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Before Architecture: Archai, *Architects and Architectonics in Plato and Aristotle*

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Abstract

"The beginning (*archē*) seems to be more than half of the whole." So claims Aristotle in the first book of *Nicomachean Ethics* (1098b8). Might this claim be as true for architecture as it is for philosophy? If so, what can the first philosophical statements concerning architects tell us about the aims, scope and limits of an architect's role?

This study gathers and interprets the earliest extant references to architects in ancient Greek philosophy, as found in select works of Plato and Aristotle. Surprisingly, there has been little treatment of these passages. Aside from isolated citations, the question of how and why Plato and Aristotle chose to integrate "architects" (*architektōn*/αρχιτέκτων) and "architectonics" (*architektonikē*/αρχιτεκτονική) into their discursive inquires has not been asked. Thus, one of my basic aims is to disclose what these philosophical passages contribute to a critical and speculative discourse on architecture. Although the Greeks had no word for architecture per se (*architectura* being a Latin word first found in Cicero),[1] Plato and Aristotle—in the midst of examining political, ethical and epistemological problems and potentialities (in the 4th c. BCE)—began loosely to define principled "architectonic" practices involving the knowing direction of individuals, arts and materials toward comprehensively beneficial aims. Whereas the earliest extant inscriptions naming "architects" (from the 440s and 430s BCE) yield only a few meaningful but

largely techno-bureaucratic details,[2] and Herodotus' *Histories* (from the same decades) merely credit select "architects" with a disparate assortment of "wonders" (*thaumata*),[3] the philosophical sources introduced below open more precisely articulable questions concerning what architects ought to know, do and desire.

As I have shown elsewhere, philosophical thinking about architectural practice was prefigured by dramatizations of architectural acts, as shown by the inclusion of "architects" and "architecting" (*αρχιτεκτόνειν*) in select scripts of Athenian drama. Indeed, the earliest extant *architektōn* in Greek literature is found neither in inscriptions nor historical prose, but (arguably) in a fragmentary etiological drama by Aeschylus (staged in 476 BCE), wherein a personified Justice (daughter of Zeus) is presumed "to architect" proportionate order.[4] About fifty years later, in the wake of Pericles' ambitious building program and while Herodotus' *Histories* were circulating in Athens, Euripides and Aristophanes featured more medial (and mortal) architect-protagonists. Amid grave dangers, these agents—called "architects" and called upon "to architect"—dared to initiate and lead collaborative schemes aimed at restoring social order, regional peace, levity, and even *theōria*.[5] These dramatizations, together with the philosophical passages following them, represent substantial yet largely overlooked contributions to the beginnings of architectural theory.

Bearing these precedents in mind, the "architect" and "architectonic" terms of Plato and Aristotle will be our guide to renewed inquiry into the *archē* of architecture. While some may be eager to brush these old words aside, this study seeks to grasp them afresh, taking them up as clues to discursive contexts that open onto cultural problems and possibilities, still comparable and instructive to our own.

Plato: Toward a Syncritical, Synthetic and True Technē

The dialogues of Plato have been profoundly influential in shaping architectural theory, at least since the Renaissance. This is true particularly of dialogues concerning the constitution of the *polis*, such as the *Republic, Timeaus, Critias* and *Laws*, wherein Plato's interlocutors provide seminal formulations of topics still pertinent to present-day architectural discourse. Such topics include: the desire for ideal cities; notions of ideal forms; the paradigmatic role of geometry; nuances of representation; mimetic correlations of body, city and world; the generative primacy of space; and the nature of the beautiful—a topic also central to the *Symposium, Phaedrus* and *Philebus*. However, as architecturally relevant as all this may be, not one of these dialogues mentions the Greek word *architektōn*. Even *Timaeus* is bereft of architects. The maker of the cosmos featured in this dialogue is not called architect; rather, he is a *dēmiurgos*, one who performs "work" (*ergos*) for the "people" (*dēmos*). This distinction should not be overdrawn, since a *dēmiurgos* was a general designation inclusive of architects, and the demiurge in *Timaeus* is also qualified with *tektōn* terminology.[6] Nonetheless, an inquiry into the beginnings of architectural theory must tackle the two

dialogues where Plato actually does involve "architects": the *Statesman* and the *Gorgias*. In doing so, we discover that these dialogues explore topics concerned less with the physical and geometrical premises of cities (and cosmos), and more with the words and deeds, the intentions and practices, of leading civic agents—those who ought to guide fellow citizens toward discerning and manifesting what is best for the common good. As Plato suggests, such civic agents (statesmen and orators) perform roles comparable to architects.

In two dialogues grappling with the interrelated arts of politics and rhetoric, the *Statesman* and *Gorgias*, Plato introduces the example of architects to help clarify the powers and problems of civic leadership. At the beginning of the *Statesman* (*Politikos*), having established that a statesman acts less by means of hands and body and more by means of "intelligence (*synesis*) and strength of soul" (259c), the principal speaker, a Stranger from Elea, begins elaborating this peculiar mode of intelligence with a comparison to architects:

> Every *architektōn*, too, is not himself engaged in work but is a leader (*archōn*) of workmen (*ergatōn*)... he furnishes cognition (*gnōsin*) and not manual work (*cheirourgian*) (259e).[7]

In isolation, this statement seems merely to subordinate manual workers to (presumably) more knowing architects, while rationalizing Plato's notoriously dogmatic divisions of labour. However, in discursive context, the passage opens onto broader and subtler elaborations. Immediately after separating "cognitive" (*gnōstikēn*) and "practical" (*praktikēn*) sciences, the Stranger suspects the division is not so clear-cut; for the example of architects reveals that the mode of intelligence under discussion is *both* cognitive and practical. Questioning and amending his provisional distinction, the Stranger realizes that the art (*technē*) of statesmen, like that of architects, involves leading others in dynamic situations (260a). Such a socially and practically involved agency demands not only a cognitive capacity to make critical judgments, discerning and deciding what is best on behalf of others, but also an ongoing interpretive, communicative and interactive capability to make best use of that knowledge by leading a variety other skilled individuals and arts toward mutually desired ends (260a). It would be insufficient, the Stranger contends, for those with civic obligations to judge from a distance, like a "spectator" (*theatēn,* 260c); rather, they must enact judgments by engaging an ensemble, leading others in their midst. Put another way, architects and statesmen translate decisive judgments into appropriate collaborative actions. Although their art may not be productive in isolation (in the same way that manual labourers produce artifacts), it is oriented toward external action, and thus cannot be purely cognitive. The remainder of the dialogue is devoted to elucidating this hybrid mode of practical intelligence, which the Stranger further subdivides as both discerning and directive, or critical (*kritikos*) and epitactic (*epitatikos,* 260b). Although Plato's dialectical method proceeds by logical division, his ultimate philosophical aim, as well as that of statesmen (and architects), is to foster synthetic practices and understanding.

Architects are not mentioned again in the *Statesman*, aside from a subsequent observation that an architect's art differs from a statesman's in that a statesman directs only animate kinds of becoming, involving living "ensouled" citizens, whereas the "architectonic (art)" (*architektonikón*) extends also to inanimate kinds of becoming, including the transformation of "soulless" building materials (261c-d). Thus, ostensibly leaving architects behind, the Stranger proceeds to elucidate the political *technē* through a variety of other revealing paradigms: comparing statesmanship, comically, to the shepherding of herd animals (261d-267d); mythically, to the periodic taming of the unruly animal cosmos by a demiurge and divine helmsman (268-274e); and, more analogically, to the art of weaving. Like weaving, the political art harmonizes a web of heterogeneous elements into a complex whole, creating unity from multiplicity by intermeshing opposites, including people of opposing but mutually reinforcing dispositions (279a-283a). This prolonged excursus into weaving—one of the dialogue's many "devices of indirection"[8]—draws criticism from the Stranger's interlocutor for its excessive length (283b). The Stranger, in turn, defends his elaborately detailed paradigm with a lesson on measurement. In a way that recalls Socrates' opposition to speeches "hurried on by the clock" (*Theaetetus,* 172d),[9] and anticipates Aristotle's arguments for flexible rules and different kinds of precision,[10] the Stranger in the *Statesman* describes two modes of measuring. One involves calculating by numbers, quantifying large to small, long to short, etc.; the other, more qualitative and "difficult," entails evaluating in relation to situational contexts, customs and contingencies, in accordance to what is moderate, appropriate, timely and obliging—or, as the Stranger puts it, measuring relative to "the mean (*to metrion*), the fitting (*to prepon*), the opportune (*to kairon*), and the needful (*to deon*)" (284e). Since cities and human situations are so complex and variable, a statesman "with *phronēsis*" (prudence, or practical wisdom) would be capable of acting through the latter, more pliant and comprehensively accommodating mode of reckoning (294a-b). With this finely woven argument the Stranger defends his elaborate excursus as fitting for the topic and times, while arguing that prudent statesmen and good legislators ought to exercise flexible decision-making, appropriately adjusting judgments (to be held more tightly here, more loosely there) in relation to particular and changing circumstances. To rigidly impose fixed laws without such practical accommodation would be to disassociate wisdom from action, separating those cognitive and practical activities that statesmen (and architects) were said in the beginning of the dialogue to integrate. Moreover, in divorcing thinking from doing, the imposition of fixed laws would risk destroying all the arts, making the city "altogether unlivable," as the interlocutors fear (299e).[11] Thus, only an intelligently practical *technē*—also qualified as a combinatory "*syncritical* art" (283a) and "*synthetic* science" (308c)—would, the Stranger argues, lead a city toward "beautiful, just, and good things" (309c), enabling citizens to "turn out beautifully" and "become happy" (311b-c).

Although the Stranger often seems to be cutting the city to shreds with obsessive dichotomies, there is a gradual shift of emphasis as the dialogue proceeds toward weaving the city's opposing complementarities back together again into a lively and variegated whole. The Stranger does not explicitly bring such restorative obligations back to bear on the discerning and directive capabilities of architects, but it is

productive for us to recognize their share in synthetically weaving the fabric of the *polis*; in collaboratively manifesting happy ends; and in practicing *phronēsis*—a mode of situational interpretation that, as we shall see, Aristotle associates with "architectonic intelligence."

Whereas Plato's *Statesman* investigates the discerning, directive and synthetic capabilities of political agents in ways that illuminate architectural leadership, the *Gorgias* initiates a related inquiry linking political, philosophical and pedagogical ends with the discursive potential of architectural intentions.

In *Gorgias,* Socrates engages the famed rhetorician after whom the dialogue is named, challenging him and his two pupils to explain the scope and power of their art—if indeed it is an art (*technē*), or, as Socrates quips, merely a "knack" (*empeiria*, 462c). Predictably, Socrates gains the upper hand, dismissing his interlocutors' misuse of rhetoric while demonstrating how and why the art ought to be performed. Although Socrates' mention of architects in this discussion may, at first, seem inconsequential, his repeated concern for improving the *polis* and for transforming its topography with temperance (not decadence) suggests otherwise.

Near the beginning of the dialogue, Socrates urges Gorgias to acknowledge the limits of his rhetorical competence, saying:

> Whenever there is a gathering in the city to choose doctors or shipwrights or any other *dēmiurgic* group, surely the rhetorician will not then give his advice, for it is obvious that in each such choice it is the real expert [one *most* skilled, or artistic (*technikōtaton*)] who must be selected. And when it is a question about the building of walls or equipping of harbors or dockyards, we consult, not the rhetoricians, but the *architektones* (455b).[12]

In response, Gorgias insists, to the contrary, that rhetoricians and statesmen, including Pericles, have indeed been successful in counseling the city on these matters, thus the advice of architects and other demiurges would be unnecessary, even unwelcome (455e-456e). As the discussion unfolds, however, it becomes clear that what's most at stake in Socrates' challenge is not simply the question of who ought to advise on matters as important as civic transformation, but the nature of the advice: to what end is the advice ultimately aiming; on what knowledge is it based; and is it fostering understanding of what is good for the city?

The long and heated debate advances through many arguments, rebuttals and digressions concerning the function of persuasion, the criterion of justice, the problem of power tending to corrupt, and the plausible bases for genuine discourse—Socrates suggests these ought to be *pathos*, *philia* and *philosophia* (common humanity, friendship and love of wisdom). In the end, Socrates, who speaks as if confronting his own unjust executioners, recounts a myth about the fair judgment of one's soul in the afterlife (523a-527e). But before delving into the underworld, Socrates returns vigorously to his concern for the physical (and moral) fabric of the living city, and to the need for proper advice on its transformation. Recalling Gorgias' dismissal of architects, Socrates agrees that the speeches of politically empowered rhetoricians, includ-

ing Pericles, had indeed persuaded the people to transform Athens, but they did so improperly: for they merely succeeded in filling the Athenian landscape "with harbors and dockyards and walls and revenues and similar rubbish" (519a).[13] In paying no heed to "temperance and justice" and "true" persuasion these politicians failed to improve the *polis*. Instead, they made the city "swollen and festering" (518e)—a condition corresponding to the unhappy "festering" soul of an intemperate tyrant, which Socrates diagnosed earlier in the dialogue (480b).

As Eric Voegelin has emphasized, the *Gorgias* is Plato's declaration of war against corruption in Athenian society.[14] His enemy being the corrupting influence of false public representatives who cater inappropriately to the masses through flattery and manipulation, appealing to their self-serving and shortsighted prejudices and passions instead of attempting the more difficult task of discursively building a better society. But, even though Plato (via Socrates) reveals his disgust for corrupt imitations of political and rhetorical arts as practiced in his day, Socrates' dialogical manner of speaking demonstrates the possibility of restoring these arts to proper aims. For Socrates does not ultimately reject politics and rhetoric, rather he attempts to recalibrate them, in part, through his own example, turning them toward genuine inquiry of what constitutes true persuasion and the common good. For instance, early in the dialogue, Socrates excludes himself from the tribe of demagogues he opposes, emphatically decrying, "I am no politician" (473e6). But, toward the dialogue's close, having refuted Gorgias and his unscrupulous followers, Socrates professes to be among the few Athenians who "attempt the political art *truly* (*alēthōs*)" (521d).[15] Similarly, Socrates initially denies that rhetoric is an "art" (*technē*, 462b); but, in the end, he argues for a "true rhetoric" (517a), insisting that a properly "artistic" (*technikos*) rhetorician would strive to engender in others justice, temperance and goodness (504d-e). And this is exactly what Socrates attempts throughout the dialogue. Thus, with the force of dramatic irony, Socrates opposes a narrowly and naïvely construed *technē* by practicing a more exemplary *technē*, one that, like politicians and rhetoricians, acts through persuasive speech, but persuades toward wiser, more comprehensive, and self-questioning ends.[16] Whereas his sophistic interlocutors admit to pursuing gratifying popularity, power and personal pleasure, Socrates strives to awaken in others a desire to pursue what is good for the city. Whereas the teachings of Gorgias impart opinion (*doxa*), or belief without knowledge, Socrates aims to cultivate awareness of one's own (and others') ignorance in ways that enkindle a courageous yearning for genuine knowledge via discourse. Thus, Socrates attempts to "lead the *logos*" toward both self-questioning and questioning of what is just and good for the city (461c2-3).[17] And what is good for the city is also good for one's soul (the ordering of soul, city and cosmos being always reciprocally mimetic of one another for Plato). In this discursively inquisitive way, Socrates demonstrates not only the ethical and philosophical potential of rhetoric, but also what has been called Plato's "pedagogical definition of politics,"[18] since political competence both presupposes and produces knowledge, and because leading entails learning, and learning leading.

