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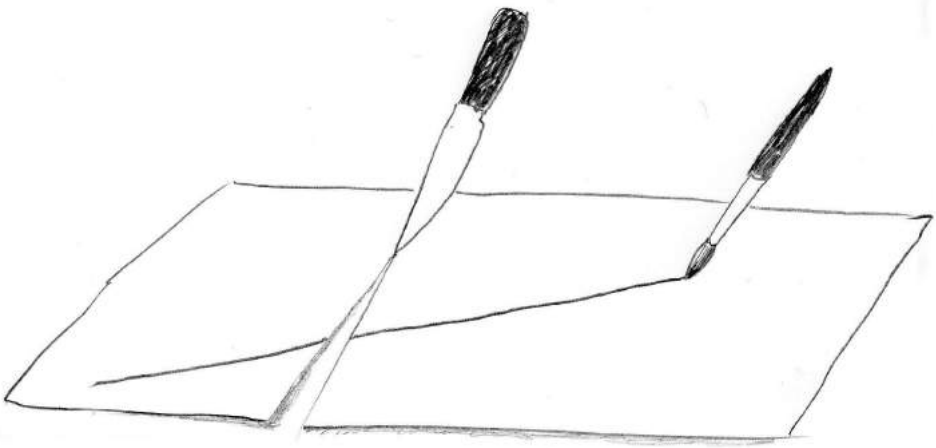

Contents

Preface

Through the exploration of hagiographic, architectural, administrative, physiologic, methodologic and mediatic motifs, this publication proposes the material landscape of a collaborative encounter. The attic of a gothic cathedral, the rumour of a contaminated spoil heap on an archipelago, an underground carpark and the remainders of a decapitation, are some of the sites sketched, in order to develop the dynamics of: communication/isolation; access/exclusion; division/unity.

Contrasting minor textual and visual genres: the postcard, the travelogue, the sketched diagram and the email; along with historical narrative, speculative writing (both analytic and imaginary) and a critique of disciplinary processes, we have aimed to merge both lived and historical experience in order to articulate relations within and between fields of research and practice. This publication is concerned with relaying historical and contemporary information through the description of specific collaborative environments, to propose analogies for the affective encounters experienced in both. The aim is to present an instance calibrating these three factors.

The first section: Mobility, addresses themes of movement and transport – historic, physiologic and mediatic – through discrete sites of research, which situate themselves around the site of the Basilique Cathédrale de Saint-Denis and its eponymous, headless saint, St. Denis. We explore the basilica's spaces through its encounters and the processes that have directed its socio-political past and present. The motif of decapitation is applied as a multiplying metaphor: through the figure of the cephalophore; various political divisions and ruptures; and the throwing of voices and dummies of various kinds. This is concluded through a discussion of language and its substitutions.

The second section: Depot, considers how information

and data (virtual and material) are sorted, ordered and preserved, varyingly as waste or value. The text of an entire gothic cathedral and an email exchange pursuing the rumour of a contaminated spoil heap on an archipelago, are considered for their implied activities of logging, dating, recording and preserving. This is concluded with comparative analysis of an underground carpark in Rome, which explores biologic supports for memory and the physiologic deposition of experience into muscle memory.

The third section: Delivery, details some of the historic modes of cross-disciplinary collaborations between art and archaeology. Considering (mis)communication, mediation and noise as part of this collaborative encounter, the dummy figure of St. Denis is expanded metaphorically as a postal worker and a micro-mythic media proposal; one concerning the bifurcation between a message and its courier.

The prologue and the epilogue frame the chapters through a description of a postcard, purchased from an online vendor in 2017, depicting the Capitoline Wolf and the postcard's handwritten greeting from Rome in 1989. From research into the sender and recipients of the postcard, a back narrative emerges concerning laboratory tests on rats, conducted in the 1980s. These rat experiments, the research funding indicated in the handwritten text, their analogous relationship to the Capitoline Wolf, and the postcard's transportation – addressor, addressee and postal markings – are considered as an elaborate parable of the three chapters.

The postscript portrays the context in which this publication arose.

Prologue: Sender

Rat 12 wakes slowly today. It takes him a while to open his eyes, but it seems that he is quite quickly aware of the absence of his companion, Rat 4. He responds to the background noise of the radio, which is a good pre-indicator that the surgery has been a success, and he has also managed to drink water from the home cage. The visual conditional motor task is tested first. Preoperatively, Rat 12 achieved 95% accuracy across both white and black plaque doors, taking him into the top percentile for performance. Postoperatively, expectations are that he will respond correctly within the 3-minute deadline, counter to his comparative, Rat 4, who died a few hours after the first postoperative motor task. Rat 12 does not manage to open the door correctly for the first 5 attempts. At the 6th attempt, it is noted that he pushes the door using a new technique involving his left-hind leg, gaining entry to the conjoining compartment where he eats the 45gm pellet. A further 19 attempts are made, with a success rate of 8/20. Trials will continue at 20 per day, until Rat 12 achieves 95% accuracy. Initial conclusions can be drawn that removal of the medial dorsal nuclei (MD) has resulted in slower but not ultimately impeded learning. It is also noted that, whilst both the ventral and medial nuclei process pain, the removal of MD has not evidently amplified the pain, as such, but it is possible that premotor lesions lead to slow relearning on the visual conditioning motor task.

Oxford. July 12th, 1988.

On Wednesday 16th August 2017, in Maastricht, I receive a postcard. Unusually, for postcards, this one is sealed in a freshly stamped, card-backed, brown envelope and is positioned upright in a narrow pigeonhole. Across the bottom, this envelope is franked with the barcode RO6VV #3425C1A#05#2101# and fixed to the top right-hand corner are three second-class stamps; the first two with the standard-fare dummy profile-of-a-monarch; the third, however, miniaturises the Pre-Raphaelite painter William Dyce's *Madonna and Child*. As I turn it over, it becomes clear that the sender of the brown envelope is careful, if not fastidious, in nature: Mr. Ervins Cippa has not only stuck an adhesive label with his name and address on the back, but he has also laminated it with an extra layer of Sellotape. Evidently, holding little trust in the fidelity of brown-envelope gum, he has applied the same treatment to the back of the envelope's sealed top flap. When I break open this double seal, the speculated nature of Mr. Ervins Cippa's meticulousness is confirmed. The postcard inside has been slid into a glossy, transparent plastic sleeve, also with an adhesive label bearing a printed code with a blue ball-point line struck through: ~~LC02766~~.

This postcard, like all postcards, has a front and back. A recto and a verso: generally comprised of an image on its front and, on the reverse, an arrangement of letters and words, including an addressee. The used postcard I am holding has already been previously addressed, sent and received; and it does not deviate from these conventional roles, fulfilling its prosaic duty to (front) show and (reverse) tell. Generally, the two sides of a postcard are reserved for quite different types of communicative exchange. The front-facing image is essentially a gift – a surplus thought that has usually been bought by the sender. The handwritten text on the back, however, sets out the terms and conditions for a social exchange; an unwritten contract is excised in which this gesture of communication should, at some point in the future, be reciprocated by the receiving party: 'Thanks for the postcard,' etc.; a benign obligation is implied without an expectation of some future repayment in kind.

Turning the postcard again to its front, I study the image: a colour photographic reproduction of a bronze she-wolf, cringing nervously into the distance with ears standing directly upright like peace lily flowers and eyebrows so stricken they look like they are being anchored up in the middle with invisible guy ropes. Her two front legs stand neatly in line, but with one back leg extended – it appears that she is in arrested motion, able to uncoil forward at any moment. The hard and smooth topography of her skinny rack of ribs pressing through skin flows into eight full, hanging mammary glands; both are forms that have been stretched taught from lack and excess respectively. The rendering of fur has not been attempted by the wolf's anonymous sculptor. Instead, the undulating 'U' forms hang and perfectly taper into pointed 'V's. Eight gourds of wolf milk decorate the architectural ribs of her torso whilst, beneath, two infant boys are contained in the rectangular space provided by the protective walls of her legs. Both boys strain their mouths upwards to suckle from the ceiling of wolf teats.

This is the Capitoline Wolf and she is one of the reasons I have bought this postcard from Mr. Ervins Cippa. A Kenneth-Clark-type icon of civilisation, the Capitoline Museum's she-wolf has long been the poster girl for the inaugurating myth, dating back to 750 BC, of the founding of Rome. In this myth, the noble-born baby twins Romulus and Remus, having been perceived as a threat to the ancient pre-Roman city of Alba Longa's noblesse order, are abandoned then subsequently adopted and suckled by a she-wolf. This wolf provides her eight substitute teats as the babies' source of nourishment: their birth-mother's breasts, those of a Vestal Virgin visited in the deep of night by the god Mars, are replaced by the dugs of a canine beast.

Looking at this very familiar image, I think about how breasts, udders, teats and dugs present the same typological form across mammals: like the Capitoline Wolf, they are contoured from 'U's hybridised with 'V' forms; alphabetic proto-forms for containers, cones and vessels – jug-shaped profiles – which can be transposed into the hull of a boat, the belly of a pot, or flipped over to become simultaneously an arch to walk through, the apex of a bell tent, or the inverted dome

of a church ceiling.

The beast breasts of the wolf enter a symbolic order as animated dummies and stand-ins for the patrimonial welcome denied to the twins and, here, the act of non-human nurture allows a transgressive divorce of paternal power from familial roots and biological generation. The form of these 'U-V's, therefore, starts to leak profusely with a symbolically prototypical, yet un-codifiable, maternity.[1]

Well, if we don't
get the money for rats…
Hope the stamp is new
to the collection.
Best wishes to all –
including me, as I'll be back,
Nick.

I turn the postcard around again to read the text written on its reverse. This is the other reason for my eBay purchase from Mr. Ervins Cippa of a postcard whose history is now criss-crossed with multiple times, places and people, myself included. The sender of the postcard and author of its handwritten text is identified as Nick and, as evidenced by the address on the right-hand side, the postcard had been sent to his work colleagues, 'S. FEARN et al.', in the 'DEPT OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCH., SOUTH PARKS RD, OXFORD'.

Nick is the gifter of the surplus image of the Capitoline Wolf that accompanies the obligatory message from Rome, from Fiumicino airport, as it happens and, from the time-stamp on the back, evidently just before he boards a return flight to London. A brief online search

1 This idea is developed by Su Fang Ng (2012). Ng, Su Fang. 'Hobbes and the bestial body of sovereignty', in *Feminist Interpretations of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Nancy J. Hirschmann and Joanne H. Wright (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2012): 91.

of key terms provided by Nick's message identifies him as Dr. Nicholas Rawlins, a British experimental psychologist whose professional research interests include animal learning and the mechanisms of how the brain stores memory. In Nick's instance, the brains of laboratory rats, and not wolf milk, are his cheese, bread and wine.

More internet digging into the Department of Experimental Psychology and its association with rats reveals that colleagues Nick and Sara Fearn are the co-authors (with three further colleagues) of a research paper in the journal *Behavioural Neuroscience*, published the year before the image of the Capitoline Wolf made its way from Rome to Oxford, and almost thirty years before Mr. Ervins Cippa puts it in a post box to end up, finally, in Maastricht. The article details how the colleagues worked upon their rodent mammals, removing non-primary motor areas of the dorsomedial area, located in the region at the back to the centre of the brain, 'with a fine-gauge sucker'.[2] The results of the experiment successfully established that the removal did not impair the rats' ability to perform and learn motor skills, even if some of them didn't make it to the finish line. The lobotomised rats, not quite headless but virtually crownless, learned and behaved in the same manner as un-vivisected rats when it came to spatial delayed alternation tasks. For the experimental psychologists, this implied that the removal of this area of the brain resulted in 'a similar effect to removing premotor cortex in monkeys' and was not to be regarded as part of the pre-frontal cortex.[3]

Historically framed by his co-authored article, the first sentence of Nick's postcard ('Well, if we don't get the money for rats…') situates the rats and their lobotomised brains in the context of (un) forthcoming monetary funds and research capital; the postcard's image of the literally 'entwin(n)ed' wolf is supplied as an intimate metaphor for superstructural funding (and possible lack thereof) that

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2 R. E. Passingham, C. Myers, N. Rawlins, V. Lightfoot, and S. Fearn. 'Premotor cortex in the rat,' *Behavioral Neuroscience*, Vol. 102(1), (1988): 102.

