LEXICON FOR A RECONSTRUCTION

In other forms, otherwise, present memories of Amatrice

Archive

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LEXICON FOR A RECONSTRUCTION

In other forms, otherwise, present memories of Amatrice

Graduation Project
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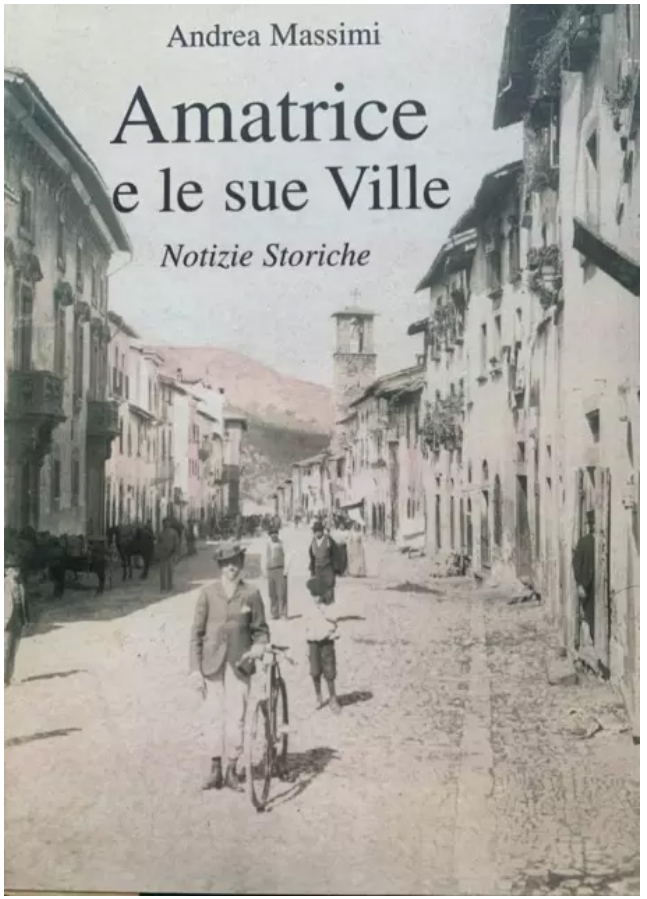
MSc4 Independent Group

Faculty of Architecture
and the Built Enviornment

2024–2025

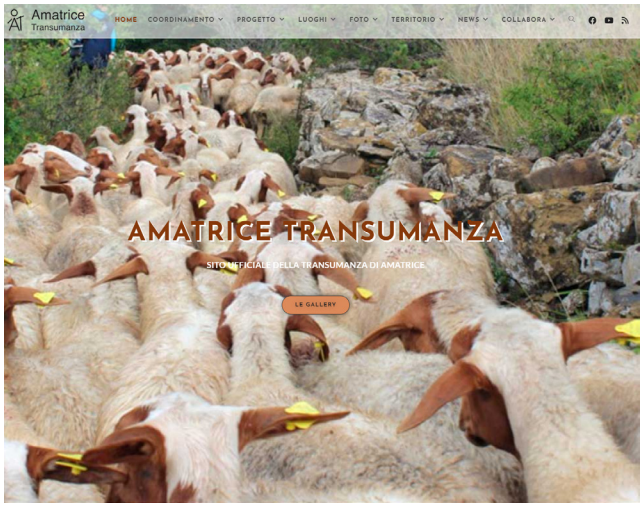
A

AMATRICE



BOOK
Massimi, Andrea. *Amatrice e le sue Ville: Notizie Storiche*. Amatrice: Alftedo Aniballi Amatrice, 1958.

BOOK
Viscogliosi, Alessandro (ed.), Giulia Catalani, Simone Lucchetti, and Antonio Mirandola. *Amatrice: studi e ricerche per la ricostruzione della città.* Milano: Silvana editoriale, 2022.



WEBSITE
Mozzetti, Marzio. *Amatrice Transumanza*. amatricetransumanza.it

IMAGE
Unknown author, Amatrice (locality of Sommati), Santa Maria della Filetta. Photograph of a fresco. Biblioteca Hertziana. https://galerie.biblhertz.it/amatrice/

IMAGE
Unknown author, Amatrice (town of Ferrazza), Chiesa dell'Icona Passatora. Photograph of a fresco. Biblioteca Hertziana. https://galerie.biblhertz.it/amatrice/

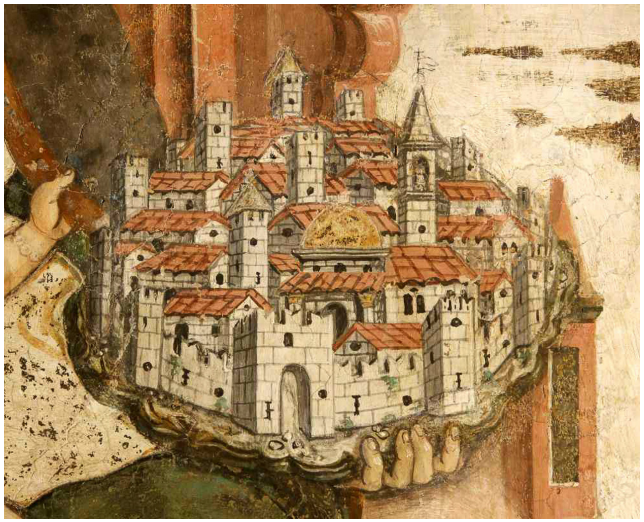
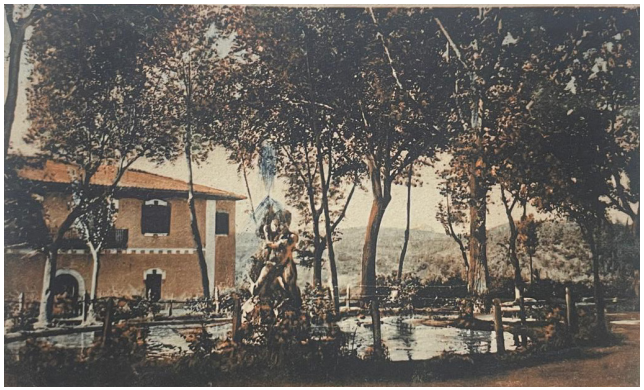


IMAGE
Unknown author, Amatrice (town of Ferrazza), Chiesa dell'Icona Passatora. Photograph of a fresco. Biblioteca Hertziana. https://galerie.biblhertz.it/amatrice/

PHOTOGRAPH
Unknown author, Amatrice, Torre di Sant' Emidio. Photograph. Biblioteca Hertziana. https://galerie.biblhertz.it/amatrice/



PHOTOGRAPH
Public garden in Amatrice, courtesy of Mario Ciaralli.

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Public garden in Amatrice, courtesy of Mario Ciaralli.

PHOTOGRAPH
Public garden in Amatrice, courtesy of Mario Ciaralli.

PHOTOGRAPH
Public garden in Amatrice, courtesy of Mario Ciaralli.

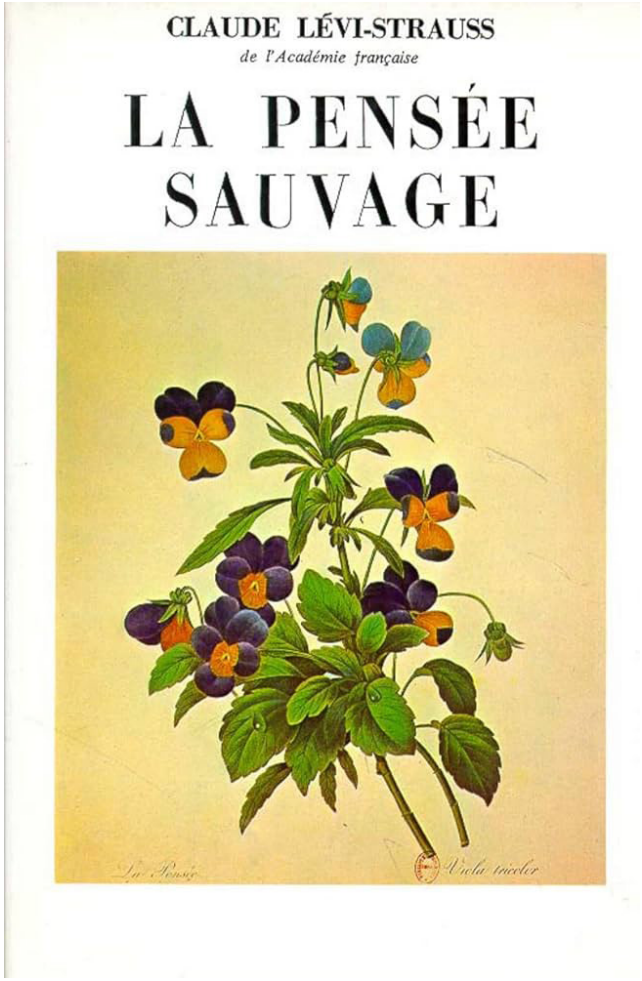
PHOTOGRAPH
Alley in Amatrice. Corriere della Sera. https://images2.corriereobjects.it/methode_image/2016/08/24/Interni/Foto%20Gallery/480734_605076232851425_1205284206_n.jpg

B

BRICOLAGE

bricolage

IMAGE
Illustration for the Book of Daniel Defoe “Robinson Crusoe”.
Epinal imaging from the end of the 19th century.



BOOK
Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *La pensée sauvage.* Paris: Plon, 1962.

Never Modern

Irénée Scalbert and 6a architects

BOOK
Scalbert, Irénée, and 6a Architects (Firm). *Never Modern.* Zürich: Park Books, 2013.

Bricolage

Irénée Scalbert on bricolage, Lévi-Strauss, Colin Rowe, Charles Jencks, Guiseppe Penone, Robinson Crusoe and other topics. *Architecture VIII, Assistant Prof. Tom Emerson, 08.03.2011, HIL E4, 8-10am.*

Assistant Professor Tom Emerson, Architecture and Design HIL G 74.1 www.emerson.arch.ethz.ch
Boris Cisnic, Phillip Imboden, Christoph Junk, Steffen Jurgensen, Nicholas Lobo Brennan

LECTURE
Scalbert, Irénée. "Irénée Scalbert on bricolage, Lévi-Strauss, Colin Rowe, Charles Jencks, Guiseppe Penone, Robinson Crusoe and other topics" Transcript of speech delivered at ETH Zurich, March 8th, 2011. https://id202.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/irecc81necc81e-scalbert-bricolage.pdf

Irénée Scalbert writes: " [...] The bricoleur works on his house like the gardener does in his garden. He is pivotal to the entire process, being at once designer, builder and inhabitant. The distinction between design and living is not one that in his terms is particularly significant. Like gardening bricolage ('DIY' in English) is responsible for a considerable part of the building economy. [...] the academic literature on bricolage is negligible. To this day, the seminal text remains the few pages written by Claude Lévi-Strauss at the beginning of his book, The Savage Mind. Lévi-Strauss describes not the thought of primitive people but the primitive foundation of thought, the process that explains the transition from nature to civilization.

The 'savage mind', he writes, 'is neither the mind of savages nor that of primitive or archaic humanity, but rather mind in its untamed state...' This point must be emphasized. Bricolage, the means by which the untamed mind puts order into things, is not seen as being peculiar to tribes in the Amazon basin and elsewhere but as being available to all.

Lévi-Strauss calls bricolage 'the science of the concrete'. He offers only few examples of this science: the Ideal Palace of the Facteur Cheval, the stage sets of Georges Mélies and the suburban castle of Mr. Wemmick i Dicken's Great Expectations. The fundamental characteristic of bricolage is that its inventory is made of all kinds of different things and that, even when this inventory is large, it remains limited. The bricoleur uses what is at hand

because that is all that he has. His materials bear no relation to his task because they are themselves the result of previous constructions (Lévi-Strauss refers to these materials as being 'pre-constrained').

Before embarking on a project, the bricoleur interrogates the materials in his treasury. He tries to discover new significations and new possibilities.What had been ends in previous projects now become means. The bricoleur rebuilds his set by using the debris of previous events, the odds and ends left over behind by others. But the set remains always the same. Inevitably, the result will be a compromise between his original project and the objects that were available to him.

This text by Lévi-Strauss became well-known among architecture critics in the late 60s and 70s. Not least with Colin Rowe and Charles Jencks. It is not difficult to see why. Lévi-Strauss contrasts the bricoleur with the engineer. Unlike the bricoleur, the engineer—so Lévi-Strauss claimed—subordinates materials to his projects. Unlike the bricoleur who recycles the leftovers of older projects, the engineer (and Le Corbusier after him) imagines his project in the context of universal laws. He imposes his concepts on reality. The bricoleur on the other hand looks for signs and images in the reality that is around him. [...]

What about our own time? The bricoleur today is not, as it was for Jencks, a consumer adapting the products of industry to his own project. Nor is he an antiquarian like Colin Rowe, rummaging through the debris of the past. Our closest affinities, I think, are with Robinson Crusoe. What kind of person was he? Michael Tournier, the French novelist whose version of the story I shall follow, gave him the figure of a demiurge. He imagined him at a workbench covered with all kinds of objects. Robinson is an organiser, 'one who does battle with a world in disorder which he seeks to master by whatever means come to hand.'

Shipwrecked on what becomes his island, he brings to shore biscuits, a hammer, a plane, planks torn from the ship's decks... He also brings things of no immediate use: clothes, table service and silver, maps, a chest of coins... These objects are stored in a grotto that becomes Robinson's treasury. When he starts work on a new boat, his only tools are an axe and a pocket knife. He had no nails (unlike those of you in Tom Emerson's studio).

To the materials rescued from the wreck, Robinson adds the resources of the island. A tree trunk is made into the keelson of his boat. The bark of a holly is boiled into a sludge and smeared over the hull. Robinson himself is part of this arsenal, his body bearing the marks of construction in cuts, burns, scars and bruises. With the passing of time, his identity becomes indistinguishable from that of the island. 'Henceforth, Tournier writes, there is a fluttering 'I' which comes to rest now on the man and now on the island, making of me one and the other by turns.' Robinson abolishes the divide between nature (incarnated in the savage figure of Friday) and culture (represented by the shipwreck and its crew)—the same divide

that Bruno Latour proposes to abolish in his book, We have never been modern. Robinson and the island, humans and nature are at one in the naïve, unreflective condition that is the ordinary mode of our existence.

Yet Robinson remains human. Only from his own industry can he expect that which nature provides freely to animals: his dress, his weapons, his sustenance. Like every other man, he must replace what is given by what is created. In short, Tournier's classic book is an allegory of bricolage. In Robinson's island, we find the essence of Lévi-Strauss's closed instrumental set, a place that is finite in extent and clearly circumscribed. In Robinson himself, we find the essence of the bricoleur making do with what is at hand. To be born is to be shipwrecked in nature, and our happiness, our existence even, depend upon the wisdom of our ecology.

For Rowe and for Jencks, the bricoleur belonged in a vision of society and culture. They argued for a society that was liberal and pluralist, one that could accommodate a multitude of findividual projects. For Rowe in particular, the most eloquent expression of bricolage was a city, like Rome, that was demonstrably built upon and with the debris of events. Buildings drew directly from their context, and in turn they provided the context for subsequent constructions.

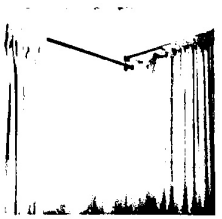
For Robinson, too, the whole of human culture—everything that could be salvaged from the shipwreck of civilisation—is open to recycling. But unlike Post-Modernists call 'context', unlike what green activists call 'environment', Robinson's island includes all creation: natural forces that have been humanized, and humans like himself who became natural forces.

Robinson is no different from the drivers in big cities and motorways described by Lévi-Strauss in The Savage mind. 'It is neither men nor natural laws, he wrote, that are brought face to face. Rather it is systems of natural forces humanized by drivers' intentions, and men transformed in to natural forcees by the physical energy of which they are the chanel.' Robinson-bricoleur merely happens to be the messenger between nature and culture, the mediator between his own modern past and pre-modern past that is represented in the person of Friday.

Where does this leave architecture? Bricolage cannot have a form because, to the bricoleur, it is a life process. Nor can bricolage have a philosophy. It does not lend itself to concepts or theories. Instead, it values flair, wisdom and forethought, resourcefulness, deception and vigilance, opportunism, skills and experience. It is a form of cunning aking to the metis of the Ancient Greeks, associated with that other great shipwreck, Odysseus. The bricoleur is always waist-deep in practical situations, being most at home between the sensible and the intelligible, between the earthly and the aerial. [...] Let's return to bricolage. For some time already, bricolage has been accepted in the arts. But the same cannot be said of architecture. Which architect has attempted to embrace

the freedom of the artiste-déorateur? Which architect has tapped into the mysteries of DIY, of repairs, maintenance and decoration? Yet all construction, all knowledge clearly involve some bricolage. Even the most abstract science must sometimes appeal to the science of the concrete. [...] Bricolage is not an alternative to architecture as we know it. In one way or another, it intervenes in all design."

LECTURE
Scalbert, Irénée. "Irénée Scalbert on bricolage, Lévi-Strauss, Colin Rowe, Charles Jencks, Guiseppe Penone, Robinson Crusoe and other topics" Transcript of speech delivered at ETH Zurich, March 8th, 2011. https://id202.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/irecc81necc81e-scalbert-bricolage.pdf



question underlying our work is how to instrument forms and spaces in a way that they can resound truthfully to people, rousing memories of what already exists and kindling visions of something which does not exist yet.

Speaking about buildings, we recognize a paradox in the coexistence of a common understanding of spaces and in an individual specificity of the same understanding, different for each of us.

We have the ability to recognize and to name spaces, such as a room a terrace a tower so that we can communicate with others in our daily life, but most of the times each of us will have its own experience of a room a terrace a tower, recalling a memory of a visit or of a reading or even of a scene from a movie.

The main point of interest of our research lays in this paradox, since we observe that when we stand in a space surprisingly memories of other spaces arise and that often these memories belong to space, which may differ from a parametric or common definition of it. We may have visited a house experiencing it as a walk through a portico, even if that house is not a covered

Helsinki, 1955 - 56 (2019)
© Alvar Aalto Studio

Francesca Torzo

BOOK
MVSC04. *Francesca Torzo*. 38–41. Gent: Art Paper Editions, 2020.

ambulatory; our mind is able to make unpredictable interlacements and therefore we may live and share with others the experience of a portico in a sequencing of rooms.

The hypothesis at the base of this search is that relations among spaces have a specificity that allows to awaken memories of other spaces, beyond form and beyond material.

The recognition of these relations that allow us to access experiences lived by us or others, to remember them and to imagine new ones building a dialogue with other times, is the instrument of our cultural expression, unique for each individual and occasion.

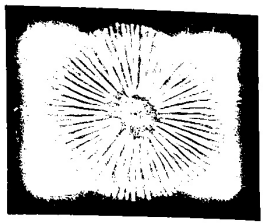
•••

ABOUT A METHOD

The studio is engaged in assignments of different scales and profiles, ranging from door handles to museums in Italy and abroad.

Glyptotek, Possagno, 1957 (2016)
© Canova and Carlo Scarpa

MVSC04



The process of design starts from an understanding of the material constrains and of the cultural context where we are called to operate, through a discipline of observation and reflection. The goal is that of formulating the primary spatial relations, which have to be preserved through the complete process, from design to detailing and execution phase, in order to do not deceive an expectation of experience.

If the primary relations are clear, even adaptations of materializations and details may be non influential as long as they do respect the narrative.

In order to check the consequences of choices the work is developed in parallel at very different scales, combining studies of settlement with details 1 to 1 or facade studies with construction prototypes.

There is no preconceived language, not in the process nor in the result.

Language and design tools are defined by the research, which is specific to each assignment and to the communication of the story in relation to the interlocutors, in search of the meeting point

Mushroom lamellas
© Anonymous

Francesca Torzo

between the individual perception and the collective understanding.

This approach has similarities to the scientific method, where an experiment is developed continuously sifting individual perceptions and objective observations.

Often design develops into experimental constructions as a logical consequence of assuring the specificity of an experience and not as a drift for innovation in itself. The process of finding technical solutions to solve problems engages with the available means, recombining traditional and conventional techniques with the aim of making the effort invisible in the result.

The fruit of our work, in the end, is a building or an object to be lived.

•••

WORKSHOP

We invite the students to develop a draft design of a small object.

Z33, Manano ceiling lamp
© Francesca Torzo

PROJECT
Caruso St John, and Eva Löfdahl. *Kalmar Stortoget*. Kalmar, Sweden. 1999–2003.
(image author: Hélène Binet)

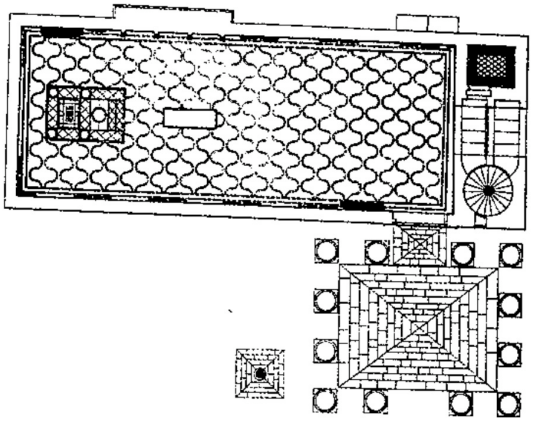
PROJECT
Francesca Torzo Architetto. *Casa due*. Sorano, Italy, 2006–2010.
(image author: Gion Balthasar von Albertini)

C

COMMUNITY ROOMS

spazi di comunità

PROJECT
Lina Bo Bardi and Edson Elito. *Teatro Oficina*. São Paulo, Brazil. 1984.
(image author: Unknown photographer)



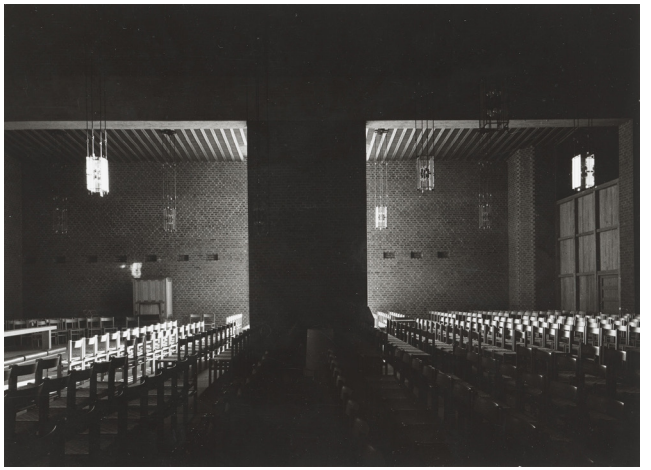
PLAN
Sigurd Lewerentz. *Chapel of the Resurrection*. Enskede, Sweden.
1925.

PROJECT
Sigurd Lewerentz. *Chapel of the Resurrection*. Enskede, Sweden.
1925.
(image author: trevor.patt via Flickr)

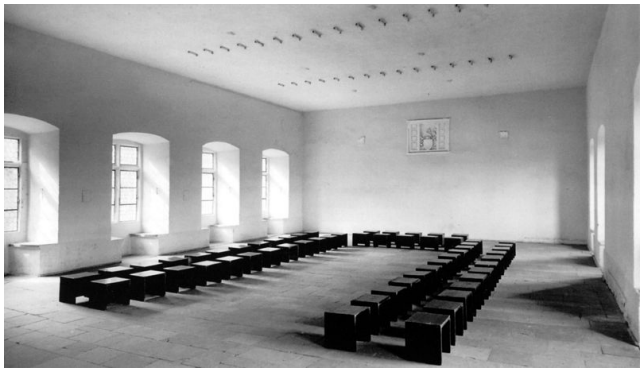
IMAGE
Höfer, Candida. Der Oude Kerk Amsterdam I. 63×81. Chromogenic color print. Amsterdam, 1993.

IMAGE
Höfer, Candida. Der Oude Kerk Amsterdam III. 63×81. Chromogenic color print. Amsterdam, 1993.

PROJECT
Peter Celsing. *St Thomas Church*. Vittangigatan, Sweden. 1959.
(image author: Andy Liffner)



PROJECT
Peter Celsing. *Härlanda Church*. Gothenburg, Sweden. 1959.
(image author: Sune Sundahl)



PROJECT
Rudolf Schwarz. *Conversion of the chapel and great hall at Burg Rothenfels am Main*. Rothenfels, Germany. 1928.
(image author: Unknown photographer)

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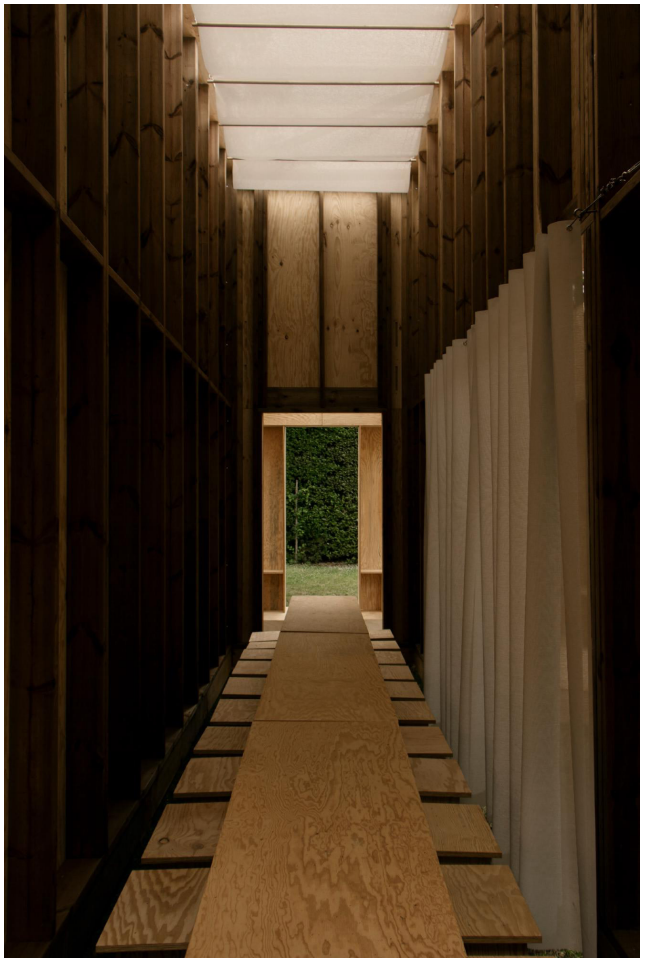
Rudolf Schwarz. *Conversion of the chapel and great hall at Burg Rothenfels am Main*. Rothenfels, Germany. 1928.
(image author: Unknown photographer)



PROJECT
Pratique and Fanum. *Forum des Vestiges*. Rome. 2023.
(image author: Gautier Baufils)

Luigia

Lonardelli

Lo spazio pubblico

come immaginario

intervista a

Matilde

Cassani

06

Loqui

LetteraVentidue

BOOK
Lugia Lonardelli, Matilde Cassani. *Lo spazio pubblico come immaginario: intervista a Matilde Cassani.* Siracusa: LetteraVentidue Edizioni, 2022.

PHOTOGRAPH
Unkown author. 2019. *Sagra dell'Amatriciana*. August 30th, 2019. Photograph. La Repubblica. https://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2019/08/30/news/amatrice_nel_week_end_la_sagra_degli_spaghetti_una_ricetta_per_risorgere-234701526/

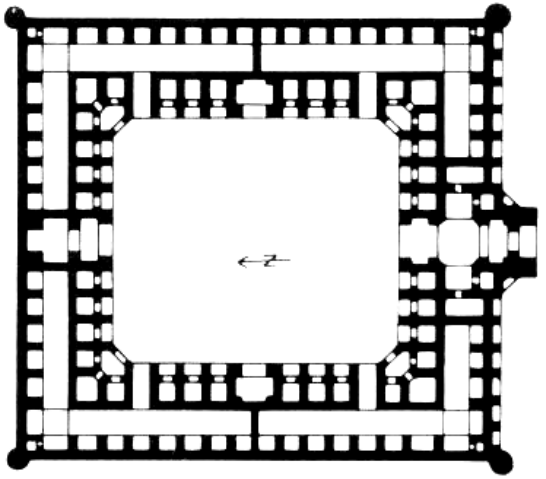
PHOTOGRAPH
Unkown author. 2019. *Sagra dell'Amatriciana*. August 30th, 2019. Photograph. La Repubblica. https://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2019/08/30/news/amatrice_nel_week_end_la_sagra_degli_spaghetti_una_ricetta_per_risorgere-234701526/

VIDEO
hearwind59 on YouTube. “Il Viaggio della Transumanza: lungo il Corso di Amatrice.” YouTube. July 6th, 2014. 3:14. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtUKuM_Ozdo.