Aside from fostering genuine dialogue, the particulars of what Socrates deems good for the city are not disclosed. Nevertheless, the gist of his counsel is clear: transforming the *polis* ought to entail true

persuasion—self-doubt, self-questioning, desire for self-improvement, and probing discussion with others on the most relevant and difficult questions. Through such discursive means, edifying advice concerning what is good for a city may be discerned. Whether or not the "architects" Gorgias had dismissed would have attempted such syncritical and synthetic inquiry if called upon to speak in public assembly is a question. What is important is that Socrates suggests they had an opportunity to do so. Thus, we may take Socrates' counter arguments and discursive manners in the *Gorgias* as a provocation that architects ought to attempt their own political-pedagogical *technē* truly.

　　With these teachings of Socrates and Plato in mind, we turn now to consider how Plato's student Aristotle continues to practice habits of thinking in ways that implicate (and incidentally clarify) knowledge, agencies and responsibilities of architects. Yet, whereas Plato's manner of persuasive inquiry is dramatized by multiple contending voices and symbolically enriched with interrelated mythic and metaphoric digressions, Aristotle's investigations proceed in more directly assertive, iterative and abstract manners. These differences, combined with the fact that Aristotle refers to architects much more frequently and diversely, calls for a less narrative and more topical approach in the following review.

Aristotle: Pursuing Architectonic Beginnings, Middles, Means and Ends

In his historical work on the *Constitution of Athens*, Aristotle makes a relatively simple statement about architects. Reviewing the functions of different institutions in his day, he notes that the Athenian Council is responsible for inspecting public buildings and superintending ships, whereas "the Assembly appoints architects for the ships by vote" (46).[19] While attesting to architects' competence extending to ship design and their obligations to democratic processes, these facts (consistent with the sort of contractual details found in ancient inscriptions) suggest little else about an architect's role. The remaining sixteen references to architects in Aristotle's extant corpus are more revealing—and complex. In seven of his philosophical works, Aristotle repeatedly draws on the example of architects, and what he calls "architectonic" arts, to qualify variously interrelated kinds of knowledge and action. Although there are instances where Aristotle discusses actualities and potentialities associated with "house-building" (*oikodomikē*), as in book theta of *Metaphysics*, and describes optimum configurations of a *polis*, as in book seven of *Politics*, these are not the thematic contexts where architects arise. Rather, like Plato, Aristotle involves architects in epistemological, ethical and political inquiries to qualify and vivify capabilities and aims associated with synthetic knowledge, practical reasoning and civic leadership.

　　The following review of relevant passages culminates with *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle posits politics as the most "architectonic" art and identifies the political philosopher as "architect of the end (*telos*)," i.e., of the common "good" (*agathon*) to which politics at its best aims. To understand how

and why Aristotle draws architects into a political and philosophical quest for the good, we must consider the use of "architects" in his other works, beginning from a simple starting point.

"All men by nature desire to know." These are the generous opening words of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. He then proceeds to outline four interrelated ways of knowing: sense perception (*aisthēsis*), experience (*empeiria*), art (*technē*), and science (*epistēmē*). It is in striving to distinguish what each mode of knowing entails that Aristotle involves architects. As he explains, perception gives rise to memory and experience, and experience underpins art and science; yet, while experience gains knowledge of particulars, art and science discern universals. In realms of production and practice, experience is invaluable, for those with experience are capable of producing well-made artifacts and performing advantageous deeds. However, arts and sciences reach for more comprehensive understanding. Put differently, whereas those with experience know "that," the others know "why," and are thus capable of explaining and teaching their art. Hence, Aristotle claims:

> the architects (*architektonas*) in each *technē* are more honourable and know in a truer sense and are wiser (*sophōteros*) than the manual artisans (*cheirotechnōn*), because they know the causes of the things that are done (981a30-b2).[20]

Aristotle elaborates this distinction a few lines later, emphasizing it is knowledge of "first causes and the principles of things" that make the *architektōn* "wiser"—having more *sophia* (981b26-982a3).[21]

Underlying these opening arguments of *Metaphysics* are Plato's distinctions between the focused skills of laborers and synthetic concerns of architects, as well as Aristotle's own recurring distinctions between productive, practical and theoretical knowledge. It must be noted, however, that Aristotle, throughout his various writings, does not consistently hold these distinctions, and shows architects operating in and across all three domains. Nevertheless, in *Metaphysics*, it is in articulating limits and kinds of knowledge that Aristotle divulges key aspects of what he means by "architects." Surprisingly, he refers to architects "in each" *technē*, implying each art or sphere of action has its own leading agents defined more by what they know and do than what they make; and, significantly, he asserts that their more comprehensive wisdom entails knowledge of first causes and principles.

For Aristotle, "causes" (*aitia*) and "principles" (*archai*)—better translated as "beginnings"—account for how and why actions and things come into being and become knowable. Book delta (5) of *Metaphysics* reviews the many senses of these key terms, including the material, formal, efficient and final causes, or *teloi* (1013a24-b3); and the varieties of *archai,* ranging from tangible starting points and foundations, to elemental matter from which life originates, to basic premises and best hypotheses from which topics become comprehensible (1012b33-1013a23). *Archai* also encompass willful "choices" that initiate change, including the decisive directives and advice of civic authorities, as well as those "arts" (*technai*) that bring about transformation. In this regard, Aristotle emphasizes that "the arts, and of these especially the archi-

tectonic arts (*architektonikai*)," are called *archai* (1013a13-14). He also clarifies that "all causes are *archai*" (1013a16), and *archai* include ends: for, as he explains elsewhere, "the end aimed at is the starting-point of our thought, the end of our thought the starting-point of action."[22] Aristotle culminates his definition of beginnings with reference to ultimate ethical ends: "the good and the beautiful are the *archē* both of the knowledge and the movement of many things" (1013a22-3). So, to summarize, for Aristotle, architects and architectonic arts ought to have knowledge of *archai,* and these material, cultural and intellectual *archai* appear to include all manner of pertinent beginnings, means and ends. As we shall see, this philosophy of *archai* outlined in *Metaphysics* helps us comprehend the manifold and reciprocal agencies embedded in the "architect of the end" in *Nicomachean Ethics.* But, what are we to make of Aristotle's surprising plurality of architects and architectonic arts?

Much as the Stranger in Plato's *Statesman* recognizes that statesmen act like architects insofar as they lead dedicated arts toward broader civic aims, Aristotle realizes that certain arts guide others. But Aristotle goes further in naming the general class of such guiding arts architectonic. In other words, "architectonic" does not solely concern the art of architects, but rather qualifies any individual or art capable of knowingly leading others to more encompassing ends. Although Aristotle comes to cast politics as the most definitive architectonic art, several revealing variations may be found in his work. For instance, ship design and navigation are architectonic arts compared to shipbuilding; on the topic of diction, elocution and rhetoric are architectonic arts compared to poetics; and an architectonic physician would be involved in judging matters concerning the art of medicine. Each of these examples warrants brief review.

In a discussion of matter and form in the *Physics*, Aristotle notes that while productive arts make material objects (such as a ship), other arts govern their ends by directing production (as would a ship's architect), and/or by understanding use (as would a ship's helmsman). Both of these directive and using arts are "architectonic" (194b2-4).[23] Aristotle's example of an architectonic end user is worth elaborating: a helmsman—by knowing the sea, the weather, the stars, the destinations, the arts of steering and navigation, and the benefits and detriments of differently shaped hulls—would know a ship's overall performance and, thus, have a significant share in directing its making toward the best results. Such a user is architectonic not for knowing techniques of material construction, but for knowing the best form of use—"form" (*eidos*) entailing not merely shape, but performativity. These architectonic arts are not mutually exclusive. In the same passage Aristotle grants that some arts, like that of the "house-builder" (*oikodomos*), entail knowledge of both making and use (194a25-27). Thus, Aristotle implies that architects would know the best beginnings and ends of both production and performance—how and why what is made performs well in use. In his *Poetics* and *Politics,* he extends the architectonic qualification to arts more socially constructive.

Toward the end of his *Poetics,* having treated dramatic plot and character, Aristotle turns to the topic of "diction" (*lexis*). However, he claims the theory of diction belongs not to poetry but to the actor's art of elocution, and the "*architectonikēn*" art, by which he implies rhetoric, or possibly the art of dramatic direction (1456b11). Whereas poetry is responsible for poetic composition, and elocution concerns

dramatic delivery, the architectonic art would analyze, interpret and judge the composition's performance and reception, evaluating its inflections, turns of phrase, effects and pertinence to occasion.

A digression in *Politics* brings architectonic to the art of medicine, then back to the political electorate. Questioning the capability of the populace to choose the best political leaders, Aristotle raises the parallel example of evaluating physicians. The best judges of a physician's work, he claims, are not laymen, but medical practitioners, together with "*architektonikos*" physicians, and those who either study or teach medicine (1282a3-5). However, he admits, experts are not always the best judges. In some arts, the better judges are all those involved in an art's benefits and use—the end users (as argued above). For instance, "knowledge of the house is not limited to the builder only," but extends to its inhabitants, just as the best judges of a feast are its guests, not its cook (1282a20-23). Bringing these observations back to bear on the public electoral process, Aristotle wisely concludes that, although some specialized figures (like treasurers and generals) may be best appointed by political experts, the collective populace would (in healthy regimes) best judge public representatives, since "each individual among the many has a share of excellence (*aretē*) and practical wisdom (*phronēsis*)" (1281b3-4).[24] And, so, in this digression, the architectonic qualification tacitly shifts from experts (who are vulnerable to self-interest) to the knowing *polis* as a whole—to the heterogeneous community constituting the city and living with the political results.

Regardless of field, what unifies the architectonic arts in the above set of examples is knowledge of the worlds within which particular works and practices would interact. Such knowledge of relevant cultural contexts—the world of the sea, of language arts, medicine, or city life—enables the direction of related arts toward the best ends. Individuals with such knowledge would be capable of deliberating well and deciding wisely, making the best possible decisions in view of their appropriately comprehensive understanding and experience. The protagonists of architectonic arts do not necessarily have all the technical skills to produce the work in question (the helmsman does not build the ship, the rhetorician does not compose the dramatic poem). Rather, by involvement in the use and performance of what others make, architectonic agents have the requisite capabilities and foresight to judge whether the work might be, in the end, good.

The next set of examples makes the processes inherent to architectonic judgment more explicit. Here architects are tied to a trio of intellectual capabilities governing decision-making: reasoning (*logos*); deliberating in view of practical action (*phronēsis*); and thorough thinking (*dianoia*)—literally, using the mind (*nous*) all the way through, across, or from side-to-side (*dia*). These are powers not simply to reason and think, but to reason and think in ways that are both pertinent to particular situations and comprehensive in their considerations and implications. In an aside of *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle calls such full and cogent thinking "practical and architectonic intelligence (*dianoia*)" (1217a6-7). The ensuing passages from Aristotle's political and ethical inquiries expand on these cognitive capabilities.

In the opening book of *Politics*, as a prelude to examining political structures of cities, Aristotle reviews the governance of those communities of which a *polis* is composed: domestic households. His purpose is to critically identify and understand different kinds of leadership. In this context, he uses the

example of architects to help describe the directive agency of household managers. Initially, in a way that is simultaneously poetic and offensive (to modern ears), he explains that household managers require slaves as "ministers of action" to operate the tools and instruments of production. For, he says, such instruments do not move of their own accord, "obeying or anticipating the will of others like the statues of Daedalus or the tripods of Hephaestus," for if they did, then "architects would not need assistants, nor masters slaves" (1253b35).[25] While rejecting Aristotle's views on slavery, we may learn from his portrayal of the dynamic between leading and assisting agents, which he euphemistically suggests can resemble that magically anticipatory dynamic between mythic artisans and obeisant automata. Yet whereas Daedalus and Hephaestus initiate wondrous works through ineffable cunning, domestic and civic leaders need both skilled collaborators and skill in leading them, since mortal leaders bring about transformation not by magic, but through social interaction, persuasive communication, and, most importantly for Aristotle, deliberative reasoning, or *logos*. Thus, ultimately rejecting house-masters (and slave-masters) as models for statesmen (1255b16-39), Aristotle identifies *logos* (not familial blood ties) as the primary agent responsible for fostering common bonds, equity and order in society. In the *Politics*, *logos* is defined, foremost, as that discursive power which discloses what is helpful and harmful, just and unjust (1253a14-16). A few chapters later, Aristotle personifies this justly and socially constructive power of *logos* as architect. While every free member of a household and city would have some share in this intellectual capacity, leading agents must have deliberative reasoning power "in its fullness" (*telios*), as they are obliged to discover and choose (with and on behalf of others) the best means for best ends. This deliberative work, Aristotle claims, "demands an architect, and *logos* is architect" (1260a18-19).

In a similar passage of *Magna Moralia, phronēsis* is architect. The personification arises in this way: following an inventory of moral excellences (courage, moderation, wittiness, and so forth), Aristotle describes the intellectual excellences (*aretai*), especially *phronēsis*, the "capacity for deliberation" by which one strives to choose, judge and see things "rightly" (1197b13-14). To portray the peculiar way in which *phronēsis* is active and practical, Aristotle gives the example of architects, who possess the power of making by virtue of their deliberations, decisions and directions. Thus, an architect is said to have *made* a building as much as its builder (*oikodomos*). Extending this analysis to all excellences, Aristotle concludes, "all the excellences are practical, and *phronēsis* is a kind of *architektōn* of them; for as she directs, so the excellences and good men act" (1198b6-7).[26] The subsequent passage tempers this authority by re-qualifying *phronēsis* as a good housekeeper, or steward, appropriately dispensing work to others so that the head of the house (*sophia*) may leisurely pursue philosophical study (1198b10-16). This governing yet medial (even servile) role of *phronēsis* recurs in *Nicomachean Ethics*, when Aristotle admits it strange that "*phronēsis,* though inferior to *sophia*, will exercise greater authority" (1143b33-4). But, as he clarifies, this is because *phronēsis* issues orders not *to sophia* but for its sake, providing for *sophia's* "coming into being" (1145a8). Thus, by implication, these passages cast architects, acting with *phronēsis*, as both serving wisdom and generating preconditions for its flourishing.

Aristotle argues for the *activity* of intellectual excellences also in book seven of *Politics*. Just prior to presenting his celebrated description of an imagined best *polis,* Aristotle defends the practical value of philosophical speculation. Against those who would value political life but dismiss a life of contemplation (*bios theōrētikos*) as inactive, impractical and unproductive, Aristotle argues that theory is indeed an excellent form of *praxis*:

> the thoughts (*dianoēseis*) and contemplations (*theōrias*) which are independent and complete in themselves [are practical]; since acting well (*eupraxia*), and therefore a certain kind of action, is an end, and even in the case of external actions, [the architects (*tous architektonas*), through their thinking (*tais dianoiais*), are] most truly said to act (1325b20-24).[27]

This passage makes clear what has been intrinsic in the above series of examples: that thinking oriented toward action is more (not less) active than overtly productive arts; and that theoretical contemplation, if practiced well, is an end in itself. In Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (as in *Magna Moralia*) such cognitive capabilities are discussed under the heading of intellectual, or dianoetic, excellences (*aretai dianoetikai*). These thinking powers guide ethical and theoretical action toward manifesting and contemplating what is "good." With this we turn to a final set of corroborating examples and to Aristotle's most comprehensive provocation that architects have political and philosophical obligations to contemplate, choose and manifestly pursue such an end.