3 Ibid: 101.

the department requires to secure their ongoing research, including wages (psychologist's and technician's) and, of course, a ready supply of rats. Nick suggests that, if unsuccessful, both himself, Sara and their colleagues will, with stoic resignation (like the Roman infants), live hand (or substitute teat) to mouth. Resourcefully, though, the Department will accept whatever fortunate gifts or morsels arise if the mother of funding bodies fails them. It is a self-consciously wry observation, which extends itself metaphorically through zoomorphic identification with rats and wolves. Nick jovially indicates a potential occupational crisis akin to the extraction of the laboratory rats' dorsomedial area, in which top-down funding structures, previously secure, are reversed and suctioned out of the Department. His is a resigned, though jocular, hypothesis that, as researchers on the front line of rationalised and brutal funding structures, they may need to secure financial suckling from unexpected substitutes.

'Hope the stamp is new to the collection': I look for the stamp referred to in Nick's message. It appears to have been peeled away carefully from the top right-hand corner of the postcard. To be safeguarded by couriers, any object of post requires a stamp. Only by bearing this token can the postal object succeed as a means to communicate a message or to deliver exchangeable goods. Once a stamp-bearing postal item is deposited, then a postage frank authenticates, by date and time stamps, the presence of the letter, postcard or package within the postal service. Traditionally, this is achieved by inking over, defacing and, thus, expiring the stamp with the relevant time and place of the postcard's departure; on entering the postal system, the postage frank functionally expunges the stamp as legal tender, preventing its re-use for the purposes of delivery. The frank on this card, whilst informing us of the date, time and place of depositing, also includes a small linear outline of a post horn; historically, an aural manifestation of the moment of postal delivery or departure that is, in 1989, compressed into a repeatable emblematic notation.

The common and rather uninteresting UK stamps affixed by Mr. Cippa, which have arrived in Maastricht, are expired in an altogether different manner: the franking stamp runs along the bottom of

the envelope documenting the machine, franking number and other necessary details of departure, whilst the stamps themselves are each defaced by a single stroke of a black ballpoint pen; three manual gestures proceeding with pressure upon a ready-inked instrument are diagonally traced from bottom-left to top-right of each stamp and, in an evocation of Republican sentiment, act like three repeated lines of decapitation across the necks of Queen Elizabeths and one motherly Madonna.

MOBILITY

It's 6.10am in the Eurostar departure lounge at King's Cross St. Pancras and the terminal hums with a party-like atmosphere. Human traffic swells and contracts as snaking queues are processed through a series of human and machine validation and security checks, before spreading out into the open concourse, like a welcoming floodplain in the wake of a tsunami. In this zone of traveller purgatory, people with bits of luggage hover or sit around aimlessly until a departure announcement jerks them into action to form a herd around the sliding, transparent doors that lead up to the trains. I am at the back of the herd and, as the doors open, we move together, nose to nape in steady unison, rocking forward from leg to leg onto the sloping travelator to the platform. In carriage number 8 on seat number 72, I try to sleep and manage to do so through Ebbsfleet and Ashford. However, when entering the tunnel, the train slows and stops, eliciting a series of announcements over the tannoy. A Eurostar employee informs us that the train will be delayed by 1 hour and 15 minutes due to a person on the tracks on the Calais side of the tunnel. Each mouth of every body in my carriage expels a sigh, chorally unifying into one enormous exhale. This is quickly followed by another perfectly synchronised collective movement to locate a mobile device. The Eurostar employee continues to perform emotional labour on behalf of the company through the delivery of sincerest apologies for the delay. Approaching Gare du Nord in Paris, she proudly declares that the train is in fact only delayed by 10 minutes! Eurostar and its employees have made up for the lost time. Later that day when scanning online news, I read that a man from Eritrea was killed from head injuries after trying to jump onto a moving train bound from Paris to London via Calais.

Saint-Denis. April 21st, 2016.

Crawl Space

Cycling up the N1, which leads out from the centre of Paris and into its north-eastern suburbs, the environment changes visibly and dramatically within a couple of kilometres. From Baron Haussmann's open spaces and clear military thoroughfares, the city shifts into a different architectural gear. A medieval blueprint still persists, guiding the territorial and aerial arrangement of contemporary urban developments. The medieval town of Saint-Denis is situated in the region of Seine-Saint-Denis, one of the north-eastern suburbs or *banlieues* in the Île-de-France, which give a faint echo of what Parisian urban planning might have resembled in pre-republican France.

Reductively speaking, there are two well-known facts about Saint-Denis' past and present that define its identity and ensuing notoriety. Firstly, that it was and is the burial place of all the monarchs of France. Now, it would be entirely justified if this provoked the assumption that economic riches might potentially follow historic ones. However, this is not the case, because the second indisputable fact remains that Saint-Denis is also one of the most poverty-stricken and culturally divided communities, not only of the Île-de-France, but also in the whole of the country. A grand historical narrative of royal power comes into contact with a contemporary global one; Seine-Saint-Denis, at the last headcount, had the highest proportion of immigrants of all French regions, from both first and second generations. The displacement and immigration of huge numbers of people precipitated by an ongoing global refugee crisis, added to the legacy of colonialism and the anatomy of post-war social housing developments, has transformed an industrial outlier into a contemporary political battleground. This pronounced reverberation and reflection of larger national questions is not so dissimilar from another moment in Saint-Denis' political past, where ideological wars were played out between state, church and citizen during the French Revolution; establishing who and what you stood for defined your choice between life and death, identity and non-identity or, more politically, between citizenship and exile. Today, the occupants of the town – Dionysiens – have witnessed a reconvergence of this political dynamic along one

of the town's historically violent fault lines: Rue de la République, which, most recently, in November 2015, achieved dubious media fame for being the location of a shoot-out between police and terrorists after the Bataclan attacks.

Rue de la République courses from the town's train station, situated on the banks of the Seine, to the town's central and inaugural site: the gothic Basilique Cathédrale de Saint-Denis. For the most part, the basilica derives its current form from the 12th century when it underwent massive renovation and expansion by dint of the care and management of Abbot Suger, an ambitious and charismatic monk, statesman and royal confidant, whose religious zeal was only matched by his talent for self-promotion, economic accountancy, patronage of the arts, and ostentatious display of his church's treasures. Fervently religious and devoutly monarchist, from 1137 Suger transformed the basilica to be a fitting resting place for the divine right of France's kings to be displayed. As a cutting-edge contractor and visionary architectural patron, he has become the basilica's most renowned navigator between spiritual and worldly demands; the basilica is widely thought to be the first manifestation of the gothic architectural style in Europe and was taken as the blueprint for subsequent performance-enhanced cathedrals such as Orléans and Chartres.[4]

4 See Suger, Erwin Panofsky, and Gerda Panofsky-Soergel (1979) for a comprehensive translation of Suger's writings on the 12th-century renovation works of the basilica. Suger, Erwin Panofsky, and Gerda Panofsky-Soergel, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

Between the cracked skin of a concrete pachyderm and a gabled copper hat lies the crawl space. The crawl space has an animal's conception of time; a pace matched by its own creeping metabolism of stone and plaster. The crawl space is not public, nor is it private, but is somewhere porously in between; several centuries' worth of faeces, spider webs and feathers, plus grey sand jet-blasted from restoration works, coat the interior in a fine, consistently grey powder. The basilica's true form is concealed: underneath its A-frame roof in fact lies a colossal cruciform flatworm, segmented and sectioned by the upper faces of gothic arches and domes which give it form. Its undulating plaster surface is perforated with small holes, the diameter of an eye, each housing a plug which rises up like a nipple. With no head and a brick/plaster skin a maximum of 20 centimetres thick, this architectural monster is bent and buttressed into position through a combination of experimental mechanical engineering and gravity.

Saint-Denis. July 20th, 2016.

The basilica that stands today is part-church, part-museum and part-offstage-infrastructure. The ground level of the basilica is split into two sections: one is religious where entry to worship in the church is free; the other section is partitioned into a museum where, for nine Euros, historical knowledge is afforded and gothic curiosity might be satisfied. It is through both the church and museum parts of the basilica that locked wooden doors (placed at the bottom of the large supporting columns, which skeletally define the outer boundary of the basilica walls) can provide entry to a set of spaces that are neither religious, touristic nor administrative, but are functional chambers embracing the building's exterior. The movement of bodies through the basilica's partitioned spaces is controlled at significant points, or gateways. Firstly, it begins with a security bag-check for all visitors, including employees. This is followed by a possible monetary transaction at the ticket office for those who choose to enter the museum. The third gateway is only accessible to a select few: those employees and contractors with access to the locked doors that lead into the non-public spaces of the basilica. These three differing gateway exchanges comprise of: 1.) social agreement, 2.) monetary purchase, and 3.) state or municipal employment responsibilities, grant a different outcome of passage to the beholder, which could be seen as a proto-microcosm for territorial questions of free movement, purchasing power, rights, privilege and access.

Behind the open public spaces of the capacious interior are the labyrinthine and often vertiginous non-public chambers of the basilica, which sit just inside, behind or outside the metre-thick walls. These are accessed through the dozen or so wooden doors opened by a single master key (replacing a previous, and arduous, system of individual key recognition). One of the most staggering of these chambers is a crawl space: an enormous attic set between the concrete roof of the basilica's domed ceiling and beneath the interior created by the basilica's steep verdigris-coloured roof. This attic is in a state of almost permanent abandonment and is rarely accessed, except by a few archaeologists, conservators, maintenance workers and administrators, all of whom maintain a unique – if not life-long – working

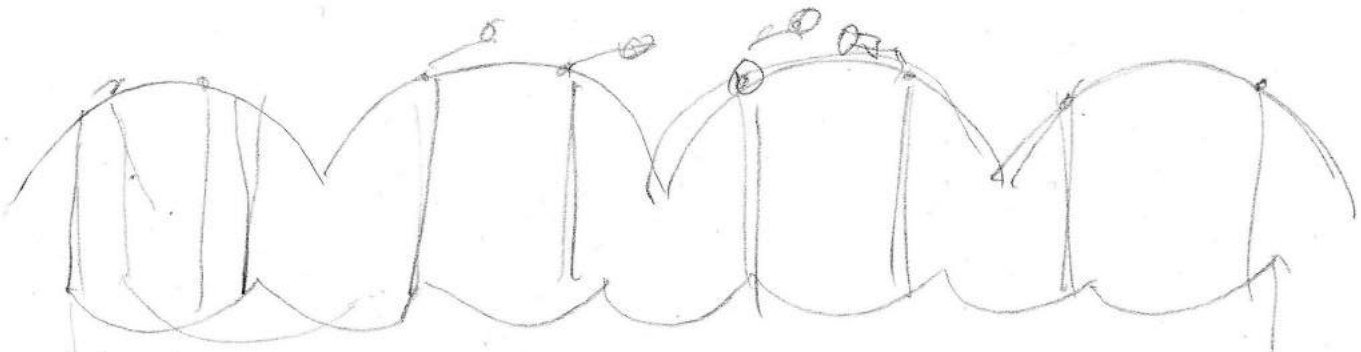
relationship with the building, in the manner of children tending to a matriarch who will outlast them all. Although unseen by any regular visitor or tourist to the basilica, this attic is part of the architectural machinery and scaffolding, which cultivates the religious, touristic and educational performances that take place in the central nave of the church.

Saint-Denis and its basilica are located just north of the Boulevard Périphérique – the orbital road that divides Paris from its suburbs – and which the N1, leading out of central Paris, passes under just after meeting the Porte de la Chapelle. N1, a wide multilane road, continues north towards Saint-Denis in an almost perfectly straight trajectory and, for the most part, is practically impossible to cross on foot, excepting infrequent pedestrian bridges. If walking the length of the road on foot, out from the centre of the capital towards Saint-Denis, you will encounter a steady progression of institutions and churches which reiterate different versions of the Saint-Denis name: Eglise de Saint-Denys de la Chapelle; La Plaine Saint-Denis. This succession of locations from central Paris to the medieval town directly links to the town's origin myth, whose titular is derived from a walking, talking, head-carrying cephalophore: namely, St. Denis.