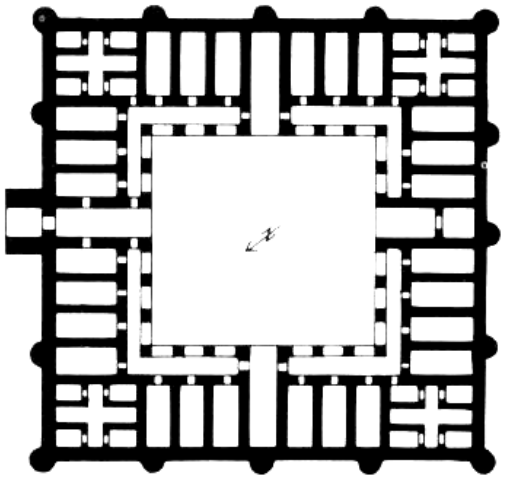
C

CARAVANSERAI

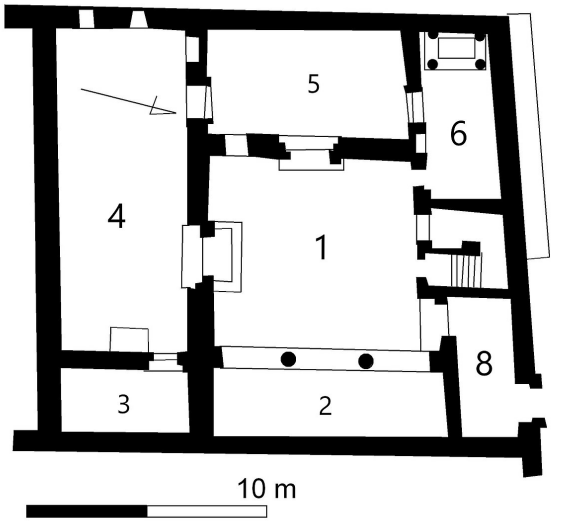
caravanserraio



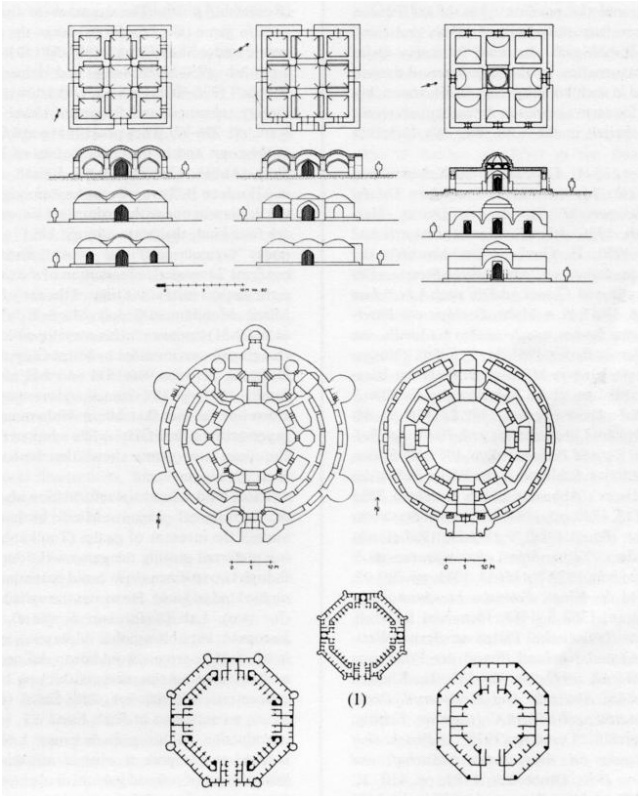
PLAN
Unknown author. *Plans of large courtyard caravansaries in Qal'a-ye Sangi Kaj.* Encyclopaedia Iranica. https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/caravansary#prettyPhoto[sidebar]/0/



PLAN
Unknown author. *Plans of large courtyard caravansaries in Bisotun.* Encyclopaedia Iranica. https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/caravansary#prettyPhoto[sidebar]/0/



PLAN
Unknown author. *House church of Dura Europos.* Dura Europos, 231 AD. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Church_dura.jpg

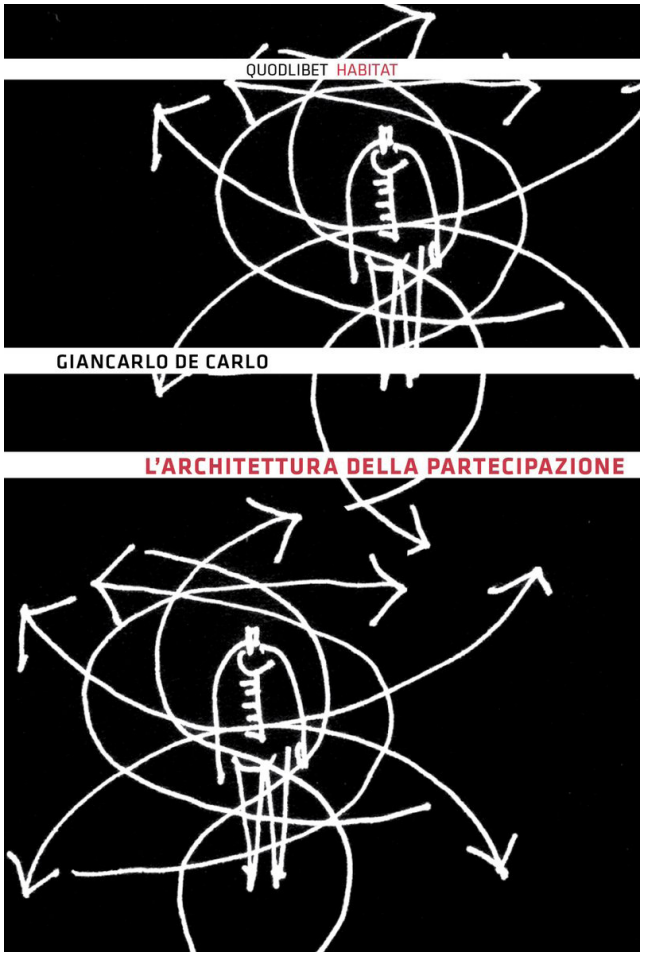


PLAN
Unknown author. *Plansand sections of three pavilion caravansaries.* Encyclopaedia Iranica. https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/caravansary#prettyPhoto[sidebar]/4/

C

CARE

cura



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De Carlo, Giancarlo. Marini, Sara. *L'architettura della partecipazione.* 2. ed. Macerata: Quodlibet, 2013.

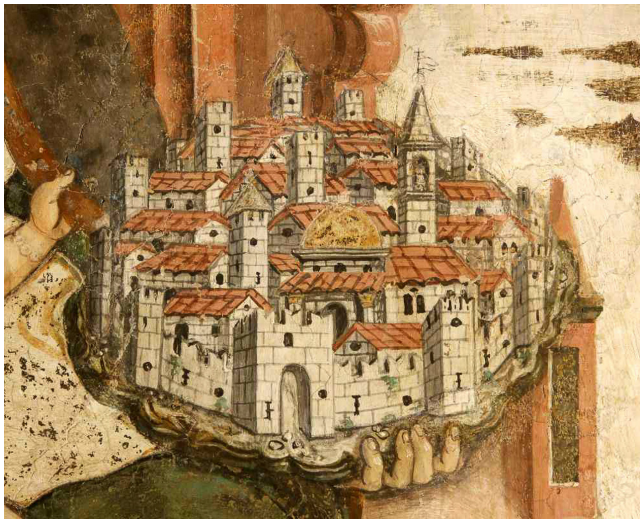


IMAGE
Cityview of Amatrice in a detail of the fresco of the Madonna and Child Enthroned on the left side of the apsis

IMAGE
Monks cultivating and taking care of the land.

Marco Agliata, Vincenzo Cingolani, and Elisabetta Salvatorelli write: “La biodiversità e la naturalità del territorio hanno a volte anche una matrice culturale. L’Appennino con le sue aree protette è un caso eclatante di questo incrocio tra natura, cultura e storia. Testimonianza eclatante di questa commistione è quella della cultura religiosa dei monaci benedettini: in molti dei Parchi nazionali, infatti, si ritrovano ruderi di monastero benedettini o costruzioni ancora in uso o, in alcuni casi, abbandonate: Cinque Terre, Arcipelago de La Maddalena, Foreste Casentinesi, Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga, Majella, Parco Nazionale d’Abruzzo, Asinara, Gargano, Cilento Vallo di Diano, Pollino, Sila, Isole Tremiti nel Parco Nazionale del Gargano. In ognuno di questi territori, i monaci furono i protagonisti della cura

del territorio: predisposero terrazzamenti nelle aree collinari, si occuparono - insieme alle comunità – delle opere di bonifica, della manutenzione dei corsi d’acqua e di quella delle foreste, che spesso contribuirono ad accrescere.

La naturalità delle aree protette appenniniche, quindi, comunemente ritenuta ‘innata’, è invece frutto anche dell’oculata e responsabile azione dell’uomo. La regola di San Benedetto che traduce l’ascetismo dei deserti - quelli della Siria e dell’Egitto, culla della cultura ascetica del monachesimo cristiano – ben si fonde con la spiritualità della foresta, sovrapponendolo alla tradizione celtico-germanica della foresta come luogo di confine tra il mondo terreno e l’aldilà, spazio limite favorevole all’esperienza religiosa. E indica le leggi della convivenza con la natura: “Siano i detti Eremi fra le selve fatte, quali col piantare, inserire, tagliare e con altre diligenze si mantengano, e s’accreschino”.

Come abbiamo visto, a partire dal medioevo i Benedettini hanno dato vita, soprattutto lungo la dorsale appenninica, ad una rete di monasteri, abbazie e luoghi di culto che hanno costituito il punto di riferimento principale (un riferimento spirituale ma anche concreto) di un grande numero di comunità e di insediamenti. Fin dalla sua prima elaborazione la Regola dei Benedettini ha operato in una condizione di grande armonia tra la dimensione meditativa e quella lavorativa, introducendo delle conoscenze di ordine spirituale insieme a delle tecniche per l’utilizzo delle risorse naturali che hanno costituito una delle basi di supporto e di diffusione delle attività di gestione e manutenzione del territorio, generando nei fatti il primo modello locale di sviluppo sostenibile ante litteram, in grado di porre in equilibrio i sistemi di produzione e le ricadute economiche con gli ambiti naturali. Le forme del territorio intorno ai monasteri dell’Ordine portano ancora oggi i segni di quella attività di gestione dei territori che ebbe origine proprio dall’azione avviata dai monaci della Regola. L’abbazia di Vallombrosa ad esempio, cuore della foresta omonima (1.279 ettari nella Riserva naturale statale di Vallombrosa), è stata per secoli funzionale ad una delle aree verdi più famose d’Italia: l’insediamento monastico e il vasto complesso forestale rappresentano due elementi inscindibili tra loro. Furono infatti i monaci a dar vita alla grande foresta di abetine bianche estendendone la coltivazione secondo un razionale metodo di coltura artificiale, le cui prime

norme furono dettate dall’abate Michele Flammini nel 1350. Per secoli e secoli i monaci

hanno curato i boschi e la terra da cui traevano il sostentamento per la comunità: i tronchi d'abete erano una merce preziosa, servirono infatti per secoli alla costruzione ed al restauro dei palazzi di Firenze. Grandi foreste di abeti circondano il Monastero di Camaldoli (all'interno del Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna) dove S. Romualdo attorno all'anno mille diede vita al primo nucleo della congregazione dell'ordine degli eremiti camaldolesi, dell'ordine di San Benedetto: cresciuto nel tempo, per nove secoli, sempre in completo rapporto con questo territorio dando vita ad un modello di gestione forestale che si è esteso poi a tutti i centri camaldolesi italiani. L'Abbazia di Montecassino (situata oggi all'interno dell'area protetta Monumento Naturale Montecassino, gestito dal Parco regionale dei Monti Aurunci) sorse in un bosco sacro dedicato al dio Apollo. Ancora: presso l'Abbazia di San Basilide a Badia Cavana (fondata attorno al 1100 da San Bernardo degli Uberti, monaco vallombrosiano, dunque benedettino, nel comune di Lesignano dè Bagni, in provincia di Parma), si trova una pianta di fico ultracentenaria, con una circonferenza di oltre 50 metri per sette metri di altezza: l'esemplare più antico d'Italia. Le ricerche25 hanno anche messo in relazione un'interessante constatazione, cioè come la presenza benedettina, coincide con la riduzione del dissesto idrogeologico. È stato constatato (dalla misurazione della larghezza delle chiome degli alberi, indicativa della loro longevità) che alcune aree ad alta criticità geologica avevano subito, nel corso dei secoli, un numero molto ridotto di dissesti idro-geologici rispetto ad altre aree. L'apparente contraddizione tra la presenza di alberi plurisecolari in aree ad alta franosità (rispetto ad altre aree con caratteristiche geologiche analoghe profondamente danneggiate da continui dissesti, e quindi senza alberi plurisecolari) è stata superata scoprendo che queste aree 'virtuose' erano accomunate, appunto, dalla presenza di monasteri Benedettini, con le descritte conseguenze nella gestione del territorio."

ESSAY
Agliata, Marco, Cingolani, Vincenzo, and Salvatorelli, Elisabetta. 2017. "2.4 Parchi a matrice culturale: l'eredità dei monaci benedettini". In *Atlante dell'Appennino*, edited by Fondazione Symbola. 110–113. Fondazione Symbola. https://symbola.net/ricerca/atlante-dellappennino/

D

DEBRIS

macerie

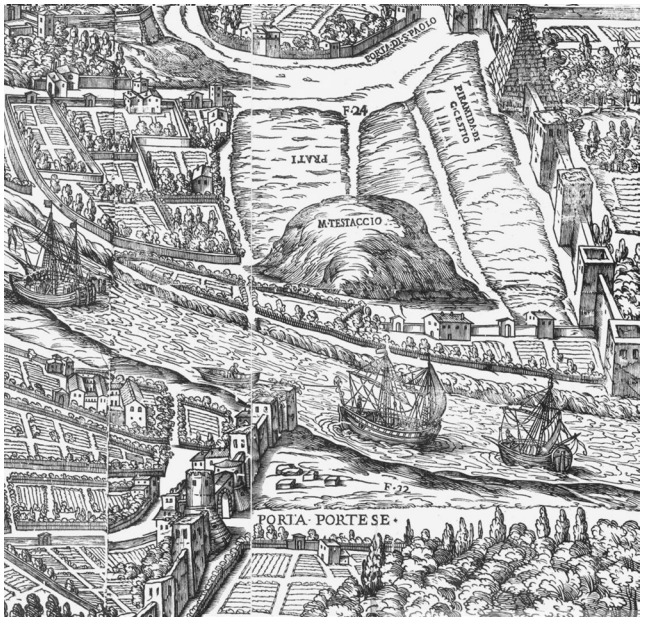
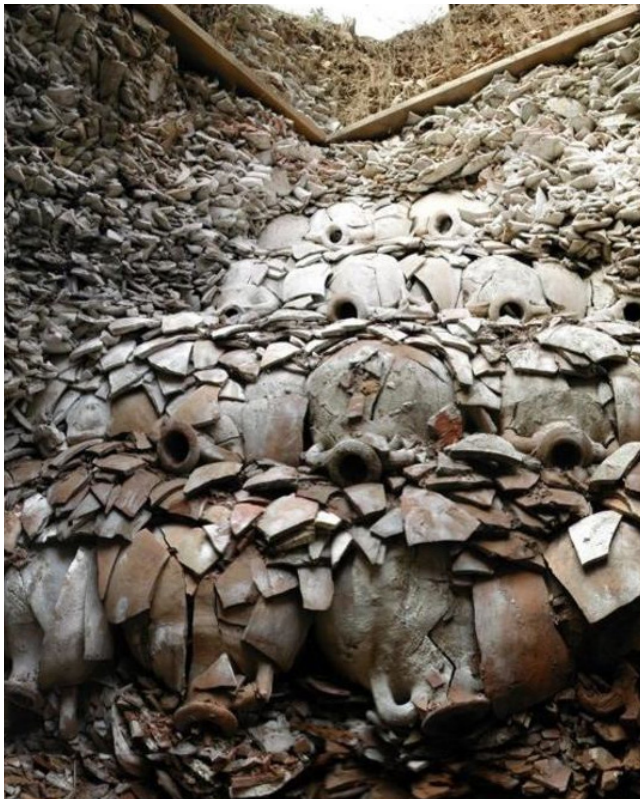


IMAGE
View of the Testaccio district of Rome, 1625.
Unknown author. https://picryl.com/topics/rione+xx+testaccio+in+art/17th+century+images+of+rome

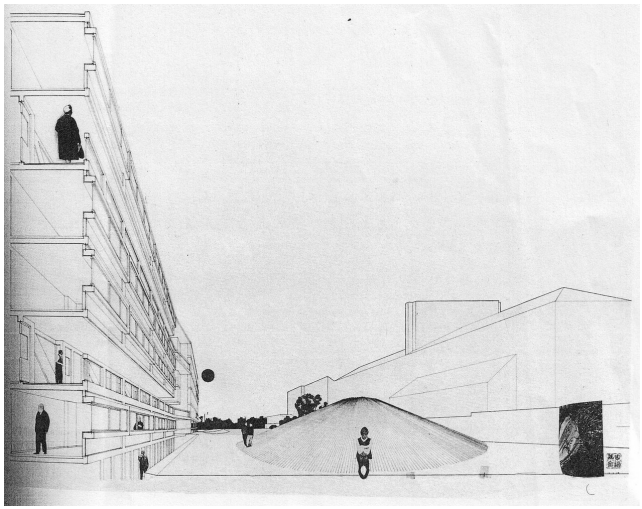
PICTURE
Mount Testaccio in the 60s (20 000 m² in 35 metres of height. Approximately 30 milions of anphoras). Unknown author. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/El-Monte-Testaccio-en-los-anos-60-20000-m-en-su-base-35-metros-de-altura-aprox-30_fig3_319754255



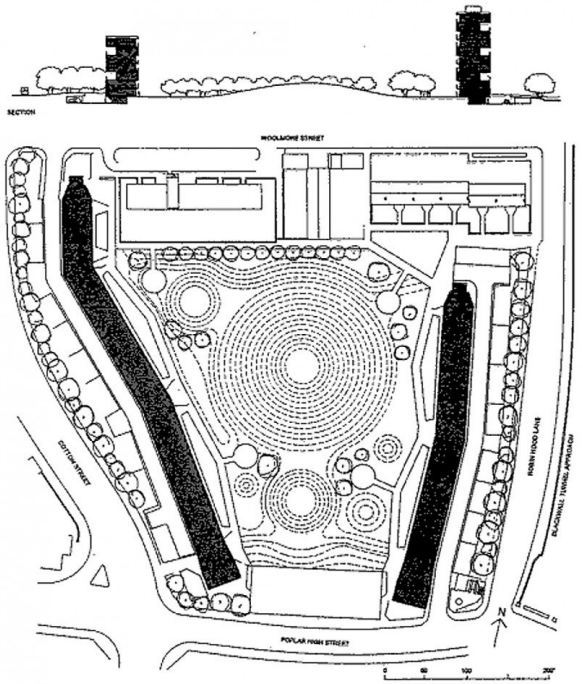
PICTURE
Anphoras in Mount Testaccio. Unknown author. https://maritime-verbindungen.uni-trier.de/en/index.php/project-areas/historical-research/

PROJECT
Alison and Peter Smithson. *Robin Hood Gardens*. London, UK.
1972. (image credits: Royal Institute of British Architects)

PROJECT
Alison and Peter Smithson. *Robin Hood Gardens*. London, UK.
1972. (image credits: Royal Institute of British Architects)



PROJECT
Alberto Burri. *Cretto di Gibellina*, Gibellina, Italy, 1984.



PROJECT
Alberto Burri. *Cretto di Gibellina*, Gibellina, Italy, 1984.

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Alberto Burri. *Cretto di Gibellina*, Gibellina, Italy, 1984.

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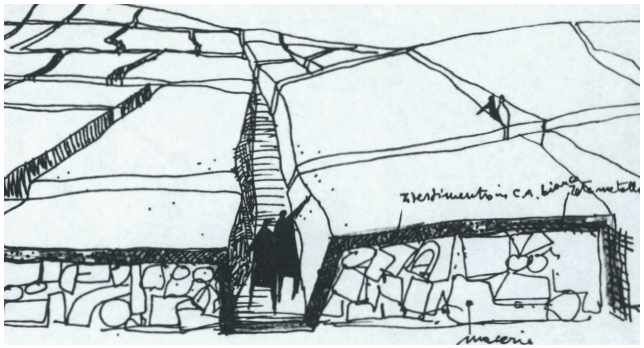
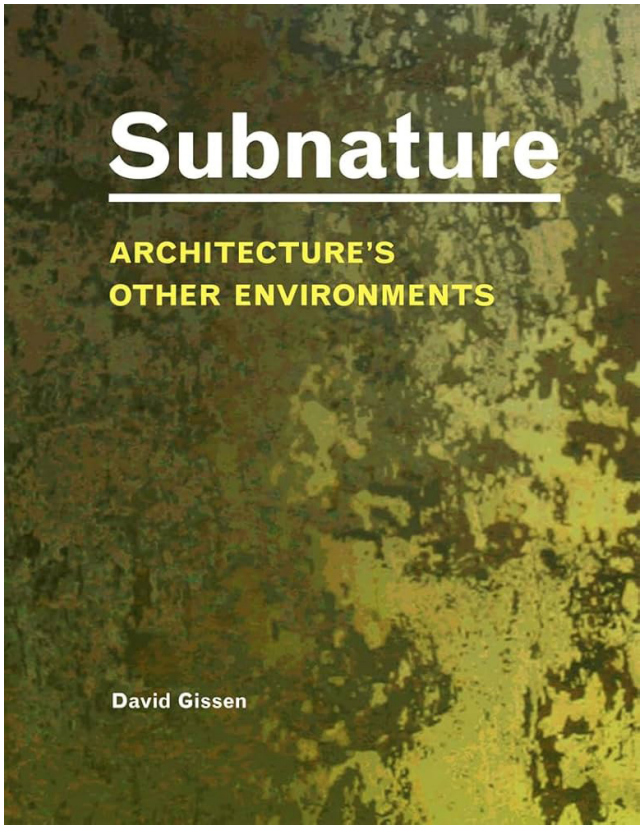


DRAWING
Alberto Burri. *Cretto di Gibellina*, Gibellina, 1984.



BOOK
Gissen, David. *Subnature : Architecture's Other Environments.* Unabridged. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1487277.

David Gissen writes: "The term débris originated in eighteenth-century France to describe a type of broken, scattered substance that was once part of a building or standing structure. The term differed from the French words moellon or décombres, both translating as "rubble." Moellon refers to rough stones pulled from quarries or used for paving roads, and décombres describes the wreckage from building demolitions. Within early-modern and modern French architectural writing, authors often used the word débris to describe the scattered and atomized remains of structures that had been leveled by cataclysmic events such as war or natural disasters. In contrast, other terms describing rubble suggested something larger, potentially salvageable, and local in terms of its distance from the building that it was once part of.

The emergence of the term débris coincides with two important architectural developments. The eighteenth century witnessed the increased use of gunpowder in European warfare and the documentation of its effects on architectural structures, as well as, more generally, an increase in the archaeological documentation of tiny fragments of destroyed structures. Unlike the study of ruins during the Renaissance, the latter method differed in that it involved taking in the totality of bits that once composed earlier structures. An examination of débris, in this sense, was different from studying the architectural fragments of ruined sites, which generally focused on former building elements, apart from surrounding remains. A study of an architectural fragment could refer back to some physical whole—a column, an architrave, perhaps an entire structure, but debris was often referred to as a collection of unrecognizable matter. Debris takes in the total spatial transformation wrought by violence and disaster, and it speaks of the ways that destroyed structures transform their surroundings.

Discussions of architectural debris—as both the remnant of destructive events and as a territory of fragments—can be traced to the eighteenth century, specifically as an aspect of the French archaeological project in architectural theory. Architectural theorist Julien-David Le Roy was one of the first to provide debris with a specifically architectural visual character. Le Roy was among the first Europeans granted entry into the Ottoman-controlled regions of Greece. Prior to Le Roy's expedition, knowledge of Greek structures was limited to the writings of Vitruvius and surveys of the surviving temples at Paestum in Italy. Le Roy's drawings of Greek structures provided the groundwork for two movements in architecture: the Neoclassical movement (the adoration of a simplified Greek classicism) and what would eventually become the Picturesque movement (emphasizing the gradual decay of structures and their integration into natural surroundings). The slow creep of nature on architectural structures underscored time and the impact of history on our experiences of buildings. These contributions have been well documented by contemporary historians, but other significant ideas moving through Le Roy's images of Greek ruins have remained obscure. Although many of the structures he examined had reached their current state as the result of the

slow creep of time and nature, his image of the Parthenon represented a singular human-caused cataclysmic event. It is somewhat deceiving, as he was not examining a well-aged, slowly decaying building but the results of an approximately eighty-year-old attack by Venetian forces that had exploded the ancient structure. Le Roy's image of the Parthenon, with its side blown open and the resulting architectural fragments scattered in front of it, provides an evocative image of debris as the product of an act of violence. In this image, we are witnessing the destruction of an important ancient artifact and the resulting transformation of that artifact's surroundings. This is far more than a Picturesque dialectic between an ideal building type and the onrushes of time. Coursing through Le Roy's image is the notion that in one flash of a moment the distinction between social creation and nature are atomized.

The idea of destruction implicit in Le Roy's studies of debris becomes much more explicit 100 years later in the work of another French architectural theorist and inspector of ruins, Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc. In his examinations of important French monuments, the architect, theorist, and preservationist explored the remains of numerous buildings throughout the state. Where Le Roy provides us with an emotive and atmospheric concept of debris, Viollet-le-Duc portrays debris as part of a rational engineering project of warfare and systematic destruction. In his book Annals of a Fortress (1872), Viollet-le-Duc explores the numerous sieges that befell a French stronghold. He uses the term débris consistently throughout the text to capture the character of the physical matter produced by the attacks and the sense of violence against the inhabitants of this place. The debris that Viollet-le-Duc inspected in his examinations of French historical sites is imagined as the register of battering rams and the work of modern artillery. As in Le Roy's images, Viollet–le-Duc's book portrays the ground as a site filled with shards, stones, and other material remnants. From both Le Roy and Viollet-le-Duc we realize that debris is matter that remakes the ground in images of violence. Debris does not talk about decay as a result of forces of nature but due to an incident, a cataclysmic socionatural event.

Where Le Roy and Viollet-le-Duc developed some of architecture's earliest images of debris, something we might term an architectural theory of debris did not emerge until eighty years later, in the mid-twentieth century's aftermath of massive warfare at a global scale. Immediately after World War II, architectural theories of debris emerged throughout Europe as well as within Japanese architectural culture. This was primarily in response to the destruction of European and Asian cities by the Allied and Axis powers. While early-modern and modern wars in Europe and Asia unleashed incredible destructive forces on cities; during World War II, for the first time in history, enormous cities in Europe and Asia were flattened, transformed into little more than debris sites. Architects reacted to the debris-laden cities of World War II in a number of ways. For the European CIAM group (the International Congress of Modern Architects), the ruined state represented opportunities for reimagining cities as blank slates, obliterated of their premodern

histories.

Some architectural thinkers, such as Ludwig Hilberseimer, wished to abandon cities altogether. Hilberseimer became concerned with the increasingly catastrophic nature of modern warfare, particularly the effects of debris from nuclear fallout. But for another group of postwar architectural thinkers, the ruined sites of European and Asian cities were opportunities for reflection on the thing itself—the massive accumulations of debris that these cities had become. In England, the New Brutalists, centered on the work of Alison and Peter Smithson and their larger Independent Group of architects, artists, and designers, sought an "authentic" architecture focused on the everyday experiences of postwar urban life. In post–World War II European cities, such an authenticity involved acknowledging the detritus that littered bombed and shelled urban centers. In the Smithsons's work, debris became a type of authentic nature that contrasted with to the green parkways and fieldscapes of other postwar architects and planners. In their Patio and Pavilion, the constituent elements of the heavily bombed sector of London's East End become the materials for a new type of spatial construct. Formerly functional objects—bicycle wheels, tools, and other forms of rubbish—are scattered around, beneath, and above a simple shacklike pavilion made of worn-out planks of discarded wood. Within this installation of "gritty, dirty, grainy and rough" materials, British photographer Nigel Henderson developed a series of collages composed of images of debris, forming a new take on urban subjectivity. Architectural historian Reyner Banham wrote of the entire installation that "one could not help feeling that this particular garden shed with its rusted bicycle wheels, battered trumpet and other homely junk, had been excavated after an atomic holocaust." The Smithsons's own commitment to debris as late-modern nature continued in their controversial housing project for the Robin Hood Gardens, where the remnants of demolished houses that previously occupied the site were transformed into a new type of collective landscape. Rather than remove the image of debris from the city, the Smithsons locate it as a central aspect of the experience of modern urbanization.Unlike the British experience in which debris marked the horrific sacrifices of an ultimately victorious state, for the citizens of the defeated nation of Japan, debris lacked any such associations.

During World War II, over one million Japanese soldiers and civilians were killed by the Allies, and in one evening 167,171 buildings were destroyed during the firebombing of Tokyo. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki killed over 200,000 people and imparted a new frightening language of megatonnages and "radio-active" fallout and debris onto modern consciousness. The Japanese architect Kenzo Tange, one of the founders of the Japanese Metabolist movement, wrote one of the more evocative reactions to the horrific and ruinous debris-littered state of Japanese cities after World War II. Reflecting on the destroyed state of Tokyo, he said: I cannot dispel from my memory the image of the city (Tokyo) as I

saw it immediately after the war at the end of 1945. . . .The spectacle that met my eyes was

desolate. . . .Around Marunouchi, the financial center of the metropolis, a few of the larger reinforced concrete structures still stood upright. . .but vast areas of homes, small shops, and stores in lower Tokyo had been razed to the ground. . . .Here there were not even the mountains of rubble of German towns; the wooden structures had gone up in flames and smoke, leaving the ground covered with black dust and spent embers. . . .For acres and acres the prospect was one of a grey desert, where every now and then one came across broken crockery, strange green stones (the remains of bottles that had molten because of the heat), misshapen sheets of corrugated iron which had barely been covered by some flowering climber that had managed to germinate between one bombing and the next. Tange contrasts the nature of debris—"the grey desert"—with the more naturalistic form of a plant climbing out of the landscape. But debris and this image of a climbing shoot should be understood as part of one and the same phenomenon—an image that returns Tange's postwar concept of debris back to Le Roy's earliest images of rubble-strewn landscapes. Debris suddenly produces the conditions for a new type of nature—a grey ground that nurtures the most weedlike of verdure.

Tange and other members of the Metabolists negotiated the seemingly impossible nature of reconstruction following such horrible destruction. Many of their projects feature buildings that operate on a new ground, leaving the debris-ridden city as a type of pristine field upon which a new reality is constructed, and some rise directly from images of ruins and debris. Arata Isozaki, one of the youngest members of the group, offered a more frightening engagement with the image and effect of debris-laden worlds. Isozaki's project Hiroshima Blast Site: Electric City contains images of two ambiguous structures rising from the destruction of Hiroshima. The structures oscillate between appearing to result from the same disaster that befell its surroundings and a new type of building built in relation to

this destroyed world. As in the Smithsons' work, we see an architecture of debris that attempts to imagine the destroyed city as a type of human-produced context—an antinature. We might think of debris as an undertheorised category within recent architectural culture, simply because the late-modern world has not witnessed a single condensed period of global warfare, but this is not the case. Several contemporary examinations of debris interrogate the architectural imagery of destruction, warfare, and geological transformations first introduced by Le Roy and Violletle-Duc. In his utopian project Moonmark, the architectural theorist Jeffrey Kipnis proposes the production of debris as an act of political protest. In this work, he calls for the entire nuclear arsenal on earth to be detonated in one spot on the moon. The resulting explosion would not only scar the lunar surface, but it would eject moon rock

into orbit. Reflecting on his proposed performance of destruction, Kipnis writes:

The location of the mark was calculated to take maximum advantage of the moon's changing phases, and the orbiting ejected material could have been shepherded with satellites into Saturn-

like rings around the moon. . . . It seemed to provide a fitting testimony to our collective decision to survive and progress beyond our potential for massive selfdestruction.

Employing Henri Lefebvre's concept of the production of space as an inherently political act, Kipnis sought a conceptual technique to produce a space through the act of destruction itself. In this,

Kipnis's proposal makes debris a tool of projection, and he speaks of a potentially destructive future. Kipnis's techniques share affinities with the strategies of architect Lebbeus Woods, who further explored the appearance of debris, scarring, and the destructive capacity of modern warfare and the geophysical power of the earth. In projects such as Berlin Free Zone, DMZ, and Terrain, Woods examined the production of debris as a type of material for a future architecture.

