Uwe Fleckner & Mari Lending (eds.)

Provenance in Architecture

A Dictionary of Terms

Hatje Cantz

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HATJE
CANTZ

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Architectural provenance
A preamble

Uwe Fleckner & Mari Lending

Since the word "provenance" was coined in the 1780s (from the Latin *provenire*, to come from), the concept has been used to describe the origins, authorship, ownership and legitimacy of precious and relatively easily movable objects such as artworks, manuscripts, ethnographical and archaeological remnants. Transposed into architecture – scaled up and zoomed in to consider something that apparently sits still – provenance reveals new complexities in the social and material lives of buildings, while reframing questions of movement, migration and circulation. With provenance as a lens, both ownership and authorship in architecture transform: ownership may expand beyond the possession of the object itself towards the sources and resources of its components; while the idea of the singular author splinters in the face of truly multi-authored objects, defined by architects, inhabitants, patrons, custodians, construction workers, maintenance personnel, lawyers, bureaucrats, politicians, historians and others.

Architecture is envisioned, commissioned, contracted, designed, invested in, built, owned, traded, abandoned, expropriated, inherited, debated, overwritten, neglected, monumentalised, repurposed, amended, repaired, destroyed, disseminated, forgotten, repeated, collected, archived, catalogued. Any cut into time will show architecture performing in all sorts of states between complex origins and uncertain destinations. Buildings live interesting lives – lives that may be happy or traumatic, or both, in the course of time.

Buildings are unruly and multi-temporal entities. They consist of materials from many sources and with different life expectancy. On a closer look even the smallest, locally situated structure is the product of networked supply chains within architectural cultures that depend, and have always depended, upon global exchanges of resources, techniques, principles and ideas. Buildings move, and so do architectural artefacts. They move across genre and formats. Consideration of the value, purposes and potentials of architecture, too, are constantly shifting. The insights in this book emphasise the extent to which architecture is produced through and in time. Permanence dwindles as a marker of architectural significance; not even monument designation or listing protocols can arrest a building's history. By nature, and by culture, architecture changes physically, in interpretation and through reception histories.

Architectural provenance unfolds through objects in flux; it exposes where something comes from and where it is heading. Between beginnings and the present there is a whole world, and there is more – provenance may also be a way of imagining the futures of architectural objects.

While traditionally understood as the process that secures an object's authenticity as well as its authentication, and sets its value both aesthetically and economically, provenance is yet to be applied in architectural discourse and practice. Relocating the concept into architecture provides a way to encircle the intricate trajectories of fundamentally composite objects. Together, the entries expose what we may call a politics of provenance: provenance considers value – economic, social, cultural, historical, emotional, artistic and political. Climate change and ecological concerns prompt a radical rethinking of the built world and the future possibilities of the existing building stock within a circular economy. Yet, provenance calls also for a reconsideration of architecture. Its framework reveals new ways of writing architectural history, suggesting that virtual re-inscription and material recycling might be conceptualised as artistic, social and political strategies. As the entry "Afterlife" shows, provenance opens new ways to engage with the past.

Combining the *longue durée* with microhistorical traces and marginalia, provenance reveals how architecture is bought and sold, extracted, distributed, adapted, appropriated, altered, moved or undone according to changing ideals, ethics and politics. The provenance of architectural artefacts opens up an understanding of buildings as multi-trajectorial phenomena rather than as stable entities to be recorded chronologically and retrospectively: "Provenance is a form of memory", as defined in the entry "Fragment"; "Provenance is not just history; it is the consciousness of history", the author contemplates in "Costs". Architectural provenance grasps situated details that tie into global networks of production and transaction. As the entry "Readymade" shows, apparently banal and spectacularly mundane elements create their own "micro-provenance history". By documenting artefactual knowledge, architectural provenance reconsiders core aesthetic concepts such as origins, authorship, attribution, authenticity and authentication, as well as labour and ownership of resources, property and land.

The provenance of architectural provenance

Provenance research, as it has been understood and practised, does not deal with architecture. This is based on the erroneous assumption that buildings are stationary objects that rest in themselves. Our transference of the term towards works of architecture builds on approaches that study how artefacts travel through time and space.

The provenance of things characterises the status and value of cultic or cultural objects. Christian relics, for example, depended on the fact that they could be traced back to the body of a holy person or, at least, to direct contact with such a person; the sentimental as well as the material value of an artefact increases when it has passed through the hands of a prominent personality. Proof of the authenticity of an artwork could also be substantiated by establishing an unbroken pedigree of its owners. In recent decades, provenance research has developed from this kind of historical investigation of evidence towards a globally successful

method. It deals with the origin and history of artworks, particularly regarding their acquisition, legal status and the ethical implications associated with their collection and exhibition. Fuelled by the growing awareness of artworks illegally acquired during the National Socialist era, museums around the world began to examine their holdings on the basis of the *Washington principles on Nazi-confiscated art* (1988) in order to clarify the itineraries of objects and, if necessary, initiate restitution to the rightful owners or their descendants. Importantly, provenance research today also serves other contexts of injustice, such as objects translocated in the frameworks of colonisation. This has led to restitution proceedings, which were – and still are – often accompanied by legal, political and ethical challenges.

