

Rus ‘Becomes’ Urbs: Hard and Soft Landscape Elements in the Gardens of Pompeii

Jessica Venner - University of Birmingham

The Roman *hortus* of the late Republican and early Imperial period came to occupy a space of societal polarities, of conflict between the old and the new, the individual and the community, the real and the surreal, the rich and the poor, and the country (*rus*) and the city (*urbs*). The latter opposition is identified by Diana Spencer as a cultural faultline existent during the early Principate,²⁷ a faultline which required careful navigation to ensure societal (or literal) survival. Wealth, and the endeavour for political power, sat at the centre of this struggle, with *horti* both public and private becoming physical manifestations of an individual’s own ambitions and desires. It is widely acknowledged that an architectural space is the product of the society which produces it. As articulated by Jones, the Roman *hortus* in particular was an expression of an individual’s internalised mental experience of other *horti* around the city in which he walked, the pages he read, and the descriptions he heard.²⁸ Yet a study which looks at the manifestation of this in the physical construction of the private *hortus*, namely via an analysis of hard and soft landscape elements, is yet to be undertaken. Such a study is important for assessing the fluency of “ordinary” individuals in the epistemological discourses of the elite and establishing the “rules [which] govern the production of Roman garden space” beyond the purely descriptive approach which has thus far dominated Roman garden scholarship.²⁹ This analysis will be taken from the perspective of the authoritative male, namely the *pater familias* (the individual most likely involved in the employment of architects and *topiarii* for private *hortus* design) in order to explore the interesting tension between who we imagine “enjoying” and “making” place in the garden, and where, when, and why.

²⁷ Spencer (2010: 246).

²⁸ Jones (2014).

²⁹ See for example Farrar (2011); Gleason (2013); Bowe (2017). While von Stackelberg (2009) and Spencer (2006) have separately approached the tension of *rus* and *urbs* present in archaeological remains and literary descriptions of Roman gardens, a study which specifically relates this common literary Roman trope to the physical design elements of *horti* of “ordinary” individuals outside of the Roman elite is still lacking. For a study which looks at wealth and status promotion in the villas of the elite on the Bay of Naples, see Zarmakoupi (2014). For the literary descriptions of leisable elite gardens, see Myers (2005).

This paper will begin by defining hard and soft landscape elements, before moving on to an assessment of the associated notions of “*rus*” in Roman elite literature during the late Republican and early Imperial periods. The findings of both will then be applied to four garden case studies from the town of Pompeii in order to analyse the social and practical motives behind hard and soft landscape compositions in Roman garden design.

Hard and soft landscape elements

In contemporary society, the role of a landscape architect is to achieve “visual unity and harmony” in the design scheme of a garden through the balanced combination of hard and soft landscape elements.³⁰ Hard landscape elements are the bones of the garden, inanimate in their composition and used to create boundaries, order the movement of individuals, and delineate and organise space. Most importantly, hard landscape elements serve to direct pedestrian movement and create lines of sight, acting as physical imprints of human intervention upon the constructed “natural” landscape of the garden. Hard elements today are understood as important for defining the “mood” and “character” of a garden space,³¹ and a major consideration in their construction is their relation not only to the “visual quality of the surrounding [area]”, but also to any space external to that of the garden.³² That hard, rather than soft, elements are related to character and mood is indicative of the element of human control inherent in their composition, their purpose understood in terms of their cognitive and physical influence upon the human body. Hard elements are composed of materials which are unlikely to change greatly over time, such as masonry, soil and wood. In the Roman garden, these may include pergolas, paths, walls, fences, terracing, water features and fountains. Soft landscape elements are characterised by their constant state of change, and as such include flowers, trees, shrubs, water and soil. These elements are at the heart of the garden and create attractive and verdant displays, contributing to the temporal and heterotopic nature of garden space (the space of the heterotopia will be discussed below).

Combining hard and soft elements requires careful planning to achieve the correct balance for a pleasing display, in consideration of the desires of the patron, much as

³⁰ Shah, Kale and Patki (2002: 168).

³¹ Blake (2015: 47).

³² Shah, Kale and Patki (2002: 168).

Vitruvius describes in the process of architectural design.³³ The human element of hard landscape elements makes it natural to apply them to the realm of *urbs*, and subsequently soft to *rus*, though in some cases the expected may not be the conclusion, as shall be demonstrated below. Keeping this in mind, we may move on to consider the *hortus* in relation to collective Roman identity, as communicated by the elite, before assessing the translation of this onto the physical space of the *hortus* from the literary and archaeological evidence available to us.

Collective Roman identity and the *hortus*

All gardens throughout history are constructed according to the agency of the human race and as such encompass, as Cook and Foulk state, the “distinct social changes and ideals” of the society which creates them.³⁴ Should we accept that nature is “socially constructed”,³⁵ while also acknowledging that an individual’s motivation is a product of societal pressures, we begin to appreciate the garden as a construct of the independent Roman mind, impressed upon by the society in which he lives. McIntosh emphasises the problematic presence of humanity in “nature”, and the blurred relationship between the two which ultimately causes nature to lose all agency to human control. Such a relationship has in history caused a “human-centred view of nature... as the beneficiary of human cultural constructions”,³⁶ hence the pastoral tradition at the centre of Roman collective identity. As such, we may view “nature [as] a grand collection of metaphors for human actions and relations”,³⁷ and begin to view the *hortus* of the early Principate as an urbane output of Imperialist ideologies which saw Rome contain the Empire within its walls, and asked its citizens to do the same.

A consideration of the Foucauldian concept of the heterotopia is useful for understanding the temporal and “physical mutability” of the garden in defining its own spatial identity and that of its creators and participants. A heterotopia is a “space in

³³ Vitruvius (*De arch.* I.2) divides architecture into six constituent parts: ordering, design, shapeliness, symmetry, correctness and allocation. The proper design, planning and construction of each according to the needs and status of the individual(s) for whom the structure is intended (e.g. I.2.9), in line with these constituent parts, constitutes good architectural practice.

³⁴ Cook and Foulk (2013: 177).

³⁵ Vogel (1996: 5). See also Reed (2001: 42) on transcendentalism and the human consciousness in relation to nature.