He addresses debris as a form of matter as well as the destructive forces that produce these horrifying wastelands. Explorations of debris continue in contemporary work. For a public park and buildings in Cologne, Germany, the architects Manuel Herz and Eyal Weizman developed a construction language composed of debris and rubble. In the development of the park's pavilions, Herz and Weizman propose reusing the remains of buildings buried after the bombing of Cologne during World War II. Soil, rubble, and debris are heaped over concrete frameworks with elongated windows to extend past the angle of repose of the dumped bits of brick and stone, forming a series of garden pavilions. The architects propose using shattered matter to build a future out of a violent past; the debris will eventually be planted with sod to become a site for wild flowers, weeds, and plants. Building on the work of the Smithsons, Herz and Weizman transform debris into a true construction system that imbues material qualities that connect with, but ultimately extend past, loss and disaster.

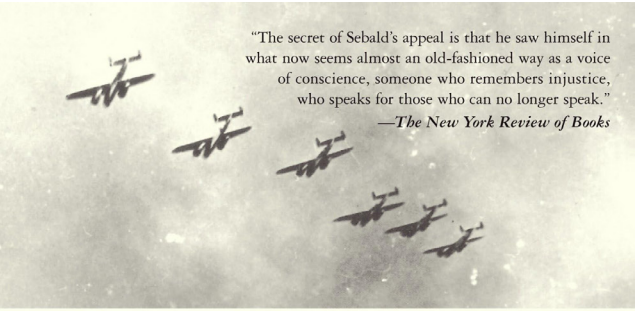
From these last two examples we should understand that debris should not become an architectural image of horror, because it cannot be easily reconstituted into its former form. As a construct (or deconstruct), debris is certainly a key component of a new type of subnatural environment born from violence—it is so intimately connected with the destructive capacities of modern production. From its inception, both as a term and a concept, debris refers to cataclysmic social events and the transformation of a building's ground. This, one could argue, has subtle yet important implications: debris, like rubble, returns buildings to their surrounding nature, but unlike theories of ruins and their inherent fantasies of the Picturesque, debris also mutates its surroundings. Because it is often unrecognizable in its original form, and because it often refers to social disasters, debris signifies not only the return of society to nature but it exists as a type of latent hybrid nature in its on right."

BOOK
Gissen, David. *Subnature : Architecture's Other Environments.* Unabridged. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012. 132–145. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1487277.

D

DESTRUCTION

distruzione



W. G. SEBALD

ON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF DESTRUCTION

W. G. Sebald. *On the Natural History of Destruction*. New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2004.

Walter Benjamin writes: “It could happen to someone looking back over his life that he realized that almost all the deeper obligations he had endured in its course originated in people who everyone agreed had the traits of a “ destructive character. “ He would stumble on this fact one day, perhaps by chance, and the heavier the shock dealt to him, the better his chances of representing the destructive character.

The destructive character knows only one watchword: make room. And only one activity: clearing away. His need for fresh air and open space is stronger than any hatred.

The destructive character is young and cheerful. For destroying rej uvenates, because it clears away the traces of our own age; it cheers, because everything cleared away means to the destroyer a complete reduction, indeed a rooting out, of his own condition. Really, only the insight into how radically the world is simplified when tested for its worthiness for destruction leads to such an Apollonian image of the destroyer. This is the great bond embracing and unifying all that exists. It is a sight that affords the destructive character a spectacle of deepest harmony. The destructive character is always blithely at work. It is Nature that dictates his tempo, indirectly at least, for he must forestall her. Otherwise she will take over the destruction herself.

The destructive character sees no image hovering before him. He has few needs, and the least of them is to know what will replace what has been destroyed. First of all, for a moment at least, empty space-the place where the thing stood or the victim lived. Someone is sure to be found who needs this space without occupying it.

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The destructive character does his work; the only work h e avoids is creative. Just as the creator seeks solitude, the destroyer must be constantly surrounded by people, witnesses to his efficacy.

The destructive character is a signal. Just as a trigonometric sign is exposed on all sides to the wind, so he is exposed to idle talk. To protect him from it is pointless.

The destructive character has no interest in being understood. Attempts in this direction he regards as superficial. Being misunderstood cannot harm him. On the contrary, he provokes it, j ust as oracles, those destructive institutions of the state, provoked it. The most petty bourgeois of all phenomena, gossip, comes about only because people do not wish to be misunderstood.

The destructive character tolerates misunderstanding; he does not promote gossip. The destructive character is the enemy of the etui-man. The etui-man looks for comfort, and the case is its quintessence. The inside of the case is the velvet-lined trace that he has imprinted on the world. The destructive character obliterates even the traces of destruction.

The destructive character stands in the front line of traditionalists. Some people pass things down to posterity, by making them untouchable and thus conserving them; others pass on situations, by making them practicable and thus liquidating them. The latter are called the destructive.

The destructive character has the consciousness of historical man, whose deepest emotion is an insuperable mistrust of the course of things and a

readiness at all times to recognize that everything can go wrong. Therefore, the destructive character is reliability itself. The destructive character sees nothing permanent. But for this very reason he sees ways everywhere. Where others encounter walls or mountains, there, too, he sees a way. But because he sees a way everywhere, he has to clear

things from it everywhere. Not always by brute force; sometimes by the most refined. Because he sees ways everywhere, he always stands at a crossroads. No moment can know what the next will bring. What exists he reduces to rubble-not for the sake of the rubble, but for that of the way leading through it.

The destructive character lives from the feeling not that life is worth living, but that suicide is not worth the trouble."

ESSAY

Benjamin, Walter. "The Destructive Character", in *Selected Writings Vol.2, Part 2: 1931–1934*. Translated by Livingstone, Rodney, et al. Edited by Jennings, Michael w., Eiland, Howard and Smith, Gary. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

E

EARTHQUAKES

terremoti

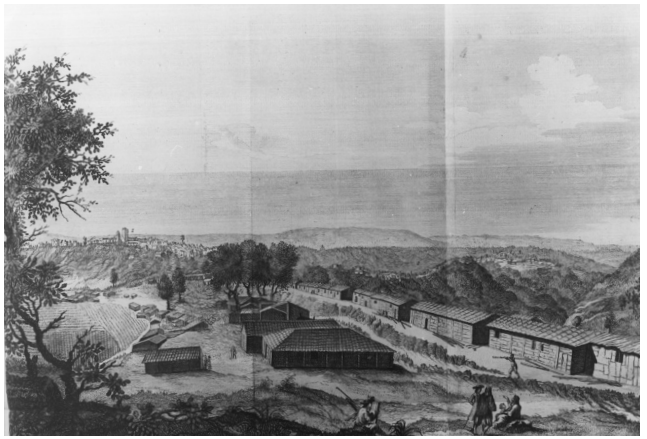

IMAGE
Schiantarelli, Pompeo; Zaballi, Antonio. *Mileto. conseguenze del sisma, terremoto*. 1783. (image credits: Catalogo dei Beni Culturali)

RIBA J The RIBA Journal

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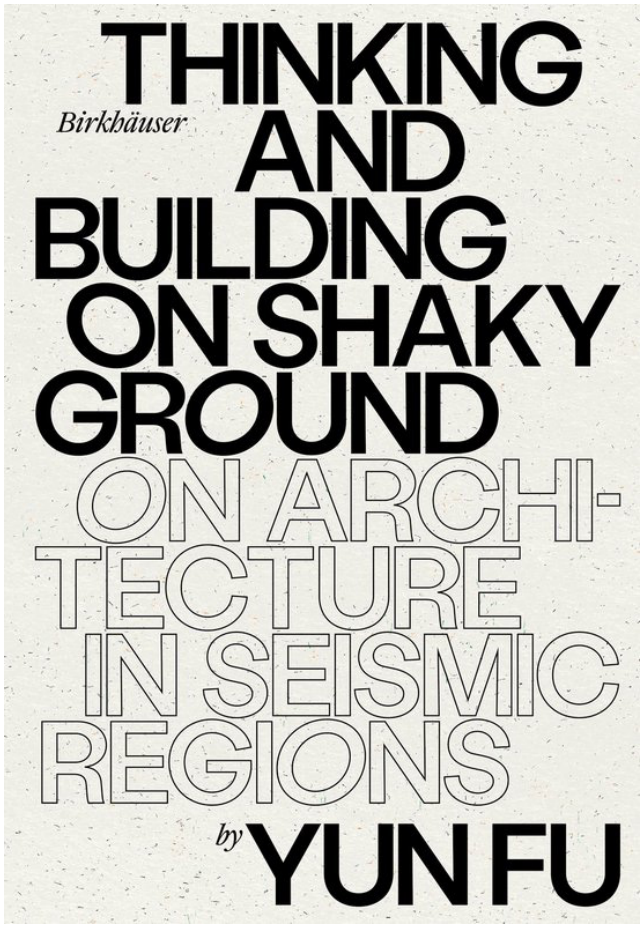
Earthquakes and building regulations

23 May 2023

Words: Giulia Panedigrano

Most improvements to the way we build have occurred in reaction to fatal tragedies, says Giulia Panedigrano, commended in the 2023 RIBAJ/Future Architects writing competition

Giulia Panedifrano, "Earthquakes and building regulations", *RIBA Journal*, May 23, 2023.



Fu, Yun. *Thinking and Building on Shaky Ground: On Architecture in Seismic Regions.* Basel: Birkhäuser, 2023.

TECHNIQUE
Jacketing. https://www.seismico.org/jacketing-gabions-and-more
(image credits: seismico.org)

TECHNIQUE
Jacketing. https://www.seismico.org/jacketing-gabions-and-more
(image credits: seismico.org)

TECHNIQUE
Bhatar / Hatil. https://www.seismico.org/bhatar (image credits: seismico.org)

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Bhatar / Hatil. https://www.seismico.org/bhatar (image credits: seismico.org)

6. **Aperture di vani in breccia.** — Allorchè si deve *aprire in mura esistenti* una larga apertura, oppure *consolidare una piattabanda lesionata*, e si ritiene più facile, stabile e sbrigativo reggere la muratura superiore o sostituire la piattabanda di muratura con due o più travi in ferro a ⌶ collegate da bolloni (coppia di travi che nella circostanza viene chiamata *piattabanda armata*), la pratica costruttiva usa fare, su ciascuna delle due pareti opposte del muro, un *taglio alto e profondo rispettivamente quanto l'altezza e la larghezza delle ali delle travi da impiegare*, ed in questo incasso si piazzano le travi unite ogni 60 cm. da tiranti di ferro tondo trattenuti ad un estremo dalla testa e impanati all'altro estremo ove si applica un dado.

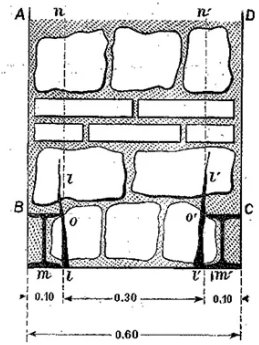


Fig. 51.

E poichè le ali delle travi dei tipi più usati delle ferriere italiane hanno una larghezza variabile da 4 a 10 centimetri, l'incasso nella preesistente muratura si fa profondo al massimo 10 o 12 centimetri.

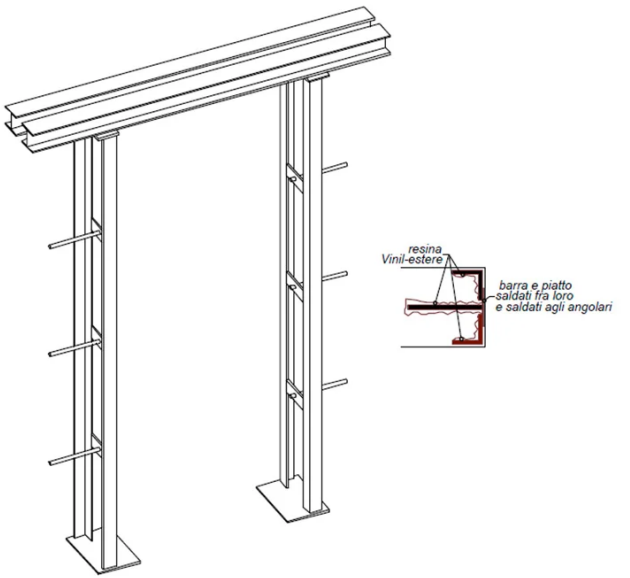
Così praticando, la sistemazione delle travi a lavoro compiuto risulta come è indicato dalla figura 51.

***

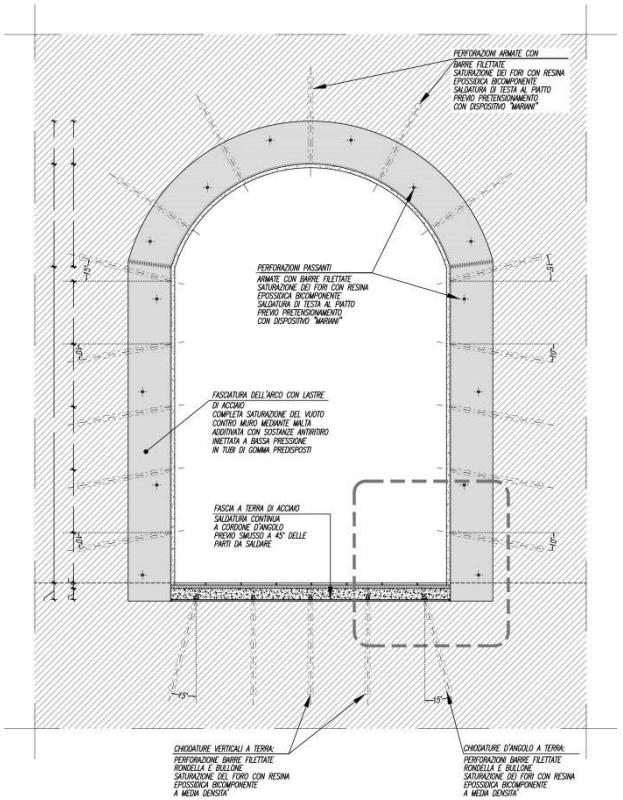
Ora è da rilevarsi che tale sistemazione non raggiunge lo scopo di sostenere la muratura sovrastante A B C D, imperocchè le travi *m* ed *m'* non sostengono in effetto che le piccole zone di muratura A B *o n* ed *n' o'* C D (figura 51).

Per cui la zona centrale *n o o' n'* (allorchè le travi di ferro sono collegate da tiranti) grava sui tiranti stessi *t t* (fig. 53); ma, quando tali tiranti non esistono (come mi è capitato più volte di constatare) allora la muratura centrale *n o o' n'* (fig. 51), trattenuta solo dalla *presa* delle malte, resta sospesa per dir così a vuoto e produce le lesioni *l l*, *l' l'* (fig. 51) a sèguito del rilascio del materiale e della rottura delle pietre.

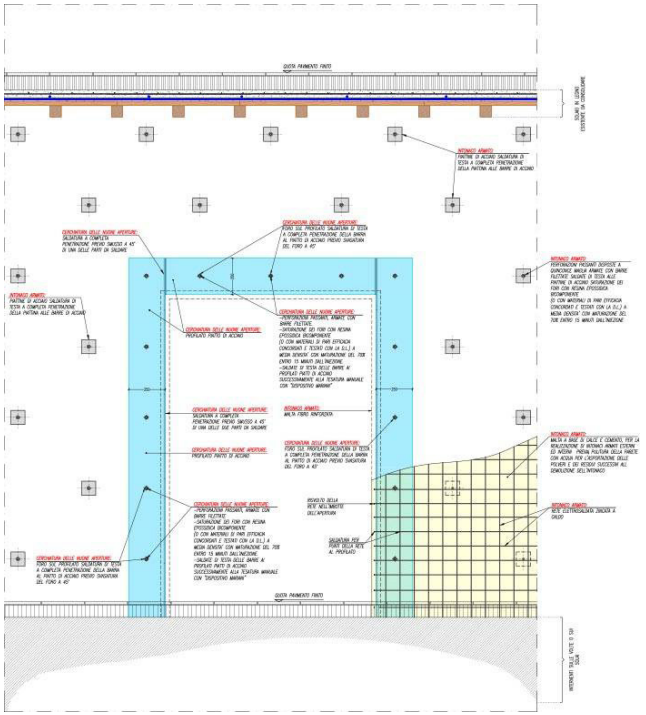
TECHNIQUE
Openings in masonry. https://www.edilportale.com/news/2022/05/focus/interventi-locali-e-apertura-di-nuovi-vani-in-edifici-in-muratura_88572_67.html (image credits: Edilportale)



TECHNIQUE
Steel reinforcement for openings in masonry. https://www.studioprandi.com/pdf/ISi%20interventi%20locali_003.pdf (image credits: Studio Prandi)



TECHNIQUE
Steel reinforcement for openings in masonry. https://www.ingenio-web.it/articoli/particolari-costruttivi-delle-cerchiature-delle-aperture-nelle-strutture-murarie/ (image credits: Ingenio)



TECHNIQUE
Steel reinforcement for openings in masonry. https://www.ingenio-web.it/articoli/particolari-costruttivi-delle-cerchiature-delle-aperture-nelle-strutture-murarie/ (image credits: Ingenio)

E

ENERGY

energia

Energy and Matter

The 'environment' in architecture has come to mean heat loss calculations and the amount of energy that is embodied in the material production of buildings. In a world of diminishing resources, these are certainly important issues, but this definition is too narrow. The environment can also be imagined as something that can encompass human endeavour as well as matter, a territory where the connections between energy and culture can be made. When I think of the buildings and urban places that move me, I think about their material condition as well as the images and associations that arise from appearances, sounds and smells. Art practice has long recognised the emotional capacity held within the world of things, and has adopted a suitably expanded definition of the environment. Architecture, which profoundly and irrevocably engages the world around us, has not. It continues to be defined in narrow, materialist terms. I wonder if architecture can also embrace an expanded environmental field.

Cedric Price made a career out of questioning the necessity of new construction in the pursuit of architectural and urban projects. Price is one of the few architects I can think of to consistently exercise the artist's prerogative to do nothing, or do very little. In his 'Docklands' project of 1991 for Hamburg's city centre docklands, Price put forward a time-based strategy that would enable the vast area of disused docks to return to a semi-wild state and become a much needed

First published in: *Kalmar Stortorg: Art/architecture in urban space*, edited by Helena Mattsson, Statens Konstråd, Stockholm, 2005.

BOOK
Caruso, Adam. *The feeling of things*. Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2008.

habitat for the city's threatened flora and fauna. This was not intended as a final use for this valuable real estate, but rather a medium term measure that would bring the land back into use until strategies and investment emerged that would allow for a more intense development. The city authorities did not take up the proposals, but similar low intensity strategies have been used elsewhere in the rehabilitation of large, disused industrial sites.

Outside Duisburg in Germany, the disused Thyssen iron and steel works have been transformed into a network of public open spaces, Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, by the landscape architects Latz and Partners. In addition to providing new regional leisure facilities, the design makes provision for the decontamination of the ground. Some of the gardens were fit for human occupation immediately upon completion of the park in 1994, while others, for a period of ten years and more, would only be accessible as views through openings in walls and from high-level walkways, until the slow process of natural aeration rendered the ground safe for human occupation. This is in stark contrast to the development of the Greenwich peninsula in southeast London, much heralded in Britain as an 'environmental' approach to the redevelopment of disused industrial land. The ground under the Millennium Dome and Village has also been heavily contaminated by previous uses. With the millennium deadline looming there was insufficient time to allow the ground to be decontaminated through aeration and the introduction of insect life and instead the vast site was capped with millions of tonnes of imported topsoil. The movement of such vast quantities of soil to the site is hardly a low energy strategy, to say nothing of the poisonous gases that are now trapped under the surface of the new 'green' community.

The other architect I can think of who really questioned the modes of production in architecture and construction is Buckminster Fuller. Although he did occasionally succeed in achieving recognition in the worlds of science and business that he so wanted

to be a part of, his position was most significant as an outsider, and the intuitive and broad ranging methods he brought to his work, were much more in tune with artistic practice. His natural milieu was amongst artist friends like Isamu Noguchi and Martha Graham and his work was more of a critique of American post war positivism than an engagement with it. Fuller always adopted the widest possible view of the task at hand and his efforts to develop ever lighter structures and more efficient geometries of enclosure took on an ethical dimension that went far beyond the material optimisation of each of his structures. The Fuller exhibition organised by the Museum für Gestaltung in Zurich in 1999 was infused with a hopeful and humanist spirit that suggested an unspoken connection between Buckminster Fuller and Joseph Beuys, between the hippy world of the *Whole Earth Catalogue* and the nascent Green politics of the International Free University.

Architects like Archigram, Norman Foster and Will Alsop are, by their own admission, very influenced by the ideas of Cedric Price and Buckminster Fuller. Yet, it is hard to imagine any of these architects, or their followers, ever doing a little, when they could do a lot. In contrast to Price, who could be accused of laziness with regards to his small built output, contemporary architects strive to maximise their production in order to strengthen brand identity and expand their market share. In many cases this involves designing and building large quantities of 'green' architecture.

The use of large scale means of production and the levering of nature in the making of art was championed by Joseph Beuys and by contemporaneous developments in late 1960's American conceptual art. This work sought to resist the process of commodification in the art market by removing art from the gallery and the museum, and making it too big, too heavy and too messy to be contained within its customary sites. *7000 Oaks for Kassel* was a project initiated by Joseph Beuys in 1982 for Documenta 7. Beuys, personally supervised the installation of the first fifty or so trees and basalt blocks, and his

celebrity became fused with the work for the purposes of Documenta 7. By the time of the planting of the 7000th tree five years later, what had started as the symbolic reforestation of the German industrial landscape had assumed the spirit of a civic project executed at the scale of the whole city.

Spiral Jetty by Robert Smithson engages with an even more vast territorial scale. Like a civil engineering project, dump trucks were directed by the artist to extend the dusty ground of the salt flats into the body of the Great Salt Lake. Purposeless and remote, Smithson's Spiral has recently emerged from the depths of the salty water, like an archaic fragment from another age. By radically shifting the means and the scale of their production, the location, image and fabrication of the work of these artists became simultaneous or fused. This suggests a practice where the marshalling of material and of the environment is inseparable from an aesthetic impetus. This is not to say that Beuys and Smithson were unconcerned with form, rather they had devised profound new ways to connect matter and energy.

Architecture was relatively unaffected by these developments. The mainstream continued to pursue the post war positivist agenda while radicals became involved with the events of 1968 and socio-political debates. The work of the Italian group Superstudio, though a product of 1968, engaged with many of the same issues as contemporary conceptual artists. They imagined a world of abstract, gridded structures, a kind of synthetic garden, inhabited by a population of suave, white suited cave dwellers. Sophisticated, post-urban hippies dressed by Paco Rabanne. Needless to say, Superstudio's projects remained in the realm of drawings and films, so what could be intensely material and concrete in the work of contemporary artists remained abstract and theoretical.

Aldo Rossi and Robert Venturi wrote *Architecture of the City* and *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* in 1966. These books sought to restate the significance of form in architecture. Both books emphasise the emotional effect of the built environment and attempt

to connect form with material production, meaning and history. Although neither of these architects is obviously connected to the development of conceptual art, they did show how the material of architecture, the familiar forms of vernacular structures, the streets and squares of the European city, the porticos and domes of public buildings, operated at a fundamental and a widely accessible, emotional level. This combination of material and formal precision with a wide social engagement is not so different to Smithson's glue pours and digger earthworks. The immediate legacy of these texts, however, was a renewed pursuit of classical formalisms and for a brief period, a taste for the traditional European city. Architecture seemed to be unable to follow contemporary art's discovery that form and material can sustain an emotional charge over large territories of operation. Perhaps its deep structural connections to the economy and political power limit architecture's room for manoeuvre, it does not have the option of opting out of the market. Indeed, since the 1970's, the market has once again embraced almost all forms of artistic production, and even architecture has emerged as a commodity in its own right, with brand name architects producing logo buildings. I wonder if architecture has the capacity to marshall energy, to imagine an environment that holds the emotions of a place and the significance of human endeavour.

Our project for Stortorget at Kalmar was not brought about by functional or aesthetic necessity. There was no plan on the part of the city to introduce new programmes to the Square and it would remain a ceremonial place charged by the century old dialogue between Town Hall and Cathedral. There was a sense that Stortorget was not quite achieving its potential. The last hundred years of adaptation and modification has mostly been for the benefit of the car, and the figure of roads, pavements, curbs and parking bays had undermined the formal unity of the place, a unity that is an intrinsic quality of a major square.

On my first visit to the site, even with eighty cars parked within the space, I was struck by the beauty of the stone surface, of the variety in size and colour of the material and the way it sparkled in the sun. The physical history of Stortorget has been about the shifting of these stones—field stones from the surrounding agricultural lands stacked into dry stone boundary walls, and then—wall stones providing the raw material to make the streets and square of the baroque town. The presence of field stones at the centre of Kalmar is a reminder of this physical, almost primitive, transformation of rural land into urban place. Over a period of 300 years these stones have been laid, lifted and re-laid. Their varying size, type and colour distinguish them from those in later granite-paved streets, appearing like a collection of bright minerals rather than a homogenous surface. Before pavements, kerbs and roads, the linear ordering of the stones was a continuous field up to and around the surrounding buildings.

The new design attempts to expand the potential of the square by returning Stortorget to a kind of origin and emptiness once held by the undifferentiated space of the field. Paradoxically, this formal cleansing of the urban floor contradicts contemporary policies of historic conservation, in Sweden and in Britain. These hold each new intervention to be significant in telling the story of a historic building or place, a reasonable and intelligent position that is not difficult to agree with. At Stortorget, the effect of these many layers was to prioritise the status of the car over the pedestrian and to produce a kind of formal cacophony at odds with the clarity demanded by a major public space. After long and philosophical discussions, formal coherence was chosen over the ambiguities of history. The cut granite stones and curbs, laid over the last hundred years to divide cars and pedestrians, were removed to be used elsewhere in Kalmar. Existing areas of field stones were restored and extended to re-establish a level and unitary surface. Practical matters, like easy routes for pedestrians and cyclists, and places for gathering at the entrances to the Cathedral and the Town Hall, are addressed with smoother paths and clearings

whose light presence within the surface is like that made by footfall on a beach or after a heavy snowfall.

I hope that Stortorget today retains the enormous energy expended centuries ago in the extraction of granite and limestone from the glacial deposits surrounding Kalmar, and the significance that these stones hold in lending an urban identity to the centre of Kalmar. The skill required in cutting the archaic granite cat-skulls and curb-stones is also preserved in the new square. To these have been added the considerable endeavour of contemporary stonemasons who skilfully extracted the cat-skulls from the line of the roads and re-laid them as clearings to make places that acknowledge the significance of the Square's major buildings. Without the freedom to choose material or technique this project is completely about form and largely about shifting existing material. It is energy neutral in a way the Beuys and Smithson might have approved of.

RE-CONSTRUCTION CAN AS MUCH BE SEEN AS MARSHALLING ALL THE PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL ENERGY THAT IS TIED UP IN THE (NOW) RUBBLE INTO WHAT THE CITY NEEDS & FEELS NOW. RATHER THAN A DIDACTIC REPLICA OF WHAT IT NEEDED (BEFORE

Maybe there's a building/pile of rubble in Amatrice that would be better off cleared out and left empty? I always think on the map it has no "piazza". To build an identity on.

Then maybe that 'rubble' and its energy is moved to help build a new version of those huts for transhumance. This time for migrant people not sheep...

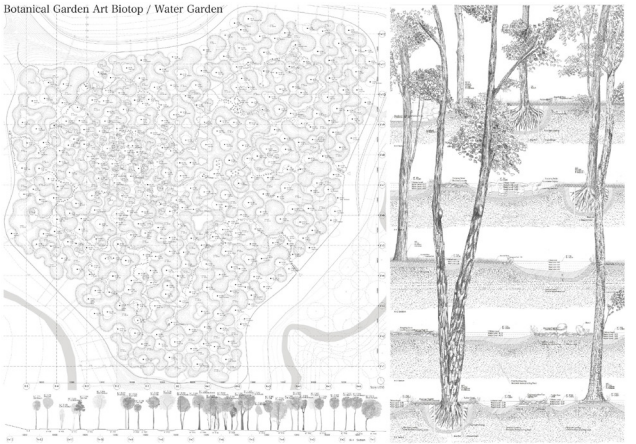
G

GARDENS

giardini

PROJECT
Dom Hans van der Laan. *Cemetery Saint Benedict Abbey*. Vaals, Netherlands. 1968
(image author: Aldo Amoretti)

PROJECT
Junya Ishigami + Associates. *Art Biotop Water Garden*. Tochigi, Japan. 2019
(image credits: Nikissimo inc)



DRAWING
Junya Ishigami + Associates. *Art Biotop Water Garden*. Tochigi, Japan. 2019

PROJECT
NArchitekTURA + Bartosz Haduch. *The Great Synagogue Memorial Park in Oświęcim*. Oświęcim, Poland. 2019.

I

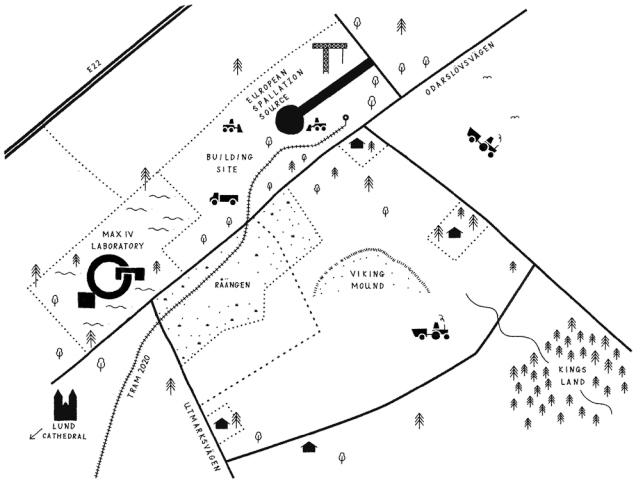
INCREMENTAL

incrementale

IMAGE
Breton, André; Hugo, Valentine; Eluard Paul. *Cadavre Exquis.* 1932.

