RUINSCAPES IN POETRY AND ARCHITECTURE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to interrelate poetry and ruin in their multiple modalities of being together. Ruin reveals the poet's intentions, visualizes the poetic attitude as such, and functions as mirror and model for poetic constructions. On the other hand, poetry, as measure for authenticity in architecture, reveals and elucidates phenomenology of ruin-dwelling.

Ruinscapes are examined in the domain of poetry, whether intentional or unintentional, integral or fragmented, and in the domain of architecture, whether intentional or unintentional, integral or fragmented. Architecture and poetry ruinscapes manifest a common aesthetics based on different configurations of the tragic, which is the conflict of man and physis, physis and creation, creation and man.

Poetry ruinscapes are being considered in their physicality, in a unified word-object relation, which reflects a language-world continuum. Openness is being discussed in the context of visual grids, the fragmentary, effacement and breaking, cryptograms, elliptical transcriptions, errors, letter phanopoeias, and palimpsests.

Architectural ruinscapes are seen as spatial manifestations of the conflicting dipoles which constitute the poetics of ruin-habitation: inside and outside, nearness and beyond, rootness and errance, narrow and infinite, intimacy and strangeness, appropriation and exile, etc. Ruins are classified according to earthly or cosmic Openness, reflecting the existentials of human habitation. Categories discussed are the "aethreon" and "trilithon" ruinscapes, the "passing dwelling", the Byzantine dome and column, Roman ruinscapes and the Gothic.

This present investigation is inseparable from my own poetic ruin-work, as documented at the end. Theoretical research and poiesis -as "making"- form here a corpus of interconnected dispositions, anticipations, recollections.

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Introduction

Approaches and methods for studying ruins and ruinscapes include historical and sociological, archaeological and geological, architectural and formalist, psychoanalytic and semiotic. The chosen approach for this study, without excluding borrowings from other methods, is at the same time a phenomenological and poetic one.

First, it is phenomenological in as much as it describes the phenomenon of the ruin as it is given to consciousness through experience. Its aim is to "descend", through a series of "reductions" and "bracketings" of naive, unreflective beliefs, to the essence of the phenomenon, or to pure transcendence itself.

And second, it is poetic because it opens up to poetic experience as such, as it differs from other motivated experiences; for example, a pleasurist's,1 an explorer's, or a military's.

Poetry and phenomenology are closely related attitudes because they both experience the world at the moment of its constitution, or even before its constitution, the pre-world, or what Dufrenne would call "the pre-real"

"...I call the pre-real because it is given to us before we are given to ourselves and before the world as external and objective is constituted. The pre-real is the ground on which the real is founded."2

and because they proceed in the same way by suspending spatio-temporal constraints in order to consider things anew, and shape them, "more

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1 i.e. Rose Macauley's "Pleasure of Ruins", Weidenfeld:London, 1953

intensely than the Things themselves ever dreamed of existing."\(^3\)

The fusion, however, of phenomenology and poetry is a controversial one, since not only does it not eliminate the ambiguity inherent in phenomenological thought, as such, but it accentuates it to the extremes, by giving constitutional priority to Physis rather than Being, to the Invisible rather than the Visible. This second distinction is elaborated by M.M.Ponty’s late fragments on the perspective of the Invisible\(^4\) as circumscribing topology of being ""behind", beyond, far-off...". This "impure" phenomenology -- impure, because it touches on the existentials of an impure dwelling place -- is mainly developed\(^5\) by the later Heidegger, Sartre, Blanchot, M. Ponty.

The notion of spatial or temporal distance, which found a clear expression in German romantics, and notably in Hölderlin, is of centric importance for this present study of ruin aesthetics. It presupposes Openness, which is a kinetic concept pertaining to the inner/outer being of the ruin, in its chiasm and intertwining with our own self-double. It perforates skin and psyche of buildings, in the same manner that it exposes our own skin and mind to the air of the terrible angelity of the air.

This excess of air is the space assigned for the poet’s ruin dwelling -- an ethereal and "non-existing" dwelling, which, nevertheless, belongs to the concreteness of earth’s registry of wounds.

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\(^4\)"The invisible is, 1. what is not actually visible, but could be (hidden or inactual aspects of the thing -hidden things, situated "elsewhere"- "Here" and "elsewhere"), 2. what, relative to the visible, could nevertheless not be seen as a thing (the existentials of the visible, its dimensions, its non-figurative inner framework), 3. what exists only as tactile or kinesthetically, etc., 4. the λέκτων, the Cogito", in M.M. Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible, Northwestern Univ. Press: Evanston, 1968, p.257

\(^5\)not mentioning poets, who anyway contribute to an applied phenomenology: as Husserl would say, the eidetic reduction is "spontaneously fulfilled" in the world of poetry.
Chapter 1

Poetry and the Ruin

During the 18th century, Abbé Batteux interrelated architecture and rhetorics according to usefulness. He classified them as intermediate arts, in-between mechanical arts and the Beaux-arts, because they have as object usefulness and pleasure together. "It is need that made them blossom and taste that perfectioned them."\(^6\) Eloquence uses language in order to communicate thoughts in a pleasant way, and architecture "changed into laughing and agreeable houses the caves that need had cut out to serve as shelters to human beings."\(^7\)

Poetry differs from eloquence in the same way that ruin differs from architecture. They are both beyond usefulness and beyond pleasure or beauty as mere ornamental additions. They are at the side of the sublime, rather than that of beauty; of wonder and commemoration, rather than appropriation and effectiveness.

1.1 Poetry, Physis

If it lives, if poetry still exists, it is owing to that insignificant, that humble crack the gods forgot in the closed window of man's certainty and his defense.\(^8\)

Poetry is the purgatorium of language and Ruin is the purgatorium of architecture.

Poetry is a parasitic language inside language. Its function is to "borrow"

\(^{6}\) Batteux, Les Beaux-Arts réduits à un même principe, Paris, 1783, p.111

\(^{7}\) Batteux, Ibid. p.44

\(^{8}\) T.Sinopoulos, The Poetry of Poetry, in "Landscape of Death, the selected poems of Takis Sinopoulos", Ohio State University Press, 1979, p.157
words from everyday language, purify them and give them back to the world in their original pre-worldly state: a parasitic but nobler form of language. Purification of language is accomplished through "opening up" of forms. Poetry saves words from everyday use by opening up to the body of language so many chasms and voids, that it finally resembles a ruinous landscape: poetry is in itself a ruinscape.

Elements of ruinity, elliptical forms and the fragmentary are positive in a higher sense; they do not signify impediment in communication as they do in ordinary speech, but are functional elements of poetic language.

"There are pauses and silences, signs of omission, dashes, that speak, speak a lot, speak the unutterable language of silence, full of implications, by opening-up to another space." 9

Both poetry and the ruin take shape from the action of opening up. Opening upon opening, vertical opening, horizontal opening, so that air and light can enter, so that the exterior becomes a reminiscence of the interior, and the interior can not enclose any more. Where did openness come from? Was it the synergy of Nature that left out what ought to be left out; or was the poet trying to say the unexpressable; or were those two things finally one?

The poet, according to Plato, is a raging person, possessed by divine mania. Or, if we listen to Ovid, Deus est in nobis

Agitante culescimus illo

"A god is within us: when he urges, we are inspired." The image of the poet who writes under the pressure of the divinities is pushed even further in the Middle Ages, where artists do not sign their works, and the personality of the poet disappears when confronted with the divine origin of the work itself. Human accomplishment is really human response. Or as Heidegger would say in a later lecture on language,

"who the author is remains unimportant here, as with every other masterful poem. The mastery consists precisely in this, that the poem can deny the poet's person and name."10

The presence of a divine order in the making of the poem and the poet's acknowledgment of Nature's priority over human concerns is what distinguishes poetry from other forms of communication, including prose.

"And if I had to distinguish between poetry and literature, I would suggest that poetry says properly the ineffable: Nature before man, the depth, density and power of being."11

Here we understand nature more in its pre-Latin origin, in the sense of Greek "physis", "the arising of something from out of itself, as a bringing-forth (Hervor-bringen)". But, physis (nature) is here poiesis (poetry) in the highest sense, if we consider poiesis in its early Greek meaning as

"every occasion for whatever passes over and goes forward into presencing from that which is not presencing"12

Physis and poetry are not contradictory terms denoting cosmic versus human creation, but offsprings of the same origin. Nature infiltrates poetry in all its manifestations: "there is poetry because a poiesis of nature acts through poets."13 A poet, we should say, stays alert in the inbetween space of divine and human in the same way that the ruin exists at the edge of natural and man-made.

Hölderlin's phrase "serene abandonment" would describe the story of man's withdrawal from man's works. A ruinscape is an abandoned landscape, an abandoned architecture, left on Nature's lap. It belongs to the wind. "Belongs" means that its origin and its destiny is the wind. It is written by the wind, and will be read by the wind.


Do not move

Let the wind speak\textsuperscript{14}

or,

True singing is a different breath,

A breath of nothing. A gust in god. A wind.\textsuperscript{15}

1.2 Ruin, Physis, Melancholy

Indeed, the artist creates his work in matter as Plotinus' One does the creatures of the world which tend to return to it. In similar fashion, the works of art tend to return to the world of ideas which gave them birth, as if their descent into matter was but a contact with death, despite the fact that it is through matter that they acquire a concrete figurative life. In the reflection of life and death, of beginning and end, beauty is mirrored.\textsuperscript{16}

Ruin is also a parasitic language inside architecture. Assuming the abandonment of the functional, it literally opens up built forms, it deforms matter and transforms our dwellings into another becoming. This new becoming, although having a parental affinity to its mother art, shifts significantly from it as an independent aesthetic category with its own aesthetic principles. As G. Simmel wrote,

The ruin of a building, however, means that where the work of art is dying, other forces and forms, those of nature, have grown; and that out of what of art still lives in the ruin and what of nature already lives in it, there has emerged a new whole, a characteristic unity.\textsuperscript{17}

Elements of ruinity and the opening up of forms, much in the same way as in poetry, do not signify a devaluation of meaning, according to the original, but are essential constituents of the language of ruin. Because,

\textsuperscript{14}E. Pound, The Cantos, CXX Canto, New Directions, New York, 1973

\textsuperscript{15}R. M. Rilke, Les Sonnets à Orphée, Paris: Seuil, 1972, p. 111 (My translation)

\textsuperscript{16}P. A. Michelis, Problems of the Finished and the Unfinished in Art, Studi di Estetica, 20, Torino, p. 10

\textsuperscript{17}G. Simmel, Die Ruine, in Philosophische Kultur, Gesammelte Essays, Leipzig: Alfred Kroner, 1919, p. 126
To be sure, from the standpoint of that purpose which the spirit has embodied in palace and church, castle and hall, aqueduct and memorial column, the form in which they appear when decayed is a meaningless incident. Yet a new meaning seizes on this incident, comprehending it and its spiritual form in a unity which is no longer grounded in human purposiveness, but in that depth where human purposiveness and the working of non-conscious natural forces grow from their common root.\textsuperscript{18}

Contradictory as it may appear, natural forces of destruction are not external to the essence of the destroyed, but coincide with its inner structural disposition. For example, the complete disappearance of roofs in ruins of classical temples, is due to the inner composition and texture of wood, as well as to the nature of joints and cohesiveness of the rest of the construction. In that sense, nature completes what man has left incomplete: it opens up the temple to the sky, thus fulfilling a predisposition that remained hidden or marginal during the time that architecture was functional and intact.\textsuperscript{19} Another example, observed by Michelis, is the specific way that the huge column of the temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens has been lain down, revealing in its rhythm the composite nature of spondyles and the inner distribution of natural forces. As Michelis writes, "this tragic ruin justly claims structural and synthetic autonomy."\textsuperscript{20} It is also in this sense of Nature's act of completion over the man-made, that Rodin stated the necessity of ruining a torso in order to appreciate its full poetic potential.