³⁶ McIntosh (1974: 45).

³⁷ McIntosh (1974: 51). See also Reed (2001: 41).

which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs”.³⁸ Unlike the utopia, which is an “unreal” space, heterotopias exist in the material world. They are spaces in which the real world is reflected, represented and reformed, sometimes contested and sometimes inverted. They are external to all other places, metaphorically and sometimes metaphysically, and exist as “real places that contain all other places”.³⁹ As such, the heterotopia resonates with our understanding of the Roman *hortus* in existing as a mirror of reality (natural landscape) and of thought (Roman epistemes of autochthony, tradition and *rusticitas*), understood in the moment of occupation only as a result of the space which it represents or builds upon. In other words, a heterotopia can only be “real” because of “other space, [and is] created as a result of passing through the external point of representation to come into being”.⁴⁰ The heterotopia of the garden can therefore be seen as an allegorical sponge of individual, community, and national identity in Roman history; in particular, the Roman *hortus* of the first century AD was a product of agricultural and pastoral autochthony and Roman origin, combined with cultural influences from external sources, namely the Hellenistic from the mid-first century BCE onwards. It therefore represents “territorial totality”, “onto which the whole world comes to enact its symbolic perfection”,⁴¹ and a packaged environment of boundaries which at once preserves time, fosters culture, and is at once temporary and permanent.⁴²

Augustan reforms which strove against the sterility of luxury,⁴³ growing exponentially (in the eyes of the elite, at least) since the late Republican period, caused Roman authors such as Horace and Seneca to become fascinated by the boundaries dividing *rus* and *urbs*, and *labor* and *otium*, presenting new interactions with natural landscape as in conflict with the identity of a population founded on pastoralism and agriculture. This anxiety, felt and communicated by elite authors, was founded in a consciousness of a waning “Roman” collective identity. As Connerton states, the dominant groups of society are inclined to hold themselves responsible for memory preservation by creating a sense of power and influence, locating themselves “within a linear trajectory of time, in relation to the past legitimising origins”.⁴⁴ On the other hand, subordinate groups move according to a “rhythm” set by their own intervention in the “working of the dominant

³⁸ Foucault (1986: 23).

³⁹ Soja (1996: 158).

⁴⁰ Foucault (1986: 24).

⁴¹ Soja (1996: 160).

⁴² Soja (1996: 160).

⁴³ See Hartswick (2004: 13–4) who suggests looking at the domus of Vedius Pollio for an example of this. See also Ovid *Fast.* 6.637–48 and Dio Cass. 54.23.5 for discussions of the “sterility” of *luxuria*. See Edwards (1993) for an extensive discussion on the politics of immorality (and luxury) in ancient Rome.

⁴⁴ Connerton (1989: 19).

institutions”.⁴⁵ Gardens, as heterotopias, were the perfect candidate for imprinting collective Roman identity and memory, symbols of which were captured in specific design elements and emulated by those of lower status (either via visiting the gardens of patrons and friends, or in the public gardens of Rome).⁴⁶ The evolution of the *hortus* in the first century AD, as we shall see, was a process of successful state functioning, which ultimately relied on the “adherence [of the masses] to a collective or social memory in which the elite of the empire could see their own story”.⁴⁷ In the case of the evolving Roman heterotopic *hortus* of the early Principate, the driving force was agricultural and pastoral ancestry, and by extension the “Romanisation” of Italian landscape, both wild and cultivated,⁴⁸ as well as Imperial conquest and power. The translation of this into *horti* can be read in their hard and soft element composition.

Once Upon a Poor Man’s Farm

While the heterotopia of the Roman *hortus* was useful for perpetuating collective memory, as preserved and promoted by the dominant elite, the new association of the *hortus* with *otium*, now representing the antecedent to memory preservation, was frequently placed in stark contract with *maiores nostri* and noble pastoral and political figures such as Cincinnatus and Manius Curius Dentatus who, in literary reconstructions, traditionally found time to build moral character both on the land and in the forum of Rome.⁴⁹ Most importantly, such figures were associated with the productive output of their gardens and land, as nature intended. Pliny the Elder references the direct difference between the *hortus* of the past and his present, describing it as once a space for the poor to produce humble fare for the table, “*hortus ager pauperis erat*”, but now a space from which to practice the contradiction of nature for the benefit of a man’s *otium*, given that market goods are now imported from the Empire over:⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Connerton (1989: 19). For more on collective and cultural memory, see Ferris (1999) and Orlin (2015).

⁴⁶ Zarmakoupi’s (2014) study of luxury villas on the Bay of Naples demonstrates the “sophisticated interplay of architecture and landscape” (3) established by designers and architects for the promotion of status and wealth, and for the accommodation of a life of “educated leisure in the countryside” (2), with an equal appreciation of both Greek culture and Roman landscape.

⁴⁷ Ferris (1999: 197).

⁴⁸ Woolf (1992) puts forward the contribution of memory to Romanisation.

⁴⁹ On Cincinnatus, see Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* X.23-5; Flor. *Epit.* I.11; Livy III.26-9; Plin. *HN* XVIII.4. On Manius Curius Dentatus, see Plin. *HN* VII.16; Flor. *Epit.* II.18; Juv. *Sat.* XI.78; Poly. *Hist.* II.19; Plut. *Pyr.* 25; Cic. *Sen.* 16; Val. Max. IV.3.5; VI.3.4.

⁵⁰ Plin. *HN* XIX.52.

At Rome at all events a garden was in itself a poor man's farm; the lower classes got their market-supplies from a garden—how much more harmless their fare was then!... But I protest, how little does garden produce cost, how adequate it is for pleasure and for plenty, did we not meet with the same scandal in this as in everything else! We could no doubt have tolerated that choice fruits forbidden to the poor because of their flavour or their size or their portentous shape should be grown, that wines should be kept to mature with age and robbed of their virility by being passed through strainers, and that nobody should live so long as not to be able to drink vintages older than himself...

Romae quidem per se hortus ager pauperis erat; ex horto plebei macellum, quanto innocentiore victu!... at, Hercules, quam vilia haec, quam parata voluptati satietatique, nisi eadem quae ubique indignatio occurreret! ferendum sane fuerit exquisita nasci poma, alia sapore, alia magnitudine, alia monstro pauperibus interdicta, inveterari vina saccisque castrari, nec cuiquam adeo longam esse vitam ut non ante se genita potet...