In *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle involves architects in three interrelated ways: to define politics as an "architectonic" art, one that leads and supports other arts in striving toward ends that are good for the city; to distinguish (within this political art) an "architectonic" *phronēsis*, the scope of which entails not personal choices made in isolation but representative decisions concerning civic affairs; and to identify the political philosopher as an "architect of the end," one capable of discerning the comprehensive "good" at which a city ought to aim and making this target conspicuous for others. Since aspects of these points have been sketched above, the following review of passages will also serve as a summary of the multifaceted practical, ethical and theoretical role Aristotle projects for architects and architectonic arts. Because architectonic terminology is integral to pivotal arguments of his ethical inquiry, it is best to consider the passages in relation to the philosophical work as a whole.

At the start of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle optimistically claims that every art, inquiry, action, and choice aims at some good as its end. However, he acknowledges, such ends vary: "of medicine, the end is health; of shipbuilding, a ship; of generalship, victory; of household management, wealth" (1094a8-9). Aside from varying in outcome, such ends vary in scope and significance. Some are narrowly focused, others more encompassing. He gives an example: "just as bridle making and such other arts... fall under horsemanship, while this art and every action related to warfare fall under generalship, so in the same manner, some arts fall under one capacity, others under another" (1094a10-15). Honing in on his subject, he then explains:

> in *all* of them [*sc.* sciences, arts, and capacities], the ends of the architectonic ones (*architektonikōn*) are more choiceworthy than all those that fall under them, for these latter are pursued for the sake of the former...

> If, therefore, there is some end (*telos*) of our actions that we wish for on account of itself, the rest being things we wish for on account of this end... clearly this would be the good (*agathon*), that is, the best (*ariston*). And with a view to our life, then, is not the knowledge of this good of great weight, and [if we discern it] would we not, like archers in possession of a target, better hit on what is needed? If this is so, then one must try to grasp, in outline at least, whatever it is and to which of the sciences or capacities it belongs.

> But it might be held to belong to the most authoritative and most architectonic one (*architektonikēs*), and such appears to be the political art (*politikē*). (1094a15-28).[28]

With these opening arguments, Aristotle establishes interrelated hierarchies of arts, ends, and goods. But hierarchy itself is not the goal. His purpose is best understood not simply as vertical evaluation (ranking certain arts higher or lower than others), but more as practical orchestration for the sake of mutually beneficial results. The architectonic art would deploy and direct a plurality of civic arts (which, in turn, direct others), deciding which ought to be performed and learned (and to what degree), with the aim of securing and preserving what is good for the *polis* as a whole (1094b1-11). Employing a spatial metaphor, Aristotle explains (in the passage immediately following) that the architectonic end "would *encompass* those of the others" (1094b6), "encompassing" (*periechein*) meaning, literally, "to hold" (*echein*) "around" (*peri-*). This implies the architectonic art would actively encircle, delimit and support multifarious goods within its protective and edifying embrace—as a city would hold its citizens, and ether the earth.[29] This embracing gesture presents the architectonic art less as an upper rung on a hierarchal ladder and more as a surrounding horizon, palpable yet ambient. The image is more inclusive than divisive. This embracing-encompassing function is also a feature definitive of "place" (*topos*), as Aristotle describes it in the fourth book of his *Physics*.[30] Thus, we could say that the architectonic art of politics, at its best, creates a bounded place—a supportive delimited situation—for many good things to come into being.

Together with supporting a city's myriad goods, Aristotle posits the architectonic art as possessing knowledge of a single comprehensive "good"—the best "end" (*telos*) and "target" (*skopos,* root of the English word "scope") at which a whole *polis* ought to aim. According to Aristotle, everyone agrees that this target's name is *eudaimonia* (conventionally translated as "happiness"), but they disagree on what it actually is (1095a18-21). Working toward his promised "outline" of this ultimate good—a "sketch" he hopes others will later fill in[31]—he comes to define *eudaimonia* as an activity of "living well" and "acting well," consisting of *eupraxia*, "good-practice" or "good conduct" (1095a18-20; 1098b21-2). In his discussion of magnificence, Aristotle offers some examples of *eupraxia* at the scale of the city: hosting foreign guests; leading diplomatic embassies; participating in gift exchanges; equipping ships; ornamenting one's house in ways that ennoble the *polis*; and supporting great (*mega*), beautiful (*kalos*) and wondrous (*thaumaston*)

works, including sacred buildings, public offerings, choral performances, and civic feasts (1122b16-1123a19). However, since the good of a city depends on good actions of citizens, Aristotle's primary concern (the core of his treatise) is to describe varieties of good conduct.

Books three to five of *Nicomachean Ethics* outline eleven such "ethical excellences" (*aretai* ēthikai), each defined as the middle, or mean (*meson*), between extremes. For instance, courage is the mean between cowardliness and recklessness; and friendliness is a middle disposition between being unfriendly (quarrelsomeness) and overly friendly (flattery). Such excellences (even magnificence) are, thus, in-between, not on top. This is neither a valorization of mediocrity, nor a pacification of individuality, but rather an agitation for appropriately empowering agency—even anger is praiseworthy in some situations (1125b33). Excellent conduct entails both feeling and acting with apt moderation, "when one ought and at the things one ought, in relation to those people whom one ought, for the sake of what and as one ought—all these constitute the middle as well as what is best" (1106b21-23). However, discerning the exemplary middle way in the variegated flux of life situations is difficult. It is not simply a matter of calculating a half-way mark, as on a ruler; but more, as the Stranger in Plato's *Statesman* suggested, reckoning with an array of dynamic contingencies to discover and choose what is most moderate, appropriate, timely and obliging in particular circumstances. Drawing on another spatial analogy, Aristotle clarifies that, in practice, the middle is not a point, but a region: "there is a certain defining boundary (*horos*) of the middles" (1138b23).[32] *Horoi* (plural of *horos*) were common boundary stones in ancient Greece, permanently marking perimeters and thresholds of properties, such as the open public area of a temple precinct (*temenos*), a marketplace (*agora*), or, more regionally, the frontiers of a city-state (*polis*). Just as multiple boundary stones would delimit spaces of proper sacred and civic action in a *polis*, Aristotle proposes ethical *horoi* to delimit and orient conduct in daily life. Thus, while looking to an excellent "target" one "tightens and loosens" the sinews of conduct within a bounded region of appropriateness—between excesses and deficiencies (1138b22-3). Aristotle's treatise discursively demarcates these boundaries, establishing an ethical frame of reference—a horizon (of which *horos* is root)—in relation to which various manifestations of good action (*eupraxia*) and *eudaimonia* might play out.

Having established regions of ethical action, Aristotle, in book six, seeks to clarify the correct mode of reasoning (*orthos logos*) by which one would become skilled in aiming at the excellent middles. Considering each of the various ways of apprehending truth,[33] he predictably emphasizes *phronēsis*, which, like an architect (as mentioned above), enacts flexible decision-making in the midst of difficult situations. Aristotle then elaborates the deliberative, decisive and directive capacities of *phronēsis*, many of which have been sketched above. However, he introduces a new distinction: "a certain architectonic"—within the scope of political *phronēsis*—oriented toward framing those general limiting conditions that might encourage good actions in particular circumstances (1141b22). He clarifies, somewhat, a few lines later:

> Of *phronēsis* that is concerned with a city, one part is an *architektonikē phronēsis*, namely, the legislative art (*nomothetikē*); the other, concerned with particulars, bears the name that is common to them, 'the political art,' and is bound up with action and deliberation. For a specific decree is a matter of action, as it is the last thing (in the process of deliberation). Thus people say that only those (who issue decrees) are engaged in political life, for they alone act, just as *cheirotechnai* [manual artisans] do (1141b25-28).

Within the encompassing architectonic art of politics, Aristotle identifies an architectonic art of establishing general laws, and this legislative practice is architectonic because it, in turn, encompasses and guides the more particularized art of negotiating specific decrees with a view to the good. In spite of what "people say," each of these domains is political and practical, and each is architectonic in its own way. Whereas lawmakers (and city founders) framed general laws, any advocate in the Assembly could negotiate particular decrees—ultimately decided by popular vote.[34] Both kinds of political agents would (ideally) act with *phronēsis*; however, they performed differently. Fashioning decrees involved hands-on politicking amid the people, deliberating and adjusting laws in accommodation of specific circumstances to ensure equity. Aristotle compares this task to that of a mason working with a malleable leaden rule to fit each irregular stone into a cohesive whole (1137b26-32)—thus, his apt comparison to manual artisans. Alternatively, the preliminary work of founding more general constitutional laws (conceived with appropriate looseness so as to be adaptable) demanded more synthetic consideration of local and global *archai*: knowing the best starting points to help bring a city's good into being, and understanding this city in relation to others—past, foreign and future. Those performing with "architectonic *phronēsis*" would make decisions in consideration of an appropriate mix of particulars and universals, including remembered and imagined particulars of cities—not only as they were and are, but as they might and ought to be.

This example again demonstrates the plasticity, inclusivity, and mobility of Aristotle's architectonic qualification. Its scope and capabilities are general and loose enough so as to be adapted—like a malleable rule—to diverse arenas of action, without losing sight of any architectonic art's fundamental target: obligations to the common good. In the final example, Aristotle bends and extends the architect qualification to himself.

In book seven, Aristotle finds that to advance his inquiry he "must make another beginning (*archē*)" (1145a15). He proceeds to describe kinds of conduct falling outside the bounds of appropriateness, ultimately advocating for self-restraint and perseverance. He then returns to his sketch of the good. Seeking to correct received opinion that *eudaimonia* can be reduced to the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain (criteria challenged in Plato's *Gorgias*), Aristotle suggests that this exemplary mode of well-being entails a middle disposition mingling the two. For he admits there are certain "wondrous" pleasures "intermixed" with *eudaimonia* (1177a22-27), just as there are certain pains accompanying noble deeds (1104b11). But, more importantly, Aristotle argues that this ultimate good is found not by pleasure-seeking in itself but by careful thought and correct choice, guided by consideration of all aspects of the good:

> Contemplating (*theōrēsai*) what concerns pleasure and pain belongs to him who philosophizes about the political art. For he is the architect of the end (*tou telous architekōn*) with a view to which we speak of each thing as being bad or good in an unqualified sense (1152b1-4).

While an experienced politician may bring about what is good in particular situations, the political philosopher—in fully contemplating both particulars and universals—would, like an architect, be capable of critically discerning and making manifest for others the ultimate common good at which a city ought to aim. This optimistic pursuit should not be mistaken for suggesting that architects *are* good. There is nothing inherently good about architects. Indeed, Demosthenes, the great Athenian orator and exact contemporary of Aristotle twice refers to "architects" of deceitful and malicious schemes.[35] However, Aristotle presents architects not at their worst, but at their best—projecting architects as they ought and might yet be. In effect, with these lines and throughout the subsequent passages, Aristotle posits the political philosopher, the "architect of the end," as a teacher of potential lawgivers,[36] but also of any receptive citizen willing to take pains to pursue and produce a shared *ethos* of *eudaimonia*.

Conclusion: Beginning Again

Aristotle closes *Nicomachean Ethics* with two books describing various forms of friendship, especially the rare community of "complete friendship" (*teleia philia*) among those sharing in a pursuit of wisdom.[37] Correspondingly, in the tenth and final book he posits "complete *eudaimonia*" as an activity "coextensive with *theōria*."[38] Yet, in spite of these efforts toward completion, Aristotle admits, in conclusion, that he has not yet reached his "end" (*telos*), for his primary purpose has been to cultivate good actions not only of individuals but of cities (1179a35-b2). Thus, *Ethics* becomes the *archai* for civic transformation. As is well known, his closing chapters open an inquiry on political constitutions, anticipating his treatise on *Politics*. And *Politics*, arguably, ends with a call for architecture, for establishing appropriate public buildings, monuments and festivals with a view to sustaining social harmony and participation in practices of democracy (1321a35-1321b4).[39]

What, then, of architects? Throughout this review, Plato and Aristotle have been shown to consistently present architectonic agents as exemplary civic and intellectual leaders acting in awareness of their own (and others') limits, with knowledge of the most appropriate *archē*, and with a view to the most comprehensive aims—the common good. This discloses an alternative and more accurate etymology of architects: not as master-builders but as leaders and makers of beginnings (*archai*).

The aim of this essay has been not only to rediscover the discursive beginnings for a renewed philosophy of architecture, but to suggest how these philosophical *archai* might help present-day archi-

tects reimagine the full relevance of their still contested role. Plato and Aristotle give us no incontestable answers to our predicaments, but their inquiries can assist us in arriving at the best questions concerning what is good. As the scholar and teacher Christopher Long writes,

> The good is thus at once elusive and alluring. Its transformative political power comes not to those who pretend to possess it but rather only to those who recognize that the source of its power lies in the way it requires each new generation to take it up as a question and work it out in living dialogue together.[40]

The closing line of *Nicomachean Ethics* looks forward to this subsequent task, which at the close of this essay we must each take up as our own: "With this as our beginning, then, let us speak" (1181b23).

Notes

1   Cicero, *de Officii* 1.151.

2   In these early inscriptions, which are more contractual than commemorative, an "architect," often called out by name, is made responsible for specific tasks: namely, preparing overall specifications (*syngraphai*) for designated works and, sometimes, detailed measures (*metra*), models (*paradeigmata*), and templates (*anagrapheus*); presenting specifications to Council (the *Boulē*); providing on-site direction; supervising ongoing construction together with appointed treasurers and sacred officials; and reporting back to the people in the Athenian Assembly (the *Ecclēsia*). See especially, *IG* I³ 35; *IG* I³ 64; *IG* I³ 52; *IG* I³ 32; *IG* I³ 79; *IG* I³ 78; *IG* I³ 474; *IG* II² 1685; and *IG* II² 1666. *IG = Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin, 1873-), digitally available at http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/. For a translation and discussion of one of the most intact inscriptions concerning Philon's Arsenal at Pireaus (*IG* II² 1685), see J.A. Bundgaard, Mnesicles. *A Greek Architect at Work*, Trans. Ingeborg Nixon. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1957), 117-21.

3   Herodotus, *Histories* 2.175.5; 3.60.3-4; 4.87.1-88.1; 7.36.1.

4   Aeschylus, *Dikē Play* 16. Lisa Landrum, "Ensemble Performances: Architects and Justice in Athenian Drama," in *Architecture and Justice: Judicial Meanings in the Public Realm*, ed. Nicholas Temple, Jonathan Simon and Renee Tobe (Farnham/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 245-56.

5   Euripides, *Cyclops* line 477 (circa 424, or 408 BCE); Aristophanes, *Peace* 305 (421 BCE). Lisa Landrum, "Performing Theōria: Architectural Acts in Aristophanes' *Peace*," in *Architecture as a Performing Art*, ed. Gray Read and Marcia Feuerstein (Farnham/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 27-43.