Yet, the full aesthetic impact of the ruin is reflected to a metaphysical tension of transience and eternity which is deeply rooted to human innerness. The turbulence and intertwining of opposite emotions, which is the essence of the tragic, are in the center of life confrontations, but acquire their purest, tragic form of non-ending struggling in the realm of poetry. (And this is because life has not yet totally succeeded in imitating art, despite Rilke's apocalyptic statement:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{18}G. Simmel, ibid., p.127
  \item \textsuperscript{19}We refer to the 7th category of temple that Vitruvius called "hypaethrium". See also Chapter 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{20}P. A. Michelis, \textit{Η Αισθητική Αντοχή, Αισθητικά Θεώρηματα A}, Athens, 1962, p.154
\end{itemize}
Works of art always spring from those who have faced the danger, gone to the very end of an experience, to the point beyond which no human being can go. The further one dares to go, the more decent, the more personal, the more unique a life becomes.\(^{21}\)

Thus, poetry and ruin become the "topos" of manifestation of the tragic, through a continuous shifting of boundaries between exaltation and fall, poverty and ascension. The unresolved presence of those dualities within the space of the poem, or the space of the ruin, intensify the sense of the ingraspable and of danger, which are essential characteristics of the category of the Sublime.

The Sublime, which according to Plotinus and Longinus stands in the antipodes of the classical realm of measure and proportion, reflecting the union of pure, incommeasurable light that comes from within, as well as from the outside of the soul\(^{22}\) becomes an autonomous aesthetical category in 18th century's art theory, with E. Burke (1757):

> Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger; that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion, because I am satisfied the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure.\(^{23}\)

The "equilibria of deficiency", as Bayer\(^{24}\) characterizes the Sublime, which permits the shifting from harmony and classical serenity to an apocalyptic and pathological vision towards the limits of existence, becomes the crucial point of the Romantic spirit. Goethe declared: "I name the classical healthy, and the romantic illness".\(^{25}\) And Novalis, much more romantic than Goethe,
would envision "through the junction with illness, the elevation of our existence". Because, he thought, "the essence of illness is as obscure as the essence of life."27

Indeed, if we think of Romanticism as attempted unification of the spheres of ethics and aesthetics, the resulting failure of life bears the trace of an extreme melancholy. Ruin-building and ruin-existence are confronting each other, as in the image of the defeated Marius among the ruins of Carthage:

He lived miserably in the shelter of a poor hut, built in the middle of the ruins of Carthage. There, Carthage and Marius contemplated each other and consoled themselves of their mutual destiny.28

In the battle between transience and eternity, melancholy prevails. Melancholy is the simplest and most commonly attested trait of ruins. Diderot begins his "poétique des ruines", on the occasion of H. Robert's ruinsapes, thus:

The effect of these compositions ... is to leave you in a sweet melancholy"29

And Bernardin de Saint-Pierre:

Ruins, where nature battles human art, inspire a sweet melancholy.30

John Ruskin, in his essay "The Poetry of Architecture" (1873), associates the "ruinous disorder" and "delapidation" of the "most humble edifices" of Italy, with its equally delapidated landscape, "where nature is most beautiful because neglected", and "everything around betokens decay and desolation in the works of man". Because, he explains,

What is most musical will always be found most melancholy; and no real beauty can be obtained without a touch of sadness. Whenever the

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27 Novalis, ibid., p.211
29 Diderot, Salon de 1767, Seznec, t.III, p.228
30 Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Etudes de la Nature, mentioned in R. Mortier, ibid., p.131
beautiful loses its melancholy, it degenerates into prettiness.31

Melancholy, sister of stars, essentially links poetry and ruin in terms of its daemonic language, by opening up an abyss of asymbolia. The melancholic, through what J. Kristeva calls a "denial of negation of a loss", finds himself at the edge of language, where words can not substitute for an essential loss of an "essential object". This tragic interspace of language and non-language, is the ruinscape of the poet, who also treats words not as signs of things, but as the Thing itself, a thing which, nevertheless, is impossible to grasp, since it is Chasm, crevasse, lacuna: "disinherited of what? An initial deprivation is thus indicated at once; it is not, however, the deprivation of a "property" or "object" constituting a material, transferable heritage, but the loss of an unnameable domain, which one might, strangely enough evoke or invoke, from a foreign land, from a constitutional exile."32

Melancholy, pathology of a soul which, as Novalis prophesized, becomes positive abyss, is the unstable ground where poetry contributes its most authentic ruinscapes. Here is poetry again:

La poésie, mesdames, messieurs: une parole d' infini,

parole de la mort vaine et du seul Rien.33

"She dwells with Beauty-Beauty that must die;" Keats repeats in his "Ode on Melancholy". And Nerval in "El Desdichado" (The Disinherited), speaks of the "Black Sun of Melancholia". And Blanchot, later, in "L'écriture du désastre" ascribes to all writing the movement of disaster -sister of stars-, assuming a most silenced language, a language which fuses perception and perceived, ruin and logos of ruin.

It is not you who speak; let the disaster speak in you;

31 J. Ruskin, The Poetry of Architecture, October 12, 1837, p.15


33 Celan, as mentioned by M. Blanchot, L'Écriture du désastre, Paris: Gallimard, 1980, p.143
Amnesia is here the temporal equivalent of space emptiness, which, in a movement of inversion, preserves the fragmentary nature of anamnesis. It is the non-appropriation of the past, which has to remain in distance, in order for us to maintain our temporality. The image of that dispersed past, which will never become "ours", which always shifts in Lethe, is the image of the ruin. Because, as Simmel wrote, "the ruin creates the present form of a past life, not according to the contents or remnants of that life, but according to its past as such." And the poem, in a similar movement, absorbs the totality of time, in return for our non-returning:

The poem is never the present. It is only past and future, memory and expectation. An absence from objects and a projection into a reality which has existed or shall sometime exist in a sudden movement which will itself be all of time.

In parallel, exile attempts through strangeness to bring us near a more proper being. It is what Hölderlin poetically defines in one of his fragments as "more athletic in ruin", direct reference to his own self-exile, as a "possible of return" to his native land. In another fragment, entitled "Mnemosyne", he inscribes the otherwise ruin perspective:

A sign we are, without meaning

Without pain we are and have nearly

Lost our language in foreign lands

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34 M. Blanchot, ibid., p.12 (My translation)
35 G. Simmel, ibid., p.128
37 Hölderlin, Mnemosyne, translated by R. Sieburth, Hymns and Fragments, Princeton, 1974, p.117
1.3 The Fragmentary

There is an essential difference between the fragment as indicative of a lost and evoked totality, and the fragment as "thing", that simply stands as "thing". Abandoning the notion of the fragment as referential unit, we then consider it as absolute being, as "wholeness of the fragment".

The term "wholeness of the fragment", though contradictory at first impression, means the aesthetic completeness of a work which bears no connections with the surroundings in geographical or temporal sense. The German romantics extensively used the fragment as a literary genre, and Friedrich Schlegel defined it as

"a small work of art, (which) ought to be entirely isolated from the surrounding world and complete in itself like a hedgehog." 38

In a ruinscape we move among fragments, but we experience the wholeness of each fragment. We do not reconstruct the missing parts towards an imaginary completion, because we see the fragment not as a mutilated remain, but as complete aesthetic object.

It is part of the phenomenological understanding of the ruin to suppose it "raw", "naked", as given to consciousness, to suspend any habitual or cultural assumption about it in order to confront its essential structure. But it is also part of the romantic sensibility never to fulfill a missing link, a void, but on the contrary, by accepting the object's "perfect incompleteness" to preserve its incomprehensibility and inaccessibility, and even to emphasize it by all means of poetic force. As Rousseau expressed it,

"If all my dreams had turned into reality, I would still remain unsatisfied: I would have kept on dreaming, imagining, desiring. In myself I found an unexplainable void that nothing could have filled; a longing of the heart toward another kind of fulfillment of which I could not conceive but of which nevertheless felt the attraction." 39

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In other words, the fragment would be the pure present of the present, the connections of which to its destiny or its origin, to future or past are out of sight, have disappeared, have not yet appeared, were lost forever, are always ahead, etc. It reminds us "the unique and eternal object of the soul" that Valéry spoke about, "that which does not exist: that which existed and is not any more -- that which will become and is not yet, that which is possible, that which is impossible, this is the soul's movement, but never what it is!"

Adorno speaks of the fragment as a totality that resists totality itself and Derrida of the fragment that "despite its fragmentary appearance signifies the memory of totality, as ruin and monument." Novalis, much earlier, conceived the fragment in its temporality and operation through the void. He speaks of, and uses the fragment as

"a pierced verse, an arrow shot at, a light captured by..."  

The void surrounding the fragment gives the necessary isolation, but also allows us to move around and see all its sides, in the same way that we would move around the Schlegelian hedgehog. Classical ruinscapes are, for example, a real topography of fragments, since they do not owe their deformation on collapsing but on dismemberment. Poetry ruinscapes reveal aesthetics of the fragment, not only at a formal level, but also through the rapidity of word-image displacement in our mind. Mallarmé's poem "Un Coup de dés" is a ruinscape which consciously applies, besides its spatial dispersity and noematic dislocation, a third source of fragmentary, which belongs to the ethics of the idea itself, around which the poem is built: not even the "depth of a shipwreck", "nothing... will have taken place... but place".

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40 Armel Guerne, in Novalis, ibid., p.46: "le "fragment" (...) c'est une forme en soi, un mode d'écriture essentiellement poétique, une percée vers, une flèche tirée sur, une lumière prise à, ou parfois un argument pour cet élément capital et purement ineffable de toute vérité vivante, entrevue ou conquise, qui est tout à la fois la raison de l'être et le but même du vrai langage, son secret et son aliment."

41 See Chapter 3

42 S. Mallarmé, Un Coup de dés, in Oeuvres, Paris, Gallimard, 1945, p.457
RIEN

de la mémorable crise
ou se fut
l'événement
accompli en vue de tout résultat nul
humain

N'AURA EU LIEU
une élévation ordinaire vers l'absence

QUE LE LIEU
inférieur clapotis quelconque comme pour disperser l'acte vide
abruptement qui sinon
par son mensonge
est fondé
la perdition

dans ces parages
du vague
en quoi toute réalité se dissout
Mind, memory, commentary, reminiscence, mania, premonition, mnemosyne, anamnesis, monument. Architecture is an act of remembrance, and monument is architecture par excellence. We build in order to commemorate: victories, death, the rays of the sun, the life of the Queen. The first architecture is the tomb. On the tomb we read:

"Matis was my name and my fatherland Celenes" 43

The first poem is the epitaph. Epitaph, from "epi+taphos", on+tomb. Architecture becomes the support for writing and writing the fulfillment of architecture.

We walk out of our room in a hot summer day at high noon in southern latitudes. Light is tangible, white, objects almost float in a shadowless landscape: we are in pure exteriority. On the stele we read:

"...pity him for dying so beautiful." 44

The inscription dissolves into the world, and the world changes, becomes inscription. We can not separate world from words. The poem breaths next to the breathing landscape. Both poem and the world transcend the limits of here and now, they lie outside history.

