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# *John Evelyn's "Elysium Britannicum" and European Gardening*

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# Parterre, Grove, and Flower Garden: European Horticulture and Planting Design in John Evelyn's Time

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*In memory of Donna Salzer*

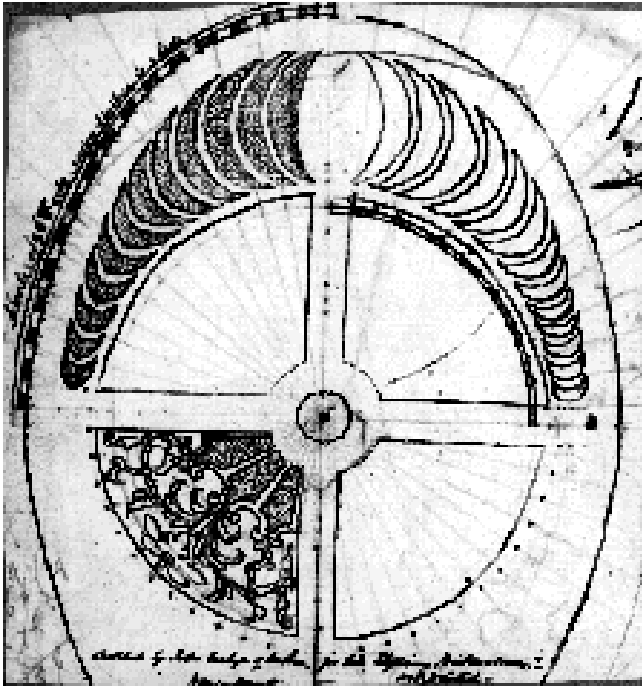
Chapter five, book two of John Evelyn's "Elysium Britannicum" ends with an instruction: "Place here the fig {draughts} of the Parterrs." Similarly chapter seven, book two concludes with a reminder: "Here inserte the Plotts of Groves & {other} Relievos."<sup>1</sup> Because all of these illustrations are missing from the manuscript, however, the challenge of reading Evelyn's text is to translate his verbal account into visual form. At first sight, the survival of a single plan for a parterre in the Drawings Collection of the British Architectural Library in London seems to offer an answer (Fig. 1), for it contains an inscription by William Upcott: "Sketched by John Evelyn of Wotton for his 'Elysium Britannicum'—not printed."<sup>2</sup>

Yet, closer examination of this sketch reveals the complexities behind the matching of text to image. Firstly, there is reason to doubt the validity of the inscription, because the words around the

I would like to thank John Harvey for his willingness to identify the plants mentioned by John Evelyn in connection with planting in the parterre, grove, and flower garden. He has, over many months, provided further invaluable comments on my text and offered useful suggestions on sources. I am also grateful to the following people who have helped in various ways to improve the final text: C. Allan Brown, Douglas Chambers, Michel Conan, Peter Goodchild, Michael Hunter, John E. Ingram, Erik de Jong, John Dixon Hunt, Susan Taylor Leduc, Prudence Leith-Ross, Nicholas Purcell, Ada Segre, Ruth Stungo, Sally Wages, Robert Williams, and Jan Woudstra. Finally, I would like to thank John Wing, librarian at Christ Church, Oxford, for his kind help in providing access to the manuscripts.

<sup>1</sup> See here the manuscript kept at the British Library, London: John Evelyn, "Elysium Britannicum; or The Royal Garden in Three Books," chap. 5, p. 77, and chap. 7, p. 111. I have used John E. Ingram's transcription of October 1992 for all quotations in this essay.

<sup>2</sup> This plan was first published in J. Brown, *The Art and Architecture of English Gardens*, London and New York, 1989, 39. The execution of the 1653 plan seems problematic. Michael Hunter had originally suggested to me that it was in the hand of Evelyn's amenuensis, Richard Hoare, who did bits of calligraphy for him ca. 1650. However, in a letter of October 18, 1993, Hunter elaborated on the handwriting of the key: "This does *not* look like Hoare's hand, but it is certainly not Evelyn's either: i.e., it could be the hand of another professional scribe (and the drawing could be by a professional draughtsman)."



1. Sketch plan of a parterre, attributed to John Evelyn by William Upcott but of uncertain draftsmanship (photo: British Architectural Library/RIBA. Drawings Collection, London)

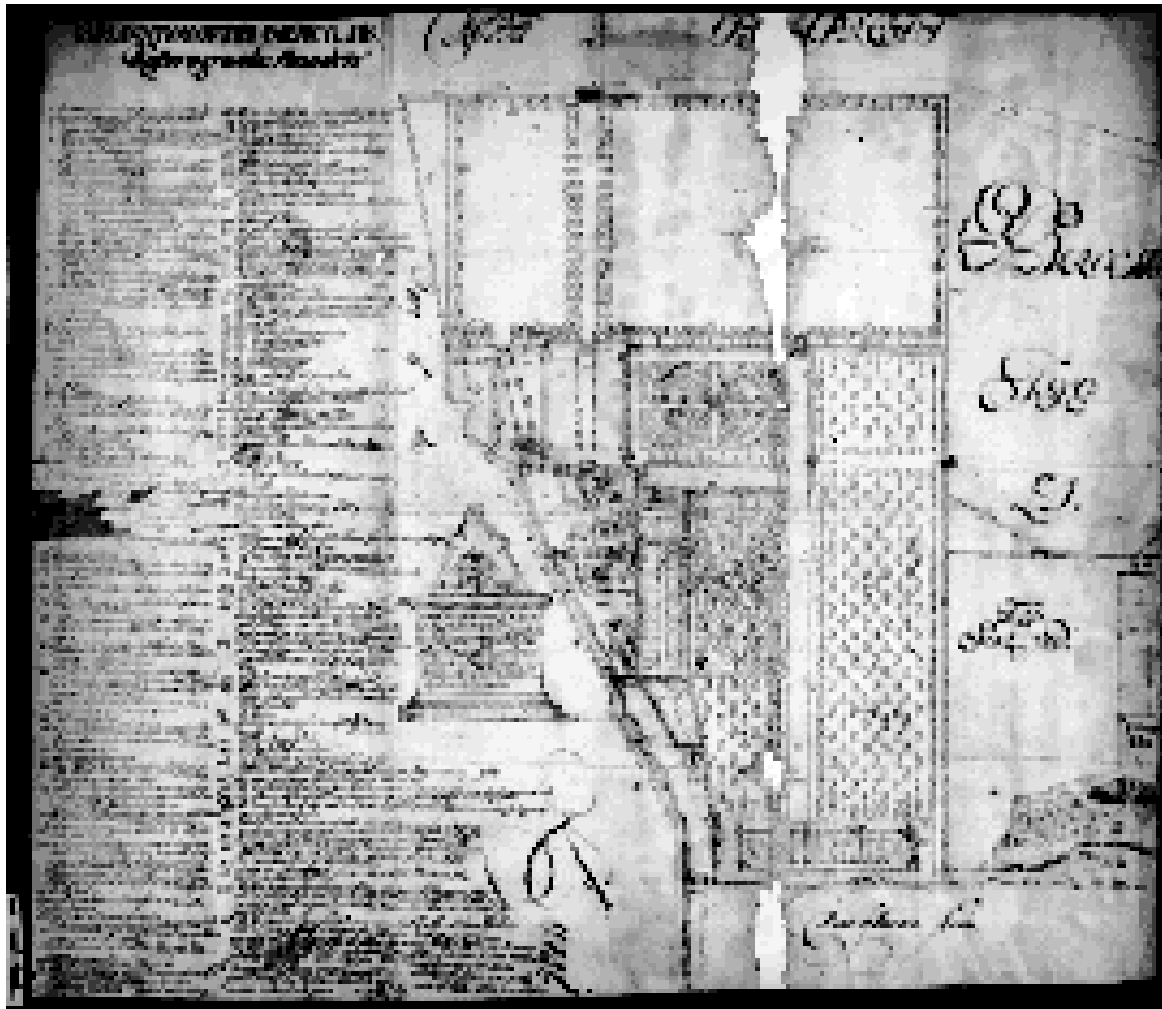
edge of the sketch are not in Evelyn's hand and because Upcott's caption has no authority in itself. Secondly, as the design resembles the parterre at Sayes Court in the well-known plan of 1653 (Fig. 2; see also Fig. 7), there is a good chance that the sketch could be a proposal for Evelyn's own garden, begun on January 17, 1653, rather than a figure for the manuscript as such.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, even if some version of this Sayes Court parterre was meant to be one of the "draughts" for chapter five, there is still a need to explain the choice of figure. For it is apparent that the "oval Square" parterre at Sayes Court was influenced by Pierre Morin's oval garden in Paris, which Evelyn visited in 1644 and 1651 (see here Fig. 8).<sup>4</sup> Yet, Morin's layout was more of a florist's flower garden than a conventional parterre or knot, and Evelyn seems to acknowledge this in writing to his father-in-law, Sir Richard Browne: "If God prosper us, [my Morine Garden] will farr exceede that both for designe & other accommodations?"<sup>5</sup>

Thus, to reconstruct an image of what Evelyn understood by the terms "parterre," "grove," and "flower garden" requires more than merely a search for the missing figures and "plotts." Two complementary tasks of interpretation are needed: the first entails tracing the origins of Evelyn's ideas, both in the gardens and in the gardening and horticultural literature of contemporary Europe;

<sup>3</sup> See E. S. de Beer, ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 6 vols., Oxford, 1955, III, 80.

<sup>4</sup> See here M. F. Warner, "The Morins," *National Horticultural Magazine*, July 1954, 168–76; and G. Parry, "John Evelyn as Hortulan Saint," M. Leslie and T. Raylor, eds., *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, Leicester, 1992, 130. Evelyn's letter to Richard Browne is quoted from P. Leith-Ross, "A Seventeenth-Century Paris Garden," *Garden History* 21, 2 (Winter 1993), 153. It was David Sturdy who first discovered the plan of Pierre Morin's garden in the British Library, and he drew it to the attention of Prudence Leith-Ross, Lady Hartopp. I am indebted to her and John Harvey for the reference. For Evelyn's visits to Morin in Paris, see de Beer, *Diary*, I, 85–87; II, 132–33; and III, 33; and Leith-Ross, "A Seventeenth-Century Paris Garden," 150–57.

<sup>5</sup> The letter is dated May 2, 1653, and is kept at Christ Church, Oxford.



2. Plan of John Evelyn's garden at Sayes Court, 1653. Both handwriting and draftsmanship uncertain (photo: Christ Church, Oxford; reproduced by permission of the trustees of the will of Major Peter George Evelyn)

the second involves relating those ideas to the forms of the layout at Sayes Court. For it is the Sayes Court plan of 1653 that appears to offer the best visual correlation to the text of the “Elysium Britannicum” at its conception in the late 1650s and early 1660s.

Before we can begin the task of reconstruction, a few distinctions are necessary. Evelyn writes: “Those who are most pleased with distinctions have constituted fowre, or five sortes of Gardens. As the *Parterre knot* and *Trayle-worke* for one: The *Coronarie* or Flower-Garden for a second: The *Medicinal*, or Garden of Simples for a Third: The Orchard, {Olitory} and Garden of {Fruite &} *Esculent* plants for a Fowerth and Fift.”<sup>6</sup> Evelyn qualifies these further by associating the orchard with the fruit grower, the “olitory” or kitchen garden with the cook, the medicinal or physic garden with the

<sup>6</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 2–3. It is notable that Olivier de Serres in his *Le Théâtre d’agriculture et mesnage des champs*, Paris, 1600, 501, distinguishes four types of garden: le potager, le bouquetier, le medicinal, and le fruitier. But Evelyn’s four or five distinctions were clearly derived from another text, Jacques Boyceau’s *Traité du jardinage selon les raisons de la nature et de l’art*, Paris, 1638, 81–82. The close parallels between the two texts suggest that Evelyn was familiar with Boyceau’s publication.

botanist, and the “coronary” or flower garden with the florist.<sup>7</sup> It is reasonable to assume, of course, that the first category of “parterre” garden is used here as a shorthand for the entire ornamental garden as it extended outward from the house and parterre to the allées and groves.

Within the scope of “Gardens of Pleasure,” fit “chiefly for the divertissement of Princes, noble-men and greate persons,”<sup>8</sup> come the first three types of garden: the parterre garden (with groves), the flower garden, and the medicinal garden. The “Elysium Britannicum” is thus concerned essentially with the ornamental pleasure garden, as opposed to the productive garden. Indeed, the chapters envisaged (but now missing) on the orchard and kitchen garden were conceived only in relation to the “Garden of Pleasure,” for, as Evelyn points out, they had been covered in their own right in his translation of Nicolas de Bonnefons’s *Le jardinier françois* (*The French Gardiner*) (1658).<sup>9</sup>

If the horticulture of vegetables and fruit lies beyond the scope of this essay, the same is true of the medicinal garden, John Evelyn’s “Philosophico-Medical Garden” of chapter seventeen, book two. It is certainly significant that Evelyn regards it as “an ornamentall . . . addition {to} . . . these our Royal Gardens.”<sup>10</sup> But as a physic garden, it demands discussion in relation to taxonomy, the history of medicine, and the history of botanical gardens. Likewise, chapter fifteen, book two, “Of Orangeries, {*Oporothecas*} and Conservatories of rare Plants & Fruites,” takes us beyond the domain of horticulture and ornamental planting design into the realm of plant collecting and botany.<sup>11</sup>

Let us begin the task of reconstruction with the parterre. First, we need to interpret terms, thereby establishing some sources for Evelyn’s usage; then we can try to relate those terms to the

<sup>7</sup> Evelyn elaborates further on florists and flowers, “Elysium Britannicum,” 3: “such as make profession of selling and making gaine by their beauties.” The commercial aspects of the florist trade, and the “anthomania” of the tulip craze, however interesting in relation to the “coronary” garden, lie beyond the discussion in this essay. It is important to add that the “florist” of the period was not necessarily engaged in commerce; indeed, the term often refers to the avid collector and grower of rare and select varieties of tulip, auricula, anemone, carnations, ranunculus, etc. Sometimes, such amateur florists profited from exchange of rare plants, but as we read in George London and Henry Wise’s *The Retir’d Gard’ner*, London, 1706, 246, “A Florist, who ought to be curious himself, ought in like manner to satisfie any ones Curiosity, who desires to see his Garden, provided he has any Assurance that the Persons he admits will not gather his Flowers.” This openness cost Pierre Morin dearly on one occasion, as John Evelyn relates, when a rival florist gathered seed surreptitiously on glue stuck to his cloak. See here de Beer, *Diary*, I, 86–87, and “Elysium Britannicum” 292, margin note. For further discussion of florists, see R. Duthie, *Florists’ Flowers and Societies*, Shire Garden History Series, Aylesbury, 1988.

<sup>8</sup> “Elysium Britannicum” 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>11</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 262. See here D. Chambers, “John Evelyn and the Invention of the Heated Greenhouse,” *Garden History* 20, 2 (Autumn 1992), 201–6. In practice there proves to be much overlap between the plants of the conservatory and those of the grove and flower garden; in this sense the concerns of chapter 15 are germane to the discussion and are examined later in this essay. One phrase used by Evelyn in this chapter should also be noted. He refers to the flower pots being arranged on “benches & shelves *Theatricaly* placed in degrees one above another”: “Elysium Britannicum,” 272. This idea of “theatrical” disposition, also expressed in the form of the “auricula theater,” was eventually to enter into the vocabulary of ornamental planting in the pleasure grounds of the 18th century. See, for example, R. North’s catalog frontispiece of 1759 and N. Swinden, *The Beauties of Flora Display’d*, 1778, i, where he describes graduation in a flower bed: “The lowest plants being placed in front, and rising gradually in height from the edge upwards, will form the appearance of plants placed in a Greenhouse, or seats in a Theatre.”

layout at Sayes Court. The heading of chapter five, book two, “Of knotts, {Fretts} Parterrs, Compartiments, Bordures, and Embossemments,” reflects the period in which new ideas from France were changing the vocabulary of planting. The knot was giving way to the parterre; germander, thyme, and hyssop were being replaced by box. Yet, at no point in the text is Evelyn explicit about the distinction between the knot and the parterre. Indeed, the two terms sometimes seem interchangeable. Evelyn writes, for example:

We have seene the ordinary *Frith*, and *dubble Daisie* do exceedingly well in this kind of ornament. When your parterr is thus planted, and the heads of the box clipped into exact . . . {forme}, if the *Interstices* or *terrace* be layed over with some . . . {splendidly} colourd Sand, it will make {a} very glorious {effect}: Or there may some of these spaces be a little embossed with mould, planted with low growing Flowers of various Colours which will resemble a rich & . . . noble Tapistry.<sup>12</sup>

Here Evelyn is applying the term “parterre” to old-fashioned knots: the “closed” knot—a pattern of interlocking herbs (e.g., thrift and double daisy), infilled with flowers—and the “open” knot—infilled with “colourd Sand.”

The interlineation “Fretts” is equally elusive. As it occurs in John Rea’s *Flora* (1665), it may have been added at this time.<sup>13</sup> It evokes the fretwork of the architect or cabinetmaker and seems to relate to the earlier forms of the knot. Evelyn could also have been influenced by the passage of Francis Bacon’s *Sylva* (1626): “We see in Garden-knots, and the Frets of Houses, and all equall and well answering Figures how they please.”<sup>14</sup> Here, the connection between gardening and architecture is tangible, but a precise image of the “frett” remains fuzzy. Only through reconstructing Rea’s flower garden can we picture the fret more clearly as a geometric configuration of flower beds that interlock like a knot.<sup>15</sup> Although it seems likely then that Evelyn had Rea’s *Flora* in mind, it should not go unnoticed that he has unwittingly slipped from focus on the parterre to focus on the flower garden—the subject of chapter sixteen of the “Elysium Britannicum.”

The term “compartiments” looks back to the time of Charles Estienne and Jean Liébault’s *L’Agriculture et maison rustique* (1564), though Evelyn would have encountered the same word in more recent works by Jacques Boyceau and Claude Mollet. Liébault had referred to the “compartiment” as a single square in the form of a knot.<sup>16</sup> It is noteworthy, for example, that his “bordure avec son compartiment du millieu” (Fig. 3) from *L’Agriculture* was reproduced in the 1608

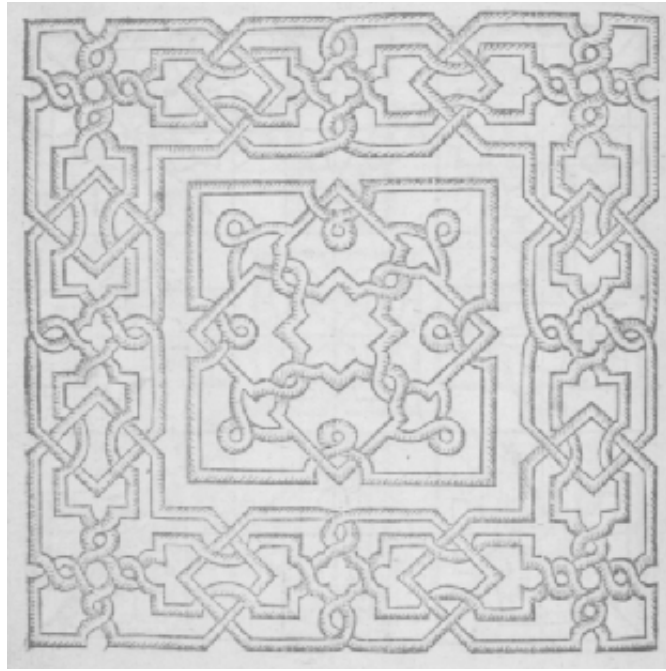
<sup>12</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 76. It is interesting to note that the phrase “noble Tapistry” may be derived from J. Parkinson’s *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris*, 1629, 14: “a piece of tapestry of many glorious colours.”

<sup>13</sup> See here P. Goodchild, “John Rea’s Gardens of Delight: Introduction and the Construction of the Flower Garden,” *Garden History* 9, 2 (Autumn 1981), 99–109, and R. Duthie, “The Planting Plans of Some Seventeenth-Century Flower Gardens,” *Garden History* 18, 2 (Autumn 1990), 77–102, esp. 78–81.

<sup>14</sup> F. Bacon, *Sylva*, 1626, § 111, quoted in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1989. The *OED* also gives the reference to Evelyn’s *Architect*, 1664, 138: “Roofs . . . Emboss’d with Fretts of wonderful relievo.”

<sup>15</sup> See again Goodchild, “John Rea’s Gardens of Delight,” 109.

<sup>16</sup> See K. Woodbridge, *Princely Gardens*, London and New York, 1986, 98. It should be noted that Charles Estienne’s *Praedium rusticum* was first published in 1554 and only translated from Latin into French by his son-in-law, Jean Liébault, in 1564. Other editions followed from the 1570s onward, with additional material by Liébault.