6   The demiurge is twice called a carpenter, builder, or "framer" (*tektainomenos,* 28c6, 68e5), and is repeatedly said to engage in "framing" (*tektainomai,* a verb form of *tektōn*, 30b, 33b, 36e, 45b, 70e, 91a).

7   Trans. Seth Benardete, *The Being of the Beautiful. Plato's Theaetetus, Sophist and Statesman. Translated and with Commentary* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006. First edition 1984), iii, 1-67. My translation substitutes "architect" for Benardete's "master-builder" and "leader" for "ruler." Subsequent translations of *Statesman* are from this edition.

8   For this expression, and the value of such digressions in advancing Plato's key arguments, see Eric Voegelin, *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Vol. 16, Order and History, Vol. III, Plato and Aristotle,* ed. Dante Germino (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2000. First published 1957), 204.

9   Plato, *Theaetetus,* Trans. F.M. Cornford in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato,* ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series LXXI, 1961), 845-919. *Theaetetus* is the first dialogue in a trilogy that also includes the *Sophist* and *Statesman.*

10   *Nicomachean Ethics* 1094b12-26; 1137b26-32.

11   On these consequences, see Voegelin, *Plato and Aristotle*, 219-20.

12   Plato, *Gorgias,* Trans. W.D. Woodhead in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato,* ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, 229-307. Subsequent translations of *Gorgias* are from this edition, unless noted.

13   "Revenues," or "tributes" (*phoros*) were obligatory monetary payments made to Athens by its allies. The pooled fund was intended for collective defense, but Pericles was accused of redirecting surplus money to building monuments on the Acropolis.

14   Voegelin, *Order and History, Vol. III, Plato and Aristotle*, 78.

15   This translation by Christopher Long, *Socratic and Platonic Political Philosophy: Practicing a Politics of Reading* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 45, with discussion.

16   Plato frequently involves *technē* terminology as a foil against which to qualify a *technē* of ethical knowledge, which is *not* exactly *technē* in any instrumental sense. On these two types of *technē* in Plato's moral philosophy, see David Roochnik, *Of Art and Wisdom. Plato's Understanding of Techne* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

17   On Socrates "leading the *logos,*" see Long, *Socratic and Platonic Political Philosophy*, 53-9.

18   Jean-François Pradeau, *Plato and the City. A New Introduction to Plato's Political Thought,* trans. Janet Lloyd (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002. First published in 1997 as *Platon et la cité*), 41-2.

19   Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution,* trans. F.G. Kenyon, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle. Bollingen Series LXXI*, 2 Vols, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Clayton, GA: InteLex Corporation, 1992).

20   Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* trans. W.D. Ross, *Complete Works.*

21   In this passage, Aristotle sets up a series of overlapping and nested relationships of which the architect is a part: "the point of our present discussion is this, that all men suppose what is called wisdom (*sophia*) to deal with the first causes (*aitia*) and the beginnings (*archai*) of things. This is why, as has been said before, the man of experience is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any perception whatever, the artist (*technitēs*) wiser than the men of experience, the *architektōn* than the *cheirotechnou,* and the theoretical (*theōrētikai*) kinds of knowledge to be more of the nature of wisdom than the productive (*poiētikōn*). Clearly then wisdom (*sophia*) is knowledge about certain causes (*aitia*) and principles (*archai*)" *Metaphysics* 981b26-982a3.

22   *Eudemian Ethics* 1227b32-3, trans. J. Solomon, *Complete Works.*

23   *Physics* 194b2-4, "The arts (*technai*), therefore, which govern the matter and have knowledge are two, namely the art which uses the product and the *architektonikē* art which directs the production of it (*poiētikēs*). That is why the using art also is in a sense *architektonikē*; but it differs in that it knows the form (*eidous*), whereas the *architektonikē* art which is directive (*diapherei*) as being concerned with production knows the matter (*hulēs*)." Trans. R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye*, Complete Works.*

24   For a related discussion of every individual's capability and responsibility for judgment in modern society, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Limitations of the Expert" in *Gadamer on Education, Poetry and History. Applied Hermeneutics,* trans. Lawrence Schmidt and Monica Reuss (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 181-92.

25   Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. B. Jowett, *Complete Works.*

26   Aristotle, *Magna Moralia*, trans. St.G. Stock, *Complete Works.* The Athenian statesman Demades, a contemporary of Aristotle, similarly personified *Nous* as architect. In the midst of a lengthy self-defense of his own skills as a counselor, Demades argues, "Force does not enable a man to master even the smallest things. It was inventiveness (*epinoia*) and system (*methodō*) that made him yoke the ox to the plough for the tilling of the land, bridle the horse, set a rider on the elephant, and cross the boundless sea in boats of wood. The *architektōn* and *dēmiourgos* of all these things is Mind (*Nous*)." *On the Twelve Years,* 42, J. O. Burtt, trans., *Minor Attic Orators, vol. II.* Loeb Classical Library, No. 395 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).

27   Aristotle, *Politics,* trans. B. Jowett*, Complete Works.* My insertion restores the missing "architects" to Jowett's translation, following Richard Kraut, *Aristotle Politics Books VII and VIII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

28   Trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

29   In the opening lines of *Politics,* Aristotle presents the *polis* as the best kind of political community since it "encompasses (*periechousa*) all the rest" (1252a6). The notion of ether "encompassing" the earth is found in Plato (*Timaeus* 31a), Euripides (Frag. 919), and the fragments of Anaximander. Elsewhere, *periechein* qualifies human embraces—both protective and affectionate.

30   *Physics* 212a28-28, "Place (*topos*) is thought to be some surface and like a vessel and surrounder (*periechon*)." For an important interpretation of Aristotle's notion of *topos,* see Edward S. Casey, *Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 53-6, 89.

31   Aristotle's word for "outline" is *tupos,* an impression like that made by a stamp on a metal coin, a seal in wax, or a footprint in sand. Later he refers to his "sketch" of the good: "for perhaps one ought to outline it first and then fill it in later. It might seem to belong to everyone to advance and fully articulate things whose sketch (*perigraphē*) is in a noble [or beautiful (*kalōs*)] condition, and time is a good discoverer of or contributor to such things... for it belongs to everyone to add what is lacking" (1098a20-26).

32   On Aristotle's imagery of ethical boundary stones, see Sandra Peterson, "*Horos* (Limit) in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," *Phronesis* 33.3 (March 1988): 233-250. On the history of

the trope, found especially in Greek tragedy, see Deborah Steiner, "Lines of Demarcation: Aesch[ylus] *Ag*[*amemnon*] 485-6," *Classical Quarterly* 62.2 (Dec. 2012): 476-85.

33   Aristotle introduces five ways of apprehending truth: art (*technē*), science (*epistēmē*), practical wisdom (*phronēsis*), theoretical wisdom (*sophia*), and understanding (*nous*). Honing in on *phronēsis*, he provisionally sidelines *epistēmē* and *technē,* because *epistēmē* is concerned more with universal and timeless matters, whereas human affairs are particular and changeable, and *technē* is concerned more with things made than actions performed. He further deems *sophia* to belong especially to *epistēmē*, the most theoretical kind of intelligence; whereas *nous* (like *logos*)*,* being a fundamental power of thinking and intuiting required to grasp *archai* and make decisions, suffuses all.

34   "Law" takes its name directly from the word for a common "custom" (*nomos*), whereas "decree" (*psēphisma*) is derived from "pebbles" (*psēphoi*) used as electoral ballots for calculating votes in Assembly. Mogens Herman Hansen, "Nomos and Psephisma in Fourth-Century Athens," *The Athenian Ecclesia: A Collection of Articles,* 1976-83 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1983), 161-76.

35   Demosthenes, *Speeches*, Against Boeotus, II (40.32); Against Dionysodorus (56.11).

36   Voegelin emphasizes this point, *Plato and Aristotle*, 337. It has been argued that Aristotle's primary audience consisted of young men eager to become political leaders. See Stephen Salkever, "Teaching the Questions: Aristotle's Philosophical Pedagogy in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics,*" *The Review of Politics* 69 (2007): 192-214.

37   1156b7, 1157a29-32, and in general all of books 8 and 9.

38   1177a11-17, 1178b30, and in general book 10, chapters 7 through 9.

39   Scholars have long debated the proper sequence of the eight books of *Politics*. For an argument that places this sixth book as the last, see Peter L. Phillips Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the Politics of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

40   Long, *Socratic and Platonic Political Philosophy,* 6.

About the Author

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Re:Reading Scarpa

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> Some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.
> — *Sir Francis Bacon*

Abstract

During the 1985-86 academic year Italo Calvino gave the Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University. In his third talk on "Quickness" he declared, "I do not wish to say that quickness is a value in itself. Narrative time can also be delaying, cyclic, or motionless. In any case, a story is an operation carried out on the length of time involved, an enchantment that acts on the passing of time, either contracting or dilating it."[1] Umberto Eco, a decade later, referenced Calvino in the third of his own lectures at Harvard entitled "Lingering in the Woods."[2] In that essay, Eco described a number of temporal strategies employed by various authors who explore the pleasures of lingering.

In this short essay I will show that such temporal tactics described discussed by Eco and Calvino share uncanny similarities Carlo Scarpa's architecture. It is my wager that a careful reader of Scarpa's work will, inevitably, linger. I will discuss two museum projects in particular—the extension to the Canova Museum in Possagno and the renovation of the Castellvechio Museum, in Verona—in both of which Scarpa intentionally posits disruptions in the uniform nature of processional time through the work and location of art. Indeed, Scarpa's work is full of delays, distractions, and redirections that, if followed, pres-

ent enchanting experiences not unlike those described by Calvino and Eco in their own work. Thus I hope to demonstrate that the similarities between architecture and narrative are not only topical, thematic, or even spatial, but temporal as well.

Narrative Time

Stories have the ability to situate oneself in another time and place. "Once upon a time" or "It was a dark and stormy night" indicate that the story is not "here and now" but rather "then and there." An additional and perhaps distinct temporal space opens up when one opens a book. Joyce and Proust, to name only two exemplary authors, have explored such temporalities in their wonderful and provocative work. Indeed, much ink has been spilled on the relationship between temporality and narrative discourse.[3] Rather than making a general comparison of approaches, I will look to Umberto Eco's discussion of narrative time to develop a framework through which I will then investigate Carlo Scarpa's approach to museum design.

Eco, building on the work of Paul Ricoeur, named three variations of time found in fiction: story time, discourse time and reading time. Story time is the amount of time that takes place in a story. Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*, for example, takes eighty days of story time (actually eighty-one for Phileas Fogg as he travelled eastward). This can also be referred to as the plot. Discourse time is the time needed to tell the story of those eighty days in the balloon. Reading time is simply how long it takes one to read the text. Dialogue may align discourse and reading times, but the three times are rarely in sync. This lack of correspondence implies that the author may employ various temporal tactics that serve to make the act of writing and reading more than the simple transmission and reception of events. Each of the times may, for example, be paced differently and for various effects, e.g., foreshadowing plays with plot and the reading time by giving the readers a hint of what they will soon read. The plot may unfold quickly or be extended, and, in effect, affect the readers' experience of duration.

The relation between story time and discourse time often affects our reading time. Description, tone, word count, and pacing can affect this. Reading the machine-gun-like staccato of a hardboiled novel by Mickey Spillane has a different pace than, for example, the slow droning on of a Don DeLillo novel.[4] An author may offer an abundance of detail or a mass of particulars that are less a representational device than a strategy for slowing down or speeding up the reader. Eco refers to this as hallucinatory time, and the work of Robbe-Grillet is offered as an example. Eco also mentions circumnavigational time in which the author adjusts points of view in both time and space. Here, time can be varied through detail, complexity of reference, or a variety of paths. The work of Calvino and Borges offers such an approach. Typically an author employs a combination of these strategies. In the lectures on lingering mentioned above, Eco describes and then diagrams the various temporalities in the novel *Sylvie* by Gerard de Nerval and shows

that the author does indeed utilize a variety of tactics to tell the tale. After Eco's analysis it is clear that the manner in which the plot is told is as important as what the story is. In *Sylvie*, for example, a typical reader will most likely get lost in the remembrances and flash-forwards. These dream-like temporal digressions, however, are intentional and a key element in the narrative.

From this analysis it is clear that there are more and less appropriate ways to read. Eco recognizes the open nature of any work, but this does not mean that the reader is free to interpret at will, but rather that the reader observe the rules of the game. Eco describes a model reader: "I call the model reader—a sort of ideal type whom the text not only foresees as a collaborator but also tries to create."[5] In a way, the reader is implicit, or may at least be an active agent, in the meaning of the text. There is also an important balance between the model reader and the model author. Eco further explains that, "The model author, on the other hand, is a voice that speaks to us affectionately (or imperiously, or slyly) that wants us beside it. The voice is manifest as a narrative strategy, as a set of instructions which is given to us step by step and which we have to follow when we decide to act as the model reader."[6]

Though tempting to conflate, the reading of a building is not the same as the reading of a book. That said, there are ways in which one can be a model reader of architecture. Much as in Eco's evaluation, it is important that both the reader and author collaborate. The architecture of Carlo Scarpa is not often easy to read. At moments his work seems timeless and at others quite dated. His intentions are difficult to uncover as he did not often speak about his intentions and wrote even less; we can, however, as model readers, attempt to make a close reading to uncover the instructions for reading the spaces.

Carlo Scarpa

According to his friend Aldo Businaro, Carlo Scarpa described himself as "a Man of Byzantium who came to Venice by way of Greece."[7] His words seem to imply that Scarpa was a traveler; however, he rarely left the Veneto, and indeed much of his work is rooted there. He was born in Venice in 1906 to an elementary school teacher and a dressmaker. In 1926 he passed with full marks from the Academy of Fine Arts and began teaching architectural drawing at the Istituto Universario d'Architettua di Venezia (IUAV), where he would teach in various capacities throughout his life. Although careful monographs exist, Scarpa's oeuvre is difficult to comprehend. Much of the work was temporary, partial, or renovated beyond recognition. Scarpa's projects are typically noted for an obsessive relationship with materials and craft, an extreme attention to detail, and a focus on the fragment.[8] Kahn and Wright are often mentioned as influences, but so too is Scarpa's fascination with Japanese culture. Often noted is the timelessness of the work. Other critics note the "Proustian" nature of the architecture without fully explicating what this might mean.[9]

During the late 1920s and early 1930s Italy saw the rise of fascism, especially in the north, and there was not much work for a young architect such as Scarpa. Most scholarship points to this and describes how the social and economic conditions led him into collaboration with the well-known glassmaker Paolo Venini. His designs for Venini, some of which are still in production, redefined ways of working with glass. While this is certainly an important influence in Scarpa's work, it should also be noted that at this time he also began to develop relationships with many important artists in the Veneto at this time and that he did find work designing exhibitions. All told, Scarpa designed at least sixty exhibitions, and many of his most well known commissions were for museums. Later in his life he reflected on the importance of museum work. From Scarpa:

> I have a great passion for works of art, as you know. I have always taken the trouble to learn, to know, to understand, and, it seems to me, to have a real critical awareness. I would not be able to write, to produce a critical article; but I have a lively sense of critical values and how they move me. Indeed, I would rather, on the whole, build museums than skyscrapers – though logic may say otherwise. Since the former may be perhaps creative, while the latter requires one to adapt and subordinate oneself to things as they are.[10]

This creative and critical approach guided the work of many exhibition spaces. I will discuss two examples in which Scarpa is seemingly more concerned with the nature and consequently the location of each piece rather than the room as a whole. This approach, begun in a series of exhibitions, was more fully developed in his museum designs.

