

MINUS SPACE

Cris Gianakos: The Way Up and the Way Down

By Thomas McEvelley

Art Critic and Scholar of Classical Antiquities, 2002

Cris Gianakos was born in New York City in 1934, at the height of the Great Depression. When he was six months old his family returned to Greece, which was still trying to emerge from the Ottoman Empire, convulsed by its contradictory layers of history. Some kind of imprint passed, at an early, almost prearticulate moment. Though Gianakos barely remembers his early experiences in Greece, they have come to dominate his imagination from afar. Back in New York, Gianakos attended public school, studied Graphic Design at the School of Visual Arts, and worked for several years as a free-lance designer. The trade brought him mainly into contact with the design challenges of rectangles – primarily book jackets, posters, and brochures. Typography also fascinated him in its structural similarities to architecture. Certain main themes of his later oeuvre could be seen as seeded by this work-his emphasis on the geometry of the rectangle, his startling selection of the diagonal as his central focus, his emphasis on architectural construction, and so on.

Meanwhile, Gianakos began making assemblages and boxes somewhat along the lines of Joseph Cornell's work – somewhat surrealistic alterations and recombinations of found objects. In 1966, at age 32, he began to exhibit some of these pieces. In the next few years Gianakos developed and realigned his work, coming to see it as belonging, with qualifications, to the Minimalist tradition. He experimented with resin castings, 1967-72, but though these referred to primary shapes they lacked the crystalline industrial surface associated with Minimalism. Another early genre was white powder works, one in 1969, another in 1970, another in 1972. In two of these Gianakos laid down a large X with scattered flour, in one a large diagonal within a pre-existing square area. Again the shapes are reductivist and primary, but instead of Minimalism's late-Modernist striving for quasi-permanence, Gianakos involved his white X's in ephemerality, siting them in lanes of traffic where the movement of vehicles would soon disperse them back into the earth. The diagonal example was his first focus on the element which would move to the center of his work and stay there for decades.

In time it came to seem that Minimalism didn't allow enough room for the accumulation of the associative network which, over time, would give Gianakos's work deepening levels of meaning. He seemed to want to refer to something outside of, or in addition to, pure form. His resin sculptures began referring to the pyramids of Egypt with their heavy burden of culture and history. By 1977, working alone and more or less feeling his way in the dark, Gianakos had begun making the "ramp" works which would occupy him for at least twenty-five years and would become known as his most characteristic or signed product.

Gianakos's ramps are usually made of wood and bolts. They consist primarily of a diagonal element with a supporting substructure. The diagonal element is usually seen as ascending, but it could as easily provide a means of descent. Sometimes the diagonal element is faced with a sheet of steel; occasionally the whole construction is made of steel and glass, in a visceral contradiction of the warmer, softer feeling of wood worked by carpentry. The ramps typically vary in length from *Morpheus II* (1994), in which the diagonal is about thirty feet long, to *120* (1980), in which it is 120 feet long. They range in height from about six feet in *Untitled* (1985), to thirty-four feet in *Mars* (1980). Structurally, some are simple ramps, dominated by a single diagonal, like *Ramp #4* (1978); others are ramps topped by platforms, like *Double Dutch*, 1980; still others are double ramps, with two diagonal elements on opposite sides, like *Wanas Ramp* (1990); one, *Styx* (1987), is a double ramp with a platform on top.

Though the viewer is immediately struck by the urgent presence of the diagonal, he or she soon becomes attentive to the support structure beneath the diagonal, which is an essential part of the sculpture. Sometimes the substructure or support system features verticals, as in *Keene Ramp* (1977), *Ramp #4*, *Double Dutch*, *Rex* (1980), and *120*. These regularly repeated uprights may suggest the colonnades of ancient Greek temples, and they show the same tendency to disappear, as harmonies in music leave the emphasis on the instrumental lead, in this case the strident cry of the diagonal.

In other cases the support system features intricate latticing of verticals and diagonals, as in *Mars*, *Ward's Island Ramp* (1979), *Morpheus II*, and, especially, *Wanas Ramp*. The proliferation of diagonals receding along the depth axis stresses less the stability of the ramp/platform than the urgent sense of upwardization impelling it. In cases where the substructure extends outward, as in *Styx* and *Wanas Ramp*, there is a suggestion of pyramidal form, as ascending diagonals rise from all four sides at once.