Although provenance research has increasingly integrated approaches that combine art history, law, political science, ethnology, sociology and other disciplines, it has tended to focus on registering proof-of-ownership chains and often serves only as an auxiliary science in the service of legal interests. Leading academics have lately recognised its methodological narrowness. Thus, our transplantation of provenance into architecture draws on critical perspectives on traditional provenance research itself: anthologies such as Gail Feigenbaum and Inge Reist's *Provenance. An alternate history of art* (2013) and Jane Milosch and Nick Pearce's *Collecting and provenance. A multidisciplinary approach* (2019), are among the significant contributions to make provenance operative beyond merely legal documentation.

In recent decades, art, but also architectural history has focused increasingly on the importance of peripatetic objects. Artefacts might be mobile under their own force, because the motives behind their relocation are inscribed in their genre characteristics (as is the case with coins, medals, stamps, prints, etc.), but also because the iconic power of artworks and their significance in terms of content and material value may trigger a more global sense of desire. One result is the abduction of artefacts – their theft and the global trade that follows such acts of dubious or illegal acquisition. Another is the travelling of variations, editions, copies, adaptations, reproductions and repetitions. Some of this attention to translation, which marks the turn towards provenance also in architecture, was foreshadowed long ago in the work of the German art and cultural historian Aby Warburg. The logics of what Warburg termed *Bilderfahrzeuge* (image vehicles) adumbrate contemporary interest in the circulation of architectural fragments, indeed of entire buildings detached from their original functional contexts.

The phenomenon of provenance is ripe to be rethought on a larger scale. Differently from art, architectural provenance can be discussed as a creative instrument, applicable to understanding unfulfilled and future potentials of buildings by engaging the complex social trajectory of architectural works. We believe this will also have intellectual and methodological consequences for the hitherto static-linear provenance research on works of art. This conceptual expansion encourages a

reframing of critical issues in very concrete ways, and a recycling of the meaning and function of buildings spurred on by the complex relationship between thinking and doing that characterises architecture.

While artworks may perhaps more easily be described by fixed points such as origin and destination, architectural culture is a theatre of exchange and circulation. Provenance describes the itineraries that are part of the lives of buildings, whether *en route* or *in situ*: "once architectural experience begins to be understood as something concerned with a built world that is not always stationary, a quality of architectural hypermobility ensues. Because this characteristic emphasises both previous and future destinations, such movement always speaks of provenance", as stated in the entry "Mobility". Architectural provenance provides insight into how material culture in a most concrete sense is distributed, appropriated, altered, reinvented and evaluated.

Defining the world

Encyclopaedias and dictionaries carry some oddly objective connotations. A proud democratic and critical tradition, publications that define what words mean or present specific fields of knowledge, always propose explanations according to contemporary worldviews and position their own historicity. This can take place as a critique of clichéd knowledge – famously in Gustave Flaubert's satirical *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, the appendix to the novel *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (1881). The colossal French Enlightenment project *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751–1780) represented a veritable rethinking of the definitions of the words that the world is made of, with one offshoot in Voltaire's polemical *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764). A similar format appealed to the historical avantgarde: Georges Bataille's entries "Abattoire", "Architecture" and "Musée" in the highly idiosyncratic *Dictionnaire* that appeared as instalments in the journal *Documents* (1929–1931) are staples in architectural circles. Some dictionaries, or works that borrow their logic, are all about the impossibility of objectivity and neutrality. Roland Barthes loved to play with the genre, also to expose the random order of the alphabet when trying to make sense of the world in writing. His treatise on love, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* (1977) undermines the temptation to recount a love story as if it was a coherent, ordered narrative.

Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc's nine volume *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e^ au XVI^e^ siècle* (1854–1868) that defined the field from "Abacus" to "Zodiac", and Antoine Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy's two volume *Dictionnaire historique d'architecture* (1832) are fundamental contributions to the definition of architecture by means of the alphabet. More recently, Adrian Forty's *Words and buildings. A vocabulary of modern architecture* (2000) became an instant classic. The last few years have seen a constant engagement with this tradition. Mari Hvattum and Anne Hultzsch concluded the edited volume *The printed and the built. Architecture, print culture and public debate in the nineteenth century* with a glossary spanning from "Bibliotopography"

to "Xylography" (2018); Graeme Brooker's *50/50 Words for reuse*, is a thoughtful consideration of sustainability in architecture (2021); Olivia Horsfall Turner, Simona Valeriani and colleagues furnished *An alphabet of architectural models* from "Ancient" to "Zoom" (2021); Andrea Crudeli introduced the essay collection *Adaptive reuse. Theoretical glossary and design labs* with a lexicon spanning from "Abacus" to "Transition" (2024). In the face of the climate crises, Eva Franch i Gilabert, Mireia Luzárragga and Alejandro Muiño presented the anthology *100 Words for water. A projective ecosocial vocabulary* (2025), while "Ass" and "Zebra" mark beginning and end in *The architect and the animal*, edited by Kostas Tsiambaos (2025), a modern ark of the long twentieth century.