A cephalophore is a head-carrying saint, one of a number of headless martyrs who were beatified after demonstrating a combined feat of vocal and pedestrian skill: where a neck has been cut through, but both the headless body and its head continue in their discrete functions – talking, walking, holding – as a re-assembled animation. The famous French martyr St. Denis was purportedly decapitated by the Romans as punishment for his Christianity, at the base of Montmartre in the 3rd century. He then proceeded to carry his head (or according to some accounts, part of his head), cradled in his arms, from his place of execution to the town which, today, bears his name. Perambulating along the route of the Seine (that now flows beneath the Boulevard Périphérique), St. Denis' severed head preached a sermon until both head and body finally fell silent and immobile at the location of the current basilica, thus founding the site of the subsequent medieval town and today's satellite *banlieue*.

Up in the crawl space I imagine a glamour-death; one where my dead-weight starts off an unstoppable web of accelerating fissures spreading out across the decrepit domes, causing me suddenly and without warning to burst from the roof. My prostrate body will fall sacrificially right on top of the altar, to be stared at and photographed by unfortunate tourists and worshippers. Michaël says with a giggle, 'Don't jump!' and I half-laugh along with him.

Saint-Denis. July 25th, 2016.



IPSUM LOREM

The cephalophore is a figure of meted violence and fragmentation, whose sliced body projects its bifurcation into multiple analogous divisions across the present-day town: political, social, technologic and economic fault lines, drawn throughout the town's history, reiterate the violence of decollation. One of these fault lines is a hiatus in Dionysien nomination when, between 1793 and 1800, the town was temporarily renamed Franciade in rejection of its royalist and religious roots. This aggrandising act of renaming, as a demonstration of belief in constructing a new historical horizon, rode upon the back of the French Revolution's wave of anti-religious sentiment. But, just a few years later, Franciade reverted back to its precursor, Saint-Denis, and a minor interlude appears to have been concluded. Saint-Denis was renamed under the Consulate of Napoléon Bonaparte, who was keen to take ownership of, and make association with, the symbolic capital it had accrued as the royal terminus. At the same time, he calculatedly used the opportunity to transform the abbey that was housed in the adjoining building of the basilica, to become a school for the daughters of the French military who had received the highest French order of merit: the Légion d'Honneur. The Maison d'éducation de la Légion d'honneur still operates today under the same legacy and traditions as when it was first instituted by Napoléon in 1812. Located right in the heart of Saint-Denis, ten-foot-high walls adorned with security cameras divide it from the town. Security has been increased in the wake of France's state of emergency, in the fear that the school might become one of the latest potential ideological targets for terrorism; the girls who study here exist within the cloisters of privilege, corralled within the safety that state-bestowed heredity secures.[5]

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5 France was declared to be under a State of Emergency from 13th November 2015 until 1st November 2017, when President Emmanuel Macron replaced it with an emergency decree, which bears many of the same hallmarks of the original legislation, enhancing police powers and, as a consequence, restriction of human rights. Critics fear a permanent state

At around the same time as the town was undergoing its temporary titular crisis, the basilica – as a monumental reminder of the monarchy's claim to divine right – itself became an ideological target, undergoing numerous symbolic castrations. When the Republican Convention Nationale gave an order for the destruction of all signs of feudal and royal power, the royal tombs and bodies of the occupants were desecrated, defaced and dumped outside of the basilica walls. This took place almost simultaneously as the beleaguered Marie Antoinette was being guillotined on the Place de la Révolution in 1793 (which, in another recognition of the power of nomination changed its name in quick succession: from Place de la Concorde, to Place de la Révolution, to Place Louis XVI, then finally back to Place de la Concorde in 1830). The destruction of these monumental symbols can still be physically seen in the basilica today, where the reinstated tombs with their marble sculptures (which were saved by Alexandre Lenoir to become part of the Musée National des Monuments Français) are covered with marks, letters, words and other symbols, scratched with sharp implements into smooth marble foreheads, hands, breasts and thighs.

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of emergency. 'UN: France anti-terror draft law would affect civil liberties', *DW*. Sept. 27, 2017. Accessed April 11, 2018, http://www.dw.com/en/un-france-anti-terror-draft-law-would-affect-civil-liberties/a-40714381.

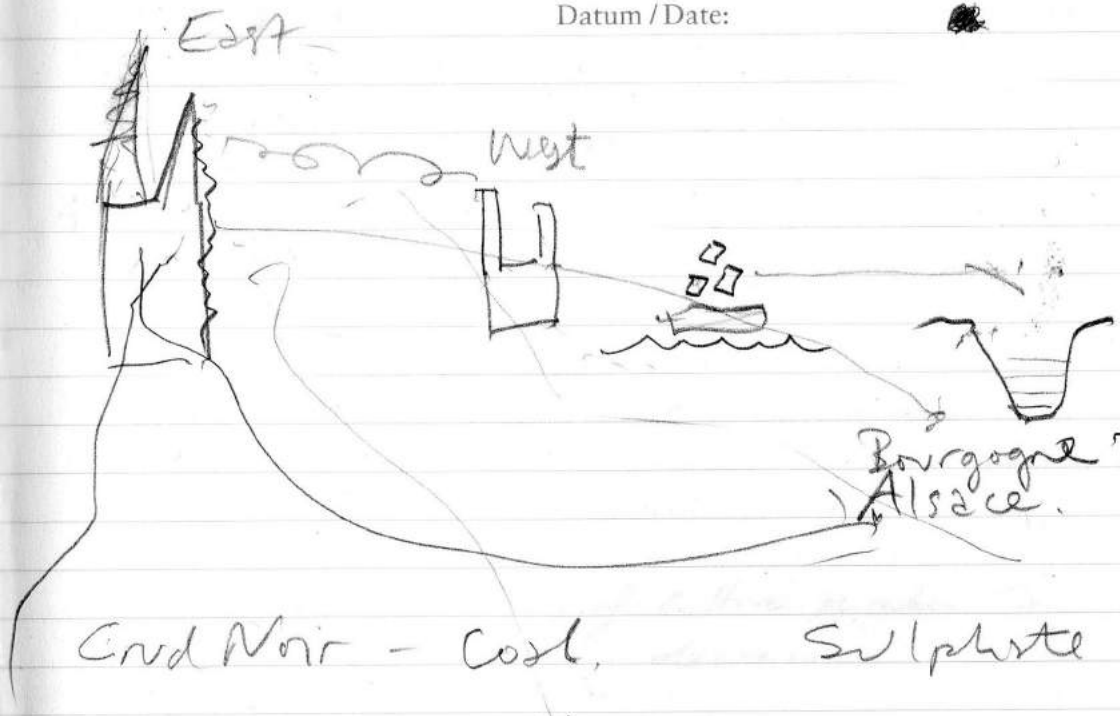
I thought that this was a very good idea but, now, lying here on a metal trolley with a POLAR MOHR 115 paper trimmer whirring over my head, I'm having second thoughts. My hair is fanned out on the heavy perforated steel surface and will be cut inch by inch with a machine that is made to trim the edges of paper stacks. I might as well be getting a haircut from a butcher with a metricised cleaver. The machine operator leans across me and presses a button to release the hydraulics. Instead of the kind of dramatic sabre-swipe I was hoping for (the machine finds its technical evolution from the original design for the guillotine), a safety guard descends precisely, pinning my hair to the machine bed. The blade then very politely but unequivocally comes down to meet hair, gently severing it to manufacturing guidelines.

Maastricht. August 13th, 2017.

Not long after the reinstatement of the royal tombs and dead bodies within the crypt from which they had been unceremoniously exhumed, a sequence of grand restoration projects for the basilica began in earnest, building on and reinforcing its primary function and status of museum and artefact. A growing administrative network consisting of pay-per-view entry into the crypt (from 1875 a visit to the royal necropolis was by ticket admission) and ancillary visitor and education rooms has completed the process of symbolic castration; what was once a powerful symbol of state power has been re-inscribed as harmless state-heritage narrative of collective ownership; divinity transferring from the spiritual into the historical. These restoration works are ongoing, the latest of which involve the exterior of the building undergoing a long-overdue restorative clean-up. There are side-effects to this conservation process: the aggressive drone of an air compressor from dawn until dusk and its related by-product – tiny particles of a silica derivative – is jet-blasted between the basilica's stonework and the blackened tumorous accumulation, which is produced as a combined result of acid rain run-off and historical industrial pollution that the restorers call *cru noir*, or black crust.

The basilica's architecture has its own story of staggered decapitation to tell. When successive lightning strikes damaged the north tower in the 1830s, the result of year-on-year storms, it was eventually dismantled in 1845 by the institutional authorities after several failed attempts to rebuild it. The stones can still be located in the grounds of the basilica, but many have been dispersed and re-employed as building material across the city, identifiable not only from their shape – a tapering hexahedron being the most common form of the defunct bricks – but also from carefully inscribed numbers carved during disassembly to facilitate the spire's future reconstruction. Today, inside the private garden behind the basilica, sandwiched and stacked side by side, overgrown with grass and decomposing leaves, the surviving stones present a disorganised inventory dappled in sunlight, which feeds through a canopy of large, deciduous trees.

Since the 1980s there has been a continuous push from the local council and archaeologists to engineer funds for



Cnd Noir - Cost. Sulphite

- Composition
- dating

the re-assembly of the tower. In the ensuing national debate, these plans have not wholeheartedly been accepted, for a variety of reasons, all of which have emerged in light of the uneasy mix of economic and political factors that constitute the contemporary, national and local scene. The justification for spending financial (possibly national) resources in this way is problematic twofold: there is the danger of damaging the authenticity of the heritage monument itself (potentially exacerbated by rising tourist demand), coupled with aggravating political and cultural sensitivities by spending money on a Catholic monument in a town that now has a majority Muslim population. In 2015, the project 'Suivez La Flèche' was launched, with much grandstanding by local politicians and public promotion for the project. However, later that year, plans were temporarily put on hold after a sequence of ideological terror attacks across France, including a bombing at the nearby Stade de France and a subsequent police raid, which resulted in a shootout between police and suspected members of Islamic State. Both of these events happened within short walking distance of the Basilica. Spending million Euros on a heritage project was not likely to be a wise move for the incumbent French president, François Hollande. In April 2016, the project was re-launched and is gathering steam, the 'Suivez La Flèche' Association being granted the title of '2018 Année Européenne du Patrimoine Culturel'.

The Unité d'archéologie de Saint-Denis was established in the 1970s by two archaeologists who came one summer on their break from university and never left. They encountered a town whose fortunes had been exponentially hit by an economic crisis, resulting from its over-reliance on heavy industry. Huge swathes of the town were also being torn apart for large-scale redevelopment and the extension of the Parisian Metro. In this context, the undergraduate archaeologists began work on the task of preserving whatever they could, in the absence of any significant heritage preservation laws and with only meagre funding streams available. Nicole Rodriguez, who was there from the beginning, was joined later by Michaël Wyss, and, throughout years of inadequate funding to meet their archaeological mission, the introduction of heritage preservation legislation, and

the town's gradual rise and overshoot of its population, they have watched Saint-Denis develop into an obese teenager with a severe case of socio-economic malnutrition. Their roles have been as caretakers and executors of the town's history, which has, over decades, been sidelined as a national investment.

Yesterday late-afternoon, Michaël took me up to the belfry, accessible only through a series of locked doors and narrow passages leading behind the pipes of the organ, corkscrewing up through the hollow columns that support the remaining south tower, its northern twin having been the victim of 2 electrical storms and some faulty engineering, which resulted in its deconstruction and the unlucky cannibalisation of its stones into the fabric of the city. The bell itself was absolutely enormous; at the end of its clacker was a ball as large as my head and, in a somewhat disembodied state, I listened as a distant chime entered stage left, almost mocking the huge schlong clacker in an act of subordination. It became evident that the Mairie (town hall) – the adjacent building in the main square – had substituted the basilica bell's ear-splitting mechanical peels for a series of compressed pre-recordings, sent out by a loudspeaker attached to its façade like an old public-address system; the bell's now muted womb throws its voice across the square. The basilica's bell no longer marks time – a sonic symbol of civil organisation – the municipality does this now with an expedient prosthetic substitute, technologically simulating its metallic belly. I suppose it's a bit like Denis carrying his prosthetic voice in his hands.