Gianakos's adoption of the limited or highly defined set of formal means offered by the ramp-form is one of the traits that continue to link him with the Minimalist/post-Minimalist tradition. His subjection of this form to long years of patient investigation relates to Donald Judd's long concentration on series of boxes, to Larry Bell's focus

on the semi-transparent box or Jene Highstein's career-long attention to the upright mound. The Minimalist artist, by returning again and again to a restricted formal range, attempts to uncover all its implications, to enrich it with new senses of meaning and at the same time to exhaust it by driving all its possible meanings into the open.

But Minimalism by itself cannot fully account for Gianakos's ramps – neither their outer form nor their inner meaning. While these works retained a relationship with the primary shapes favored by Minimalist sculptors, they increasingly acquired referents outside their own vocabulary of formal means. Minimalism arose in the 1960s in a blaze of excitement and enthusiasm, but after a few years a number of artists whose work had started from Minimalist roots came to feel that the genre was insufficiently expressive in terms of meaning or content. It seemed that perhaps Minimalism had minimized itself too much to allow room for the artist's sense of meaning to operate in. It was still in certain ways too much like formalism, with its emphasis on purity of form in isolation from the outside world. Like some other artists of his generation, Gianakos has placed his work in expanding contexts over the years. For this reason he is perhaps to be seen more as a post-Minimalist than as a Minimalist: he only started there, and quickly wanted more.

The first expansion of context took place when artists who may first have seen themselves as Minimalists began to locate their work in the wider context of Modern sculpture as a whole. This was happening by about 1970. In Gianakos's case the strongest connections were with Russian Constructivism, including its sub-category of Suprematism, and then with Neo-Plasticism and later with forms of geometric abstraction that were related to Abstract Expressionism.

Gianakos's ramps bear a special relationship with Vladimir Tatlin's famous *Monument to the Third International* (1919-20). This architectonic sculpture introduced the idea of movement as an aesthetic principle; not only does it imply movement by positing ascending walkways, but different parts of the *Monument* were actually intended to revolve on their bases. The implication of movement, if not the actual revolution of the sculpture, is still central to Gianakos's ramps, which imply people walking – or climbing or struggling – across them. The lattice-like substructure of Tatlin's *Monument* also seems to have been one of the models for Gianakos's constructions. Works of the same period by the brothers Georgii and Vladimir Stenberg – especially *KPS 11* (1919-21) and *KPS 13* (1919) – foreshadow Gianakos's central form. In addition he has felt significant affinity with elements of the work of Rodchenko and Malevich, Mondrian and Le Corbusier – above all their emphasis on simplicity and geometry. The tradition of primary shapes at a previously unrecognized interface between industry and mysticism influenced Gianakos's tendency to work in architectonic structures with an emphasis on right angles and diagonals. The sculptures of David Smith, with their tendency to cluster on the earth in complex conglomerations of metallic angles and beams relate to Gianakos's work in general, but especially to *Gridlock*, the quadratic composition of large I-beams forming an industrial mandala from the era when the United States Steel Corporation rather than Microsoft was the primary industrial reference for Americans.

Finally, there are elements of Abstract Expressionism in Gianakos's work also, though they are somewhat less obvious because of his eschewal of intuitive Action Painting-like expressionism; perhaps the most important connection is with the works of Franz Kline, whose weighty combinations of horizontals, verticals and diagonals suggest monumental scale without being monumental in size. In addition, some have perceived his work as related to Barnett Newman's in its space-separating function; as Newman segregated one part of space from another with his zip, so a long ramp like *120* acts as a zip moving through the landscape and as if ineluctably separating the surrounding space by an uncompromisingly straight line. In addition, Gianakos, by appropriating a utilitarian form and recontextualizing it as an art-object, follows in the tradition of Duchamp. His intentions, however, unlike Duchamp's, cannot be described as anti-art. He is not trying to deconstruct the idea of art, though he is, like Duchamp, interested in art that has significant overlaps with the objects encountered in everyday life.

Viewed in the art context, then, the ramp is a sculptural object. Yet it has other genre associations too. It is in part architectural-providing a structure which people may physically occupy rather than just viewing it from outside. It is also in a sense performative, as it implies movements of individuals. A ramp is a means whereby a person gets from one point in space to another, and thus it implies a narrative. In cases such as *Styx*, when the ramp has a stationary platform at its top, it may be a performance stage; *Styx* has actually been used in this way – though this cannot be said to be its central purpose.