Råängen is a new neighbourhood on the outskirts of Lund in south Sweden. Over the next thirty years, the area will become a place for people to live, work, study and play. Lund Cathedral is spearheading the project, engaging architects, artists, developers, academics and members of the public in a conversation about how to build a community for the 21st century. Read more

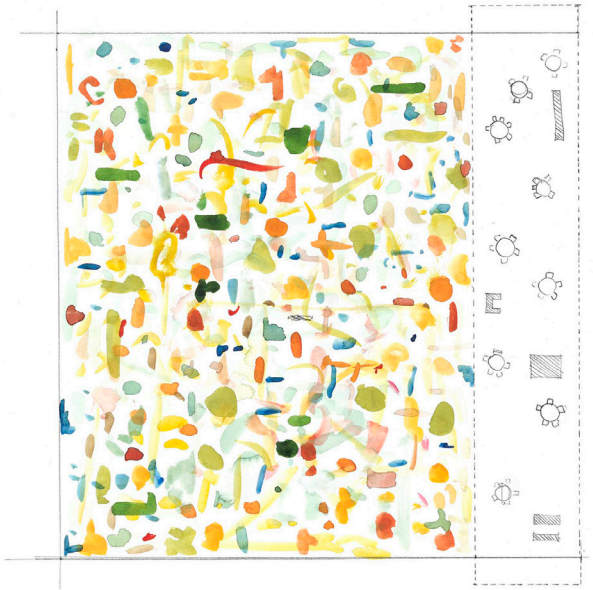
PROJECT
Raangen, Sweden. raangen.se



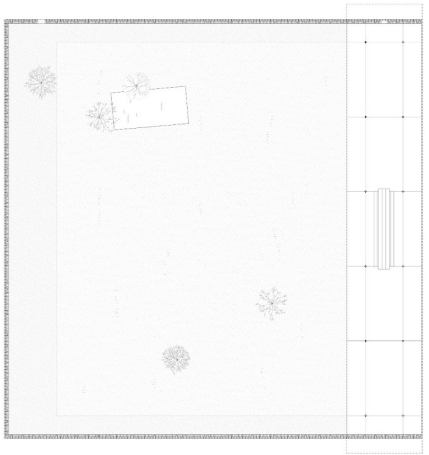
PROJECT
Raangen Masterplan, Sweden. raangen.se

PROJECT
Nathan Coley. *Heaven Is A Place Where Nothing Ever Happens*.
Sweden. 2019

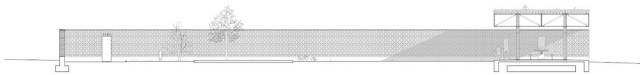
PROJECT
Nathan Coley. *And We Are Everywhere!*. Raangen, Sweden. 2019



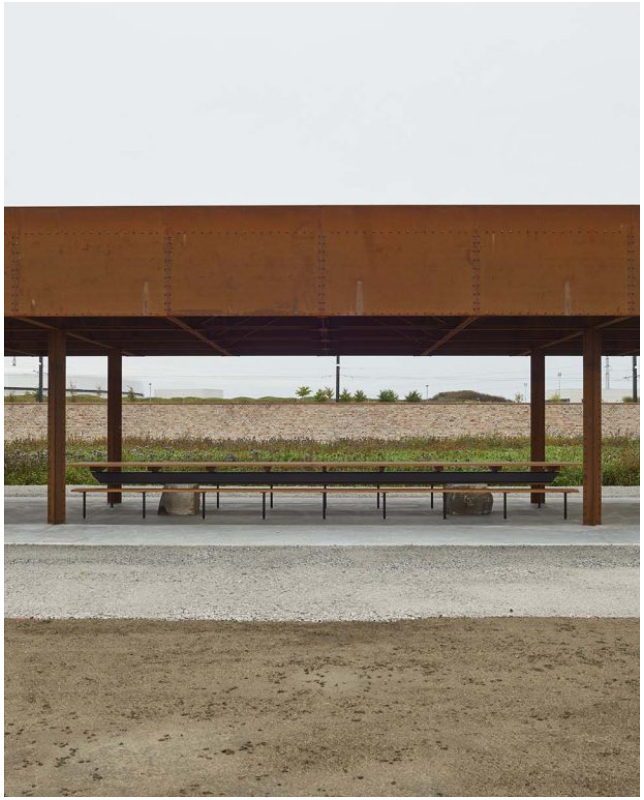
PROJECT
Brendeland &N Kristoffersen, Price & Myers. *Hage*. Raangen, Sweden. 2021



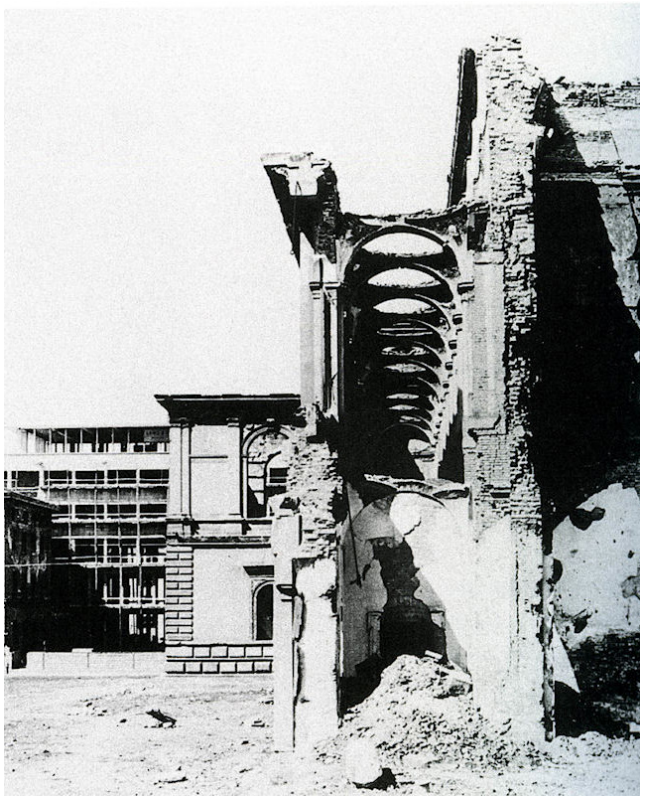
PROJECT
Brendeland &N Kristoffersen, Price & Myers. *Hage*. Raangen, Sweden. 2021



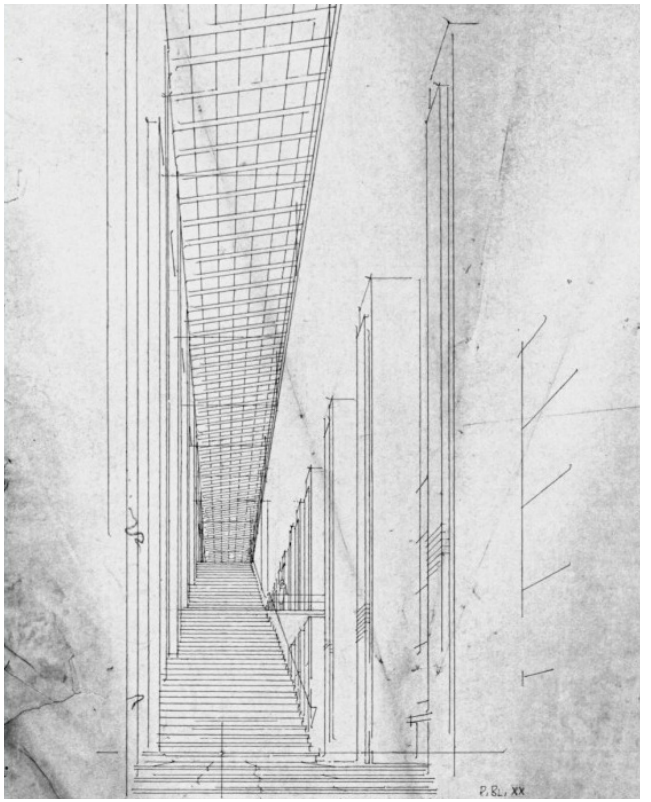
PROJECT
Brendeland &N Kristoffersen, Price & Myers. *Hage*. Raangen, Sweden. 2021



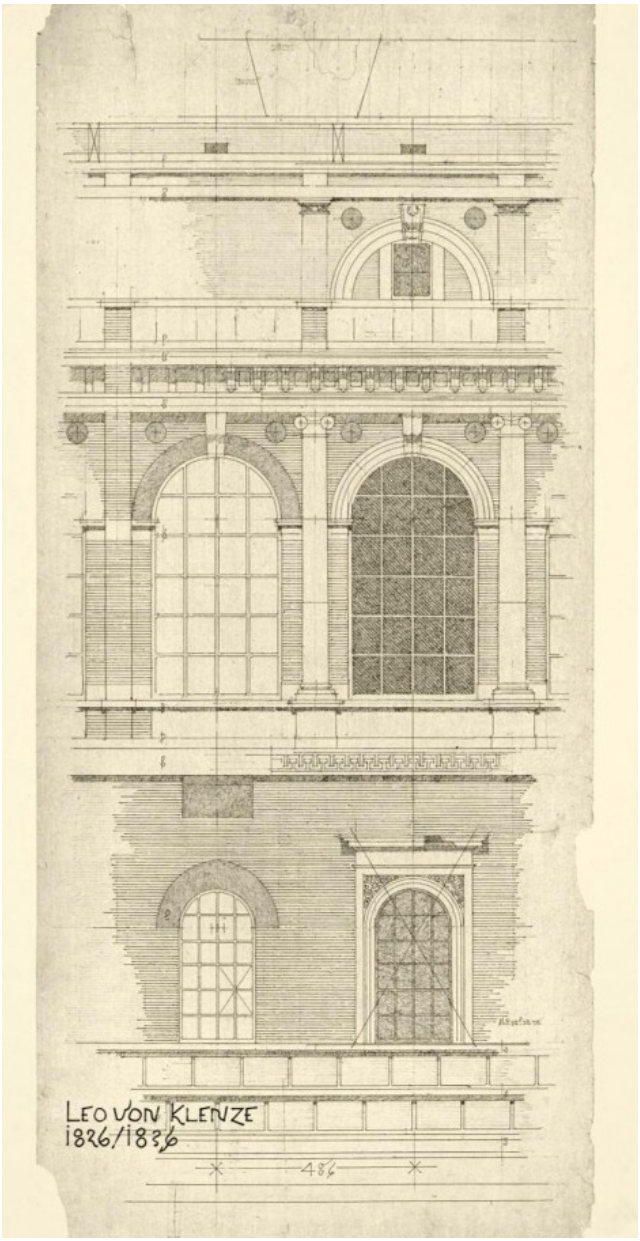
PROJECT
Brendeland &N Kristoffersen, Price & Myers. *Hage*. Raangen, Sweden. 2021



PROJECT
Hans Doellgast. *Alte Pinakothek*. Munich, Germany, 1957.



PROJECT
Hans Doellgast. *Alte Pinakothek*. Munich, Germany, 1957.



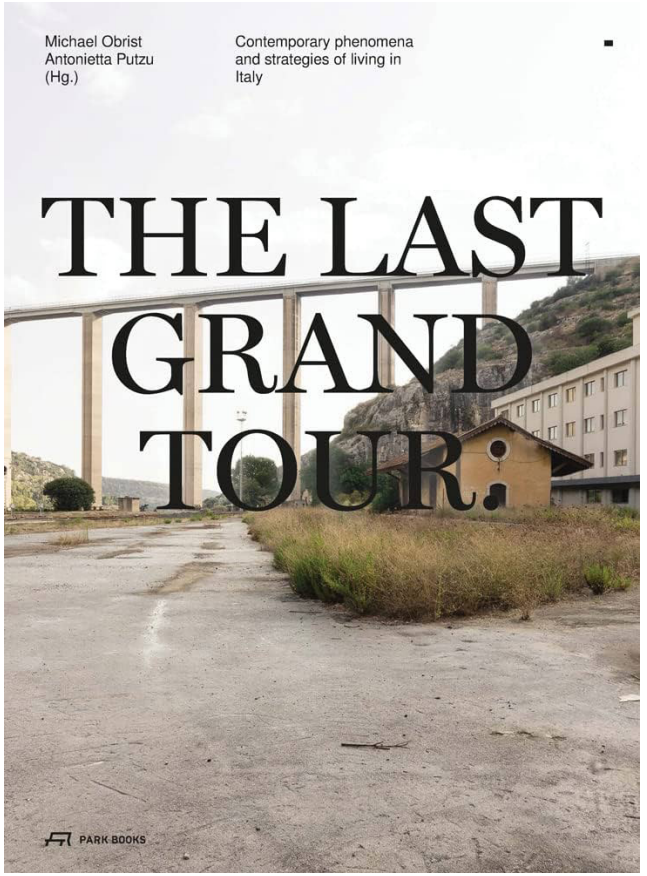
PROJECT
Hans Doellgast. *Alte Pinakothek*. Munich, Germany, 1957.

PROJECT
Hans Doellgast. *Alte Pinakothek*. Munich, Germany, 1957.

M

MARGINAL

marginale



BOOK
Obrist, Michael; Putzu, Antonietta (eds.). *The last Grand Tour*. Zurich: Parks Book. 2023.

10

Fabrizio Barca

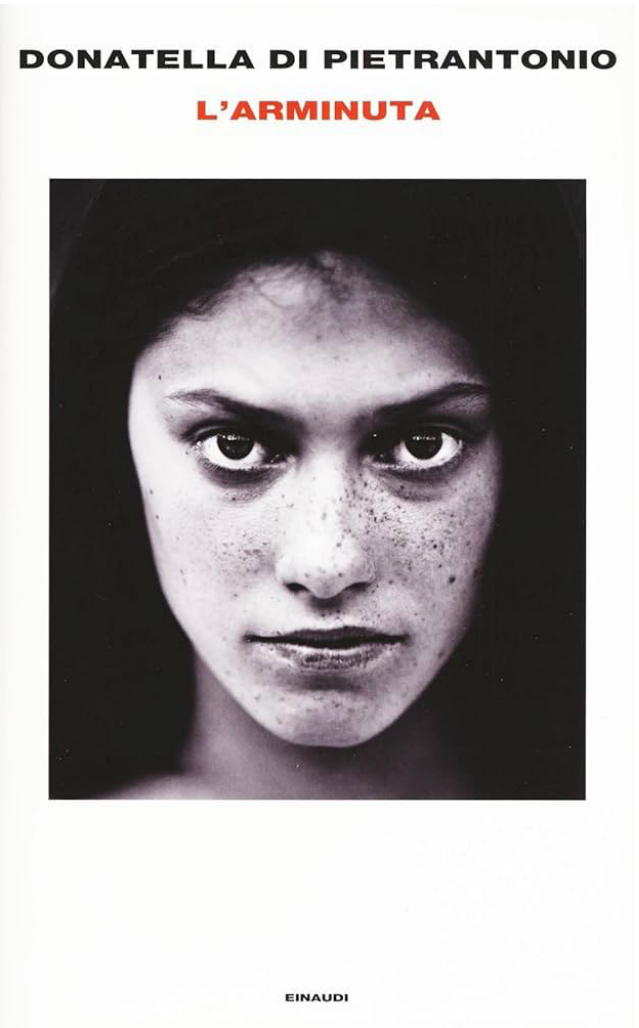
Disuguaglianze territoriali e bisogno sociale

La sfida delle «Aree Interne»

Testo della lezione per la decima
Lettura annuale Ermanno Gorrieri

Modena - Sala Gorrieri - Palazzo Europa – 27 maggio 2015

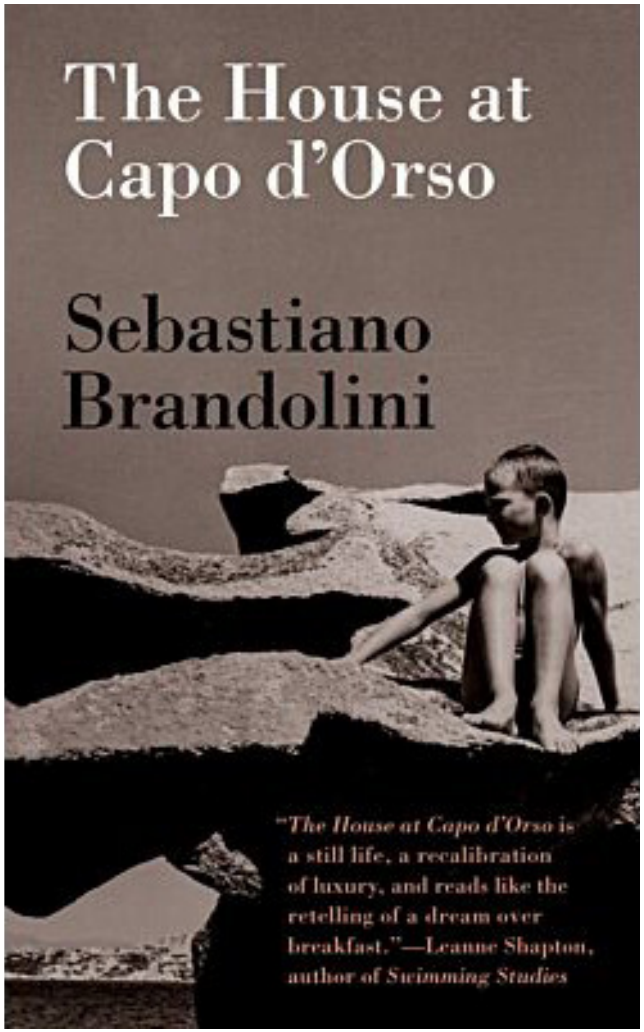
FONDAZIONE ERMANNO GORRIERI PER GLI STUDI SOCIALI



LECTURE
Barca, Fabrizio. "Disuguaglianze Territoriali E Bisogno Sociale La Sfida delle «Aree Interne»." May 27, 2015, Modena.

BOOK
Di Pietrantonio, Donatella. *L'Arminuta*. Bologna: Einaudi. 2017.

MOVIE
Frammartino, Michelangelo, director. *Le Quattro Volte*. Distributed by Cinecittà Luce, 2010. 1h 28'.



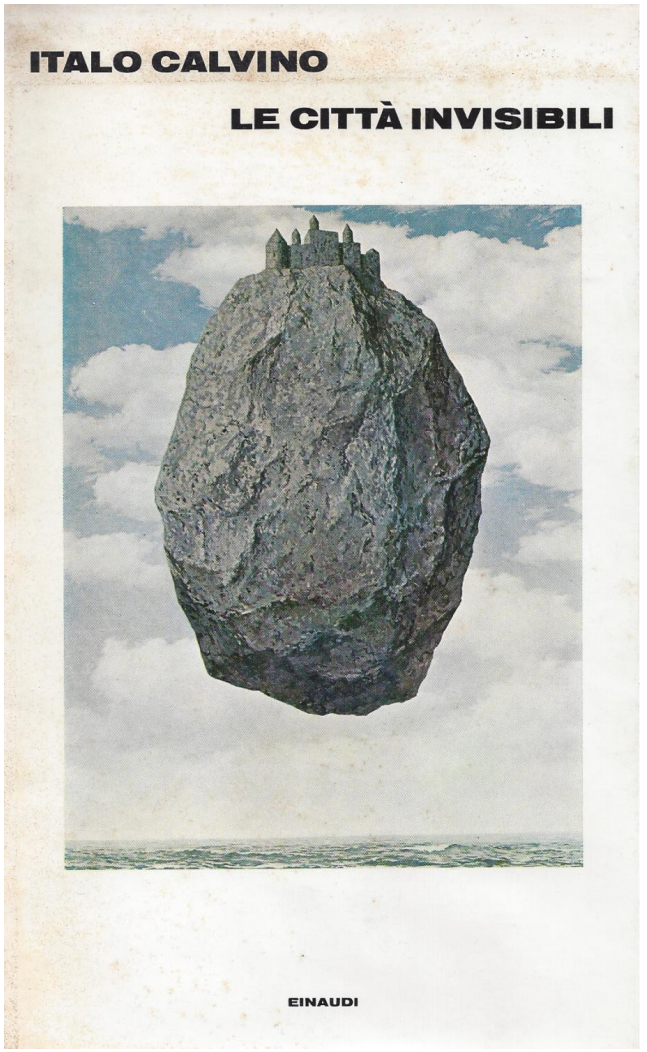
BOOK
Brandolini, Sebastiano. *The House at Capo d'Orso*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 2023.

BOOK
Fondazione Symbola. *Atlante dell'Appennino*. Rome: Fondazione Symbola, 2017, VIII. https://symbola.net/ricerca/atlante-dellappennino/

M

MEMORY

memoria



BOOK
Calvino, Italo. *Le città invisibili*. Turin: Einaudi, 1977.

Italo Calvino writes:

"Thin CIties 2

Now I shall tell of the city of Zenobia, which is wonderful in this fashion: though set on dry terrain it stands on high pilings, and the houses are of bamboo and zinc, with many platforms and balconies placed on stilts at various heights, crossing one another, linked by ladders and hanging sidewalks, surmounted by cone-roofed belvederes, barrels storing water, weather vanes, jutting pulleys, and fish poles, and cranes.

No one remembers what need or command or desire drove Zenobia's founders to give their city this form, and so there is no telling whether it was satisfied by the city as we see it today, which has perhaps grown through successive superimpositions from the first, now undecipherable plan. But what is certain is that if you ask an inhabitant of Zenobia to describe his vision of a happy life, it is always a city like Zenobia that he imagines, with its pilings and its suspended stairways, a Zenobia perhaps quite different, a-Butter with banners and ribbons, but always derived by combining elements of that first model.

This said, it is pointless trying to decide whether Zenobia is to be classified among happy cities or among the unhappy. It makes no sense to divide cities into these two species, but rather into another two: those that through the years and the changes continue to give their fOrm to desires, and those in which desires either erase the city or are erased by it.

Cities and Memory 5

Beyond six rivers and three mountain ranges rises Zora, a city that no one, having seen it, can forget. But not because, like other memorable cities, it leaves an unusual image in your recollections. Zora has the quality of remaining in your memory point by point, in its succession of streets, of houses along the streets, and of doors and windows in the houses, though nothing in them possesses a special beauty or rarity. Zora's secret lies in the way your gaze runs over patterns following one another as in a musical score where not a note can be altered or displaced.

The man who knows by heart how Zora is made, if he is unable to sleep at night, can imagine he is walking along the streets and he remembers the order by which the copper clock follows the barber's striped awning, then the fountain with the nine jets, the astronomer's glass tower, the melon vendor's kiosk, the statue of the hermit and the lion, the Turkish bath, the cafe at the comer, the alley that leads to the harbor. This city which cannot be expunged from the mind is like an armature, a honeycomb in whose cells each of us can place the things he wants to remember: names of famous men, virtues, numbers, vegetable and mineral classifications, dates of battles, constellations, parts of speech. Between each idea and each point of the

itinerary an affinity or a contrast can be established, serving as an immediate aid to memory. So the world's most learned men are those who have memorized Zora.

But in vain I set out to visit the city: forced to remain motionless and always the same, in order to be more easily remembered, Zora has languished, disintegrated, disappeared. The earth has forgotten her.

Cities and Memory 3

In vain, great-hearted Kublai, shall I attempt to describe Zaira, city of high bastions. I could tell you how many steps make up the streets rising like stairways, and the degree of the arcades' curves, and what kind of zinc scales cover the roofs; but I already know this would be the same as telling you nothing. The city does not consist of this, but of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past: the height of a lamppost and the distance from the ground of a hanged usurper's swaying feet; the line strung from the lamPPOSt to the railing opposite and the festoons that decorate the course of the queen's nuptial procession; the height of that railing and the leap of the adulterer who climbed over it at dawn; the tilt of a guttering and a eat's progress along it as he slips into the same window; the firing range of a gunboat which has suddenly appeared beyond the cape and the bomb that destroys the uttering; the rips in the fish net and the three old men seated on the dock mending nets and telling each other for the hundredth time the Story of the gunboat of the usurper, who some say was the queen's illegitimate son, abandoned in his swaddling clothes there on the dock. As this wave from memories flows in, the city soaks it up like a sponge and expands. A description of Zaira as it is today should contain all Zaira's past.

The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the Bags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.

Cities and Memory 4

In Maurilia, the traveler is invited to visit the city and, at the same time, to examine some old post cards that show it as it used to be: the same identical square with a hen in the place of the bus station, a bandstand in the place of the overpass, two young ladies with white parasols in the place of the munitions factory. If the traveler does not wish to disappoint the inhabitants, he must praise the postcard city and prefer it to the present one, though he must be careful to contain his regret at the changes within definite limits: admitting that the magnificence and prosperity of the metropolis Maurilia, when compared to the old, provincial Maurilia, cannot compensate for a certain lost grace, which, however,

can be appreciated only now in the old post cards, whereas before, when that provincial Maurilia was before one's eyes, one saw absolutely nothing graceful and would see it even less today, if Maurilia had remained unchanged; and in any case the metropolis has the added attraction that, through what it has become, one can look back with nostalgia at what it was.

Beware of saying to them that sometimes different cities follow one another on the same site and under the same name, born and dying without knowing one another, without communication among themselves. At times even the names of the inhabitants remain the same, and their voices' accent, and also the features of the faces; but the gods who live beneath names and above places have gone off without a word and outsiders have settled in their place. It is pointless to ask whether the new ones are better or worse than the old, since there is no connection between them, just as the old post cards do not depict Maurilia as it was, but a different city which, by chance, was called Maurilia, like this one."

BOOK
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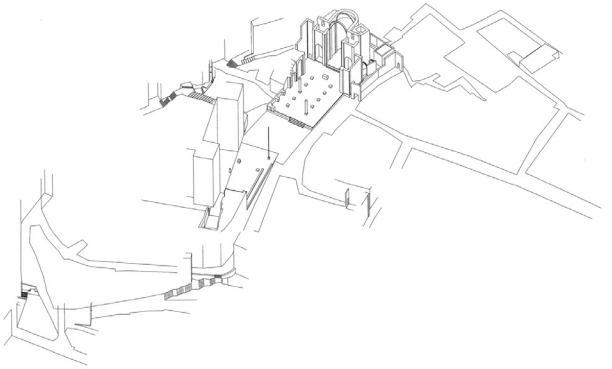

PROJECT
ALvaro Siza, Roberto Collovà. Public space in Salemi. Salemi, Italy. 1990.

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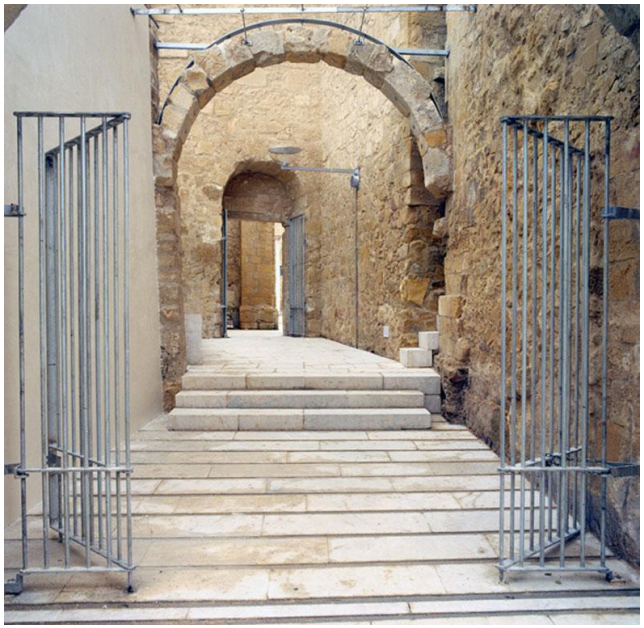
(image author: Roberto Collovà)



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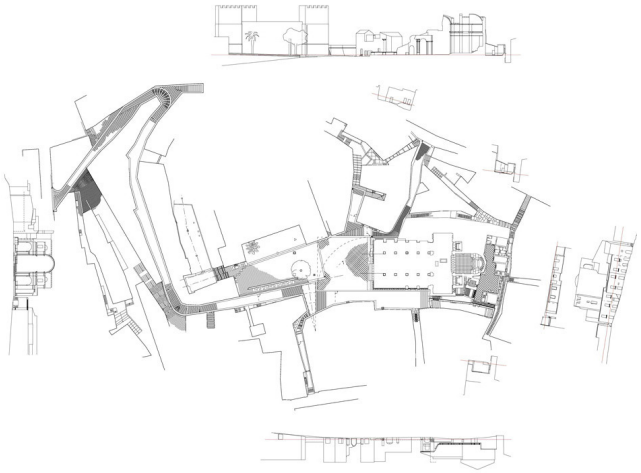

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ALvaro Siza, Roberto Collovà. Public space in Salemi. Salemi, Italy.
1990.
(image author: Roberto Collovà)

O

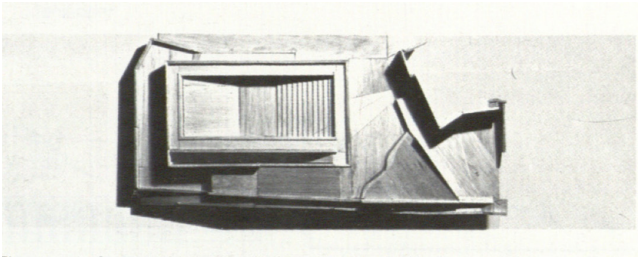
OUTDOOR ROOMS

stanze all'aperto

PHOTOGRAPH
Christopher Alexander. *Public Outdoor Room*. Unknown date and place.

PROJECT
Francesco Venezia, Marcella Aprile, Roberto Collovà. *Teatro Salemi*. Salemi, Italy. 1986.

PROJECT
Francesco Venezia, Marcella Aprile, Roberto Collovà. *Teatro Salemi*. Salemi, Italy. 1986.