Similarly, Horace voices his own concerns regarding the imitation of natural landscape in *Satires* in which individuals now aim to create a lesser image of natural landscapes for pleasurable purposes.⁵¹ Elsewhere in *Odes*, he despairs at an invasion of luxury on ancestral land and the Roman moral consciousness, with all manner of natural elements now designed to delight the senses of an individual, rather than satiate the bellies of the many;⁵²

Surely, it's the limit that Nature sets to desires—
what she will tolerate and what she will grieve for if denied to her —
that it would be more profitable to investigate; and how to sunder void from solid?

*nonne cupidinibus statuatur Natura modum quem,
quid latura, sibi quid sit dolitura negatum,
quaerere plus prodest et inane abscindere soldo?*

Seneca the Younger, according to his Stoic principles, cites the extreme lengths humanity has now gone to in order to defy nature, in building gardens on rooftops, causing flowers to bloom out of season, growing fruit trees on walls, and raising forests inside houses,

⁵¹ Hor. *Sat.* I.II.111–113. See also Hor. *Od.* II.15.

⁵² Horace *Od.* II.15.

the artificiality of which scarcely reach the level of perfection achieved by Mother Nature herself.⁵³ His Father similarly states:⁵⁴

I can scarcely believe any of these people have seen forests, or green, grassy plains, with a stream flowing through, turbulent in steep ground, calm in flat... For who could delight his mind with such debased imitations if he knew the reality?

Vix possum credere quemquam eorum vidisse silvas virentisque gramine3 campos, quos rapidus amnis ex praecipitio vel, cum per plana infusus est, placidus interfluit... quis enim tam pravis oblectare animum imitamentis possit si vera cognoverit?

Seneca the Younger writes during the excess which infamously characterised the reign of Nero when unnatural features, such as *euripi* (straight masonry imitations of rivers) were already well-recognised as a feature of public, and some private, *horti*.⁵⁵ Here both the younger and elder Seneca acknowledge the extreme levels reached by the perpetual mimesis (or imitation) first of natural landscape, then of *horti*, up to a point where the template of the natural landscape has become so distant from urban versions that the two are no longer comparable. This effect was not only limited to urban gardens, however. Martial describes the villas of the elite as “all elegance and starvation”, even poking fun at his own unproductive garden,⁵⁶ while later Pliny the Younger, as Myers astutely highlights, kept the rustic garden at his Tuscan villa visible to all visitors, yet off limits due to its lack of decorum.⁵⁷

The literature therefore leads us to believe that the *hortus* of the first century AD was an unnatural construct, overwhelmed by hard, manmade landscape elements for the benefit of *otium*, with a lasting attachment to soft elements as indicative of collective memory attached to the Golden Age of agricultural endeavour and simple living, now manipulated to be bigger, better, and tastier.⁵⁸ Thus soft elements, as much as hard, are vulnerable to becoming symbols of aspiration for lower status emulators. An example of this can be found in the imaginary court case (hence *Controversiae*) related by Seneca

⁵³ Sen. *Ep.* CXXII.7-10.

⁵⁴ Sen. *Controv.* II.13.

⁵⁵ As Zarmakoupi (2014: 157-62) highlights, *euripi* were also symbolic nods to Roman technical innovation in the area of water management, their name coming from the Greek *euripus* for the unrestrained strait between Boeotia and the island of Euboea. For further reading on water rights in Roman Italy, see Bannon (2009) and Jansen (2018).

⁵⁶ Mart. *Ep.* III.58; III.58.

⁵⁷ Plin. *Ep.* II.17.

⁵⁸ For an overview of Roman gardening techniques, see Farrar (2011); Gleason (2015); Jashemski (2018). For a wider overview of this development in ancient garden history, see Bowe (2019).

the Elder which tells how rich man who burns down his poor next-door neighbour's tree due to it blocking his view. In response, the poor man admonishes the tendency of the rich to modify nature for personal pleasure and capture imitations of natural landscapes within:⁵⁹

You rich possess for fields the territory of cities, and cities you fill with your houses. Within your buildings you confine water and groves... Beneath this little tree I used to picture to myself the forests owned by the rich.

Vos possidetis agros, urbium fines, urbesque domibus impletis; intra aedificia vestra undas ac nemora comprehenditis... Sub hac arbuscula imaginabar divitum silvas.

The heterotopia of the poor man's garden is transformed by his projection of elite ideologies onto the soft element of his "little tree". In other words, the poor man attached the symbolism preserved and promoted by dominant societal groups to the humble soft elements in his garden, thereby creating an imaginary space in which he was able to participate in bucolic collective Roman identity and aspire to better. His intention is noble: it does not require the costly confinement of "water and groves" to create the illusion of an escape to better times past, or better landscapes in the present, only natural soft elements from the realm of *rus*.

Let us consider the main points of discovery thus far. We have witnessed elite anxieties associated with a new disregard for not only for autochthonic identity relating to agriculture and pastoralism, as represented in the new and unproductive utilisation of *hortus* space for egocentric use. Further, we have considered the *hortus* as a heterotopia, within which the material world can be reflected, reformed and inverted, a container of the external, combining empirical and epistemological representations. Thus *rus* and *urbs*, via a consideration of their representation in hard and soft landscape elements, can be investigated in order to understand the motives behind garden design and use. The next portion of this paper will consider the construction of the garden and the dominant design choices emerging in the first century AD, before assessing real case studies from the town of Pompeii.

⁵⁹ Sen. *Controu*. 5.5.