A ruinscape turns every useful landscape into a monument, into a place of memory.

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43 Inscription of the Sepulchral stele from Sardis, 3rd century B.C.

44 Athens, 6th century B.C.
2.1 A Poetry Landscape

We will examine poetry ruincapes in the context of graphic discourse. Besides oral poetry tradition, there is the world of written expression, including articulations of graphic substances and surfaces, as well as instruments of writing and engraving. We are told that writing was revealed by a fallen angel, Penemue ("the inside"), who "taught mankind the art of writing with ink and paper." Writing is condemned as evil. "Without writing mankind would not have been affected by death, which destroys everything, and would have been able to continue pure and just, as angels do." The materialization of logos is conceived by ancient tradition as synonym of the Fall, as original sin. Writing, even at the moment of its constitution, faces the laws of Nature, Earth, death, destruction and ruin.

Whether original Fall or simple mnemotechnic to ensure the flow of information, writing always exists through its material support. Writing, Institution, monumentality, text origin and Archi(text)ure, is inscribed in the most visible, durable and natural form. According to V.Hugo, the transition to printing created a "colossal edifice" which killed architecture once and for all. "This will kill that. The book will kill the building." Gothic was the last architecture, which means the last universal writing of mankind: "...architecture is not any more the social art, the collective art, the dominant art. The grand poem of humanity will not be built, it will be printed".

Poetry in its written tradition always maintains a strong visual character. It first addresses the eye. Before reading a poem aloud, we hear it with our eyes. We feel its rhythm as the eyes decipher the shapes of letters and words. In opposition to the ear, the eye is able to move inside the text in all directions. Like in a landscape, it can move forward or backward, to the right

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45 Apocalypsis Henochi Graece
or to the left, it can pause for a short or for a long time in one word, it can jump, omit, it can even see and not see at the same time. The eye moves into the text in the same way a camera moves into a landscape. It has the capability to transform a poem that was intended only to be read, into a complex field of visual paths and superimpositions. It can transgress text’s originality, only on the condition that the text presents itself in a written form.

Poetry landscape would thus be a more appropriate term for written poetry. Not only because we can consciously apply a visual reading, but also because, as writers, we can be aware of the environmental, textual character of text.

Poets, magicians and prophets have consciously insisted and were inspired by the visual potential of poetry landscapes. In general, we can distinguish between two kinds of written texts. The first does not pay attention to its written configuration and treats it as direct transposition of its oral prototype. The material is seen as neutral surface, and as unrelated to the layer of text that will be inscribed on it. Prose lines end where the width of the page ends, and poetry lines end where phonetic values of meter end.

The second kind treats text layer and surface layer inseparably from one another. It almost cultivates the surface as a fertile ground for the words to root upon. Words are not considered phonetic entities, transported as such to the surface, but are part of the surface-ground and follow the laws of the material.

There are various degrees of symphony between text and surface. Throughout history, ideas acquire material form in different kinds of surfaces and textures, from stone and clay to papyri and manuscript, to paper and print. Going backwards from paper to stone surfaces we observe an increasing importance of the material itself, in terms of monumentality, uniqueness, and work value.

Economy of materials affects economy of thought. History of stone inscription
from archaic and classical Greek to Roman periods contributed to stabilization of word forms, restriction to the essence of naming, and paratactical forms of syntax (i.e. without conjunctions, avowal of periphrastic clauses, requirement of brevity). Stone writing and its visual rhetorics survived as a recognized literary form and as "lapidary style" even after the invention of typography, and until the seventeenth century.

During the 17th century lapidary writing was spread all over Europe by Jesuits, and numerous books were printed following the "stone principles" of admirationem, brevitatem, perspicuitas, etc. Theoreticians, like Christian Weise, in his book "De Argutis Inscriptionibus", printed in Weissenfels at 1678, defines the essence of inscription as a "perfect epigrammatic point", contained in each line or pair of lines. In making the line or the period unit of composition, he essentially practices an aesthetic of the fragment. Although "lapidary" writing was considered in-between the oratory and the poetic and was marginal in its literary force, it crystallized in pure and visual manner poetic devices such as the fragmentary, condensation, parataxis, and ellipsis.
2.2 The Word as Pragma

The question of the origin of coalescence between visual form and meaning, or between pure words and their material support is closely related to the dual constitution of language itself, and the arsis of that duality, which is poetry.

The apposition of writing and architecture, the parathesis of words and things belongs to a far-away origin. It precedes culture, if by culture we mean a necessary divergence between language and life situations. Before the "great Homeric deviation", as Sartre called the beginnings of Western poetic production, and before the systematization of philosophical thought, there was no gap between things and names or essences of things. Every thing was pure essence and was experienced as such.

"Things themselves were daemons (gods)- that is farthestmost essences."\(^{47}\)

or as Dufrenne would write,

"...but these words that are as things are speaking things."\(^{48}\)

Speaking things provoke fear and wonder. Here language is not a safe territory, we are not inside a Shakespearian "words... words... words... " world, but we move among a haunted and hostile universe: words threaten to exist; a river, a spring, a mountain are daemonic figures. Women become trees, lakes; men become rivers, mountains. Myths are real in that pre-real world because they use language in its apocalyptic function.

Thus, we slowly move towards a different conception of language, a language that does not substitute real beings for signs. Poetry is by definition such a language:

" Poets are men who refuse to utilize language.(...) In fact, the poet has withdrawn from language-instrument in a single movement. Once and for all he has chosen the poetic attitude which considers words as things and

\(^{47}\)Ch. Malevitis, Η μαρτυρία του ποιητή Γ.Θεμέλη, Athens, 1971, p.12

\(^{48}\)M. Dufrenne, The Phenomenological Approach to Poetry, ibid., p.123
not as signs. For the ambiguity of the sign implies that one can penetrate it at will like a pane of glass and pursue the thing signified, or turn his gaze toward its reality and consider it as an object. The man who talks is beyond words and near the object, whereas the poet is on the side of them. For the former they are domesticated. For the latter, they are in the wild state. For the former they are useful conventions, tools which gradually wear out and which one throws away when they are no longer serviceable; for the latter, they are natural things which sprout naturally upon the earth like grass and trees. 49

A "signless" language derives from the demand for authenticity. From very early times the Stoics understood that from the three interrelated things, the signifier, the signified and the object, only two are "somata" (real bodies, somatic substances), the signifier or voice, and the object or referent. The third, the signified, is an "asomaton" (a non-body), since it can be true or false, depending on assumption, and therefore unauthentic.

The language-world situation is an opaque continuum. Before any interpretation of the given, we first experience the resonance of the thing itself inside its name. The thing unveils its essence through the festivity of its appellation. Naming is the primary function of poetry. Through naming, the thing is evoked in its miraculous distance-nearness, in other words it is not subjected to ideas, but to an endless calling which remains beyond appropriation. A poetry of calling and recalling is evident in pre-Homeric and Orphic traditions, as well as in modern pure or essential poetry. All words become names. The endless adjectives of Orphic hymns have also become names, because they do not attribute properties to an objectified reality, or beautify substantives, but reveal a substantial language, part of substances themselves.

Furthermore, in primitive cultures and folk tradition, names are part of living beings. Magic can be performed by utterance of a person’s name when the person is present.

"In the West of Ireland and in Torres Straits people have refused to tell me their names, though there was no objection to someone else giving

me the information; the idea evidently being that by telling their own name to a stranger they were voluntarily putting themselves into the power of that stranger, who, by the knowledge of their name so imparted, could affect them in some way.\textsuperscript{50}

In normal communicative language there is no relationship between signifier and object. As linguists say, signifier is arbitrary, the proof being that there are different names for the same object in the different languages of the world. In poetry, however, where sound or visual form reflects the flesh of things, the object is not represented through the word, but each word is itself an object. In that sense, the words "bread" and "pain" in English and French, express two different things, or two different poetic becomings of things. This is the reason that poetry remains untranslatable in essence, and also the reason for a legitimized use of many languages for the conveyance of one single poetic idea. Onomatopoeia and Phanopoeia, which are poetic devices to fabricate words from sound and visual properties of objects respectively, can be used in a broad sense to enhance poetic fusion of language and the sensuous.

Phanopoeia is a figure by which the writer brings the image or visual elements of the object directly to imagination. By using graphic techniques instead of figures of speech, phanopoeia can directly imitate the object it refers to. In that sense the object is visually present on the inscription surface, and surface itself becomes a poetry landscape consisting of words, matter and images. The first examples of such visual poetry landscapes go back to the Hellenistic poets of "technopaegnia", or pattern poems, but the principle was extensively used by the Persian poets, and also Herbert, Mallarmé, Apollinaire, L.Carroll, Mayakovsky, the Noigandres group of concrete poets and other modernists.

The idea of inscribing text to physical objects, which is related to those objects, but also to visually represent the objects by a word/void

\textsuperscript{50}A.C.Haddon, Magic and Fetishism, Constable:London, 1910, p.22
arrangement, is in itself a ritualistic and magic practice. We find it in many variations in magic papyri and theosophist lore, where unity of things and words is necessary in order to influence the flow of events.

In poetry it appears for the first time around 300 B.C., in three poems of the Greek poet Simmias of Rhodes,\textsuperscript{51} entitled "Axe", "Wings", and "Egg". "Egg" is a poem in the shape of an egg, to be inscribed on an egg. "Axe" is a poem about an axe, in the form of an axe, to be inscribed upon an axe.

\textsuperscript{51}A.S.F.Gow, Bucolici Graeci, London, 1952, p.171
OF PROPORTION. LIB. II.

The Pillar, Piliaster or Cylinder.

The Pillar is a figure among all the rest of the Geometricall most beautefull, in respect that he is tall and vpright and of one bignesse from the bottom to the toppe. In Architecture he is considered with two accesarie parts, a pedestall or base, and a chapter or head, the body is the shaft. By this figure is signified stay, support, rest, plate and magnificence, your building then being reduced into the forme of a Pillar, his base will require to beare the breath of a metre of fix or seven or eight sillables: the shaft of foure: the chapter egall with the base, of this proportion I will giue you one or two examples which may suffice.

Her Maiestie resembled to the crowned pillar. If to the Lady Calia, sends this Osfolet letter, you must read upwark. Her Majestie's resemblance to the crowned pillar. If to the Lady Calia, sends this Osfolet letter, you must read downwards.

In bliss with immortallist,

Her trymest top of all ye sees,

Garneith the crowne,

Her soft remvant,

Chapter and head,

Parts that maintain,

And: womanhead,

Her maiden rayne,

In to gri tie:

In to nor and,

With ye ri tie:

Her roundnes faul'd,

Strictlye the flatte,

By their tourraste,

With out debate,

Concord and peace,

Of her sup port,

They be the base,

With steadiness,

Pence and grace,

Stay and comfort,

Of Alleius root,

The sonne Pillar,

And since a faire,

Is plainlye express,

Tall stately and stert.

By thi no ble poor tryst

Is my terran deite,}

Thy wit and sense,

The streames of sourse

Of e to quence

And deep discouer,

Thy faire eye are

My brighte headstone,

Thy shewes a darte

Princely port and Maiestie

Thy princely port and Maiestie.