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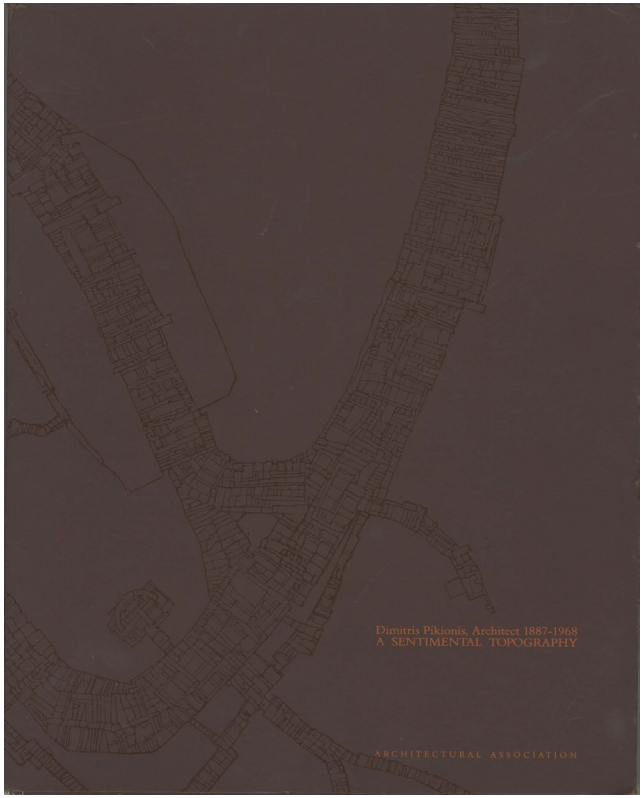
P

PATHWAYS

sentieri



BOOK
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PROJECT
Dimitris Pikionis. *Landscaping of the Acropolis surrounding area*.
Athens, Greece. 1957.
(image author: Héléne Binet)

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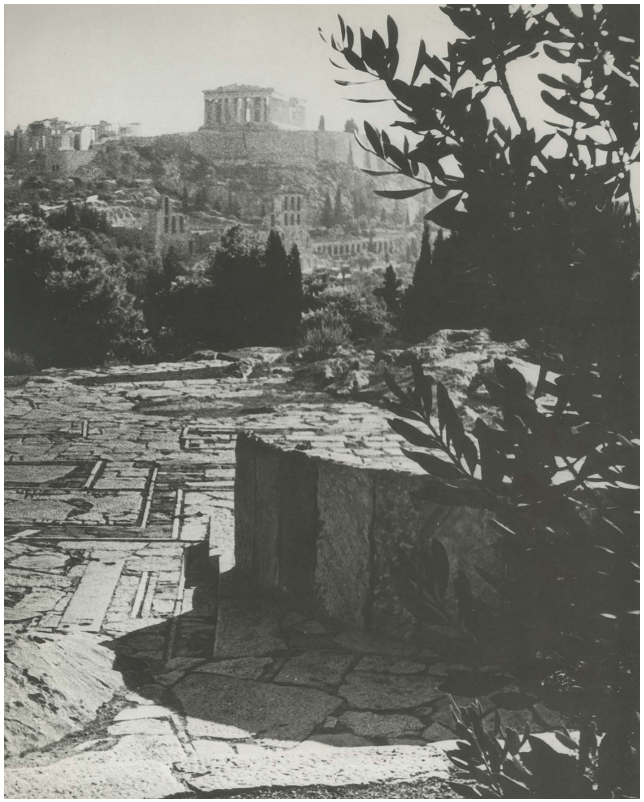

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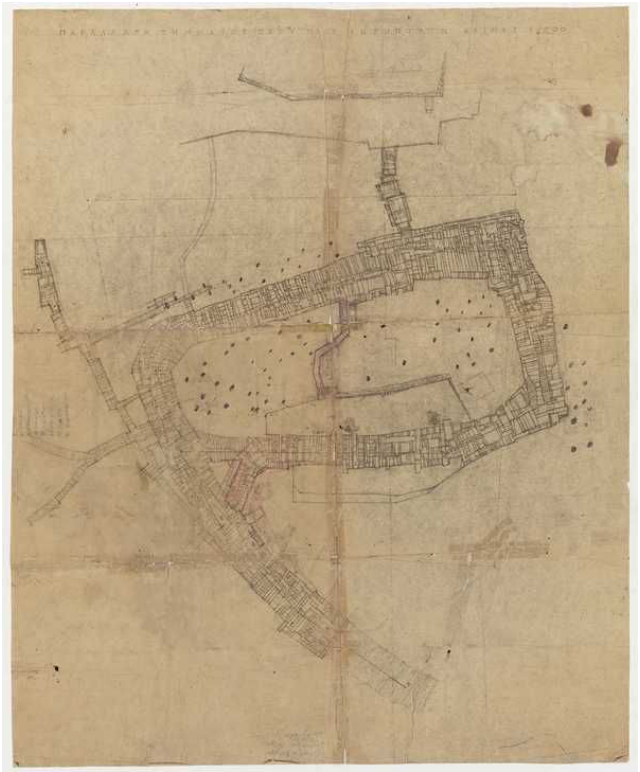

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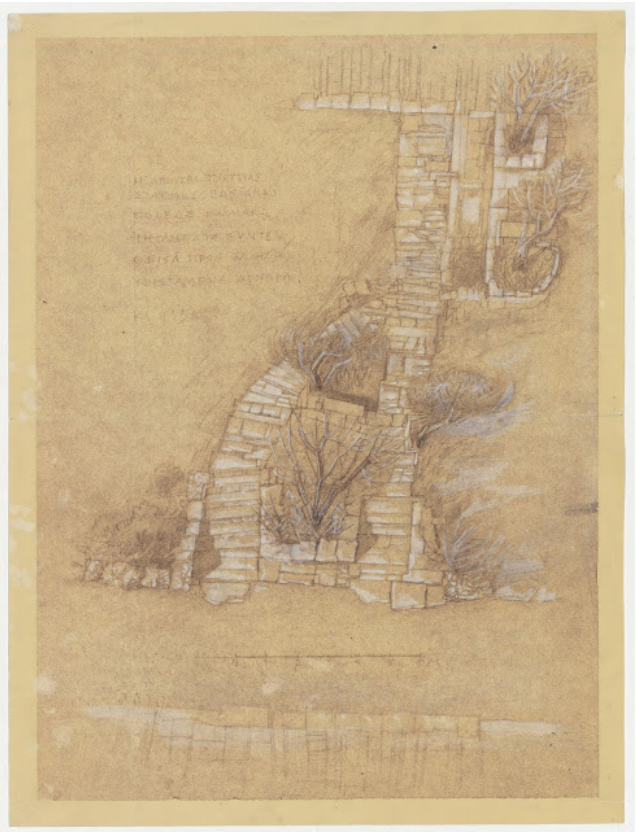

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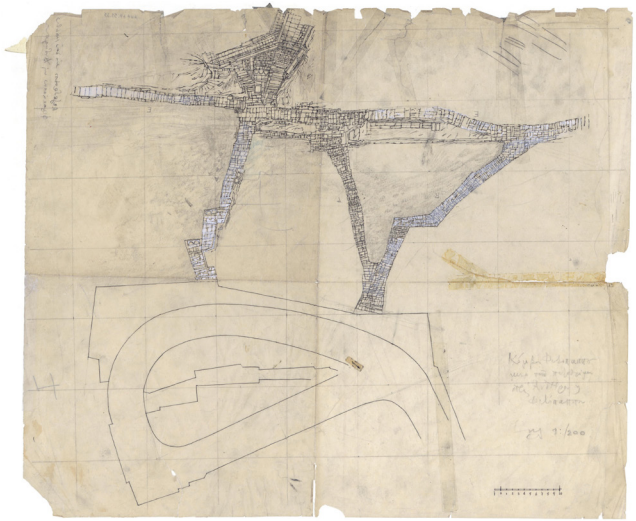

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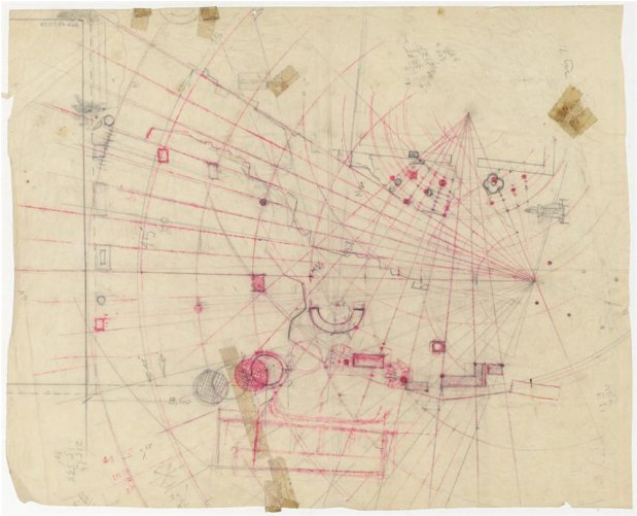

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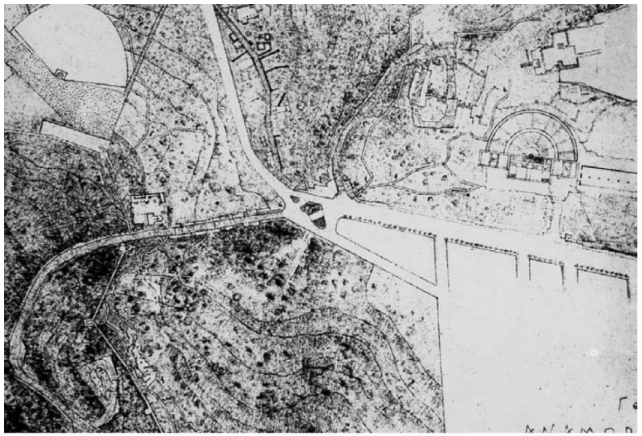

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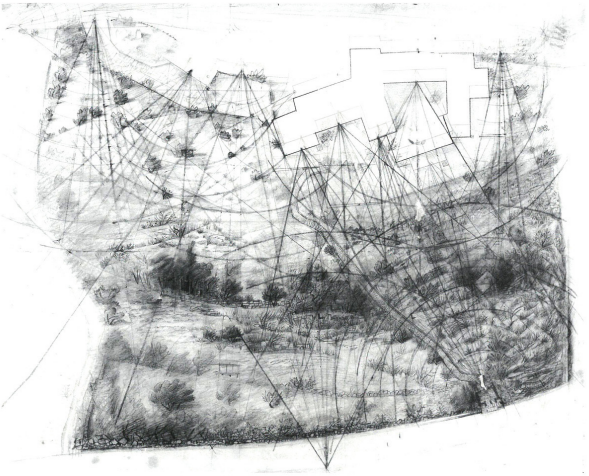

PROJECT
Dimitris Pikionis. *Landscaping of the Acropolis surrounding area*.
Athens, Greece. 1957.

IMAGE
Paul Klee. *Highway and Byways*. 1929. Oil on canvas. Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

P

PRESERVATION

preservazione

PROJECT
The reassembly of the stone blocks of the Cathedral of Sant'Andrea, which collapsed during the earthquake in 1976. Venzone, Italy.
(image author: Francesco Doglioni)

PROJECT
The reassembly of the stone blocks of the Cathedral of Sant'Andrea, which collapsed during the earthquake in 1976.
Venzone, Italy.
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The reassembly of the stone blocks of the Cathedral of Sant'Andrea, which collapsed during the earthquake in 1976.
Venzone, Italy.
(image author: Francesco Doglioni)

PHOTOGRAPH
Reonstruction of Venzone. Unknown author and date.

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P

PROCESSES

processi

PROJECT
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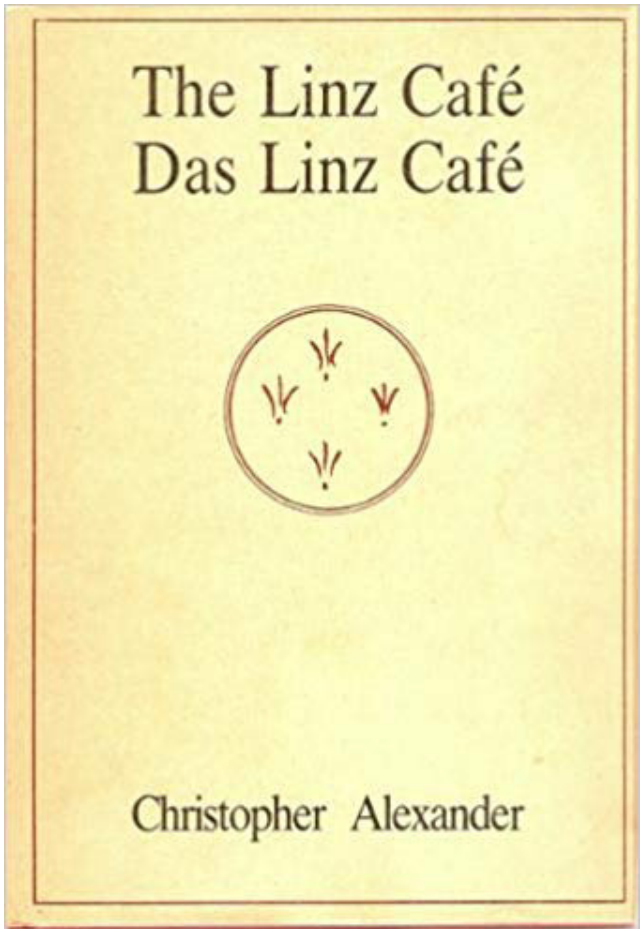

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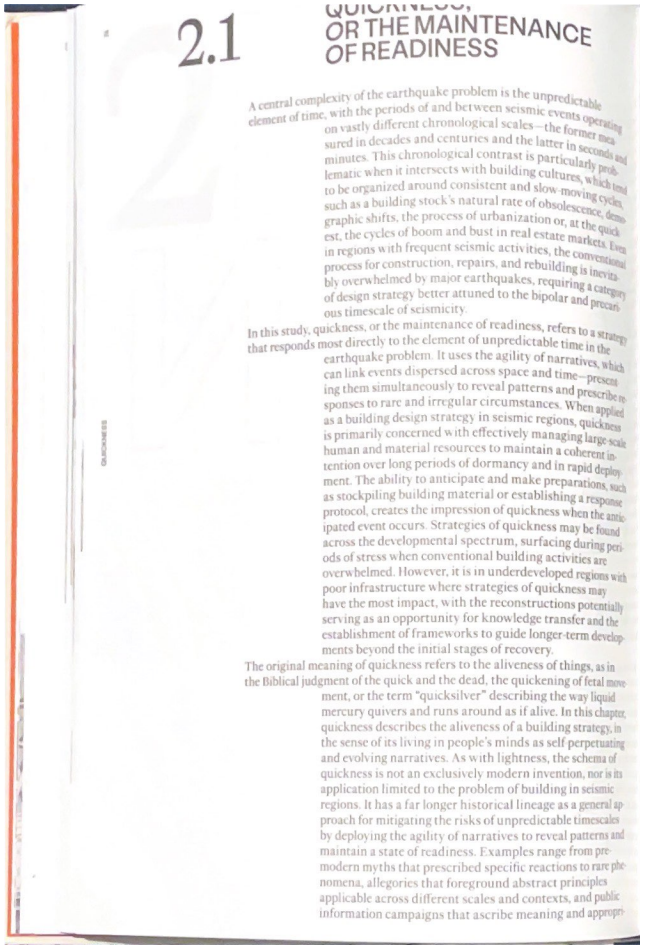
R

READINESS

prontezza



2.1 QUICKNESS, OR THE MAINTENANCE OF READINESS

A central complexity of the earthquake problem is the unpredictable element of time, with the periods of and between seismic events operating on vastly different chronological scales—the former measured in decades and centuries and the latter in seconds and minutes. This chronological contrast is particularly problematic when it intersects with building cultures, which tend to be organized around consistent and slow-moving cycles, such as a building stock's natural rate of obsolescence, demographic shifts, the process of urbanization or, at the quickest, the cycles of boom and bust in real estate markets. Even in regions with frequent seismic activities, the conventional process for construction, repairs, and rebuilding is inevitably overwhelmed by major earthquakes, requiring a category of design strategy better attuned to the bipolar and precarious timescale of seismicity.

In this study, quickness, or the maintenance of readiness, refers to a strategy that responds most directly to the element of unpredictable time in the earthquake problem. It uses the agility of narratives, which can link events dispersed across space and time—presenting them simultaneously to reveal patterns and prescribe responses to rare and irregular circumstances. When applied as a building design strategy in seismic regions, quickness is primarily concerned with effectively managing large-scale human and material resources to maintain a coherent intention over long periods of dormancy and in rapid deployment. The ability to anticipate and make preparations, such as stockpiling building material or establishing a response protocol, creates the impression of quickness when the anticipated event occurs. Strategies of quickness may be found across the developmental spectrum, surfacing during periods of stress when conventional building activities are overwhelmed. However, it is in underdeveloped regions with poor infrastructure where strategies of quickness may have the most impact, with the reconstructions potentially serving as an opportunity for knowledge transfer and the establishment of frameworks to guide longer-term developments beyond the initial stages of recovery.

The original meaning of quickness refers to the aliveness of things, as in the Biblical judgment of the quick and the dead, the quickening of fetal movement, or the term "quicksilver" describing the way liquid mercury quivers and runs around as if alive. In this chapter, quickness describes the aliveness of a building strategy, in the sense of its living in people's minds as self perpetuating and evolving narratives. As with lightness, the schema of quickness is not an exclusively modern invention, nor is its application limited to the problem of building in seismic regions. It has a far longer historical lineage as a general approach for mitigating the risks of unpredictable timescales by deploying the agility of narratives to reveal patterns and maintain a state of readiness. Examples range from premodern myths that prescribed specific reactions to rare phenomena, allegories that foreground abstract principles applicable across different scales and contexts, and public information campaigns that ascribe meaning and appropri-

BOOK
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ate responses to otherwise abstract and intangible risks in the modern world. The section below will examine five examples of quickness, aiming to trace its evolution and key traits from the historical to the contemporary period.

USEFUL STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES: PERUVIAN EARTHQUAKE MYTHS

Early examples of quickness as a risk mitigation strategy may be found in the genre of pre-modern myths in seismic cultures that explain the cause of earthquakes and, by extension, prescribe the appropriate response. An especially notable case is the Peruvian myth that attributes earthquakes to Gods walking around the earth tallying the population. The appropriate response is to run outside and shout with raised hands to expedite the count. Written records of the myth date to the 13th-century Incan deity Pachamama, although it is almost certain to have roots in earlier cultures in the highly seismic Andean region, evidence of which dates to 1250 BCE. Modern observers will immediately recognize the practical usefulness of the Peruvian myth, which uses a concise story to link the earthquake to an evacuation protocol. While the hypothesis is scientifically inaccurate, the myth memorably prescribes an effective response to a rare geological phenomenon that may otherwise be forgotten in a generation.

As Guidoboni and Ebel[1] observe in their survey of earthquakes and tsunamis in history, almost all seismic cultures have myths to explain the mechanism of seismicity. Myths are particularly effective for linking two specific things without a logical connection. However, they are also difficult to adjust or recall once established, meaning that in the long term, myths are either specific but out-of-date or valid but too general to be practically useful. Consequently, most surviving myths only espouse general principles such as teamwork, as in the Gabrielino Indian myth of the six turtles supporting the world, whose periodic arguments and parting of ways cause earthquakes, or help to alleviate our fear of the unknown by attributing the earthquake to familiar natural phenomena, as in the case of Namazu, the mischievous, earthquake-causing catfish under the islands of Japan. The Peruvian case is rare for its useful specificity while also illustrating the limitations of quickness through myths. While running outside in an earthquake may be advantageous in historically rural circumstances, the opposite is true in most contemporary cities with modern higher-rise buildings—with the retraction of a well-established myth requiring extensive re-education campaigns.

ALLEGORIES WITH ADAPTABLE PRINCIPLES: "YU THE GREAT CONTROLS THE WATERS"

The strategy of quickness also finds strong resonances in allegorical traditions around the world. A canonical example is the Chinese allegory of *Da Yu Zhi Shui*, or "Yu the Great Controls the Waters." Yu is a quasi-mystical figure who lived between 2200–2100 BCE, with systematic records dating to the *Shiji*, or "Records of the Grand Historian," from 94 BCE. Originally a folklore that chronicled the overcoming of frequent flooding, it was later adopted into the Confucian canon and is today a core part of primary school curricula across the Sinosphere. Through various adaptations, the story has maintained its basic two-part plot: 1) following his father's unsuccessful attempts, the son Yu works tirelessly for 13 years to curb periodic flooding around the Yellow River, so dedicated to his mission that he passed by his family home on three occasions without stopping to see his wife and child, and 2) following his ultimately successful implementation of innovative flood control measures, which focus on dredging and redirecting flood water to irrigate fields as opposed to reinforcing ever-higher dikes, Yu rose to the throne of the Xia Dynasty, inaugurating dynastic rule in China.

Whereas myths establish highly specific links, often without logic, allegories present a complex web of actions and outcomes that together reveal sets of abstract principles applicable to different contexts and scales. This general applicability is demonstrated within the allegory of Yu, with the same set of Confucian principles guiding him to success both in hydraulic engineering and government. Further, the story of Yu foregrounds the microcosmic quality of allegories, in the sense that each conveys a comprehensive worldview, as opposed to fragmented instructions. A close reading of the terse plot reveals a surprisingly broad spectrum of Confucian ideals, including 1) meritocracy as the basis of rule, 2) the advantages of centralized government, particularly in mediating disasters, 3) continuity of duty across generations and filial piety as the paramount social obligation, notably above those to the wife and child, and 4) the conception of nature as a capricious force that may be tamed through the strategic and persistent application of human will.

Allegories are effective strategies of quickness, as a single story can convey a complete set of ideas, while multiple stories not only reinforce ideas but also allow cross-reference and self-correction. Both are useful qualities when trying to communicate succinctly with accuracy.

PUBLIC MESSAGING: THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION'S "KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON" CAMPAIGN

The strategy of quickness is a recurring trope in many cultures, with the common tropes of narratives and storytelling being relatively well developed by the first millennium with the emergence and maturity of the major literary and religious traditions. As Alain de Botton observes in his study of religion's broader applicability in modern secular societies, the most persistent cultural traditions share similar devices of allegory and repetition, the combination of which, as confirmed by modern neuroscience, maximize the reception and retention of ideas by the human mind. While the basic narrative frameworks in strategies of quickness remain relatively unchanged through the second millennium CE, they are periodically re-rendered and magnified through new mediums of communication as they respond to the expanding range and dimensions of risks in a globalizing world. By WWII, public information campaigns such as the "Keep Calm and Carry On" posters produced by the British Government's Ministry of Information were at the forefront of utilizing media and graphics

Almost all cultures utilize earthquake myths to link rare seismic events to appropriate responses and risk mitigation strategies that might otherwise be forgotten in a generation.

Allegories like "Yu the Great Controls the Waters" allow principles to be condensed and communicated quickly, which can then be re-expanded and adapted to local situations.

and adaptable. Fifth and finally, while the core repertoire of quickness optimized to communicate and retain ideas in the human mind has remained relatively constant over time, recent developments in personalized digital media are transforming the way we produce and access information. The full implication for the strategy of quickness is not yet clear, but current trends suggest a fragmentation of general principles into clusters of specific instructions converging around values but no longer conveying a clearly discernible and static worldview or principle.

2.2 PRECEDENTS—FROM THE FABLE TO THE KEYNOTE

Before significant urbanization and economic specialization, construction was a major undertaking that involved the entire village, i.e., calling upon a community's full logistic and material capacity. In order to effectively coordinate social and material resources beyond immediately perceivable territories and time spans, many building cultures first emerged as anecdotal traditions, relying on narratives in the form of fables to prescribe specific sets of actions, which are executed whenever the activation conditions are met. Examples include the periodic migration of nipa huts in the Philippines, where houses are moved and reassembled seasonally by the community to avoid floods, and the tradition of barn raising, the collective construction of agricultural buildings common in the UK and North America. For smaller and isolated communities in seismic regions, where earthquakes may be a serious nuisance but do not occur with enough frequency to register a clearly discernible pattern or warrant specialized responses, the fable mode of transmitting building knowledge is an effective enough approach to managing a general range of risks, and still persists in many rural regions today.

In both the East and the West, a major impetus for codifying informal building traditions was the process of urbanization. As settlements became larger and denser, risks of fire, epidemics, graft, and vulnerability to natural disasters increased. Improved record-keeping and communication over larger geographic areas also revealed discernible patterns of disasters and seismicity. The codification of informal building traditions is often sponsored by the state, which sees it as a way to mitigate public discontent and its destabilizing effects. For instance, Marcus Vitruvius Pollio's *De Architectura* was published with the patronage of Caesar Augustus as Rome first reached its peak population of 1 million around 10 CE.[2] Likewise, Li Jie's *Yingzhao Fashi*, or the *Treatise on Architectural Methods*, was commissioned in the Song Dynasty by Emperor Zhezong as Kaifeng, the capital, reached its peak population of 1 million.[3] The *Yingzhao Fashi* was then revised and republished in the *Siku Quanshu*, or the Complete Library in Four Sections, during the Qing Dynasty when the population of Beijing again reached 1 million around 1800. The basic approach of building codes, abstracting exemplary practice into prescriptive principles that may be more widely deployed and systematically enforced, remains largely unchanged to the present day.

Developments in quickness as a building design strategy in the 19th and 20th centuries have mostly revolved around technological innovations, first with industrialization and the capacity to mass-produce and transport building components, and later with the information revolution and the vastly improved speed of communication. In the same period, the increasing complexity of modern buildings and specialization of the construction industry limited the scope for mass mobilization in construction, historically a latent source of speed. Since the late 1990s, the proliferation of personal digital devices is disrupting the traditional correlation between scale and speed by providing more precise and customized modes of communication. As strategies of quickness no longer need to conform to the lowest common denominator to achieve critical mass, niche issues concerning a building's cultural and contextual specificity, as well as its long-term adaptability, can also find traction. The section below will investigate five building case studies from the historical to the modern period, which together trace the development of quickness as a building design strategy.

A MARCHING BEAT

NAIKU, IN THE ISE JINGU

An early example of quickness as a building design strategy is the Ise Jingu, or the Ise Grand Shrine in Japan.[4] Founded in 4 BCE, it is the preeminent site of the indigenous Shinto religion. Of particular interest to this study is the institution of Shikinen Sengu, which periodically removes and reconstructs the two principal shrine complexes, Naiku and Geku, every 20 years. The periodic renewal is symbolic of impermanence and the cycles of life and death—central beliefs in the Shinto tradition. More practically, the process facilities the transfer of building knowledge to the next generation of craftsmen, keeping alive the Yuitsu-shinmei-zukuri style of building, which dates to 538 BCE and is exclusively reserved for the two sanctuary buildings. This study will focus on the Naiku, the oldest complex at the Ise Jingu, which will be reconstructed for the 62nd time in 2030.

As opposed to a single building, the Naiku is a collection of structures and buildings organized loosely along a path from the banks of the Uji River to the main sanctuary. It consists of the Uji Bridge, two gates along the approaching path, two smaller shrines, roughly eight ancillary buildings, and the inner precinct. The inner precinct is centered on the main sanctuary building, an elevated timber structure roughly 10.9 × 5.5m in plan and 10m tall. The inner precinct is enclosed by three layers of fences—the outermost of which is roughly 100m × 50m in plan. Directly adjacent to the inner precinct is the Kodenchi, the alternate site with almost identical dimensions on which the previous iteration of the inner precinct once stood, and where the next iteration will be built. Structurally, the buildings are timber frames connected by rigid joints, with no diagonal bracing. As distinct from later building types, the large thatched roof is supported by dedicated pillars, allowing parts of the building to move with a degree of independence in an earthquake.

The Ise Jingu demonstrates the use of a rhythmic narrative to manage and make sense of unpredictable future events. While the primitive building type consisting of untreated timber and pillars set directly into the grounds usually has a short lifespan of 30 years in the humid and warm climate of Ise, the experience of the Naiku, if not the original buildings, has been faithfully preserved for over 2000 years; surviving natural disasters, wars, changing governments and religious hegemonies. It also reveals the inefficiencies of this blanket approach despite its effectiveness in transmitting a design with the highest degree of fidelity through time. For instance, in order to provide the 10,000m³ of high-quality Japanese cypress timber necessary for each cycle of rebuilding, about 3,000 hectares of forests around Ise, collectively known as the Jingu Forests, have become secondary forests exclusively dedicated to supplying timber for the temples. Further, as the Naiku dictates timbers of particular sizes, ranging from 60cm diameters, or about 200 years old, to 1m diameters for the roof-supporting pillars in the main sanctuary buildings, or about 400 years old, the management of the forest is itself a complex and multi-generational undertaking.

As one of the oldest surviving examples of a periodically rebuilt architecture, the Ise Jingu demonstrates two core design opportunities associated with the strategy of quickness. First, maintaining the capacity to respond quickly often entails large contingencies, which may be usefully deployed to generate a dividend beyond its primary function. The Jingu Forest, for instance, in addition to assuring a sustainable supply of building material, also buffers encroaching developments and preserves the woodland environment of the Shinto temples. The Royal Parks of London, which serve as a land bank for critical war-time functions while facilitating recreational activities during peacetime, are a similar case. The added value helps to offset the expense of creating and maintaining such contingencies, contributing to their long-term viability. Second, the capacity for periodic renewal allows the qualities of newness and decay to be foregrounded as something that can be pursued and appreciated. Whereas most architecture is only built once and maintained whenever necessary until it is demolished, in periodic rebuilding the decay becomes a controlled process instead of signaling poor maintenance, allowing it to be calmly appreciated. The fragile and crisp newness of the freshly constructed temples at Ise, and the rapid aging of the untreated timber and thatch roofs, serve as a sort of ornamentation; signaling a greater underlying institutional capacity and expertise that is maintaining the readiness to rebuild.

PROTAGONIST MATERIAL

YINGZHAO FASHI
Li Jie

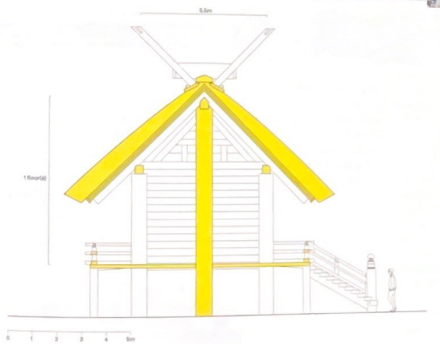
A major impetus for codifying anecdotal building practices is the process of urbanization. Looking at historical trends in both the East and West, building treatises seem to emerge as cities approach a critical mass of 1 million people. An illustrative example is the *Yingzhao Fashi*, or the *Treatise on Architectural Methods*, published in China in 1103. Authored by Li Jie, the Directorate of Buildings and Construction in the Song Court, based on a survey and revisions of existing building treatises and inherited building traditions, the *Yingzhao Fashi* was commissioned by Emperor Zhezong in response to the ails of rapid population growth and urbanization.[5] Between the 10th and 11th centuries, the population of China grew from approximately 120 million to 200 million, made possible by advancements in rice cultivation. Kaifeng, the capital, saw its population triple from approximately 400,000 in 960 to 1,200,000 in 1100, and was by then plagued by frequent fires, a typhus epidemic, and graft in construction works—all sources of public discontent and political upheaval.

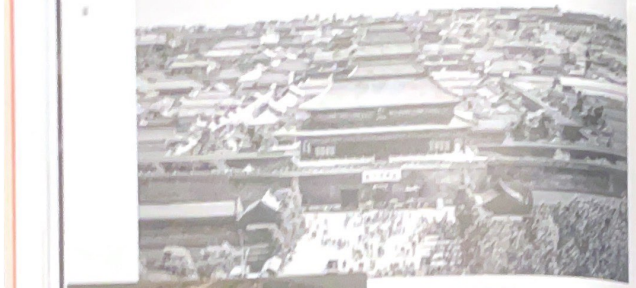
The *Yingzhao Fashi* consists of 34 chapters, covering topics ranging from the accounting of labor and building materials, measurement units, instruction for different constructional systems and building types, manufacturing standards for building components, and formulas for paints, glazes, and ornaments. Of particular interest to this study is the detailed instruction for timber bracket structures; the predominant construction system that serves as the organizational framework for the planning, accounting, and construction of buildings. The base structural module is the bracket joint, which connects the columns to beams, and aggregates to form a table-like rigid timber frame that stands on masonry or stone foundations. Lacking diagonal bracing, the bracket structure relies on the rigidity of the bracket joints for lateral stability. As the structures become larger, the complexity of joints, i.e., the number of brackets, also increases; collectively providing a degree of flexibility advantageous in the event of an earthquake.