The Construction of the *Hortus*

Gleason, in her assessment of the construction stages of garden design, finds a schematic shift from trees as a central design feature of *horti*, to “diverse and exotic plant displays from around the empire”, or the creation of the *locus amoenas*, by the mid-first century AD.⁶⁰ One central element of the latter stage was the development of *ars topiaria*, a practice which combines the imagination, skill and acquisition of certain plant species to “evoke places”.⁶¹ As found by Landgren, this practice emerged sometime during the mid-first century AD, at the same time that the *topiarius*, a skilled craftsman specialising in landscape design, and *viridaria*, “a novel display of well-arranged plants”, also appeared.⁶² The types of *ars topiaria* are summarised in Table 1.⁶³ All four have the outcomes of leisure and beauty in common. Numerous pieces of evidence point towards the widespread use of *ars topiaria* by this time, despite their apparent link to *luxuria*. While Pliny the Elder admonishes the “captured” trees now imported regularly from exotic lands, and the unnatural “aborted” state of *nemora tonsilia* due to their harsh pruning,⁶⁴ his nephew Pliny the Younger proudly declares the shaping of animals, in addition to his name and that of his *topiarius*, from box hedge in his villa *hortus* at Laurentum, as just one element of a display of his wealth.⁶⁵ He also uses shaped hedges to disguise the hard boundaries of the *hortus* wall.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Gleason and Palmer (2018: 375).

⁶¹ Gleason (2013: 17).

⁶² Landgren (2004: 178-92). See also von Stackelberg (2009: 18-9); Gleason (2013: 17).

⁶³ Landgren (2013: 82-5); Purcell (1995: 144); Gleason and Palmer (2018: 376-7).

⁶⁴ Plin. *HN* XII.112; XII.6.

⁶⁵ Plin. *Ep.* II.17. A reconstruction of Pliny’s Hippodrome *hortus* can be found in Farrar (2011: 56). Examples of decorative box hedge can be found in Pompeian gardens, for example in the garden of property I.xii.11.

⁶⁶ Plin. *Ep.* V.17-8.





Plant cut into three-dimensional shapes	Shapes created by training ivy or other vines around a shaped form	The creation of shapes made by cutting scenes or patterns into low hedges	Dwarfed trees (<i>nemora tonsilia</i>)
			

Table 1: Types of *ars topiaria*. Images: (left to right) Saga; Wikipedia; Jamie Royer/Flickr; Author's own.

Elsewhere, Cicero praises the skill of his brother's *topiarius* is the artful decoration of statues with vines, so mimetic of nature that they appear to be doing the gardening themselves (see Figure 1):⁶⁷

True, the house at present has an air of high thinking which rebukes the wild extravagance of other country houses; but still that addition will be pleasant. I commended the gardener. He has covered everything with ivy, the foundation wall of the house and the intervals between the columns in the promenade, so that the statues in their Greek cloaks look as though they were doing ornamental gardening and advertising their ivy.

quamquam ea villa quae nunc est tamquam philosopha videtur esse quae obiurget ceterarum villarum insaniam. verum tamen illud additum delectabit. topiarium laudavi. ita omnia convestivit hedera, qua basim villae, qua intercolumnia ambulationis, ut denique illi palliati topiariam facere videantur et hederam vendere.

In Pompeii, a similar effect is found in the instances of pergolas, the findings of vine root cavities at the base of supporting columns suggesting that they were trailed with vines for the purpose of shade, or similarly around statues.⁶⁸ In frescoes, *nemora tonsilia* are

⁶⁷ Cic. *QFr.* III.1.5.

⁶⁸ For example, vine root cavities at the base of the garden pergola columns were found in the House of Ephebe (i.vii.10-12/19) (Mauri (1929: 370 and pl. 20)), in a small house with a large garden (I.xiv.2), and in a fresco from the Villa of P. Fannio Sinistore at Boscoreale (of a vine-covered arbour). See also Jashemski (1972: 1, 94-97).

used much in the same way as the hard, visual features of fountains in dividing space and providing an illusion of depth, while elsewhere frescoes show vine-covered pergolas.⁶⁹ The mystifying nature of *ars topiaria* straddles the concepts of hard and soft in creating an illusion of an imitate object, much like a statue, from soft elements and posing them as invulnerable to the natural process of growth. The reflection of nature, and inversion of temporality, furthers the image of the heterotopia. In such a sense one might be tempted to categorise *ars topiaria* as a hard element, though this would be playing into the hands of the Romans own ambition of order and control which sat at the centre of Empire.⁷⁰ Instead, such displays may be associated with epistemes of *urbs*, and support the elite anxieties discussed above regarding a movement away from the natural to the controlled in the Roman *hortus*. This is important to keep in mind for the following discussion.

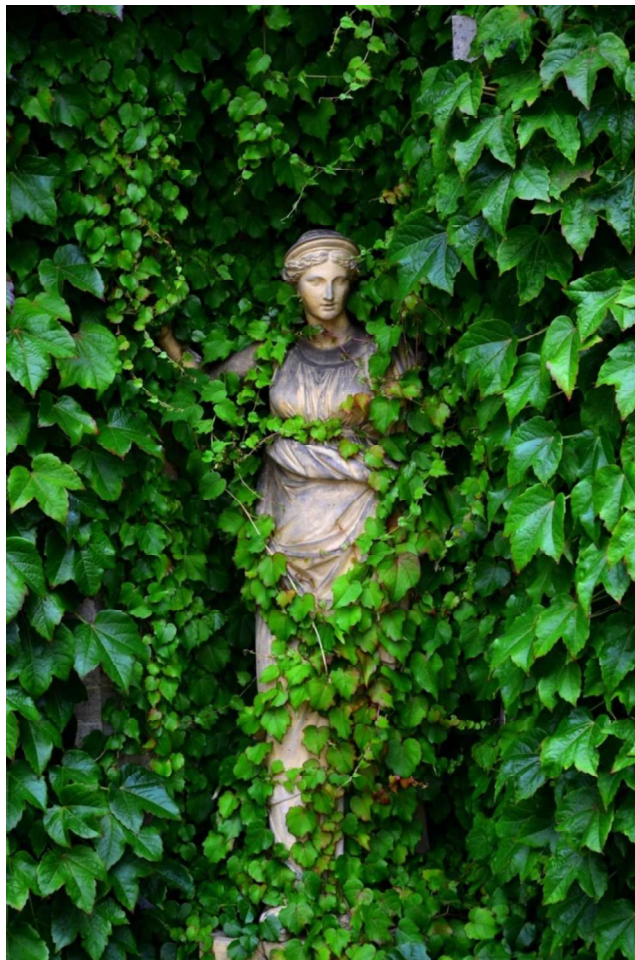


Figure 1: A classical statue covered in ivy, in the tradition of *ars topiaria* as described by Cicero.
Image: Matthew Deamer/Flickr.