Is my terran deite,

Thy wit and sense,

The streames of source

Of e to quence

And deep discour,

Thy faire eyes are

My bright headstone,

Thy shewes a darte

Her Maiestie resembled to the crowned pillar. If to the Lady Calia, sends this Osfolet letter. You must read upwards.

Her Maiestie resembled to the crowned pillar. If to the Lady Calia, sends this Osfolet letter. You must read downwards.

Thy Princely port and Maiestie.
2.3 Poetry Ruinscapes

Ruinscape I

From a Seventh-Century Manuscript:

I can... shall be to me... shine back

1 cf. Him. 3. 17

Wil. 9 B: mas καλλίτευτος

cf. Him. 3. 17

The body of Greek lyric poetry has come down to us almost entirely in a fragmentary form. We have but a fraction of the poetic work of each author, and even single poems have survived only in segments.

Papyri transcriptions use a visual grid to denote the degree of reconstruction of the original text. The visual grid is an inseparable and essential part of the form of the fragment. It is the imposition of culture onto recently discovered "raw" material, and can be paralleled to archaeological grids imposed on excavation sites. In general, poetry or archaeological grids measure the tension between enduring form and void. Poetry grids consist of numeric notations, signs of omission, parentheses, brackets, exact measurements of the missing parts and written descriptions of the nature of the voids.

Sappho’s poem 34 from a 7th century manuscript52 is a perfectly balanced ruinscape, where positive and negative space, man-made and natural forces

come together in a dynamic equilibrium. As opposed to other fragments, the impossibility of reconstructing the whole is what makes us experience the full poetic potential of the text. It is not Sappho's poem which is visible here, but a new poem, in its own new context, within its own language topology.

Ruinscape II

Sappho's fragment 63⁵³ consists of one word. The word-fragment is the written paradigm for the notion of the "wholeness of fragment". It stands in total isolation from the surroundings like a star in the void. Its visual equivalent would be its inscription in the center of a circular page. Take, for example the image of an island, which reposes in itself, without any connections, exchanges, etc. If we invert the word/surrounding void, or island/ocean polarities, the void and ocean become the positive, and the word and island the negative. In this sense, we can speak of the "hollowness of the fragment", emphasizing the importance of the zone of silence for the consideration of the fragment.

It is difficult to discard the tradition that associates meaning with word's

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⁵³Ibid., p.226
positiveness. Gadamer, discussing context and meaning in pure poetry, would say that

"To name something is always to call it into presence. Of course, without some contextual determinacy, an individual word as such can never evoke the unity of meaning, which arises only through the totality of what is said(...) How can a whole be formed out of configurations of sound and fragments of meaning?"54

A ruinscape in the pure form of fragment 63 is an amalgam of a shout and a silence. In poetry, unity of meaning does not arise through the totality of what is said, but through the totality of what is said, and what remains unsaid. Poetry is a simultaneous act of silence and speech. And, even what remains covered, sliding, unsaid, inactual, is what matters and determines the present.

"Thinking's saying would be stilled in its being only by becoming unable to say that which must remain unspoken. Such inability would bring thinking face to face with its matter."55

Ruinscape III


55 M. Heidegger, The Thinker as Poet, in Poetry, Language, Thought, ibid., p.11
Fragments of stone inscriptions create poetry ruinscape with extremely vivid visual traces of cracks and effacement. Poems take shape according to the breaking lines of the surface material. Effacement areas are created where the material is more exposed to oxidation. In general, stone and stelelar inscriptions are more subjected to violent cracks and the laws of gravity than papyri and codices.

In the breaking of surface materials, the body of the text is shaped by the surrounding voids. Architecturally, it corresponds to the edge of a cliff, or the
remaining part of a torn-down wall, which shapes itself according to the horizontal forces of the earth. In the effacement of surface materials, the void is organized in the middle of the text. Architecturally, it corresponds to openings performed by time in solid masses of building facades.

In the fragment of a fine white marble stele depicted, only the middle part of the text is preserved. The right part is broken from top to bottom, whereas the left part has been thoroughly scoured. The text is from a petition addressed to Ptolemy VI or Ptolemy VIII by certain troops stationed at Paphos.

In much the same manner as in architectural ruins, textual ruinscapes create their topology according to the laws of matter and nature. The visual composition of the poem acquires its rhythm of alternate voids and mass, in agreement with physical damages of the surface, or the solid.

Ruinscape IV

\[ \text{remaining part of a torn-down wall, which shapes itself according to the horizontal forces of the earth. In the effacement of surface materials, the void is organized in the middle of the text. Architecturally, it corresponds to openings performed by time in solid masses of building facades.} \]

\[ \text{In the fragment of a fine white marble stele depicted, only the middle part of the text is preserved. The right part is broken from top to bottom, whereas the left part has been thoroughly scoured. The text is from a petition addressed to Ptolemy VI or Ptolemy VIII by certain troops stationed at Paphos.} \]

\[ \text{In much the same manner as in architectural ruins, textual ruinscapes create their topology according to the laws of matter and nature. The visual composition of the poem acquires its rhythm of alternate voids and mass, in agreement with physical damages of the surface, or the solid.} \]
A cryptogram is a text transcription that the Byzantines developed extensively for copying prophecies, spiritual comments, and magic formulae. It is based on secret algorithms that make text available only to a number of initiators. The practice descends from Orphic poetry tradition, ancient Greek mysteries and hierourgies, mysticism of the East and the Kabbalah. Common systems of cryptographic writing are based on transformation of the alphabet and alterations of the order of letters.

In codex Vindobonensis phil. gr. 231,56 copied in Naples in 1458, the copier Emmanouel opens up the text into a ruinscape, through the practice of

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56 J. Bick, Die kryptographische subscriptio im cod. Vind. phil. Gr. 231., Wiener Studien XXXVI, 1914
omitting letters, syllables or large portions of words. He practices an aesthetic of the fragment, though not for aesthetic purposes, but out of ethical and religious considerations. It is of particular importance that through elliptical transcription, he conceals all information about his own person and work, considering it unworthy in comparison to the divine original.

The intelligible words are "finished"..."hours"..."6"..."of the night"..."day"..."fr[i][d[a]y"..."in"..."of January"..."in Naples"..."wish for". Both intelligible and unintelligible parts communicate to us the extreme solitude and preoccupation of the monk.

Ruinscape V

| άνθρωπος | ΑΝΟΣ | Ἰησοῦς | ΙΣ | πνεῦμα | ΠΝΑ |
| Δαυίδ | ΔΔΔ | κύριος | ΚΣ | σωτήρ | ΣΗΡ |
| θεός | ΘΞ | μήτηρ | ΜΗΡ | σταυρός | ΣΤΣ |
| Ἰσραήλ | ΙΗΛ | σώφρονος | ΟΥΝΟΣ | υδάς | ΥΣ |
| Ἱερουσαλήμ | ΙΛΗΜ | πατήρ | ΠΗΡ | Χριστός | ΧΣ |

Copyists used similar methods of elliptical forms of language for the transcription of texts, in order to save space and time. In one of these methods, known as "symptyxis", the center part of the words is usually omitted. The practice is used in religious texts and the so-called "nomina sacra". The aim is not only to achieve economy, but also to transform the word to a visual symbol. Only certain words are subjected to this kind of condensation, for example, anthropos, god, sky, spirit, saviour, cross, son, mother, king, etc.
Omission as a conscious, functional operation is also present through the
errors of the copyists. Although carefully classified in Paleography, the
leaving out of words, syllables and letters, create unnoticeable openings to the
body of the text. Inattention usually causes large numbers of monosyllabic
words and articles to be left out. Thus, an unintentional paratactic syntax is
formed, which imitates literary devices of omission, such as the asyndeton
("unconnected"). In the figure of asyndeton, conjunctions are omitted for the
sake of economy and poetic force.

Ruinscape VI

Thus far, we have examined gaps in the context of the phrase or in the word
itself. If we descend deeper to the first elements of language, we confront
alphabetic units, which are the most general and abstract units. Nikolaus
Goldmann in his Civil-Baukunst of 1696, paralleled alphabetic units with the
finite numbers of constructional elements in the architectural orders. 57
If phrase is a city, and word a building, a letter would be a column, an arch, or
a horizontal beam, pure abstractions by themselves, which function as
combinatory elements for the creation of various architectonic types.

Fragment 15 of "New literary and subliterary texts", possibly by Anacreon,
Greek lyric poet of the 5th century B.C., reads as follows:

fr. 15

\[ \mu, [ \]
\[ \omega, [ \]
\[ \ldots [ \]

Considering the fragment in its "fragmentary completion", we notice the two

letters μ (mu), and ω (omega), which stand in extreme presence, among brackets that reinforce their isolation from the rest of the space. The two letters, from abstract alphabetic units are transformed to symbols -- the difference between signs and symbols being that signs are arbitrary, whereas symbols have an obvious and direct affinity with the object they refer to. "Mu" and "Omega" are not here conventions for the preparations of words, but as symbols they retain within their phonetic and graphic value a wide range of object associations. They are letter-objects, visible inscriptions of letter onomatopoeias that Platon first exposed in "Krtylos":

"He,(the giver of names), further observed the liquid movement of λ (l), in the pronunciation of which the tongue slips and in this he found the expression of smoothness, as in λειψευ (level), and in the word ὀλισθοευν (to slip) itself, λιπαρον (sleek), in the word κολλωδες (gluey) and the like(...)."\(^{58}\)

In his "Dictionnaire des Onomatopées françaises"\(^{59}\), Ch. Nodier discusses the "M" of the word "Ame" (Soul), as essential constituent of existence, which, in its interaction with "A", imitates inhalation (AM) or exhalation (MA). And Rilke, in his last Duino elegy will point to the huge "M", imprint and visual symbol,

"...up in the northern sky, pure as within the palm

of a consecrated hand, the clearly-resplendent M,

standing for Mothers. . ."\(^{60}\)

Fragment 15 is accompanied by a "paleographic" comment which gives the measure of ruinity within each letter. It says:

1. tip of stroke descending to right 2,w, o not excluded 3 Upper part of upright, upper left of circle, dot just above letter-top level.

M is clearly an M. But Omega is not necessarily O-mega (large O), but it can also be O-micron (small O). The hesitation between the two letters will never

\(^{58}\)Platon, Cratylus, 427b

\(^{59}\)C. Nodier, Dictionnaire raisonné des Onomatopées Françaises, Paris, 1928, p.44

\(^{60}\)R.M. Rilke, Duino Elegies, The Ninth Elegy, ibid., p.203
be solved. The $\Omega$ will contain within itself the possibility of $O$, like an invisible layer that has not yet been excavated, and that will never be revealed as a positivity.