The key innovation of the *Yingzhao Fashi* centers on the codification of the timber bracket system, with a base unit that may be aggregated to form larger structures and entire building complexes. On the one hand, it is an easy-to-fabricate material unit with well-tested structural performance. On the other hand, and perhaps more

Project NAIKU, IN THE ISE JINGU
Location Ise, Japan
Architect N/A
Date 4 BCE–

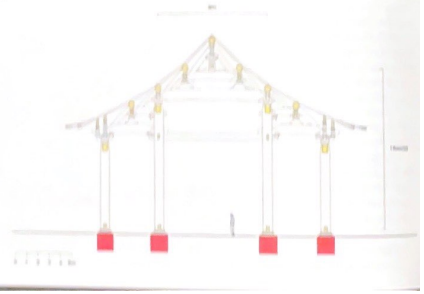
The regular cadence of rebuilding the Naiku in the Ise Grand Shrine every 20 years since 4 BCE preserves the readiness and knowledge to maintain the building indefinitely.





Project YINGZHAO FASHI
Publisher Directorate of Buildings and Construction during the mid Song Dynasty of China
Architect Li Jie
Date 1103–

The broadest point in the *Yingzhao Fashi*, a building code, is both a rallying decree and construction detail, ensuring the cost and quality of buildings to be regulated and enforced at scale.



profoundly, the bracket joint is a protagonist element in the narrative of construction, establishing continuity and translatability across the building as a conceptual diagram, process, and physical artifact; which operate in very different timescales. The ensuing transparency of the building process makes it easier to account for material and labor costs, eliminating the scope for graft, while allowing the construction to be prescribed and observed at a more abstract and efficient level.

As an early and perhaps one of the most influential examples of a building code, the *Yingzhao Fashi* illustrates two design opportunities of quickness through standardization. First, it demonstrates the use of a protagonist element to facilitate translation between the building as an idea, process, and object, allowing disparate elements to be computed simultaneously. The bracket joint in the *Yingzhao Fashi*, which is both a constructional component and a conceptual tool to think about the building as a composition of connections, is one such example. A similar example may be the unit of tatami mats used to measure floor areas in Japan, which is simultaneously a unit of flooring material, an indication of size, and a proxy for the number of people who may sleep in the space; providing direct translatability between the three. Second, the *Yingzhao Fashi* demonstrates the use of strategic abbreviation, with the design strategy specifying only a few basic rules and allowing significant adjustments to circumstance and site. For instance, measurements in the *Yingzhao Fashi* are given in relative terms, as opposed to precise dimensions, allowing fundamental features such as the span of structural bays to be adjusted to available timber dimensions across the Chinese geography; giving rise to regional variations without sacrificing its primary aim of rapid communication and the enforcement of consistent construction quality.

INSTANT DELIVERY

MAISON DÉMONTABLE 6×6
Jean Prouvé

The onset of industrialization and its many applications in architecture in the first half of the 20th century spurred major developments in quickness as a building design strategy. With the new capacity to mass produce and transport building components, the "quickness" of a building is no longer constrained by the number of people or amount of material that can be mobilized towards construction, historically the limiting factors, but by the design's optimization to a new set of fabrication and logistical metrics. Several schemes for prefabricated housing with universal ambitions emerged around this time—the most popular, if somewhat conservatively styled, is perhaps the Sears Catalog Homes with over 700,000 sold in North America between 1900 and 1940.[8] More technically advanced examples include Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House from 1927 and the series of Maisons Démontables designed by Jean Prouvé between 1938 to 1962, the focus of this study.[7] As distinct from earlier applications of industrial processes to architecture focused on optimizing specific components of the construction, Prouvé's scheme was notable in deploying technical advancements to streamline the conceptual narrative of the building process so that it's easier to understand and implement.

The Maison Démontable was originally developed for the French Air Ministry for deployment to overseas territories, including the seismic regions of Indochina and the Mediterranean Coast. The most iconic model, the 6 × 6, was developed later in 1944 in response to the wartime and post-war housing shortage in Europe. The name 6 × 6 refers to the plan dimension of the design, which conforms to the housing standards of 36m² stipulated by the Ministry of Reconstruction and Town Planning. The design had two notable features. First, responding to the post-war material shortage, the structure consists of a steel skeleton, into which modular timber panels with various architectural elements, such as windows and doors, may be inserted. Second, components of the house were scaled so it could be assembled by two people within a day, allowing a typical family to arrive on site with the kit in the morning and move in the same evening. Structurally, the building is a lightweight steel frame, braced laterally in all directions by the axial portal frame at the center of the house—the key tectonic innovation of the design. The lightness of the overall

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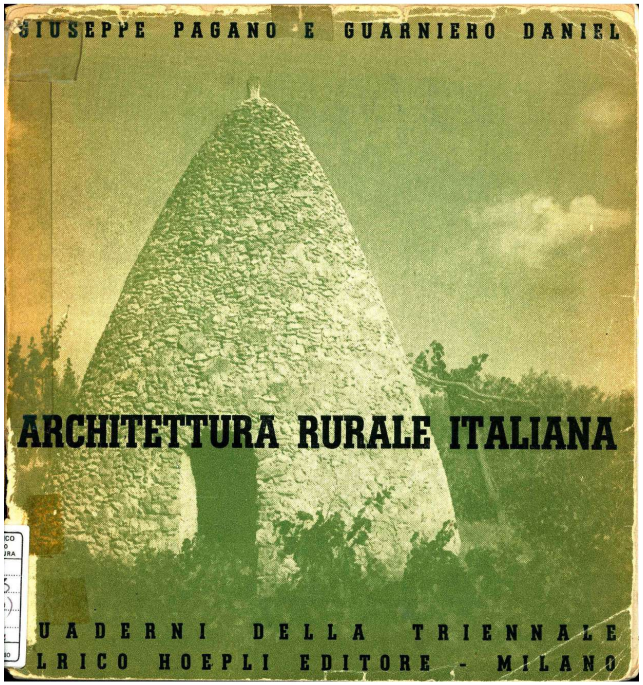


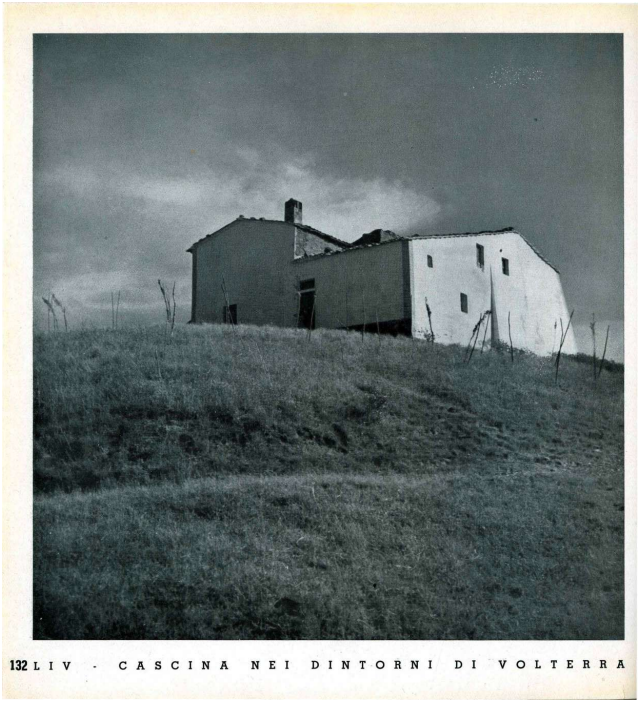
BOOK
Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.

LV - CASCINA NELLA CAMPAGNA DI LIVORNO 133

PHOTOGRAPH
Cascina nella campagna di Livorno. In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.

118 XL - CASA CON GRANDE TORRE COLOMBAIA A NARNI (UMBRIA)

PHOTOGRAPH
Casa con grande torre colombaia a Naeni (Umbria). In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.



132 LIV - CASCINA NEI DINTORNI DI VOLTERRA

PHOTOGRAPH
Cascina nei dintorni di Volterra. In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.

130 LII - CASCINALE TOSCANO NEI DINTORNI DI EMPOLI

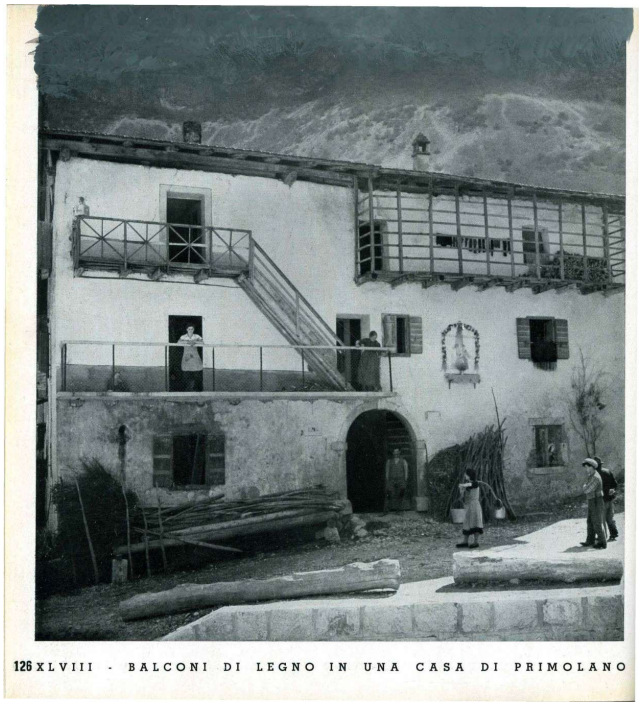
PHOTOGRAPH
Cascinale toscano nei dintorni di Empoli. In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.

XLIX - UNA CASA DI GANDINO CON LOGGIATI DI LEGNO 127

PHOTOGRAPH
Una casa di Gandino con loggiati di legno. In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.

128 L - CASA CON LOGGIE AD ARCHI A GAZZANIGA IN VAL SERIANA

PHOTOGRAPH
Casa con leggie ad archi a Gazzinga in Val Seriana. In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.

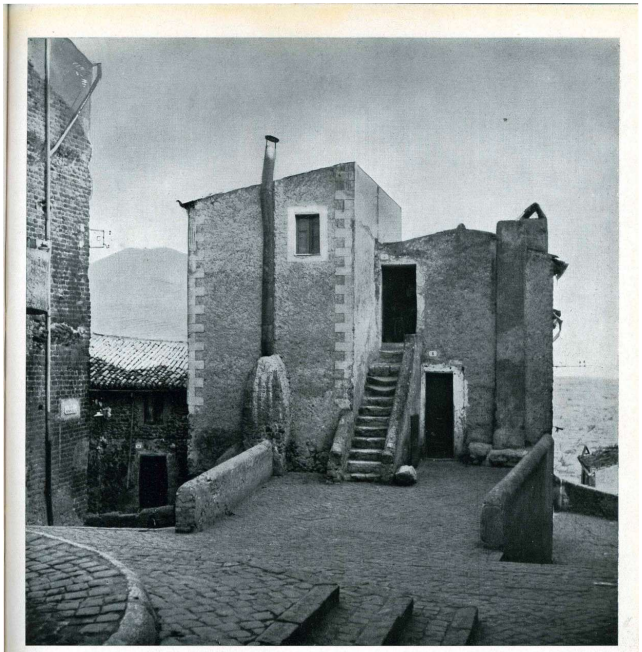


126 XLVIII - BALCONI DI LEGNO IN UNA CASA DI PRIMOLANO

PHOTOGRAPH
Balconi di legno in una casa di Primolano. In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.

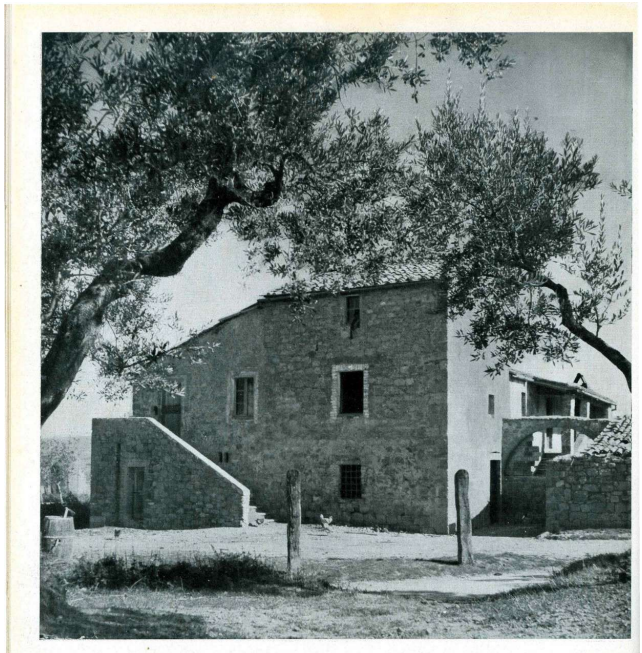
124 XLVI - CASA RURALE PRESSO GANDINO IN VAL SERIANA

PHOTOGRAPH
Casa rurale presso Gandino in Val Seriana. In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.



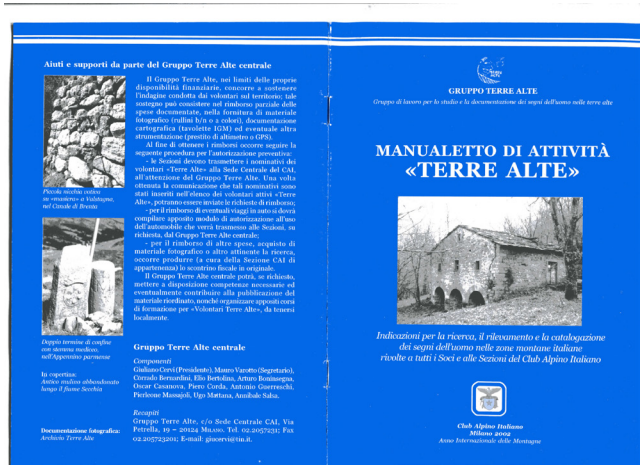
XLI - SCALA ESTERNA IN UNA ESPRESSIVA CASA DI CORI (LAZIO) 119

PHOTOGRAPH
Scala esterna in una espressiva casa di Cori (Lazio). In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.



120 XLII - UNA CASCINA NELLA CAMPAGNA DI PIENZA (SIENA)

PHOTOGRAPH
Una cascina nella campagna di Pienza (Siena). In Pagano, Giuseppe; Daniel, Guarniero. *Architettura Rurale Italiana.* Milan: Hoepli Editore. 1936.



Aiuti e supporti da parte del Gruppo Terre Alte centrale

Il Gruppo Terre Alte, nei limiti delle proprie disponibilità finanziarie, concorre a sostenere l'indagine condotta dai volontari sul territorio; tale sostegno può consistere nel rimborso parziale delle spese documentate, nella fornitura di materiale fotografico (rullini b/n o a colori), documentazione cartografica (tavolette IGM) ed eventuale altra strumentazione (prestito di altimetro o GPS).

Al fine di ottenere i rimborsi occorre seguire la seguente procedura per l'autorizzazione preventiva:

– le Sezioni devono trasmettere i nominativi dei volontari «Terre Alte» alla Sede Centrale del CAI, all'attenzione del Gruppo Terre Alte. Una volta ottenuta la comunicazione che tali nominativi sono stati inseriti nell'elenco dei volontari attivi «Terre Alte», potranno essere inviate le richieste di rimborso;

– per il rimborso di eventuali viaggi in auto si deve compilare apposito modulo di autorizzazione all'uso dell'automobile che verrà trasmesso alle Sezioni su richiesta, dal Gruppo Terre Alte centrale;

– per il rimborso di altre spese, acquisto di materiale fotografico o altro attinente la ricerca, occorre produrre (a cura della Sezione CAI di appartenenza) lo scontrino fiscale in originale.

Il Gruppo Terre Alte centrale potrà, se richiesto, mettere a disposizione competenze necessarie ed eventualmente contribuire alla pubblicazione del materiale riordinato, nonché organizzare appositi corsi di formazione per «Volontari Terre Alte», da tenersi localmente.

Piccola nicchia votiva su «muretto» a Valdidentro, nel Cimale di Bormio

Doppio termine di confine con sistema mediano, nell'Appennino parmense

In copertina:
Antico mulino abbandonato lungo il fiume Scrivia

Documentazione fotografica:
Archivio Terre Alte

Gruppo Terre Alte centrale

Componenti
Giuliano Cervi (Presidente), Mauro Varotto (Segretario), Corrado Bertocchini, Elio Bertolina, Arturo Bonimegna, Oscar Casanova, Piero Corda, Antonio Guerreschi, Floriano Mussoni, Ugo Mottana, Annibale Salsa.

Recapiti
Gruppo Terre Alte, c/o Sede Centrale CAI, Via Petrella, 19 – 20124 Milano. Tel. 02.2057231; Fax 02.205732201; E-mail: gtaservi@tin.it.

GRUPPO TERRE ALTE

Gruppo di lavoro per lo studio e la documentazione dei segni dell'uomo nelle terre alte

MANUALETTO DI ATTIVITÀ «TERRE ALTE»

Indicazioni per la ricerca, il rilevamento e la catalogazione dei segni dell'uomo nelle zone montane italiane rivolte a tutti i Soci e alle Sezioni del Club Alpino Italiano

Club Alpino Italiano
Milano 2002
Anno Internazionale delle Montagne

JOURNAL
Club Alpino Italiano (CAI). Manualetto di attività “Terre Alte”. Milano: CAI, 2002.

S

SACRED

sacro

PROJECT
Dom Hans van der Laan. *St. Banedictusberg Abbey*. Vaals, Netherlands. 1986.
(image author: Tim van de Velde)

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(image author: Aldo Amoretti)

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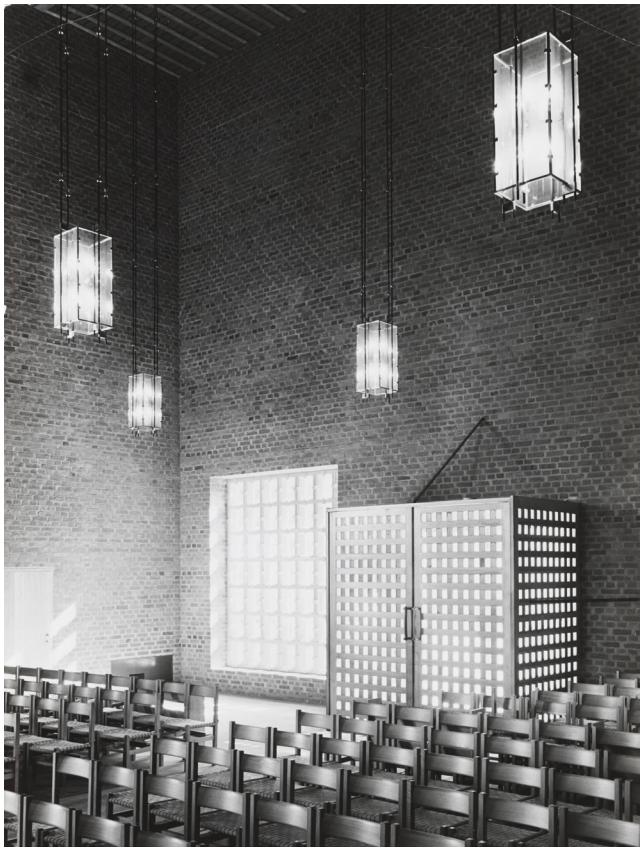
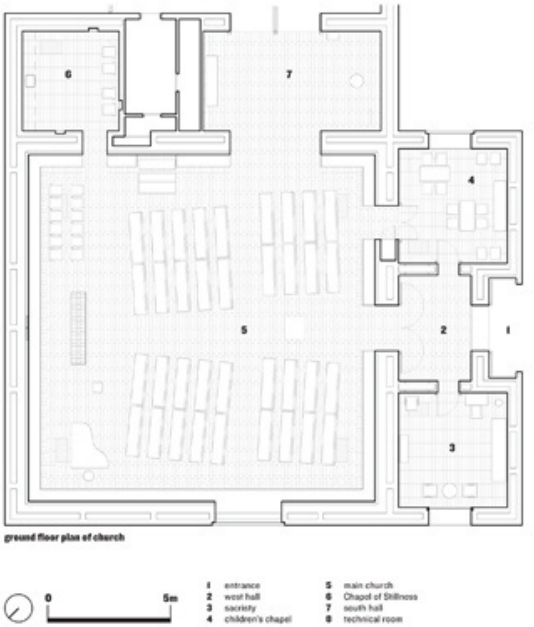


PROJECT
Peter Celsing. *Härlanda Church*. Gothenburg, Sweden. 1959.
(image author: Sune Sundahl)

PROJECT
Johan Celsing Arkitektkontor. *Arsta Church*. Stockholm, Sweden. 2011.
(image author: Ioana Marinescu)



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Johan Celsing Arkitektkontor. *Arsta Church*. Stockholm, Sweden. 2011.

PROJECT
Peter Celsing. *Härlanda Church*. Gothenburg, Sweden. 1959.
(image author: Sune Sundahl)

S

STORAGES

magazzini

PROJECT
Sitterwerk. ST. Gallen, Switzerland.

PROJECT
Microscape. *San Pellegrino Church restoration and outfitting of plaster depots*. Lucca, Italy. 2016.

IMAGE
Hubert Robert. A Museum Gallery with Ancient Roman Art, before 1800. Oil on canvas.

PHOTOGRAPH
Fragments of the Colossus of Constantine. Musei Capitolini.
Rome, Italy.

T

TABULA RASA

tabula rasa

Pier Vittorio Aureli writes: “Since the 2007 economic recession, the culture of architecture has witnessed the rise of activism and participatory practices. With the 1990s avant-garde architects on the decline of political correctness, we are witnessing a new wave of socially concerned architecture. Symposiums, exhibitions, biennales, magazines, and journals have amplified this phenomenon by promoting new ways of practicing architecture that invest design with a social and political mission. The new generation of young architects feels the urge to focus not on aesthetic and formal concerns, but on the improvement of our urban condition. In conferences and discussions about architecture one often hears the lament that in the past twenty years architects have overindulged in useless formal acrobatics and irrelevant theoretical discussions and shown little responsibility towards issues such as public space, housing, and other “socially oriented” topics. Paradoxically, while the recession is forcing many people to live in very precarious conditions, many young, socially concerned architects see the crisis as an opportunity for their creative acts The crisis is “forcing” the architectural discipline to be more inventive, more disposable, more astute in finding ad-hoc solutions for our crumbling urban condition.

Indeed, there is a serious link between crisis and creativity. The human is distinct from other species precisely because of its creative impulse. This impulse is triggered by humans’ lack of specialized instincts

and permanent inner feeling of not being at home. This requires humans to adapt to their environmental situations, even the most hostile. The creative act is thus the act of "making a world," that is, making acceptable our own living conditions in any given situation. This kind of creativity is precisely what capitalism has seized as its main labor-power. From industrial to postindustrial production, the infinite resourcefulness of the creative subject is the fundamental labor-subjectivity exploited by capital. Economic crises and recessions are moments in which this infinite resourcefulness, the urge to adapt to new (and often more adverse) conditions, is radically augmented. In this context popular slogans such as "Doing more with less" recently launched by a famous "engaged" Italian architect-cum-politician in order to promote anticonsumerist culture, are involuntarily ironic when used to define our new post-recession ethos. Doing more with less is precisely what capital demands from us: more productivity and less welfare, more creativity and less social security, because creativity becomes more productive when our "given" conditions grow harder and more unstable. The new socially oriented architectural activism poses a dilemma that cannot be avoided. Are these new practices addressing the possibility of radical change or are they simply confirming, and to a certain extent sublimating, the crisis' most regressive effects? It is useful to approach this dilemma through Walter Benjamin's ethical project, which has found its most radical formulation in two short essays: "The Destructive Character", and "Experience and Poverty."

1. In 1931 Walter Benjamin wrote a short piece titled "The Destructive Character." This small Denkbild was written in one of the worst periods in German and European history: after the crisis of 1929, when European fascism was on the rise. Benjamin writes:

"It happen to someone looking back over his life that he realized that almost all the deeper obligations he had endured in its course originated in people who everyone agreed had the traits of a "destructive character." He would stumble on this fact one day, perhaps by chance, and the heavier the shock dealt to him, the better his chances of representing the destructive character. The destructive character knows only one watchword: make room. And only one activity: clearing away. His need for fresh air and open space is stronger than any hatred. The destructive character is young and cheerful. For destroying rejuvenates, because it clears away the traces of our own age; it cheers, because everything cleared away means to the destroyer a complete reduction, indeed a rooting out, out of his own condition. Really, only the insight into how radically the world is simplified when tested for its worthiness for destruction leads to such an Apollonian image of the destroyer. This is the great bond embracing and unifying all that exists. It is a sight that affords the destructive character a spectacle of deepest harmony. The destructive character is always blithely at work. It is Nature that dictates his tempo, indirectly

at least, for he must forestall her. Otherwise she will take over the destruction herself. The destructive character sees no image hovering before him. He has few needs, and the least of them is to know what will replace what has been destroyed. First of all, for a moment at least, empty space –the place where the thing stood or the victim lived. Someone is sure to be found who needs this space without occupying it."

To a certain extent "The Destructive Character" can be read as a paradoxical ode to the same aggressive forces – capitalism and fascism – that would threaten the life of people, and especially the working class, in the 1930s. If the 1910s and '20s saw the revolutionary forces of socialism and communism challenge the hegemony of capitalism, the 1930s were a period of restoration of capital through fascist repression in Europe and the advancement of welfare state politics in the US. This project would culminate in a final blow to workers: the 1939 pact of nonaggression between Hitler and Stalin. Benjamin's destructive character is thus an image of the destructive impetus that would force many lives – including his own – to be uprooted and annihilated. The essay is thus autobiographical: it refers to the increasingly precarious life of its author, who, unable to secure a stable professional position, earned his living by writing occasional pieces for journals, newspapers, and radio programs. On top of this he endured an excruciating divorce from his wife, the forced separation from his son Stefan, the ending of his tormented relationship with Asja Lācis, and constant changes of domicile. This last seems to have been one of the fundamental traits of Benjamin's life. Indeed, there is no other intellectual, not even in the dramatic decades of the 1930s and '40s – when millions of people were forced to move from their place of origin – who changed address so frequently.

The beginning of the short essay clearly points to a situation in which the destructive character is personified by non benevolent figures: those to whom we endure all our deeper obligations. With such a statement Benjamin makes clear that the source of the destructive character is not a liberating force, but an oppressive one. And yet for Benjamin it is precisely the sudden realization – the shock – that our life depends on forces that are in essence destructive that introduces us to the use of such forces or our own sake. This is a fundamental point in the way Benjamin categorizes destruction. Unlike the art of building, which from Vitruvius to Alberti is identified not just as a technical expertise but also as having ethical and moral value, pars destruens refers to annihilating forces and thus to the loss of any value, of any stable point of reference. In spite of Benjamin's early taste for romanticism, and later for the hopeless pessimism of German baroque drama, he seems to have no illusion about the destructive character: the destructive character can only be embraced by accepting it as a force inherited from those who threaten our existence in the most fundamental way. There is no doubt that,

albeit within a materialist dimension, "The Destructive Character" can be read as the cusp of Benjamin's apocalyptic messianism, a "negative" that evolves throughout his entire oeuvre, as well as in German Judaism in general. Commenting on the 1930 edition of Franz Rosenzweig's Star of Redemption, Benjamin's friend and theologian Gershom Scholem remarked that the theory of catastrophes implied by apocalyptic messianism breathed fresh air into the tradition of Judaic theology in the 1920s.

The awareness of a looming catastrophe supported the idea that there was always a potential for destruction within the historical time of the secular world. For Scholem, redemption was both a liberating force and a destructive one, and this issue was precisely what many Jewish theologians had tried to avoid. Such theological desire for destruction was echoed if not inspired by the political, social and economic reality of the Weimar Republic, the turbulence and instability of which was for Benjamin mirrored in the hopeless atmospheres of the German baroque drama, the acid sarcasm of Dadaism, and the desperate subjectivity of expressionism. And yet, at the time of "The Destructive Character" Benjamin was no longer indulgent of the melancholic character of the protagonists of baroque drama or the anarchism of artistic avant-gardes such as Surrealism and Dadaism. After having analyzed in Passagenwerk the archaeology of his contemporary capitalist metropolis, Benjamin saw no room for romantic rebellion. The destructive character, the will to destroy established forms and values, had to be organized as the struggle of the proletariat against capitalism. Indeed, through his observations on Paris, Benjamin discovered the nexus that binds together technology, urban form, and capitalistic power, and noted that in the 19th century the arcades introduced a new architecture made of the most advanced materials and forms. For Benjamin these crass and valueless commercial spaces had the potential to threaten the reassuring gemütlichkeit of bourgeois domesticity. Even the urban form imposed on Paris by the reactionary Baron Haussmann after the revolution of 1848 was, for Benjamin, the appearance of a new and radical urban experience. Haussmann's dramatically new circulation system of boulevards gradually replaced the old medieval topography of Paris with a landscape of endless runs of the same kind of façade. Even if these transformations were advanced to counter the threat of another revolution (which eventually occurred in 1871), the ruthless character of Haussmann's urban operations had the effect, as Benjamin noted, of disorienting the bourgeoisie's trust in their own city.Yet, in Benjamin's opinion the dreamlike scenario in which these disruptive urban transformations took place had preserved the capital from being annihilated by its own destructive power. Seen from the vantage point of 20th-century Berlin, Paris, the capital of the 19th-century, was interpreted by Benjamin as both a warning and a chance.

When Benjamin was writing "The Destructive Character," Berlin was a city of both cultural emancipation and regressive social conditions. Benjamin saw Berlin as both the city where new experimental urban projects were being developed by a radical city planner like Martin Wagner – who, together with Bruno Taut, designed the Heufeisen Grosssiedlung in Berlin Britz – and the "stony" city, harshly criticized by Werner Hegeman, where inhumane housing conditions such as those manifested in the infamous rental houses – the Mietskaserne – affected the majority of the urban proletariat. Confronted with this contradictory landscape, Benjamin saw Berlin as the place in which the destructive character of modern urban experience could be radicalized in the form of a tabula rasa – a messianic Jetztzeit – that would turn the brutal forces of capitalist development against themselves in the form of a proletarian revolution rising up from the most reified human subjectivity. For its own sake, this revolution had to assume the disenchanted and cheerful spirit of the destructive character and turn it against the powers from which it originated.

A fundamental point of reference for Benjamin's tabula rasa was the literary work of Paul Scheerbart and the theater of Bertolt Brecht. In very different ways Scheerbart and Brecht attacked the most enduring values of bourgeois culture. In 1914 Scheerbart published Glasarchitektur, a treatise on architecture centered on the idea that the whole built world could be transformed into a landscape of total transparency.