⁶⁹ For further discussion of garden frescoes, see Ciarallo (2001); Bergmann (2018).

⁷⁰ Gleason (2013: 39).

How far then was this development in *hortus* design, from the rustic to the urbane, represented in the *horti* of the lower- and middle-classes? To answer this question, the following will consider four case studies of gardens from Pompeii, chosen for their abundance of recoverable material with regards to both soft and hard landscape elements. The chosen case studies will be treated as representative of the development of *hortus* design and use over time, beginning with an example of a traditional manifestation of *rus* in an urban *hortus*. Two *horti* exhibiting *rus* connotations for the purpose of display and status will then be assessed, before concluding with one example of a non-elite *hortus* which most closely represents the culmination of *urbs* epistemes in *hortus* design in the first century AD, thereby demonstrating the persistent epistemological link between hard and soft landscape elements and elite-preserved collective identity.

A Symbol of *Rus* in *Urbs* in the Shop-House Garden

The Shop-House Garden (I.xx.5) is a humble commercial-domestic property found in Region I of Pompeii, residing in the greenest portion of the town, where many market gardens were discovered by Wilhelmina Jashemski from the 1960s onwards. The property consisted of living quarters above, accessed via the stairs held in the south-east corner of the second storage room on the ground floor (found to the north-east of the property), a shop facing onto the wide Via della Palestra, three rear storage rooms (the rear containing one large *dolium*), and a large productive garden full of fruit and nut trees and vines to the south-west (see Figure 2), accessible via a door from the west wall of the shop.

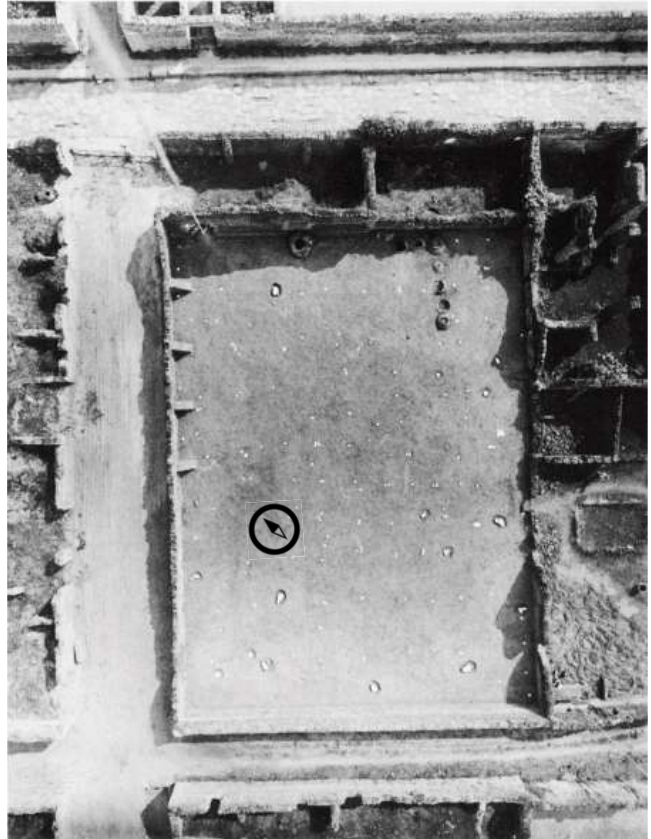
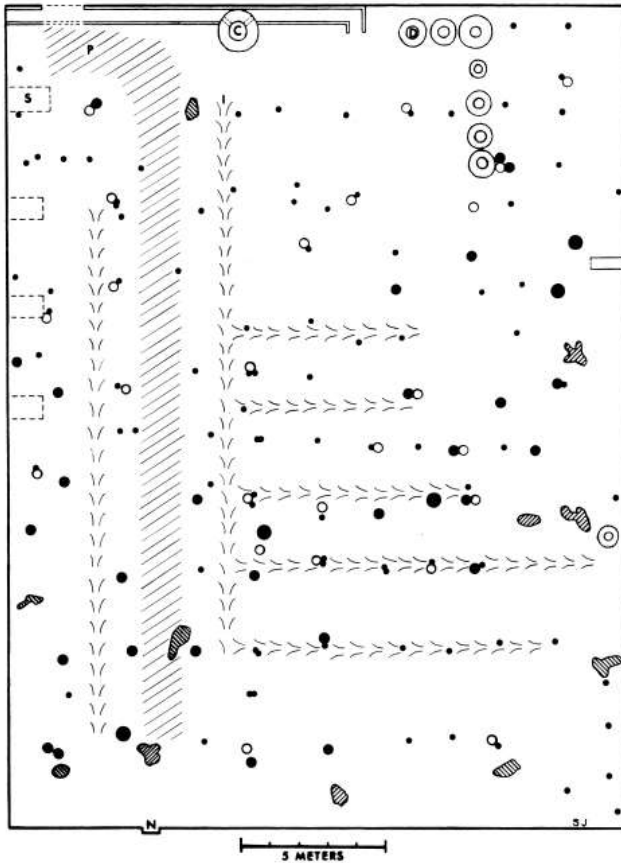


Figure 2: Plans of the Shop-House Garden (I.xx.5) showing root cavities.
Images: Wilhelmina Jashemski (1977: 219-222).

Like others in Pompeii, this *hortus* was created from a space previously occupied by a construction likely destroyed in the earthquake of AD 62 (Jashemski 1977: 221), demonstrating demand strong enough to warrant the creation of a *hortus* over an architectural structure.⁷¹ The hard boundary wall to the north-east was set along its length with broken amphorae, presumably to deter thieves from stealing the fruit growing within. The discovery of toys, hair pins, lamps, cooking equipment, and a working lararium during excavations suggested to excavators that this garden was used as an alternative living area to make up for the lack of indoor space (Jashemski 1977: 226).⁷² Following the earthquake of 62 AD, a large cistern had been constructed in the north-eastern portion of the garden, in front of an original doorway which had been walled over. Through the pipes running along the building, rainwater would have been

⁷¹ Plaster on the base of the south-east wall indicated a previous structure with walls had been removed. Other properties noted by Jashemski as having been removed in favour of gardens are VI.v.7 and VIII.vi.5.