3. "A border with his feuerall proportion in the midst" (Bordure avec son compartiment du millieu), from Charles Estienne and Jean Liébault, *L'Agriculture et maison rustique*, 1564, Richard Surfflet, trans., London, 1600 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)



4. Design for a *compartiment* by Claude Mollet, from Olivier de Serres, *Théâtre d'agriculture et mesnage des champs*, 1600 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

edition of Thomas Hill's *The Gardener's Labyrinth*, replacing the original diagram of "a proper knot." In Olivier de Serres's *Le Théâtre d'agriculture et mesnage des champs* (1600), the term "parterre" begins to be used along with "compartimens" (Fig. 4), and, in time, what Boyceau and the Mollets called "compartimens en broderie" or "parterre en broderie" was to evolve into what is now known as "parterre de broderie."<sup>17</sup> Thus, by the time Evelyn was first writing the "Elysium Britannicum" in the 1650s, the concept of the knot or "compartiment" was slowly going out of fashion, and the term "parterre" was in the ascendant.

It was Etienne du Pérac who gave Claude Mollet the idea of the *parterre*—the unified design in box, as opposed to smaller interlocking patterns in various herbs.<sup>18</sup> This was at Anet, after his return from Italy in 1582. As Mollet recalled in his *Théâtre des plans et jardinages*:

At the time I began to make the first *compartimens en broderie*, box was still rarely used, because very few people of rank wished to have box planted in their gardens, so that I planted my *compartimens en broderie* with several kinds of garden plant which gave a variety of green. But such plants cannot last long in this French climate, because of the extremes of heat and cold that we have. It was the great labour and expense of remaking and replanting the compartments every three years which led me to experiment with the box plant. . . .<sup>19</sup>

After Anet came the parterres of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Fontainebleau. This was around 1595, but as Sten Karling pointed out some years ago, from the evidence of Claude Mollet's illustrations in de Serres' *Théâtre*, there were hardly any *broderie* elements in the parterres of the 1590s. Not until Alexandre Francini's views of Fontainebleau and Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1614 do embroidery-like scroll forms appear for the first time. And within several decades—as Boyceau's *Traité* of 1638 indicates—broderie had become a fully developed art form.

According to Evelyn's account, the use of box was promoted in England by John Parkinson after "a greate dispute amongst Gardiners."<sup>20</sup> Parkinson was, of course, writing in his *Paradisus Terrestris* (1629). Yet, Gervase Markham had already anticipated the recommendation to use box in his *The English Husbandman* (1613).<sup>21</sup> This did not mean, however, that box broderie automatically replaced

<sup>17</sup> See here Boyceau, *Traité*; C. Mollet, *Théâtre des plans et jardinages*, Paris, 1652 (published posthumously); and A. Mollet, *Le Jardin de plaisir*, Paris, 1651.

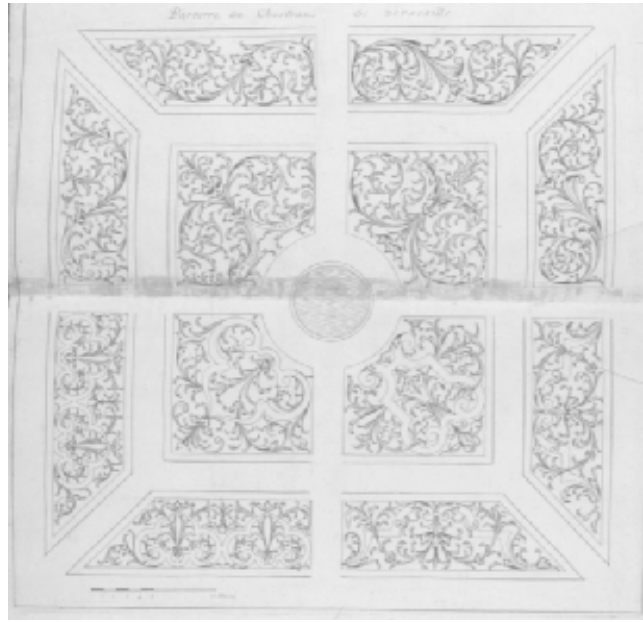
<sup>18</sup> See here Woodbridge, *Princely Gardens*, 110, and a fuller discussion in S. Karling, "The Importance of André Mollet and His Family in the Development of the French Formal Garden," in E. B. MacDougall and F. H. Hazlehurst, eds., *The French Formal Garden*, Washington, D.C., 1974, 3–25.

<sup>19</sup> As quoted in Woodbridge, *Princely Gardens*, 108. The original manuscript for the *Théâtre* seems to have been finished about 1615. The fact that Evelyn mentions myrtle being used in Italy instead of box may suggest that this is what Du Pérac saw on his visit there. See Mollet, *Théâtre des plans et jardinages*, 199–203.

<sup>20</sup> "Elysium Britannicum," 75. The perennial objection to box was of its "ill sent," the "naughtie smell" as Gervase Markham put it. Evelyn claimed that this could be avoided by keeping the box short, but this did not stop critics like John Worlidge from objecting to the scent and its effect on the soil. Evelyn comments that the roots "emaciate the ground," and that it had become "almost banished . . . out of our Gardens {in England} as an ornament altogether out of fashion" (pp. 75–76). Compare here Stephen Blake, *The Compleat Gardeners Practice*, London, 1664, 76: "almost out of fashion, for the roots of it drieth and impoverisheth the earth." I am indebted to Jan Woudstra for this reference.

<sup>21</sup> G. Markham, *The English Husbandman*, London, 1613, 120. Whether he means the "dwarfe box" (*Buxus sempervirens* L. "Suffruticosa") recognized by Parkinson is uncertain, as he suggests that the box be kept 18 inches wide





5. Design for the *parterre de broderie* at Versailles, from Jacques Boyceau, *Traité du jardinage*, 1638 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

knots of interlocking herbs. As in France, that process was gradual. Nevertheless, the fact that Evelyn used various terms to describe box broderie—“embroidery,” “moresco,” “*Grotesco*,” “*Foliage*,” etc.—implies some recognition in England of the parterre’s gaining ascendancy over knotwork. The terms also suggest familiarity with the planting style of Boyceau and André Mollet as it developed in the 1630s and 1640s, and its origins in embroidery, grotesque ornamentation, and the decorative use of organic forms (Fig. 5). Boyceau writes, for example:

Les Parterres sont les embellissemens bas des Iardins, qui ont grande grace, specialement quand ils sont veus de lieu eslevé: ils sont faits de bordures de plusieurs arbrisseaux & sous-arbrisseaux de couleurs diverses, façonnez de manieres differentes, de compartimens, feuillages, passements, moresques, arabesques, grotesques, guillochis, rosettes, gloires, targes, escussons d’armes, chiffres, & devises.<sup>22</sup>

The link with embroidery is suggested in Boyceau’s use of the word “passement,” which means a braiding of gold, silver, or lace; the same word was used in English during the period to mean “gold or silver lace, gimp or braid of silk, or other material, for decorative trimming.”<sup>23</sup> And Boyceau’s

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at the bottom, compared to the 2 inches recommended by Evelyn. This could confirm Claude Mollet’s observation that the ordinary box was favored initially for its hardness. I am indebted to Jan Woudstra for the reference in Markham.

<sup>22</sup> Boyceau, *Traité*, 73. Compare also Evelyn’s phrase in “Elysium Britannicum,” 74, “The flattest Embelishments of Gardens are . . . *Parters*,” with Boyceau’s “Les Parterres sont les embellissemens bas des Iardins.” See, here, M. Conan’s “Postface” to André Mollet’s *Le Jardin de plaisir*, Paris, new edition, 1981, for a discussion of the evolution of that style. See also Karling, “André Mollet and His Family,” for further discussion of the role played by the Mollet family in the development of the *parterre de broderie*.

<sup>23</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed.

reference to escutcheons, ciphers, and devices—alluding to the earlier emblematic style of Claude Mollet (see again Fig. 4)—is reflected in Evelyn’s “*Impresses, Mottos, Dials, Escutchions, Cyphers* and innumerable other devices. . . .”<sup>24</sup>

Such emblems could still have been seen in the England of the 1650s and 1660s. Indeed, David Loggan’s illustration of the garden at New College, Oxford, in *Oxonia Illustrata* (1675), shows coats of arms and dials in the four quarters. Moreover, “open” and “closed” knots of old-fashioned design were also being made in smaller gardens at this time, as the designs of the Reverend Walter Stonehouse (1631–40) and the plates of Stephen Blake’s *The Compleat Gardeners Practice* (1664) indicate.<sup>25</sup> Yet, the elaborate *parterres de broderie* at Wilton show that the André Mollet style had reached the grandest gardens of England by the 1630s (see here Fig. 18).<sup>26</sup>

These diverse planting forms—from knot to parterre—are thus mirrored in the “Elysium Britannicum” and in the diverse and rather elusive vocabulary that Evelyn uses. As we have seen, some of the terms—“compartment,” for example—are French words adopted wholesale from French texts, but without necessarily remaining synonymous in meaning or fixed in usage. Just as in French, “compartimens” covered the transition from the knot to the parterre, so in English, the word “compartiments” had its own evolutionary passage. In the “Elysium Britannicum,” for example, Evelyn’s definition of a “compartment” seems to resemble a border: “{narrow &} thinner *knotts* running along the sides of Allies in which *flowers, Cypresse, shrubbs*, etc. may be planted at pleasure.”<sup>27</sup> By the time Philip Miller was writing in his *Gardeners Dictionary* in 1731, that association with beds and borders had become strengthened in a vague formulation: “*Compartiments* are Beds, Plats, Borders, and Walks, laid out according to the Form of the Ground.”<sup>28</sup>

In contrast to “compartment” and “parterre,” Evelyn also uses words of English origin or of uncertain provenance. “Trayle-worke,” for example, defies easy definition, despite the description: “another kind of intermixture cutt out upon the Turfe or Carpet.”<sup>29</sup> It could just possibly have been the *compartiment de gazon*, as illustrated by André Mollet in *Le Jardin de plaisir* (1651) (Fig. 6).<sup>30</sup> For at

<sup>24</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 75.

<sup>25</sup> See. R. Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England*, London, 1979, 40; and M. Hadfield, *The History of British Gardening*, London, 1979, 103.

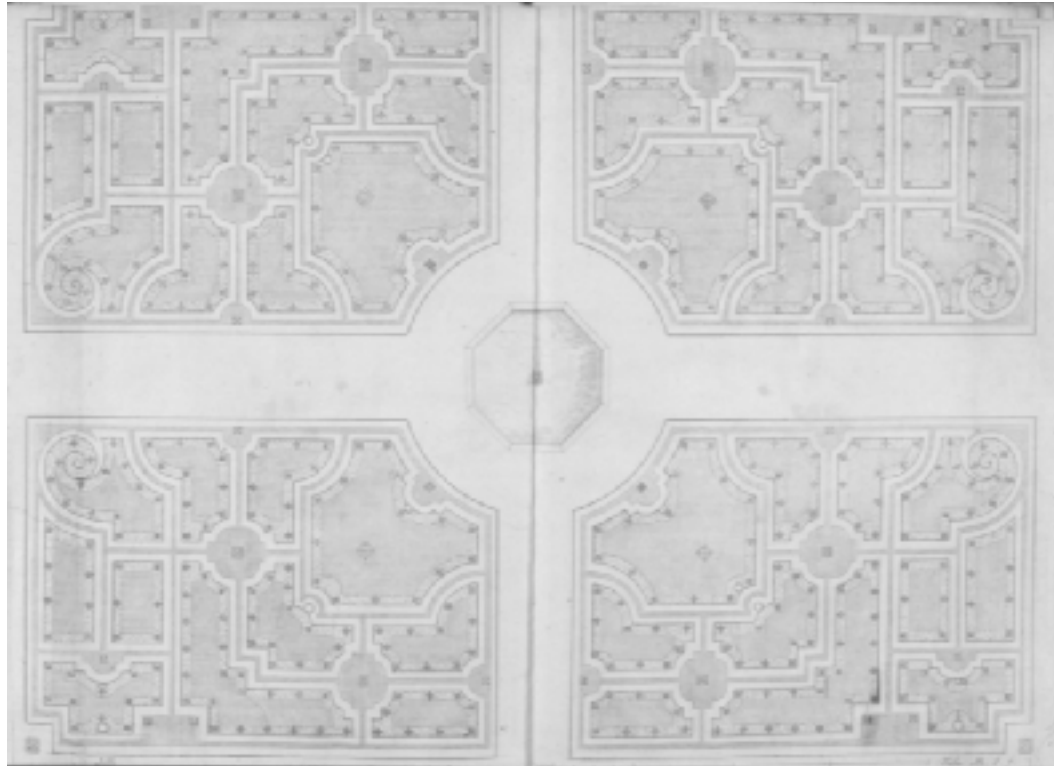
<sup>26</sup> See again Strong, *The Renaissance Garden*, 147–61; and also T. Mowl, “New Science, Old Order: The Gardens of the Great Rebellion,” *Journal of Garden History* 13, 1–2 (January–June 1993), 16–17.

<sup>27</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 76.

<sup>28</sup> P. Miller, *The Gardeners Dictionary*, London, 1731, s.v. “compartiments.”

<sup>29</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 76.

<sup>30</sup> See here W. Hansmann, “Parterres: Entwicklung, Typen, Elemente,” in D. Hennebo, ed., *Gartendenkmalpflege*, Stuttgart, 1985, 151–53. Hansmann rightly distinguishes the *compartiment de gazon* from the “cutwork” of the later *parterre à l’angloise*. The narrow, mazelike bands of lawn that are framed by flower borders seem to evoke the “trayle-work” of Evelyn. Another variant is the *parterre de pelouse* at Versailles, illustrated by Jacques Boyceau in his *Traité du jardinage*. I am grateful to Sally Wages for drawing my attention to this. Michel Conan has pointed out to me, however, that “pelouse” did not always mean a grass surface; it could indicate a carpetlike surface composed of any plant. This is clear in Boyceau’s statement that follows his account of parterres as containing escutcheons, cyphers, and devices: “Ou bien par planches, se recontrans sur des formes parfaites, ou semblables, dans lesquelles on employe des plantes rares, fleurs, & herbages plantez en ordre, ou faisant des pelouses épaisses, d’une ou plusieurs couleurs, en forme de tapis de pied” (*Traité*, 73).



6. Design for a *compartiment de gazon*, from André Mollet, *Le Jardin de plaisir*, 1651  
(photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

the Luxembourg, as one example, Evelyn noted the knots in “trayle or grass Worke.”<sup>31</sup> But this remains a problematic term in the manuscript.

Likewise, “embossments” finds no French equivalent and is probably an English term, suggesting raised beds that resembled “fretwork.” They may have been circular beds; for Evelyn refers in the same breath to “the *Bordure*, or Circle . . . for Cammomile.”<sup>32</sup> Certainly, the fact that Evelyn associates the term “embossements” with the idea of an earth camber does not appear to distinguish it from his “bordure,” which was also gently raised to the center: “These we name *Embossements*, which like to *Bordures*, are made with a gracefull swelling and *Relievo*.”<sup>33</sup> This “swelling” was later called the “ass’s back” or “carp’s back.”<sup>34</sup> But the border itself was in flux in regard to meaning and is thus hard to pin down. In the “Elysium Britannicum,” for example, Liébault’s elaborate framing “bordure” of knotwork or “carreaux rompus” (see Fig. 3) has been converted into the simple flower “border,” despite Evelyn’s retention of the French spelling: “*Bordures* are the most simple of ornaments, & are commonly for edges, and under the outmost wales [walls].”<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See de Beer, *Diary*, II, 130.

<sup>32</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 76.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>34</sup> The “dos-d’âne” or “dos de carpe.” See London and Wise in *The Retir’d Gard’ner*, 242; they indicate that a 6-inch rising to the center is sufficient.

<sup>35</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 76.

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Evelyn goes on to elaborate how borders are sometimes edged with inorganic materials such as timber, stone, tile, and brick, or with the “*Partrig-Ey’d* or *Spanish Pinke*”<sup>36</sup> (almost certainly *Dianthus plumarius* L. var. *annulatus*, although probably more than one species or variety of matted pink was used). Thomas Hanmer’s *Garden Book* (1659) and John Rea’s *Flora* confirm the traditional use of “boarded” beds—beds that were raised by edging boards a few inches above the walks.<sup>37</sup> But Evelyn then admits that boards were better suited to the flower garden: “Let such *Embossements* as enter into the *Parterr* be bordurd with the same verdure of the knotts.”<sup>38</sup> And by “verdure” he meant either box or one of the herbs. Thus, it transpires that, whether in relation to “fretts” or “embossements,” Evelyn was straying once again, almost unheeded, out of the parterre proper into the domain of the flower garden.

To visualize what Evelyn describes in this chapter, therefore, we should move away from the slippery ground of words to the slightly firmer terrain of text and image. Here we must return to the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) parterre sketch (Fig. 1), to Sayes Court (Fig. 7), and to Richard Symonds’s plan of Pierre Morin’s garden in Paris, drawn in 1649 (Fig. 8). On his first visit to Morin in April 1644, Evelyn recorded that the garden was “an Exact *Ovall* planted with very talle Cypresse, cut very Even, & with *Nices* [niches] of the same for heads & statues, besides the Parterrs, of the richest *Tulips*, *Anemonies*, *Ranunculus*, *Crocus’s*, *Polyants*, that could any where be seene.”<sup>39</sup>

On Symonds’s plan of 1649 some of these elements are apparent: at *B*, for example, is the “lofty hedge of Cypresse trees” that contained “9 Arches of Stone wherein is a statue {in each} 3 foot above ground” (marked *A*); *C*, meanwhile, denotes the “beds compassed with box where in the middle grow all sorts of rare Tulips, poples, flowers, herbes rare all”;<sup>40</sup> and *E* marks the cypresses—“cutt close & of this fashion. almost 4 foot high”—around the fountain *D*; at *F* are 4 tall cypresses—“that spread about 4 foot above ground & grow loose & neate without cutting”; *G* are “boxes wherein grow Oringes, mirtle, philaria; and all choice greens”; *H* indicates “greene walkes all the yeare long of Alaternus, which lynes the wall round”; and *I* seems to be “od places wherein loosely grow, all Green trees rudely like a wood.”<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

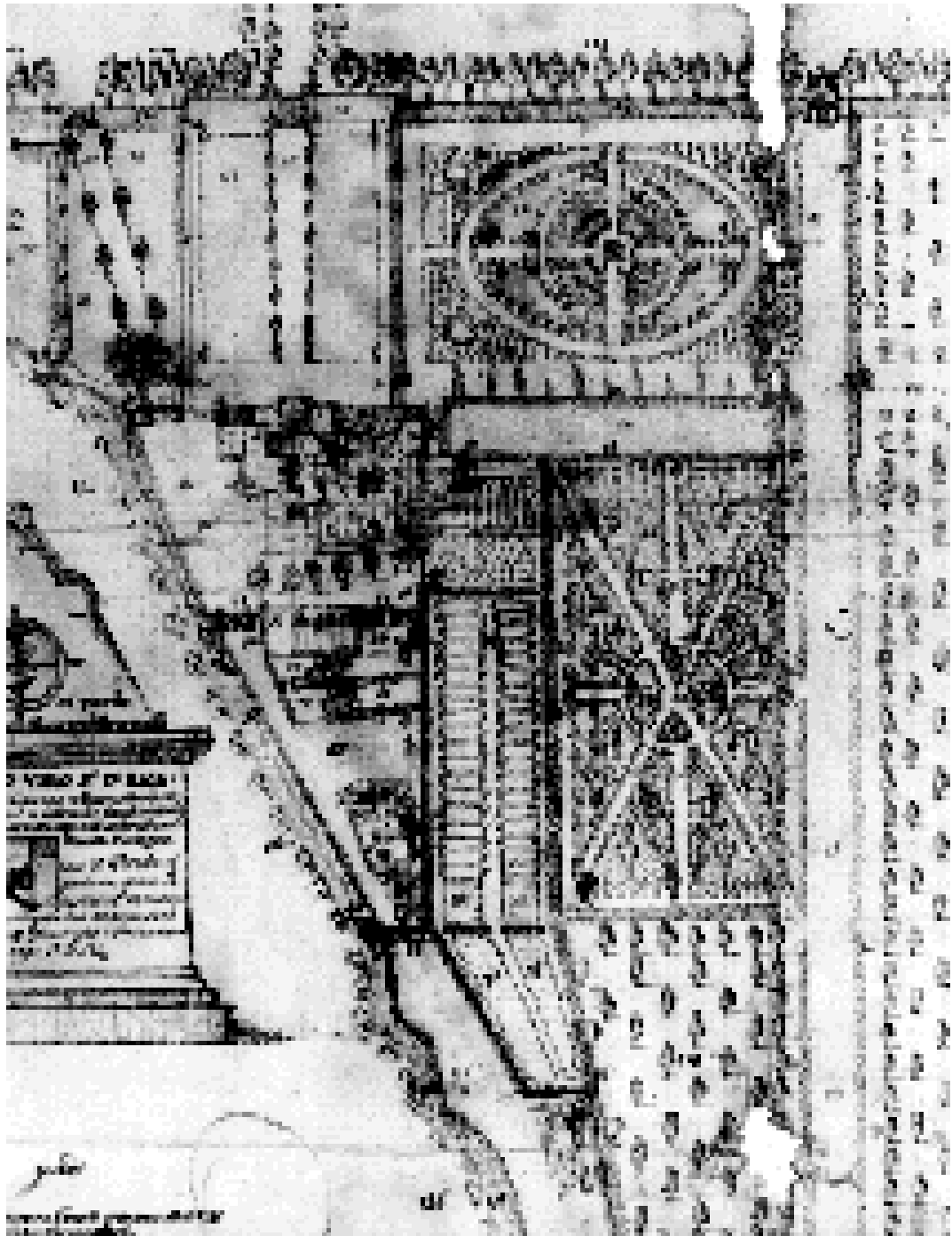
<sup>37</sup> See I. Elstob, ed., *The Garden Book of Sir Thomas Hanmer, Bart.*, London, 1933, transcribed by Ivy Elstob, with an introduction by E. S. Rohde; Goodchild, “John Rea’s Gardens,” *passim*; and Duthie, “Planting Plans,” 83, in which she corrects some errors in the Elstob edition. For further details of inorganic edgings, see “Elysium Britannicum,” 76, margin notes, and also 277.