Canova Plaster Museum

Opened in 1955 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Canova's birth, the Canova Plaster Museum houses Canova's plaster casts and study models used in the fabrication of the larger marbles. Scarpa's project is an extension to the existing museum designed by Giuseppe Segusini between 1831-1836, the one that houses marble Canova sculptures. The original proposal was to relocate all of the work. Though he was not required to make an extension, Scarpa decided to keep the existing building, and the differences are marked. The first thing a visitor notices in the original gallery is the severe axis. All of the pieces, except one at the conclusion of the axis, are mirrored on either side of the gallery. Each is placed on a pedestal of similar height. Each is spaced evenly apart. Each is to be viewed frontally. One can imagine that Segusini intended that a person view the work in a linear manner, pausing at each piece for a similar amount of time before moving on to the next. Standing at the entry of the older museum and looking to one's right, a visitor encounters a decidedly different approach to the setting out of objects of art.

Entering into the gallery the visitor is greeted by a collage of fragments. In the distance a bust slightly pulled off the wall is framed by a figure seated but looking away, but set at a height in which you notice the sculpture's footwear first. To the right and much lower is another sculpture. You are, however, looking at the side of the piece, and to view the front of the work requires that you circumnavigate to the front. In doing so, you also see the front of two other pieces, though at different heights. Once around the work, and in your peripheral vision, you begin to see the full length of the second gallery. To view each piece in the gallery requires an active looking at various heights, scales and, indeed, a mix of temporalities. In a rare television interview Scarpa described his approach, explaining that, "By paying close attention to how one arranges a plastic object, whether it be sculpture or painting, it is possible to intensify certain qualities of the work."[11] This intensification, say, of a Roman sandal, the fall of fabric in stone, a profile, force the visitor to move around a work, to scrutinize closely, and to survey from a distance in a way that intentionally affects the temporal experience of the work.

Scarpa's gallery follows the existing topography, sloping down slightly. At the end of the galley, the visitor is greeted with a collage, this time framed by a full-height glass wall over a small pool of water, the conclusion of which is the famous study of the three graces. A set of long, low, shallow stairs leads the visitor down one side of the gallery. The scale of the work in the second gallery is even more varied, and at each landing one is tempted to linger around a piece or perhaps to look back. At this point the visitor may also begin to notice the care and craft displayed in the vitrines, also designed by Scarpa to hold the smaller and more delicate pieces. The three spaces, the entry, and the first and second gallery, are each scaled and lit differently, and they also offer a surprisingly varied set of experiences for such a limited space.

A comparison between the two approaches – Segusini's and Scarpa's – is telling. Relating back to Eco's discourse, the story time of each gallery is similar, that is, a series of sculptural pieces displayed for viewing. The narrative time, however, is quite different. Segusini's gallery is much more temporally uniform. He organizes the work in a manner consistent in plan and section, even in elevation. Although visitors are free to linger, it is completely their responsibility to do so. Scarpa's approach is much more temporally varied – a garden of forking paths. He adjusts the organization in plan, section, elevation, and even type of object to set up a conversation between the objects on view as well as such objects and the visitor.

Castelvecchio Museum

Similar tactics are present at the renovation to the Castelvecchio museum in Verona. The site is a complex layering that dates back to a 12th century communal wall, the Castelvecchio proper, built by the Scaligeri family. It was altered in the 19th century for use as a military barracks. In 1924 the building was transformed into a civic museum to house a mix of sculpture and painting from the 12th through 19th centuries. In the

early 20th century Ferdinando Forlati plastered a historicist "Venetian Gothic" façade over the interior of the courtyard. By the time Scarpa was involved, a good portion had been destroyed in the bombings of World War 2. Forlati's façade remained. Scarpa's renovation began in 1956 as the design of a temporary exhibition (*da Altichiero a Pisanello*), then continued to include a structural shoring of walls and, finally, the reorganization of the entire collection that occupied Scarpa for at least an additional twenty years.

One of the most daring design moves here was to place the statue of the Cangrande to the far left of the courtyard, where it is somewhat precariously raised up on an exterior platform. Arguably the most symbolic piece in the collection, the Cangrande becomes the keeper and guardian of the museum and, indeed, this is how Scarpa referred to it. In counterpoint to the Cangrande is the actual entry, located on the right side of the façade. Scarpa moved the entry from the center of the façade to the far right. A double row of hedges, however, forces the visitor from a direct route to the entry. The axiality of the hedges foreshadows that of the galleries – the interior enfilade is parallel to the landscaping. Entering underneath a bell tower, one makes a quick right and then left, goes past and around a small fountain with another right then left, and, finally, enters into the museum. The entry half wall directs the visitor to the museum and away from the exit stair descending from the second level. The entry is certainly intended to slow the pace of the visitor prior to entering the museum and also to offer a variety of perspectives. Indeed, George Dodds in his own analysis of the garden notes that the visitor makes no less than seven changes of direction and even more changes in elevation prior to entering the museum.[12]

Once in the museum the visitor is on axis with an enfilade that cuts through five galleries on the lower level. The organization of the floor existed prior to the renovation, and rather than deconstruct the centuries-old building, Scarpa chose to leave the organization of the rooms intact. In each of the rooms, however, Scarpa organizes each piece in very particular ways. Work is placed so that one rarely confronts sculpture frontally. Moreover, one is not able to walk into a room and quickly survey all of the work at once. Work is placed at differing heights and even on the floor. One enters and might notice the fall of a fabric in a light set against another color, or perhaps the profile of a sculpture framed in the next room. One's interaction with the work is temporally varied and not equidistant; in a way it is more dance than wandering. One can see this in an early sketch showing a visitor's movement through each room.

At the end of the first floor of galleries, one emerges outside and under the Cangrande statue, crosses a moat (unearthed during construction) and enters into another series of galleries. The visitor now sees the Cangrande closer than from the entry, but partially and from below. In the next series of galleries, as with the sculpture, paintings are pulled off of the wall and placed on easels, almost as if the artist were simply pausing to take a break. As a result of this positioning one begins to notice the frame, and the back of the painting (rarely ever seen) is now available for view. Continuing through the gallery, one is led back outside and over a bridge. The Cangrande is now seen at the same level, but from behind. One then enters into the next row of galleries and can, if one dares, go back outside to inspect the sculpture frontally and in much more detail.

From his drawings we can see that Scarpa intended that the Cangrande be viewed from a number of positions and over time. No one view is privileged, but rather the visitor's experience combines to form his or her own whole. Essential is the fact that the experience of the work unfolds and occurs in time. The second floor galleries mimic the organization of the first, but Scarpa moves the circulation to the exterior wall, alongside the river. At the conclusion of the galleries is a stair that leads the visitor down to the entry, where the one-point perspective of the first floor galleries is again presented.

The renovation to the Castelvecchio is interesting in that multiple times exist. To refer back to Eco's classifications, the story time is not unlike that of many civic museums. The narrative time, however, the time it takes to tell the story, operates at a number of levels. From the multiple views of the Cangrande to the collaged planning of the art, and even the severe axial organization of rooms, a visitor is allowed to walk quickly through the museum, or to linger around any detail. While I am not prepared to claim a normative museum design, rooms designed according to chronological, typological, stylistic, or other taxonometric interests, it does seem that Scarpa is proposing something distinctive. In both the extension to the Canova gallery and the renovation of the Castelvecchio, Scarpa proposes an interaction with art that is inherently temporal. It is active and engaged but also allows one to slow down, linger, and perhaps take an inferential walk.

Postscript

Sverre Fehn was in Venice intermittently from 1958-62 while working on the Nordic Pavilion for the Biennale grounds. While there he met Scarpa. The meeting, as described by Fehn years later, was not exactly rich in dialogue. As Fehn recalled, "I remember my short meeting with Carlo Scarpa in Venice. I had an appointment, but he arrived very late. I talked about Oslo, but for Scarpa it was somewhere beyond the Alps, and he remarked, "For me, there is no culture north of the Alps."[13] That said, Fehn was a very good student of the Venetian's work. Fehn returned to Oslo and began work on the Storhamarlåven in Hamar – a museum/archeological site not completely dissimilar in terms of program to the Castelvecchio.

Comparable in terms of site, program, and theme, Fehn's work in Hamar also offers a very particular approach to objects on display. The setting of individual pieces was undertaken almost exclusively by Fehn – his office at that time consisted of himself and one assistant. Just as at Castelvecchio, where Scarpa directs your gaze to the fall of a fabric in stone on the back of a sculpture, Fehn presents a visual dialogue with the work: a necklace that is set on leather to replicate the touch of skin, a scythe that casts a similarly slender shadow, a plow that cuts though a steel plate, a boat that is set on the opposite side of a balustrade so it can be seen from above as if it were in the water, and then, seen from below so as to notice the construction of the boat. Many other examples exist.

Movement through the Storhamarlåven is also similar to that in the museum in Verona. Directly inside, a concrete ramp dissects three concrete boxes, inside of which are the objects excavated from the Bishop's manor. The concrete bridge also allows the visitor to observe the walls of the original structure from an elevated perspective. Here, in a manner similar to the enfilade at Castelvecchio, one can choose to walk quickly through the exhibits or to pause and linger amongst the artifacts. Continuing along the ramp past the three small concrete rooms and turning right into the northern wing, one finds artifacts unearthed from the period after the site had been converted to a working barn. Objects in the north wing of the museum vary in size – from a boat to utensils – and allow for a much more varied display. The floors are pulled away from the existing walls and are cut away so that the floor only occupies half of the area, thus allowing for double height spaces adjacent to each floor. Similar to the arrangement at Castelvecchio, the circulation loops back around to the entry. In both museums the choreography of movement and the interaction with specific objects opens up to multiple readings of the same work; the visitor has the rare experience of seeing the familiar in an unfamiliar way. As Fehn stated, "It is the object that is constant, but the visitor experiences the exhibited object differently…The exhibitor injects a new personality into the object, but it is the visitor who decides if it is understood."[14]

Many other similarities exist, so much so that one that one could argue that Fehn's Storhamarlåven, is a direct translation of the Castelvecchio museum. But that is a story for another day.

Notes

1   Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

2   Umberto Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

3   In addition to the work by Eco Calvino referenced above, Paul Ricoeur's writing and specifically the three volume set of *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-88), is particularly relevant to this topic.

4   Punctuation, location of text on the page, and even various strategies for footnotes may affect the manner in which a reader reads. David Foster Wallace's use of footnotes in *Infinite Jest: A Novel* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996) is a particularly interesting example.

5   Eco, *Six Walks*, 9.

6   Ibid., 15.

7   Aldo Businaro restated this unreferenced but often quoted bon mot. See Giuseppe Zambonini, "Process and Theme in the Work of Carlo Scarpa," in *Perspecta* 20 (1983), 22. Zamboni references a 1981 interview in which Scarpa quotes Eugenio Montale and then says "when my time comes, cover me with these words because I am a man of Byzantium who came to Venice by way of Greece." The words to which Scarpa references to be placed on his epitaph are Montale's. Montale's writing is quite similar to the poem *Sailing to Byzantium* by W. B. Yeats, a poem Montale translated into Italian.

8   Manfredo Tafuri discusses Scarpa's relationship to the fragment as well as others who have framed the work as such. See Manfredo Tafuri, "Carlo Scarpa and Italian Architecture" in *Carlo Scarpa: The Complete Works,* eds. Francesco dal Co and Giuseppe Mazzariol (New York: Rizzoli), 70.

9   M. Dalai Emiliani, "Musei della riconstruzione in Italia, tra disfatta e rivincita della storia," in *Carlo Scarpa a Castelvecchio* (1982), 164.

10   Carlo Scarpa in "Incontri a cura di Gastone Favero: un'Ora con Carlo Scarpa," Radiotelevisione Italiana documentary, 1970.

11   Ibid.

12   George Peter Dodds, "Landscape and Garden in the Work of Carlo Scarpa," Unpublished dissertation from the University of Pennsylvania (January 1, 2000).

13   Per Olaf Fjeld and Sverre Fehn, *Sverre Fehn: The Pattern of Thoughts* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2009), 64.

14   Ibid., 127-28.

About the Author

Marc J. Neveu graduated with a professional degree in architecture after which he went on to complete a post-professional M.Arch and Ph.D. at McGill University in Montréal. While working on his dissertation Marc was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for study in Venice and a Collection Research Grant at the Canadian Centre for Architecture. Neveu has taught history / theory and studio at universities in the United States and Canada. He has published on issues concerning architectural pedagogy in the Italian eighteenth century as well as our contemporary context. In 2014 he was named as the Chair of the School of Architecture at Woodbury University in Los Angeles. Neveu is the current Executive Editor of the *Journal of Architectural Education.*

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The Jesuit Theater of Memory in China

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Abstract

During the late 18th century, European Jesuits built a "Western garden" for Emperor Qianlong. The garden was located within Qianlong's Garden of Perfect Brightness (Yuanmingyuan) complex in the northwestern suburb of Beijing. The destination of the Western garden was an open-air theater designed with the technique of illusory perspective (trompe l'oeil). This Baroque-like garden was part of a garden residence for Qianlong's retirement for which he also built a palace garden, the so-called Qianlong Garden, in the Forbidden City. The terminus of this palace garden was a secret interior theater designed by the Jesuit painters' Chinese students with the technique of illusory perspective. The landscape theme of both theaters is reminiscent of Renaissance theories of theater design, especially Sabastiano Serlio's satiric stage. Qianlong's *follie*-like theaters were both hidden within the most remote corners of the typically Chinese garden context and provided vivid perspectival views of depicted landscapes. These trompe l'oeil mountains, clouds, and rustic order of buildings not only demonstrated Qianlong's entangled cosmic view between the real and fictional, East and West, but also symbolized different yet interactive cultural and religious meanings respectively for the emperor and Jesuits. The link between the satirical and pastoral in Qianlong's theaters helps reveal the ethos which was opened up by theatricality of illusory perspective and fully engaged by the emperor and the Jesuits. The comparison between pictorial perspectives and literary metaphors in Qianlong's mind mirrors the Jesuits' art of memory in China, which resonates with the theater of memory in Renaissance tradition.