In some examples, such as the inscriptions from the Argive Heraeum, ruinity and ambiguity within the letters is precisely represented in print. For example, line 4:

```
A ΦΙΛΕΙΑ Δ ΦΙΑ
5 ΑΡΙΣΤΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΑΥΠΛΙΑ
```

A ΦΙΛΕΙΑ Δ ΦΙΑ

Line 4 is ruinscape by itself, owing its pure visual resonance and expressivity in the different levels of fragmentation and repetition rhythms. The poetic impact is lost in the reconstructive attempt, which is presented below:

```
1 νας Μια
ονος Δυ[αρχ]ος
a 'Αρχεμάχ[a]
a Φιλεία Δ     Φιλ
5 'Αριστόπολις Ναυπλία
a Δακόω Δυ...a...τολ
a Αίρι
ατη
σ
10 ρατ ευς
αφαγή 'Ε
Σωστράτ[a]
Χάριτα 'Αρι[στόπολις]
Δυσιοτράτα
15 'Αγάθων[ν]
Κληγά[ρα] Π
'Αρ[χάπτα
κλείδα 'Οκλ
20 'Αρχείπος Κλεο[πολε]
on 'Οφελλ[ων]
νης Κλεο[πο]λίδα
αισθειμ... 'Αμν[κλαίος
ν 'Αράχνας
```
Ruinscapes as Palimpsests. Ruinscape VII

Occasionally, writing surfaces bear the traces of multiple layers of texts, in the same way that earth beholds different layers of buildings or cities of the past within a restricted geographical zone. The word palimpsest, from Greek words palin+psao, means to scratch again. It refers to a technique used during the first centuries of Middle Ages, when, because of scarcity of parachment, copyists used to write a new text (scriptio superior), on top of the previous text (scriptio inferior), after having erased it with various complicated methods.

Depending on the method of erasing, and the care with which it was done, portions of the old text were still visible, though extremely difficult to read. Decipherment was possible by using chemical reactors, which nevertheless destroyed the pages, and more recently through infrared or ultraviolet photography. The process of decipherment is a real excavation of the page, aimed at reading the layers of texts within their historical contexts.

An architectural ruin reveals the cultural/natural resistance of a specific place. Similarly, a palimpsest writing is a ruinscape, which inscribes in a poetic form and through condensation the fragmented story of human intelligence. A palimpsest is a "vertical" fragmentary language, which attains a transformation of multiple writings into one, through effacement, superimposition and intertwining of textual strata.

A palimpsest is essentially a transparent surface where the eye travels, not horizontally, but depthwise. Fragments are created by the tension between past and present layers. When all of the layers are the creation of one person, we speak of poetry palimpsestal ruinscapes.

Poets often leave palimpsests of their own creations, writings and re-writings of the same poem in the same surface. Here, the tension between past and present layers reveals a struggle of meaning as well, a struggle towards a "whole" that remains beyond grasp. The mission of the poet is, to use
Ponge's words, that "rage of expression". Poetry is indeed the conflict of expressing the inexpressible. The poet, in his agony of circumscribing absence, of translating silence into logos,

often and in almost every step, reaches into impasses (...) Language, which is given to him in order to utter silence, is not always enough.\textsuperscript{81}

The writing surface becomes a field of battle to inscribe the poet's losses. In a palimpsest, corrections and crossing-outs are positive marks which reveal both the crossed-out and the new becoming. A crossed-out word remains thus, actual, and even more present through its effacement. When, for example, Heidegger in his second period of thought, writes

\underline{Being} instead of \underline{Being},

transgresses language into a palimpsestal construction, which seems to be more proper for the approach of essence of \underline{Being}. By writing \underline{Being}, he reveals a ruinscape which effectuates both actual and inactual regions of the visible. Furthermore, \underline{Being} is not only a crossed-out \underline{Being}, present through its absence, but also a palimpsest of \underline{Being} and the letter, or symbol "X". "X" is a sign of crossing-out, as well as a sign for the notion of "gathering" at a point of intersection:

The symbol of crossed lines can, to be sure, according to what has been said, not be a merely negative symbol of crossing-out. Rather it points into the four areas of the quadrangle\textsuperscript{62} and of their gathering at the point of intersection. The being present as such turns towards the essence of man in which the turning-towards is first completed, insofar as the human being remembers it. Man in his essence is the memory of \underline{Being}, but of \underline{Being}.

Ruinscape VIII

Friedrich Hölderlin's drafts of hymns and fragments of his later period are

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{81}G.Themelis, Poetry and Language, ibid., p.216
  \item \textsuperscript{62}The quadrangle is an essential category in Heidegger's aesthetics. Here Heidegger means the gathering of the Four: Earth and Sky, Divinities and Mortals.
  \item \textsuperscript{63}M.Heidegger, The Question of Being, College and Univ. Press:New Haven, 1958, p.83
\end{itemize}
ruinscapes which work both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally here refers to the sudden crevasses that open up the space of the poem, both literally, in the mise-en-scene of the written page, and in essence, by constituting a fragmentary field of meaning which favors silence and the abyss. Vertically refers to the in-depth accumulation of the poet's re-writings, erasings and crossing-outs which tragically balance the page landscape, but also the poet's journey from a mythical and innocent past to an infamous present and back or the constant shifting of his own person from "health" to "insanity", from exile to "Vaterland".

The continuous bringing together of those essential dipoles of life/poetry situations, inscribed in the page topology as an "earth-sky" analogy, constitutes Hölderlin's palimpsestal ruin-dwelling. In his fragment of hymn "Das Nächste Beste", multiple re-writings give an extremely kinetic landscape, which inscribes in space all the time-lapses and mind-lapses of the poet, since,

offen die Fenster des Himmels

Und freigelassen der Nachtgeist

The presence of all previous re-writings in the manuscript of "Das Nächste Beste" break the intended narration (is there an intended narration?) to a new and original rhythm, which can not be reduced or "reconstructed" to one single form. This rhythm belongs to the eye, and is as natural as a palpable landscape, descending to all its previous origins.

In the fragmented hymn "Kolomb" Hölderlin, along with the sudden stops and extended voids of the text, does not hesitate to include phrases in Greek or French, in an effort to appropriate what he calls "the national" through distance in time (Pindar), or distance in place (exile in France).

Und seufzeten miteinander, um die Stunde,

---

64The windows of heaven are open,/ and the spirit of night is set free...
Nach der Hizze des Tags.

Nuit à les pleures

The poem ends in an image of the gods who "gather together alone", when the heavens become "too lonely",(...) "or the earth"(...), because, or despite the fact that "far too pure is",(...) "either"(...), and the last line bringing, or dismissing "traces of ancient education". (The five lines from Pindar, that Hölderlin inserts in Greek in the poem, are usually omitted in the editions of the Fragments.) Being at war with his own language, in an effort to express an immense thought -- which is not thought yet --, and at the same time reconciling himself with the distance that must be kept between those two universes -- of the possible and the impossible --, Hölderlin writes in the margin of the incomplete elegy "Promenade à la Campagne":

Je voulais chanter un léger chant, mais je n'y parviens jamais,

Car mon heur ne me rend pas la parole (légère)
Das Nächste Beste

und freiglassen

ist offen die Fenster des Himmels
unbändigen

5

Und freiglassen der Nachgrist
volkstümlichen

Der unheilswen, ist Gerechtigkeit,
der hat unter Land
unendlichen

10

Bis diese Stunde.
Beschwert, mit Sprachen viel (unsichtbaren), und
Dies, was ich will.
Den Schutt gesetzt
Das (Feinde) Gott.

15

Bis diese Stunde.
Doch körnt das, wächst ich will.

Viel thut die gute Stunde. Weiß
Dram wie die Stürme

ID (Mit Freuden) Schrei.
weil auf Gegenstr. Orla, wie (drei)

30

Weil im Olierland, und

immer, immer

Sprung

An grabbewachsen Wegen
25

brauchen
Unendlich in der Waffe
Die (Sichel stößt)

Blauen

30

Die Söhne dorthin.
Und das Herz der Eltern thut
Sich aufschauen um
Den Himmel von Eichen

35

Die Rinder
Das Schwere unter Tannen

40

An bergerwaspische Sträucher jene, stehend.
Sie schauen nun die Herrin,
Weit grad aus feinem Stein,
Die -

45

Weil Wasser wimmeln rieselt
Und heiter Grün sich zeigt
Auf feuchtklimmer Wasser der Charente.

Die stürzen sich plötzend.
Weil aber.
die Luft von Wurzen.

50

(Weil Al Scharfe und die IdAugen der Nordost, riechen sie auf.)
darum auch

Namlich (daran) daher, weil
Daher hilflosen teil zu einem
(Zu einem)
1515 wird, dass an
Allein zusammenhalten
oder die Erde, die (es leidet) heutem in
Entweder

Dass aber

) die Spuren der alten Zucht.
Die Apriorität des Individuums

und kehr' in Ha' ihn hernach

über das Geist

den Augenblick des Triumphe

Vorletz

heile Priestern und wir

Vom Abgrund nimmt sich

Wir anleitung und gegangen um tap opsey

Gebante

Dem Lungs gawh. (id)

heilt

Der Lügen

In dem Brand

Der Welt

Lichtstrahlen und der Thronen hoch

Mit Bild aber wird, und ein Hund, umgang

ihnen in der Hohe meine Striffe auf den Gassen der Gärten

Der Schöpfer

in den weissten Menschen

indices aber

In Frankreich, neues zu sagen

Und Spiegel die Züge

Frankfurt aber, nach der Gestalt, auf

Meinem Fürsten

Auch der Natur, zu geben

Dletis Menschen nemich, ist der Stiel

Is des Menschen erfühlt. Aber

Dieser Erde, dieser Zeit aber

raunet nationell

ist Zeit, und deutschen Schmerzes

Germania

Ein wilder Hurger aber steigt aber dem Abhang

darß ich seinen sohle

Meiner Gärten, Kirchenbauern, Schätzer Ohren aber wirn

stoff die Lüche des Frages, Alde bin ich

Alice mizeten. Wunderbar

Aber schwächt gebläht neben

aller über Quellen begeh schon

Bergen der Freude weg

Ein Hubbahn und sich Senne, wie Koral

Nach an dem Streiche über Höhen von mord.

Aus denen

Unfruchtbar aus Korn, nun aber zu gesamten, besetzter Gast

von Blumen

so zu Schmeichler aber der hende stieg

Neue Bildung aus der Stadt

Chrommgewach auf und die Gr. aus der Provence, und

Und Naturkraft

Denkbarkeit - Schmack

länger aufstehen

und Gott

Denkbarkeit mir die Gasopfrischen Lande euch ab

größten Fleisch

Gekront und genannt

Geben u.J. bringen aber, nach zu eines, nachdem mich

der Tafel und

Die Rapportur und des Festtags braune Trunken, braune

und mein wert o

Untragbar

Ihr Bißchen von Deutschland, o mein Herz wird

Kreutz an dem

Das Lichte sich preiset, weil

Deutschland
Chapter 3
To Dwell-in-Ruin

By rejecting the idea of poetry as "unreal play of poetic imagination" far removed from life situations, on one part, and as part of literary production on the other, Heidegger assured us that poetry is indeed the presupposition for authenticity in architecture. Architecture as the essence of existence in terms of dwelling, and poetry as initial measurement of the limits of habitation, are substantially linked. Interpreting Hölderlin's phrase, "... yet, poetically man dwells...", Heidegger wrote that

Poetry first causes dwelling to be dwelling. Poetry is what really lets us dwell. But through what do we attain to a dwelling place? Through building. Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building.

But what kind of building is poetry? And, inverting the question, what is the poetic among the fundamentals of habitation? Where, among the dwelling places, and in what form is the poiesis nature of poetry to be found?

A dwelling place can be a house, a church, a factory, in so far as we are able to consider it a "lived" reference point for our perpetual wandering. A dwelling is the beginning and ending of all our departures, it is the "lived" counterpart of the geometric zero, where everything originates from.