In Gianakos's work, the ramp's central purpose is more symbolic than actual. It is not only a structure on which one gets from one point to another – which is equally true of a path or a bridge or a car – but a structure which specifically takes one from one vertical level to another. It is not merely a structure of passage but of a specific kind of passage: either an ascent or a descent. In this sense the ramp can operate as a medium not merely for a passage but for a *rite* of passage. In the Orphic rites of ancient Greece, initiates sometimes ascended ladders to symbolize the idea that they were passing, through the power of the initiation rite, to a higher level of reality. In fact, in shamanic rituals (or "performances") around the world the ladder-ascent is used for this purpose. In some instances each rung of the ladder, or level of the ascent, is regarded as penetrating into a higher astronomical realm, the realm of a higher or more distant planet or constellation. Sumerian King Ur-Nammu, c. 2100 BC, was presented, on his famous stele, as ascending from one astral level to another by means of ladders, in order to

consult the deity on high.¹ These different levels were represented by the stages or levels of the ziggurat – a pyramidal staged platform each level of which is reached by ascending a ramp from the last one.²

This type of content, involving actual references to ancient cultures and their monuments, represents an expansion to a third scale of context, the first being Minimalism, the second Modern sculpture in general, the third the whole range of human iconicity. Though Gianakos's ramps have meaning within the first two contexts, they connect even more deeply with symbolisms of ascent and descent in ancient religious monuments. Some of Gianakos's first sculptural works, it should be recalled, were based on the Egyptian pyramids-which may be seen as multi-directional ramps leading from all four cardinal points to the same apex. Gianakos has returned repeatedly to such preoccupations. Among his mature ramp-works the closest thing to the pyramidal shape is *Wanas Ramp*, where two of the four sides have full ramps, while on the other two sides diagonal buttresses without actual ramps rise to the same apex. A pyramidal form is intimated but not fully stated. Other ancient structures which are involved in Gianakos's expanding network of references include the three-leveled Hatshepsut temple at Deir El-Bahari in Egypt, where two massive freestanding ramps lead from the first level to the second and from the second to the third. Perhaps invoking the same symbolism, a ramp leads from the bull-ring floor to the throne room of the Minoan palace at Phaestos on Crete, and at the temple of Apollo at Delphi a small pedestrian ramp leads onto the stylobate, or ground floor, where the sacred and sheltered precinct of the oracle was accessed. These examples have exerted influence on Gianakos, who is keenly aware of his Greek heritage and of the connection that it provides with ancient civilizations in general.

There are in addition other ancient references which Gianakos has not specifically stated but which may usefully be introduced into a discussion of his work. These are often involved in conceptions of the afterlife and the journey which the soul must take after leaving its body. Afterlife-connected ramps may feature not only the idea of ascent but simultaneously the idea of descent. The idea of descending into the earth, as much as that of ascending into the sky, has often been conceived as a culmination of the soul's afterlife adventure. Among the so-called Kurgan cultures which entered Europe around 4,000 BC, perhaps from the steppe-land lying to the North of the Black Sea – and which have for a while been at the heart of the debate about Indo-European origins – the custom of wagon-burial was not unusual. A figure of authority in his community would be buried with his horses and wagon, on which his war-gear would be heaped. In some cases it seems that horses and wagon were lowered into the death-pit, but in other cases it seems a ramp was built down which the horses would pull the battle-wagon to its subterranean destination. In a similar culture in early Bronze Age China, "The royal dead were buried in deep pits up to fourteen by nineteen metres in plan sunk ten metres or so below the surface and approached by a cruciform arrangement of ramps".³ In the cruciform arrangement the ramps descend into the pit from the four directions (if the grave is oriented astronomically this means the four cardinal compass points). In this arrangement, as in the pyramid, the ramp idea is conjoined with the idea of the center and the four surrounding quarters of space; it is symbolically the center of the universe that the deceased is dispatched into.