⁷² Jashemski (1977: 226).

collected in the cistern. This water would likely have been used to support the growth of young plants, such as trees, and vegetables, all of which require a lot of water in the early years of establishment,⁷³ making this a good example of a hard landscape element used for non-recreational purposes. Judging by the presence of the *dolia* and the width of these vines, “from 2.5 cm to 17.5 cm with a median largest dimension of 10 cm”,⁷⁴ these vines were at least three years old and producing harvestable fruit, perhaps explaining the presence of the nine *dolia* embedded around the garden.

The small family who cooked, worked, played and took shade here likely shared a similar mentality to that of the poor man in Seneca’s letter, their healthful space below the shade of their fruit trees and vines transporting them to a “real-and-imagined” landscape in compliance with Roman collective identity. All elements, hard and soft, within the garden were directed towards rustic endeavour or daily activity, such as cooking. This garden is therefore an example of a working *hortus*, with hard and soft elements alike equally driven towards commercial output. Given the identification of this as a working vineyard, with young ordered vines and nine embedded *dolia*, it appears that this *hortus* was also providing an income for the shopkeeper and his family, an achievement of true *rusticitas*. It was an agricultural heterotopia in miniature, inverting the expectations of mid-first century AD *horti*, and epistemes of a lost past communicated by the elite, in bringing the external bucolic landscape into the city via soft landscape elements.

Pseudo-*rusticitas* in the House of Julius Polybius and the House of the Ephebe

In Region IX, insula 13, we find an extension of the rustic mentality in the House of Julius Polybius (IX.xiii.1) (see Figure 3). This large property (measuring 7,500 square foot) is thought to have been owned at the time of the eruption by C. Julius Philippus, freedman of another (possibly Imperial) freedman C. Julius Polybius (see Nappo 199: 52; Solin 1996, 252, 260; Jashemski 1979: 26; Allison 2001: 53-74). The property boasted two atriums, one with an impluvium, as well as a large peristyle garden. Within the planted peristyle, five large root cavities, one smaller tree cavity, and a row of small, young roots in *ollae perforatae* (terracotta pots with four holes planted in the ground) along the eastern wall of the garden were found by Jashemski and her team between 1973 and 1978. Stakes were also found, suggesting that fruit and nut trees may have been propped up nearby (Jashemski 1979: 28). One tree was identified as that of an olive, another a

⁷³ Jashemski (1977: 223-4). See also Col. RR 10.143-8 who discusses the importance of close water sources for the garden.

⁷⁴ Jashemski (1977: 224).

filbert, a third a walnut, while the remainder were suspected as being fig trees, due to the many carbonised figs and pollen found here. In the soil, the imprint of an 8-metre-long fruit ladder was found lying on a north-west to south-east angle, akin to the distinctive shape and size of those used in the area by fruit pickers today.⁷⁵ Entertainment rooms, including two *oeci*, look out onto this rustic display in which the pastoral activities of the countryside are directly alluded to. Small landscape scenes in the indoor frescoes of this property, in addition to garden frescoes in the peristyle, provide further visions of *rus* to visitors and household members alike.

C. Julius Philippus appears to have aspired to the ideologies of the elite discussed above. This is even more likely if one considers the real possibility that Philippus may have owned land outside of the town, or alternatively used his peristyle as an aspirational imitation of this. This garden therefore serves as an example of a wealthy freedman in Pompeian society conforming to elite tropes of *rusticitas* in order to demonstrate his conformity with collective Roman identity via the exclusive display of soft landscape elements in his peristyle garden. Where this garden differs from that of the Shop-House Garden above is in the possible transplantation of exotic plant species among native, suggested by Jashemski to be citrus, thought in the 1st C. AD to be a fairly recent addition to Campania.⁷⁶ Jashemski reached this conclusion due to the *ollae perforatae* (stated by Pliny to be a method of transporting this plant) surrounding the young roots, as well as nails for espaliering the branches to the wall, as is still practiced today (Jashemski 1979, 29). Regardless of species, exotic or native, the effort that went into maintaining and improving this small garden suggests the presence of workers with special knowledge of horticulture, perhaps even a *topiarius*, and a long-term soft landscaping plan.

While the produce of these five large trees was unlikely to have supported the nutritional requirements of the inhabitants whose skeletons were found here (numbering twelve plus an unborn foetus, though true inhabitants could have been more or less than this; see Ciarallo and De Carolis 2001), they were likely a positive addition to any communal feast, as a symbol of the *pater familias*' Roman character. In this property we are once again looking at a *hortus* heterotopia, metaphorically and metaphysically reflective of the external world of agriculture, as well as the bucolic setting for mythical events and ancestral virtue, found below the shade of fruit and nut trees and in frescoes found on

⁷⁵ Jashemski (1981: 32).

⁷⁶ Vergil is the first Latin author to mention the citrus tree, referring to it as the Median apple (*G.* II.126-7). Pliny the Elder states that it was imported and acclimatised for its medicinal properties (*HN* 15.47). Theophrastus says the tree is grown in pots with holes in them (*Hist. pl.* IV.iv.3). For more on the citrus, see Jashemski (2002: 102-3). Depictions of this tree have been found in the House of the Fruit Orchard and garland paintings, examples of which are now kept in the Naples Museum (e.g. Inv. No. 8526).

the walls of this domus. This, and the next case study, demonstrate the use of soft elements as indicative of *rus* in the first century AD “middling class” *domus*.



Figure 3: Peristyle in the House of Julius Polybius, Pompeii. Source: Archaeological Park of Pompeii.

We find another display of pseudo-*rusticitas* in the House of the Ephebe, in Region I of Pompeii (I.vii.10-12). This was a large domus, potentially larger due to the adjoining domus which could be reached via the door at the rear of the garden. The garden of this property was divided into two discrete areas. To the west we find a large masonry triclinium backed by a decorative altar-cum-water-feature, with steps leading down for the flow of water. The pygmies and Nile scenes in the frescoes decorating the triclinium add to the Nilotic theme. A vine-covered pergola and complimentary statues completed the display (for a reconstruction, see Figure 4). The vines on the pergola were presumably mainly for the purpose of shade.