<sup>38</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 76–77. Peter Goodchild has pointed out to me that the reason John Rea used boards rather than box as edging in his flower garden was to protect his choice flowers from competition with the box plants. This would explain why Evelyn suggests “boarded” beds for the flower garden but box for the borders of the parterre.

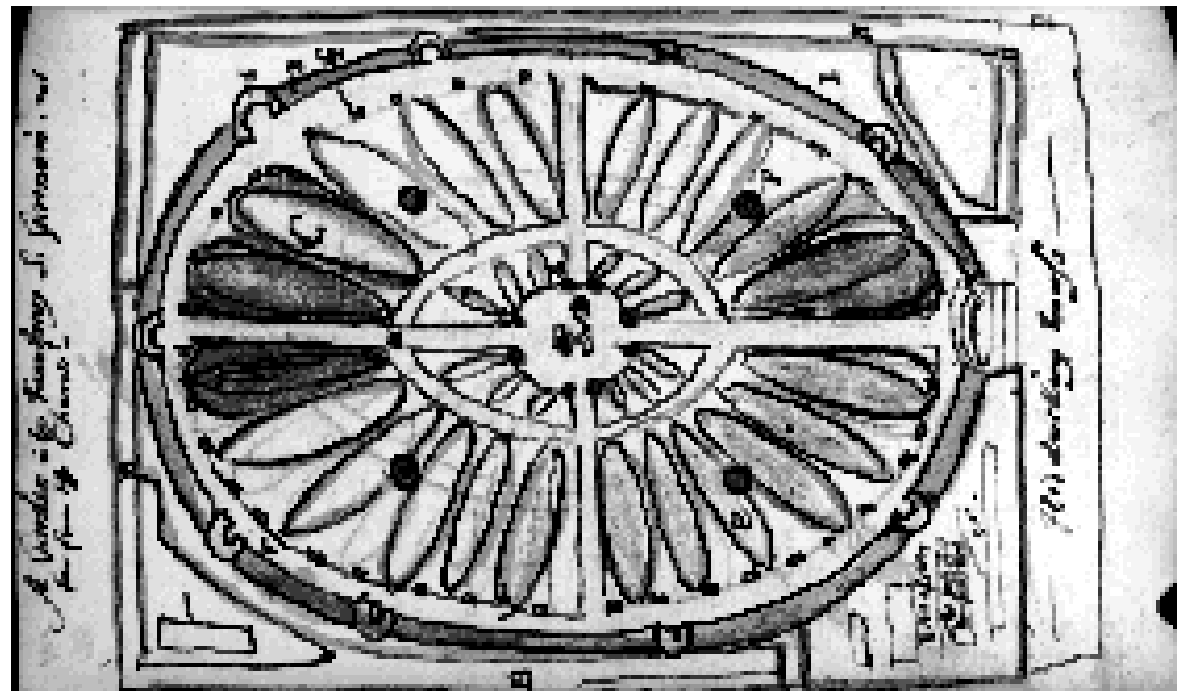
<sup>39</sup> See here de Beer, *Diary*, I, 86. This account in *De Vita Propria* differs a little from the description in the diary (II, 132–33): “His Garden is of an exact Oval figure planted with Cypresse, cutt flat & set as even as a Wall could have form’d it: The Tulips, Anemonies, Ranunculus’s, Crocus’s &c being of the most exquisite; were held for the rarest in the World, which constantly drew all the Virtuosi of that kind to his house during the season; even Persons of the most illustrious quality.” See also “Elysium Britannicum,” margin note on 296: “all the allys of . . . Morins Garden planted or edged with *Cyclamen* the large lying flat make a rare grotesco: planted before the bordur at the edge of the ally: cf. Dr: Needham:”

<sup>40</sup> John Harvey has suggested that “poples” could mean *Agrostemma githago* specifically or simply annuals of bright colors in general.

<sup>41</sup> British Library, Harl. MS 1278, fol. 82.



7. Detail of the plan of John Evelyn's garden at Sayes Court, 1653 (photo: Christ Church, Oxford; reproduced by permission of the trustees of the will of Major Peter George Evelyn)



177  
178

A. A wheel of water...  
B. A wheel of water...  
C. A wheel of water...  
D. A wheel of water...  
E. A wheel of water...  
F. A wheel of water...  
G. A wheel of water...  
H. A wheel of water...  
I. A wheel of water...  
K. A wheel of water...  
L. A wheel of water...  
M. A wheel of water...  
N. A wheel of water...  
O. A wheel of water...  
P. A wheel of water...  
Q. A wheel of water...  
R. A wheel of water...  
S. A wheel of water...  
T. A wheel of water...  
U. A wheel of water...  
V. A wheel of water...  
W. A wheel of water...  
X. A wheel of water...  
Y. A wheel of water...  
Z. A wheel of water...

8. Richard Symonds's sketch plan with key of Pierre Morin's garden in Paris, 1649. British Library, Harl. MS 1278, fols. 81v and 82 (photo: by permission of the British Library)

A comparison of the Sayes Court parterre with the Morin garden points to the repeated use of eight cypress trees at the center of the composition, this time around the “mount” and “dial.” Cypresses also occur at every junction of parterre, grass plat, and path. Yet, the design suggests how a complex hierarchy of elements had replaced Morin’s oval beds. The progression from broderie to grass parterre to bosquet, normally expressed in terms of a linear declension from the house, is here compressed into a single form—the “oval Square,” as Evelyn called it. It is a remarkable composition, viewed from the terrace, rather than directly from the house itself.

At the center lies the “Round Parterre of Box with 12 Beds of flowers & passages betwixt each bed.”<sup>42</sup> The RIBA plan helps to clarify the shape of those beds and the configuration of the broderie. Further sketches in the British Library confirm (with slight differences) the form of the broderie and increase the chances that the Sayes Court parterre (or a variant of it) was intended as one or two illustrations in the “Elysium Britannicum” (Figs. 9 and 10).<sup>43</sup> My perspective reconstruction offers a conjectural interpretation of how these elements fitted together (Fig. 11).

Beyond the parterre at Sayes Court were the “Grasse plotts sett about with a Border, in which flower plotts.” Then, as an oblong frame around the circle within the oval, Evelyn shows two different settings: on the one side, “evergreen thicket, for Birds private walkes, shades—and Cabinetts”; and on the other, “Two Cantons with a Strait and very private passage out of the oval neich into the walke 43.” Evelyn adds some detail on the planting of the latter: “This planted with dwarfe fruit. Raspberris Strawberries, Currants & Cherries, and 2 Cabinetts of Ivie, and Aliternes.”<sup>44</sup>

In September 1644, the same year that Evelyn visited Pierre Morin’s garden, an excursion was made to Cardinal Richelieu’s garden of Richelieu, to the south of Tours. In his diary, Evelyn recorded, “The Gardens without are very large & the Parterrs of incomparable imbrodry, set with frequent statues both brasse, & Marble: The Groves, Meadows & several excellent Walkes are a real Paradise.”<sup>45</sup> It is not clear whether the “incomparable imbrodry” referred to the parterre adjacent to the château or to the Grand Parterre de la Demi-Lune beyond the canal. The latter is depicted by Adam Perelle and shows the *parterre de broderie*, the crescent-shaped hedge of *phillyrea*—cut into niches for statues—and the flanking pavilions or *grottes* (Fig. 12).<sup>46</sup> Certainly, what is striking are

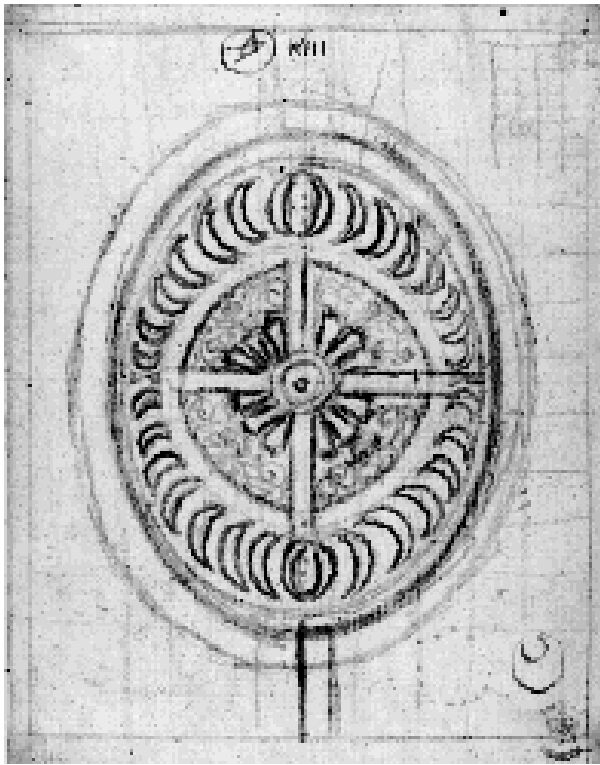
<sup>42</sup> “Explanation of the Particulars,” key to the 1653 plan.

<sup>43</sup> I am grateful to John Ingram for drawing my attention to these. Michael Hunter, in his letter to me of October 18, 1993, commented: “The caption (and the pentacle/‘XVII’ endorsements) are *definitely* in Evelyn’s hand, and the numbers also look to me like Evelyn’s.” This may mean that the drawings are also by him, but that remains to be established. The caption certainly implies the connection with Sayes Court: “See in yr notes of Husbandry for the true draught of th Garden at SAYS Court before the [?] was made”; and the endorsements—the pentacle is the symbol used here for the “Elysium Britannicum” and the “XVII” (= chapter 5, book II, “Of Knots, Parterrs”), the chapter number—indicate the intention of inclusion in the “Elysium Britannicum.” I am grateful to Douglas Chambers for checking this information at the British Library.

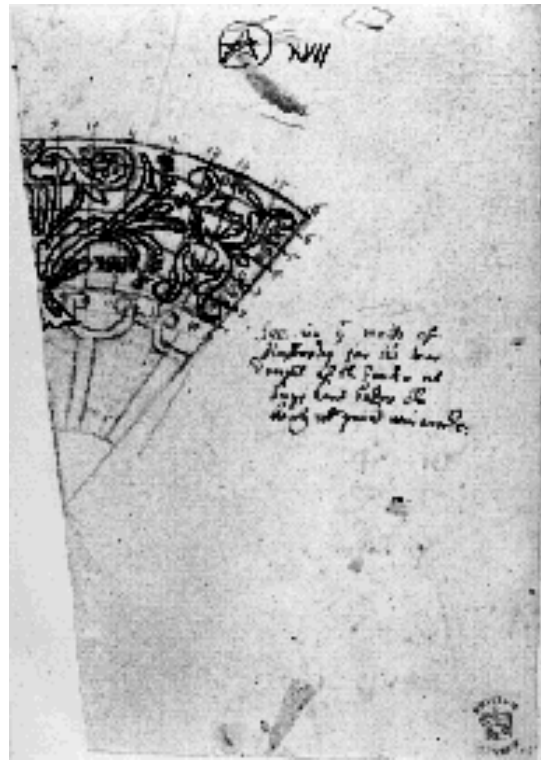
<sup>44</sup> “Explanation of the Particulars.” In the interpretation of planting within the flower borders, I have relied on information from slightly later sources published previously in M. Laird and J. H. Harvey, “‘A Cloth of Tissue of Divers Colours’: The English Flower Border, 1660–1735,” *Garden History* 21, 2 (Winter 1993), 158–205. However, the principle of creating a “carpet” of flowers or an “enamelled” effect through intermixing single flowers in repeated patterns was, I believe, already established in the 1650s. See, for example, Mollet, *Théâtre*, 189–90.

<sup>45</sup> De Beer, *Diary*, II, 151.

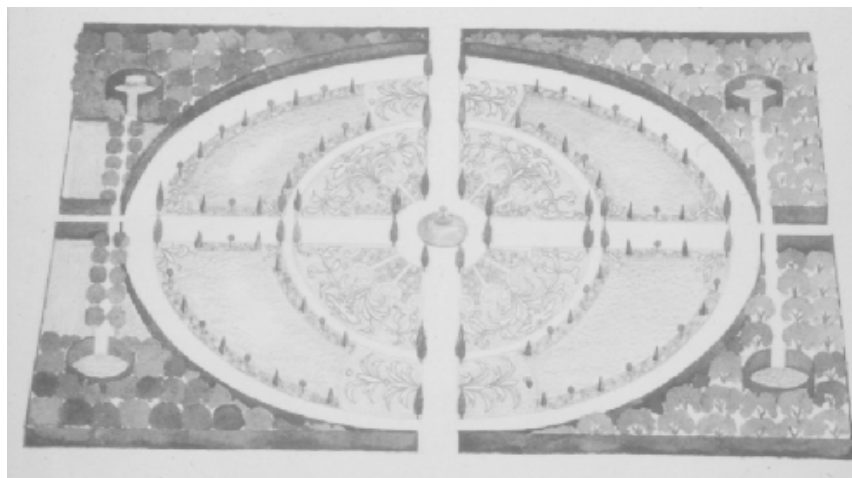
<sup>46</sup> See here Woodbridge, *Princely Gardens*, 143–47.



9. Sketch for a parterre, certainly endorsed and possibly drawn by John Evelyn. British Library, Add. MS 15950, fol. 173 (photo: By permission of the British Library)



10. Sketch detail for one-quarter of a parterre, certainly endorsed and possibly drawn by John Evelyn. British Library, Add. MS 15950, fol. 174 (photo: By permission of the British Library)



11. Conjectural reconstruction as bird's-eye perspective of the parterre at Sayes Court, based on the plan of 1653 and drawings in the British Architectural Library and the British Library. Painting by Mark Laird





12. Engraving by Adam Perelle of the Grand Parterre de la Demi-Lune at Château de Richelieu, from *Veues des belles maisons de France*, Paris, ca. 1650 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

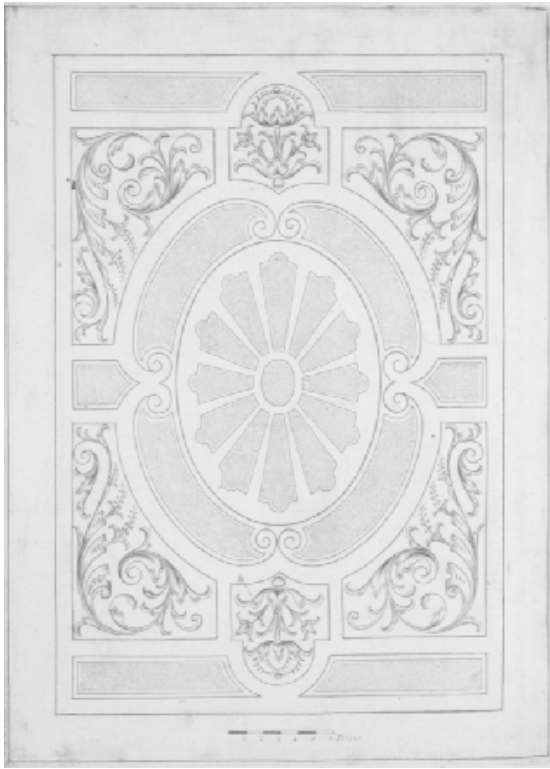
certain affinities between Evelyn's circular parterre and that at Richelieu. The form of broderie, the relationship of a circle (respectively oval) to a square or rectangle, and the use of cypress trees as sentinels are some common elements.

For all the apparent inspiration of Morin and possible inspiration of Richelieu, however, the parterre at Sayes Court eludes facile comparison. Above all, the integration of the twelve flower beds into the four quarters of broderie seems an idiosyncratic and novel feature. Could it be that Evelyn drew inspiration directly from the plate in Olivier de Serres's *Théâtre* (Fig. 4), or, more likely, from plates in Boyceau's *Traité* and Claude Mollet's *Théâtre*, in which flower beds are shown incorporated into the center of the *parterres de broderie* (Figs. 13–15)?

At Richelieu, in contrast, the flower beds are to the sides of the parterre in conventional oblong and circular patterns. In both the RIBA plan and the sketch in the British Library (Fig. 9), Evelyn is seen experimenting with alternative crescent-shaped beds to the outside of the four quarters; there are twelve (or thirteen) per quarter. Could these forty-eight (or fifty-two) beds have been influenced by the Bed of the Seasons at the Hortus Palatinus, in which the flowers were distributed in seventy-two compartments according to the seasons?<sup>47</sup> Or were they merely a version of Morin's

<sup>47</sup> The reference to Salomon de Caus and Heidelberg on page 271 of "Elysium Britannicum" implies some knowledge of the *Hortus Palatinus*. See here R. Zimmermann, "The Hortus Palatinus of Salomon de Caus," in M. Mosser and G. Teysot, eds., *The History of Garden Design*, London, 1991, 157–59, and R. Zimmermann, "German and Austrian Renaissance Gardens," in J. D. Hunt, ed., *Garden History: Issues, Approaches, Methods*, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture 13, Washington, D.C., 1992, 100: "Each of the large quarters is dedicated to

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13 and 14. Two designs for parterres with broderie and flower beds, from Jacques Boyceau, *Traité du jardinage*, 1638 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)



15. Design for a parterre with broderie, grass, and flower beds, designed by Jacques Mollet for Claude Mollet's *Théâtre des plans et jardinages*, 1652 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

oval flower beds, or Boyceau's curved "planches"? Or, indeed, could the crescent forms in the parterres at the château de Fromont have been known to him through Israël Silvestre's engraving (Fig. 16)? In a letter of January 28, 1659/60, to Sir Thomas Browne, Evelyn refers to his chapter on the history of the garden, which "is in a manner finished by itselfe." He then listed the legendary, ancient, and modern gardens that he had in mind for the chapter, and amongst those of France was the name "Froment."<sup>48</sup> This would have been chapter nine, book three of "Elysium Britannicum," now sadly missing.

These unresolved questions remain to be explored. But chapter five of the "Elysium Britannicum" and the "oval Square" of Sayes Court both imply that the parterre of the 1650s to 1660s did not conform to rigid categories, as later codified by A.-J. Dezallier d'Argenville, e.g., *parterre de broderie* or *parterre à l'angloise*. In France and England there seems to have been room for imaginative fusions of broderie and beds, often with lawn too: in Boyceau's *Traité* and Mollet's *Théâtre*, for example, and in Evelyn's mix of broderie, beds, and grass plat with borders.<sup>49</sup> Le Nôtre was to work with the three elements at Issy, and the same *mélange* found expression in J.-F. Blondel's design of 1738 for a *parterre de broderie mêlé de gazon entouré de platebandes de fleurs*.<sup>50</sup> Thus, Evelyn's vision of parterre has resonance beyond his time. Indeed, for all his apparent attachment to old-fashioned "knotts" and "compartiments" in the text of the "Elysium Britannicum," Evelyn was clearly committed to the progressive form of the parterre, which is evident in his actual design for Sayes Court. And it is implied by the two figures that, almost certainly, would have been incorporated into chapter five, book two to provide the "draughts" for that text.

While in France Evelyn also observed various types of grove, allée, and other "Relievos"—those areas that formed the "relief" to the flatness and openness of the parterre.<sup>51</sup> Evelyn considered them the "more principall parts" of a garden, offering diversity after the "compt, polite and uniforme" parterres and walks.<sup>52</sup> At Rueil he saw a grove of "Perennial Greenes;" at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Blois, and Tours he saw the pall-mall allées; and at the Tuileries he saw a "Labyrinth of Cypresse."<sup>53</sup>

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one of the four seasons, and each of the individual beds is dedicated to a different month. In fact, the flowers are planted in such a way that those blooming in a certain month are together in the appropriate bed. Accordingly, the 'round field' not only creates the illusion of eternal spring, but also organizes the world of flowers according to a rational principle, namely, the period in which they bloom." Given Evelyn's preoccupation with the *Ver Perpetuum*—discussed later in this essay in the context of the grove and flower garden—it is conceivable that he had some such idea in mind.

<sup>48</sup> Adams, *The French Garden*, 76. The date should be 1659/60, not 1657, as given by Adams. See here the letter from Evelyn to Sir Thomas Browne, January 28, 1659/60, in G. Keynes, ed., *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, Chicago, 1964, IV, 273–78, in which "Froment" is listed. For further information on Fromont, see *Bulletin de la Société historique et archéologique de Corbeil, d'Estampes et du Hurepoix* 10 (1904), 37–38. I am grateful to Susan Taylor Leduc for this reference.