In the Sumerian burial site known as the Royal Tombs at Ur, excavated early in the last century by Sir Leonard Woolley, "a pit open to the sky [is] approached by a sloped ramp, at one end of which is a single-chamber tomb..."⁴ This situation is repeated. The use of multiple ramps at Ur does not seem to have been merely a way to transport the considerable grave-goods into the tomb-pits. It seems to have been regarded also as a symbolic transition into the afterlife, as is suggested by the fact that in one case "the bodies of... five men were on the ramp which led down to" the pit.⁵ These were, presumably, human sacrifices intended to accompany the deceased lord or lady into the afterlife as part of his or her retinue. In another spot, "at the foot of the ramp lay six soldiers, orderly in two ranks, with... copper helmets crushed flat on the broken skulls".⁶ In the king's tomb (as Woolley identified it), the pit, which held the bodies of 74 human sacrifices, was "approached as usually by a sloped ramp".⁷ In the pit were wagons which beasts of burden had dragged down the ramps before themselves being sacrificed. In this setting the ramp is evidently conceived as a transitional device leading into the realm of death. By a paradoxical twist not uncommon in afterlife mythos, the descent by ramps into the earth was seen as somehow equivalent to an ascent through astronomical levels into the sky. The afterlife, not involving the fetters of embodiment and physical space, was beyond the distinction between above and below. An extraordinarily clear example is found in the ramp that descends into the Tomb of Ramesses VI in the Valley of the Kings near Luxor in Upper Egypt. After a long staged descent which is continuously accompanied by wall paintings on the themes of descent and transformation, one reaches at last the actual burial pit or tomb chamber, where the passage of stars through the night sky is depicted on the ceiling. By descending into the depths of the earth one has somehow appeared at the height of heaven.

Ancient afterlife myths, in other words, might involve either the motif of ascent or the motif of descent. As Heraclitus said, "The way up and the way down are one and the same" (fr. 60). One can ascend or descend from the life-plane into a spiritual existence in the afterlife. Thus, seen metaphysically or ritualistically, the ramp has two functions which, paradoxically, are regarded as one and the same. In terms of the Orphic myth which seems to have brought such ideas into Greece, the soul, when it is temporarily banished from its home on high, descends into materiality and is embodied; after many lives in the body it reaches a stage of realization where it can cast off the body and reascend to the heaven from which it originated. As the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* exhorts the soul of the deceased: "Get thee back to the heights of heaven!"⁸ It is implied that the soul has primordially descended from that height to the realm of matter, and now, freed from matter, has the opportunity to reascend. The ramp goes up and the ramp goes down. It is a symbol of universal process working itself out

through the descent and ascent of the soul. Gianakos's feeling of personal affinity with such material is illustrated by the fact that he has said he thinks he was there when the pyramids were built. Like the up-and-down ramps, the pyramid or four-sided ramp is a launching pad to launch the pharaoh's soul into the zone of the circumpolar stars.

The urgency of the religious need for descent and/or ascent is implicit in the dynamism of the diagonal. According to traditional interpretations, the horizontal plane expresses peace or stability; the vertical represents authority or rigidity; the diagonal represents dynamism and restlessness. Gianakos's emphasis on the diagonal breaches the basic principle of Modernist abstraction which was laid down by the Constructivists, engraved in stone by the Neo-Plasticists, and maintained relentlessly in place by the Minimalists: the pre-eminence of the square-or at least the squared off rectilinear figure, that is, the rectangle. From Black Square to Hans Hoffman and Kenneth Noland, from Donald Judd's boxes to Sol LeWitt's three-dimensional grids, this was the dogma. Classical Modernist abstraction did not for the most part focus on change and dynamism so much as on solidity and four-square monumentality. The square relates to the idea of the mandala, the center-with-quaternity that symbolizes orderliness within space-time – as in the face of a compass or a clock.

Within this hallowed tradition Gianakos has performed a heresy – or is it a blasphemy? – by choosing the diagonal as his focus. In the history of thinking about geometry and mathematics the diagonal has a very peculiar and special meaning by which it shows the way out of the mandala. It represents incommensurability. According to traditional histories, Pythagoras or his student Hippasus of Metapontum discovered the outrageous fact that the diagonal and side of any rectangle (including any square) can not be measured in the same scale, no matter how fine that scale is made. They are incommensurable in relation to one another. If either the diagonal or the side is recorded as a rational or whole number, the other will necessarily be an irrational number which, like pi, continues to extend itself in infinite decimal points, never reaching full definition; always unfolding itself, it is never fully unfolded. It is this inner road to infinity on which the dynamism of the diagonal is based.

Thus, the diagonal is a quirky, unmanageable force, unlike the relatively tame horizontal and vertical. It is a wild spirit cavorting irrationally among the tamer types. Though Gianakos's work looks controlled and manageable, it features at its very center this typos of irrationality and eternal flux. By choosing the diagonal Gianakos has chosen the rectangle, but not in and as itself. He has chosen the irrational element of the rectangle, which is the same as to say the dynamic element, the number that keeps running on forever, never closing itself out.