145 Vine-covered triclinium in the garden of the House of the Ephebe. Today glass protects Egyptian paintings on the triclinium.

Figure 4: Hortus vine-covered pergola and triclinium in the House of the Ephebe. Source: Pompeiinpictures.

To the east, excavators uncovered a rectangular area divided from the rest of the garden by a path and a reed fence, topped with herms. Within this space, the remains of a vegetable garden were found, the furrows preserved in the conditions of the eruption.⁷⁷ The area was perpendicular to the masonry triclinium and would as such have been in direct view of any visitors lounging and dining on the couches. This layout appears to have been designed to facilitate a better view for guests to the house, who would have been positioned on the *lectus summus* and *lectus medius* in the triclinium (see Figure 5). Most significantly, places on the *lectus medius* were reserved for the higher status guests, which in this case would have had a direct view of the rustic garden, even with the water

⁷⁷ From the forthcoming companion to Jashemski, Gleason, Hartswick and Malek (2018).

course dividing the *lectus medius*.⁷⁸ My own spatial syntax analysis has since shown the limited access of this space to strangers, meaning that a display of rustic endeavour was intended to be displayed to those being entertained at the triclinium.⁷⁹

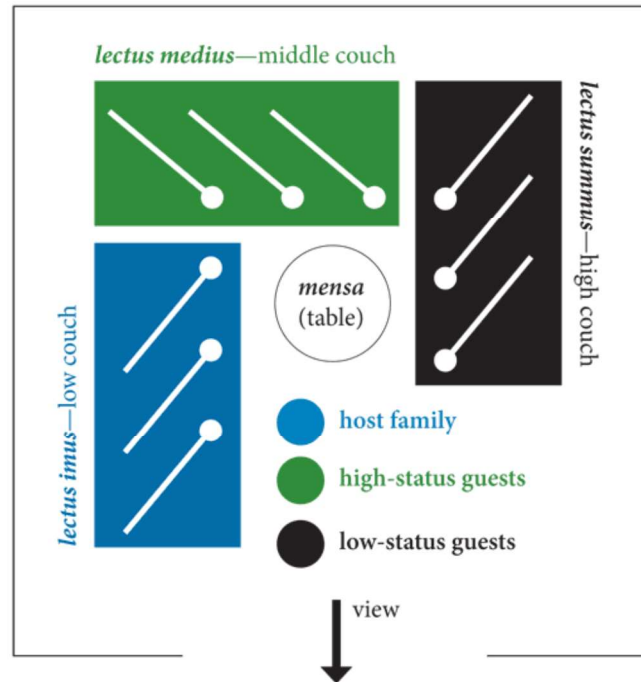


Figure 5: Reclining in the Roman triclinium. Image: The Getty Iris/Getty Center.

The incorporation of hard landscape elements into a garden scheme would have cost money, with size, materials, and labour affecting price. For example, a fountain decorated with marine shells would require the sourcing of shells,⁸⁰ the design and labour, as well as the cost for materials for the structure, and the mosaics and/or frescoes (see below for a discussion of the link between hard landscape elements in the *hortus* and suggested wealth). In this garden we find a perfect example of the Foucauldian heterotopia, in which almost all of the six dimensions described above reside. In the garden the juxtaposed cultures of Greece, Rome, and Egypt meet, as an historical and cultural monument to a new collective memory, a direct output of Imperialism. On one hand, the *pater familias*' urbane and cultured nature is confirmed with a hard, structural area for entertaining and exotic decoration, while simultaneously his rustic roots and strength of Roman identity are visibly exhibited. The patron's own input into the creation

⁷⁸ For more on the positions of diners, see Clarke (2006: 224-5); Mols (2007-2008: 157).

⁷⁹ Findings of author forthcoming.

⁸⁰ In personal correspondence with Mark Robinson (2020), he indicated that the shells chosen for fountains were of a uniform and specific type, and not of the type typically eaten.

of this *hortus* space is made even more convincing by his suspected source of wealth through commerce;⁸¹ perhaps this household had access to Egyptian trade routes and culture through their occupational endeavours, as was increasingly possible following the Battle of Actium in 31 BC and Augustus' subsequent increase in trade with Egypt. Further, the garden is both penetrable and accessible, to a select few, and exists as a combined hard-and-soft landscaping scheme only as a result of passing through external points of representation, in native and established, as well as new and exotic, collective memory. *Rus* is brought into *urbs* under the control of the *pater familias*, in his own heterotopic creation.

Urbs Conquers Rus in the House of D. Octavius Quartio

Within many Pompeian properties we may consider the Augustan Imperial influence, with the elaborate display of water and the growing dominance of hard over soft elements from the late Republican period onwards. The introduction of aqueduct water to the town of Pompeii in the second half of the first century BC⁸² opened up many possibilities for *hortus* decoration and use to the citizens living there, though the decorative display of it was still limited to the wealthy few. The pinnacle of the luxurious display of water, and the subsequent implied wealth of the owner, can be found in the House of D. Octavius Quartio (II.ii.2), in Region II of Pompeii. The garden took up much of the space (approx. 2,520m²) of the property and can be taken as a representation of the culmination of structural design in the first century AD Roman *hortus*, with a strong dominance of hard over soft landscape elements.

Taking Pliny the Younger's Tuscan villa as an example,⁸³ we find a strong relation between the features of his *hortus* and that of Octavius Quartio, with a *gestatio* shaped around the verdant display of a symmetrical planting scheme, flowing water, and ordered flower beds.⁸⁴ The frequent allusions to literary scenes, for example frescoes of scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the garden,⁸⁵ are direct allusions to the "Other" space of this garden by the *pater familias*. This is a heterotopia which combines mythological and bucolic scenes with elite creations of public and private horti, through

⁸¹ Archaeological Park of Pompeii.

⁸² Jones and Robinson (2005); Laurence (2006: 44); Bannon (2010); Mays (2010: 121-3). For a survey of Pompeii's water supply, see Eschebach (1996).

⁸³ Plin. *Ep.* V.6.

⁸⁴ See Gleason (2013: 39). Significantly, Pliny the Younger omits any description of statues in his *horti*.

