of the Kaballah are a version of site considerations linking the highest with the lowest point in the process of meditation that sought the separation of the highest soul from the breath soul.

The Etruscans formalized the surface of the sacrificed calf's liver used in divination. The schema followed a celestial model, linking the sacrifice to seasonal variations and correlative cosmic events. The model is preserved in Piacenza, Italy.



Geometry interpreted mathematical sequences, such as the Fibonacci series, which were in turn representations of the intervals and ratios found in music. Complex overlapping figures consolidated the overdetermined relationships that linked musical harmonics with numerical relationships.