<sup>49</sup> For an example of the typical English plat with flower borders, see Robert Thacker's painting of the parterres to the east front of Longleat House, reproduced in Laird and Harvey, "A Cloth of Tissue of Divers Colours," fig. 15. Plate 17 of André Mollet's *Le Jardin de plaisir* provides a further example of broderie, grass, and flower borders combined in one composition.

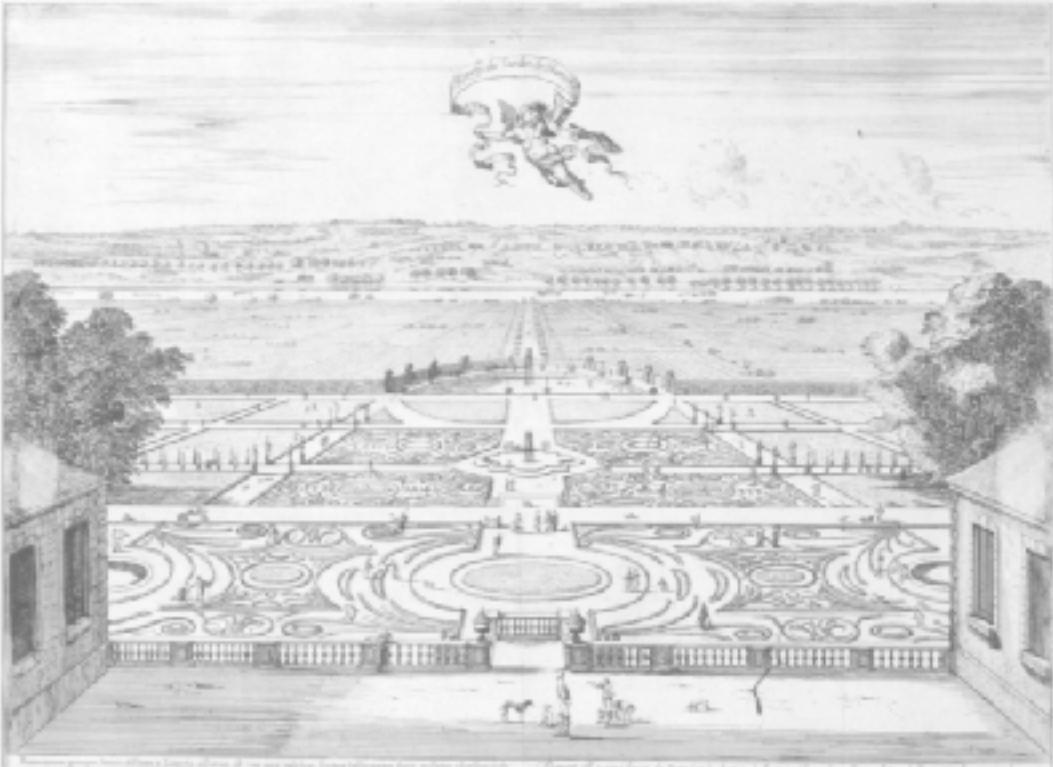
<sup>50</sup> See Hansmann, "Parterres," 154–55, and the example of Schwetzingen described in H. W. Wertz, "Wiederherstellung und Unterhaltung von Parterreanlagen," in *Gartendenkmalpflege* (as above, note 30), 174–204.

<sup>51</sup> See here Boyceau, *Traité*, 74, the chapter entitled "Du Relief."

<sup>52</sup> "Elysium Britannicum," 90.

<sup>53</sup> See de Beer, *Diary*, II, 106, 108–9, 111, and 142. Discussion of pall-mall allées, beares, carpets, and bowling

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16. Etching and engraving by Israël Silvestre and Stefano della Bella of the garden at the château de Fromont, ca. 1649 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)



17. View of the grounds of the Villa Borghese, Rome, from G. B. Falda, *Il Giardini di Roma*, 1683 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

But it was in Italy, above all, that he encountered groves that had a pervasive influence on the “Elysium Britannicum.” At the Villa Borghese, for example, he commended the groves of “Cypresse and Lawrell, Pine, Myrtil, Olive &c. . . .” (Fig. 17).<sup>54</sup> Such evergreen plantations found their way into chapter seven, book one, “Of Groves, Labyrinths, Daedales, Cabinets, Cradles, Pavilions, Galleries, Close-Walkes and other Relievo’s,” and also into chapter fourteen, book two, “Of Verdures, Perennial-greens, and perpetuall Springs.” He describes how through evergreens “an English Garden, even in the midst of Winter, shall appeare little inferiour to the Italian, where the Seasons are more . . . benigne, and the gardens almost perpetually florid.”<sup>55</sup>

We have come now to a second major type of ornamental planting feature discussed in the “Elysium Britannicum”—the grove. The distinction, if substantial, between grove, wilderness, and thicket is never precisely articulated (nor, indeed, is that between labyrinth, daedales, and maze).<sup>56</sup> Evelyn appears to have relied on English usage here, even though equivalent French terms existed for the “grove” or “wilderness”: Boyceau had talked of “Les Corps relevez” and “bosquets” in his *Traité*; in Claude Mollet’s *Théâtre* and André Mollet’s *Le Jardin de plaisir* “bosquet” is used. Yet, Evelyn’s detailed terminology came directly from French sources; cabinets, cradles, pavilions, galleries, etc., were translations of “cabinets,” “berceaux,” “pavillons,” and “galleries,” etc.<sup>57</sup>

These various architectural features or arbors within the grove were constructed from either “quarters, or poles”; the two types are apparent in the engraving of Wilton (Fig. 18).<sup>58</sup> “Quarters” are timber that has been squared for an arbor, whereas “poles” are untreated wood. Or, as Evelyn expresses it himself on page 94: “If you frame the worke of quarters, let the timber be of Oake, . . . cleft of 6 inch Square which is best for lasting. This for the punchions [upright supporting posts]: Fower Inches broad & 2 inch thick for the thwart pieces . . . For this worke poles of ground Ash and

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greens—the focus of chapter 6, book II—is not pursued further in this essay, although they involve interesting aspects of planting design.

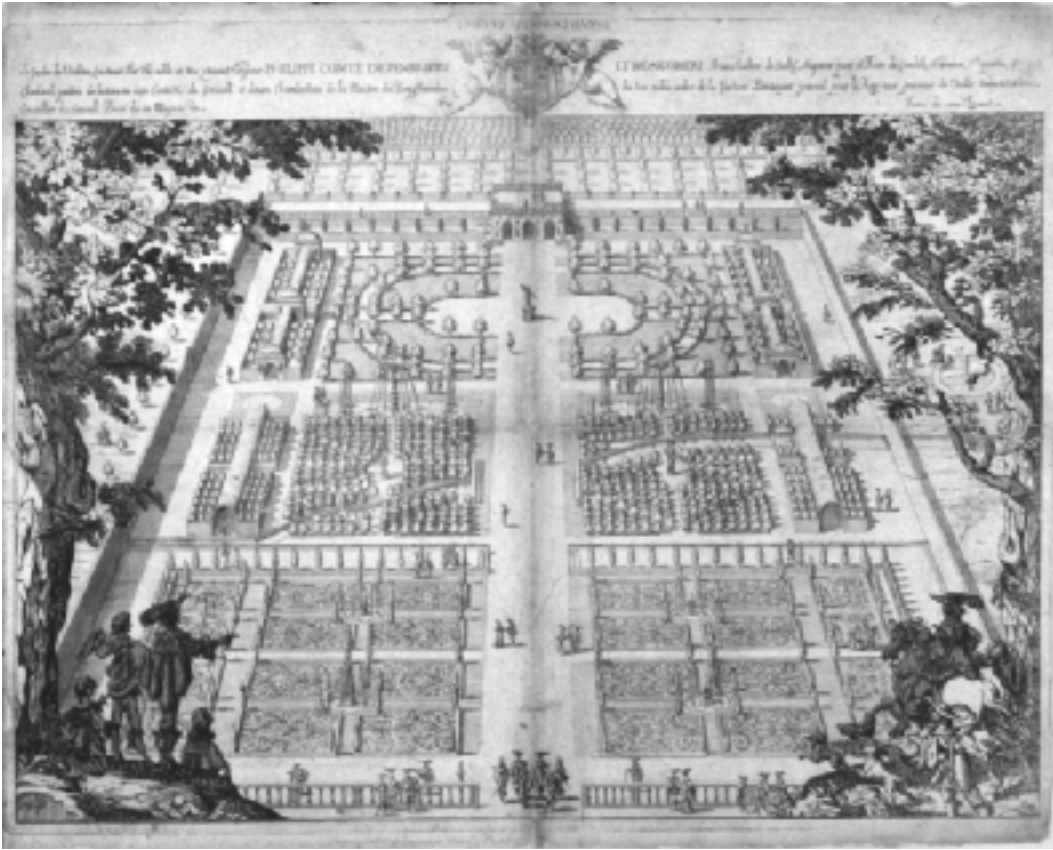
<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 252. Mirka Beneš has demonstrated that these groves of evergreens were planted in the “major revision” of the layout, beginning in 1624–25 and described by Jacopo Manilli in 1650. The laurels in the four compartments closest to the villa were the smallest and most densely planted. Beyond them were compartments of taller firs, succeeded by the outer compartments of the tallest umbrella pines (*Pinus pinea*). This “tree garden” replaced the compartments of fruit and nut trees planted from about 1610 to 1614. See M. Beneš, “The Social Significance of Transforming the Landscape at the Villa Borghese in Rome, 1606–1630: Transpositions of Territory, Trees, and Agriculture in the First City Park in Baroque Rome,” in A. Petruccioli, ed., *Theory and Design of Gardens during the Time of the Great Muslim Empires, Muqarnas Supplement*, vol. 7, Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture, Leiden, 1996. I am greatly indebted to Mirka Beneš for allowing me to consult her manuscript before publication.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>56</sup> The “thicket” could indicate a grove that is underplanted, as opposed to an “open” grove of trees without underplanting—a distinction that is clear in later horticultural literature. On the other hand, “thicket” also seems to be associated with underplanting itself, as in “for the under-~~{under}~~ woods, . . . thicketts & *Vepréta* of Groves”: “Elysium Britannicum,” 95. “*Vepréta*” are brakes of brambles in classical usage. Evelyn also uses the term “Coppse” for underplanting on one occasion: *ibid.*, 95.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, the discussion of “Les Corps relevez” in Boyceau, *Traité*, 74; for the construction of “berceaux,” see Mollet, *Théâtre*, 115–16.

<sup>58</sup> For the planting of such arbors, see “Elysium Britannicum,” 95, and 103, where “*Virginian Ivy*, with divers sorts of *Gourds & Calibasses*” are recommended for “temporary” cabinets, etc.



18. Bird's-eye perspective of the gardens at Wilton, from Isaac de Caus, *Wilton Garden*, 1647 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

Chessnutt are the best: The stakes would be 5· or 6· inches about the collaterall 3. the breadth and the height of the walkes.” Ancient as well as contemporary models seem to have inspired Evelyn. He speaks of the cabinet in Verona, “canopied with Ivy at excessive heights” and of the hornbeam arbor at Hampton Court.<sup>59</sup> He also refers to the idea of an opening at the center of the grove—“a large and goodly *Circus* resembling some *Amphitheatre*.”<sup>60</sup> Here Pliny’s account seems close at hand.<sup>61</sup>

John Beale’s influence was clearly pronounced in the use of classical terms such as “Viridaria,” “Vireta,” “Vepreta,” “Cypresseta,” “Myrteta,” “Daphnonas,”<sup>62</sup> and in the advocacy of extensive

<sup>59</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 95. See also de Beer, *Diary*, III, 324, where he refers to the “Cradle Walk of horn-beame” at Hampton Court.

<sup>60</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 95, and margin note.

<sup>61</sup> See here the Loeb Classical Library edition, *The Letters of Pliny*, Cambridge and London, 1972, I, 348–51. The section of the letter in book V, vi, 31–36, describes the hippodrome with its planting of planes, ivy, box, cypress, and roses. This account was to continue to influence the planting of amphitheaters until into the 19th century, as the hippodrome at Charlottenhof, Sanssouci, in Germany illustrates.

<sup>62</sup> See here, for example, the letter from Beale to Evelyn, September 30, 1659, quoted by P. H. Goodchild, “No phantasticall utopia, but a reall place’: John Evelyn, John Beale and Backbury Hill, Herefordshire,” *Garden History* 19 (Autumn 1991), 118–19. “Daphnonas” is a term used in Martial to denote a stand of laurels: “Daphnonas, platanonas et aerios pityonas” (laurel-groves, plane-groves and airy pine-groves). *Epigrams*, XII, 50.

gardening and groves “already planted by Nature.”<sup>63</sup> Francis Bacon’s voice is heard in the account of flowers perfuming the walks<sup>64</sup> and seems to be joined with Beale’s as Evelyn reaches the conclusion: “For thus the {naturall} Groves, parterrs, Viridaria . . . {hills} . . . Mounts . . . fields, {Walkes} [&] statues, Grotts, Fountaines, streames {large} & frequent enclosures would reppresent the beholder {with} a prospect of a noble & masculine majestie far surpassing those trifling bankes and busy knotts of our ordinary Gardens.”<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, Evelyn does not dismiss entirely the attractions of “artificial” topiary: “we do not altogether decrie the moderat use of this worke, especially in Pyramids, Globes, Embossemments, Battlemments, Nieches, Skreenes & Triumphall Arches.”<sup>66</sup> Thus, as in the parterre, Evelyn presents a spectrum of traditional and progressive ideas on planting through use of a heterogeneous vocabulary.

To visualize how Evelyn’s complex terminology was expressed in actual design, we should return to the Sayes Court plan of 1653 (Fig. 7). To the north of the parterre, and separated from it by the terrace walk or mount, lies the “Grove with the severall walkes, meanders and Thickets &c.” The rectangle, some 40 yards by 80 yards, is contained to the south by a barbary hedge, and to the east (and possibly the north) by a lilac hedge. To the west lies a codlin hedge, for he notes: “The entrances into it, are where the Codlin hedge does open.” The central circle is a mount, “planted with Bayes, but the Circle Walke with Laurel.” This implies an evergreen area, in which laurel lined the walks, with the interior being filled with bays. In this circle are two of the fourteen “Cabinetts of Aliternies.” The others are disposed symmetrically around the rest of the grove. We can visualize these as small spaces; but whether they were hedged around or trellised over with the evergreen *Rhamnus alaternus* is unclear.<sup>67</sup>

Evelyn also notes how a “great French walnutt” [*Juglans regia*] is placed at every one of these fourteen cabinets. They, and an additional ten trees, show up on the plan as larger features—twenty-four in all. In this sense, Evelyn seems to have loosely followed the example of Claude and André Mollet. In *Le Jardin de plaisir*, André Mollet illustrated a plan of a bosquet with trees in several

<sup>63</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 90, where Evelyn makes the point that natural groves are “preferrable to all artificial additions.”

<sup>64</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 90–91. Evelyn’s phrase in the marginal note on 91—“for the breath of flo: is sweeter in the aire then in the hand”—comes directly from Bacon’s essay “Of Gardens,” 1625: “the *Breath* of Flowers, is farre Sweeter in the Aire, (where it comes and Goes, like the warbling of Musick) then in the hand” (as quoted in “Francis Bacon (1561–1626),” in J. D. Hunt and P. Willis, ed., *The Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden, 1620–1820*, Cambridge, MA, and London, 1988, 52).

<sup>65</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 91. For the links between Beale and Bacon, see Goodchild, “‘No phantasticall utopia,’” *passim*, and Leslie and Raylor, *Culture and Cultivation* (as above, note 4), appendix 3, 226–31. The same reference to Bacon’s observation, “that the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the ayre, than in the hand” occurs, for example, as point nine of Beale’s “The Argument.” Point eight alludes to “The advancement of the Lord Bacons ayme at Ver perpetuum,” which is also pursued by Evelyn in chapter 14, “Of Verdures, Perennial-greens, and perpetuall Springs” (see p. 261). It appears that Evelyn is using the terms “Vireta” and “Viradaria” simply to denote evergreen plantations.

<sup>66</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 97.

<sup>67</sup> “Explanation of the Particulars.” There are various statements on cabinets in the “Elysium Britannicum”: “By *Cabinetts* we signifie Arbours & Summer houses {whereoff some are open ???} if they be covered” (p. 93); “Cabinetts may be also Cupola’d above, open or close in the center to let in a gloomy light, or they may be canopied with Ivy at excessive heights” (p. 95).



19. Design for a bosquet, from André Mollet, *Le Jardin de plaisir*, 1651, fol. 26. It is described as having “une plate-bande de gazon au milieu, comme aussi dans les salles, ou cabinets, lesquels sont bordés d’un espace de trois pieds de large pour mettre des fleurs, comme il est décrit sur les dessin” (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

cabinets. He wrote of “les cabinets communicant l’un à l’autre, et les statues et arbres posés par ordre et correspondance, . . .”<sup>68</sup> In another plan, trees are located at the centers of cabinets embellished with flower borders (Fig. 19). Claude Mollet had described one such type of cabinet in his *Théâtre*.

Aussi si vous desirez faire planter quelques Cabinets, c’est du moins que vous leur puissiez donner que quatre toises & demie, ou cinq toises en quarré, & laisser croistre la Palissade à hauteur de vingt pieds; & faut planter un Arbre qui soit beau & bien droict, soit Telleau, ou Orme femelle, iustement au milieu pour donner de l’ombre: mais il le faut tailler par les branches lors qu’il en sera besoin, pour empescher qu’elles ne s’estendent sur vos Pallissades.”<sup>69</sup>

However, as the largest of Evelyn’s cabinets measured only five yards across (as opposed to five “toises,” i.e., around ten yards), it is unlikely that the hedges were allowed to grow up to the twenty feet recommended by Mollet. It also seems unlikely from the evidence of the Sayes Court plan, that Evelyn intended his French walnuts to stand at the centers of the cabinets; rather, they are disposed to the sides within the thicket. To judge from the plan, the four circular cabinets seem to have

<sup>68</sup> Mollet, *Le Jardin de plaisir*, 35.

<sup>69</sup> Mollet, *Théâtre*, 114. Compare here “Elysium Britannicum,” 95: “{I have seene them covered by one tree, as Elme, Lime, etc: by half cutting the branch & bending them down in forme of an umbrilla, . . .”



contained a central area of lawn, whereas the remaining rectilinear ones were in sand or gravel. They may have contained sculptural ornaments, but this is not specified. It certainly seems probable that Evelyn avoided the extremes of artifice found in the French bosquet: the fountains, sculpture, and topiary.<sup>70</sup>

Evelyn refers to planting “above 500 standard trees, of oake, ash, elme Ceruise [*Sorbus domestica*], beech-chesnutt,”<sup>71</sup> some of which appeared to line the perimeter of the grove, but they no doubt filled the quarters too. From Evelyn’s remarks in the “Elysium Britannicum” it might be inferred that the interior trees were planted in a random manner; he recommended “the confused & irregular planting of them far before the ranging of them in lines.”<sup>72</sup> But the tight geometry of the grove might equally have led to disposing them in rows. The underplanting, here described as “thicketts,” is composed of “Birch, hazel, Thorne, wild fruites, greenes &c.” He concludes, “the close walkes, and spiders Clawes Leading to the Cabinets, you may perceive by the designe &c.”<sup>73</sup> It is reasonable to assume that these “close walks” were in the form of arbors or “berceaux.” But in comparison to the French prototypes, they may have been quite simple, made of poles, rather than quartered timber. The urge to naturalness implied in the adoption of Beale’s ideas—albeit in the context of extensive gardening—may have counterbalanced the architectural influences of the Continental bosquet. My perspective reconstruction helps to illustrate how the grove might have looked as a whole (Fig. 20).

It is not clear from the key that hedges lined all the walks, but it is reasonable to infer this from contemporary practice. We are also left without specification for the height of those hedges. The proportions of the walks in the grove are much smaller than their Continental prototypes; even the main walks are only about ten feet wide, compared to the twenty or thirty feet width of some French allées.<sup>74</sup> On the principle of the hedges being “two thirds of the breadth of the Allees,”<sup>75</sup> it is reasonable to assume that those at Sayes Court were not above six or seven feet. Some Italian hedges in the *bosco* appear to have been lower than the French, and Evelyn may have had them in mind as models.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>70</sup> See Boyceau, *Traité*, 74. In the “Elysium Britannicum,” 94, Evelyn does, however, mention “*Niches*, in the verdure it selfe, for statues, Seates, Fountaines, Tables of Marble.”

<sup>71</sup> “Explanation of the Particulars.”