Introduction

During the 1740s-70s, European Jesuits designed and built a Baroque garden for the Chinese emperor Qianlong for his retirement. This exotic garden was located in the northeastern corner of the imperial garden complex Yuanmingyuan, the so-called Garden of Perfect Brightness. The Baroque garden starts from a labyrinth, passes through a sequence consisting of gateways, stone mansions and mechanical fountains, and reaches an open-air theater at the eastern end. After the garden was built the emperor commissioned twenty copperplates to represent perspectival views of the garden scenes.[1] While the Western garden of the Yuanmingyuan was under construction in the northwestern suburb of Beijing, Qianlong was also building another garden residence for his retirement, namely Qianlong Garden, in the northeastern corner of the Forbidden City. An interior theater designed by Jesuit-trained Chinese students was hidden at the northern end of the Qianlong Garden. Both the theaters are located in the most remote corners of their garden enclosures and are related to the Jesuit art of illusory perspective (trompe l'oeil) used for stage design. The themes of the stages focus on the depiction of landscapes, which all matches Sebastiano Serlio's theater model of a satiric stage. On the Renaissance and Baroque stages, landscape representations were frequently applied for the embodiment of divinity and the cosmos. Did the Jesuits' stage design in China correspond to Serlio's satiric model? If yes, what did the pastoral scenes mean respectively to the Jesuits and the emperor?

The answers to the above questions require a comparative study between Qianlong's theaters and Renaissance stage theories, especially considering that a copy of Serlio's architectural treatise was stored in the Jesuit church library throughout 18th-century Beijing.[2] The finding of similarities between both sides will reveal the common ground where cultural differences were best presented and began to dialogue and to fuse poetically. This case study will not only demonstrate the historical significance of the Jesuit theater design in China as pioneering cultural encounters during the 18th century, but also provide a historical enlightenment for today's architecture in its forging ahead as a meaningful cultural product in the global and regional contexts.

As a result of a detrimental fire in 1860 the imperial garden complex Yuanmingyuan was destroyed, and left only was a site of ruins where the Western garden once stood. The stage of the open-air theater is a parking lot in the present day outside the ruins, and it cannot be traced for any physical existence. A similar obscurity exists for the interior theater in the Qianlong Garden, where the theater has never been opened to the public and has remained a mystery until recently, when the Palace Museum began to restore the theater. It will be interesting to compare these two theaters since they were constructed in the same period of time and built for the same purpose for the emperor's retirement and, most importantly, were designed with the Jesuit technique of illusory perspective. In addition, there are some coincidences between the two theaters. The first stage is located in the most remote northeastern corner of the Yuanmingyuan garden complex; the second stage, similarly, in the most remote northeastern corner of the Forbidden City. The

first stage is to be viewed towards the east, while the second stage towards the west. They were oriented towards each other in the emperor's mind when he traveled across the long distance between the imperial palace in the heart of Beijing and the garden residence in the northwestern suburb. Was the second stage intentionally oriented towards the first one? If so, did the second stage act as a memory of the first one? The answer for these questions will help reveal the role of the Jesuits' other representation technique, the art of memory, in their theater design in China, which can be compared and related to the Renaissance tradition of the memory theater, including Robert Fludd's model. Fludd's treatise was stored in the Jesuit library in Beijing.[3] The comparison between Qianlong's theaters and Fludd's memory theater will disclose how the trompe l'oeil stage of landscape acted as a mnemonic medium for both the Jesuits and emperor.

The Trompe L'oeil Stage

During the 18th century, the Chinese called the Western technique of linear perspective the "line method" (*xainfa* 线法). The term first appeared in the preface of the 1735 edition of the first Chinese treatise on linear perspective, a book entitled *Shixue* 视学 (Study of Perspective), and written by Nian Xiyao 年希尧. In the prefaces of both the 1729 and 1735 editions, Nian acknowledged the help he had received from the Jesuit painter Lang Shining 郎世宁 (original name, Giuseppe Castiglione), the chief designer of the Jesuit garden in the Yuanmingyuan.[4] The term "line method" was frequently used in the titles of the twenty copperplates of the Jesuit garden. The last copperplate, entitled "Line-Method Paintings East of the Lake," depicts the central perspectival view of the stage set, a set composed with illusory perspective (trompe l'oeil). In the 1729 edition of *Shixue*, the author emphasized that the magic of linear perspective lay in creating a view which looked so "real" (*zhen* 真) that a sense of "wonderfulness" (*miao* 妙) would emerge. Some painters might feel that a literal imitation of reality through painting was tedious, but Nian argued that without thorough imitation through linear perspective, wonder could not take place.[5] His comments are especially true in the stage design where trompe l'oeil views make the audience feel lifelike (*bizhen* 逼真, literally "close in on the real"). In other words, the lifelike effect can only take place through illusory perspective.

        At the stage set in the Yuanmingyuan, the designer applied illusory perspective to create a vivid street view of a European city, with the front ground of a real lake and the background of depicted distant mountains. In a construction drawing of the stage plan made by the Lei family,[6] the court contractor who implemented the Jesuit design, in which six painting panels of houses with trees are arranged respectively on the left and right edges of the central triangular ground to create the trompe l'oeil view in perspective depth. The front panel on each side depicts an arched portico. The focal point of the overall perspective layout is located on the furthest back panels which depict distant mountains.

In the preface of the 1729 edition of *Shixue*, the author listed the usefulness of linear perspective, including depictions of objects, mountains and waters, creatures in nature, etc. He stated that the perspectival depiction of forms could interact with skylight, oblique sunlight, lantern and candle light, shadows, and depth of the view. He pointed out that although a depicted perspectival view looked "natural" (*ziran* 自然), but that when it was perceived by the spectator, it could touch the heart. In this way, linear perspective can utterly explore mystiques and reveal truth.[7] It is important to know when the author attempted to impress the Chinese audience with the magic of linear perspective introduced from the West, he emphasized its "natural," "real," and "true" appearance in comparison with Chinese traditional landscape paintings. This finding explains why illusory perspective was so attractive to the emperor and was passionately applied to the stage designs of his theaters. In the preface of the 1735 edition of *Shixue*, the author continuously emphasized the magic effect of illusory perspective that made a painting look so real that the spectator could mistakenly intend to step into a depicted building or touch a depicted object. He thus concluded with three principles of perspective composition: using focal point and converging lines to draw visual depth; applying shades and shadows to create volumetric images; borrowing skylight to consummate wonderfulness.[8]

In the copperplate of the illusory stage of the Yuanmingyuan, focal point and converging lines compose the depth of buildings; shading, without shadows,[9] is applied to all objects; and skylight subtly touches the surface of each object and makes the water appear wavy, clouds floating, mountains sublime, landscape thriving and houses real for living. The shaded surfaces of the depicted objects clearly show that sunlight comes from the right side, which correctly matches the south in accordance with the location and orientation of the Jesuit garden. This implies that the perfect moment for the emperor to view the stage was at sunset when sunlight came from the west and fully brightened the stage for the best illusory effect without being bothered by the issue of shadows, because shadows at that moment were all hidden behind the painting panels.

When the author Nian of *Shixue* stated that perspective which looked real could touch the spectator's heart, he was inferring that trompe l'oeil perspectives could impress the spectator's mind regarding memory. The Jesuit art of memory was first introduced to China by Matteo Ricci's Chinese book *Xiguo jifa* (Western Art of Memory) (1595). In the book, he stated that the success of memorizing depended on the lifelike effect of images and places. "The more real (*zhen*) the taken image looks, the more impressive the memory is."[10] He also mentioned that there were three types of places for preserving memory: real place, imaginary place, and half-real-half-imaginary place. Among these three "the half-real-half-imaginary is as if two actual rooms are connected by an imagined door…and is the most wonderful (*miao*)."[11] It is interesting to note that both Nian and Ricci used the same pair of concepts "real" and "wonderful" to characterize linear perspective and the art of memory respectively, thus linking both arts in the Chinese context.

The Rustic Order

As I analyzed in previous research, the Jesuit garden in the Yuanmingyuan was a perspectival garden designed with linear perspective and was intended for the embodiment of perspectival representation. Why did the garden end at an open-air theater; what did this theater mean both to the emperor and the Jesuits? Renaissance architect Sebastiano Serlio categorized stage design into three types: comic, tragic, and satiric. Compared with Serlio's theories, the Jesuit stage in the Yuanmingyuan appears close to the satiric model which depicts the "rustic" life with "wooded groves, rocks, hills, mountains, greenery, flowers and fountains."[12] According to Serlio, such a pastoral tradition was related to Greek satyr drama.[13] Serlio referred his category of stages to Vitruvius, who defined the satiric stage scene as "rustic objects delineated in landscape style."[14] Alberti described the satiric stage as being for "singing of countryside delights and pastoral romance."[15] On the satiric stage, landscape and satire were thus associated. Did the stage of the Yuanmingyuan imply the emperor's satiric intentions?

In Greek mythology, a satyr is a Dionysiac creature deeply related to nature. The similar identity of satyr in Roman mythology is the rustic forest god Faun. In ancient Greece the gods of life were usually paid homage at rustic shrines, designated sacred groves, where rock-cut sculpture and trees coexisted without definite planning.[16] In his travelogue the Greek traveler Pausanias in the 2nd century visited many sites of sacred groves, including one devoted to Aphrodite. He observed her statue was composed of a "stone face and hands and feet, but the rest of her is made of wood" and he thought the sacred grove was "a delightful place for idling in the summer."[17]

The trompe l'oeil porticos on the stage of the Yuanmingyuan remind one of Serlio's "rustic" architecture. In Book IV of his architectural treatise, he described the rustic work as the mixture of the work of Nature and the work of crafts. The rustic stones, branding the classic orders of columns, "represent the work of Nature."[18] For him, the rustic style not only looks unusual and pleases the people, but also suits a building for a scholar with a robust style in a city.[19] In his *Extraordinary Book of Doors*, Serlio focused his discussions on rustic porticos. He completed the manuscript while living in Fontainebleau on the invitation of the French king. In the book he stated, "In this solitude of Fontainebleau, where there are more beasts than there are men…The desire came into my mind to form in a visible design several gateways in the Rustic style…I stayed into such licentiousness."[20] His licentiousness was related to the unruly disorder of the rustic style and the joyful solitude in gardens. This finding helps us understand why the Jesuits designed the portico panels in the rustic style—because they were an expression of the satiric stage as well as its garden context. Serlio's joyful solitude in licentiousness of landscapes at Fontainebleau echoes the "solitary joy" of the Chinese historian Sima Guang 司马光 of the Northern Song dynasty (11th century CE). After withdrawing from state politics, Sima built the Garden of Solitary Joy (Duleyuan 独乐园) in Luoyang for his retreat life. At the end of his garden record he stated that his solitary joy was not to be shared with

others, because his joy in the humble garden was "simple and rustic" and usually despised and abandoned by society.[21] His rustic solitary joy euphemistically satirized the mainstream of state politics.

Most of the buildings in the Jesuit garden of the Yuanmingyuan acted as the background or the vantage point for the spectacular views of mechanical fountains and demonstrated "a certain nobility" of the emperor in Serlio's sense of tragic stage.[22] However, the rustic order was also applied to a little retreat house called "The View beyond the World" (Fangwaiguan 方外观) (Figure 1), which was said to be a residence of Qianlong's Fragrant Concubine (Xiangfei).[23] The original term of "view" of the building name is "*guan* 观," which can also be translated as "belvedere." A Daoist temple is usually called a *guan*. A *guan* was a type of building constructed specifically for viewing distant landscapes during the Western Han dynasty (c. 2nd century BC-1st century AD),[24] the same age when the "belvedere" building type began to emerge in Ancient Rome.

From the balcony of the rustic portico at the "View beyond the World" house, the emperor could overlook into the opposite side where five bamboo pavilions were connected by curved bamboo galleries. In Chinese tradition, a bamboo pavilion symbolizes the pastoral retreat life. They can be called the Chinese "rustic order" (*xiangtu* 乡土) in contrast with the "official order" (*guanshi* 官式) of classic architecture, of which latter the imperial buildings represented the highest class. The symbolism of the bamboo "rustic order" alluded to the legend of the "Seven Sages in Bamboo Groves" (Zhulin qixian 竹林七贤) of the Three Kingdoms dynasty (3rd century). This group of scholars liked to stroll in a bamboo grove, drink wine and write literary works which obscurely satirized the hypocrisy of the imperial court.[25] Their works are often taken as the representative of mysterious philosophy (*xuanxue* 玄学), the Bohemianism of Chinese philosophy. The rhetorical style of the Seven Sages' writings is called *xieyin* 谐隐, which literally means "humor and satire"[26] whose moral and didactic intentions echo the humor and satire in Renaissance literature. The latter was related to Greek satyr (gods of woods) drama as illustrated by Serlio's rustic stage.[27]

Mountains, Water, and Clouds

Approaching the stage, the emperor passed through a Baroque portico of which through the central arched doorway he could see only the trompe l'oeil distant mountains on the stage and the real water surface of a rectangular lake in front of the stage. Similar to Palladio's Olympic Theater, the portico works as a door revealing the trompe l'oeil views from behind. The framed image of "water" and "mountains" signifies the Chinese traditional concept of landscape, so-called *shanshui* 山水 (literally, "mountains and waters"). The decorations of the portico include bas-reliefs of seashells, ivy, and sculptures of nectar bottles, which all imply the Daoist celestial islands in the East Sea.

The framed view of "distant mountains and close water" (*yuanshan jinshui* 远山近水) is a typical composition of Chinese landscape paintings. Different from the Olympic Theater, the view framed by the portico is a mixture of trompe-l'oeil mountains and real water. Such a combination of the real and fictional matches the documentation that ancient emperors of the Qin and Han dynasties (c. 3rd century BC-2nd century AD) repeatedly send Daoist monks by ships to cross the East Sea in search of the legendary celestial islands for panaceas.[28] The emperor Qianlong could actually take a boat paddling on the geometrical lake towards the shore of the fictional world on the stage. The image of boating on the lake reminds one of Nicola Sabbattini's machines for creating the spectacles of water and ship on the Renaissance stage.[29]

Signifying the celestial mountains for the emperor, the distant trompe l'oeil mountains might indicate Mount Sinai for the Jesuits. Mountain Sinai was a typical machine-operated scene on the Renaissance and Baroque stages. As described vividly by Joseph Furttenbach the Elder in his treatise on Baroque theater machines, "When Moses is in the wilderness, the rear shutters open where Mount Sinai is seen in the distance."[30] In this sense, for the Jesuits, the paddling over the water towards the distant mountains could symbolize Moses's exodus from the Red Sea eastwards to Mountain Sinai.