Later that day, I wait dutifully in the square to record the bell's 6 o'clock iteration, my eyes fixed on the town hall's speaker. In the town square's corner, a merry-go-round is pumping out acid colours, light and music. I wait for quite a while, sound recorder in hand, but nothing happens. I press stop and make my way to the nearby Carrefour supermarket, slightly disappointed.

Saint-Denis. July 16th, 2016.

A crawl space, as a physical entity, is most commonly understood as an inaccessible area in architecture – usually due to human height restrictions – which might conveniently conceal wiring, plumbing or any other number of infra-architectural elements, such as the space between a false ceiling and the interior surface of a roof. Whilst the basilica's attic has no human height restrictions, easily clocking over 12 metres at its highest point, any curious visitor is advised – after departing the centrally located duckboards in order to crawl across its domed surface – to spread their weight as far as possible when negotiating the 10-metre-wide curved hillocks. Below their feet, which rest on 20 centimetres of medieval masonry, is a 50-metre drop into the cavern of the basilica.

Like the Boulevard Périphérique carving away the *banlieue* from the capital, experiencing the solitariness of the basilica's crawl space disrupts the imposing and continuous public frontage of the church's historic patriarchy, forcing the crawl space's occupant, instead, to identify with a domain on the periphery of the major political and religious narratives. As a remaindered space between the frame of the basilica and the frame of the sky, the attic's crawl space produces an extended analogical chain. To begin that chain: the analogy of the crawl space is a process that produces values; centres and peripheries are produced by the dividing action of tools, protocols, utilities and violence. It is found in both the quotidian and in the major social and political ruptures that define Saint-Denis' history: the Périphérique defines a psychological and political boundary between one central municipality and others, a line that bisects the urban landscape and tolls the difference between social housing policies, which have produced ethnic segregation; Franciade, a titular hiatus bookended by absolutism and dictatorship; the act of audio recording the basilica's bell, divorcing the bell's sonority from the basilica and placing it into the town hall's digital timekeeping system of pre-recordings; particles of jet-blasted silica forcing their way between the *cru noir* and medieval stone masonry, a division separating pollution from renewal; a lightning bolt upon, and an architect's plan for, the north tower, decapitates the basilica – the now weather-worn remainders sit in the

basilica's garden.

All of these examples are little more than an historical list of change, fragmentation, substitution and development. But, this is where the crawl space, as an instrumental encounter with matter, is mythically initiated and hagiographically inaugurated through the primary act of disconnection, which leads to Denis' beatification. The executioner's swing of the axe's shaft brings the blade down upon the neck of St. Denis, cutting through flesh and trachea and, in this moment of blade bisecting neck, it is a tool that divides and redistributes. A decisive cut splits the body in two: a gory representation of the Cartesian split between body and mind. In this act of division and redistribution, a crawl space emerges. Crawling into the space of the cut is not like magnifying a line or plotting the distance between upper and lower cross-sections of a severed neck, but is, instead, the gloop of the cut's remainders – some fleshy matter lost to the blade and some of the blade lost to fleshy matter – a microparticulate exchange of blood for metal on the upper and lower cross-sections of St. Denis' neck; a transaction between the blade and that which was previously whole. Any crawling space is only as good as identifying the thickness of this exchange, of identifying the transfer of remainders across the process of redistribution.

If the attic is considered for its empty volume, this articulates how a crawl space can be a habitable recess between divided worlds (the inside and outside of the basilica): a depressed cavity or a bridge connecting edges; an in-between; a third position between two embankments. In a further analogical extension, the crawl space can also be a useful way of thinking about the transactions between academic disciplines. The notion of transdisciplinary collaboration is a projection, a neutral region lacking material form. Its anticipation of producing a communal voice arises from agreements between partners to invent knowledge holistically prior to disciplinary subdivisions. Its aim is to produce and occupy an analogue of knowledge before it becomes taxonomically, institutionally and academically divided; a narrow, indifferent possibility between institutional partners, who are not directly related yet, nevertheless, search out an overlapping zone

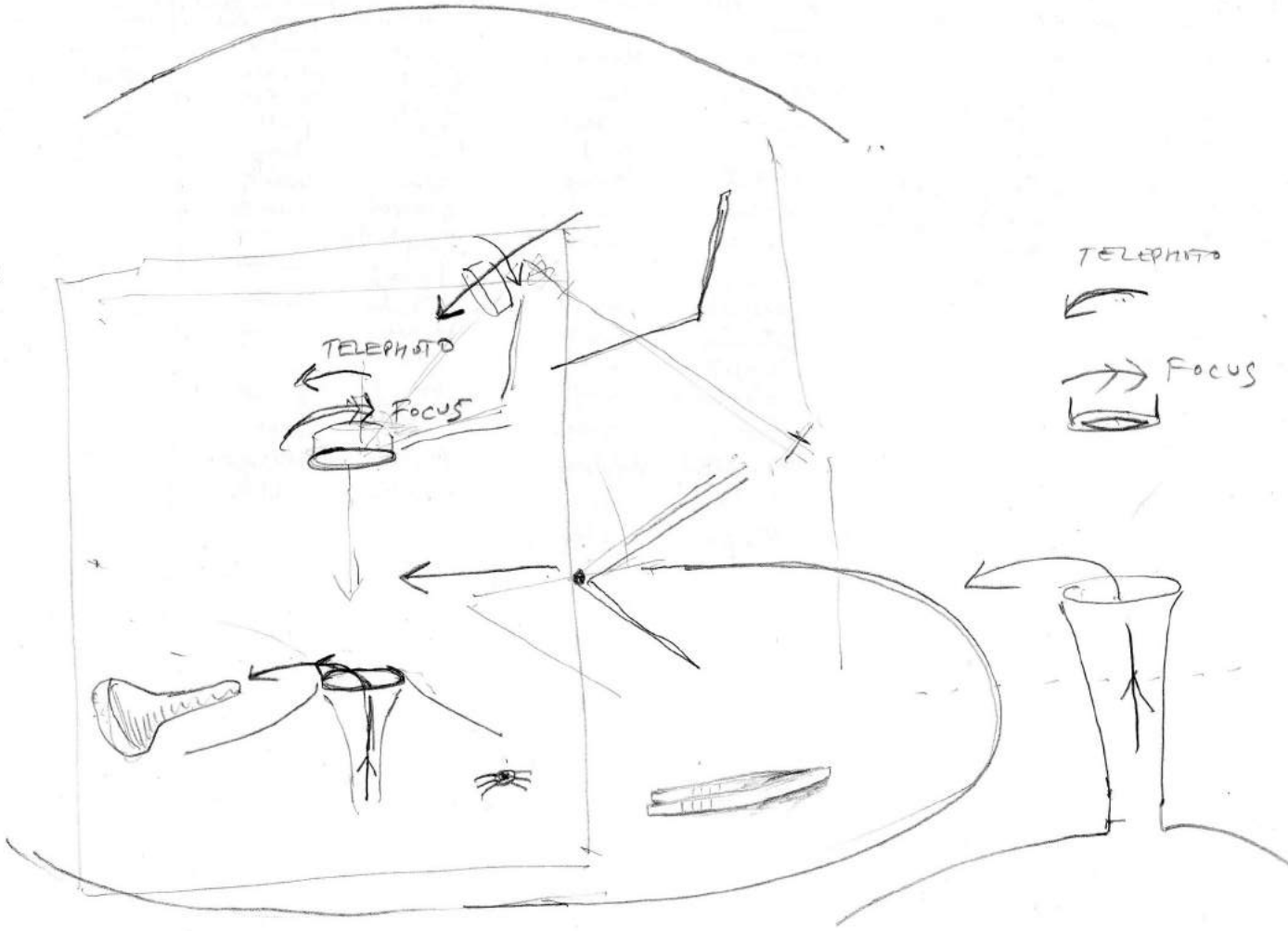
within a field of transaction – a crawl space. So, the crawl space proposed is simultaneously an empirically existent place as a motif (the attic space of the basilica), a recess that is the *trans* of transdisciplinary encounter (between art and archaeology), and a division that is the result of decapitation (St. Denis' hagiography).

Plug

Nipples protrude at regular intervals, concentrated mostly along the seams of a series of convex and concave ribs, which are individually intersected by smooth, barrelled bellies. Look a bit closer and you can see that each nipple is topped with a circular wooden disc, approximately 4 centimetres thick and 12 centimetres in diameter, attached from its centre by an umbilical chain a few feet long embedded into the original plaster dermis of its mother. The wooden disc is the perfect size to fit into the palm of a hand; which, when it does, is graspable and removable, revealing the disc to be in actual fact a plug of mushroom-like proportions. Each plug conceals a hole (more of a puncture, really) and when the plug is removed a short jet of archaic black dust erupts upwards in a short, warm exhaled gasp; followed by a few disorientated and stumbling spiders from its blow hole. After clearing away some of the debris with Ikea barbeque tongs, I use a camera lens to telephoto into the space below. The camera frames the content of each puncture. It sucks out images with a hungry lens reflex in a trained sequence of repetitions: the 1st unblocked aperture reveals miniscule recumbent statues – Kings Clovis and Dagobert with stone lapdogs at their feet stare back at me; in the unplugged 2nd orifice tiny tourists photograph each other and the shrunken architecture; in a 3rd aperture a miniature wedding takes place between descendants of France's former colonial citizens of Senegal; in the 4th, mosaic flooring and pews catch sunlight raking through the stained glass rose window; in the 5th hole a security guard searches the bags of tourists. When removing the 8th and final plug in a row, peering through the stoma-like orifice with the camera, I can just make out the basilica museum's freelance conservator, gently cleaning the statue of Marie Antoinette. This, apparently, happens every 5 years, give or take, when the accumulated grease from thousands of hands has incrementally collected into a brown deposit on the breasts of the youthfully depicted

queen. Louis XVI, who kneels beside her, by contrast, is largely untouched and, therefore, needs comparatively little attention.

Saint-Denis. July 20th, 2016.


TELEPHOTO
FOCUS
TELEPHOTO
FOCUS

Across the floor of the crawl space is distributed an ordered grid of apertures; holes that each have their own tethered stopper – a lathed wooden plug attached to the crawl space floor with a metre-and-a-half of metal chain. One end is fixed into the cement adjacent to its related aperture, whilst the other ends in an eyelet fixed to the crown of the wooden plug. Over time, these plugs have been rendered the same lunar-grey colour as the attic's floor. Once, they were painted red to allow the basilica workers to easily locate their position, evidenced by the occasional residue of paint. Archaeologists at the Unité have suggested that these plugged holes may have once been used to suspend ceremonial drapes on the occasion of the funeral and internment of a member of the monarchy. Now redundant, their original use misplaced, the holes are plugged for the sole reason of stopping currents of air and, therefore, dust, restoration sand, dead spiders, age-blackened webs and bird faeces from passing through them into the space below. Like the corks of bottles purposed to keep food and water fresh, these plugs are functional objects tasked with preventing contamination. Each plug now performs as a deliberate substitute for an absent part of the ceiling, standing in for the missing stonework that constitutes the cored-out holes. More like a dummy measured to satisfy a hole, rather than being itself the thing, these crawl space dummies are wooden stuffing for gaps; reverse templates and stand-ins for absent lithic material.

This is the quiet, golden hour of the morning in the basilica – the moment between its transition from church (morning mass has just been delivered) to museum. Visitors start queuing at the ticket office from 10 o'clock but take some time to filter through into the ambulatory where I'm standing behind a fully extended tripod, crowned with a flashing digital monitor. The LCD display shows a man with a vacuum cleaner systematically traversing the screen bottom to top and left to right. Behind the monitor, the man's avatar advances through the nave's rows of chairs for prayers, from front to back and south to north. On reaching the 4th row, his rhythm, along with the soothing vibration of the machine, is disrupted by a sudden noise radiating from the entrance of the west façade. A group of school children chatter, yelp and squeal, piercing the lazy timelessness of the space with unrepressed nowness. They are accompanied by one of the basilica's education officers, who is dressed in jeans and white t-shirt, and has a small ponytail tied at the back of an otherwise shaved and shining baldpate. He leads the children up the central aisle and gets them to sit carefully on the steps just before the altar, making sure that they do not cross the red-rope-and-brass barrier that separates clergy from congregation. Getting fully into character for his one-man show, the education officer proceeds to dramatise the life of St. Denis and his sidekick martyrs, Rusticus and Eleutherius, from bishopry to beheading, when, at a crucial choreographic instance, he jumps over the red ropes and stands with arms stretched out in front of the altar, singing the Sanctus acclamation (in Latin) in a loud, crystal clear voice. The continuous drone of the vacuum cleaner melds with the building's recursive echo of the showman's voice – 2 dozen children and 2 papier maché decapitated heads on poles look on.