By playing with the alphabet's presumed order within a longstanding, venerable genre, these books propose different ways of describing what constitutes architecture and architectural thinking and, importantly, make strong claims as to what is imperative to discuss and critique in the very present. Dictionaries historicise, define and pose perspectives on objects and phenomena to rethink received knowledge, as well as to reexamine canonical reception history.

A provenance abécédaire

Provenance in architecture. A dictionary historicises, theorises and demonstrates architectural provenance from "Acquisition" to "Will". Architecture is acquired and bequeathed, and between these two economic and legal procedures one hundred entries deal with provenance from oblique and sometimes unexpected angles. They cover notions from across semantic fields, many with clear or latent intersections to other topics, spanning from the logics of the building industry to question of materials, parts and objects, finance and economy, legal matters and ownership, decay, repair and preservation, transport and relocation, media and media dissemination, musealisation and presentation, conflict and iconoclasm, cultures of remembrance, agency and alterity.

This dictionary springs from the international research project *Provenance projected. Architecture past and future in the era of circularity*, based at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, with more entries contributed by kindred spirits and dear colleagues from all over Europe and the United States. Many of the entries read like microhistories that take specific events or evidence as a starting point to evoke bigger questions. There are no claims of neutrality, the relationship of words and the world are seen from the perspective of the work of the authors, both scholars and practitioners. The result is a polyphonic collection and an architectural history written through episodes from across time and place. Both speculative and concrete, the entries may also reveal the provenance and intellectual history of the words themselves, of concepts, ideas and principles. "Weathering" implicates the historicity of the climate crisis through the unheimlich contemporaneity of John Evelyn's 1661 treatise *FUMIFUGIUM: or The Inconveniencie of the AER and SMOAK of LONDON*; while "Theft" uncovers a fundamental detail: in Michel

Foucault's *Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire* (1971), provenance is defined not as "the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified". That insight may well serve as one motto for theorising provenance in architecture.

Key provenance terms such as "Authorship", "Attribution" and "Authentication", emerge as messier in architecture than in art. Here, the prominence of the architect as the sole author of a work crumbles, as does the myth of the architect as a controller of processes. Our entry on "Authorship" dates the architect as virtuous author back to fifteenth-century humanist discourse when "the creation of buildings was claimed as an intellectual practice: a building could exist 'complete' in the mind of an architect before ever it was realised in brick or stone". The entry "Network" redefines this established idea of authorship: buildings are "not made by powerful minds (star architects, demiurges, those powerful 'Gods'), but architecture […] emerges, and gains provenance, as it traces many intricate and hesitant relationships with materials and technologies, skills, bodies and institutions". In our context, architecture materialises as everything but a linear path from an architect's conception to the completed building, which complicates typical provenance phenomena such as attribution and authenticity in the lives of buildings: "Authenticity redefines itself not as a fixed attribute, but as a continuum of care", as the entry "Authentication" observes. The entries "Bricolage" and "Pasticcio" inherently deconstruct simplifying definitions of origins and authenticity, the former as the origins of the elements are "neither here nor there", the latter by "placing equal value on authentic fragments and their reproductions, suggesting a more fluid approach to questions of cultural property and historical authenticity".

Architecture's fundamental practical purpose and constantly changing presents depicts established elements of provenance as continuously negotiated across time. The patron, the client, the person who commissioned the work, may be accounted for in the names of certain buildings: Villa Borghese, Villa Savoy, the Farnsworth House. Yet, the ownership chains that are crucial to traditional provenance research, have been of less interest to architectural historians. In architecture, ownership disputes and changes often imply significant ruptures, and conjure uses and abuses, collective memory and trajectories of emotions as shown in the entries on the ways in which architecture may be owned and possessed – among them "Bond", "Contract", "Demolition", "Deaccessioning", "Dispossession", "Expropriation", "Inheritance" and "Occupation".

Architecture involves a stronger public dimension than most artworks do. Buildings are not only the product of a vast cast of actors over time; different groups may also claim ownership to buildings: "In a world where cultural heritage is threatened by war, economic exploitation and environmental degradation, respecting provenance becomes a matter of justice", as suggested in "Preservation". Provenance in architecture unsettles worn dichotomies and, for instance, shows that the natural

resources architecture is made of are cultural products with histories. Provenance may act with actual political force: as "Dispute" demonstrates, "activist provenance" can be conducted by groups that question the official stories of sourcing, to reveal the true origins of materials. Provenance research is itself a specialised field of reception that in our context unfolds far from any anxiety of influence. Also, as stated in the entry "Ghosts", architectural work "inventively unbuilt, and thus timeless and uncertain" gains provenance "through which a possible future world is envisaged and from whose examples its forms might be borrowed". If provenance circumvents the temptation of pinning down architecture to official moments and individual signatures, history becomes more of a "treasure trove to be shared", to be kept alive by "the active quoting and borrowing of the works and ideas of the past", as pondered in "Quote".