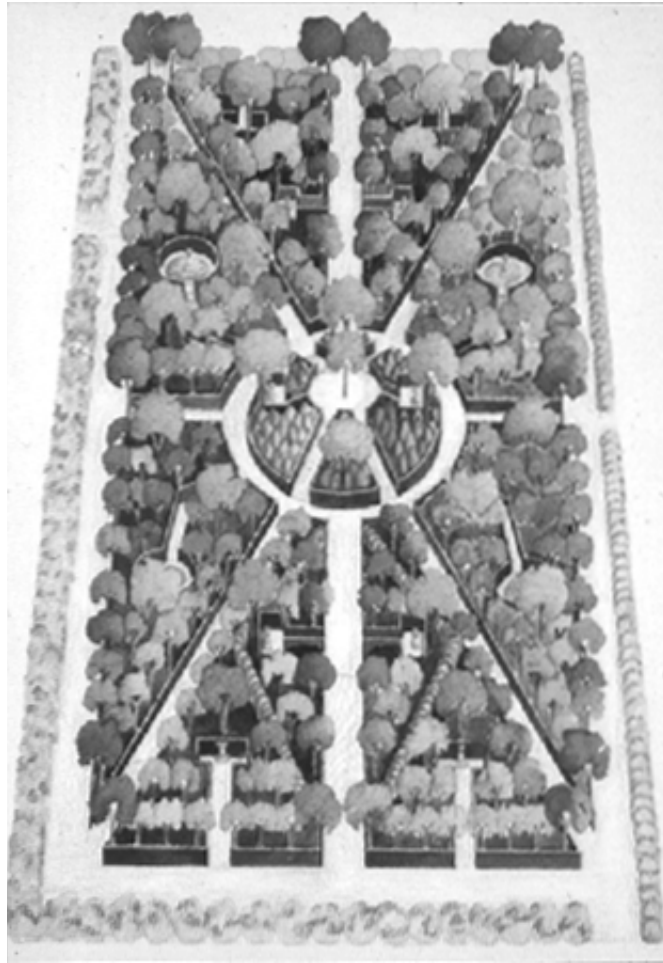
<sup>72</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 92.

<sup>73</sup> “Explanation of the Particulars.”

<sup>74</sup> It is interesting to note once again Evelyn’s close reliance on Boyceau’s *Traité*. Compare, for example, “Elysium Britannicum,” “For Cover’d Walkes do make the Allee seeme broader to the Eye than the open and free” (p. 78), with *Traité*, “Mais nous reconnoissons que le couvert . . . fait sembler l’espace plus grand, que quand l’air & la veue sont libres” (p. 72); “the . . . altitude of the Palisade or pole hedges containing two thirds of the breadth of the Allees” (p. 78), with “la hauteur de la pallissade doit estre mesuree, luy donnant les deux tiers de la largeur de l’Allée” (p. 72); and “Thus, the middle Walke of the Thuilleries which is planted with stately Elmes is 30 foote {in} breadth and of far more beauty than the two collaterall of Platanus, which is onely 20· though {it be} 600 foote long” (pp. 78–79), with “ainsi qu’il se voit aux Tuilleries l’Allée d’Ormes, qui a trente pieds de large, beaucoup plus belle que les deux de Platanes qui sont es costez, qui en ont seulement vingt, sur trois cens toises de longueur” (p. 72).

<sup>75</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 78.

<sup>76</sup> G. B. Falda’s view of the Villa Borghese in the 1680s (Fig. 17) suggests that the hedges around the fir and pine compartments were still maintained at a height not much above eye level. On the other hand, Evelyn commented on the



20. Conjectural reconstruction as bird's-eye perspective of the grove at Sayes Court, based on the plan of 1653. Painting by Mark Laird

In the “Elysium Britannicum,” Evelyn clearly prefers evergreen to deciduous hedgework: “For *Palisade-hedges*, and *Contr’Espaliers Cabinets*, *Close-walkes*, *Mazes* etc there is none to be compared to the *Alaternus’s* of severall sorts which we first brough[t] into use and reputation for these workes in England.”<sup>77</sup> He also commends the holly that he used on the terrace at Sayes Court for a hedge with topiary: “The *Agrifolium* exceeds all . . . {the perennial} greens whatsoever for hedges

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hedges of myrtle at the Quirinal that were over a man’s height (*Diary*, 287). On the question of low hedges and the tendency toward higher hedges in Italian gardens of the seventeenth century, see C. Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden*, New Haven and London, 1990, 33 and 275–76.

<sup>77</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 101. For further discussion of hedges or palisades, see *ibid.*, 54, where Evelyn advocates hedges in preference to walls as a means of enclosure: “Rather therefore, let such partitions be made of *Contr’Espaliers* and *palisades* hedges of *Alaternus*, *Holly*, {*paliuras*} *pyrocanta*, *Lawrells* {*cypresse*, *juniper*}, *Horne-beame*, *Elme*, the *Garden purple-flour’d Willow*, the *peach-blosed thorne*, {*white thorne*, *Berberies*} some hedges of *fruites* . . .”; see also p. 78 margin note, where the distinction between “palisade” and “contr’espalier” is defined. His “palisade” is what is usually termed an espalier today: “that which covers the *Walle* {or serves in stead},” whereas the “contr’espalier” is a “pole-hedg” standing by itself. However, “palisade” is often used in the period for a free-standing hedge. See, for example, John Rea’s *Flora: seu, De Florum Cultura*, London, 1665, 6: “*Pallisado’s* (or, as we usually call them, *Pole-hedges*) are much in fashion in *France*, and there set with dwarf *Fruit-trees*; such are troublesome to keep in order, and subject to strong *Winds*, fit onely for spacious *Gardens*.”

of Service.”<sup>78</sup> Other evergreens used for hedging seem to have included cypress, laurel, pyracantha, juniper, yew, and box—an interesting selection by the standards of today. John Rea, like Evelyn, favored evergreen hedges of pyracantha, Phillyrea, and alaternus, etc., over deciduous ones.

Although it is apparent that some evergreen trees and shrubs were kept apart in the Sayes Court grove (i.e., the mount), “intermixing” is implied in the underplanting.<sup>79</sup> By contrast, in the “Elysium Britannicum,” Evelyn emphasizes: “This also we thinke fit to caution, that he at no hand admitt of any plant which sheads its leafe, to be mixed with his perenniall verdures; because it would be a very greate deformation to the rest, make a gapp, and looke like a patch ill sorted in a new and fresh garment.”<sup>80</sup>

Other evidence of Sayes Court adds to this ambiguity. First, there is a reference in a letter of January 28, 1659/60, to Sir Thomas Browne. In a list of important English gardens, Evelyn adds, “my owne poore Garden may for its kind, perpetually greene, not be unworthy mentioning.”<sup>81</sup> Then there is a letter of 1684 from Robert Berkeley, cited by Douglas Chambers in this volume, in which he speaks of the greens in Evelyn’s wilderness, “where they are so agreeable.”<sup>82</sup> Yet, the mount and hedges aside, they are not clearly identifiable in the 1653 plan. The explanation for this, and the resolution to the apparent ambivalence toward the principles of “intermixture” and “segregation,” is to be found in Evelyn’s lists of plants in chapters seven and fourteen.

The first list on pages 99 and 100 of chapter seven (“Of Groves . . .”) contains evergreens itemized in four sections: trees, shrubs, shrubs and herbs, and herbs. It is preceded by a short separate list of deciduous trees and shrubs. The insertion on page 260 of chapter fourteen (“Of Verdures, Perennial-greenes, and perpetuall Springs”) duplicates these lists of evergreens but includes many additional species. John Harvey’s identifications in “The Plants in John Evelyn’s ‘Elysium Britannicum’” (this volume) allows us to interpret what Evelyn had in mind for his distinct “evergreen grove.”

First of all, many of the evergreen trees or shrubs listed were tender exotics. They required hothouse or greenhouse treatment over winter or, in a few cases, an environment protected from cold winds and frost. The trees and shrubs that must have been overwintered indoors in boxes or large pots included *Capparis spinosa* (caper), *Ceratonia siliqua* (carob), *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (cinnamon), *Citrus aurantifolia* (lime), *C. aurantium* (Seville orange), *C. medica* (citron), *Dracaena draco* (dragon

<sup>78</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 101.

<sup>79</sup> Evelyn appears to have liked the effect of evergreen underplanting to a deciduous wood: “For thus have we sometymes beheld a very tall wood of . . . {goodly} Trees {whose leaves had forsaken them} having in the midst of winter an under wood or Coppse of perenniall Greenes, no lesse divertissant to the eye in that cold {& naked} season then coole fresh & usefull in the heate of Summer” (“Elysium Britannicum,” 95).

<sup>80</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 102.

<sup>81</sup> Keynes, *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, IV, 278. This assessment of his own garden as “perpetually greene” may, of course, be attributed simply to the presence of so many alaternus hedges. See here Leith-Ross, “A Seventeenth-Century Paris Garden,” 156, quoting an Evelyn letter of October 1656: “Of Alaternus I have thousands: and yet desire more seede: for I intend to plant all ye grove with them, & other Greenes, which is neere an acher of Ground.”

<sup>82</sup> See D. Chambers, “‘Elysium Britannicum not printed neere ready &c’”; The ‘Elysium Britannicum’ in the Correspondence of John Evelyn,” this volume, 126.

tree), *Guaiacum officinale* (lignum vitae), *Nerium oleander* (oleander), *Olea europaea* (olive), *Opuntia ficus-indica* (prickly pear or barbary fig), *Passiflora incarnata* (passion flower), *Persea gratissima* (avocado), *Phoenix dactylifera* (date palm), *Santalum album* (sandalwood), and *Tamarindus indica* (tamarind). In addition, Evelyn listed some smaller “evergreen” shrubs and herbaceous plants that were clearly in need of winter protection in pots, such as *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (maidenhair fern), *Globularia alypum* (herb terrible), and *Origanum marjorana* (marjoram).

Those that were borderline hardy, but may well have been kept in cases or pots, included *Cneorum tricoccon*, *Convolvulus cneorum*, *Cupressus sempervirens* (cypress tree), *Myrtus communis* and vars. (myrtle), *Pistacia terebinthus*, *P. vera*, and *Sassafras albidum*. All these plants that were kept in boxes or pots must have been brought out into the cabinets of the wilderness each spring. As Evelyn wrote in his handbook “Directions for the Gardener at Sars-Court” (1687), “Never expose your *Oranges*, *Limons*, & like tender Trees, whatever season flatter; ‘til the Mulbery puts-forth its leafe, then bring them boldly out of the Greene-house; but for a fortnight, let them stand in the shade of an hedge; where the sun may glimer onely upon them.”<sup>83</sup> In summer—set against the alaternus hedges—the rows and ranks of potted herbs, boxed oleanders and oranges, lemons and limes, carob and cinnamon, date palms and “dragon trees” must have created the sense of a miniature Eden, perennially fruitful and green.<sup>84</sup>

Of course, in winter, these evergreens were not performing their function as “verdure” in the grove itself; they were away in the hothouse or greenhouse (Fig. 21). Evelyn seems to have been aware of this, noting:

Now then let us but imagine the beauty, . . . verdure, {& variety} which all these must needs produce; the hardy at all tymes, the tender and more choyce in their seasons, . . . sometymes in the *Conservatory*, other whiles under the portico’s & peristyles . . . in both which they may be transported in their cases, & orderly ranged so as to forme most delicious groves, even in the very middest of the Winter.<sup>85</sup>

It also seems likely that Evelyn shared a misguided belief, then widely held, that even the evergreen plants from the tropics might eventually be acclimatized to the English winter. He highlighted a group of seven species from warmer climates with an asterisk, commenting that they might be “a stranger with us, but prompting to experiments”; these were the gum arabic, cinnamon, the dragon tree, avocado, sandalwood, sassafras, and tamarind.<sup>86</sup>

The second qualification is that not all these tender exotics were in fact evergreen; *Jasminum grandiflorum* and *Melia azedarach* are deciduous. Some of the plants that are borderline hardy also lose

<sup>83</sup> See MS 136 (Christ Church, Oxford), fol. 27, now at the British Library, London. The manuscript was edited by G. Keynes for the Nonesuch Press in 1932.

<sup>84</sup> It should be noted that my bird’s-eye reconstruction of the grove at Sayes Court portrays the appearance of the planting in spring, i.e., before the tender exotics have been placed out in the cabinets. For a wider discussion of the perpetual spring and the evocation of Eden, see J. Prest, *The Garden of Eden: The Botanic Garden and the Re-Creation of Paradise*, New Haven, 1981, reprint 1988, chap. 6.

<sup>85</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 261.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, insertion on p. 261. Only the sassafras from North America proved half-hardy.



21. Tender trees and shrubs arranged in ranks in the orangery for winter protection (*top*), and detail of citrus fruit, fig, and other plants in cases, tubs, and pots (*bottom*), from Jan van der Groen's *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier*, Amsterdam, 1683, pl. 15 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

their leaves—the sassafras, for example. And the maidenhair fern is undecided, needing a sheltered home to remain evergreen. In attempting to assemble the greatest variety of plants that might create his “perpetuall Spring,” Evelyn was thus stretching the limits of the category “evergreen.” That he was conscious of this is apparent from his deletions in the list of “evergreens” drawn up for the insertions in “Elysium Britannicum.” He has, for example, struck through “*Larix*. the Larch tree. 1365 Looseth his leaves X.”; and against the turpentine tree (*Pistacia terebinthus*), he noted his doubts over the plant remaining evergreen.<sup>87</sup>

This tension between the ideal and the real is even more apparent in the hardy plants that were listed under “evergreens.” A good number of these trees and shrubs were in fact deciduous, even if there were reasons for Evelyn to suspect they might retain their leaves. These included *Artemisia abrotanum*, *A. absinthium*, *Daphne gnidium*, *D. mezereum*, *Dorycnium suffruticosum*, *Prunus cerasifera*, and *Rubus fruticosus*.<sup>88</sup> In the case of the herbaceous plants, Evelyn perceived that there was a blur between his two categories, when he wrote:

<sup>87</sup> See here MS 38 (Christ Church, Oxford), fols. 219–21, now at the British Library, London, which relate to Evelyn’s insertions of evergreen plants. See also John Harvey’s introduction to the lists I.A and I.B in “The Plants in John Evelyn’s ‘Elysium Britannicum,’” this volume, 221–26. It is noteworthy that, whereas the larch is deleted in MS 38, it still appears as an “evergreen” in the insertion in the “Elysium Britannicum,” 260.

<sup>88</sup> *Artemisia abrotanum* is an example of a plant that is deciduous to semievergreen. *Coriaria myrtifolia* was regarded by Loudon as still an “evergreen” in 1829, but today is listed under deciduous plants. The full list is itemized with the other plants that Evelyn called “deciduous” in Harvey, “Plants,” list I.B.

Now though all these are greene in Winter; yet may we not accurately speaking, name them all to be perennial {& vivaces?} because some of them shed their Seedes (especially the Herbes) and to renew themselves; Others produce suckers; and some are {annual &} to be sowne yearly, Some bisannual, & others every three yeares.<sup>89</sup>

In other words, Evelyn had observed how many herbaceous plants—even some annuals and biennials, by seeding—would retain or produce new green leaves and shoots throughout the winter period, despite the fact that they were not evergreen in the sense of woody plants like ivy. These provided a semblance of a green carpet on the floor of the grove, even in December or March. Some were, indeed, what we would now call “ground cover”—periwinkles (*Vinca major* and *V. minor*), for example, or the spurge laurel (*Daphne laureola*)—but others would only have covered the ground with green rather intermittently. In addition, Evelyn included a selection of plants that flower in the late winter: hellebore, primrose, winter aconite, crocus, daisy, and hepatica. Although these and the early-flowering shrub *Daphne mezereum* are in no sense true evergreens, they relate to the concept of *Ver Perpetuum*, as described by Francis Bacon—a continuum of flowering throughout the year.<sup>90</sup>

In assembling the greatest variety of partially evergreen herbaceous plants, Evelyn also stretched the limits of what might have been practical for underplanting in the grove. He included some plants that are suited to maritime conditions or rock gardens. Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*), for example, is indigenous to coastal areas and is difficult to cultivate because of its saline requirements. Likewise, the cotton weed (*Otanthus maritimus*) grows best on rocks near the sea. The houseleek and pennywort (*Umbilicus rupestris*) cling to stones, walls, and roofs. Moreover, Evelyn also included many herbs, salad plants, and vegetables, only some of which would have grown well under trees and shrubs. Here, we might note the wild leek (*Allium ampeloprasum*), wild celery (*Apium graveolens*), and beets (*Beta vulgaris*), brassicas (*Brassica rapa*), and rocket salad or Italian cress (*Eruca sativa*). Especially interesting is scurvy grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*), which was a popular salad vegetable in the mid-seventeenth century. Its place in the grove is, however, questionable.<sup>91</sup>

To what extent Evelyn actually used such plants in his own grove at Sayes Court remains a matter for speculation: the parasitic mistletoe (*Viscum album*), for example, or the stream-loving watercress (*Rorippa nasturcium-aquaticum*); the tricky alpine rhododendrons (*R. ferrugineum* and *R. hirsutum*), or the rock-loving sedums. But it does seem reasonable to assume that his concept of a partially evergreen “ground cover” was exploited in some way. These “Herbae Semper virentes,” together with the alaternus hedges and his collection of tender evergreens, may account for the

<sup>89</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” insertion on p. 260.

<sup>90</sup> See Bacon, “Of Gardens,” as quoted in “Francis Bacon (1561–1626)” (as above, note 64), 51–52.

<sup>91</sup> Evelyn seems to have appreciated the difficulty of cultivating Samphire, which he also called “an excellent Salad” (p. 137). In chapter ten, book two, within the section on plants suitable for rocks and grottoes, he writes, “*Sampier* seedes frequently sprinkled in the chinkes of your rockworke, where there is mosse, mortar or Earth will take hold” (p. 137). It clearly had a place within the “habitats” of the mount in Evelyn’s Philosophico-Medicall Garden (“*Crithmum* in the wall”) (p. 327) and in the rugged terrain of a wilder grove (“a natural cliff & precipice . . . with now and then a . . . rift . . . for . . . *Sampier* {& *Caper*}”) (pp. 141–42). But whether rockwork was located in formal groves such as the one at Sayes Court seems more doubtful.

claim that his “owne poore Garden . . . perpetually greene” could be included in the list of important English gardens. Whether, of course, this verdant floor was seen from over the hedges or from within the woodland is a matter for further conjecture. It may imply that the hedges were lower than six to seven feet, indeed, around four feet or beneath eye level.

In the concept at least of segregated planting, in the use of alaternus hedges, and in the configuration of the grove as a whole, Evelyn may have had some influence on later planting design. Philip Miller and James Meader continued to advocate segregation until the late eighteenth century.<sup>92</sup> And the diagonal, orthogonal, and circular structure of the path system at Sayes Court was to recur in various forms at Sir William Temple’s Moor Park, at the duke of Lauderdale’s Ham House, and at Sandywell in Gloucestershire in the early eighteenth century.<sup>93</sup> The idea of the “Ver Perpetuum,” building on Francis Bacon’s account, also had a lasting influence in the creation of evergreen shrubberies and winter gardens.<sup>94</sup> However, the use of tender exotics wheeled out of the greenhouse for display each summer was to be largely abandoned, along with topiary, in the shift from the formal wilderness to the informal shrubbery.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, the attempt to evoke the “perpetually florid” effects seen in Italy—through the greenhouse and conservatory—was an imaginative vision, suggestive of the future in landscape gardening.<sup>96</sup> Working on the mind by association, “it would even strike and surprise the Winter Spectator, who might imagine himselfe . . . transported into some new or enchanted Country.”<sup>97</sup> Above all, Evelyn’s use of alaternus for hedgework was innovative, analogous to the introduction of classical, French, and Italian words into the language of gardening; it was an act of translation.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>92</sup> See here M. Laird, “Ornamental Planting and Horticulture in English Pleasure Grounds, 1700–1830,” in Hunt, *Garden History* (as above, note 47), 266.

<sup>93</sup> See J. D. Hunt and E. de Jong, eds., “The Anglo-Dutch Garden in the Age of William and Mary,” *Journal of Garden History* 8, 2–3 (1988), 245–47, 255–58, 264–65.

<sup>94</sup> See M. Laird, “Approaches to Planting in the Late Eighteenth Century: Some Imperfect Ideas on the Origins of the American Garden,” *Journal of Garden History* 11, 3 (1991), n. 44, 172.

<sup>95</sup> There is some evidence that tender exotics in tubs and pots were still being used in shrubberies of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. See here J. Harris, *The Artist and the Country House*, London, 1979, fig. 363a, a view of the “orange tree garden” at Wanstead House, Essex, attributed to Charles Cotton the Elder, ca. the 1760s, and fig. 393, a view of Lord Northwick’s villa, Harrow Manor House, Middlesex, ca. 1820 by John Glover. Sinking the tubs in the ground was also an alternative to arranging them on grass. One finds, for example, “Large Orange Trees sunk into Brick’d Pits” mentioned on a proposal plan ascribed to Placido Columbani for what became the Elysian Garden at Audley End. See Michael Sutherill, *The Gardens of Audley End*, London, 1995, 32. This appears to date from the 1780s. Columbani also refers to “Clumps of Myrtles, Geraniums, Cistus’s, & other low exotick plants, the pots plung’d in Earth, & Intermix’d with Sweet Flowers.” In this sense, the tradition lived on—the artificiality of tubs being replaced by the apparent naturalness of “plunged” exotics. I am grateful to Peter Goodchild for raising this issue.