Saint-Denis. July 13th, 2016.

Dummy

Life-size dummies are distributed throughout the museum section of the basilica, monopolising the floor space. These are the sarcophagal recumbent statues whose crowned and reposed heads, when looked at from their apex, appear remarkably like the heads of cruciferous vegetables; broccolis or cauliflowers, say. Portrayed supine, as if on their deathbeds, they carry a consistency of composition through the posture of the body, with feet strictly vertical and hands clasped together in prayer, in a last act of remote communication. Quite a few of the statues are accompanied by marble dogs or ermine at their feet, sitting loyally like stone versions of hot-water-bottle covers. Known as the Royal Necropolis, the basilica is the resting place for almost all the kings of France and for many other royal and religious subjects besides. The reclining effigies of forty-two kings and thirty-two queens are dummies; substitutes for regal subjects. Carved in marble and stone, along with the occasional metal-beaten effigy, these lithic substitutes prolong their royal subject's vitality and divine privilege after their organic death. They are stone, dummy versions of the organic bodies placed into the flesh-eating boxes that support them. Unlike a death mask, these are not representations of the recently departed, but alibis for the absolute monarch's divine right. Captured momentarily before death, the stone stiffs articulate a symbolic moment of transition; that, despite being captured on their deathbed and on the cusp of expiring, they are still able to dial-in God's mandate. The statues extend this representation into the permanence of stone, thereby tautologically demonstrating their domain in perpetuity.

These dummies demonstrate an extension of lived existence into stone through the potency their carved imitations have carried to incite rage or adulation, as testified by the semi-literate graffiti which still pockmarks and lines their surfaces; overlapping gestures of defacement made across centuries of power in turmoil. This is proof of the persistence of the image of the monarchy to illicit violence beyond the subject's biological death; the image is retained in the psychic and physiologic memory of the monarchy's potentially disaffected subjects and, as their power is inherited, so is, conversely, powerlessness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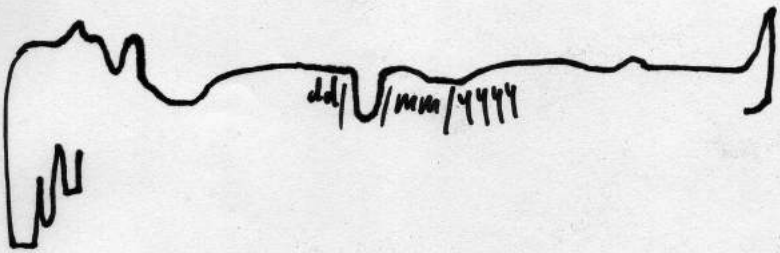
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and its affects. The clinical death of these kings and queens is neither a social nor a political death, and only is it in part biological. These marble representations assume a divisive zombie afterlife, through their ability to motivate living performances as contradictory as veneration and disfigurement.

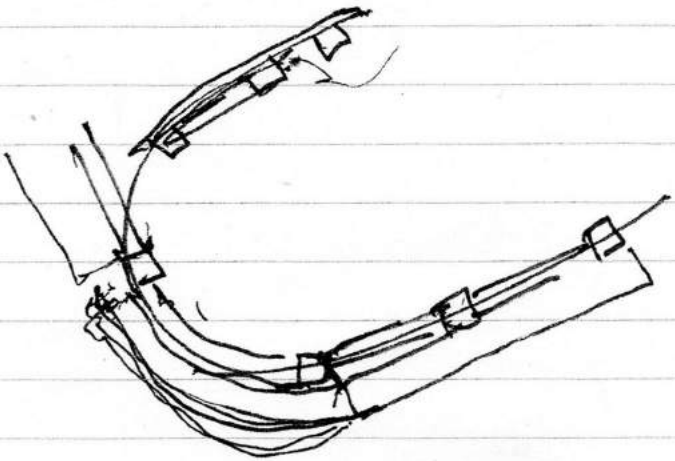
This after-death motivation of the biologic extends in a very literal way through the monarchy's use of another valuable raw material they had to hand: that of the dead monarch's body. Since the 10th century, the French monarchy and nobility were not shy of having their most elevated members eviscerated for the royal cause, understanding the representational value and utility a cadaver could furnish. In effect, they took on board the example of St. Denis, whose relics, along with those of his fellow martyrs St. Rusticus and St. Eleutherius, still sit in three golden reliquary caskets in pyramid formation at the back of the ambulatory. These relics became actors in ceremonial processions, and the adulation their presence instilled in the populous was not lost on its institutions. There is probably no better way to bask in the associative glow of religion and its related connectivity, than to follow by example and ensure your placement in proximity; a fact surely not neglected by Abbot Suger in his dealings with the French kings. The monarchy, therefore, took the saint's decapitation as a symbolically efficient example of dismemberment. As royal custom dictated, after death, the king's internal organs were removed, with the heart being interred separately at a carefully calculated, often distant, strategic geographic location. This tendency peaked in the 18th century, when the divinely sanctioned organs were placed in ornamental cardiotaphs and portioned out to Catholic destinations across France: L'église de l'Annonciation in Paris and the Basilique Cathédrale Sainte-Croix d'Orléans.

This horse-and-carriage delivery of the monarch's excised organs became a ritual of geo-corporeal distribution, a symbol of the sovereignty's purity and – via birthright and ceremony – his lifetime of patriotic and fatherly sacrifice. God's will effectively isolated the living king from any earthly judgement, like a Cartesian head severed from a body, but in death this patrician and parental separation was custom-

arily and symbolically reversed. Scattering organs across the kingdom entailed the spiritual and patriotic fertilisation of the land, along with the physical reconnection of the monarch's divinity with the common masses.[6] It also had the belated advantage of promulgating social cohesion without apparently contradicting the king's spiritual superiority. This politico-religious ritual enforced a continued subjectification of the deceased king through the control of circulation, display and use of his dismembered body.[7] Relics and reliquaries have been used in this way by the Catholic Church for centuries. Golden-framed fragments of bones, organs, teeth and hair are not simply symbolic manifestations but, through metonymic magic, presented dead saints in their totality. A steady supply of bodily remnants has provided abbacies, bishoprics and canons with a ready resource of spiritual capital. This conversion into a sacred body appears stable, so long as the authenticity of the property is maintained, controlled and regulated through the relevant authorities. In the early days of spiritual trade in relics, such regulation had not been established; in the case of St. Denis' relics, this authority was challenged in a medieval dispute whereby two competing property claims were made over his corporeal assets. Notre-Dame de Paris claimed to have the crown of the head of the saint, which, in a retelling of the historical narrative, was severed by the executioner's badly-aimed initial blow. This was in direct contestation to the monks' claim, upriver at the Abbaye de Saint-Denis, that they possessed the entire mutilated body; a toss-up between a scalping and a total severance of the brain. The property dispute retells the origin story of St. Denis, weaponising hagiography in a necro-economic power battle. The dead body is controlled through a re-telling of its bloody distribution and made to speak differing values, like a dummy

6 C. Régnier. 'The hearts of the kings of France: Cordial Immortality'. *Medicographia*. Vol. 31:4 (2009): 430-439. Accessed March 11, 2017, https://www.medicographia.com/wp-content/pdf/Medicographia101.pdf.

7 Myriam Nafte, 'Institutional Bodies: Spatial Agency and the Dead,' *History and Anthropology*, Vol. 26:2 (2015): 206-233.



replacement.

or a puppet being played by historically remote and external forces.

> 'The animals learned the task preoperatively and were then tested for retention after removal of the area AGm or after a sham operation [...] In animals the area AGm was removed from both hemispheres. The operation was performed within 10 days of the completion of preoperative testing. It was carried out under sterile conditions and with Chlor-Nembutal as an anesthetic. A rectangular bone flap was removed, 4 mm wide and extending from 1 mm behind to 4.5 mm anterior to bregma. The tissue was removed with a fine-gauge sucker. A binocular operating the microscope was used to guide the surgery. The remaining 6 animals served as controls. In these animals the scalp was cut, and the skin was resewn.'[8]

The preservation of the body, or parts of the body, after death through means of mummification and embalming intersects spiritual and religious practices with that of early medicine and veterinary science. As can be seen today in the Musée Fragonard d'Alfort, life-size anatomical models of flayed human bodies have become both educational tools and a form of public entertainment and spectacle. The contemporary after-death body has different stakes in the technologically speculative but medically disputed practice of cryonic preservation. Cryonics applies the technologies and science of low-temperature preservation to the clinically dead human (or animal) body in those fee-paying cases where irreversible biological death, cryonic theory maintains, has not yet occurred. The ALCOR Life Extension Foundation in Scottsdale, Arizona (USA) specialises in cryonic suspension. At the heart of their mission statement is the sharp distinction between clinical death and biological death, where clinical death signals an indeterminate passage of time between organ failure and the irreversible chemical damage of organ tissue. For ALCOR, their

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8 R. E. Passingham, C. Myers, N. Rawlins, V. Lightfoot, and S. Fearn. 'Premotor cortex in the rat,' *Behavioral Neuroscience*, Vol. 102(1), (1988):101-2.

aims are dependent upon the scientific and technological expansion of this approximately six-minute window, through intensive cooling, perfusion and vitrification of its patients' bodies, into a reanimation window of decades or even centuries. Patients are maintained at temperatures below minus 196°C at which it might be possible that the brain's cell structures which store personality and memory may not have irreversibly been degraded; that information-theoretic death has not occurred. The resuscitation of these wealthy patient-clients is speculated into a distant future where the freezing process can be technologically reversed without any potential further cellular damage, and at such a time when the causes of patient fatality or chronic disease are also curable. But patients also have the option of an alternate process in neurocryopreservation, which involves the isolation of the patient's head as the cellular storehouse of personality and memory, to be revived at a point in the future when brain transplantation is possible. Or, possibly redundant, if the information can be retrieved and attain a second life by other means.

Speech

In the case of his disassociated voice, St. Denis seems to perform an almost spectacular feat of representational bifurcation, by becoming simultaneously both ventriloquist and ventriloquist's dummy. Whilst the origin of the word 'ventriloquism' is etymologically rooted, in part, through the act of speech, historically it never demanded the presence of a porcelain or fibreglass doll with which it is associated today. Instead, ventriloquism was understood to be gastromancy – prophesising from the gut. Speaking from the belly or the womb, the ventriloquist's stomach transmitted audible rumblings of the gut's peristaltic motion, which were interpreted as the speech of the dead-in-residence in the prophet's (ventriloquist's) stomach. St. Denis, holding his cut-off head to his belly, could appear to be performing an homage to this ancient type of gastromanic ventriloquism, whilst simultaneously, and prophetically, presenting a displaced but physically present and active mouthpiece.

Shifting from paganist and religious associations with voice throwing as a facet of a miraculous act, in recent centuries ventriloquism has become more synonymous with illusion and trickery. The ventriloquist, through vocal and dramatic skill, aims to conjure the existence of a speaking but absent body, mediated through a dummy. However, the cephalophore disrupts this dynamic, as a totality spilt into two separate yet coexistent parts.[9] One does not hold dominance over the other; the channel is open from both sides in an act of mutual beneficence. The headless body holds its head forth, like a figurehead on the prow of a boat, whilst the head pulls the body onward, perhaps instructing it through its disassociated voice. St. Denis, in this double-representation, blows off to the entertainers with a homunculus sat on their knee. The ventriloquists invade their subjects with a mouth-shaped hand through which to 'throw their voices', using their empty-bellied dummies as foils, sidekicks and competitors. In

9 Steven Connor, 'Panophonia', *stevenconnor.com* (2012). Accessed January 3, 2018, http://stevenconnor.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/panophonia.pdf.

a serial extension of this gastromanic displacement and Dionysien access to the dead's logorrhea, the medieval period sees St. Denis wrongly attributed authorship of the theological texts of Dionysus the Aeropagite, only for these to be later reappraised as the works of a completely different individual now referred to as Pseudo-Dionysus, the Aeropagite. False attribution and pseudonyms further extend the gastromancer's Dionysian chain.