Towards a provenance turn

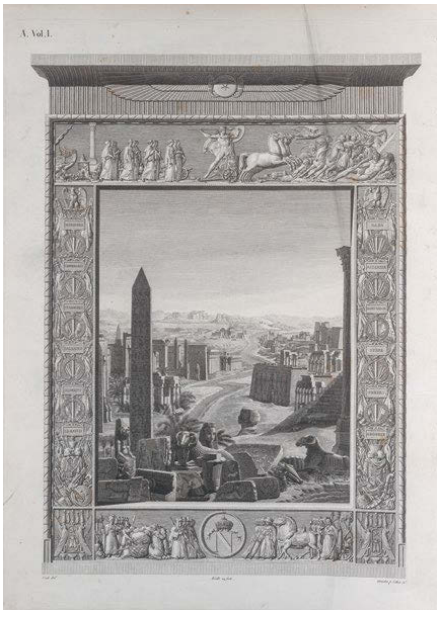
Very differently from art and archaeology, architectural provenance may carry a forward-bound, dynamic and productive significance. Provenance encompasses history and theory on the one side and design work on the other. The reversing of conventional terms of history writing may represent a provenance turn in architecture and architectural thinking, one that presents fragments of other pasts with repercussions for the future. Provenance reconceptualises the architectural object beyond established distinctions of history and practice, culture and nature: "Conceiving architectural design as artefactual design opens the possibility of thinking about architecture not in terms of conformity to the rules of classical theory, but in terms of its provenance, in the manmade history of artefacts and the deep history of nature", as proposed in "Artefact".

Architectural objects leave marks of all sorts on their way from one state to another. Architectural provenance provides a prism through which we are enabled to understand how architecture moves, is destroyed, survives and is transformed, from the macroscopic to the microscopic. In both practice and scholarship architectural provenance may be conceived as a method as well as an ethos.

Acquisition The decennial of 18 Brumaire in 1809 was going to be a many-splendoured thing. Among the projected celebrations, the boundless *Description de l'Égypte* was to mark one of the most prized possessions of the newfound empire – the domain over the classical tradition and imperial authority, and their wellspring in pharaonic antiquity. The ill-fated campaign to conquer Egypt (1798–1801) was a military disaster, but in the exhaustive notes and surveys of the combined French sciences lay the potential for an all-encompassing book that could substitute lost ground. Like so many things Napoleonic, the *Description* blew its budget and overshot its deadline, and when it did come out the next year, its exuberant frontispiece was full of contradictions (fig. 1).

Designed by committee, forged from disparate sources, unrestrained by decorum and vocal in its assertion of historical finality, the enormous engraving epitomised the imperial monument. But strangely, a group of spoils, stacked together beside a token seashore for implicit delivery to France, contradicted universally

1 François-Charles Cécile, *Frontispiece*, engraved by Abraham Girardet and Charles Sellier, etched by Jean-Baptiste Réville, from *Description de l'Égypte, Antiquités*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie impériale 1809)

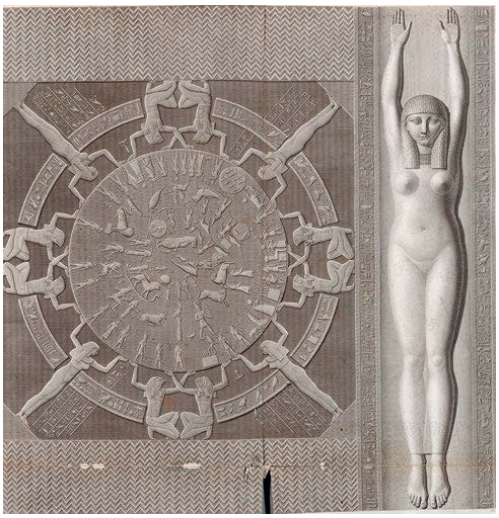


accepted facts and seemed to rehearse a decade-old humiliation (→ SPOLIA). Dead centre in the image, behind the Rosetta Stone and resting against a carved pharaoh, was a massive slab of stone, the circular astrological ceiling from Dendera.

In reality, most of the things that were rounded up neatly in the frontispiece were either lost or never possessed. The heroic exodus of pharaonic treasures envisaged in advance of the campaign had failed to take place. It was Bonaparte's distinguished army of the recent Italian campaign that was now booted out from France's most promising prospective colony by an Ottoman-British coalition and a ragtag band of saboteurs and assassins. In an ironic reversal of the Treaty of Tolentino, through which the Republic had enriched the Louvre with the masterpieces of the Italian canon, the Treaty of Alexandria of August 1801 dictated that the French now cede their collected treasures to an Ottoman-British coalition. By 1809 and the printing of the frontispiece, the Rosetta Stone was still indexical of French defeat, displayed in the British Museum with an epigraph celebrating its capture from Bonaparte's expedition (→ CARGO). It was a nose-thumbing not soon forgotten. But where the Rosetta Stone had been lost, the Dendera zodiac had never moved an inch, and was still very much *in situ* in the ceiling of the Temple of Hathor (fig. 2).