All live movement in space occurs as a going away or a coming back. If I sit in the cafe, I can arise to fetch a newspaper and afterwards return to my place. But this place in the cafe is only a passing point of rest. After I read my newspaper, I arise and go "home". But after I have returned to my place of residence, am I really "at home" there? Where is my real home?67

We commonly say "home", "house", "at home", in order to describe the essence of dwelling place, the spatial center of our being in the world. What are the fundamental categories of habitation, where poetry as "aletheia"

occurs?\textsuperscript{68}

So far, the discussion on the essence of dwelling has been based on the absolute distinction between inside and outside space. House has meant separation:

By means of the house’s walls man carves out of universal space a special and to some extent private space and thus separates an \textit{inner space} from an outer space.\textsuperscript{69}

House reveals intimacy, protectiveness, whereas outer space is the space of openness, fear, and abandonment. Phenomenology of dwelling and poetics of space, from Bachelard’s topophilic studies to descriptive psychology, emphasize the dualism between inside and outside space, and associate the values of the inside as positive values for the poetry of habitation. Bachelard’s "poetics of space" examines the inside in all its manifestations, namely the house, cellars, drawers, chests, nests, caves, shells, corners, etc., in order to extract the essential principles of dwelling. His aim is to examine

the quite simple images of felicitous space. In this orientation, these investigations would deserve to be called topophilia. They seek to determine the human value of the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love. For diverse reasons, and with the differences entailed by poetic shadings, this is eulogized space.\textsuperscript{70}

He then continues by equating the values of well-being, intimacy and comfortness with those of dwelling places: "Indeed, in our houses we have nooks and corners in which we like to curl up comfortably. To curl up belongs to the phenomenology of the verb to inhabit, and only those who have

\textsuperscript{68} Aletheia, "truth", is interpreted by Heideggerian phenomenology, in its platonic etymology, as a(privativum) + lethe(forgetfulness), which means disclosure, remembrance, coming to light. Poetry is understood as aletheia, because -as Dufrenne comments- its opposite is not falseness, but opaqueness, unexpressiveness. However, a second etymology is proposed by Plato in Kratylus 421b, which is closer to our interpretation of ruin-dwelling. According to that, aletheia is formed by ale + theia, which means errance, wandering, persistent to divinities.

\textsuperscript{69} O.F. Bollnow, ibid., p. 180

\textsuperscript{70} G. Bachelard, The poetics of space, Beacon Press: Boston, 1964, p. xxxi
learned to do so can inhabit with intensity." 71

To dwell-in-ruin proposes an entirely different phenomenology of habitation. The home as positivity does not elevate language to its tragic affirmation as poiesis of habitation. It is the home as field of battle that provides the context of shifting realities for the dwelling dipoles. The ruin-dwelling gathers in itself a resting tension of space contraries, that normally belong to two different realms of experience: the inside and the outside. The ruin-dwelling thus becomes the concretization of all poetic manifestations of the "horrible inside-outside", that Michaux spoke about. It opens up to an abyssal in-between space which mingles rootness and errance, confined and infinite, intimacy and strangeness, hospitality and exile, nearness and the beyond. According to Blanchot,

what poets establish -- space: void and basis of language -- is what does not remain, and man’s authentic sojourn is not the shelter where he seeks protection, but corresponds to the reef, the shipwreck and whirlpool and to that "memorable crisis" which alone gives access to the moving void, the place where creative activity begins. 72

Poets live forever in ruins. As Baudelaire would say, "to live forever in a building about to collapse." We have to take these words literally, in order to understand poiesis of ruinity, as articulated in architecture and dwelling places. The poet does not contemplate, but is inside the "horrible inside-outside":

"... you will be sitting outside; you will be invited
by the warm floors; Inside, the wind
will be blowing over you . . . " 73

A ruin-dwelling manifests a strange osmosis of transience and permanence,

71 G. Bachelard, ibid., p. xxxiv
73 Fragment of doubtful origin
determination and fate, which in its turn fabricates freedom from narrowness and intimacy from extensiveness. The exterior becomes a reminiscence of the interior, whereas the interior encompasses a non-enclosing nostalgia for the far-off. Indeed, there is enough void for the Terrible of nature to enter, and so much solid for the memory of embracement to be kept.

What kind of building is poetry -- which lets us dwell-- ? Poetry's dwelling, which is a real dwelling, is a ruin-dwelling. Architectural ruinscapes are silent testimonies of our poetic dwelling.

3.1 Openness

History of architecture is certainly a history of roofs and walls. But, if essence in architecture is coverness and horizontal delimitation, essence in ruinscapes is manifested through the function of openings.

Openings are not simply architectonic devices for air-light and fire circulation, or for formal arrangement of facades, but are a veritable topology of transition that reflects the psychological antinomies of human existence between presence and transcendence, locality and extensiveness. The opening is the most tragic moment in the history of spatial constitution of human life.

Openings can be divided into two fundamental categories: first, vertical openings, such as doors, windows, or irregular discontinuations of walls in the form of holes, which favor an earthly, or geographical link between what is here and what is beyond. Those openings, by defining an in-between space of "near horizon", gather in themselves the longing of the journey, the departures and arrivals of real and fictitious far-away origins. They are openings which are associated with the community. The mythological god of doors is Hermes, who stands in the threshold to ensure human separation and reunion.
The second category of openings establish a vertical communication between the celestial and the terrestrial, through roof openings, or through irregular perforation of ceilings. What characterizes these openings is not the bridging of a topography of "here" and "elsewhere", but the spatialization of offering and receiving, belief and infidelity, pertaining not to the community, but to the sky’s transcendence. Goddess Hestia, friend of Hermes and protector of the center of the house, ensures the undisturbed journey of the smoke of sacrifices from earth to heaven.

Two clay house models from the neolithic period in Thessaly, Greece, describe the two categories of openings, the earthly and the cosmic. The first has an oversized hole in the roof as the only opening, which emphasizes the respirational function of the dwelling place towards the sky. The second presents four openings, one for each wall, which open up the inside to the full extensiveness of the horizon. The irregularity of openings suggests a fusion of window, door and threshold in one entity and situates the poetics of entering in a ruin perspective, that Rilke would describe thus:

Threshold: what it means for two lovers

to be wearing down, imperceptibly, the ancient threshold of their door --

they too, after the many who came before them

and before those to come. . . . . , lightly.  

3.2 Aethreon, Trilithon

The ancient Greek "aethreon", which means "place full of air", is primarily a roof opening, large enough to transform the very center of the house to a space opened to the first elements of air, water, fire and earth. It is a space associated with rituals of sacrifice to the divinities, and retains its character as an unprotected area open to the presence of nature and the signs of gods. Not only does it allow the smoke of offerings to escape upwards, and the benevolent rain and daylight to enter, but also provides the house with a horizontal window which frames the multiplicity of changes of the sky.

The prototype of "aethreon" is to be found in early examples of prehistorical oval houses in Greece, such as the "house of Chamaizi" in Crete, or the "house of Rini", in Thessaly, with striking resemblances to preexistent Assyrian examples. Later on, the Mycenean "megaron" with its central hearth surrounded by four columns which support the roof opening, would become the paradigm for the further evolution to the classical aethreon. In the classical period, roof openings became the space par excellence, which bridged the house with the house of Olympian gods above and the underworld below.75

Aethreon is a ruinscape by itself, not only because it allows an immediacy of exchange between human and cosmic psyche, but also because it is the only distinct element among today’s scattered remainings of houses of classical and Hellenistic antiquity. It is true that in the otherwise insignificant and ephemeral constructions of domestic architecture, the ruin-aethreon dominates in its monumental character, and its worn-out accentuated features of a magnificent void.

75See also J.P. Vernant, Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs, Egnatia:Thessaloniki, p.170
Nach WACE-THOMPSON.

Haus von Chamaizi auf Kreta. 1:300. Nach NOACK.
Classical architecture is a "post and beam" architecture. Its prototype is the primitive "trilithon", (i.e. three stones), namely two vertical stones which serve as columns, and one horizontal which bridges the gap and balances the forces of gravity. The trilithon is a momentary roof construction under which man can momentarily dwell. At the same time, it is an opening, a door, a gate, a window, a construction of a void around a void, through which man realizes his own exodus or his own palindrome. In that sense, the trilithon is a passageway not only for human body, but for human soul as well. By finite means it reconciliates distance with abolition of distance, memory with abolition of memory.

Ruins of classical temples owe their transparency and sense of immateriality to the rhythmical alteration of trilitha, which gather in themselves the purity of the surrounding landscape. as opposed to intact temples, where solid mass dominates behind and above the colonnades, here, openness elevates the building towards the sky. Furthermore, the exposition of white marble to the devastating light of the Greek landscape increases the effect of dematerialization. The word "peripteron", which characterizes the surrounding colonnade of the temple, acquires its literal meaning as "winged all around" in today's classical ruinsapes.

Temples which preserve more the anamnesis of enclosure in the interior of their colonnades, such as the Parthenon, the Aphaia in Aegina, the Posseidon in Sounion, and the Apollon in Vassae, manifest openness in the double sense of worldly and cosmic. To dwell-in-ruin in a classical ruinscape would be to experience the tragedy of light in the inside, where the slender shadows of trilitha can not prevent the Heracleitean sun "from overstepping his measure". The tragedy of the "terribly black light", that Seferis spoke about, manifested through the antinomies of ruin-space, is here united with man's conflicts of innocence and endurance. As Seferis again wrote in a letter,
"The Erinyes will hunt down the sun, just as they hunted down Orestes; just think of these cords which unite man with the elements of nature, this tragedy that is in nature and in man at the same time, this intimacy. Suppose the light were suddenly to become Orestes? It is so easy, just think: if the light of the day and the blood of man were one and the same thing? How far can one stretch this feeling?"**76**

The emptiness of the inside of the ruin-temple can be considered as the final evolution and destiny of a marginal type of temple that Vitruvius refers to as "hypaethreon", which means "under the air". The inner peristyle of that temple corresponds to a roof opening above. Consequently, the interior treated as an exterior, is exposed to air. As Choisy remarks**77**, those temples are all consecrated to gods who personnify light: Zeus (temples of Olympia, Jupiter in Athens, Selinous), Apollon (temples of Vassae and Militos). In the temple of Olympia, the traveler Pausanias describes the legend according to which a thunderbolt, which fell in the open aethreon of the building, was a sign from the god that he liked the statue that Pheidias had made to his honour.**78** The extreme nakedness of the ruinscape of trilitha is in harmony with the bareness of the remote sites of Greece where they were built. In most places, columns substitute the absence of trees as the only vertical elements, reminding us of the strange fusion between nature and architecture. In other places however, to use Chateaubriand's phrase, "here and there, high cypresses replace the fallen columns of those palaces of death..."

The ruinscape of the city of Palmyra in the middle of the Syrian desert is certainly a longer poem, probably the most elaborate manifestation of the poetics of the trilithon in space. The desert, as ruin of a landscape, but also as the simplest and purest experiencing of horizontality, illimitness, and mirroring of earth and firmament, provides to poetry surface an inverted

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**78** Pausanias, Description of Greece, Elis I. XI. 9.
"Coup de dés". It is not the Mallarmean "space made poem" that is here envisioned, but the poem itself, exchanging words and separation of words for architectural voids and distance of voids. A vast topography of vertical voids -of extreme matter litote- which, in their dispersal, reflect

EXCEPT...

MAYBE...

A CONSTELLATION

or retrace that

A DICE THROW...

WILL NEVER...