Besides the real water, the real blue sky and floating clouds over the open-air stage are included into the trompe l'oeil view of distant mountains. Mystic clouds appear in all copperplates of the Jesuit garden in the Yuanmingyuan. In their treatises, both Sabbattini and Furttenbach discussed in detail the machines for creating clouds on the stage. The latter especially mentioned the clouds, so-called Glory, where the divine light radiated over Mount Sinai.[31] As stated in biblical scripture, "Moses went up on the mountain, and the clouds covered the mountain. The Glory of the Lord settled on Mountain Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days."[32] On the Renaissance and Baroque stages, moving clouds were usually used as the means for divinities to shuttle between the heaven and earth. As vividly described by Serlio, "Sun rise and set, moon set; many spectators remain lost in wonder...Gods descend and pass through the air."[33] In his *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum* (1693), the Jesuit illusory perspective maestro Andrea Pozzo described his altar design for the Jesuit church at Rome as a theater design. The altar consisted of six painted panels, and at the center of the great arch where the focal point of perspective was located "clouds filled with angels adoring the blessed sacrament."[34] The six painted panels at Pozzo's altar match the panel number at the stage in the Yuanmingyuan. His analogy between altar and theater was thus hinted at by the Jesuits in the Yuanmingyuan. Pozzo's book was closely imitated by Nian Xiyao when the latter wrote his perspective book *Shixue*. A copy of Pozzo's book was stored in the Jesuit library in Beijing.[35]

Pozzo's representation of sacrament through clouds is comparable to Daoist tradition in which clouds signify the means for saints to shuttle between the mortal and immortal worlds. The Daoist scripture *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (2nd century BC) states, "So the man who knows Dao is tranquil and magnanimous...He rides on clouds ascending to heavens (*chengyun lingxiao* 乘云凌霄)."[36] A landscape painting theory of the Northern Song dynasty describes clouds as the "spirit [or *qi*] of mountains and rivers."[37] The Northern Song painter Mi Youren 米友仁, who was famous for depicting clouds, thought it was because of clouds that a

spectacular landscape owned its thousands of looks. He called his representation of clouds the "ink game" for capturing the "true wonder" (*zhenqu* 真趣) of landscapes (Figure 2).[38] Unlike his contemporaneous fellows, Mi's landscape paintings do not focus on objective details, but rather appear rustic and playful for a more direct expression of subjectivity. His works of cloudy mountains are never counted as the mainstream of classic landscape paintings, but they created a unique rustic diversity in Chinese painting history.[39] In the colophons, Mi usually penned his works as "playful works" (*xizuo* 戏作) to satirize tedium of the orthodox school and to defend his own originality. Besides paintings, a representation of clouds is popular in frescos in Daoist temples. In the frescos of the City-God Temple (founded in the 16th century and rebuilt in the 19th century) in Pingyao, Shanxi Province, we can see the depiction of mystic rising clouds, celestial island mountains above the clouds, and the bridge for saints to cross over the water into another world.

In classic Chinese gardens, rocks are shaped by rockery art and symbolically perceived as celestial clouds. The analogy between rocks and clouds can be seen in the first Chinese treatise on rocks entitled *Yunlin shipu* 云林石谱 (12th century).[40] The term "cloudy forest" (*yunlin*) in the book title signifies both rocks and clouds. In a later treatise on rocks, entitled *Suyuan shipu* 素园石谱 (1613), the author listed an ancient poem which described wondrous rocks as "auspicious clouds in thousands of shapes" (*wanzhuang qingyun* 万状卿云).[41] When Emperor Qianlong visited the Jiangnan area which was well known for literati gardens, he was mostly impressed by the eccentric rocks in the Garden of Lion Grove (Shizilin) in Suzhou. In a poem a local scholar called this group of rocks "*yungeng* 云根,"[42] which literally meant "root of clouds" and specifically indicated the high and remote mountain place where clouds rose up. Qianlong built a replica of the Garden of Lion Grove in the Yuanmingyuan, just next to the Jesuit garden. In the Lu Garden in Macau, a former Jesuit colony in southern China, the rocks behind a gate appear to be contained by the bottle shape of the gate. This framed symbolic view alludes to the Daoist thought that the cosmos can be contained in a magic bottle. The gate is poetically entitled "Scooping the Clouds" (Yiyun 挹云). In the same garden a zigzagging stone bridge crosses over the water and meanders towards the symbolic paradise. Eccentric rocks rise above the water and symbolize both heavenly clouds and celestial islands. The Lu Garden is coincidentally next to the Macau Ricci Institute, a Jesuit research library for commemorating Matteo Ricci.

Theater of Memory

The Jesuit garden in the Yuanmingyuan was part of the garden residence for Qianlong's retirement in the northwestern suburb. Meanwhile, he was building another retirement garden, the so-called Qianlong Garden, in the northeastern corner of the Forbidden City (Figure 3). At the northern end of this classic garden is located a secret interior theater, designed by Jesuits' Chinese students.[43] Different from the Chinese

traditional theater, the theater of the Qianlong Garden includes an orchestra, front stage and back stage based on the western model. Opposite to the stage, the audience is composed of two floors for exclusively serving the emperor. The entire ceiling, back stage and northern wall of the theater are covered with trompe l'oeil frescos, which depict a rustic view of a bamboo trellis, imperial gardens, and distant mountains.[44] From the second-floor audience the emperor could project his view over the roof of the stage pavilion into the illusory distant mountains on the back stage. All the trompe l'oeil frescos initiate the illusion that this interior theater looks like an exterior theater in landscapes.

The view towards the mountain fresco of the back stage is in the same direction towards the western suburb where West Mountain was located. The mountain depicted in detail looks like a rock mountain, which recalls the memory of both West Mountain and the illusory mountain of the stage in the Yuanmingyuan. The overall composition of near and distant mountains and rising clouds among mountains is reminiscent of Mi Youren's works of cloudy mountains. The grove of magnolia blossoms in the bottom-left corner of the fresco indicates the spring season, and pine trees on the mountain peaks of the right symbolize longevity.

West Mountain is an iconic landscape west of the capital Beijing. It is well known for mountain landscapes and rich spring water and contains numerous temples and imperial gardens, including the Yuanmingyuan. In a traditional woodcut of West Mountain, auspicious clouds circulate around the mountain peaks (Figure 4).

On the back wall of the second-floor audience, there hangs a poetic couplet which states: "Blossoms reflect sunrise; the cosmos illuminates clouds (九华辉晓日，五色焕彤云)." The original term of "cosmos" in the couplet is "five colors" (*wuse*), indicating the divine light of the cosmos. The "sunrise" indicates that the mountain fresco should be best viewed with the sunrise light which projects from the east towards the west. In other words, sunrise is the best time for viewing West Mountain from the Forbidden City. The orientation of looking westward confirms that the mountain fresco was to evoke Qianlong's memory of West Mountain and the Yuanmingyuan that was named by his grandfather Kangxi and built by his father Yongzheng.

The entrance of the theater is from a southern moon gate of an actual bamboo fence. The northern wall is occupied by a trompe l'oeil fresco consisting of a similar-looking bamboo fence and an imperial garden behind. On the northern wall, directly opposite to the actual bamboo moon gate on the southern wall, there is a trompe l'oeil bamboo moon gate near which a red-crown crane has just landed and is looking through into the theater. It is surmised that this vividly depicted crane was created by Castiglione prior to his demise and was later pasted here by his Chinese students.[45] In Chinese tradition a crane is the symbol of longevity and the means for an immortal to ascend to the heavens. The crane behind the bamboo moon gate thus acts as the messenger to the divine world. The crane and bamboo fence hint of the similar role of a bird in a cage as the agent of memory in western medieval culture.[46] The hypothesis that the crane might act as the agent of the emperor's memory can be confirmed by a grove of blooming peonies appearing through the moon gate. Qianlong's poem recorded how, together with his grandfather and father, he

as a teenager appreciated the beauty of peony blossoms in Kangxi's Garden of Uninhibited Spring near the Yuanmingyuan.[47] Furthermore, the trompe l'oeil bamboo fences and the bamboo trellis on the ceiling of the theater recall the rustic order of the bamboo pavilions in the Jesuit garden of the Yuanmingyuan.

On the northern wall of the second-floor audience the trompe l'oeil fresco created an oblique illusion of room spaces from which a court lady was peeking into the theater. Her curious eyes represent the emperor's perception of the theater as spectacles of trompe l'oeil. The wall clock beside her is linked to yet another spectacle--the mechanical fountains in the Jesuit garden of the Yuanmingyuan.

Based on Giulio Camillo's Memory Theater as the "built mind,"[48] the English Renaissance philosopher Robert Fludd established his model of theaters as "memory rooms."[49] The back stage in Fludd's theater was presented as the "rustic" wall of a castle, which contained five doors on two floors, including four arched doors and one hinged central door, and bay windows on the second floor. On the front stage, there stood five columns in five different colors.

At the stage in the Qianlong Garden, two arched doors with curtains link the front and back stages. At the stage in the Yuanmingyuan, the arched central door of the portico west of the lake frames the symbolic image of mountains and water. As Ricci stated in his Chinese book on the art of memory, "the half-real-half-imaginary place," like Qianlong's trompe l'oeil stages, operates as if "two actual rooms are connected by an imagined door" and is the most wonderful place for preserving memory.[50] For the Jesuits, the mnemonic doors in Qianlong's theaters corresponded to Pozzo's "hinges" of the trompe l'oeil panels at the altar, which "folded and unfolded" the "clouds filled with angels."[51]

Conclusion

The trompe l'oeil representations of pastoral landscapes and rustic buildings in Qianlong's theaters embodied his memories of the cosmos and individual life. For the Jesuits these two theaters integrated the work of Nature and the crafts of illusory perspective in Serlio's sense of satiric stage. Jesuit stage designs interwove the memory of biblical landscapes and the Chinese Daoist concept of nature, *shanshui*. Signaled by mystic clouds, the Jesuit memory theater in China transcends the "comic" or "tragic" life towards the "rustic" world where the divine dwells. The Jesuits sharply observed that religious and cultural differences could be symbolized and fused through the magic play of landscape and building representations. The satiric character of Qianlong's theaters expressed his desire of returning to *ethos*, the "truth wonder" brought by cultural encounters. Both the theaters are located in the most remote corners of their respective imperial gardens. If meandering through the garden was like the life journey, the *follie*-like theaters became the emperor's intended destination. As stated in his poem on the Qianlong Garden in 1776, "Old age compels me to retire from diligent administration, / Solitary joy keeps me off the bustling world (耄期致勤倦，颐

养谢尘喧),"[52] although in that year he was still twenty years away from his actual retirement. The trompe l'oeil landscapes and the rustic order of his theaters certainly drew his memory to the poetic enunciation of Wang Wei 王维 (8th century), a great landscape poet/painter of the Tang dynasty:

> When the river [of life] reaches its end (行到水穷处),
> Suddenly, I see the clouds rising from mountains (坐看云起时).[53]

Wang's image of clouds represents the entrance to another world, the divine world. The emperor felt fascinated by the illusory distance, signaled by panel hinges, mnemonic doors and mystic clouds, between the real and the fictional. This theatrical distance, as revealed by François Jullien's insightful interpretation on "the clouds and the moon,"[54] provided necessary cultural detours for both the emperor and Jesuits to access truth in China. Being such a detour, the landscape theme of Qianlong's theaters countered the Baroque trend of literal "real" space projected by perspective geometry and maintained a sense of "otherness" of divine light.[55] In the Jesuit memory theater in China, the door between the real and what is fictional continuously swings to and fro.

Images

Figure 1. The rustic order of the "View beyond the World" house in the Western garden of the Yuanmingyuan. (Photo by author, 2002)

Figure 2. Mi Youren, Painting of Spectacular Landscapes of Xiaoxiang (partial view) (12th century), collected by the Palace Museum of Beijing.
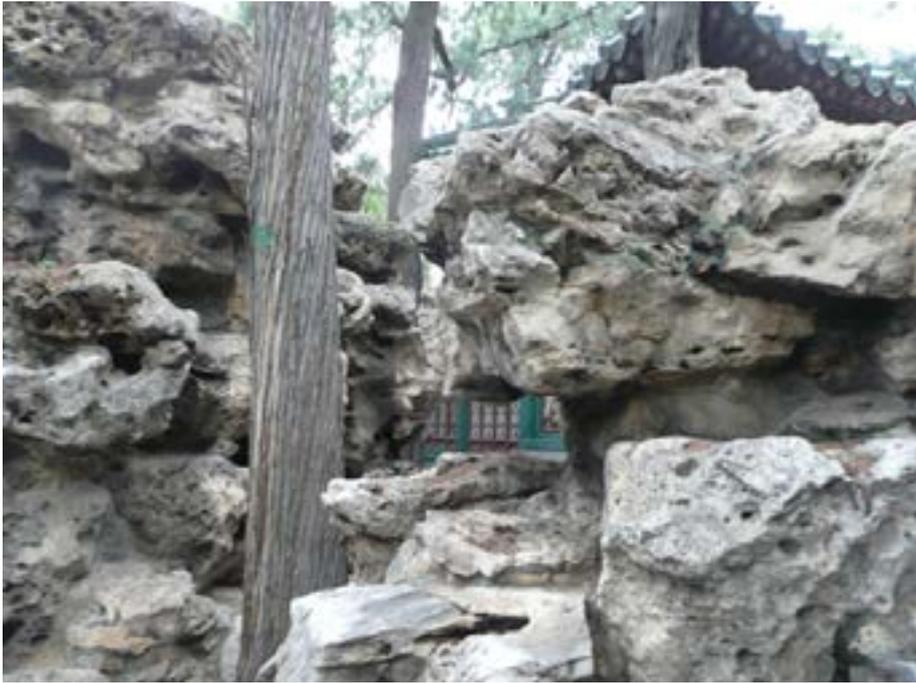
Figure 3. Rocks in the Qianlong Garden of the Forbidden City. (Photo by author, 2010)
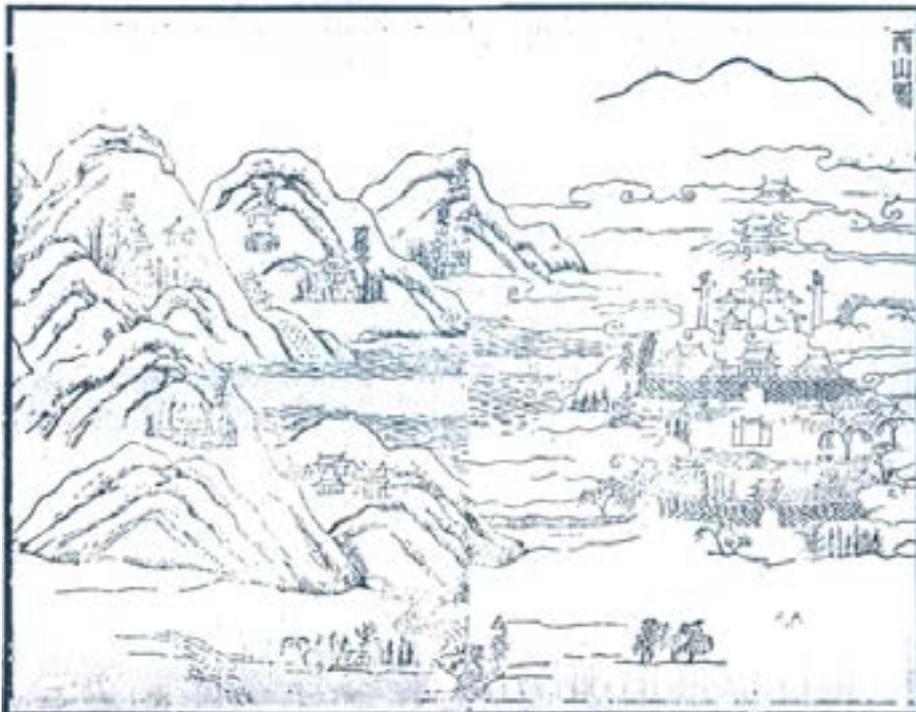

Figure 4. Woodcut of West Mountain in the western suburb of Beijing.
(Source: Sancai tuhui 三才图会, 1609)

Notes

1   For a reprint of this copperplate engraving set in the original size, see *Palais, pavillons et jardins construits par Giuseppe Castiglione: dans le domaine impérial du Yuan Ming Yuan au Palais d'Été de Pékin: 20 planches gravées, de 1783 a 1786* (Paris: Jardin de Flore, 1977).