<sup>96</sup> The Elysian Garden at Audley End confirms the survival of this tradition, while Painshill Park demonstrates the use of planting features in the landscape garden that transported the visitor to other times or places; for example, Charles Hamilton’s evergreen “amphitheatre” at Painshill was surely meant to evoke a “perpetually florid” Italy.

<sup>97</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 259–60.

<sup>98</sup> According to Prudence Leith-Ross, the vogue for alaternus as a hedging plant was attributable initially to Pierre Morin, who made his fortune out of it, by calling it “Filaria” (Phillyrea). See here Leith-Ross, “A Seventeenth-Century Paris Garden,” 155–56. I am grateful to John Harvey for alerting me to this point. Like some of Evelyn’s linguistic introductions, the alaternus hedge did not survive much beyond his period. John James, translating from the French,

Whereas John Beale helped to provide Evelyn with precedent in antiquity for extensive gardening, Sir Thomas Browne offered an account of ancient practices in the use of flowers, especially “flowry Crowns and Garlands.” He sent Evelyn a letter from Norwich that was later published in 1684 under the title “Of Garlands and Coronary or Garland-Plants.”<sup>99</sup> This was consulted for chapter sixteen, book two of the “Elysium Britannicum,” “Of Coronary Gardens, Flowers, and rare Plants . . .”

In analyzing this third feature of Evelyn’s ornamental planting, we are confronted with a difficulty in defining his use of the term “coronary”—a difficulty compounded by the absence of chapter five, book three, “Of Crowns, Chaplets, Garlands, Festoons, Flower-pots, Nosegays, Posies, and other Flowry Poms.” There is very little in the extant text that relates to the “convivial, festival, sacrificial, nuptial, honorary, funebrial” customs of antiquity that Browne describes, or of the “Gestatory,” “Portatory,” “Suspensory,” or “Depository” forms of garland that Evelyn’s correspondent associated with the “Ancients.”<sup>100</sup> Here we might compare the “Elysium Britannicum” with a near-contemporary work to highlight what is missing in Evelyn’s account. In his *A Display of Heraldrie* (1610), for example, J. Gwillim writes:

*Coronarie Herbes* are such as in respect of their odiferous smell have beene of long time, and yet are used for decking and trimming of the body, or adorning of houses, or other pleasurable use for *eie* or *sent*: as also in respect of their beautifull *shape* and *colours*, were most commonly bestowed in making of Crowns and Garlands; of which uses they received their name of *Coronarie*. Amongst which, we may reckon the *Rose* before expressed, to be one of the chiefest, as also *Violets* of all sorts, *Clove-Gillofers*, *Sweet Majoram*, *Rosemarie*, *White Daffodil*, *Spikenard*, *Rose Campion*, *Daisie*, &c. But of all other, the *Flower de Lice* is of most esteeme, having beene from the first *Bearing*, the *Charge* of a *Regall Escocheon*, originally borne by the *French Kings*.<sup>101</sup>

Likewise Sir Thomas Browne, having described the coronary traditions of the ancient world, was

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could still recommend it in *The Theory and Practice of Gardening*, 1712; but when Philip Miller was writing his *Gardeners Dictionary* a few years later, he stressed that *Rhamnus alaternus* was not good for making hedges; it was labor-intensive and required clipping three times a year.

<sup>99</sup> See here G. Keynes, ed., *The Miscellaneous Writings of Sir Thomas Browne*, London, 1946, 57–61. According to John Harvey, Browne’s catalogue of coronary plants was compiled ca. 1657–58 (personal communication, 1993).

<sup>100</sup> See here Keynes, *Writings of Sir Thomas Browne*, 57–58. It should be stated, however, that Browne also used the example of the ancients to provide a contrast with the modern gardener, who had a wider choice of newly introduced flowers at hand: “The Catalogue of Coronary Plants is not large in Theophrastus, Pliny, Pollux, or Athenaeus: but we may find a good enlargement in the accounts of Modern Botanists” (p. 59). Thus, his plant list contains mostly exotics. Ada Segre has commented to me on the fact that the names of the American exotics, Browne’s allusion to the “Inhabitants of Nova Hispania,” and his account of feather crowns made by “American Nations” are derived from works such as Hernandez’s *Thesaurus Mexicanum*, 1651, and Manucci’s *Trattato del Fiore e del Frutto*, 1605. For the use of garlands and floral crowns in antiquity, see W. F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii*, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1979, 267–75. See also J. Harvey, “Coronary Flowers and Their ‘Arabick’ Background,” in G. A. Russell, ed., *The ‘Arabick’ Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, Leiden, 1994.

<sup>101</sup> J. Gwillim, *A Display of Heraldrie*, London, 1610, III x, 114. Spikenard, now identified as the Himalayan *Nardostachys grandiflora*, may have meant the lavender or other similar plants with fragrant inflorescences on spikes. I am grateful to Ada Segre for this insight.



more precise in his definition of the modern floral crown, which was also dedicated to Gwillim's pleasures of "*eie* and *sent*":

but our florid and purely ornamental Garlands, delightfull unto sight and smell, not framed according to mystical and symbolical considerations, are of more free election, and so may be made to excell those of the Ancients; we having China, India, and a new world to supply us, beside the great distinction of Flowers unknown unto Antiquity, and the varieties thereof arising from Art and Nature.<sup>102</sup>

It is true that Evelyn includes a section on gathering flowers "for Nosegays, for shew, for the House etc.,"<sup>103</sup> and makes a passing allusion to garlands: "For then the statues of our most renound & illustrious Gardiners [Gardens?] are celebrated with Elogies, Garlands and Festoones."<sup>104</sup> But there is no explicit categorization of "coronary" plants—whether according to scent, color, shape, etc., or according to the rituals of love, marriage, domestic or community festivals, or to the customs surrounding birth, death, and so on—a categorization that would help distinguish them from other flowers in the flower garden.<sup>105</sup> Sir Thomas Browne, in contrast, compared antique "convivial Garlands . . . preventing drunkenness" or "solemn festival Garlands" to modern garlands, which were composed for "Beauty and good Odour" alone, and which consisted of new exotics, rather than old "coronary" flowers such as the rose, lily, and violet, favored by the Romans.<sup>106</sup> Thus, despite Evelyn's chapter heading, the text is essentially concerned with the *growing* of choice flowers in the private garden to one side of the palace or residence. Evelyn called the area a "*Serraglio* . . . at one of the Flankes of the Manton."<sup>107</sup>

As with Evelyn's account of the parterre and grove, there is an initial problem in visualizing what he describes as the structure and ornamentation of his ideal flower garden: "But for the forme . . . & disposition of the Beds, they may be either mixed with parterris, . . . Traile-worke . . . Compartiments (& Grasse plotts), or be so marshald by themselves as to be brought to an agreeable

<sup>102</sup> Keynes, *Writings of Sir Thomas Browne*, 58.

<sup>103</sup> "Elysium Britannicum," 317.

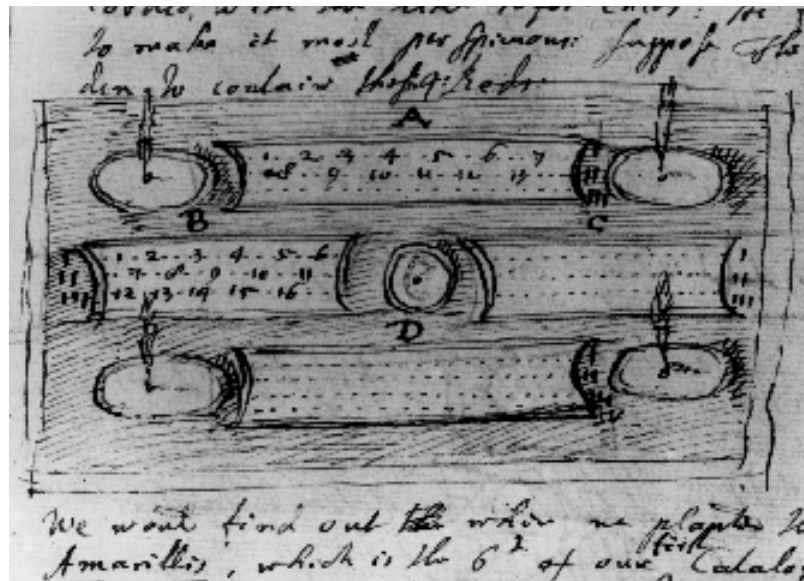
<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

<sup>105</sup> See here "The Coronary Flower Garden," chapter 4 of Ada Segre's Ph.D. thesis, "Horticultural Traditions and the Emergence of the Flower Garden (ca. 1550–1660)," University of York, 1995. She argues that scent, color, longevity (when dried), etc., were factors in the choice of coronary flowers. I am greatly indebted to her for the opportunity to consult this chapter before the completion of the thesis. For a wider discussion of the social history of garlands and floral crowns, see J. Goody, *The Culture of Flowers*, Cambridge, 1993, especially 66–70, 75–80, 157–61, 167–69, and 202–5.

<sup>106</sup> Keynes, *Writings of Sir Thomas Browne*, 57–58. The distinction between antique and modern practices is, however, vague in Browne. For a discussion of which flowers were favored by the Romans, see Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii*, 271.

<sup>107</sup> "Elysium Britannicum," 275. The sense of private enclosure implied by the term "seraglio" suggests the *giardino segreto* of Italian Renaissance gardens, the private space adjacent to the villa, which was inaccessible to the casual visitor and which was often used for growing rare and valuable plants. See here E. B. MacDougall, *Fountains, Statues, and Flowers: Studies in Italian Gardens of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Washington, D.C., 1994, 221. It is interesting to note how Evelyn saw the Coronary Garden as a place moderate enough in size for the owner to care for himself: "it . . . dos argue that there be a mediocrity in the extent . . . as the Master himselfe may take the greatest pleasure to cultivat with his owne hands, be he Prince or Subject" ("Elysium Britannicum," 276).

22. Design for a Coronary Garden, "Elysium Britannicum," 317 (photo: Christ Church, Oxford; reproduced by permission of the trustees of the will of Major Peter George Evelyn)



worke.”<sup>108</sup> On this occasion, however, an illustration is provided that shows a simple arrangement of beds interspersed with what appear to be cypresses, and perhaps a pool and fountain at the center (Fig. 22). The flower beds seem, therefore, closer to what he describes as “marshald by themselves,” and he confirms elsewhere, “(To speake our owne sense) we do least of all affect the planting of Flo: in the Compartments {or in the knotts}.”<sup>109</sup> Likewise, the “Private Garden of choice flowers, and Simples” at Sayes Court appears to contain geometric flower beds without broderie or “traileworke.” At the center is a fountain, and at one end is the “Beehive,” perhaps indicative of the garden’s role as a store of honey-providing herbs and flowers.<sup>110</sup>

There follows then a long and interesting account of how the flowers might be grown in the “bordures”: first, the idea that the borders around the walls be reserved for taller flowers—“graduatedly ranged” down to the low flowers in the center borders; second, the idea of those interior borders being 3½ to 4 feet wide, so that they can be easily tended; third, the idea that the earth should be raised to the center by about 8 inches to create “Embroidered Cushions for thence *Pulvini*,”<sup>111</sup> and

<sup>108</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 276. Among the plants that are singled out for broderie or knotwork, the following should be mentioned: *Bellis perennis*, which Evelyn commends for “lower embroderie,” as well as for edging (p. 293), and *Primula vulgaris* vars., “which become a parterre the best of any being planted thick, because they couch low, and may be wrought in rare imbrodueries the colours well sorted” (p. 299).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 276. Evelyn also seems to like the idea of grass plats with flower borders and a little broderie: “Carpet, Environed with bordures . . . then a branch of the Parterre for the greater variety” (p. 277). This sounds like the arrangement he used in his parterre at Sayes Court. He mentions an illustration at the end of the chapter, but this appears to be missing.

<sup>110</sup> “Explanation of the Particulars.” See here Segre, “Coronary Flower Garden,” for a discussion of the coronary flower garden and bees.

<sup>111</sup> “Pulvini,” as John Harvey pointed out to me, is the Latin for cushions or pillows; “Pulvinus” was still used in texts such as Stephanus’ *Hortus* (1539) to denote “beds.” See also Prest, *The Garden of Eden*, 1, for the use of the term *pulvillus*.

fourth, the idea that they should be edged with pinks, thrift, or box or, alternatively, with two- to three-inch high white boards, brick, or klinker.<sup>112</sup>

Evelyn then elaborates on the first idea of a graduated disposition of flowers, the tallest around the walls, the shortest in the central beds:

Now as the envioning bordures serve for the taler flo: so these beds for the more humble & lower: The *Coronary Garden* admitting the *Verticulate*, *Umbeliferat*, *Corymbiferat*, *Capitate*, *Campaniforme*, *papiforme*, some *Gigantine*, some of the Ordinary stature, Even to the dwarfish {groveling} & abortive.<sup>113</sup>

At this point he wisely crosses out “Fungus and Mosses” and clarifies the graduation: lilies, crown imperials, and Turk’s cap lilies next to the walls; then tulips, irises, narcissus, carnations, and larkspur in the adjacent borders; and primroses, crocus, anemonies, ranunculus, auriculas, hepaticas, gentians, and hyacinths in the central beds.<sup>114</sup> The purpose was to intersperse the flowers in such a way “that the Beds appeare furnished at all Seasons,” an idea that invokes *Ver Perpetuum* once again.<sup>115</sup>

The all-inclusiveness of Evelyn’s Coronary Garden—from spring and summer bulbs and rhizomes to herbaceous summer annuals and perennials, from tender exotics in pots to hardy roses and clipped evergreens, from aquatic plants to climbing plants, from fruit trees to the occasional esculent plant—suggests, indeed, the fusion of several traditions. There was the coronary floral tradition that had been revived by the sixteenth century from antiquity; the florists’ tradition of exotics that was gaining ground in the seventeenth century with the influx of new bulbs; and a separate physic garden tradition—the medicinal plants of the Philosophico-Medical Garden.<sup>116</sup> Evelyn might concede that the florists’ bulbs are “commonly the most rare of the *Coronary Garden*,”<sup>117</sup> but his flower garden was open to all comers. Thus to the traditional coronary flowers mentioned by Gwillim—the carnation, the rose, the Madonna lily, the sweet violet, the iris, the daisy, sweet marjoram, lavender, and the various amaranths, etc.—were added Morin’s and Hanmer’s bulbs: the tulip, the fritillaries, and the hyacinths.<sup>118</sup> And to all these Evelyn appended a group of plants more suited to the physic garden such as British native orchids—even just possibly “Fungus and Mosses.”

<sup>112</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 277. More unusual flowers for edging included *Bellis perennis* (daisy) (p. 293) and *Cyclamen* (p. 296), used to edge all the walks in Pierre Morin’s garden.

<sup>113</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 277. This version of graduation could be derived from Claude Mollet’s *Théâtre*, in which he describes how tall flowers should be planted around the edges of the beds, with the shorter flowers inside the bed either in embroidery patterns or in other designs. This idea was derived in turn from earlier French authors, such as de Serres.

<sup>114</sup> The three tiers of the graduation are elaborated in “Elysium Britannicum,” 278. To visualize the tripartite division of flower beds, see Goodchild’s reconstruction of John Rea’s flower garden in “John Rea’s Gardens of Delight,” 107.

<sup>115</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 277.

<sup>116</sup> See here, again, Segre, “Coronary Flower Garden.” She classifies Evelyn’s flower garden as “mixed,” because in combining traditional coronary plants with the newer bulbous plants, his practice differed from the separation of “coronary” and “exotic” beds in Italian gardens of the 16th and 17th centuries.

<sup>117</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 280.

<sup>118</sup> See Segre, “Coronary Flower Garden,” for a discussion of how new exotics were incorporated into the traditional coronary garden through her “theory of the reference groups.”

The inclusion of the terms “Verticulate” or “Corymbiferat,” for example, indicates an interesting preoccupation with dividing plants into families on a natural basis. (John Ray had used “umbelliferous” in a modern sense by 1662, and “corymbiferous” was used within a few years after; “Capitate” seems to be what we call composite today—daisies, thistles, etc.)<sup>119</sup> Evelyn was thus thinking of his flower garden as not merely decorative, not merely for cut flowers or choice flowers; indeed, his ordering system suggests an overlap with the order beds of a physic garden. That this overlap, however, sometimes stretched the ornamental and practical functions of the Coronary Garden is apparent from Evelyn’s occasional remarks, especially those on the aquatic plants, which had to be squeezed into “some corner . . . in some place that may not disorder the Garden,” or which, like *Menyanthes trifoliata*, were perhaps better suited to the “Marshes” of the Philosophico-Medical Garden.<sup>120</sup>

The ordering of the flower garden according to “Recension & enrroulement”<sup>121</sup> is developed further in Evelyn’s description of the illustration. Each bed is given a letter—A, B, C, D, etc.—and divided into rows that are enumerated in Roman cyphers—I, II, III, IV, etc. Within each row, the individual plants are labeled according to the “barbarous” figures 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., inscribed or “stamped” on “Tallys or Tesseræ”—the five-inch-high lead labels that we still see in some botanic gardens today (Fig. 23).<sup>122</sup> This allowed the owner and gardener to record each and every plant with location and other information in a book or catalogue, such as the one Evelyn saw in the Netherlands in Leyden on August 28, 1641.<sup>123</sup> The “curious” collector of flowers could marshal his regiments.

When Evelyn writes of the owner and gardener as a “Monarch & Generall of all this multitude” taking “account of his severall subjects & Souldiers,”<sup>124</sup> we are inevitably reminded of Andrew Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House” of the early 1650s, especially of these lines: “See how the Flow’rs, as at *Parade*, / Under their *Colours* stand displaid: / Each *Regiment* in order grows, / That of the Tulip Pinke and Rose.”<sup>125</sup> Thus, the disposition of flowers in rigid rows or regiments was not peculiar to the physic garden of medicinal plants. It was commonplace for the period. Indeed, Evelyn reminds us that the “*French* have invented a Frame of Wood . . . contrived like a *lattice*, every square of competent dimension, this they presse edgewise upon the Bed, & where the impression

<sup>119</sup> Personal communication, John Harvey, January 21, 1993. See here R. Dodonæus, *Stirpium Historiæ Pemptades Sex*, Antwerp, 1583, 295, for the classification “De Umbelliferis Herbis,” which was used to distinguish this group of plants from other families. Ray was thus following an earlier precedent. I am grateful to Ada Segre for this insight.

<sup>120</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 301. See also *Datura stamonium* (thorn apple), which Evelyn suggested planting in “some wast[e] corner for variety, not much ornament” (insertion on p. 301), and *Scorpiurus sulcatus* (caterpillars), “a grovling plant . . . & only for curiosity not the flowers” (insertion on p. 301).

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* See also A. Huxley, *An Illustrated History of Gardening*, London, 1983, 125–26: “The French appear to have been using tallies in the eighteenth century, if not earlier. These were, in fact, great wooden sticks, in which Roman numerals were cut with a knife, read upward from the base.” Evelyn makes a point of noting that his tallies were in lead.

<sup>123</sup> De Beer, *Diary*, II, 52–53: “I went also to visite their Garden of Simples, which was indeede well stor’d with exotic Plants, if the Catalogue presented to me by the Gardiner be a faithfull register.”

<sup>124</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 316.

<sup>125</sup> Quoted from Hunt and Willis, “Andrew Marvell (1621–78),” *The Genius of the Place* (as above, note 64), 72.



23. Illustration of tools, including “A box of Lab?ells, or Tallies . . . to prick in next the stalke of the choycest flowers & plants” (no. 65) and “A Register or booke wherein are the names of all the flowers and plants in the Garden” (no. 66), “Elysium Britannicum,” 51 (photo: Christ Church, Oxford; reproduced by permission of the trustees of the will of Major Peter George Evelyn)

remains, there make the holes” (Fig. 24).<sup>126</sup> The interval for disposing bulbs in a grid of this kind was around three to four inches—not closer than the “span of 4 fingers” as Evelyn remarked.<sup>127</sup>

This did not mean, of course, that bulbs or other flowers were always disposed singly; we are told expressly of the gladiolus that “you may cluster halfe a dozen together for the better shew.”<sup>128</sup> Moreover, in some cases flowers such as the “*Tuberous*, etc.” were better planted “with the *dibber*, & without more trouble then marking their Spaces with the *Compass*.”<sup>129</sup> In other cases, flowers were plunged in pots. And in a few cases, flowers such as the *Ranunculus* required beds or pots of their own; they were “unsociale” plants.<sup>130</sup> But often enough flowers were mixed together, as Sir Thomas Hanmer recorded in his garden at Bettisfield in 1660.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>126</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 280. As Ada Segre pointed out to me, this account seems to come from G. B. Ferrari, *Flora sive Florum Cultura*, Rome, 1633, 233–34. Ferrari referred to the “Gallicam cratem.”