If the frontispiece was mysterious in its portrayal of ancient treasures in a transitory state, its *explication*, an exegesis printed in the *Description* itself, was outright jiving when it declared that the image showed "the most precious fragments *collected* in Upper Egypt, such as the planisphere of Dendera". An apparent typo, the wording only revealed that possession was a descriptive exercise, a graphic fact.

The polytechnicians that travelled Egypt alongside the expeditionary force were acutely aware of the transcendent nature of their historical mission. For these savants the mission had been a reflexive one: by bringing the rejuvenated and enlightened French sciences to bear on the place of their ancient origins, both would be



2 Édouard de Villiers du Terrage and Jean-Baptise Prosper Jollois, *The circular zodiac of Dendera*, engraved by Louis-Jean Allais, from *Description de l'Égypte, Antiquités*, vol. IV (Paris: Imprimerie royale 1817)

enriched and revealed, bypassing centuries of decadence. What ensued as the military ambition faltered was a race for transcription, analysis and replication that outdid questions of possession in the immediate, material sense. Egyptian antiquity, obscured, inaccessible and buried in lifeless sand as though a metaphor of historical entropy, could be revealed by empiricism spliced with inference and held by description and printing. Accurate → REPRODUCTION, as thing, as image – the enormous engravings of the *Description* were both – could outweigh the whims of warfare and vicissitudes of geopolitical fortune. Knowledge, a permanent record, offered a stronger sense of domain than → FRAGMENTS in a museum.

Vivant Denon was the first to draw the zodiac and he published it in his wildly successful *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte* in 1802. But Denon was chiefly an artist and prone to interpretation and enthusiasm, and it was for the impossibly productive ponts-et-chaussées-engineers Édouard de Villiers du Terrage and Jean-Baptise Prosper Jollois to fashion a graphic transcription that could outdo the thing itself (→ ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING). In the fullest awareness of the profundity of their task, the two worked on in the darkness of the temple interior under diminishing supplies of lamp oil till they had exhausted their stock of pencils, fashioning ad hoc replacements by pouring melted bullets into straws. Eminently legible, accessible and indisputably French, the resulting engraving was everything the zodiac was not.

Discovery, transcription and publication was ample claim to ownership of a thing no one could access. And the controversies that immediately followed the first reports of the discovery made the zodiac a ubiquitous presence in France in the wake of Denon's *Voyage*. Dated between fourteen thousand years old or from Roman imperial times, the Dendera planisphere was either a straightforward reiteration of Greek astrology or refutation of biblical chronology and proof of Egypt's deep antiquity, and the pages of the daily *Moniteur Universel* brimmed with opinion pieces. In August 1802, the zodiac was hot, and eyeing ownership of a supreme conversation piece, the editorial commission of the *Description de l'Égypte* requested permission from Interior Minister Jean-Antoine Chaptal to have sculptor and Egypt veteran Jean-Jacques Castex execute a copy in marble in the domestically compliant scale of 1:3. A report estimated its costs to 1,800 francs, and Castex requested lodgings and a studio, into which he disappeared to work on a preparatory wax → MODEL. It was nearly eight years later that the commission, facing imminent publication of the *Description*, followed up with some impatience. Meanwhile, Castex had spirited his model off to Naples, jealously guarding his monument. With thinly veiled concern, the commission gently beckoned Castex and his zodiac to Paris with the reassurance that they were not attempting to deprive him of the ownership of the monument. By now, the best Dendera planisphere was in Southern Italy.

It was long after the fall of Napoleon that Castex' genteel and gleaming white marble zodiac appeared under royal auspices as an artwork at the Salon of 1819. Still, serialisation and beautification had not entirely killed the allure of the thing itself. In an Egypt now ravaged by

greedy collectors who specialised in moving the gigantic, the antiquities dealer Sébastien-Louis Saulnier saw an opportunity to achieve the impossible (→ COLLECTING). On his orders, the mason Jean-Baptiste Lelorrain acquired a *firman* for the removal of the zodiac from Ahmet Pasha, the entrepreneurial governor of Upper Egypt, in January 1821. Ownership, and its modern provenance, was in any case long since established. To Saulnier, Denon had claimed the astrological ceiling for France (see Buchwald and Josefowick 2010, p. 11). For Lelorrain, it was the war booty of the French army.