ABOLISH CHANCE

In Palmyra, the other dimension of Openness is the aethreon of the earth, the vastness of the sky, absolute coverness, the opening of which is still unopen. The poetics of that macro-openness is to be thought as immense zero, the zero of a chiasm of a cosmic and worldly flesh, as the romantics of the sky would say:

...work in our Zero zone and at the same time remain open to the zero zones which the "world", man, and nature offer us in permanence

79


80Otto Piene, The Development of the Group Zero, Lightworks No 13, fall 1980, p.28
EXCEPTÉ
à l'altitude
PEUT-ÊTRE
aussi loin qu'un endroit
fusionne avec au-delà
hors l'intérêt
quant à lui signalé
en général
selon telle obliquité par telle déclivité
de feux
vers
cel doit être
le Septentrion aussi Nord

UNE CONSTELLATION

froide d'oubli et de désuetude
pas tant
qu'elle n'énumère
sur quelque surface vacante et supérieure
le heurt successif
sidéralement
d'un compte total en formation

veillant
doutant
roulant
brillant et méditant

avant de s'arrêter
à quelque point dernier qui le sacré

Toute Pensée émet un Coup de Dés
3.3 A Passing Dwelling

"The House of the Poor" is an engraving by C.N. Ledoux, visionary architect of the enlightenment, which appeared in his book "L' Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la legislation" in 1804. In front of the vast openness of the sea, extending to infinity, and the animated, overwhelming presence of the sky, which occupies the largest part of the image, a man sits. As the text informs us, the image does not represent a natural scene outside, but "the house of the Poor", or "the shelter of the poor". Ledoux describes an interior space that is intimate and infinite at the same time. Man's dwelling place -- which is a tree -- gathers the proximity of the far-away horizon and the distant regiment of the community of gods.

Man's ruin-dwelling is a poetry-dwelling in the sense that it encompasses an absence in both space and time; an absence, or a shifting from the fixed delimitations of a definite construction. In terms of dwelling, we have to pass, as M.M. Ponty wrote, "from the thing (spatial or temporal) as identity, to the thing (spatial or temporal) as difference, i.e. as transcendence, i.e. as always "behind", beyond, far-off...". Ledoux does not intend to comment on a pre-architectural era of habitation. He rather points out that meta-architectural denudation (ruinity), and the shifting from building's solidity to ethereal movement of nature is indeed the presupposition for dwelling.

From the fragile ruin-dwelling of the tree and the protection of the heavens' interior, we pass to a passing ruin-dwelling, unstable boundary between rootness and journey, forgetfulness and remembrance. C.D. Friedrich's painting "Streaks of fog", made in 1818/20, has a conceptual similarity with Ledoux's representation: a man lives outside, in the vastness of the desert, under a dominating sky.

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Yet the man is next to his home, and not "at home". If Ledoux's man is in a stance of praying, with his hands wide open, and his gaze towards the celestials, Friedrich's man is simply sitting, apparently waiting. He seems to wait for an invisible sign, so that he can leave again. In the perfect stillness of the setting and the unmovable centricity of man and his dwelling, everything is in transition: the man is ready to move, the clouds are moving, the birds are moving. Even the house is a transportable house, a house without foundations, ready to go, along with the chariot.

And the sky is not the rayful sky of Ledoux's engraving, compensating man for his offerings. Rapidly moving clouds, postponing forever an imminent storm cover a shadowless field, where -- to use Dante's words -- "every light is silenced". In that cosmic desert which abolishes all signs of immediacy or permanence towards gods or men, nevertheless, man dwells. What does this invitation to a dwelling place without ground mean:

Come to the openness, friend! although today not enough light

Still gleams, and the sky is prison to us.  

It is exactly in the without ground, that man dwells. Hölderlin, in a fragment entitled, "What is the life of man..." asks:

...the simple sky, is it, then,

rich?

and later on, he answers:

...But when the simple

Blue is effaced, the sky,

Mat as marble, shines like ore,

Indicating riches.  

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82 F. Hölderlin, La Promenade à la Campagne, in Hölderlin, Œuvres, Paris:Gallimard, 1967, p.803. (My translation)

83 F. Hölderlin, ibid., p.887
Rayless light defines an in-between space of indirect and silent vertical communication, which Hölderlin in an essay on Tragedy, defines as follows: "God and man, so that there would be no chasm in world flow, and the anamnesis of heavens would not be lost, come into communication through the form of infidelity, which indicates forgetfulness; because divine infidelity is what we best retain." 84

84F. Hölderlin, Remarques sur les traductions de Sophocle, in Oeuvres, ibid., p.958. (My translation)
3.4 The Byzantine Dome

Dome construction is the dominant element of Byzantine architecture. The Byzantine dome comes to perfection through the invention of spherical triangles, upon which the cupola rests. Its uniqueness is that it does not need the enormous mass of support -- which is characteristic of Roman domes --, but rests on light columns, thus giving the impression of a dome "hanging from the sky". As Otto Demus observed, the columns of the dome resemble descending tentacles or "hanging roots".85

The Byzantine dome, with pure architectural means, achieves the etherization of the vault, through the irrational victory of the supported over the supporting parts of construction. It uses architecture in order to aesthetically neglect the essence of architecture: gravity. The absence of walls as support for the dome, accomplishes not only a spiritual ascension through imitation of the hierarchy of heavens, but also creates arches of passage in the ground to the four corners of the earth. Those arches are veritable gates, which intensify horizontal openness, already observed in the classical trilithon.

The dome is thus a ruinscape by itself, because it opens up space in both directions, vertical and horizontal. It denies the limitedness of finite space, first by elevating an artificial sky to the height of real sky, and second, by creating a space of transience in the ground, based on the entrance dipoles. The detachment of the dome from its supports, and its ascension upwards is further suggested by the mediative tympan, which, perforated by multiple openings, creates an in-between zone of light.

Thus, vertical openness in the Byzantine dome is achieved, not by piercing of the sphere -- as we observe in Roman domes -- but by its detachment. (Later

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on, in Baroque architecture, perforation of the roof is achieved by pictorial illusion.) Being under the dome, one has the impression of an "environment which is at the same time closed and open, where space is infinite and limited together." It is a roof which protects by exposing the body to an almost transcendental openness. As the poet G. Seferis noted in his diary, it is always the sense of light protectiveness of this architecture. It covers you without being heavy. Open winds over you: the light cover.

Byzantine painting and iconography does not represent the sky as a surface which occupies part of the background. The sky is painted as object among other objects, in front of a monochromatic golden background. It is not the sky of the world which is visible in the form of the dome, but the sky as a region of the sacred. In that specificity of the sky, the role of the columns is not to support its dome, but to establish a delicate, almost invisible link between this and the other world. As in the case of Hölderlin's rayless light, we are in a non-immediacy of communication between this world and the other. It is always represented as disproportionally slender, and sometimes literally immaterial, almost without color: a transparent column.

The column has a theocentric origin, rather than the anthropomorphic one of classical architecture. It is not a "structural" column, expressing in its form balancing of forces, beauty of proportions, and the stance of human body, but a "metaphysical" column, monolithic and weightless, which reflects the ascension of the soul and the tendency to liberate the ascended body from the bounds of the earth.

The Byzantine column-knot is the ruin-dwelling of the anchorite. The anchorite is also called "steletes", which means "the man who dwells in the column". He lives for years on the top of a high column in the desert. The column is extremely transparent, since it is made of two pieces of rope with a knot in the middle. The rope is always in tension; still, an opening among the

86 G. Seferis, Μέρες Γ, Athens, 1975, (Friday Feb. 24, 1939)
two strings is always left. The knot-column is really a continuation of the body of the anchorite. It is the chiasm between the flesh of the anchorite and the flesh of the column, that brings the momentary balancing of the opposite forces: the non-body of the anchorite and the non-body of the earth.

There is no further stage of ruinity for the knot-column; because its role is to prevent something, not from falling to earth, but from flying upwards.
Η δήτησις ἀμφοτέρων ἦκε τριήμερο εἰς τὸ μνήμα τῆς παροιμίας.
3.5 Roman Remainings

As opposed to classical ruins, where rhythmical repetition of distinct fragments gives a sense of serene sublimity, Roman (and Byzantine, to an extent) ruins owe their poetics to the violence of the pierceing of surfaces and masses.

This is the consequence of a different concept of construction, which in the case of Roman architecture uses continuous structural skins and non-homogeneous materials. Architectural elements are not independent, but work together in such a way that there is no clear distinction between supporting and supported members. Forces of matter are not vertical, as in the case of "post and beam" architecture, but are distributed almost evenly in all directions inside the primary elements of arches and vaults.

In such a non-skeletal architecture, where there is no distinction between strong and weak parts, ruinscapes give the impression of collapse and not of dismemberment. Characteristics of Roman ruinscapes include the uniqueness of deformation for each single building, irregularity and the unpredictability of openings. Because of the overall strength of their cohesive shells and the distribution of forces, there is more resistance to natural causes of ruination, such as earthquakes, and less resistance to man's destructive forces. This is probably the reason that G.Simmel, in an essay of 1911 on "the Ruin", writes that

(...) a good many Roman ruins, however interesting they may be otherwise, lack the specific fascination of the ruin -- to the extent, that is, to which one notices in them the destruction by man; for this contradicts the contrast between human work and the effect of nature on which rests the significance of the ruin as such. 87

The poetics of Roman ruins certainly does not lie in the harmonics of deformation and the tranquility of opening-up of architectural elements. On the other hand, nature is present in a manner that did not escape the

87 G.Simmel, The Ruin, in G.Simmel, Kurt Wolff ed.:Ohio State Univ. Press, 1959, p.128
sensibility of the romantics, nor literary and pictorial representations of ruins during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. As Bernardin de Saint-Pierre -- being in the antipodes of rationalism and scientific determinism of the 18th century -- wrote in his chapter of "pleasure of ruin", in "Etudes de la Nature", (1784),

Comme elle (la nature) édifie toujours, lors même qu'elle détruit, elle fait sortir des fentes de nos monuments des giroflées jaunes, des chenopodiums, des graminées, des cerisiers sauvages, des guirlandes de rubus, des lisières de mouches, et toutes les plantes saxatiles qui forment, par leurs fleurs et leurs attitudes, les contrastes les plus agréables avec les rochers. 88

The idea of nature as a "reparation force" is carried further by Chateaubriand, who describes his refuge in Villa Adriana, in a sudden rain:

(...) Les fragments de maçonnerie étoient tapissés de feuilles de scolopendre, dont la verdure satinée se dessinoit comme un travail en mosaique sur la blancheur des marbres. Ça et là de hauts cyprès remplacoient les colonnes tombées dans ces palais de la mort; L' acanthe sauvage rampoit à leurs pieds, sur des débris, comme si la nature s'étoit plu a reproduire, sur les chefs-d'oeuvre mutilés de l'architecture, l'ornement de leur beauté passée. 89

The "ugliness" of Roman ruinscapes is contrasted and even transformed to the opposite by vegetation. The cause, however, for the abundance of floral growth lies, curiously enough, in the brutality of Roman utilitarian methods of construction: massive broken vaults and walls, exposing to the air their poured fillings of mortar, earth, brick, and stone, gave seeds an ideal place to grow.

Rome, the "eternal city", remained the most affordable source of inspiration and the easiest place to travel for Renaissance humanists, scholars, poets and painters during the 14th to 19th centuries. It was not, however, until 1767, that the "couple" Diderot-Robert came to the most poetic interpretation of the essence of Roman ruins.