⁸⁵ Knox (2015).

the careful combination of hard and soft elements. Even the euripus, famously created on a large scale by Agrippa in the Campus Martius in 19 BC, is recreated here in an impressive 51.5m length.⁸⁶ This euripus is traversed by small temples and pergolas adorned with the effects of *ars topiaria*, themselves primarily used for the shading of fish, a detail which would undoubtedly have incensed the likes of Seneca and Varro who speak out against such practices.⁸⁷

A sense of perspective is also created by these hard elements, an effect which demonstrates Vitruvian-like planning on the part of an *architectus*, before the interference of the *topiarius*, and one which supports Gleason's theory of first century AD *horti* preoccupied with the rationality of geometric design. The shrubs which once grew here were likely a target of the practice of *ars topiaria* given the rest of the context of this *hortus*. The elaborate combination of soft and hard elements, the former tightly controlled by the rational composition of hard structural elements or in the nature of such (for example, through ordered planting) are combined to create a true Roman heterotopia in which *urbs* and the human fully conquers *rus*.

Hard Landscape Elements and Wealth

Before any conclusion can be made regarding the evolving design elements of the Roman *hortus*, one may question the accessibility of hard landscape elements by wealth and house type. Was the overwhelming presence of hard landscape elements in gardens such as that owned by D. Octavius Quartio purely a reflection of evolving landscape design trends, or was it also an indicator of wealth? To test this theory, we may take an approach similar to that applied by Wallace-Hadrill to his study of atriate housing in Pompeii and Herculaneum, as linked to wealth and status. As he states (1990: 167): “a house must be of a certain minimum size to enable construction of an impluviate atrium”, the atrium thus considered an indicator of wealth. It therefore follows that the inclusion of a peristyle (additional to, or sometimes instead of, an atrium) can be deemed synonymous with those of the “middling” and “upper classes”,⁸⁸ or those who were more likely living above subsistence level (with disposable income). As Vitruvius emphasises, such open

⁸⁶ Measured using the PBMP (2020) measurement tool.

⁸⁷ Seneca the Younger (*Ir.* XL.3; *Clem.* XVIII.2-3; *Ep.* XC) speaks of the brutal man Vedius Pollio who throws one of his slaves to his death in his fishpond, to be eaten by lampreys. Varro (*RR* III.xvii.2-9) sees only cost as an outcome of the fishpond and speaks openly of Hortensius who treats his fish better than his slaves.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of the development of the Roman peristyle in Pompeii, see Dickmann (1997) and Grahame (2001).

spaces were only required for the reception of the public, and as such only required by those of an important standing, namely patrons and those in the public sphere.⁸⁹ By this deduction, the houses of study would also be guaranteed to have at least one garden. Thus, a brief analysis of all recorded excavations of gardens from Pompeii⁹⁰ was undertaken to test any link which may exist between the inclusion of hard landscape elements in private Pompeian *horti* and wealth.

Of the total dataset, those with at least one peristyle and one garden were assessed, due to the above rationale. In the properties with at least one peristyle (and therefore deemed to be of “above-average wealth”), 40 percent were found to have one or more forms of decorative features in the included garden(s) (here classified as hard artistic features, such as a fountain, statue or stucco), 23 percent a pool, 11 percent an outdoor triclinium or biclinium, and 32 percent with artistic depictions of gardens, found both indoors and outdoors. This contrasts with houses which include no peristyle or portico area (but do include a garden), with only 21 percent found to have one or more decorative garden features, 16 percent a pool, 11 percent with triclinia or biclinia, and 26 percent with an indoor or outdoor garden fresco. This dataset represents only material which survived the eruption and was retrieved and recorded during excavations, the data for triclinia being especially problematic, as these were not always made from materials which survived the eruption (wood being a popular choice). Nonetheless, from the surviving data, it can be suggested that households of above-average wealth were more likely to include hard landscape elements in their garden(s) than those of lower incomes. Should one take out the question of wealth, one can conclude that those with peristyle houses were more likely to incorporate hard landscape elements in their gardens. Though the data is even more incomplete for archaeobotanical and horticultural evidence, houses with no peristyles also exhibited a higher frequency of regular planting in rows and furrows, synonymous with productive gardening, in addition to higher evidence of root cavities for vegetables, herbs and/or flowers, perhaps reflecting a higher tendency for self-sufficiency.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Vitruvius, *De Arc.* I.2.9; see also Wallace-Hadrill (1990: 167).

⁹⁰ This data was taken from the forthcoming companion to Jashemski, Gleason, Hartswick and Malek (2018).

⁹¹ For those without a peristyle, 0.04 percent had regular rows, 0.05 percent furrows, and 0.06 percent vegetables, herbs and/or flowers, in comparison to 0.02 percent, 0.03 percent and 0.03 percent respectively for properties with a peristyle.

Conclusion

In four gardens from Pompeii we have witnessed the careful combination of hard and soft elements in the *hortus* for the satisfaction of a patron's desires. In the humblest of *horti*, such as that of the Shop-House Garden, this was the combined desire for monetary profit and a heterotopic space from which to escape the realities of urban life and play a humble role in collective Roman identity via *rus* in *urbs*. In other *horti*, such as the House of the Ephebe and the House of Julius Polybius, a more sophisticated combination of hard and soft elements were put to use in creating at once a cultured space of exotic lands, belonging to recent Imperial conquest, while also paying homage to good Roman character in a deliberate display of *rus* in productive plantings and garden or landscape paintings. We have also seen the culmination of this design development in the House of D. Octavius Quartio, in which the domination of hard over soft landscape elements acts as a conscious statement of Imperialism and the patron's conformity with an evolving collective Roman identity. Thus, through the lens of hard and soft landscape elements we have witnessed the development of the *hortus* in the first century AD and established a link between the balance of these elements in *hortus* design and the discourses of the dominant elite groups in Roman society. We can therefore conclude that the *hortus* of the first century AD came to be the space in which the social ambitions of a Roman citizen were expressed via the careful balance and placement of hard and soft landscape elements, providing the opportunity for even the poorest of men to express their conformism to the collective Roman identity under their modest tree at the back of their *hortus*.

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