To Bonaparte's savants Egypt had been a landscape resilient to revolution. In a culture in which societal disruption was measured in the destruction of monuments and → VANDALISM was on everyone's lips, Egyptian antiquity, monolithic, cold and rigid, was a bulwark against the destructive forces of time. Ironically, this extended to whatever coveted ornaments were affixed to the giant structures of pharaonic architecture, and the expeditionary engineers had quickly abandoned efforts to detach the zodiac from the temple. Now, it successfully resisted Lelorrain's attempts. Lodged three feet deep in the structure, it weighed 60 tonnes and had to be wrestled from the ancient architectural matrix by force (→ DISPLACEMENT). Employing a workforce of twenty locals, Lelorrain toiled over twenty-two days in the gruelling heat using hacksaws and explosives drilled into the structure to sever the stone slab from the temple. So as not to disrupt the integrity of the monument, a → PLASTER CAST was installed in the ceiling.

When it arrived in Paris in 1822, Jacques-Joseph Corbière, the Minister of Public Instruction and soon-to-be Interior Minister, established a commission comprised by luminaries of the Académie des Sciences and the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres to evaluate the importance of the zodiac. They concluded that it was an important piece. In 1822, Louis XVIII purchased the planisphere for 150,000 francs and had it installed in the Royal Library. A commemorative medal was struck, neatly expressing Bourbon domain over the Egyptian and Graeco-Roman past by juxtaposing the zodiac with the king's other recent acquisition, the Venus de Milo. Access to the original zodiac hampered neither reproduction nor discourse, and over the next two years the planisphere was the subject of nine monographs. But what had previously been possessed in reproduction alone was now an auratic, material fact under Louis, and the image that heralded the Napoleonic *Description de l'Égypte* shifted from the portrayal of things distant and contested to things immediate. *Eirik Bøhn*

Actor An actor is a participant in the process of architectural production and consumption. The term "actor" typically designates the autonomous entities that play an important role in the making of architecture (see Latour 1987). They can include individuals (an architect, an engineer, a contractor), collectives (the public, the nation), visual representations (plans, → ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS, scale → MODELS, budget figures), or non-figurative representations (national spirit, cultural → HERITAGE, procurement system, regulations), → MATERIALS or technologies. To identify the actors, we ask ourselves if the presence or absence of an entity makes any difference.

If we trace the → NETWORKS of architectural practice, we can witness how an actor comes into being rather than taking its properties for granted and as fully defined and assuming the world is composed by a number of known entities. We can define an actor on the basis of behaviour – its performances – manifested in the process of design-making, dwelling, → RENOVATION, → MAINTENANCE and other processes. Performance refers to the specific situation in which an actor emerges and is defined through actions, trails, difficulties and experiences. What describes the actor's profile is not a set of qualities or characteristics defined in terms of essence, but rather the results of these events, trails and experiences – that is, performances.

For instance, a building undergoing renovation is not a mere ostensive object, it is rather unpredictable. To take a specific example, the

process of renovation of the seventeenth-century Alte Aula in Vienna (2004–2006) by the Viennese architect Rudolf Prohazka presented the architect and builders with numerous surprises (fig. 1). The building is a part of the university quarter built in 1623 when Emperor Ferdinand IV entrusted the theological and philosophical faculty of the University of Vienna to the Jesuit Order. Its renovation required the massive and coordinated efforts of architects, preservationists, clients and engineers. To fully grasp the renovation of the Alte Aula, we need to follow all these actors at numerous places of planning, discussion and negotiations throughout the whole process until the final completion of the building in 2006 and witness how they engaged in the long-lasting venture of reshaping and redefining it time and again. We need to trace how they expressed their concerns, modify the criteria, communicate their expectations and engage in negotiations. Following these actors, we can recount renovation not as a series of personal "heroic" battles of an architect with the unchangeable "historical substance" of an old building, but rather as a collective venture – tentative, difficult and controversial – to reshape and redefine, rearticulate and re-establish the building of the Alte Aula. Over the course of this process numerous non-human agents (such as the building facade, the natural stone used for the floor, the columns' grid, the fresco and the layers of paints) manifest themselves as important players in renovation.

For instance, the fresco will reveal different yellowish minuscule strata, a new wooden beam will be discovered, and these elements will surprise architects and construction workers in the morning (fig. 2). A surprise can derive from the discrepancy between the received knowledge of the building (preceding the renovation process) and the knowledge that is gradually acquired in the process of renovating it. The architect will stop and wonder, questioning retrospectively the building's fabric: Why was it built so? Why were these wooden parts used? Why were the foundations of the building not laid in the way architects would lay them now? These questions will then trigger a process of corrections and adjustments of the building using the available contemporary techniques and archives.

However, in the course of renovation interventions, the Alte Aula, expected to be a coherent entity, suddenly multiples. Not one fresco but many fresco → FRAGMENTS emerge. Not a single renovation practice, but many diverse practices of intervening and transforming are at stake. The participants in renovation face new uncertainties and engage in new networks. That is the regime of intense and enduring surprise.