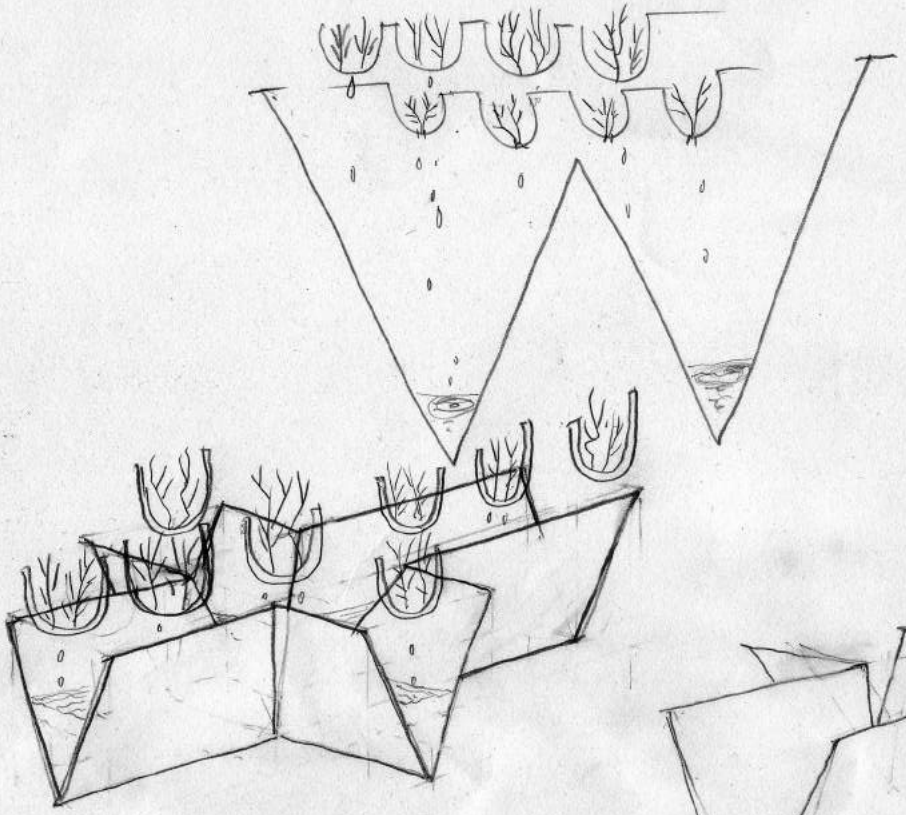
Substitution

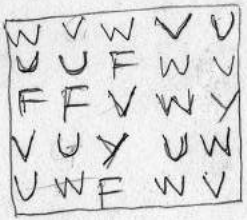
VACVVM

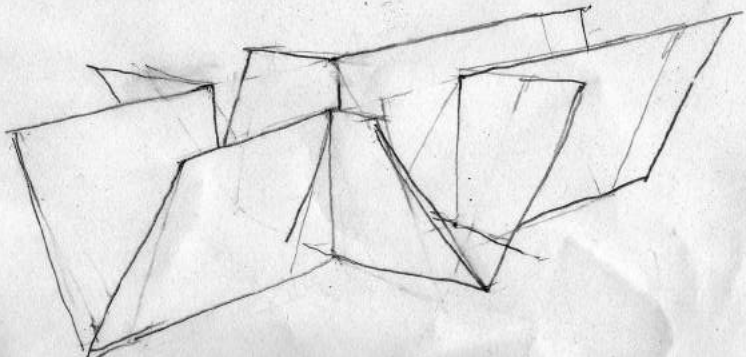
ROMVLVS REMVS

milk duct orifices

WAW = W, V, F, U, Y





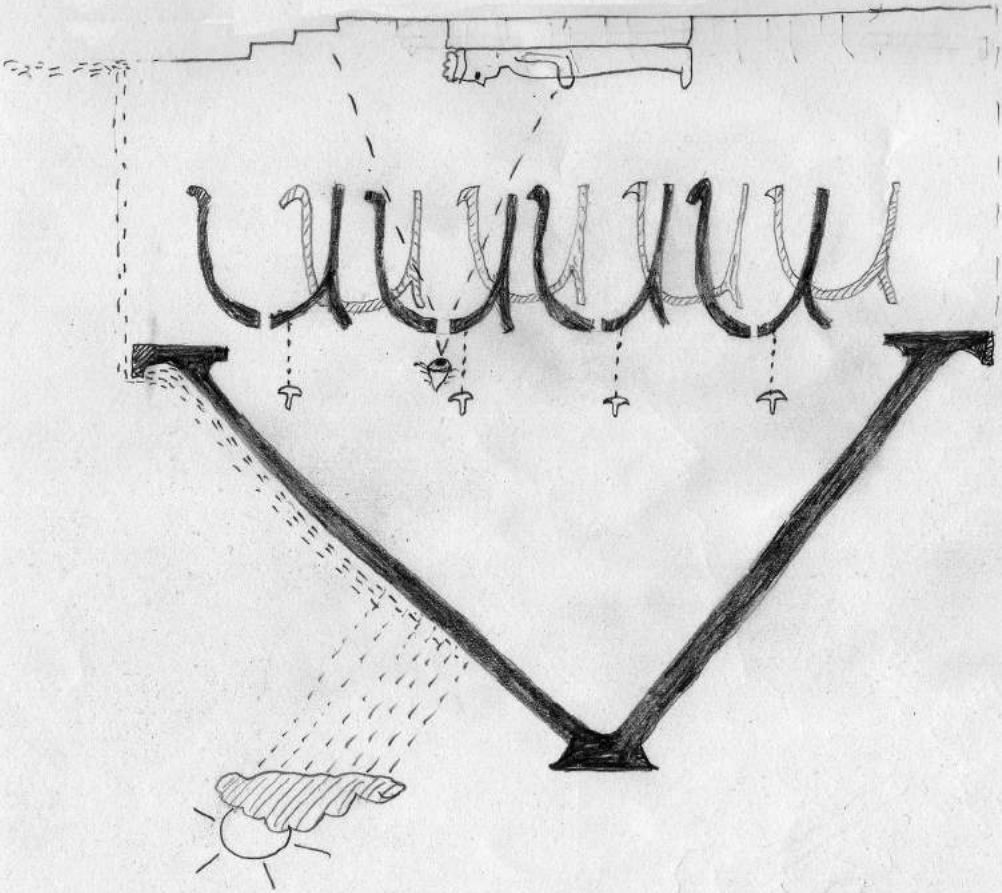


If Nick's postcard of the Capitoline Wolf is turned upside-down, the frame of her legs transforms into another topographic representation; this time, the gravity-defying belly and the teats now rise up from the bottom of the frame, their gravitational shift rendering them into intersecting domes, which, through their basic geometry, look almost like the ones in the crawl space of the Saint-Denis basilica. Turning this super-imposed image back round again in our mind's eye, it is now the crawl space that has been rotationally and architecturally up-ended, its domes appearing to hang like eight wolf dugs and its plugged holes like wolf teats with milk-duct exit points. Mapping this mammalian image of eight hanging breasts onto the crawl space produces an image of eight upturned domes reading as lowercase 'u' forms (uuuuuuuu), in a cross-sectional cut of the domes. The inverted cruciform of the basilica roof, which now hangs beneath them, becomes two large valleys, which intersect as capitalised 'V' forms (VV). These two copper 'V' channels are arranged horizontally in axial formation and from these two intersecting 'V's an enormous 'W' can be written across the space. The upturned crawl space in the basilica is architecturally formed from a series of 'U's and 'V's, which follow the cruciform floor plan, radiating out from the basilica's central dome that, now inverted, hangs 50 metres below the elevated transept.

Historically, the written letters 'U' and 'V' have always had a close intervolution and conditional relationship. 'V' predates 'U' and, in Latin script, it served the dual function of both consonant and vowel, dependent on its relative position to other consonants and vowels. So, it could be said that 'V' is the prototypical form for 'U', until this dynamic is shifted in the 14th century when the two letters both become discretised as vowel or consonant, in a gradual systematisation of the phonetic base of the Latin alphabet. It wasn't until the 17th century that 'U' became authoritatively recognised as distinguishable from 'V', as instituted by the French Academy. 'U', therefore, becomes a kind of written container which arises as a substitute for – or an outsourcing of – the sound that is the previous

vowel function of the letter 'V'.

The form of 'U' also has a pictographic identity both historical and contemporary, inscribed in notions of containers and containing: picture the cross-section of a water jug or a pot; more symbolically, consider a uterus or the contemporaneous use of 'U' as a technological abbreviation on mobile and digital messaging platforms. In this instance, the singular letter 'u' becomes a compressed container for the word 'you', at first originating from the need for enforced economy for word count expenditure in text messages, then evolving to 'text-speak' at its most concentrated codification or residue. Through catalysing the image of an inverted attic-chamber, an ongoing graphic and phonetic relationship between 'v' and 'u' can be construed. Here the linguistic rule of thumb is contingent upon a substitutive, compressive and de-compressive semiotics, in which each of the written and the spoken produces the other.

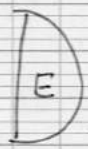


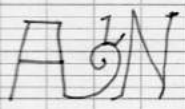
DEPOT

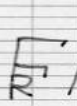
On the roof of the basilica's north tower, in view of Olivier harvesting honey from his urban apiary, I photograph the mason's markings that Michaël is showing me. I see this as a good opportunity to capture the recording of the prosthetic town-hall bell – a good time and good proximity. In advance of 12 o'clock midday I press record and continue photographing. 12 o'clock passes and again the bell does not ring. I press stop to save the recorder's batteries. About minutes later the bastard bell rings.

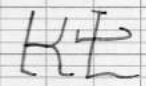
Saint-Denis. July 17th, 2016.

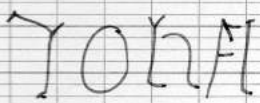
ABBREVIATIONS IN INSCRIPTIONS

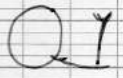
 = DE = OF

 = AGN[us] = LAMB

 = FRA/T[res] = BROTHERS

 = K[a] L[endas] = CALENDARS.

 = JOHA(N)

 = Q[U]I = HERE

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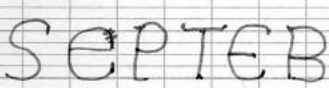
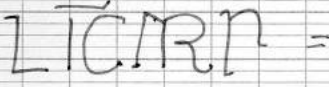
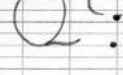
 = SEPTE[M]B[re]

 = L'[in]CARN[acion] = INCARNATION

 = P[OR] = for

 = Q[U]IT = ~~QUI~~ WHO.