2   *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Pé-tang*, ed. Pé-tang Library (Beijing: Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1949), nos. 2752, 3978. See also Hui Zou, Appendix: Books on architecture and gardens in the Jesuit Libraries in Beijing, "The *Jing* of a Perspective Garden," *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* 22, no. 4 (December 2002): 318.

3   *Catalogue,* no. 1616.

4   Nian Xiyao 年希尧, *Shixue* 视学 (1729, 1735), rpt. in Ren Jiyu 任继愈, ed., *Zhongguo kexue jishu dianji tonglu: shuxue juan: juan 4* 中国科学技术典籍通录: 数学卷: 卷4 (Zhengzhou: Henan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1993), 711, 713. For complete English translations of the two prefaces of the 1729 and 1735 editions, see Hui Zou, *A Jesuit Garden in Beijing and Early Modern Chinese Culture* (Lafayette, IN: The Purdue University Press), 96-98.

5   Nian, 712.

6   For the Lei family's construction plan of the Jesuit theater, see Hui Zou, "Perspective *Jing*: The Depth of Architectural Representation in a European-Chinese Garden Encounter," in *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 6, ed. Alberto Pérez-Gómez & Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), fig. 13.14, p. 297.

7   Nian, 711-712.

8   Ibid., 714.

9   In my book, I have analyzed why the twenty copperplates of the Jesuit garden do not present shadows. See Zou, *A Jesuit Garden in Beijing*, 88.

10   Matteo Ricci, qtd. in Hui Zou, "Jesuit Perspective in China," *Architectura: Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Baukunst / Journal of the History of Architecture* 31, no. 2 (December 2001): 152.

11   Ibid.

12   Sebastiano Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture*, trans. & intro. Vaughan Hart & Peter Hicks, vol. 1 (New York: Yale University Press, 1996), Book II: 90.

13   Sebastiano Serlio, "The Second Book of Architecture, " in *The Renaissance Stage: Documents of Serlio, Sabbattini and Furttenbach*, ed. Barnard Hewitt, trans. Allardyce Nicoll et al. (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1958), 26.

14   Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Morris H. Morgan (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1968), Book V: 150.

15   Leon Battista Alberti, "Book Eight: Ornament to Public Secular Buildings," *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 273.

16   Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, "Greek Antecedents of Garden Sculpture," in *Ancient Roman Gardens*, ed. Elisabeth B. Macdougall & Wilhelmina F. Jashemski (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1981), 28.

17   Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, trans. & intro. Peter Levi, vol. 1 (London: Penguin Books, 1979), 283.

18   Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture*, vol. 1, Book IV: 266.

19   Ibid., 298, 332.

20   Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture*, vol. 2, Book VIII: 460-462.

21   Sima Guang 司马光, "Duleyuan ji 独乐园记," in *Zhongguo lidai minyuan ji xuanzhu* 中国历代名园记选注, ed. & anno. Chen Zhi 陈植 & Zhang Gongchi 张公驰 (Hefei: Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe, 1983), 26.

22   Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture*, vol. 1, Book II: 88.

23   Maurice Adam, *Yuen Ming Yuen: L'Oeuvre Architecturale des Anciens Jésuites au XVIIIe Siècle* (Beijing: Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1936), 29.

24   Hui Zou, "The Memory of Landscape in Beijing," *Montreal Architectural Review* 1 (December 2014): 9.

25   Liu Yiqing 刘义庆, "Rendan di ershisan 任诞第二十三," *Shishuo xinyu* 世说新语, trans. & anno. Shen Haibo 沈海波 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 194.

26   Liu Xie 刘勰, "Xieyin di shiwu 谐隐第十五," in *Wenxin diaolong jinyi* 文心雕龙今译, anno. Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 133-136.

27   Anne Lake Prescott, "Humor and Satire in the Renaissance," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: vol. 3: The Renaissance*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 288.

28   Zou, *A Jesuit Garden in Beijing*, 4.

29   Nicola Sabbattini, "Manual for Constructing Theatrical Scenes and Machines," in *The Renaissance Stage*, 135.

30   Sabbattini, 38-49. Joseph Furttenbach, "The Noble Mirror of Art," in *The Renaissance Stage*, 238.

31   Furttenbach, 239.

32   Exodus 24.15, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 3rd ed., ed. Michael D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 118.

33   Serlio, in *The Renaissance Stage*, 24.

34   Andrea Pozzo, *Perspective in Architecture and Painting* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1989), 157.

35   *Catalogue*, nos. 2511-12.

36   Liu An 刘安 et al., *Huainanzi* 淮南子, trans. & anno. Gu Qian 顾迁 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 6.

37   Han Zhuo 韩拙, "Shanshui chun quanji 山水纯全集," in *Zhongguo gudai hualun leibian* 中国古代画论类编, ed. & anno. Yu Jianhua 俞剑华, vol. 2 (Beijing: Renming meishu chubanshe, 1998), 670.

38   Mi Youren 米友仁, "Yuanhui tiba 元晖题跋," in ibid., 688.

39   Chen Chuanxi 陈传席, *Zhongguo shanshuihua shi* 中国山水画史 (Tianjing: Tianjing renmin meishu chubanshe, 2008), 152, 155.

40   Du Wan, *Tu [Du] Wan's Stone Catalogue of Cloudy Forest*, trans. with a commentary by Edward H. Schafter (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1961), 50, 65.

41   Lin Youlin 林友麟, *Suyuan shipu* 素园石谱 (1613), rpt. in *Zhongguo kexue jishu dianji tonglu: dili juan: juan 3* 中国科学技术典籍通录: 地理卷: 卷三, ed. Ren Jiyu 任继愈 (Zhengzhou: Henan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 46.

42   Chen Qian 陈谦, "Du Suichang Zhengxiansheng Shilin jiazuo liaofu erzhang 读遂昌郑先生师林佳作聊附二章," *Shizilin jisheng ji* 狮子林纪胜集, ed. Shi Daoxun 释道恂 & Xu Lifang 徐立方, vol. 1 (1857. Rpt., Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2007), 19.

43   *Juanqinzhai* 倦勤斋, ed. Gugong buwuyuan gujianbu 故宫博物院古建部 (Tianjing: Tianjing daxue chubanshe, 2012), 49.

44   For detailed photos of the theater in the Qianlong Garden, see *Juanqinzhai*.

45   Ibid., 50.

46   Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 323,

47   Zou, *A Jesuit Garden in Beijing*, 20.

48   Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 132.

49   Ibid., pl. 17.

50   Ricci, 152.

51   Pozzo, 157.

52   Qianlong 乾隆, "Qianlong sishiyi nian yuzhi Fuwangge shi 乾隆四十一年御制符望阁诗," in *Rixia jiuwen kao* 日下旧闻考, ed. Yu Minzhong 于敏中 et al., vol. 1 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 2001), 250.

53   Wang Wei 王维, "Zhongnan bieye 终南别业," in *Quan Tang shi* 全唐诗, ed. Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), juan 卷 126.

54   Francois Jullien, Ch. XIV "The Clouds and the Moon," *Detour and Access*, trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2000), 351-352.

55   For a criticism on the Baroque equality between "real" space and pictorial space projected through perspective geometry, see Alberto Pérez-Gómez's analysis on Andrea Pozzo's works in *Built upon Love: Architectural Longing after Ethics and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 85.

About the Author

Hui Zou is an associate professor of architectural history and theory at the School of Architecture, University of Florida. His research interests include architectural and garden histories, architectural philosophy, and comparative cultural studies in the art of building. His research searches for historical coincidences (*qiaohe* 巧合, literally, "crafty joint" in an architectural sense) and endeavors to reveal the horizon of their meanings.

Book Review:
Vit-Suzan, Ilan. *Architectural Heritage Revisited: A Holistic Engagement of its Tangible and Intangible Constituents*
Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014

Santiago de Orduña

The book *Architectural Heritage Revisited* by Ilan Vit-Suzan represents an extraordinary effort to understand the symbolic complexity of certain monuments, not as historical curiosities, but as cultural institutions charged both with historical sense and some kind of "spirituality" that exceeds, sometimes, their cultural and geographical limits. The author asks, from the first pages of the book, "if the poetry of a ruined place can provoke strong feelings of continuity with the past, as well as promises of transcendence?" (xi).

Because of modern alienation from his own tradition, contemporary man has lost the ability to properly interpret a historical phenomenon. Hence the importance of Vit-Suzan's book. His understanding of the studied cases through their denotative and connotative aspects reminds us of the notion of "intentional object" of Nicolai Hartmann or the notion of "concretization" of Roman Ingarden, both of whom understood the work as a "layered structure" where the physical aspect of the monument is only its ontological basis, which basis is wrapped in layers of meaning as the product of different historical visions that have been superimposed throughout history, and with the outer layers representing the prejudices of those who analyze or observe the phenomenon themselves. Accordingly, when we see a ruin or a building

we may also perceive these layers of meaning that are revealed in several ways and degrees in accordance with our sensitivity in a process that Roman Ingarden describes as a "concretization" of the work.

Vit -Suzan proposes a methodology to analyze monuments based on Gramsci's notion of inventory, which methodology consists of two aspects: the denotative inventory which focuses on the history of the material building, (specially its different renovations and reconstructions), and the connotative inventory, which focuses on the meanings and interpretations embodied in the building during different historical periods. The first inventory reveals architectural trends of an era, the second examines the evolution of symbolic legacies related to the different worldviews occurring over time.

These monuments are interpreted as layered structures of historical and symbolic meanings that reveal social and spiritual connotations. Their interpretation reflects the different worldviews that the monument has gone through, such as the concepts of divinity or divinities, the denial of cultural loss and the tolerance between different cultures and beliefs.

For Vit-Suzan, the building's layered structures simultaneously reveal "change and difference". The author recognizes that there is an "intuitive recognition of the building essence, not just its current state-of-being" (172). This essence, notes the author, is somehow defined by Alfredo López-Austin as a "hard nucleus", which represents "a kind of master narrative supported by certain systems of thought that are highly resistant to fundamental change." To López-Austin, "this nucleus is constituted by an ensemble of deep core propositions, whose ability to resist change stems from an ability to provide a coherent inter-pretation of reality and by extension to develop successful mechanisms of adaptation, that is, to heighten a group´s survival. Thus, while the (tangible) appearance of heritage may change, its (intangible) essence persists" (172).

Just as the Russian Matryoshka or the suggestive image of the "Glass Onion" of the Beatles' song, the phenomenon of the ruin is revealed within its layered complexity through the careful analysis of Vit-Suzan who, like a skilled surgeon, rips off, one by one, all the layers of meaning that cover these superb monuments. These interpretations demystify nationalisms and ideologies and represent, to my point of view, real points of departure for a future with meaning in which we can see and understand the possibility of a historical continuity despite different worldviews (Pantheon), where we will be able to accept the loss of cultural institutions in order to accept ourselves as who we are, viz., as the product of a mixture of races and cultures (Teotihuacan), and/or to visualize the real possibility of a place of diversity and inclusion (the Alhambra).

In the Pantheon, Vit-Suzan highlights how the building has had the capacity to symbolize through various changes and cultural paradigms, from the Roman Polytheism and Christian Monotheism, to that of a contemporary Museum. The Pantheon has been able, despite many renovations and changes, not only to transform its cultural denotations, but to transfer a sense of timeless universality.

In the case of Teotihuacan, the analysis shows that, just as the ancient *Mexicas* interpreted the abandoned Teotihuacan ruins as the place where the gods were sacrificed for the Universe to continue its

flow, constituting the ethical example for systematic human sacrifice, contemporary Mexicans want to see in these ruins a dubious cultural legacy and a fictitious cultural continuity. While there are many things to learn from the Teotihuacan ruins, this interpretation is contrary to the reality of contemporary Mexicans who want to deny their corresponding part of Western culture. Hence the risk of returning to a mythical time and avoiding the acceptance of loss; and hence also evading reconciliation with one's own self. The author argues the need to recognize the loss of cultural continuity and reminds us of the importance of keeping a critical distance from nationalist demagoguery when analyzing monuments (170). In this sense the author suggests that the Teotihuacan ruins: "under the mantle of vegetation, may be hard to swallow; however, it is an honest image of the past, which may stimulate a better future" (171).

In the case of the Alhambra in Granada, the analysis reveals that, because of its geographical conditions it has served as a refuge for marginalized groups which have flourished and developed a tradition of cultural inclusion. In this sense the Alhambra is a great example which shows that coexistence, tolerance, and intellectual exchange are possible among heterogeneous groups. In the Alhambra, for a relatively long period of time, the "other" was seen as the "same". The author makes it clear that the respect for social diversity can and must be preserved against the homogenizing tendencies of technological modernity, the latter an heir of a vision of the "One True God", which only produces intolerance towards anyone who thinks differently. He clarifies that "the reversal of exclusion could reinstate the legitimacy of alternative views of reality (heterodox worldviews) as integral constituents of major expressions of human culture" (171). The author tells us that the antidote by which to avoid the "cyclical return of inquisitorial intolerance" is "a thorough revision of the ideas of democracy, equality, and solidarity to strengthen the belief that another world is possible. That is why we cannot inherit these traditions uncritically" (164). It is necessary, therefore, that the initiative for action "must be driven by grassroots movements, not paternalistic aid from Westernized elites" (170).

Herein lies the richness of these monuments and the need for sophisticated hermeneutics, for precise interpretation based on evidence, without losing sight of their own questions and interests: compassionate, in order to understand the "other", but critical as well of imposed worldviews. The analysis of monuments as layered structures helps us to understand the processes in which different groups have had to deal with the question of the "other", allowing the possibility of understanding ourselves as "Pagans", "Infidels", "Christians", "Muslims", "Jews", "Indians", "Mestizos", "Ancient", or "Modern" … the ruins finally representing an image of our own circumstances as humans. In this sense, the book reveals that it is important to preserve cultural identity from the homogenizing process of modernity and totalitarian ideologies.

Finally, it should be noted that since the discipline of architecture has alienated itself from its cultural roots since the Enlightenment, it has been problematic to integrate historical heritage with architectural practice. With notable exceptions these attempts have been superficial, e.g., the historicism of the nineteenth century or so-called postmodernist movement of the 80s in the twentieth century, which

both have been limited to making copies of purely formal elements. Contrastingly, I think it is through non-superficial interpretations that history is going to be seen again as meaningful and represent a real point of departure. The author shows that the ruins still have the ability to revive our capacity to dream as we lead the way towards a possible return to our cultural heritage for the practice of architecture and other disciplines. In that sense, despite the dangers of falling uncritically into nationalism and ideologies, we must reinvent a tradition based on architectural history. The idea of inventory by Gramsci, or Hartmann's "intentional object", or Tarkovsky's "mystical rationalism", can give us the tools for preserving existing ruins and provide us with elements for imagining a possible better world.

About the Author

Santiago de Orduña was born in Mexico City in 1965. He completed a degree in architecture and a master's degree in philosophy at the Universidad Iberoamericana (1984-2000) where he taught various subjects from 1990 to 2000. He has held a CONACYT Fellowship and received his Masters and Ph.D., directed by Dr. Alberto Pérez-Gómez, in History and Theory of Architecture from McGill University in Montreal. He lives with his wife and two children in Coatepec, Veracruz.