1 *Alte Aula, fresco room (old Jesuit theatre)*, 1654, renovated 2004–2006, Vienna. Photo: Albena Yaneva, 2005



2 *Alte Aula*, 1654, renovated 2004–2006, Vienna. Photo: Albena Yaneva, 2005



These multiple surprises show that once reopened, the building starts to act as an agent that enrols more materials, renovation techniques, clients and preservationists. We witness how renovation attends to the multiplicity of the building that cannot be removed from the practices that sustain it. It comes to light as a performative agent that can hardly be mastered by architects, preservationists and planners. Instead, it stubbornly resists interventions, hinders or facilitates specific ways of accommodating the programmatic requirements. In many cases the Alte Aula has no scruples in objecting to the architects' and builders' actions by behaving in undisciplined ways, blocking the renovating operations, obstructing the plans, suspending the builders' deadlines, disappearing from view, disclosing unknown layers of its history and showing a selective "attitude" to different materials. Yet, to argue that a seventeenth-century building is an actor does not mean to claim that it operates as a strange quasi-theatrical machinery from the Jesuit time or that it literally talks to architects and builders. For a building to act, it is to be a part of a network, in which each element relays, prolongs and overtakes the action of the building and the whole collective without either of them ever constituting a source of action in itself.

The fresco or the wooden beams' "objections" that lead to surprises are prolonged by the actions of many agents in renovation. As a result, the capacity of the building to act is the effect of the associations of a heterogeneous network composed of architects, fresco layers, wooden beams, conservators, visitors, visuals, instruments, instead of being assigned to a powerful master architect (→ AUTHORSHIP) or to a single architectural object that could determine the course of action (→ THING-RIGHT). The way architects, builders and clients respond to the objections of a building shows their constant uncertainty over the nature of this entity. No matter how thorough the research on the building history is, the building often happens to reveal a hidden layer; no matter how systematic the knowledge of its materials and construction is, these materials and construction techniques often manifest new properties. The Alte Aula acts (and transforms action) in unexpected ways not merely repeating and relaying it. It distorts and modifies the meaning attributed to it instead of faithfully transporting it through the centuries. Both its history and modalities of action are probed and redefined through the moments of surprise and lead us to question traditional definitions of buildings as static backdrops of activities, as subservient to the laws of technical causality. *Albena Yaneva*

Afterlife In Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig 1852ff.), the noun *Nachleben* (afterlife) has two alternative meanings, on the one hand as "*nachahmendes Leben*" (imitative life), which emulates a role model, and on the other hand as "*nachfolgendes, nachdauerndes Leben*" (subsequent, lasting life), in which the sustainable echo, the after-effect of a lived life or an (emotional) experience is considered. Combining both meanings, afterlife became a category in art history as early as the nineteenth century, when Anton Springer, who counted the young Friedrich Nietzsche among his students at the University of Bonn, investigated the reception of ancient art in the Middle Ages (see Springer 1867, vol. 1, pp. 1ff.). Aby Warburg adopted the term from him and initially used it in his investigations into the afterlife of antiquity, particularly in the Italian and German Renaissance, the lifelong leitmotif of his research. The Hamburg scholar extended the term to other areas and used it as a metaphor to describe how works of art, their iconographies (→ POLITICAL ICONOGRAPHY) or the motifs contained in them (including the so-called "pathos formulae") could continue to operate in various geographical, cultural and social contexts, sometimes changing their artistic form and sometimes their content. Beyond the comparatively simple reception modes of direct copying or → REPRODUCTION, Warburg was especially interested in those adoptions that were the result of more complex processes; he was dealing with the → TRANSFORMATIONS of

the objects concerned and their constancy or shift in meaning. The art historian observed with fascination how works of art that were revitalised in this way beyond their original contexts could experience a psychological or political increase in expression (see Didi-Huberman 2002).

In architectural history, the adoption of existing models, as documented for the field of antiquity in the Census of Antique Works of Art and Architecture Known in the Renaissance (see www.census.de), has so far tended to be told as a history of influence. Of course, it has always been recognised that Early Modern buildings, for example, were inspired by stylistic forms and architectural → ELEMENTS from antiquity, that neo-Gothic architecture drew on medieval models and much more. With the concept of afterlife, as Warburg introduced it, such modes of reception can, however, be regarded as essential prerequisites of an art history that is currently increasingly understood as a global network of exchange. In this way, stylistic devices of the architecture of historicism, modernism and postmodernism, such as the use of (simulated) → SPOLIA or other forms of → PASTICCIO, which were previously viewed with scepticism, can also be re-evaluated (see Meier and Jäggi 2021).

In the academic investigation of architectural afterlife, it is essential to distinguish between virtual and actual material afterlife, just as we do with the closely related phenomena of architectural → IMAGE VEHICLES and → DISPLACEMENTS. In many instances, we encounter a virtual afterlife where, for artistic, cultural, political or other reasons, exemplary buildings or styles are referenced or imitated in new contexts. This can occur either as a homage to traditional models, as a take-over of specific meanings or as a gesture of dominance, as frequently seen in colonial architecture. For instance, English colonial rulers transferred the forms and building methods of their native architecture to India, while German colonial rulers transferred them to China. A significant example of this is the residence of the German governor, which the West Prussian-born civil engineer and architect Werner Lazarowicz built in Qingdao between 1903 and 1907 in the "German" style of eclectic monumentalising neo-Romanesque architecture (fig. 1).