With this book Scheerbart attacked the bourgeois interior, the fixed architecture of the 19th-century apartment in which the ruling class had cultivated its idea of domestic comfort. However the Scheerbart's idea of building architecture in transparent materiality was motivated not only by a desire for transparency per se, but also by the idea that the character of the domestic interior should be completely indifferent to the life of its inhabitants. In a house made of glass, traditional dwelling was made impossible because the inhabitants would not be able to leave traces on the glass. In this way domestic space would be freed from the burden of personal identity and would allow inhabitants to always start their daily existence afresh.

Scheerbart's architecture can be considered a tabula rasa insofar as it intended to remove any ornament, any superfluous object, and to reduce domestic space to its bare essence of empty and transparent spaces. His idea of total transparency and removal of any sense of interiority is also reflected in the protagonists of his novels. As Benjamin noted, Scheerbart's fiction was populated by figures devoid of any psychological characteristics, completely transparent in their thoughts and intentions. Moreover, their positive relationship with technology allowed them to be completely free of natural resources. Scheerbart thus showed Benjamin the possibility of a completely constructed and artificial world in which any myth of nature was erased and technology,

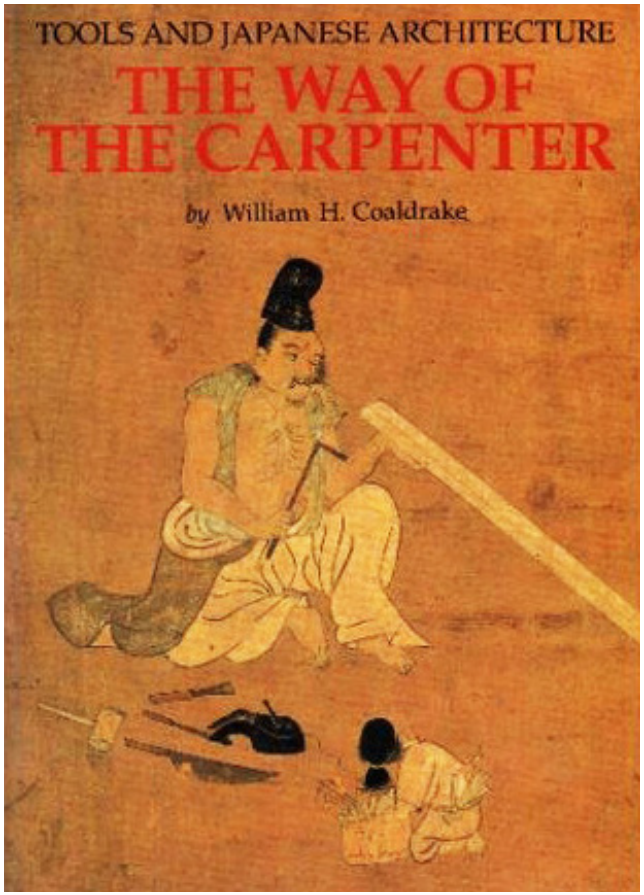
rather than producing the phantasmagorical landscape of the Parisian arcades, gave form to a straightforward, objective urban condition. For Benjamin the science fiction aspect in Scheerbart's literary work was the result of the naïve amazement with which he described the achievements of new building techniques. Benjamin also saw this quality in the theater of Brecht. Like Scheerbart's architecture, Brecht's theater was devoid of psychology and completely invested in the actions of its protagonists. For Benjamin, the target of Brecht's destructive character was the idea of artistic creativity, the alibi through which art and literature had always been removed from the broader world of material production. By destroying any sense of psychological refinement in his plot, Brecht made his dramas available as pedagogical devices at the service of participatory spectatorship. In both Scheerbart's books and Brecht's theatre, Benjamin found the possibility for a "sober" language that was appropriate to his goal: the invocation of a messianic revelation from within the most extreme experiences of modernity."

ESSAY
Aureli, Pier Vittorio. "The Theology of Tabula Rasa: Walter Benjamin and Architecture in the Age of Precarity" Log, no. 27, 2013.

T

TIMBER

legno



BOOK
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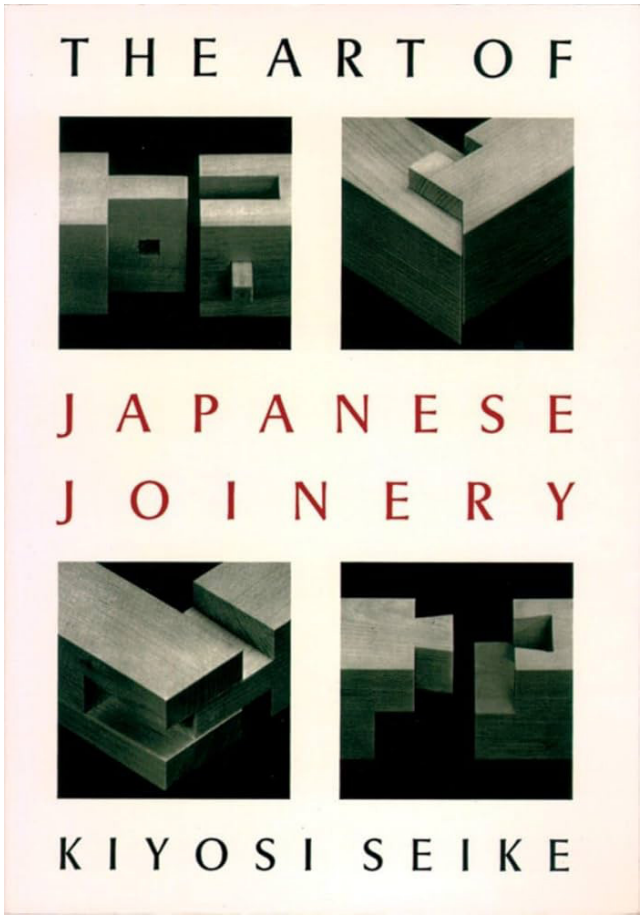

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PROJECT
Francesca Torzo Architetto. R08 *Green Crane House*. Sorano, Italy, 2006–2009.
(image author: Gion Balthasar von Albertini)

T

TRADITION

tradizioni

with the Le Cardonnels, and Charles Le Goffic, and *La Revue Intellectualliste* (monographs of contemporaries) are new enterprises.

M. Roger-Allard has founded a miniature review: *Le Nouveau Spectateur*. *La Rose Rouge* (which ought to use some discernment in its advertisements—I would suggest that its editors consider what is being done in that line in certain foreign countries) has a sound staff with Maurice Magre, André Suarès, Charles-Henry Hirsch, De Max, Carco and André Salmon. Henri Barbusse contributes to *Nos Voix*.

French thought is captured even outside France. At Geneva *L'Eventail* unfolds certain of its most recent phases in graceful if somewhat fragmentary form.

L'Arbitraire is being inaugurated with verse by Guy-Charles Cros, whose return to freedom—after near upon five years—was celebrated in a recent *Mercure* with verse brought back from Germany. Another captive, Mario Meunier, has re-assumed his literary life with the publication of a tragedy: *Un Camp de Représailles, Fr. K. III.* (Berger-Levrault), dedicated to the memory of the scholarly poet's father who died from sorrow at the knowledge of his son's sufferings. In this line M. Dufour's previous self-illustrated record (Hachette) should be signalled.

The book throwing a shadow furthest ahead, recently published, is Duhamel's *La Possession du Monde* (read: *The Mastery of Self*) (Mercure). It is experience gained from experiences. In *Clarté* (Flammarion) Henri Barbusse echoes, while emphasising, *Le Feu*. Both books are prophetic, the latter more confusedly though more literally so, despite its fiction-form. Nothing vague or chaotic about Duhamel in his Emersonian mood, and he builds more solidly and more daringly than Maeterlinck. Barbusse does some fine drama and description.

An allusion, at the very least, is due to the graphic historians of the war. Those men who may be said to have created a style and founded a school: F. Léger, Taquoy, Marchand, Lhôte, Segonzac, Vallotton, André Mare, Frayé, etc., will convey its features to coming generations. They have uttered its spirit and form with a minimum of subjective comment and have proved that new conditions (the mechanical side of modern warfare, for example) call for, and find in these artists, adequate interpretation.

There have been other pictorial chroniclers, of course, but their vision has been more of the nature of the cartoonist's (Forain, Iribe) or more subjective and romantic (Steinlen, de Groux, Naudin) and yet others (like Georges Victor-Hugo) whose different angles of view will be eclectically but discriminatingly represented at the Bibliotheque and Musée de la Guerre under the general and able direction of M. Camille Bloch, inspector of French public libraries, whose artistic section is being organised by an expert in the matter and a lover of modern art, the critic René-Jean.

On no occasions have these men attempted effects in which an element of fancy must make compensation where eye or memory fails. Especially those named in the first group have imposed a strict discipline of objectivity upon their vision and the records are, consequently, unimpeachable testimonies of such facts and circumstances as come within the range of their experience and permit of a drastically true rendering. And they have proved that truth may be disengaged by elimination and transposition and that fidelity to it is not necessarily submission.

It is those who are most qualified to treat of a subject who are most diffident about doing so. M. Vollard being more than anyone qualified to criticise the art of Cézanne (Cès) has preferred the more modest part of writing a plain account of his life and manner of work. A straightforward portrait it is, as honest and unadorned as Cézanne himself would have desired it to be. M. Vollard has had the truly admirable self-command to put on one side what there is in him (and that is not small) of the art-critic and the adulator while his well-known sense of humour finds several exquisite opportunities (in ridicule of Emile Zola, for instance). Those aspects of Cézanne which approached mania he has handled so tactfully that even the painter's son has found no cause for disapproving their relation.

M. Vollard is at present writing the life of Renoir.

Francis de Miomandre's last book, *Les Voyages d'un Sédentaire* (Emile Paul), is a collection of essays, something more unusual in French than in English and American literature, though often designated in the latter under the Gallic heading: "belles lettres," a qualification doubly fitting in this case. M. Miomandre does not achieve the clean wastelessness of Lamb and his purest continuators like Lucas (though he has moods much like Lucas, an author he has never read, for he is ignorant of English), but he obtains our patience for those parts where we could do with less from gratitude for those where we could do with more.

MURIEL CIOLKOWSKA

Tradition and the Individual Talent

IN English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence. We cannot refer to "the tradition" or to "a tradition"; at most, we employ the adjective in saying that the poetry of So-and-So is "traditional" or even "too traditional." Seldom, perhaps, does the word appear except in a phrase of censure. If otherwise, it is vaguely approbative, with the implication, as to the work approved, of some pleasing archæological reconstruction. You can hardly make the word agreeable to English ears without this comfortable reference to the reassuring science of archæology.

Certainly the word is not likely to appear in our appreciations of living or dead writers. Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind; and is even more oblivious of the shortcomings and limitations of its critical habits than of those of its creative genius. We know, or think we know, from the enormous mass of critical writing that has appeared in the French language the critical method or habit of the French; we only conclude (we are such unconscious people) that the French are "more critical" than we, and sometimes even plume ourselves a little with the fact, as if the French were the less spontaneous. Perhaps they are; but we might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticising our own minds in their work of criticism. One of the facts that might come to light in this process is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else. In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of

ESSAY
Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Perspecta 19, 1982: 36–42. https://doi.org/10.2307/1567048.

the man. We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not intend the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity.

Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, "tradition" should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of æsthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.

In a peculiar sense he will be aware also that he must inevitably be judged by the standards of the past. I say judged by, not amputated, by them; not judged to be as good as, or worse or better than, the dead; and certainly not judged by the canons of dead critics. It is a judgment, a comparison in which two things are measured by each other. To conform merely would be for the new work not really to conform at all; it would not be new, and would therefore not be a work of art. And we do not quite say that the new is more valuable because it fits in; but its fitting in is a test of its value—a test, it is true, which can only be slowly and cautiously applied, for we are none of us infallible judges of conformity. We say: it appears to conform, and is perhaps individual, or it appears individual, and may conform; but we are hardly likely to find that it is one and not the other.

To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the poet to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly on one or two private admirations, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period. The first course is inadmissible, the second is an important experience of youth, and the third is a pleasant and highly desirable supplement. The poet must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations. He must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe—the mind of his own country—a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind—is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare or Homer or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. That this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any improvement. Perhaps not even an improvement from the point of view of the psychologist or not to the extent which we imagine; perhaps only in the end based upon a complication in economics and machinery. But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show.

Someone said: "The dead writers are remote from us because we *know* so much more than they did." Precisely, and they are that which we know.

I am alive to a usual objection to what is clearly part of my programme for the *métier* of poetry. The objection is that the doctrine requires a ridiculous amount of erudition (pedantry), a claim which can be rejected by appeal to the lives of poets in any pantheon. It will even be affirmed that much learning deadens or perverts poetic sensibility. While, however, we persist in believing that a poet ought to know as much as will not encroach upon his necessary receptivity and necessary laziness, it is not desirable to confine knowledge to whatever can be put into a useful shape for examinations, drawing rooms, or the still more pretentious modes of publicity. Some can absorb knowledge, the more tardy must sweat for it. Shakespeare acquired more essential history from Plutarch than most men could from the whole British Museum. What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career.

What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

There remains to define this process of depersonalisation and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalisation that art may be said to approach the condition of science. I shall, therefore, invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide.

T. S. ELIOT

(*To be concluded.*)

Tradition and the Individual Talent

II

THE upshot of this article and of the article which preceded it is this: that honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry. If we attend to the confused cries of the newspaper critics and the susurrus of popular repetition that follows, we shall hear the names of poets in great number; if we seek not blue-book knowledge but the enjoyment of poetry, and ask for a poem, we shall seldom find it. In the last article I tried to point out the importance of the relation of the poem to other poems by other authors, and suggested the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. The other aspect of this Impersonal theory of poetry is the relation of the poem to its author. And I hinted, by an analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of "personality," not being necessarily more interesting, or having "more to say," but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations.

The analogy was that of the catalyst. When the two gases previously mentioned are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected; has remained inert, passive and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.

The experience, you will notice, the elements which enter the presence of the transforming catalyst, are of two kinds: emotions and feelings. The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one emotion, or may be a combination of several; and various feelings, inhering for the writer in particular words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. Or great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever: composed out of feelings solely. Canto XV of the Inferno (Brunetto Latini) is a working up of the emotion evident in the situation; but the effect, though single as that of any work of art, is obtained by considerable complexity of detail. The last quatrain gives an image, a feeling attaching to an image, which "came," which did not develop simply out of what precedes, but which was probably in suspension in the poet's mind until the proper combination arrived for it to add itself to. The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.

If you compare several representative passages of the greatest poetry you see how great is the variety of types of combination, and also how completely any semi-ethical criterion of "sublimity" misses the mark. For it is not the "greatness," the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts. The episode of Paolo and Francesca employs a definite emotion, but the intensity of the poetry is something quite different from whatever intensity in the supposed experience it may give the impression of. It is no more intense, furthermore, than Canto XXVI, the voyage of Ulysses, which has not the direct dependence upon an emotion. Great variety is possible in the process of transmution of emotion: the murder of Agamemnon, or the agony of Othello, gives an artistic effect apparently closer to a possible original than the scenes from Dante. In the Agamemnon, the artistic emotion approximates to the emotion of an actual spectator; in "Othello," to the emotion of the protagonist himself. But the difference between art and the event is always absolute; the combination which is the murder of Agamemnon is probably as complex as that which is the voyage of Ulysses. In either case there has been a fusion of elements. The ode of Keats contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale, partly, perhaps, because of its attractive name, and partly because of its reputation, served to bring together.

The point of view which I am struggling to attack, is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that the poet has, not a "personality" to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality.

I will quote a passage which is unfamiliar enough to be regarded with fresh attention in the light—or darkness—of these observations:

> And now methinks I could e'en chide myself
> For doating on her beauty, though her death
> Shall be revenged after no common action.
> Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
> For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
> Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
> For the poor benefit of a bewildering minute?
> Why does yon fellow falsify highways,
> And put his life between the judge's lips,
> To refine such a thing—keeps horse and men
> To beat their valours for her? . . .

In this passage (as is evident if it is taken in its context) there is a combination of positive and negative emotions: an intensely strong attraction toward beauty and an equally intense fascination by the ugliness which is contrasted with it and which destroys it. This balance of contrasted emotion is in the dramatic situation to which the speech is pertinent, but that situation alone is inadequate to it. This is, so to speak, the structural emotion, provided by the drama. But the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that a number of floating feelings, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to give us a new art emotion.

It is not in his personal emotions, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting. His particular emotions may be simple, or crude, or flat. The emotion in his poetry will be a very complex thing, but not with the complexity of the emotions of people who have very complex, or unusual emotions in life. One error, in fact, of eccentricity in poetry is to seek for new human emotions to express: and in this search for novelty in the wrong place it discovers the perverse. The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual

emotions at all. And emotions which he has never experienced will serve his turn as well as those familiar to him. Consequently, we must believe that "emotion recollected in tranquillity," is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor, without distortion of meaning, tranquillity. It is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not "recollected," and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is "tranquil" only in that it is a passive attending upon the event. Of course this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal, in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate. In fact, the bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious, and conscious where he ought to be unconscious. Both errors tend to make him "personal." Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.

III.

ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἴσως θειότερόν τι καὶ ἀπαθές ἐστιν.

This essay proposes to halt at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism, and confine itself to such practical conclusions as can be applied by the responsible person interested in poetry. To divert interest from the poet to the poetry is a laudable aim: for it would conduce to a juster estimation of actual poetry, good and bad. There are many people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse, and there is a smaller number of people who can appreciate technical excellence. But very few know when there is expression of *significant* emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.

T. S. Eliot

CHICAGO

IF you will come away with me
into another state
we can be quiet together.
But here the sun coming up
out of the nothing beyond the lake is
too low in the sky,
there is too great a pushing
against him,
too much of sumac buds, pink
in the head
with the clear gum upon them,
too many opening hearts of
lilac leaves,
too many, too many swollen,
limp poplar tassels on the
bare branches!
It is too strong in the air.
I have no rest against this
springtime!
The pounding of the hoofs on the
raw sods
stays with me half through the night.
I awake smiling but tired.

William Carlos Williams—1919

The French Idea

At Home and Abroad

A BOOK'S first public bow should be made in solo. The artist's accompaniment, other than purely subservient and ornamental, is more desirable in reimpressions. A first issue must stand on its own merits. Consequently, I disapprove of *L'Eventail's* well-meant innovations at Geneva with *Maîtres et Jeunes d'aujourdhui*. Conrad Moricand is a sympathetic enough draughtsman, whose illustrations satisfactorily fit in with Salmon's prose, but the true bibliophile, or, better, the lover of literature, would prefer his first meeting with *Mœurs de la Famille Poivre* to take place in *tête-à-tête*. When one has become jaded by an author, by all means let us have him then with artistic embellishments But in a first edition there should be no embellishment beyond adornment of the letterpress with chapter-headings, tail-pieces and decorations of any kind; all this is welcome, for it forms a setting which does homage to the author; it is as welcome as good paper and print; but there should be no illustrations. It may be argued that the drawings of a M. Moricand will, in years to come, have the documentary value of (*toutes proportions gardées*) Cruikshank, John Leech or Bottini; but this is an argument that should be applied exclusively to later editions. In later editions the text—as for instance is the case with Beardsley or with the exquisite French illustrators of the eighteenth century—is as much an accompaniment for the pictures as the pictures are for the text. There the pictures made a second kind of book—the book which is an *objet d'art*.

But a new book by André Salmon does not require to reach us improved. The surprise is not complete. We are expected to divide our attention and are displeased with the publisher for this compulsion. Moreover, the duet imposed upon us, for the reason that it is one, entails an outlay of ten francs and yet we have not a book which is an *objet d'art*. It is like a *prix fixe* meal, a thing epicureans always object to. Some people would as soon love Salmon in the *Feuille Littéraire* at a few *sous* pending an *édition de luxe* at a price which can purchase real value. Thankful one must be that the volume appears in a normal shape, for some publishers have ideas in that line making books for which the right house has not yet been built.

Salmon's book is the second or third in this Helvetic collection: a collection depending on French authors for its subsistence as American intellect depends, but more grudgingly, on the British. Followed as Salmon's book has been by a René Bizet (*Peines de Rien*, short stories), a certain homogeneity in both quality and dimensions has, either by chance or intention, been observed. Salmon is, indeed, a master in our day. There are, of course, greater things in the world than his, but none more perfect than *Mœurs de la Famille Poivre*. If, by a strain, I could find a fault in it, it might be that there is just a touch too much of anxiety to entertain. Salmon, no more than did Sterne, need fear that he will be dull for a single page. He can write of the most trivial affair, and be more entertaining than another fully-equipped with matter. Soon Salmon will be quite careless of his reader—quite free of any consciousness of being listened to.

The grievance in regard to the editions of Salmon's book would have been aggravated were the artist the one chosen for M. René Bizet's stories: M. Bressler, a second-hand Moricand who has studied Rouveyre, but cannot smudge and smirch, who would fail exactly where M. Moricand succeeds.

Bizet is another young master, though his book loses by comparison with Salmon's. A book by Mme. Rachilde—

Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance

KENNETH FRAMPTON

The phenomenon of universalization, while being an advancement of mankind, at the same time constitutes a sort of subtle destruction, not only of traditional cultures, which might not be an irreparable wrong, but also of what I shall call for the time being the creative nucleus of great cultures, that nucleus on the basis of which we interpret life, what I shall call in advance the ethical and mythical nucleus of mankind. The conflict springs up from there. We have the feeling that this single world civilization at the same time exerts a sort of attrition or wearing away at the expense of the cultural resources which have made the great civilizations of the past. This threat is expressed, among other disturbing effects, by the spreading before our eyes of a mediocre civilization which is the absurd counterpart of what I was just calling elementary culture. Everywhere throughout the world, one finds the same bad movie, the same slot machines, the same plastic or aluminum atrocities, the same twisting of language by propaganda, etc. It seems as if mankind, by approaching en masse *a basic consumer culture, were also stopped* en masse *at a subcultural level. Thus we come to the crucial problem confronting nations just rising from underdevelopment. In order to get on to the road toward modernization, is it necessary to jettison the old cultural past which has been the* raison d'être *of a nation? . . . Whence the paradox: on the one hand, it has to root itself in the soil of its past, forge a national spirit, and unfurl this spiritual and cultural revindication before the colonialist's personality. But in order to take part in modern civilization, it is necessary at the same time to take part in scientific, technical, and political rationality, something which very often requires the pure and simple abandon of a whole cultural past. It is a fact: every culture cannot sustain and absorb the shock of modern civilization. There is the paradox: how to become modern and to return to sources; how to revive an old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization.*[1]

—Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth*

ESSAY
Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance", in *Critical Regionalism. Revisited*, OASE, 2019.

1. Culture and Civilization

Modern building is now so universally conditioned by optimized technology that the possibility of creating significant urban form has become extremely limited. The restrictions jointly imposed by automotive distribution and the volatile play of land speculation serve to limit the scope of urban design to such a degree that any intervention tends to be reduced either to the manipulation of elements predetermined by the imperatives of production, or to a kind of superficial masking which modern development requires for the facilitation of marketing and the maintenance of social control. Today the practice of architecture seems to be increasingly polarized between, on the one hand, a so-called "high-tech" approach predicated exclusively upon production and, on the other, the provision of a "compensatory façade" to cover up the harsh realities of this universal system.[2]

Twenty years ago the dialectical interplay between civilization and culture still afforded the possibility of maintaining some general control over the shape and significance of the urban fabric. The last two decades, however, have radically transformed the metropolitan centers of the developed world. What were still essentially 19th-century city fabrics in the early 1960s have since become progressively overlaid by the two symbiotic instruments of Megalopolitan development—the freestanding high-rise and the serpentine freeway. The former has finally come into its own as the prime device for realizing the increased land value brought into being by the latter. The typical downtown which, up to twenty years ago, still presented a mixture of residential stock with tertiary and secondary industry has now become little more than a *burolandschaft* city-scape: the victory of universal civilization over locally inflected culture. The predicament posed by Ricoeur—namely, "how to become modern and to return to sources"[3]—now seems to be circumvented by the apocalyptic thrust of modernization, while the ground in which the mytho-ethical nucleus of a society might take root has become eroded by the rapacity of development.[4]

Ever since the beginning of the Enlightenment, *civilization* has been primarily concerned with instrumental reason, while *culture* has addressed itself to the specifics of expression—to the realization of the being and the evolution of its *collective* psycho-social reality. Today civilization tends to be increasingly embroiled in a never-ending chain of "means and ends" wherein, according to Hannah Arendt, "The 'in order to' has become the content of the 'for the sake of;' utility established as meaning generates meaninglessness."[5]

2. The Rise and Fall of the Avant-Garde

The emergence of the avant-garde is inseparable from the modernization of both society and architecture. Over the past century-and-a-half avant-garde culture has assumed different roles, at times facilitating the process of modernization and thereby acting, in part, as a progressive, liberative form, at times being virulently opposed to the positivism of bourgeois culture. By and large, avant-garde architecture has played a positive role with regard to the progressive trajectory of the Enlightenment. Exemplary of this is the role played by Neoclassicism: from the mid-18th century onwards it serves as both a symbol of and an instrument for the propagation of universal civilization. The mid-19th century, however, saw the historical avant-garde assume an adversary stance towards both industrial process and Neoclassical form. This is the first concerted reaction on the part of "tradition" to the process of modernization as the Gothic Revival and the Arts-and-Crafts movements take up a categorically negative attitude towards both utilitarianism and the division of labor. Despite this critique, modernization continues unabated, and throughout the last half of the 19th century bourgeois art distances itself progressively from the harsh realities of colonialism and paleo-technological exploitation. Thus at the end of the century the avant-gardist Art Nouveau takes refuge in the compensatory thesis of "art for art's sake," retreating to nostalgic or phantasmagoric dream-worlds inspired by the cathartic hermeticism of Wagner's music-drama.

The progressive avant-garde emerges in full force, however, soon after the turn of the century with the advent of Futurism. This unequivocal critique of the *ancien régime* gives rise to the primary positive cultural formations of the 1920s: to Purism, Neoplasticism and Constructivism. These movements are the last occasion on which radical avant-gardism is able to identify itself wholeheartedly with the process of modernization. In the immediate aftermath of World War I—"the war to end all wars"—the triumphs of science, medicine and industry seemed to confirm the liberative promise of the modern project. In the 1930s, however, the prevailing backwardness and chronic insecurity of the newly urbanized masses, the upheavals caused by war, revolution and economic depression, followed by a sudden and crucial need for psycho-social stability in the face of global political and economic crises, all induce a state of affairs in which the interests of both monopoly and state capitalism are, for the first time in modern history, divorced from the liberative drives of cultural modernization. Universal civilization and world culture cannot be drawn upon to sustain "the myth of the State," and one reaction-formation succeeds another as the historical avant-garde founders on the rocks of the Spanish Civil War.

Not least among these reactions is the reassertion of Neo-Kantian aesthetics as a substitute for the culturally liberative modern project. Confused by the political and cultural politics of Stalinism, former left-wing protagonists of socio-cultural modernization now recommend a strategic withdrawal from the project of totally transforming the existing reality. This renunciation is predicated on the belief that as long as the struggle between socialism and capitalism persists (with the manipulative mass-culture politics that this conflict necessarily entails), the modern world cannot continue to entertain the prospect of evolving a marginal, liberative, avant-gardist culture which would break (or speak of the break) with the history of bourgeois repression. Close to *l'art pour l'art,* this position was first advanced as a "holding pattern" in Clement Greenberg's "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" of 1939; this essay concludes somewhat ambiguously with the words: "Today we look to socialism *simply* for the preservation of whatever living culture we have right now."[6] Greenberg reformulated this position in specifically formalist terms in his essay "Modernist Painting" of 1965, wherein he wrote:

> Having been denied by the Enlightenment of all tasks they could take seriously, they [the arts] looked as though they were going to be assimilated to entertainment pure and simple, and entertainment looked as though it was going to be assimilated, like religion, to therapy. The arts could save themselves from this leveling down only by demonstrating that the kind of experience they provided was valuable in its own right and not to be obtained from any other kind of activity.[7]

Despite this defensive intellectual stance, the arts have nonetheless continued to gravitate, if not towards entertainment, then certainly towards commodity and—in the case of that which Charles Jencks has since classified as Post-Modern Architecture[8]—towards pure technique or pure scenography. In the latter case, the so-called postmodern architects are merely feeding the media-society with gratuitous, quietistic images rather than proffering, as they claim, a creative *rappel à l'ordre* after the supposedly proven bankruptcy of the liberative modern project. In this regard, as Andreas Huyssens has written, "The American postmodernist avant-garde, therefore, is not only the end game of avant-gardism. It also represents the fragmentation and decline of critical adversary culture."[9]

Nevertheless, it is true that modernization can no longer be simplistically identified as liberative *in se,* in part because of the domination of mass culture by the media-industry (above all television which, as Jerry Mander reminds us, expanded its persuasive power a thousandfold between 1945 and 1975[10]) and in part because the trajectory of modernization has brought us to the threshold of nuclear war and the annihilation of the entire species. So too, avant-gardism can no longer be sustained as a liberative moment, in part

because its initial utopian promise has been overrun by the internal rationality of instrumental reason. This "closure" was perhaps best formulated by Herbert Marcuse when he wrote:

> The technological *apriori* is a political *apriori* inasmuch as the transformation of nature involves that of man, and inasmuch as the "man-made creations" issue from and re-enter the societal ensemble. One may still insist that the machinery of the technological universe is "as such" indifferent towards political ends—it can revolutionize or retard society.... However, when technics becomes the universal form of material production, it circumscribes an entire culture, it projects a historical totality—a "world."[11]

3. Critical Regionalism and World Culture

Architecture can only be sustained today as a critical practice if it assumes an *arrière-garde* position, that is to say, one which distances itself equally from the Enlightenment myth of progress and from a reactionary, unrealistic impulse to return to the architectonic forms of the preindustrial past. A critical arrière-garde has to remove itself from both the optimization of advanced technology and the ever-present tendency to regress into nostalgic historicism or the glibly decorative. It is my contention that only an arrière-garde has the capacity to cultivate a resistant, identity-giving culture while at the same time having discreet recourse to universal technique.

