

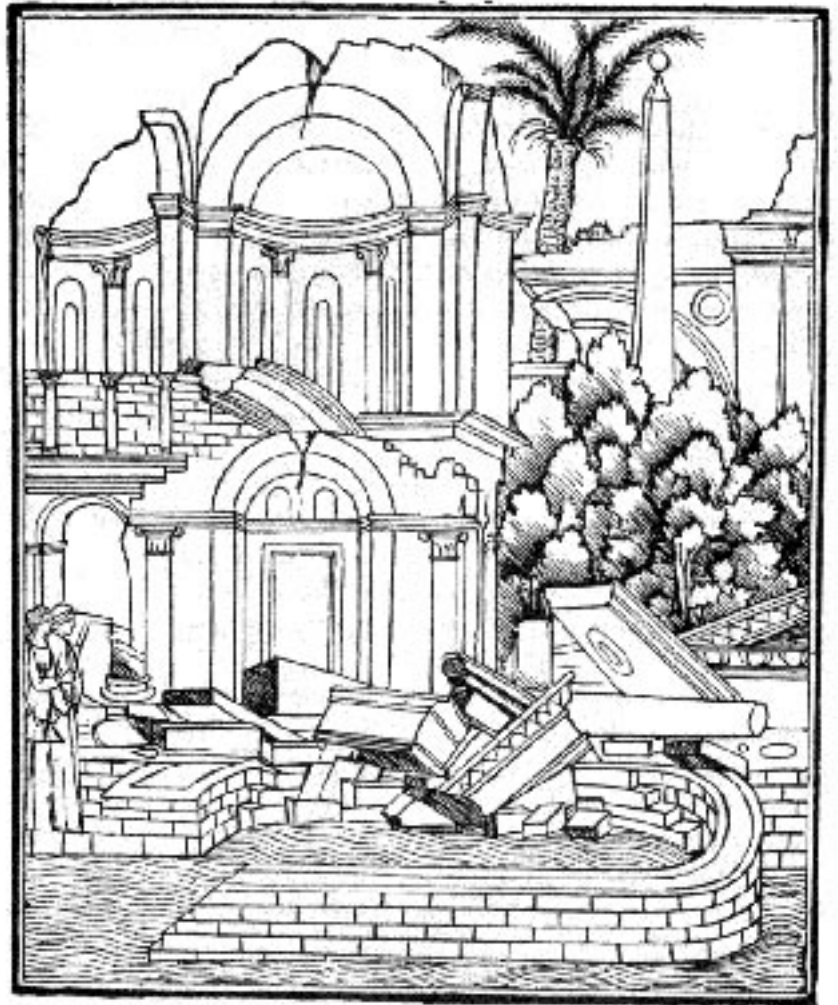
EUROPEAN VISUAL CULTURE READING GROUP

James McComish

The Hypnerotomachia Poliphili and the Erotics of Architecture

Since its publication in 1499, Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* has perplexed and amused its readers to equal degrees. The author's strange mix of sensuality and pedantry finds its outlet in an architectural love story in which both human beings and buildings are described in exhaustive and loving detail. As a result, this tale of Poliphilo's ardent pursuit of his beloved Polia turns architecture into the subject of erotic pursuit as well. This paper will explore how architecture—whether in the *Hypnerotomachia* or more generally—can be said to be erotic.

I propose three ways in which architecture can be viewed in erotic terms: first, through the viewer's emotional response; second, through the investiture of architecture with personal and emotional qualities; and finally, through the use of an eroticised form-language. Thus, while architecture in the abstract might not be 'erotic' in any meaningful sense, specific examples of architectural eroticism can be found in the erotic experience of architecture, the erotic description of architecture, and the erotic form of architecture.



Monday 11 April

6.30 pm Room 150 Elisabeth Murdoch Building

All Welcome