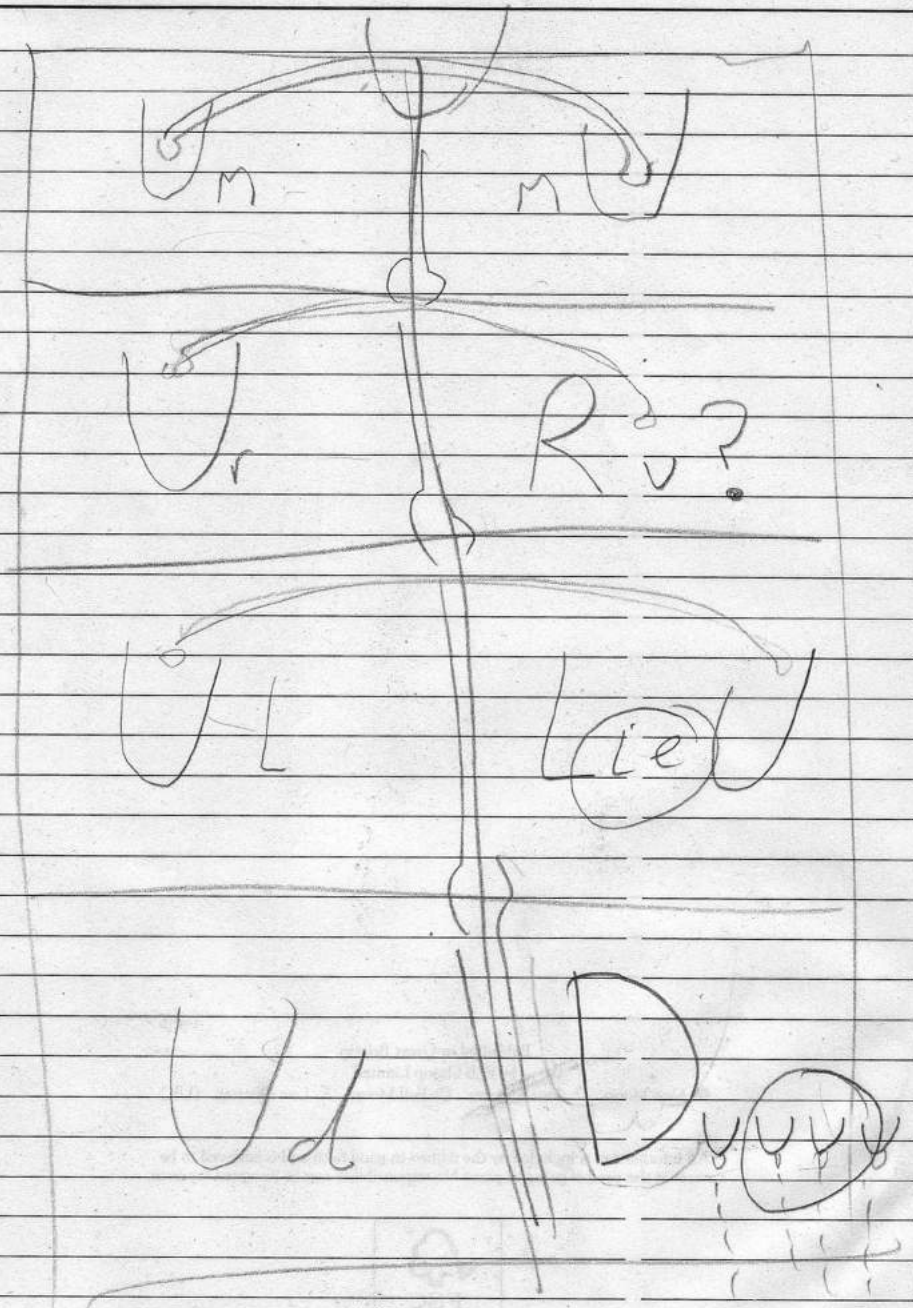
Text Collection: Epigraphy

Most of the recumbent statues in the Basilique de Saint-Denis (excepting those which follow the horseshoe curve of the ambulatory) lie along an east-to-west axis, with the soles of their feet saluting the rising sun each morning. Each marble pillow, depressed by a heavy marble head, is carved with an abbreviation of the name of the depicted French monarch. These abbreviations originate from a systematic truncation and contraction of medieval Latin, responding to the conditions, on the pillows and in the necropolis, of topographic circumscription. This act of scribal frugality filters a phonetic surfeit and, in doing so, dispenses with letters which are perceived to be semantically redundant or simply overgenerous. Resembling a medieval approximation of a graffiti writer's tag, the remaining truncations are composed of abruptly stuttered and highly punctuated codes. A linguistic mystification results from the loss of direct access to their original phonetic constitution. The abbreviations become more condensed over centuries, frequently arising from necessity; the more populated the graveyard, the more subdivisions are necessary to fit the whole. And it follows that a life-size marble pillow is only so large. For example, Marguerite de France, Comtesse de Flandres is contracted into 'MARGTE. DE FCE. CSSE. DE FL DRE., which sits comfortably upon the otherwise blank surface available.

However, looking at multiple epigraphic applications of this handy economisation, which, on the face of it, follow a structural synergy, it, in fact becomes quickly clear that the abbreviations follow no hard-and-fast rule. This is especially evident where the rationale of limited space does not concur with concise lettering. Instead, each is an adapted and individualised occurrence of the general premise, which makes it function, not as a demotic gateway to information, but as an instance of privileged codification. For example, 'CHS. V.' is the truncation for Charles V., but this abbreviation floats incongruously in the expanse of marble pillow surrounding it. The emphasis is, therefore, not on structural or communicative expediency but, rather, to be remembered emblematically, as a monogram, a logo, or in shorthand – the formation of semantic capital through phonetic efficiency. This re-codification condenses and partially obscures Latin,

limiting decipherment to those who might be classed as enlightened readers – readers who are able to decode these terse forms and find functional and semantic opportunity in linguistic redundancy. Marie Antoinette's initials are a precise example of this symbolic production (or phonetic depletion matched by semiotic specialisation), over-reaching the ready communication of a given name. Here the letter A overlays the letter M; their horizontal, diagonal and vertical lines intertwined like a purl knitting stitch.

Abbreviations are just one very tiny portion of the colossal weave of historical and contemporary languages and signs that are found in and around the basilica's walls. Both spoken and written, this language assumes a vast range of functions: liturgical, pedagogic, institutional, memorial, commercial, technical, regulatory, proprietary, illicit and bibliographic. If one were to try to build a lexicon for the basilica's entire text, the cacography generated would pose many problems for any would-be cataloguer. The unfortunate collector of this textual mêlée would need to consider vastly different functions, supports and employments of language, so as to be able to include – side by side – both the physically persistent and the ephemerally transient. Moving attention away from the more obvious examples of text as epigraphic carvings into marble, a broad cross-section of the range of examples present in the basilica demonstrates the potentially chaotic and overlapping instances which require distinction, principle of organisation, or typological ordering: electrical specifications moulded on the underside of urea-formaldehyde plugs; stock codes and prices printed on adhesive labels in the gift shop; rolling production credits (available in languages) on the education room's video monitor; the onward count of date-and-time stamps on LCD screens sitting above security alarm touchpads; 'PUSH' die-stamped on the transept altar's chromed-steel microphone port; machine-embroidered fabric care labels attached to an altar cloth; handwritten entries in the basilica's visitor book in an assortment of biro, pencil and felt-tip pen; partially legible and illegible graffiti, scratched into the aristocratic foreheads of marble and sandstone effigies; inventory numbers carved into the stones of the fallen north tower; manufac-


M
M
R ?
L
ie
D

turer logos decaled onto bathroom ceramics; inkjet prints on sheets of A4 paper detailing health and safety guidelines; rigid plastic labels embossed with 'BOUYER' on audio loudspeakers in the organ room; metal kick-plates cast with the manufacturing logo 'DORMA' at the threshold of external glass doors; paragraphs of architectural history acid-etched into glass; graphite lines and squiggles from a carpenter's pencil speedily dashed-off against the grain of a piece of wood supporting a stone altar.

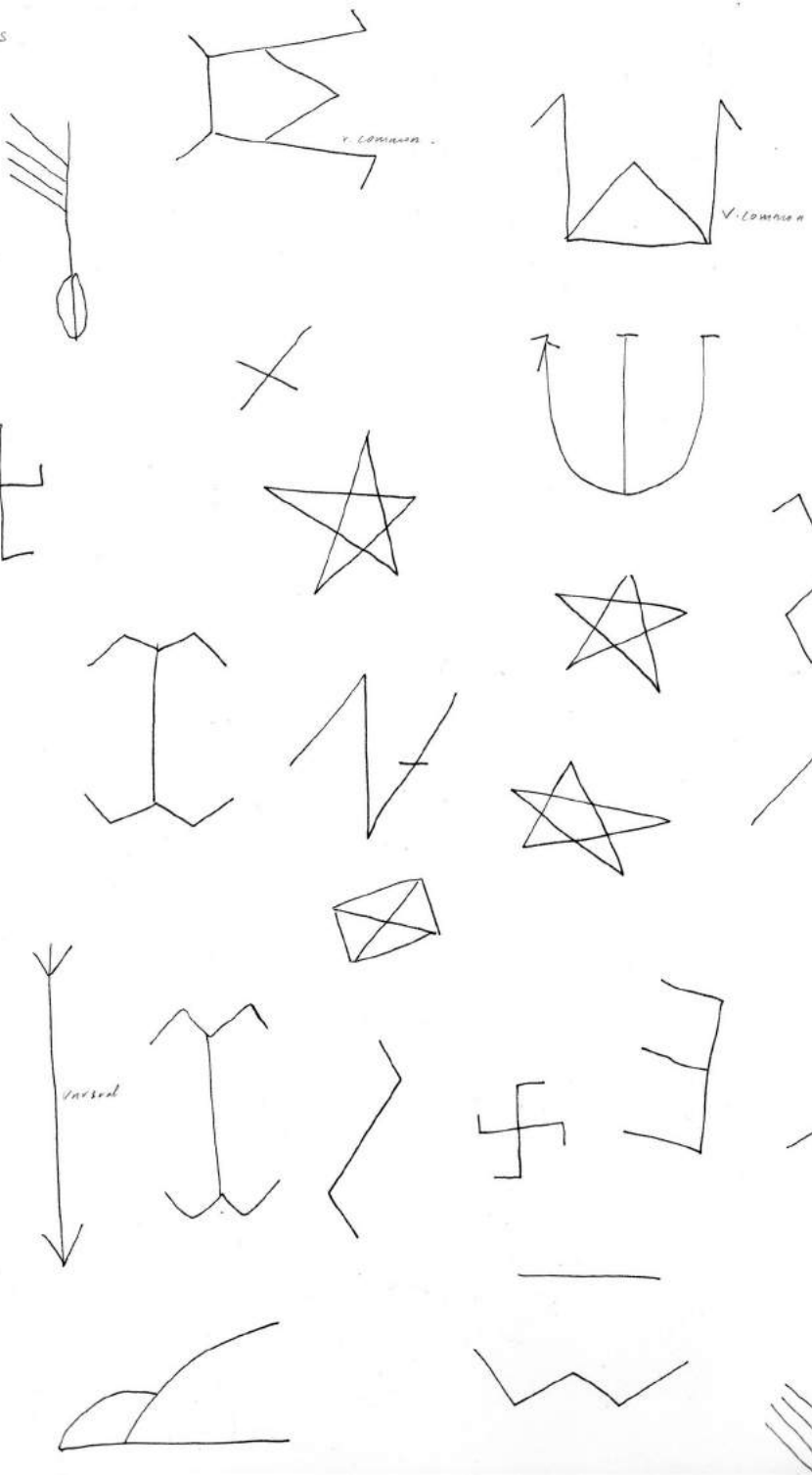
I am revisiting the belfry again late today, this time alone. I can see how the old mechanical system connecting to the bells and pulleys is still intact, though decommissioned. It was installed to replace the muscular service of the bell-ringers, but now, in turn, finds itself mothballed. Despite this, a light still flashes regularly on the operations panel. On this second visit, I have a closer look at the bell itself and find a motley collection of markings and text to record. As I make a move to record the inscription which wraps itself around the lip of the bell, adjusting to the relevant camera settings and taking up position, a red LED light flashes times in quick succession and then… the image speedily fades to nothing but a black, reflective screen. Dead battery. Biro and notepad substitute.

Saint-Denis. July 22nd, 2016.

An inventory might begin by building a skeletal infrastructure of text in imitation of the architectural layout of the basilica, recreating a history of engineering through textual evidence of authorship (individual and corporate) and regulation. The mason's marks are a good case in point. Originating from Abbot Suger's 12th-century renovations, each mason who worked on carving the huge blocks of sandstone for the columns holding up the nave inscribed a unique verification symbol, which remained traceable to the particular fabricator. Made from simple arrangements of circles, semi-circles, straight lines, horseshoes, crosses, arrows, stars, and envelope-like crossed squares, these markings are peppered across the surface of the pockmarked columns. There is also a range of esoteric letterings: an 'R' character is evident but is placed sideways; an 'E' is also revolved 90 degrees; a 'T' undergoes a horizontal rotation. However, these mason's marks appear closer to a hieroglyphic logography descended from the Phoenician alphabet, rather than holding any particular affiliation with Latin script.