It is necessary to qualify the term arrière-garde so as to diminish its critical scope from such conservative policies as Populism or sentimental Regionalism with which it has often been associated. In order to ground arrière-gardism in a rooted yet critical strategy, it is helpful to appropriate the term Critical Regionalism as coined by Alex Tzonis and Liliane Lefaivre in "The Grid and the Pathway" (1981); in this essay they caution against the ambiguity of regional reformism, as this has become occasionally manifest since the last quarter of the 19th century:

> Regionalism has dominated architecture in almost all countries at some time during the past two centuries and a half. By way of general definition we can say that it upholds the individual and local architectonic features against more universal and abstract ones. In addition, however, regionalism bears the hallmark of ambiguity. On the one hand, it has been associated with movements of reform and liberation;... on the other, it has proved a powerful tool of repression and chauvinism.... Certainly, critical regionalism has its limitations. The upheaval of the populist movement—a more developed form of regionalism—has brought to light these weak points. No new architecture can emerge without a new kind of relations between designer and user, with-

> out new kinds of programs. . . . Despite these limitations critical regionalism is a bridge over which any humanistic architecture of the future must pass.[12]

The fundamental strategy of Critical Regionalism is to mediate the impact of universal civilization with elements derived *indirectly* from the peculiarities of a particular place. It is clear from the above that Critical Regionalism depends upon maintaining a high level of critical self-consciousness. It may find its governing inspiration in such things as the range and quality of the local light, or in a *tectonic* derived from a peculiar structural mode, or in the topography of a given site.

But it is necessary, as I have already suggested, to distinguish between Critical Regionalism and simple-minded attempts to revive the hypothetical forms of a lost vernacular. In contradistinction to Critical Regionalism, the primary vehicle of Populism is the *communicative* or *instrumental* sign. Such a sign seeks to evoke not a critical perception of reality, but rather the sublimation of a desire for direct experience through the provision of information. Its tactical aim is to attain, as economically as possible, a preconceived level of gratification in behavioristic terms. In this respect, the strong affinity of Populism for the rhetorical techniques and imagery of advertising is hardly accidental. Unless one guards against such a convergence, one will confuse the resistant capacity of a critical practice with the demagogic tendencies of Populism.

The case can be made that Critical Regionalism as a cultural strategy is as much a bearer of *world culture* as it is a vehicle of *universal civilization*. And while it is obviously misleading to conceive of our inheriting world culture to the same degree as we are all heirs to universal civilization, it is nonetheless evident that since we are, in principle, subject to the impact of both, we have no choice but to take cognizance today of their interaction. In this regard the practice of Critical Regionalism is contingent upon a process of double mediation. In the first place, it has to "deconstruct" the overall spectrum of world culture which it inevitably inherits; in the second place, it has to achieve, through synthetic contradiction, a manifest critique of universal civilization. To deconstruct world culture is to remove oneself from that eclecticism of the *fin de siècle* which appropriated alien, exotic forms in order to revitalize the expressivity of an enervated society. (One thinks of the "form-force" aesthetics of Henri van de Velde or the "whiplash-Arabesques" of Victor Horta.) On the other hand, the mediation of universal technique involves imposing limits on the optimization of industrial and postindustrial technology. The future necessity for re-synthesizing principles and elements drawn from diverse origins and quite different ideological sets seems to be alluded to by Ricoeur when he writes:

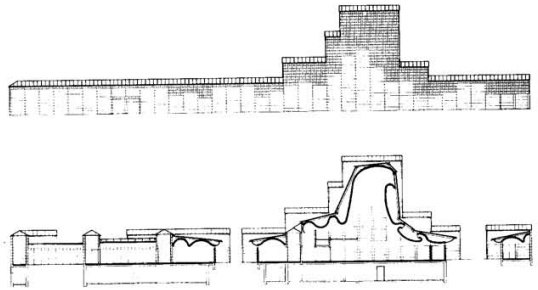
> No one can say what will become of our civilization when it has really met different civilizations by means other than the shock of conquest and domination. But we have to admit that this encounter has not yet taken place at the level of an authentic dialogue. That is why we are in a kind of lull or interregnum in which we can no longer practice the dogmatism of a single truth and in which we are not yet capable of conquering the skepticism into which we have stepped.[13]

A parallel and complementary sentiment was expressed by the Dutch architect Aldo Van Eyck who, quite coincidentally, wrote at the same time: "Western civilization habitually identifies itself with civilization as such on the pontificial assumption that what is not like it is a deviation, less advanced, primitive, or, at best, exotically interesting at a safe distance."[14]

That Critical Regionalism cannot be simply based on the autochthonous forms of a specific region alone was well put by the Californian architect Hamilton Harwell Harris when he wrote, now nearly thirty years ago:

> Opposed to the Regionalism of Restriction is another type of regionalism, the Regionalism of Liberation. This is the manifestation of a region that is especially in tune with the emerging thought of the time. We call such a manifestation "regional" only because it has not yet emerged elsewhere. . . . A region may develop ideas. A region may accept ideas. Imagination and intelligence are necessary for both. In California in the late Twenties and Thirties modern European ideas met a still-developing regionalism. In New England, on the other hand, European Modernism met a rigid and restrictive regionalism that at first resisted and then surrendered. New England accepted European Modernism whole because its own regionalism had been reduced to a collection of restrictions.[15]

The scope for achieving a self-conscious synthesis between universal civilization and world culture may be specifically illustrated by Jørn Utzon's Bagsvaerd Church, built near Copenhagen in 1976, a work whose complex meaning stems directly from a revealed conjunction between, on the one hand, the *rationality* of normative technique and, on the other, the *arationality* of idiosyncratic form. Inasmuch as this building is organized around a regular grid and is comprised of repetitive, in-fill modules—concrete blocks in the first instance and precast concrete wall units in the second—we may justly regard it as the outcome of universal civilization. Such a building system, comprising an *in situ* concrete frame with prefabricated concrete in-fill elements, has indeed been applied countless times all over the developed world. However, the universality of this productive method—which includes, in this instance, patent glazing on the roof—is abruptly mediated when one passes from the optimal modular skin of the exterior to the far less optimal reinforced concrete shell vault spanning the nave. This last is obviously a relatively uneconomic mode of construction, selected and manipulated first for its direct associative capacity—that is to say, the vault signifies sacred space—and second for its



Jørn Utzon, *Bagsvaerd Church,* 1973-76.
North elevation and section.

multiple cross-cultural references. While the reinforced concrete shell vault has long since held an established place within the received tectonic canon of Western modern architecture, the highly configurated section adopted in this instance is hardly familiar, and the only precedent for such a form, in a sacred context, is Eastern rather than Western—namely, the Chinese pagoda roof, cited by Utzon in his seminal essay of 1963, "Platforms and Plateaus."[16] Although the main Bagsvaerd vault spontaneously signifies its religious nature, it does so in such a way as to preclude an exclusively Occidental or Oriental reading of the code by which the public and sacred space is constituted. The intent of this expression is, of course, to secularize the sacred form by precluding the usual set of semantic religious references and thereby the corresponding range of automatic responses that usually accompany them. This is arguably a more appropriate way of rendering a church in a highly secular age, where any symbolic allusion to the ecclesiastic usually degenerates immediately into the vagaries of kitsch. And yet paradoxically, this desacralization at Bagsvaerd subtly reconstitutes a renewed basis for the spiritual, one founded, I would argue, in a regional reaffirmation—grounds, at least, for some form of collective spirituality.

4. The Resistance of the Place-Form

The Megalopolis recognized as such in 1961 by the geographer Jean Gottman[17] continues to proliferate throughout the developed world to such an extent that, with the exception of cities which were laid in place before the turn of the century, we are no longer able to maintain defined urban forms. The last quarter of a century has seen the so-called field of urban design degenerate into a theoretical subject whose discourse bears little relation to the processal realities of modern development. Today even the super-managerial discipline of urban planning has entered into a state of crisis. The ultimate fate of the plan which was officially promulgated for the rebuilding of Rotterdam after World War II is symptomatic in this regard, since it testifies, in terms of its own recently changed status, to the current tendency to reduce all planning to little more than the allocation of land use and the logistics of distribution. Until relatively recently, the Rotterdam master plan was revised and upgraded every decade in the light of buildings which had been realized in the interim. In 1975, however, this progressive urban cultural procedure was unexpectedly abandoned in favor of publishing a nonphysical, infrastructure plan conceived at a regional scale. Such a plan concerns itself almost exclusively with the logistical projection of changes in land use and with the augmentation of existing distribution systems.

In his essay of 1954, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," Martin Heidegger provides us with a critical vantage point from which to behold this phenomenon of universal placelessness. Against the Latin or, rather, the antique *abstract* concept of space as a more or less endless continuum of evenly subdivided spatial components or integers—what he terms *spatium* and *extensio*—Heidegger opposes the German word for space (or, rather, place), which is the term *Raum*. Heidegger argues that the phenomenological essence of such a space/place depends upon the *concrete,* clearly defined nature of its boundary, for, as he puts it, "A boundary is not that at which something stops, but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing."[18] Apart from confirming that Western abstract reason has its origins in the antique culture of the Mediterranean, Heidegger shows that etymologically the German gerund *building* is closely linked with the archaic forms of *being, cultivating* and *dwelling,* and goes on to state that the condition of "dwelling" and hence ultimately of "being" can only take place in a domain that is clearly bounded.

While we may well remain skeptical as to the merit of grounding critical practice in a concept so hermetically metaphysical as Being, we are, when confronted with the ubiquitous placelessness of our modern environment, nonetheless brought to posit, after Heidegger, the absolute precondition of a

bounded domain in order to create an architecture of resistance. Only such a defined boundary will permit the built form to stand against—and hence literally to withstand in an institutional sense—the endless processal flux of the Megalopolis.

The bounded place-form, in its public mode, is also essential to what Hannah Arendt has termed "the space of human appearance," since the evolution of legitimate power has always been predicated upon the existence of the "polis" and upon comparable units of institutional and physical form. While the political life of the Greek polis did not stem directly from the physical presence and representation of the city-state, it displayed in contrast to the Megalopolis the cantonal attributes of urban density. Thus Arendt writes in *The Human Condition:*

> The only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where men live so close together that the potentialities for action are always present will power remain with them and the foundation of cities, which as city states have remained paradigmatic for all Western political organization, is therefore the most important material prerequisite for power.[19]

Nothing could be more removed from the political essence of the city-state than the rationalizations of positivistic urban planners such as Melvin Webber, whose ideological concepts of *community without propinquity* and the *non-place urban realm* are nothing if not slogans devised to rationalize the absence of any true public realm in the modern motopia.[20] The manipulative bias of such ideologies has never been more openly expressed than in Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966) wherein the author asserts that Americans do not need piazzas, since they should be at home watching television.[21] Such reactionary attitudes emphasize the impotence of an urbanized populace which has paradoxically lost the object of its urbanization.

While the strategy of Critical Regionalism as outlined above addresses itself mainly to the maintenance of an *expressive density and resonance* in an architecture of resistance (a cultural density which under today's conditions could be said to be potentially liberative in and of itself since it opens the user to manifold *experiences*), the provision of a place-form is equally essential to critical practice, inasmuch as a resistant architecture, in an institutional sense, is necessarily dependent on a clearly defined domain. Perhaps the most generic example of such an urban form is the perimeter block, although other related, introspective types may be evoked, such as the galleria, the atrium, the forecourt and the labyrinth. And while these types have in many instances today simply become the vehicles for accommodating psuedo-public realms (one thinks of recent megastructures in housing, hotels, shopping centers, etc.), one cannot even in these

instances entirely discount the latent political and resistant potential of the place-form.

5. Culture Versus Nature: Topography, Context, Climate, Light and Tectonic Form

Critical Regionalism necessarily involves a more directly dialectical relation with nature than the more abstract, formal traditions of modern avant-garde architecture allow. It is self-evident that the *tabula rasa* tendency of modernization favors the optimum use of earth-moving equipment inasmuch as a totally flat datum is regarded as the most economic matrix upon which to predicate the rationalization of construction. Here again, one touches in concrete terms this fundamental opposition between universal civilization and autochthonous culture. The bulldozing of an irregular topography into a flat site is clearly a technocratic gesture which aspires to a condition of absolute *placelessness,* whereas the terracing of the same site to receive the stepped form of a building is an engagement in the act of "cultivating" the site.

Clearly such a mode of beholding and acting brings one close once again to Heidegger's etymology; at the same time, it evokes the method alluded to by the Swiss architect Mario Botta as "building the site." It is possible to argue that in this last instance the specific culture of the region—that is to say, its history in both a geological and agricultural sense—becomes inscribed into the form and realization of the work. This inscription, which arises out of "in-laying" the building into the site, has many levels of significance, for it has a capacity to embody, in built form, the prehistory of the place, its archeological past and its subsequent cultivation and transformation across time. Through this layering into the site the idiosyncrasies of place find their expression without falling into sentimentality.

What is evident in the case of topography applies to a similar degree in the case of an existing urban fabric, and the same can be claimed for the contingencies of climate and the temporally inflected qualities of local light. Once again, the sensitive modulation and incorporation of such factors must almost by definition be fundamentally opposed to the optimum use of universal technique. This is perhaps most clear in the case of light and climate control. The generic window is obviously the most delicate point at which these two natural forces impinge upon the outer membrane of the building, fenestration having an innate capacity to inscribe architecture with the character of a region and hence to express the place in which the work is situated.

Until recently, the received precepts of modern curatorial practice favored the exclusive use of artificial light in all art galleries. It has perhaps been insufficiently recognized how this encapsulation tends to reduce the artwork to a commodity, since such an environment must conspire to render the work placeless. This is because the local light spectrum is never permitted to play across its surface: here, then, we see how the loss of aura, attributed by Walter Benjamin to the processes of mechanical reproduction, also arises from a relatively static application of universal technology. The converse of this "placeless" practice would be to provide that art galleries be top-lit through carefully contrived monitors so that, while the injurious effects of direct sunlight are avoided, the ambient light of the exhibition volume changes under the impact of time, season, humidity, etc. Such conditions guarantee the appearance of a place-conscious poetic—a form of filtration compounded out of an interaction between culture and nature, between art and light. Clearly this principle applies to all fenestration, irrespective of size and location. A constant "regional inflection" of the form arises directly from the fact that in certain climates the glazed aperture is advanced, while in others it is recessed behind the masonry facade (or, alternatively, shielded by adjustable sun breakers).

The way in which such openings provide for appropriate ventilation also constitutes an unsentimental element reflecting the nature of local culture. Here, clearly, the main antagonist of rooted culture is the ubiquitous air-conditioner, applied in all times and in all places, irrespective of the local climatic conditions which have a capacity to express the specific place and the seasonal variations of its climate. Wherever they occur, the fixed window and the remote-controlled air-conditioning system are mutually indicative of domination by universal technique.

Despite the critical importance of topography and light, the primary principle of architectural autonomy resides in the *tectonic* rather than the *scenographic:* that is to say, this autonomy is embodied in the revealed ligaments of the construction and in the way in which the syntactical form of the structure explicitly resists the action of gravity. It is obvious that this discourse of the load borne (the beam) and the load-bearing (the column) cannot be brought into being where the structure is masked or otherwise concealed. On the other hand, the tectonic is not to be confused with the purely technical, for it is more than the simple revelation of stereotomy or the expression of skeletal framework. Its essence was first defined by the German aesthetician Karl Bötticher in his book *Die Tektonik der Hellenen* (1852); and it was perhaps best summarized by the architectural historian Stanford Anderson when he wrote:

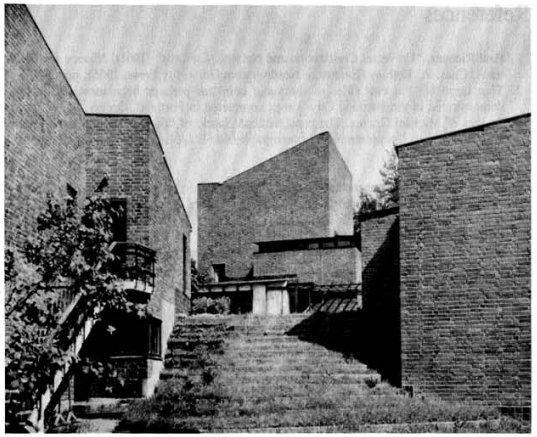
> *"Tektonik"* referred not just to the activity of making the materially requisite construction . . . but rather to the activity that raises this construction to an art form. . . . The functionally adequate form must be adapted so as to give expression to its function. The sense of bearing provided by the entasis of Greek columns became the touchstone of this concept of *Tektonik*.[22]

The tectonic remains to us today as a potential means for distilling play between material, craftwork and gravity, so as to yield a component which is in fact a condensation of the entire structure. We may speak here of the presentation of a structural poetic rather than the re-presentation of a facade.

6. The Visual Versus the Tactile

The tactile resilience of the place-form and the capacity of the body to read the environment in terms other than those of sight alone suggest a potential strategy for resisting the domination of universal technology. It is symptomatic of the priority given to sight that we find it necessary to remind ourselves that the tactile is an important dimension in the perception of built form. One has in mind a whole range of complementary sensory perceptions which are registered by the labile body: the intensity of light, darkness, heat and cold; the feeling of humidity; the aroma of material; the almost palpable presence of masonry as the body senses its own confinement; the momentum of an induced gait and the relative inertia of the body as it traverses the floor; the echoing resonance of our own footfall. Luchino Visconti was well aware of these factors when making the film *The Damned,* for he insisted that the main set of the Altona mansion should be paved in real wooden parquet. It was his belief that without a solid floor underfoot the actors would be incapable of assuming appropriate and convincing postures.

A similar tactile sensitivity is evident in the finishing of the public circulation in Alvar Aalto's Säynatsalo Town Hall of 1952. The main route leading to the second-floor council chamber is ultimately orchestrated in terms which are as much tactile as they are visual. Not only is the principal access stair lined in raked brickwork, but the treads and risers are also finished in brick. The kinetic impetus of the body in climbing the stair is thus checked by the friction of the steps, which are "read" soon after in contrast to the timber floor of the council chamber itself. This chamber asserts its honorific status through sound, smell and texture, not to mention the springy deflection of the floor underfoot (and a noticeable tendency to lose one's balance on its polished surface). From this example it is clear that the liberative importance of the tactile resides in the fact that it can only be decoded in terms of *experience* itself: it cannot be reduced to mere information, to representation or to the simple evocation of a simulacrum substituting for absent presences.



Alvar Aalto, *Säynatsalo Town Hall*, 1952.

In this way, Critical Regionalism seeks to complement our normative visual experience by readdressing the tactile range of human perceptions. In so doing, it endeavors to balance the priority accorded to the image and to counter the Western tendency to interpret the environment in exclusively perspectival terms. According to its etymology, perspective means rationalized sight or clear seeing, and as such it presupposes a conscious suppression of the senses of smell, hearing and taste, and a consequent distancing from a more direct experience of the environment. This self-imposed limitation relates to that which Heidegger has called a "loss of nearness." In attempting to counter this loss, the tactile opposes itself to the scenographic and the drawing of veils over the surface of reality. Its capacity to arouse the impulse to touch returns the architect to the poetics of construction and to the erection of works in which the tectonic value of each component depends upon the density of its objecthood. The tactile and the tectonic jointly have the capacity to transcend the mere appearance of the technical in much the same way as the place-form has the potential to withstand the relentless onslaught of global modernization.

Traditions

The last decade or so of economic growth: the vindication or the last hurrah of the global market economy, has seen the construction and demolition of an unprecedented number of buildings. The quantity and global reach of this latest boom is alarming, but perhaps if considered in relation to the world population or as a proportion of national GDPs, it is not so different from other periods of dramatic building production and urban expansion.

The first wave of industrialisation at the end of eigthteenth century in England was such a time. While on a trip to study the new mill buildings in the Midlands and the North, Schinkel writes in his diary,

> Since the war there have been four hundred mills constructed in Lancashire. One sees buildings in places that were meadows three years ago. Yet the buildings are so smoke-stained they appear to have been used for a hundred years—colossal masses of building substance are being constructed by builders alone without any regard for architectural principles, solely for utilitarian ends and rendered in red brick.
>
> (Barry Bergdoll, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel. An Architecture for Prusia*, Rizzoli, New York, 1994.)

At a time when construction often matched the brutalities of an unbridled market economy, the leading architects of the Enlighten-

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BOOK
Caruso, Adam. *The feeling of things*. Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2008.

ment were inspired by the enormous energy of scientific and economic advances. At the same time their work was able to impart a renewed relevance to the culture of classicism that for them embodied the best qualities of European civilization. The work of architects like Adam, Schinkel and Semper was remarkable in both the depth of its knowledge of the classical language and in its radical handling of that language in order to accommodate new techniques and uses. It was in distorting and adding to the architecture of the past that neoclassicism was so fresh and contemporary. It was by sustaining and progressing a cultural discourse that architecture, as a discipline, could continue to be socially significant in an increasingly complex and heterogeneous time.

Vast building programmes, extensions to the major cities of Europe and North America and the development of new typologies, also characterised the imperial economies at the end of the nineteenth century. While critics like Ruskin may have thought that only the reversal of this economic expansion could save civilized society, architects like Sullivan, Berlage and Wagner invented architectures that enabled them to engage with these new forces as well as sustain a cultural role for architecture. The formal language of this time was broadened in response to the expanded territories of empire. Sullivan transforms the closely knit repeated patterns of Moorish architecture via the new technologies of large scale terracotta cladding and steel framed construction. The potentially arid new typology of the modern office building is made significant through the delicate beauty of its façades and the sensitive consideration of its volume within the gridded structure of the nineteenth century city. In his Amsterdam Stock Exchange, Berlage uses the language of Northern European Romanesque to give civic qualities to a building that is both extremely modern in its use and in the wide spatial diversity of its interiors. This great generation of architects invented a contemporary architecture that served the political and economic powers of the day as well as developing the autonomous discourse of architecture.

Not so long ago, it was assumed that architects were the master of every aspect of their discipline, of the history of architectural form as well as the ability to build well and for the long term. The evolution of architecture as a liberal profession combined the technical capacity of the master builder with the erudition of the intellectual class. This elevated status, of speaking Latin and wearing fine clothing, once won, was jealously guarded. Although the pompous, bourgeois architect desperate to be an equal with his richer clients is an easy target of ridicule, there were always others like Semper, Viollet and Muthesius who applied enormous energy to expanding the breadth and the capacity of architecture so that it could continue to have an artistic and social relevance. This idea of the architect as the custodian of an ever developing discipline has wide manifestations. It is evident in the work of Lewerentz, where a formal brilliance and a deep engagement with the classical and pre-classical traditions, is brought to bear on the design of a chair and a light, as well as to whole material assemblies that are infused with a moving spatial character. In Loos, this intelligence is in equal measure critical and synthetic. His acute sensitivity to social mores underpin the spatial propriety of the raumplan, and directs a perfect judgement in the selection of a chair, a rug or a wall covering. The corporate projects of Eero Saarinan and SOM in the postwar United States, and Arne Jacobson in Europe were able to infuse enormous building programmes with the ethic of multinationals like IBM and General Motors, so that these were manifest in the new technology of curtain walling and equally in the meticulously designed deep plan interiors, furnished with specially developed office furniture

Today, the idea of erudition, of the architect as connoisseur has been rejected. It is curious that in a world of increasing specialisation, where artists and scientists are making dynamic new work from within their disciplines, architects have followed the lead of the management consultant, the ultimate example of the empty generalist. Rather than rise to the technical and artistic challenges of today, within the discipline of architecture, mainstream practice has embraced the rhetoric of the

market to make work that is infused with brand recognition. Strategies of cybernetics, phylogenics, parametrics, mapping—each strive to generate completely original forms, in plan, in section, sometimes both. These bold profiles can amplify or even replace corporate logos. Lacking the complexities and ambiguities that are held within the tradition of architectural form, these shapes quickly lose their shiny novelty and achieve a condition of not new, but also not old or ordinary enough to become a part of the urban background. This inability to grow old is all too resonant with an era of rebranding and cosmetic surgery. Architecture is now practiced at an unprecedented global scale, and the major players seem to be egging each other on. Who will produce the largest, and most formally outlandish project? Who will finally say stop?

Never has so much construction been based on so few ideas.

Our practice has always made work that is related to things that we have seen before. We are interested in the emotional effect that buildings can have. We are interested in how buildings have been built in the past and how new constructions can achieve an equivalent formal and material presence. We are confused by the laissez-faire state of contemporary architecture. In this environment of excess we have found ourselves attracted to the more intimate artistic ambitions of past architectural traditions. We feel more comfortable than we once did to follow these traditions quite closely. Anything that can contribute to the fragile continuities between the contemporary situation and past architectures is worth the effort. It is only by understanding and reflecting on the past that architecture can continue to be a relevant social and artistic discipline.

> History has never copied earlier history and if it ever had done so that would not matter in history; in a certain sense history would come to a halt with that act. The only act that qualifies as historical is that which in some way introduces something additional, a new element, in the world, from which a new story can be generated and the thread taken up anew.
>
> (Barry Bergdoll, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel. An Architecture for Prussia*, Rizzoli, New York, 1994.)

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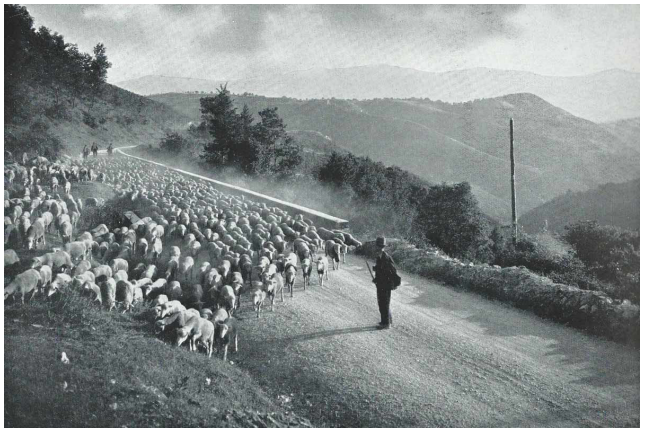
TRANSHUMANCES

transumanze



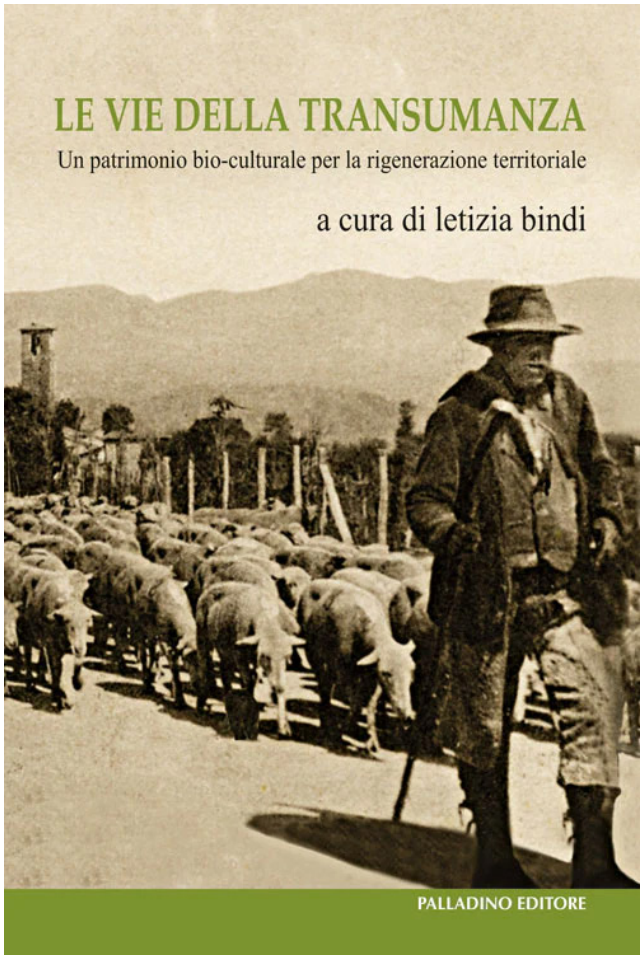
PHOTOGRAPH
R. Marinelli. *Transhumance in Amatrice*. 1950s ca.

PHOTOGRAPH
Paolo Plini. Gli stazzi di San Lorenzo. 2019

PHOTOGRAPH
R. Marinelli, *I pastori della Laga*. 1991

PHOTOGRAPH
Transhumance in Rome. Author unknown. Date unknown.

PHOTOGRAPH
Transhumance in Amatrice. Author unknown. Date unknown.



BOOK
Bindi, Letizia ed., Le vie della Transumanza. Amatrice: Palladino Editore, 2020.

Mario Ciaralli writes: “In the early days of October, leaving behind the mountains and valleys above Cardito, which were already beginning to change in a myriad of colors, the long caravan of sheep on the move, after passing through the town of Amatrice, ascended the steep mule track of “Costa Sergiata” after a few hundred meters from the Chiesa della Croce, and then reached the nearby via “Romanella”. This was the only road that, until the early 20th century, connected the via Salaria to the town.

As one moved away from the houses, the shepherds once again sounded the bells of the sheep, which had been silenced shortly before near the hospital, as a sign of respect for the passage of the flock.

Upon reaching the road and taking the consular road at the Torrita pass, our grandparents, at the head of the numerous farm, sadly set out towards the “Piana” of Cittareale and further along the narrow gorges of the Velino river towards Sigillo and Antrodoco, until reaching the towns of Canetra and Cotilia, and then nearby the Reatina plain.

Here, near Santa Rufina, in the “Cardito Roselli” area, temporarily abandoning the via Salaria, a short “tratturello” allowed to shorten the route towards the Capital, thus avoiding passing through the Sabine capital. After a brief stop, a quick check of the mules and carts, filled with all the necessary items, then leaving behind the town of Rieti and later the town of San Giovanni Reatino, the endless line of sheep, now halfway through the journey, prepared to reach the deep valley of

the Ornaro river and all those villages of the lower Sabina that lined the road. [...]

Finally, after a few days, where the landscape becomes wide and comfortable, the path to reach the sheepfolds and villages of huts was still quite distant, and already on the horizon appeared in the distance the boundless plain around the city.

At that point of the journey, the much-awaited stop for the shepherds, before reaching Rome, was an inn along the road, in the "Ponte del Grillo" area. In this inn, on the edge of the via Salaria, finally in the middle of the plain, the shepherds used to stop for a well-deserved rest and to reunite after the summer with fellow countrymen, guardians of flocks in various farms, before reorganizing everything and setting off again towards the final stretch. For some farms with estates near the inn between Monterotondo, Settebagni, and Fidene, the journey was just over.

Other farms, after leaving the via Consolare near the inn, entered shortly after on the via Tiberina to reach the nearby pastures of Fiano Romano, Nazzaro, and Filacciano. Still, others continued until they reached the territories of Castelnuovo di Porto, Riano, and Capena. In greater numbers, the endless stream of sheep marched to the gates of Rome, then took possession of the flat countryside of Palidoro, Castel di Guido, and Cerveteri on the via Aurelia, pastures leased from the "Pio Istituto di Santo Spirito". [...]

From Porta Capena, crossing Rome, the remaining farms continued along the via Appia and further into the Pontine marshes to Cisterna."

Ciaralli, Mario. "Le vie della transumanza attraverso i secoli e il viaggio da Amatrice alla Campagna Romana". In *Le vie della Transumanza: Un patrimonio bio-culturale per la rigenerazione territoriale*, edited by Letizia Bindi, 149–182. Amatrice: Palladino Editore, 2020.

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