The angle of a diagonal is among its more expressive traits. The closer an angle gets to the horizontal, the more it shares the qualities of horizontality – peace, stability, and so on; the closer it gets to the vertical, the more it shares the qualities of verticality – authority, rigidity and so on. Thus steeper ramps that approach the vertical are difficult to ascend; they keep one out, or threaten one with a fear of falling. The Mayan pyramids are of this exclusionary, authoritarian steepness. The pyramids of Copan in Honduras, for example, have ramp-enclosed stairways (not precisely ramps per se but close enough to merit the comparison) that ascend at an angle of slightly over 60 degrees-much steeper than one can walk – or maybe even crawl – on.⁹ Gianakos's most sinister or ominously overtopping ramp structures have about the same angle: *Orion* about 60 degrees and *Déjà Vu V* about 70. These ramps have a forbidding aspect because it is clear that one would be unable to ascend them-as not infrequently on the steep Mayan pyramids one finds a tourist frozen by the combination of height and steepness partway up. This aspect of authoritarian terror may also suggest why *Déjà Vu V* is constructed, unusually for Gianakos, of the threatening materials glass and steel, and *Orion* of steel alone. *Double Dutch*, at 50 degrees, still presents a threatening aspect. Such ramps suggest that there is considerable travail – even physical danger – involved in spiritual ascent or transition in the afterlife; the wayfarer is presented by them with a challenge that he or she may not be able to convert. "Long is the way/And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light," as Milton put it (*Paradise Lost* II.432-433).

In one famous reconstruction drawing of a Babylonian ziggurat¹⁰ the angle is much milder, about 15 degrees. The ramps leading from level to level in the Hatshepsut temple also trace an angle of about 15 degrees. Such angles are quite navigable on foot and are non-threatening to the pedestrian. Similarly, Gianakos's ramps with lesser angles, like *120* and *Ramp #4*, both about 20 degrees, are more peaceful and reassuring, as is horizontality in general. The ramp-like passage at the site of the Great Bath – seemingly the central ritual spot – in Mohenjo Daro in northwest India (c. 2000 BC) ascends/descends at a mild angle of about 10 degrees. The descending ramp-passage in the tomb of Ramesses VI in the Valley of the Kings in Upper Egypt follows an angle of about 12-14 degrees. (Like the ramp-enclosed staircase, the ramp-passage, or enclosed ramp, is not exactly the same structure as a freestanding ramp, but is still related to Gianakos's ramps, two of which, *Maroussi Ramp* and *Cul de Sac*, have enclosing walls).

The different angles carry a sense of different destinations with them. The ramps with steep angles create a sense of toiling upward which in turn magnifies the sense of the sacredness of the site (a too-easy ascent would belittle it) and the awesomeness of the power being approached. The steep angles carry a sense of the sublime, while the milder angles participate in the idea of beauty as they "move easily and softly over the landscape".¹¹ The extremely steep angles of Mayan pyramids invoke the terror-sublime of an authoritarian society where something more than toil is involved in passage. Something similar is implied by Gianakos's steeper ramps, such as *Déjà Vu V*, *Orion* and *Double Dutch*. The ramps with more comfortable angles, such as *120* and *Styx*, both

about 20 degrees, and *Ramp #4* and *Gemini*, both about 25 degrees, suggest less a terrifying challenge for the soul than a gentle passage into a restful place.

The ramps that might be viewed as mainstream for Gianakos's oeuvre have angles in between the easy and the impossible – *Rex* and *Zumikon Ramp*, both about 40-45 degrees, and *Morpheus II*, about 30 degrees. *Mars*, at 50 degrees, might be regarded as the upper limit of this group. These ramps seem heroic, but not sadistically over-difficult; one might have to crawl over them, holding on for dear life, but one would have a good chance of making it. In these distinctions there are suggestions of varying difficulties of ascent that may correspond to the state of the personality facing them-somewhat as in the doctrine of karma some are said to have accumulated more difficult, and others lighter, karmic clearances.

There are a few ramps which stand outside this iconography or add a nuanced variation to it. *Little Rex*, 1979, for example, expresses the sense that the ramp is not only related to the temple-in a sense it is the temple. Based on the structure of the Athena Nike temple on the Acropolis at Athens, it presents temple and ramp as interpenetrated into a single body. The implication is that the temple is a place where the upwardization work of the ramp might happen, or might be ritually prepared for. The haunting beauty of this tiny temple which was the last addition to the Acropolis temple complex clings like an ancient resonance round the little temple-ramp.