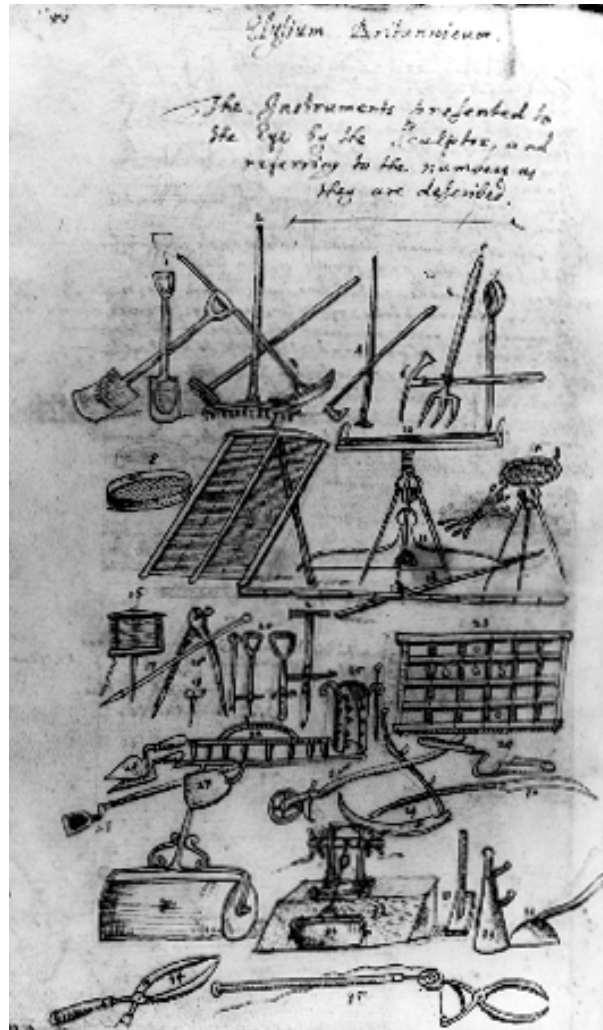
<sup>127</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 280; and Laird and Harvey, “‘A Cloth of Tissue of Divers Colours,’” 158–59.

<sup>128</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” insertion on p. 296.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 300. The Spanish narcissus and the tulip were likewise “*inimica inter se*” (p. 280).

<sup>131</sup> See Duthie, “Planting Plans,” (as above, note 13), 83–87; Elstob, *Garden Book of Sir Thomas Hanmer* (as above, note 37).



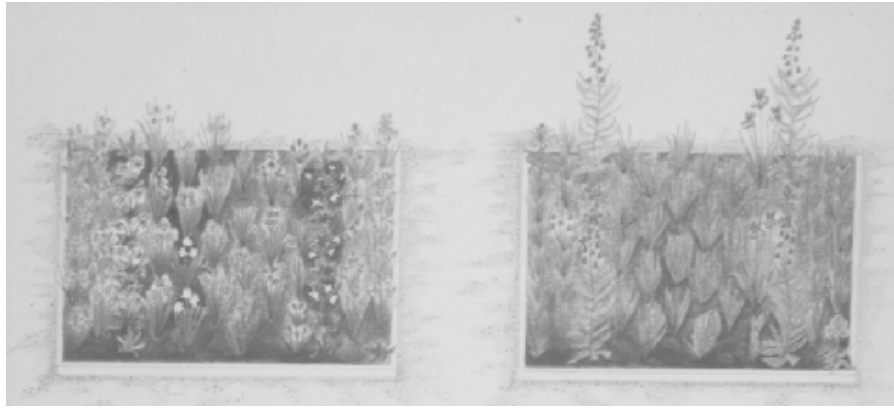
24. Illustration of tools, including “A Planting Lattice . . . of 6 foote in length, 3 in breadth, each square at competent distance for *bulbous roots* . . . ” (no. 23), “Elysium Britannicum,” 50 (photo: Christ Church, Oxford, reproduced by permission of the trustees of the will of Major Peter George Evelyn)

It was Thomas Hanmer who provided Evelyn with detailed notes on individual flowers. Evelyn writes in the manuscript, for example, “{Here review & insert Sr T: Hammers paper: of Tulip}”;<sup>132</sup> it was likewise for the other flowers of the florist, such as anemonies and auriculas. Hanmer recorded a number of beds at Bettisfield in sufficient detail to allow for visual reconstruction. Bettisfield was, of course, in no way a traditional coronary garden, being more of a florist’s garden. Yet, Hanmer’s system of ordering flowers doubtless corresponded to what Evelyn had in mind in the “Elysium Britannicum.” The first and fourth beds were essentially for tulips, whereas the third bed represents an interesting mixed arrangement, as my perspective illustrates (Fig. 25).

Whether the flowers were meant to read clearly as individuals, or would merge together, is uncertain. Evelyn writes that the beds should be “so richly furnished, as that nothing of Earth appeare naked & which were not perpetually covered with their Enamell.”<sup>133</sup> Such was clearly the

<sup>132</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 282.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 276. The spacings given by Evelyn are fairly dense, often a few inches apart, e.g., some irises “2 fingers deepe & span distant” (p. 297). For the illustration, I have assumed an average spacing around six inches, though the narcissi would then have been from up to nine inches to one foot apart. This assumption is based on the premise that the



25. Conjectural reconstruction as perspective of Sir Thomas Hanmer's planting record of flower beds in the Great Garden at Bettisfield, 1660. The left view represents the appearance of the third "boarded bed" in March to April, and the right view the appearance of the same bed in May to June. Painting by Mark Laird

intended effect at Pierrepont House, Nottingham, as depicted in the anonymous painting of ca. 1705 (Fig. 26). But illustrations of the period suggest that wide spacing was also common, especially in the Low Countries (Fig. 27).<sup>134</sup> The density of spacing depended, to a large extent, on whether the individual flower was more important than the overall effect of the planting pattern. For florists such as John Rea the value of the individual flower was paramount.<sup>135</sup>

Within the regimented disposition and a broadly symmetrical organization of Hanmer's third bed, there is a degree of variation that is hard to analyze; it does not follow any logical pattern. The outer three rows on each side correspond in all but the miscellaneous fritillary in row two. The inner rows are roughly balanced but not symmetrical. The degree of symmetry and the effect of "enamell" also depended on the season and the horticultural practices. If Hanmer had wished to force and

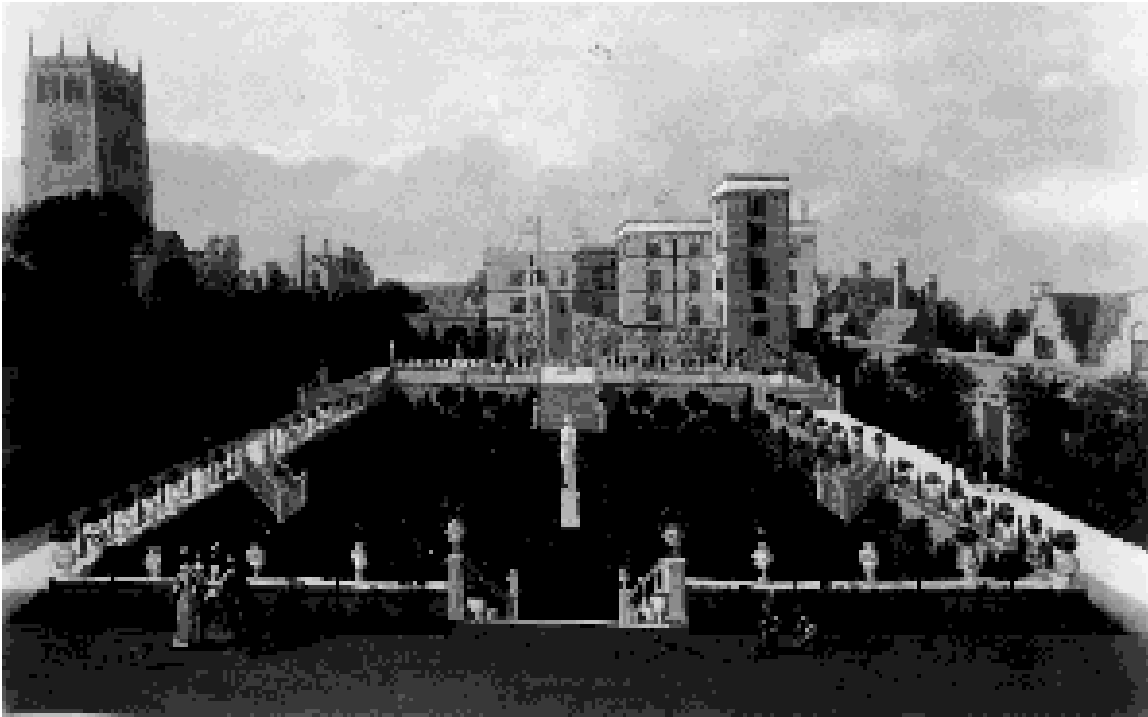
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bed would have been around four feet wide (i.e., Evelyn's maximum width, and an average width in Europe, as John Harvey pointed out to me in a letter of October 30, 1993, since at least the time of Ibn Baṣṣāl in Andalusia ca. 1080). Within this, Hanmer's maximum eight rows would take up forty-two inches, leaving three inches spare at the margins. The length works out to about six feet on this basis. Evelyn uses various terms to describe the effect of the flower borders and beds. A "rich & . . . noble Tapisstry" (p. 76) has already been noted. But there were others, such as "the most glorious enamell, wherewith *Nature* is used to diaper and embroider our Gardens with flowers and fruits" (pp. 20–22). Among these, the term "enamell," which occurs in Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 4, 149, has an enduring history that goes back into medieval literature. See here Prest, *The Garden of Eden*, 66, who quotes S. du Bartas, *His Divine Weekes and Workes*, J. Sylvester, trans., 1605: "With flowrie Ver's innameld tapistrie"; A. Marvell, *Bermudas*: "gave us this eternal Spring, / Which here enamells every thing." See also London and Wise, *The Retir'd Gard'ner*, 234: "the Enamel of the Flowers"; and Dezallier d'Argenville in *La Théorie et la pratique du jardinage*, Paris, 1722, 258: "le mélange émaillé de toutes sortes de couleurs."

<sup>134</sup> See, for example, the well-known illustration in Crispin de Passe, *Hortus Floridus*, 1614, or the painting by Frans Decker, "De tuin van het Proveniershuis in Haarlem," 1707, a detail of which is reproduced on the cover of E. de Jong, *Natuur en Kunst: Nederlandse tuin-en landschapsarchitectuur, 1650–1740*, Amsterdam, 1993.

<sup>135</sup> See here MacDougall, *Fountains, Statues, and Flowers*, 238, for evidence that Italian gardeners of the 17th century were advised to leave ample space around the individual plant to allow for air and light.

## EUROPEAN HORTICULTURE AND PLANTING DESIGN



26. Painting of the flower garden at Pierrepont House, Nottingham, ca. 1705, artist unknown. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (photo: courtesy of John Dixon Hunt)



27. Painting of Gerard van der Rijn in his town garden, showing flower beds with sparse planting, ca. 1700, artist unknown. Kerkeraad van de Verenigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente (photo: courtesy of Erik de Jong)



retard bloom so that all the bulbs flowered at the same time, then it is conceivable that a perfect climax could have been achieved over several weeks in the spring.<sup>136</sup> Yet, there is no indication in his writings that he followed this practice. His entry on tulips, for example, which is included in the “Elysium Britannicum,” states, “The early or Precoces Tulipes begin to flower in the end of March, and the rest about the middle of Aprill, and are all past by the end of May.”<sup>137</sup> Moreover, the resources at Bettisfield may have allowed only for autumn planting, not for “bedding out,” and so the bulbs would have followed their normal succession. Thus, Hanmer’s third bed might have looked spick-and-span in March or April, when the narcissi were in flower; but by May to June, only the fritillary, iris, and *Scilla peruviana* would have been in bloom. The symmetry of the four tall *Fritillaria persica*<sup>138</sup> would have been offset by the asymmetry of the irises and the one *Fritillaria pyrenaica*, and by the fact that the narcissi were no longer flowering. In the context of the garden as a whole, however, Hanmer’s third bed might have been balanced by what was in bloom in other beds in May or June.

Such variation within order may have been as instinctive as variable spelling at the time. Or it may have resulted from the fact that gardeners were often moving plants around each season, as Keith Goodway has demonstrated for Beaufort House, Chelsea, in the 1690s.<sup>139</sup> Tom Wright has suggested that the exceptionally cold seasons of the period from 1670 to 1700 may have contributed to the practice of rearranging the planting every year.<sup>140</sup> Yet, there must always have been alteration attributable to experimentation with new and rare flowers. Hanmer records, for example, that one of the three “Iris dell’Abbaye” had died, and the following season he might not have been able or might not have wanted to replace it in kind. Evelyn also points out that soil needs regular renewal “every 3d or 4th yeare,” and that this is better done “yeare by yeare successively, now one bed, now another, to avoyd disturbing the whole garden at once, & discomposing the order”; and in the case of Anemones, Evelyn writes, “Every two {or 3} yeares you may do well to take them out of the . . . beds . . . & truly in out climat to prevent the snows & cold thawes a caution not amisse.”<sup>141</sup> This might have led to further variations from bed to bed, from year to year.

<sup>136</sup> Elstob, *Garden Book of Sir Thomas Hanmer*, xxii. See MacDougall, *Fountains, Statues, and Flowers*, 233, for evidence of forcing and retarding bloom in Italian gardens of the 17th century.

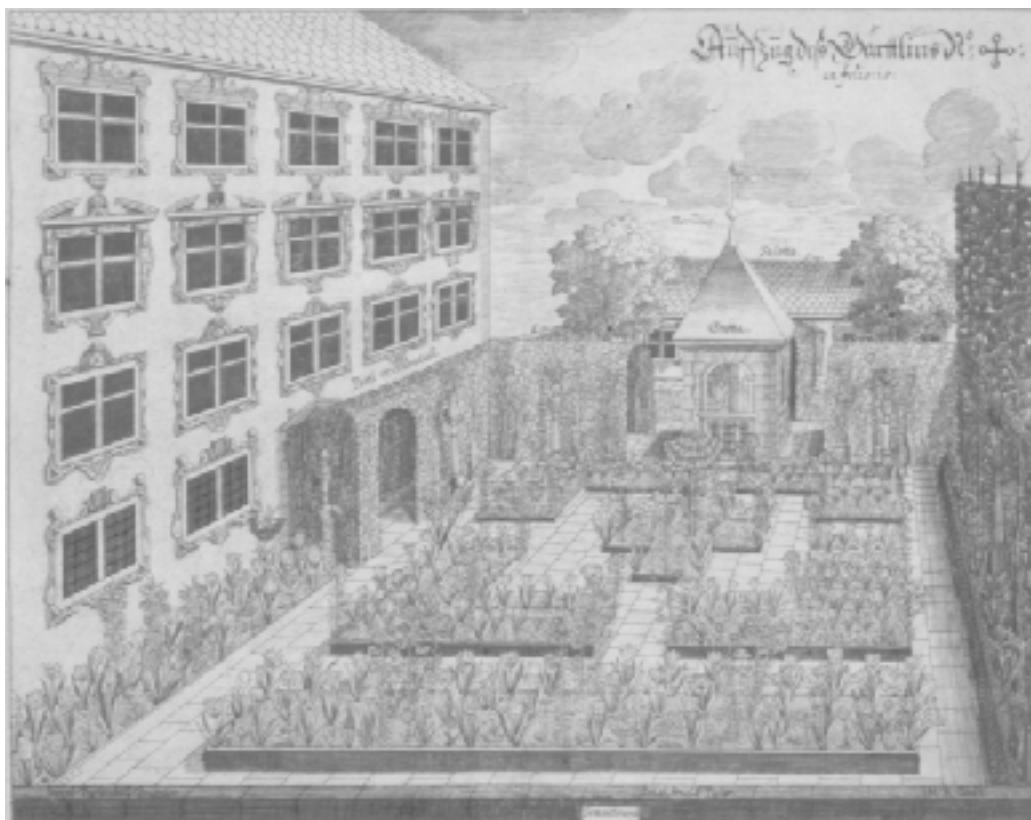
<sup>137</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 282.2.

<sup>138</sup> *Fritillaria persica* seems to be of variable height. According to a range of sources from Philip Miller to the R.H.S. *Dictionary of Gardening*, it may achieve three feet but is often much lower in stature, around fifteen to eighteen inches. I have assumed in my illustration the possibility of a maximum height. To help visualization, I have also shown an extended flowering period, even though it would often be over by May.

<sup>139</sup> See here Duthie, “Planting Plans,” 88–102, and the *Planting of Gardens, 1660–1705*, a collection of papers prepared for a research seminar at Chelsea Physic Garden, October 26, 1992, edited and distributed by Lorna McRobie, English Heritage, 1993. Goodway’s paper is entitled “Seasonal and Annual Changes in Planting,” 49–50.

<sup>140</sup> Tom Wright, “The British Climate and Weather during this Epoch,” 55–60, in *Planting of Gardens, 1660–1705* (as above, note 139), which includes interesting extracts from Evelyn’s diary from 1684 to 1706.

<sup>141</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 279 and 291. In reference to Anemones, Evelyn adds: “Gardners will, I believe, not soone forget the yeare 1662” (p. 291). The indication of the date after which Evelyn must have written this passage, is noteworthy. See here also Rea, *Flora*, 9: “And every year, as your stocks increaseth, you may dispose them according to your own fancy, or alter the places of any Roots that lose their Fibres, at your pleasure; but such Flowers, whose Roots retain them are considerably to be placed at first, where they may stand divers years without removing.”



28. Flower garden illustrated in Joseph Furttentbach, *Architectura privata*, 1641 (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)

When we look at illustrations of the period, it is worth remembering that the artist presented an ideal portrait of the planting; the flowering seasons are often compressed so as to render a composite picture, akin to still lifes or representations of fireworks in the period. This compression may have been realized in practice through forcing and retarding bloom but would have required enormous expenditure of labor.<sup>142</sup> Nevertheless, whether ideal or real, artists' representations allow us to recognize certain ordering principles, including that of seeming randomness in the midst of strict geometry. Two illustrations from Germany offer good examples.<sup>143</sup> The first is in Joseph Furttentbach's *Architectura privata* (1641) (Fig. 28). The hierarchical structure of the planting is unlike the graduation mentioned by Evelyn. It is closer to the composition of a vase of flowers in a still life. An extra-large specimen of a crown imperial, for example, dominates the center of the composition; four smaller ones accentuate the axes of the cross-shaped middle bed. Lilies also provide similar accents at the corners of the surrounding beds, or as counterpoint to the predominant rows of tulips. Yet, they are not always symmetrically disposed, and the enormous variety in colors and types of tulip would also

<sup>142</sup> See MacDougall, *Fountains, Statues, and Flowers*, 236–37, where it is suggested that each individual flower might have received its own “pocket” of soil when “bedded out.” See also “Elysium Britannicum,” 278, where Evelyn mentions that there are “some so curious about this particular alone, as to prescribe a peculiar soil for every plant.”

<sup>143</sup> These are discussed in Hansmann, “Parterres,” 162–64.

militate against a uniform impression. Furthermore, the smaller narcissus, hyacinths, anemones, etc., that are interplanted between tulips and lilies would break up the otherwise rhythmic structure of the planting.

The anonymous painting of a flower garden on the outskirts of Hamburg in the first half of the seventeenth century provides an image in color.<sup>144</sup> Here the ordering principle appears to be unwavering symmetry to the right of the central axis, with modified symmetry to the left. Some of the beds are mixed, but most are devoted to single types of flower such as tulips. Plants in pots play an important visual role; they help balance the regularity of the design. There is little sense of an overall graduation, as Evelyn proposed. Yet, it is clear from other examples, whether in Italy or the Low Countries, that no one organizing system was followed in Europe as a whole.<sup>145</sup>

John Harvey's identification of the plants listed by Evelyn in the chapter on the Coronary Garden<sup>146</sup> allows us to visualize his own organizing system for shrubs as well as flowers. It is clear, for instance, that tender plants in pots and boxes would have played a role in his flower garden, just as they had done in the grove. These included the acacia (*Acacia farnesiana*), jasmines (*Jasminum humile* and *J. sambac*), the lignum vitae (? *Guaiacum officinale*), the sensitive plant (*Mimosa sensitiva*), oleander (*Nerium oleander*), and passion flower (*Passiflora incarnata*), among many others.

Some of these would have been plunged into warm borders or placed in glass frames. The instructions for the humble and sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica* and *M. sensitiva*), for example, are "plunging the pott in the Earth, & keeping it covered with a Glasse . . . when the Sun shines not out."<sup>147</sup> The *Pelargonium triste* from the Cape of Good Hope, first sent to the Tradescants from René Morin in 1631, was likewise best preserved in winter by "setting the pott under a south wall, & covering it with mosse, & a bell glass, or better in the Conservatory."<sup>148</sup> But the pomegranate, prickly pear, and passion flower we may imagine arranged on paths and along walls in summer like the rows of containers in the Hamburg painting. They might have been combined with a few hardy plants grown in pots for decorative effect—cyclamens, cistus, ranunculus, or peonies. "The Male [*Paeonia mascula*] is more choyce, & therefore by Somer set in a pott or . . . case,"<sup>149</sup> comments Evelyn.