The combination of heavy, deliberately rustic, hewn granite blocks with plastered surfaces and half-timbering, the hybrid combination of Romanesque columns and arches with some Art Nouveau decorative forms and individual Chinese → COMPONENTS not only results in an idiosyncratic mixture of styles, but above all it programmatically stages a massive foreign body high on a hill above the city, which dominates the urban landscape of Qingdao with a powerful architectural gesture (see Lind 1998).

On the other hand, the adoption of typical local styles can also result in an afterlife of architectural forms whose use may be perceived as a sign of appreciation or, from a critical perspective, as cultural appropriation, for example in buildings of the so-called Pueblo Revival, as we come across in the New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe, designed in 1917 by the brothers Isaac Hamilton and William Morris Rapp. Here, the style of the local adobe construction method of indigenous buildings was realised in modern → MATERIALS and combined with the requirements of a contemporary museum building. The fact that such imitations have to be considered a form of afterlife is already demonstrated by the term used for this style, which is aimed at revitalisation and which we also

1 Werner Lazarowicz, *Residence of the governor of the German colony of Tsingtau*, 1903–1907, Qingdao. Photo: Uwe Fleckner, 2018

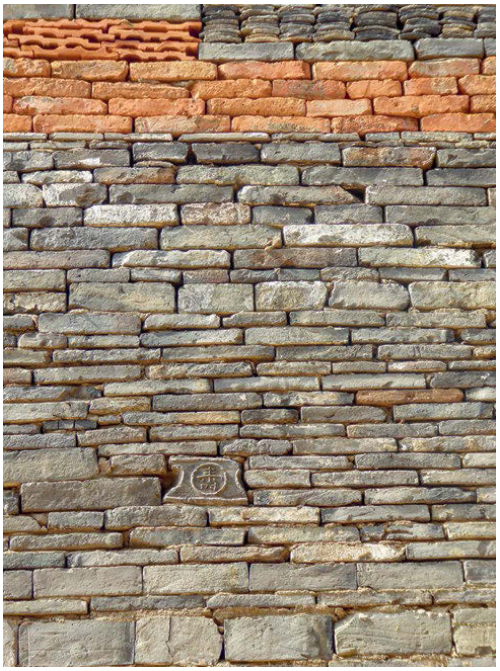


encounter in a comparable way in the Mission or Colonial Revival and in non-colonial contexts in the Greek, Gothic or Tudor Revival.

The material afterlife of architecture is given when demolished or otherwise destroyed buildings or parts of buildings are revitalised in new contexts in a manner that transcends mere cost-cutting construction or sustainability considerations alone (→ DEMOLITION, → RECYCLING, → REUSE). This is how the Chinese Pritzker Prize winner Wang Shu designed the Ningbo Museum in 2008, dedicated to the art and cultural history of the Zhejiang province. Its facade consists largely of elements that were left over as rubble from the demolition of the regional village architecture that had to make way for the new building and other structures (fig. 2).

Glazed and unglazed bricks and roof tiles of various colours and formats can be seen on the modern concrete cubes of the museum building, as well as single stone blocks and pottery

2 Wang Shu, *Ningbo Museum, detail of the facade with a brick decorated with the character 壽 (longevity)*, 2008, Ningbo. Photo: Uwe Fleckner, 2019



→ FRAGMENTS; eventually decorative elements, some of which are inscribed, are integrated in the structure of the facade materials. All those pieces, most of which date from the Ming and Qing dynasties, and some even from the Tang dynasty, were inserted using a local craft technique known as 瓦片 (roughly translated as "split brick"), a recycling method that was traditionally used for the rapid → REPARATION or → RECONSTRUCTION of buildings in the province, which is frequently hit by typhoons. By incorporating demolition materials into the new building, the construction culture that was destroyed by ruthless modernisation is at least given a remnant of dignity and permanence, echoing the highly valued Chinese concept of longevity. On the other hand, using this upgraded rubble in a distinctly contemporary structure means that neither → AUTHENTICITY nor the continued existence of obsolete architecture is deliberately feigned (→ OBSOLESCENCE); instead, its afterlife is realised through the medium of the material. In this way, history, lived experiences and enduring memories are preserved within the building, while the integrated bricks, stones and other fragments undergo an intellectual transformation. Previously, these were local building materials readily available to masons and architects; in the Ningbo Museum, they have become carriers of a distinct memorial significance (→ COLLECTIVE MEMORY).

If we apply Aby Warburg's concept of afterlife to architecture and, under his guidance, examine the phenomena of revitalising adoptions of exemplary buildings or architectural styles, as well as the actual reuse of building materials, then this scientific method contributes to a new perspective on architectural history. It is not primarily the ecological demands of a contemporary circular economy that make this approach fruitful for the provenance history within architecture. Rather, it allows us to conceptualise virtual and material recycling as an artistic, social and memorial means of engaging with tradition within a cultural-historical framework of architectural history. *Uwe Fleckner*