Hubert Robert, in his constant theme of the "arch", and the "extended arch"

89Chateaubriand, Lettre à M. de Fontanes, cited in R.Mortier, ibid., p.179
was the first to poetically explore the idea of the violent, irregular hole in Roman domes and vaults. In his variations on "Gallerie ruinée", he contrasted the two categories of openness, the earthly and the cosmic. The earthly is represented by an arched gate at the far end of a long tunnel -- an "exodus" gate, which brings the terror of the sublime, not to the "prisoners of daylight" of the classical tragedy of fate, but to real prisoners of dark vaults, of the introspective loss of innocence that Christianity accelerated.

Our power is separation, because we lost innocence.

In the cosmic ruinscape of separation and unattainable light, the anamnesis of the divinity is preserved through terrible and amorphous holes in the roof, or through the weak trembling of lanterns hanging from the top. (La Grotte du Pausilippe, 1769). Occasionally, the technical light of the lantern coexists with the strong diffused physical light coming from the shattered roof and still gives the image of darkness inside day. (Ruinose Galerie mit Schafherde).

To dwell-in-ruin in Robert's vaults and tunnels has not the sense of absolute silence and solitude of the anchorite of the past. His tunnels are cities within cities, giving metaphysical protection to the "community of the poor". They do not belong to the poetics of "The House of the Poor", but are real spatial metaphors for the impossible "earthly passage", or for a mass salvation through impurity and misery. Diderot, in the "Salon de 1767", criticized him precisely for "having too many figures" in his ruins and suggested that "he must eliminate three quarters". He writes:

(...)

Il n' en faut réserver que celles qui ajouteront à la solitude et au silence. Un seul homme, qui aurait erré dans ces ténèbres, les bras croisés sur la poitrine et la tête penchée, m' aurait affecté davantage; l' obscurité seule, la majesté de l' édifice, la grandeur de la fabrique, l'étendue, la tranquillité, le retentissement sourd de l' espace m' aurait fait frémir; (...)

Monsieur Robert, vous ne savez pas encore pourquoi les ruines font tant de plaisir, indépendamment de la variété des accidentes qu'...
elles montrent; (...)\textsuperscript{92}

Diderot's theoretical elaboration of what he called "the poetics of the ruin", focusing on notions, such as silence, solitude, freedom, melancholy, etc., does not necessarily match Robert's preoccupation with more apocalyptic images, figures of Punishment, spatial fears and soul devastations. However, Diderot's statement that "one has to ruin a building, to make it interesting" found its exact equivalent in Robert's representation of the intact Grand Galerie of the Louvre as a ruin (and later in a similar ruin projection of "The Bank of England in Ruins", by J.M.Gandy, 1771-1845). Diderot writes:

(...)we anticipate the devastations of time, and our imagination scatters on earth the buildings where we live (...) we are alone among a whole nation which does not exist (...)\textsuperscript{93}

In "The Grand Galerie of the Louvre in Ruins" Robert considers Openness in its diachronic perspective, and in a time-tunnel metaphor projects to the future his Romano-Christian version of the shattered dwelling. A final important observation in his prolonged vaults is his choice to use the zones of trilitha in the sides of the galleries, not as opening-up devices, but as opaque zones leading to walls. And, here again, he follows the Roman tradition of using the colonnades as pure decorative elements in front of walls.

\textsuperscript{92}Diderot, Salon de 1767, p.228 (on Robert's painting "Ruine d'un Arc de triomphe, et autres monumens")

\textsuperscript{93}Diderot, ibid., p.227
51. Robert, Ruinöse Galerie mit Schafherde
Robert, La Grande Galerie du Louvre en Ruines
3.6 The Gothic

Although Gothic architecture belongs to the category of the Sublime (along with Byzantine), in its tendency to strive upwards through a dominance of voids, Gothic ruins resemble the classical Greek in their expressive purity of form, structural clarity, prevailing of openings, and homogeneity of materials which favor an equal lack of excessive vegetation.

Similarly to Greek temples, Gothic ruins impose into the landscape the essence of their skeletons. But, if Greek colonnades attain openness by rhythmical repetition, gothic pointed arches open up voids of a monumental size. The structural difference between the two architectures determines the character of their openings. Gothic architecture is not an architecture of direct vertical transfer of forces, but of indirect dispersion of thrusts throughout the whole construction. Thus, a moderate cause of ruination will first separate the "weightless" screen surfaces from the carrying skeleton. It will get rid of the filling parts of the pointed arches and the cross-vaults (Abbey of Ourscamp). A stronger cause of ruination will destroy first the weak upper parts of the crossed-vaults, as for example in Tintern Abbey. A third stage of ruination would leave intact the strong vertical elements of the composite columns and the in-between openings (St. Mary’s York, or Glastonbury).

Arches, domes, and barrel vaults are imitations of the heavenly sphere and thus are associated with the most sublime forms of coverness. Because, as P.A.Michelis would say,

Naturally the heavenly sphere, in limiting the open space, is the simplest and most majestic form of boundary. Here our eye takes delight in unimpeded, ceaseless roaming, resting at will, since a single circular movement gives it the whole picture of a unified world in infinite space.\(^{94}\)

The Gothic pointed-arch, by eliminating the original curve, is not a dwelling arch. Similarly to a Greek trilithon, to use Chateaubriand’s words, "the points contrast everywhere with the roundness of heavens and the curvatures of the

\(^{94}\text{P.A.Michelis, An Aesthetic Approach to Byzantine Art, London, 1955, p.75}\)
Confusing Greek with Roman architectures, Chateaubriand further observes that in front of the grey of clouds, or in front of an obscure landscape, the vaults "are lost in the background". And this happens, he explains, because vaults follow in a parallel way the arch of the sky. A more obvious explanation is, however, that in vault construction the solid mass dominates.

On the contrary, Greek and Gothic ruins, where void dominates, "are not lost in the background", but gather the different planes of the landscape through their openings. Greek ruins achieve that gathering in a horizontal sense, like a frame by frame montage through the trilitha, whereas Gothic ruins gather in their enormous gates a vertical slice of earth, mountain, and sky continua.

C.D. Friedrich, more than any other contemporary painter expressed the poetics of the Gothic ruin dwelling. He painted many variations of the ruin of Abbey of Eldena near Greifswald, and a painting showing the Cathedral of Meissen as ruin, in the same anticipatory manner as Robert. He justifies his demolition project thus:

The time of the splendor of the temple and its servants is gone, and from the demolition of the whole thing, another age and another longing for clarity and truth have emerged.96

Friedrich also painted two Greek ruins, "Juno's Temple in Agrigent" (1828), and "Landscape with Temple Ruins", etching of 1802. The link between Gothic and Greek ruins is not accidental, but reflects first, an essential affinity of skeletal radiance to and from a barren landscape, and then, a specific disposition of the romantic soul to bring together the sublime of the north with the sublime of the south. (Another form of that disposition of bringing together the proper elements of the two cultures based on the notion of exile, is to be found in Hölderlin's poetry and life. Hölderlin was contemporary with Friedrich.)

95 Chateaubriand, Génie du Christianisme, ed. Ballanche-Migneret, 1804, v.VI, p.28
In "Winter" (1808), earlier version of Eldena ruin, to dwell-in-ruin is the image of the monk passing in front of the huge Gothic window. The hermit, passing-dweller of a devastating far-away origin, crosses an empty field, nothing but the frame of the immensity of the North: the "Abgrund". He dwells in his own "cut away eyelids", as Heinrich von Kleist wrote, one year before his suicide, seeing the "Monk by the Sea":

Nothing can be sadder or more dismal than this position in the world: the only spark of life in the vast realm of death, the lonesome midpoint in the lonesome circle. With its two or three mysterious objects, the painting lurks like the apocalypse, as though it had Young's night thoughts; in its uniformity and endlessness it has nothing but the frame as its foreground, as though the viewer's eyelids had been cut away.⁹⁷

The latest version of Eldena ruin, "Winter" (1830), is a positive, purifying dwelling under the diffused white light of the moon, passing through the same huge, barren window-gate: the last description of openness in expectation for the fullness of total enclosure; the open grave as mirror of a future aethreon.

⁹⁷Appeared in "Berliner Abendblatter", as a review of the painting "Monk by the Sea", with co-authored critiques also by Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim. (Mentioned in J.C.Jensen, ibid., p.96)
Chapter 4
Cypress Promenade

The author's thesis project is an electronic poetry-environment, consisting of text and imagery which create two parallel rhythms. The whole poem is readable through computer hardware. The title of the poem is "Cypress Promenade", and it is divided into the following sections, or "stations":

1. Before
2. Nuptial
3. Lethal View
4. Sudden Air
5. The Blue Beyond
6. Entrance
7. Pleroma

Each station contains two to thirteen frames or "pages" of computer-manipulated image and text. Specific software permits the viewer or "reader" of the poem to go through the sections and pages in a pre-determined path. This path allows a specific sequence of sections and pages each to be displayed at a different speed.

The readers can also stop, if they wish, in different "sites" of the Promenade, or they can easily create their own path through space, by altering the order of the sequences, or by changing the speed of each single frame.

The poem is presented visually. It can be thought of as a fragmented film sequence, where links between frames are absent or implied through color, form and words. The text itself is written in an equally fragmented form, and can be considered a palimpsestal ruinscape.
L'APORIE [AUSSI]
LEVITY OF FAR[WELL]
[letters missing]
APNOE
Remainder of text not clear due to image quality.
MERGERS
RAW REMEMBERANCE
SINGLE-PRESENT STUFF
[3m lines missing [0m

[LOOK:] REAL EPOCHS
DYING OUTSIDE
DRIED
PERDURE] NOT DEO
IVALE
8 PASSED AWAY [ \ ]
    [ \ ] PIECES OF
    CYPRESSES [ \ ]
    [ \ ] PIECES OF
    AUTUMNS
5 A HAND-KISSER HERE]
    [ \ ]
    [ \ ]
    [ \ ]
    lacuna (2-3 lines)

8 SCALA AMNESTIA [ \ ]
    SCALA [PARADISO [ \ ]
    SCALA AMNESTIA [ \ ]
    [ \ ]
    [ \ ]
    lacuna 2 lines

0 [ \ ]
     [ \ ] LIGHT
     [ \ ] LIGHT [CORPSIAL] LIE\-
     [ \ ] A REPULSIBLE A [ \ ]
     [ \ ] RAVENGE [FICTION]
     [ \ ] VI\-
     [ \ ] DA DELLA VI[DA MIA
5 [ \ ]
    [ \ ]
    [ \ ]
    [ \ ] IMMACULATA
    [ \ ] DORMY
    [ \ ] DEWY
10 IMMACULATA [LA DORMIEU
    [ \ ] SE DOWY [NEW DOWY
    [ \ ] VI DOWD
15 [ \ ] DAME
    [ \ ] [LE VIDE
    [ \ ] [A VIDE O [VIDE]
    [ \ ]
    lacuna 3 lines

0 [ \ ]
     [ \ ] OUTLIES [ QUIRIS
     [ \ ] AGUS DUTTS
     [ \ ] [UNSEEN
     [ \ ] NOT TWO TIMES]
     [ \ ] ONE ET VAINQUEUR
5 [ \ ] MEANS:
     [ \ ] PAST L'ÂCHERON
     [ \ ] THE CELESTIAL VERE [ \ ]
     [ \ ] OUR
18 [ \ ]
    [ \ ] VETIN VAINQUEUR
    [ \ ] EN AVE\-
    [ \ ] VAIN
15 [ \ ]
    [ \ ] VALE
    [ \ ] VALE
    9 lines missing
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Biography

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