Athena Nike II, 1991, is a development from *Little Rex*. Neither of them is strictly or exclusively a ramp, as are *Zumikon Ramp* and *Morpheus II* and most of the others that share the emphasis on the narrow extended diagonal. The back wall of *Little Rex*, though it is tilted like a diagonal, is more an inclined plane than a ramp. In *Athena Nike II* this quality is emphasized. The framework which, like *Little Rex*, is based on the proportions of the Athena Nike temple, now holds within its interior a flat rectangular inclined plane which, painted an intense light blue, seems to reflect the sky toward which it points in its angle of inclination. It is in effect a blue monochrome painting that is held within the temple-based framework rather than within a conventional frame on a wall. The temple seems to hold the sky-blue monochrome as the sacred object or icon which it enshrines.

Several other works, such as *Untitled*, 1985, share this inclined plane format. In *Pod*, 2002, the newest of the ramp works, made for the present exhibition, the simplified substructure holds aloft a rectangular inclined plane that is tilted to conform with the ramp-format, but not very much. Further, its proportions do not suggest the extended narrow diagonal but a platform that might be a table or a bed or even an altar. It is a platform raised on high as if suggesting not so much the transition to a higher state but the state itself. Though it is tilted like a ramp it suggests an elevated location rather than the means of ascent to such a location.

Though Gianakos's smaller ramps are sometimes sited in architecture-galleries or museums – he favors a setting in nature where most of his larger ramps have been sited not only because of their size but also because their meaning involves the natural setting. They imply an ascent out of nature into a beyond where, as Aristotle said of the superlunary world, reality is metaphysically fixed and does not change. That, according to ancient theologians, was the true home of the soul, in which it originated and from which it descended into the troubled realm of nature which is constantly changing. The ramp situated in a field or a thicket of trees makes two statements. First, it asserts a reality other than nature, a cultural reality of hard edges and man-made construction that stands in conspicuous contrast with the surround of nature. Second, it asserts an upward thrust that suggests a way out of the realm of natural change. Though both these expressions are in contrast to nature, yet the ramp somehow seems at home or at ease in nature. The way out of nature is a part of the nature of it all. Since the destination the ramps point toward is neither seen nor overtly defined, it stands as a kind of question-mark or metaphysical void. It is not unlike the emptiness that Yves Klein ascended briefly into in his *Leap into the Void*.

The simplicity of the ramps finally exists on a complex series of levels. First there is the contemplation of the pure diagonal, as if floating in the air like a wafted melody or summons from on high. Then there is the confrontation with the lattice. By opening one's appreciation to the substructure holding up the line segment or angled plane one greatly complexifies the experience. The sleek singleness of the ramp or plane or line contrasts with the dizzying serial array of substructural elements that are repeated till they suggest an infinite regress. The single ramp or plane or line also relates to infinity insofar as the dynamism of its diagonality creates a sense of upward thrust that points to an unimaginable beyond. Both elements imply infinity through their finite bounds.

It is this dynamic upward thrust that breaks up the stability of the line-plane-ramp and inserts it into an ongoing narrative. Now the point becomes not the structure itself so much as the destination it is pointing or thrusting toward. Seen as launching device, the ramp launches the adventurer who has mounted it into a condition which is either void or at least undefined. Now questions about story values begin to arise. Has the unseen soul whose destination is at issue already been launched into the beyond (as the burial chambers in all the Egyptian pyramids were found empty)? Or is the catapult of souls just waiting for the adventurer's appearance, for the embodied human to confront the path that awaits him, like a messiah and his waiting cross, or an animal and its trap?

- 1 For the Stele of Ur-Nammu see Andre Parrot, Sumer, *The Dawn of Art* (New York: Golden Press, 1961), p. 227.
- 2 For illustrations of ramp-structure of ziggurats see *ibid.*, pp. 11, 200-201.
- 3 Graham Clark, *World Prehistory in New Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 306.
- 4 Sir Leonard Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees, A Record of Seven Years of Excavation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938), p. 35.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- 8 E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead (The Papyrus of Ani)* (New York: Dover, 1967), p. 334.
- 9 I measured the angle with a protractor from the illustration in Lionel Casson et al., eds., *Mysteries of the Past* (n.c.: Scribner's, 1977), p. 297.
- 10 Chaldean Temple, reconstruction by Chipiez. Measure from the illustration in Andre Parrot, *Sumer, The Dawn of Art*, p. 11.
- 11 David L. Shirey, "New Approaches to the Heroic", *The New York Times*, October 21, 1979