In the case of the passion flower, Evelyn specifies that it should be trained up a stake, "for it will else grovell."<sup>150</sup> This was true of a number of climbing plants: *Phaseolus coccineus* (the scarlet bean), for example, or the everlasting pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*), or *Pharbitis hederacea* (morning glory),

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., fig. 31, p. 145.

<sup>145</sup> See, for example, the planting plans discussed by G. Masson, "Italian Flower Collector's Gardens in Seventeenth-Century Italy," in D. R. Coffin, ed., *The Italian Garden*, Washington, D.C., 1972; see also MacDougall, *Fountains, Statues, and Flowers*, 221–347, esp. 233; Segre, "Coronary Flower Garden," for a detailed study of the Cisterna flower garden.

<sup>146</sup> John Harvey, "The Plants in John Evelyn's 'Elysium Britannicum,'" pp. 221–68.

<sup>147</sup> "Elysium Britannicum," insertion on p. 301.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., insertion on p. 296. See also the list in "Directions," for "Coronarie Flowers" (p. 24), and for rarer exotic flowers, including those to be raised in the hot beds (p. 26). Here we find the "Bellvedere" and oranges and lemons mentioned along with some other plants listed in chapter 16 of "Elysium Britannicum" and on page 32, for trees and shrubs that Evelyn considered "rare" and probably suitable, therefore, for the Coronary Garden.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., insertion on p. 299.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 304.

for which Evelyn recommends “a stake or threid to climb by.”<sup>151</sup> Other tall flowers, such as the hollyhock, were, of course, staked for practical reasons, especially to guard against wind, but the training of these climbing plants on poles was also an aesthetic question. Combined with topiary and standard shrubs, they provided a vertical accent, as did carnations supported on sticks or rods. We may imagine them disposed in rhythmic intervals along the beds of the Coronary Garden (see Fig. 27). Clipped evergreens, as well as shrubs trained into obelisks and balls, appear to have provided terminal accents at the corners or ends of the bed (see Fig. 26). Evelyn speaks of the honeysuckle, shaped like a cypress or a globe, “being planted at the head . . . {or} corners of *Coronary* beds, & sustained by a stake at moderate height.”<sup>152</sup> As a mopheaded standard, the honeysuckle would branch at around three feet, thus forming a miniature tree of about five feet. As an obelisk, the flowers would be carried from the ground upwards.<sup>153</sup> For the corners of larger compartments, *Cercis siliquastrum* (Judas tree) is proposed;<sup>154</sup> a white double-flowered cherry, *Prunus cerasus flore pleno*, appears, along with the double-flowered peach, *Prunus persica plena*, as suitable for wall fruits.<sup>155</sup>

Flowering shrubs trainable into miniature trees included various roses, when “shaped into a comely forme,”<sup>156</sup> and *Spartium junceum* (Spanish broom), which “makes a pretty heading, & also dos well for shew in standard.”<sup>157</sup> Evergreens used as topiary included cypress, alaternus, bays, laurels, arbutus, etc., and the phillyrea, which Evelyn calls the “most proper to forme into knobbs & boules.”<sup>158</sup> Citrus fruit and clipped myrtles in cases were also, according to Evelyn, “placed in your Walkes & at the head of Beds & Compartements.”<sup>159</sup> But many climbing plants and “tonsile” shrubs were used to form hedges or to clothe walls: *Arbutus unedo*, *Campsis radicans*, *Pyracantha coccinea*, *Jasminum officinale*, *Rhamnus alaternus*, etc.<sup>160</sup>

Having itemized the various woody plants that belong in the Coronary Garden and described their uses, Evelyn reminds the reader:

only the Flowers are the chiefe; & the . . . Trees, Shrubbs Spires, boales & pyramids, of the taller plants, but the lesser Ornaments; of which if there seeme to have bin too many introduced in this Chapter, the Choice & admission is in the breast of our Gardiner, he may make what collation he pleases; but some he ought of necessitie to make best but for the . . . fortifying of Nose-Gays, Garlands, & other flowry ornaments which without some verdure will be . . . defective.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., insertion on p. 301.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. In an insertion, Evelyn comments on how the French trained the suckers of the honeysuckle into the main stem, but he seems to prefer a single stem with the suckers removed entirely. Other plants used at the “heads of bordures” included *Daphne mezereum*, *Viburnum tinus*, and *Syringa vulgaris* (p. 278).

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 302–3, insertion.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 306, insertion.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 306; see also 278, where Evelyn mentions *Solanum pseudocapsicum* and *Nerium oleander*.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 302–7.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 307.

In other words, there was no one prescription for Evelyn's Coronary Garden; its composition was as various as the flowers themselves, "producing ten thousand varieties, & glorious beauties perfuming the aire, & ravishing all the senses."<sup>162</sup> Indeed, it had lost its specific "coronary" purpose, and the flowers signified more than their original association with garland-making or nosegay-arranging. They were there for beauty and for curiosity, and they were at once symbolic, medicinal, esculent, and even cosmetic: the roots of the asphodel "makes the haire to come curled,"<sup>163</sup> and the *Fritillaria meleagris*, by its chequered "signature," was there "to take away spotts & freckles."<sup>164</sup>

The approach to color composition was no doubt equally various. Evelyn refers to the one example of Sir Henry Fanshaw at Ware Park. He is, of course, alluding to the account in Henry Wotton's *The Elements of Architecture* (1624), in which Fanshaw "did so precisely examine the *tinctures*, and *seasons* of his *flowres*, that in their *setting*, the *inwardest* of those which were to come up at the same time, should be alwayes a little *darker* then the *outmost*, and to serve them for a kinde of gentle *shadow*, like a piece not of *Nature*, but of *Arte*."<sup>165</sup>

We can only attempt to imagine such effects; they remain open questions, as with much else in the history of planting design in Evelyn's time. They cannot be reconstructed in the mind, and they cannot be replicated in the living form. Almost none of the vast array of tulips that Evelyn and his contemporaries described so lovingly exists today: the "Paltots," the "Morillion," the "Achates," the "Marquette."<sup>166</sup> We can only look at a still life of the period (Fig. 29) and listen to Evelyn's voice:

Whith what delight & satisfaction dos our Gardiner {then} behold some {of these} moddest {&} flowery {Nymphs} mantled in their greene scarfes, others halfe dressed (in the . . . smocks of lawne) or indeede hardly borne! You would take some to be clad in white sattin {or so much figured snow} pinked plaited, chambletted & embroiderd & chammare'd with gold; some have the resemblance of a soft mother of pearle, or a tender Emra{u}ld; some like golden bells, silver, & of {flexible} Sapphire, others . . . present you with inammeled capps, pretty paniers, & boxes lined with crimson damaske. . . . {with} vasetts of chrystall {achates} & rubies {of a gemmy luster} Their colours are . . . purpurine, celestiall: incarnadine, blushing Aurora, & virgine-white so innocent, so faire {& smiling upon you} sparkleling lively, orient, flaming & radiant: They peepe . . . {out of} their buds as out of so many Eyes {mealting & trickling into tears of joy} & turne themselves into a hundred thousand formes & protean changes.<sup>167</sup>

Only through these words and images can the flower garden of three hundred years ago come alive

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 277. This passage is quoted from "Henry Wotton (1568–1639)," in Hunt and Willis, *The Genius of the Place* (as above, note 64), 49.

<sup>166</sup> See here Duthie, *Florists' Flowers and Societies*, 70, where she states that "Konings-Kroon" is today's "Keizerkroon" and that "Duke van Thol" tulips "are still on the market and closely resemble the species *T. schrenkii*." I am grateful to Prudence Leith-Ross for this reference.

<sup>167</sup> "Elysium Britannicum," 319.



29. Vase of flowers, by Roelandt Savery, 1624.  
Collection of the Centraal Museum, Utrecht  
(photo: courtesy of Erik de Jong)

for us as it did for Evelyn every spring after the “last cruell Winter”—“a kind of Resurrection from the dead.”<sup>168</sup>

Evelyn died on February 27, 1706, and was buried at Wotton, where he had lived since 1694.<sup>169</sup> By 1706 much had changed in the world of gardening. The French sites that Evelyn had visited in the 1640s and 1650s had been eclipsed by André Le Nôtre’s work at Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles. The *parterre de broderie*, *parterre de pièces coupées pour des fleurs* and *parterre à l’angloise* had supplanted the knot, the fret, and “trayle-work.” Het Loo and Hampton Court had both been redesigned by the 1690s, and the earl of Essex had planted the forest garden of Cassiobury in the 1670s.

Evelyn’s involvement in woodland or “extensive gardening,” as exemplified by Cassiobury, is all too evident: through the exchanges with John Beale, through the publication of *Sylva* in 1664, and through the expansion of this work in subsequent editions to the end of his life.<sup>170</sup> In contrast,

<sup>168</sup> For Evelyn’s association with millenarianism, see Parry, “John Evelyn as Hortulan Saint,” 137–38. See further “Elysium Britannicum,” 275.

<sup>169</sup> See de Beer, *Diary*, V, 179.

<sup>170</sup> See here D. Chambers, “‘Wild Pastorall Encounter’: John Evelyn, John Beale and the Renegotiation of Pastoral in the Mid-Seventeenth Century,” in Leslie and Raylor, *Culture and Cultivation* (as above, note 4), 173–94, esp. 183. See also D. Chambers, *The Planters of the English Landscape Garden: Botany, Trees and the Georgics*, London and New Haven, 1993; M. Leslie, “The Spiritual Husbandry of John Beale,” in Leslie and Raylor, *Culture and Cultivation*, 151–72; and Goodchild, “‘No phantasticall utopia,’” 105–27.

no such clear progression in hortulan thinking is discernible in those revised chapters of the “Elysium Britannicum” devoted to parterre, grove, and flower garden. The insertion of lists of evergreens suggests, it is true, that Evelyn’s revisions were keeping pace with new plant introductions,<sup>171</sup> and a cursory reference to Vaux-le-Vicomte in one interlineation indicates a tentative acknowledgment of Le Nôtre’s work.<sup>172</sup> Furthermore, as Douglas Chambers has made abundantly clear in his essay in this volume, Evelyn’s continued engagement in new developments in garden design shines through the pages of his correspondence, if not through the pages of the manuscript itself, for example, in the exchanges with Robert Berkeley over Zоргvliet and Enghien in 1686/87.<sup>173</sup> Yet, despite all this and for whatever reason, it must be affirmed that the main text of the “Elysium Britannicum” (as it has come down to us today) remains rooted in the horticulture and planting design of the 1650s and 1660s.

The formative influences on Evelyn’s concept of ornamental planting were various and complex. Firstly, there were the gardens seen on his visits to France and Italy—Pierre Morin’s garden in Paris, for example, and sites like Richelieu and the Villa Borghese; in addition, there were other European gardens, known through publications as much as direct experience, which offered a subsidiary source of ideas—Salomon de Caus’s *Hortus Palatinus*, for example.<sup>174</sup> Secondly, there were the antique and modern texts, from Pliny to Francis Bacon. Among these, Boyceau’s *Traité* published in 1638 was undoubtedly a primary source of ideas on the parterre and grove. Thirdly, with regard to the flower garden, there were the works of botanists and florists, most of them home-grown horticultural writers. It is surely significant that these modern authorities were active in the early to mid-seventeenth century and not later: There was John Gerard, for example, who died in 1612—Evelyn used Johnson’s revised edition of Gerard’s *Herball*, published in 1633—and G. B. Ferrari, whose *Flora* appeared in 1633 and 1638. (Evelyn’s own copy is in the British Library in London.)<sup>175</sup> There was John Parkinson, who died in 1650; John Rea, who produced his *Flora* in 1665;<sup>176</sup> Sir Thomas Hanmer, who was active at Bettisfield from 1646 to 1678; and Pierre Morin, who published his catalog in 1651.

<sup>171</sup> This is implied by the date of introduction of some of the plants listed and confirmed in the correspondence. See here Harvey’s, “Plants in John Evelyn’s ‘Elysium Britannicum,’” where he suggests a date ca. 1685 for the later insertions; see also, for example, the correspondence cited by Chambers, “‘Elysium Britannicum not printed,’” 121: Evelyn with John Walker and Daniel Parke in the 1690s.

<sup>172</sup> “Elysium Britannicum,” 128.

<sup>173</sup> See Chambers, “‘Elysium Britannicum not printed,’” 127. There are a few indications of very late insertions—for example, “{Here consult Bernard Lamg? Translated into English, printed 1702: you have in your library at Wotton. Pag 123 etc.}” (p. 161)—but these are rare and do not relate to planting as such.

<sup>174</sup> See the “Elysium Britannicum,” 166, insertion. There is an interesting list of “Names of such Workemen as have excelled in their calcographical descriptions [*sic*] . . . both of Gardens & their Ornaments.” This confirms familiarity with the Mollets’ work on broderie. The reference to “that large Cutt of the Heidelberg gardn,” which is deleted (perhaps because of the incorrect authorship—Issac, instead of Salomon de Caus), implies some knowledge of *Hortus Palatinus*, which is further strengthened by the reference to Salomon de Caus and Heidelberg on p. 271.

<sup>175</sup> John Harvey has established that Evelyn used Johnson’s revised edition of the *Herball* from the code Evelyn used in MS 38 at Christ Church.

<sup>176</sup> See here the reference in Chambers, “‘Elysium Britannicum not printed,’” 123, to the letter to Robert Boyle of November 23, 1664, in which he mentions John Rea’s “very usefull booke.” See also “Elysium Britannicum,” 293, margin note, in which Sir Thomas Hanmer’s comments allude to 1667, thus suggesting when this material was incorporated into the manuscript.

## EUROPEAN HORTICULTURE AND PLANTING DESIGN

If Evelyn's concept of parterre, grove, and flower garden developed beyond those formative years, as we might expect, then clues could be found through a detailed study of his correspondence, and through locating other parts of the manuscript, especially the missing "figures," "draughts," and "plots." Further research into the evolution of planting at Sayes Court could also throw light on his mature ideas on planting design and on the way he absorbed new ideas from Europe. The conjectural reconstruction of the parterre and grove from the 1653 plan certainly reveals a designer of considerable flair and ingenuity, adjusting the models seen on the Continent and at home to the small scale of his site. Adjustment was inevitable. Sayes Court was after all more of a gentry than a princely garden; its purpose and its proportions were other than the grand Continental prototypes. In this sense, it must be admitted that Sayes Court provides only a limited visual counterpart to the verbal constructs of the "Elysium Britannicum"—"The Plan of a Royal Garden."<sup>177</sup> It remains a valuable counterpart nonetheless.

The functions and forms of a graciously representative garden such as Richelieu had little relationship to the personal spaces of Sayes Court: Evelyn's "Elaboratorie with a Portico of 20 foot long upon Pillars open towards the Private Garden,"<sup>178</sup> for example. Moreover, although French influences may have been dominant in shaping details of the parterre and grove in 1653, the translation of French into English did not extend to the structure of the garden as a whole. What strikes the eye immediately in the overall layout is the additive, compartmentalized, and seemingly random ordering of the parts that reflects little of French Baroque hierarchies. There may have been an axial approach to the house, but the overall alignments are askew, like the wings of the house itself. In this sense, the Sayes Court layout of 1653 retained something essentially English in its composition, something alien to the French way of ordering space.

Evelyn was later to write to Berkeley of the Dutch "Veneration of *Flora*, and the parterre," and went on to extol the gardens of the Netherlands: "tho the French at present may boast of their vast designee [*sic*], their *Versailles* and portentous workes; yet Gardens can no where be so spruce, and accurately kept."<sup>179</sup> In this letter of 1686, Evelyn seems to eschew the grandiose effects of royal gardening that he had ostensibly celebrated in those earlier years. But what does this tell us about the development of his ideas and his gardening at Sayes Court after 1653?

Acquaintance, vicarious or direct, with Continental and English designs in the 1670s, 1680s, and 1690s would certainly have affected his own planting at Sayes Court. In 1678, for example, he visited the gardens of Ham House and Cassiobury. In 1680 he returned to Cassiobury and recorded details of the earl of Essex's woodland garden. In 1685 he was at Swallowfield and in 1688 at Althorp and Hampton Court. Yet, all we know of the later layout at Sayes Court is from two plans from about 1690–1700 (Figs. 30 and 31). These seem to suggest an elimination of the parterre, an enlargement of the grove, and a new (perhaps even Baroque) axiality.

<sup>177</sup> It should be noted that although Evelyn intended the "Elysium Britannicum" to be "chiefly for the divertissement of Princes, noble-men and greate persons," he does qualify this: it "may (we hope) be of exceeding use also, and emolument for persons of all Conditions whatsoever, who are either Masters of, or delight in Gardens" (p. 3).

<sup>178</sup> "Explanation of the Particulars."

<sup>179</sup> See Chambers "Elysium Britannicum not printed," and his reference to letter book, 538, on p. 127.





30. "A colored plan of the manor of Sayes Court, in the parish of Deptford, the property of John Evelyn, Esq., as surveyed by Joel Gascoyne in 1692." British Library, King George III's Topographical Collection, K. Top. XVIII. 17. 2 (photo: By permission of the British Library)



31. "A colored plan of the manor of Sayes Court, in the parish of Deptford with the dock-yard; drawn apparently about 1700 [by John Grove?]." British Library, King George III's Topographical Collection, K. Top. XVIII. 17. 3 (photo: By permission of the British Library)

In a letter of December 13, 1670, to Sir Thomas Hanmer, it is surely significant that he speaks of being "wholly addicted to the propagation of Foresters & rusticities of that nature" and of having "miserably neglected my little Flower garden."<sup>180</sup> This may imply that the garden at Sayes Court was already changing in the direction of the extensive groves that appear in the later plans. However, until further research is possible, only tentative conclusions should be drawn on what these changes signify. Evelyn's increasing preoccupation with extensive woodland gardening was just one impulse that may have affected the layout at Sayes Court. The plain lawns and enlarged groves were, after all, entirely in keeping with a widespread stylistic shift in English garden design after 1660: an impulse to simplicity, exemplified in the eight unadorned grass plots at Ham House. But the pronounced axuality of the later layout—a more coherent organization around a central axis—could also indicate

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., reference to letter book, 332, on p. 117. There could have been religious or royalist/republican influences at work in Evelyn's shift from flowers to "rusticities" in the years after the Restoration. See here Goody, *The Culture of Flowers*, 202–5.

that Baroque influences, whether from the Continent or from less “portentous” layouts within England, were reflected in these alterations. On the other hand, it is equally conceivable that the neglect of his “little flower garden,” in favor of “rusticities,” simply betokened pressures of upkeep or shortages of time and resources.

It must be admitted that beyond the evidence of these plans, we are reliant on mere fragments: the handbook “Directions for the Gardiner at SAYS-COURT” (1687) and some miscellaneous remarks in his diary and other writings. There is, for example, one entry in his diary of 1684 as to how evergreens, including cypress, were damaged by the severe frosts of that winter,<sup>181</sup> and there is the reference in a letter of January 12, 1685, to being “forc’d quite to alter my poore Garden” through those frosts.<sup>182</sup>

Thus, while the manuscript “Elysium Britannicum” appears locked in the horticulture of the mid-seventeenth century, Evelyn’s gardening at Sayes Court progressed over nearly five decades: from the garden plan of 1653 to the end of the century, when another form of damage was inflicted on one particular evergreen. In 1698, while staying at Sayes Court, Peter the Great was pushed back and forth through the holly hedge in a wheelbarrow. As Evelyn later recalled:

Is there under *Heaven* a more glorious and refreshing Object of the kind, than an impregnable *Hedge* of about *four hundred foot* in *length*, *nine Foot high*, and *five* in *diameter*; which I can shew in my now ruin’d *Gardens* at *Say’s-Court* (thanks to the *Czar of Moscovy*) at any time of the Year, glitt’ring with its arm’d and varnish’d *Leaves*? The taller *Standards* at orderly distances, blushing with their natural *Coral*: It mocks at the rudest assaults of the *Weather*, *Beasts*, or *Hedge breakers*.<sup>183</sup>

Between these two dates lies a changing world, in which inveterate ways and inchoate ideas came together for the first time. It is hard to situate John Evelyn’s protean vision of gardening in that changing world. On the one hand he may be viewed as the traditionalist, perpetuating the forms and systems of early- to mid-seventeenth-century garden design, for example, in his attachment to the vocabulary of “knotts,” “fretts,” and “embossemments,” or in his patchwork structuring of the garden at Sayes Court in 1653. On the other hand, he may be viewed as an innovator: in his introduction of alaternus for hedging; in his promotion of the word “parterre”; in his design for the highly original “oval Square” at Sayes Court; or in his advocacy of extensive landscaping after the inspiration of John Beale. Only through further intensive study of the “Elysium Britannicum” and other writings, through meticulous analysis of the documentation for Sayes Court, and through complementary case studies will it be possible to assess John Evelyn’s decisive contribution to European horticulture and planting design during the second half of the seventeenth century.

<sup>181</sup> De Beer, *Diary*, 365.

<sup>182</sup> Chambers, “‘Elysium Britannicum not printed,’” 127.

<sup>183</sup> J. Evelyn, *Silva; or a Discourse of Forest-Trees*, 4th ed., London, 1706, 182.