ONE SIGN PER BLOCK

COLUMNS



Today I was in the organ room for over an hour and found myself spending the last 20 minutes staring at words, letters and codes on an electricity convertor for a dimmer light switch. It made as little sense to me as the Latin epigraphy on the sarcophagi below. One of the only restrictions I have placed on this impossible and quite possibly ridiculous task of text collection has been to limit myself to two languages; one, I do not understand, aside from a few references to medical Latin: 'umbilicus', 'uterus', 'ūrīna', 'venter', 'viscus'; and the other, I have only a passing acquaintance with: 'Un litre de bière s'il vous plaît'; 'merci beaucoup'. It's funny how these restrictions don't really seem to matter. Some new, unheard-of textual category keeps cropping up which bears absolutely no relation to the data sets that precede it. I'm plumbing new depths of ignorance I'm not sure are really that useful. This time it's the electrical coding and I have absolutely no idea what to do with it or how to understand it. Today, looking at a letter 'M' in a triangle; a circle inset with a right-angled design; 'KRS' (are these manufacturers initials?); Galaxian Space-Invader motifs rotated 90 degrees – it is impossible for me to make divisions between branding, health-and-safety regulations, and electronic specifications. All of these signs mean something, but I do not have the savoir-faire. Perhaps the only possibility of working this out is to accept any, perhaps every, possible level of ignorance. Although, having said that, I never thought I'd look at an organ console and feel relief at seeing the simple French designation of sound qualities on the organ stops, which, if need be, are easily translatable: nasard, trompette, bombarde, flute harmon, clarion, fourniture, prestant, bourdon, montre, grosse fourniture, viole, flute pavîllon.

Saint-Denis. July 26th, 2016.

Another opportunity to textually map the building's architectural layout is present in the five spiral staircases that coil up the inside of the huge perimeter columns (leading up, eventually, to the crawl space), and which are internally wrapped with electrical cabling, switches, distribution boards, sockets, fuse boxes and light fittings. These flows of electricity follow each curve and line of the gothic architecture, like the roots of a strange plant travelling upwards rather than downwards. To make a catalogue of the texts presented across, within and upon this electrical wiring, poses a unique problem for the act of text collection: each plug must be mined for electrical specifications; each light fixture must be unfastened, its light bulb unscrewed and crushed to retrieve any internal codes or secrets it might house; each cable needs to be sliced and stripped with electrical pliers to harvest ciphers and trade-codes concealed by the PVC and rubber housing; light switches are unbolted; brass contact points, bumpers, toggles and springs are gutted; injection-moulded PVC components need to be broken open, their contents spilled; sealed plugs are smashed apart; socket-outlets, cable couplers and fuse boxes are eviscerated – producing a mass of debitage comprised of broken plastic and glass, copper fuse clips and fuse ends, brass pins and pin screws, steel cord grip screws and steel major plug screws, flayed PVC insulated cable and wire sheaths, scalped copper wiring and nylon cord grip; a morass of decimated material from which would emerge a repetitious and soporific mantra of regulatory codes, material specifications and manufacturer logos.

Is a linguistic portrait of the building possible? Within its walls, language takes on almost any imaginable form: abbreviation, nomination, warning, instruction, scribble, trademark, graffiti, confession, insult, praise, inventory, code. Any sense of a complete list would always be lacking one component or another through some overlooked or unexplored region. And legibility is relative in this imaginary catalogue. Medieval mason's markings are as equally without representational qualities as the freshly disembowelled contents of a dimmer switch, or the scrawl of graffiti on the hands of a recumbent King Clovis; as perceptible as the erased stone-floor text, worn

away from centuries of foot tread; and equally indistinguishable from branding logos and material specifications legible only to the knowledge specialism of local or national electricians. Codes layered upon systems, layered upon further codes; all have similar origin stories comparable to the mason's marks. The only way to achieve success in this nonsensical activity of text collection would be to position one's own ignorance as subject matter, in which epigraphic understanding is overwhelmed by endlessly distinct linguistic and informational structures. Accomplishing such a task would cause a rent to appear between the inevitable contingencies of selection and the chimera of any lexical totality. The truth is that none of the languages, codes or systems used can exist outside of the wider system of upkeep, maintenance and historical comprehension in any meaningful way. This inventory, desperately in need of some ordering principle, which its subject matter cannot propose, becomes, therefore, a container for contingent and equivalent deposits, where nothing and everything is substitutable, equally invalid, and without hierarchy.

TEXT

WRAPPED

LINEAR
ARC
beginning & end

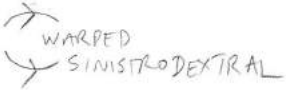
MONO

one signal into multiple/replicable channels

Monogram

BRANDING

MIRRORED MONO
MERGED STEREO
PSEUDO STEREO



SINISTRODEXTRAL

MULTIPAGE

left to right
Plaques/pages/
information panels
descriptive

LIST

SPATIAL

ANALOG

GRAFFITI

DIGITA

GRID

MAPPIN
CO-ORDIN

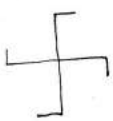
SCRAMBLED
= Spine - a
reduced to ma

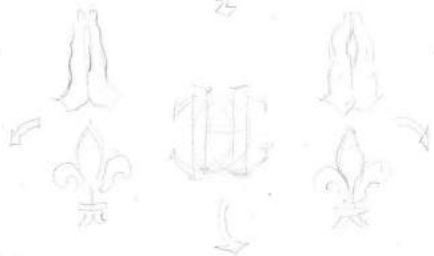
TITULAR

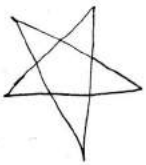
Commands
directives

IMPERATIV

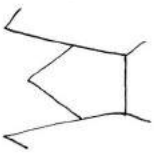
- graffiti on P
symbol? Monogra

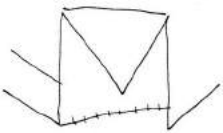


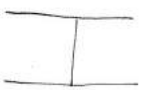




COLUMNS







POS/NEG
RELIEF?

Stratigraphy

In archaeology, stratigraphy is the process of identifying layered strata within soil in order to aid the dating of artefactual remains. During excavation, the stratigrapher identifies colourful and textural differences in the soil. Such differences, resulting from environmental and historic circumstances, combined with evidential remains found within the strata (frequently ceramic), allow the stratigrapher to assign dates to the identified layers. Items of historical note are distinguished and separated from purely geological information; matter which, in other words, is deemed to be of limited historical importance. The selected remains of human activity: manipulated, discarded, or digested matter, are then taken to specialist facilities. Analysed and given time, they will be logged in storage depots. Conversely, the undesirable geologies are discarded and skipped, immediately awaiting their advent within a new geological era. This secondary activity is one of counter-production; spoil, waste, debris or residue is considered as un-formed matter, which then assumes another role through re-employment in development and commercial industries, thereby re-entering existing socio-political and economic processes. For example, the unwanted soil from excavating a medieval town might shape the foundation for a municipal playground or commercial district; or, through rejection, refigure a distant landscape with hills of waste which will, in time, become indistinguishable from the original landscape. All this happens through the basic mathematic axiom of subtraction and addition; what gets dug out or pulled down must somehow get dug in or put inside a storage facility.

This is particularly true for preventive archaeology, where industrial and commercial development creates contingent situations in which archaeology is required to respond, albeit in an anticipatory and yet partial manner.[10] As a result, it ties a vast amount of archae-

10 According to the archaeologist Jean-Yves Breuil (INRAP Méditerranée), the birth of preventive archaeology in France came about in response to a range of high-profile scandals involving post-war commercial construction projects that had failed to properly assess or make provisions for the

ology's investigations to economic and political factors which are currently driven in large part by corporate incentives, in turn shaping what data is available to enter the historical record. The motorway and high-speed rail link excavations which began in Nîmes in 2012 and were undertaken by L'Institut National Recherches Archéologiques Préventives (INRAP),[11] are the antithesis of the generalised archaeological motif of the romantic ruin; megaprojects[12] irreversibly casting

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cultural heritage they might (and indeed did) subsequently unearth in the process of construction – for example, when the square in front of Notre-Dame Cathedral was dug up for an underground carpark in 1965, it was perhaps unsurprising that it revealed a rich cornucopia of ancient remains. In 1983, a similar thing happened during the underground extension of the Louvre Museum under the aegis of François Mitterrand (Bernstein 1984). These were just two of many such cases where a conflict of interests was highlighted between government/commercial entities and archaeology in France, leading to a dramatic change in the attitude of the general populous towards its local cultural heritage, which had previously, along with archaeology itself, been focused on post-colonial territories. As a consequence, the Valletta Treaty was passed in 1992, for the first time ensuring proper legal protection for archaeological heritage in Europe. As Breuil says, in this sense 'preventive' literally means 'to anticipate, to plan, to defer… the heart of the law is not to excavate, but to preserve' (Jean-Yves Breuil, personal conversation with the authors, April 2016).
Bernstein, Richard, 'Paris's Past Unearthed in Digs at Louvre,' *The New York Times*, Dec. 4th, 1984. Accessed April 2, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/1984/12/04/science/paris-s-past-unearthed-in-digs-at-louvre.html.
11 INRAP (previously Association Française d'Archéologie Nationale) is a state-run organisation in France numbering over two thousand archaeologists. All archaeological surveys must go through INRAP before the sites are put into tender for excavation with private business and university departments.
12 A megaproject is one that, as its name suggests, is humongous

their forms into and across all types of natural and man-made landscape indiscriminately.

both in scale and expense, with wide-reaching (and often irreversible) environmental, political and social impacts.

I arrive at Gare du Nord and am met by Valérie, a tourism intern from the local tourist office in Saint-Denis. She must be around 18 or 19 years old with greasy hair and glasses. She is wearing a red t-shirt, short shorts and trainers. She attempts to speak in English and I attempt to speak in French. I don't really know what the hell is going on or who Valérie is or what I am doing with her. It transpires conversely that Valérie also doesn't seem to know who I am or why I am there or what I am doing here being accompanied by her. She takes me on the train to Saint-Denis. Later, close by the basilica, we order food and sit in La Breton, gently sweating in 32-degree heat. Cow nose in aspic and melon with Parma ham appears. I have just been introduced to Clément, the stratigrapher, who asks me directly and without preamble what I plan to do in Saint-Denis. I am by now familiar with this type of question from field researchers, administrators and pedagogues. I respond by gently explaining that I cannot speculate on output before research (I don't think I know why I am here but, ironically, this is exactly the method of preventive archaeology that Clément is engaged in – everything and anything is game). In my case, the gathering of data into information can only be done after the object of research has been fully turned inside out, like a pocket. But instead of being concerned with the contents of the pocket, I am more interested in the fluff that is left behind. Or, perhaps, more accurately, I take the pocket including the fluff attached as the structure of the pocket. Main course of roasted rabbit arrives.

Saint-Denis. July 7th, 2015.

Typology

Typology, as an archaeological method for organising material culture, is in the service of stratigraphy, their combined purpose being to make attributions of value through the development of a foundational chronology. These chronologies are the primary means for categorisation and are still fundamentally linear; an approximate, relative date is the first piece of meta-data, after location, attached to any primary piece of raw data or artefact. In this respect ceramic remains are exemplary, because of their environmental stability and material endurance. Ceramic data provides a particularly useful baseline for determining a strata's date and, by extension, confers the ability to date all other artefacts unearthed within the stratum. These potsherds determine the chronology of human events, gauged in ceramic fragments and translated into relational periodisations. A system of historical measurement develops as a result of the material (ceramic) autonomy of the group, and by means of relative dating. Relative dating establishes the sequential order of events without providing historical dates. Just as fossils aid in the ordering of geological strata, so potsherds determine the relative dates of historical strata, which can be done by making stylistic comparisons across the group. Typology approaches ceramic objects, often pots and jugs, as depositories for technical, functional and aesthetic languages; developmental stereotypes or stylistic storage units, inherited and modified across generations. Any solitary – or group of – potsherds, helps to establish the existence of a now absent vessel; firstly, by way of contributing to a jigsaw puzzle of form; and, secondly, leading to hypotheses on the artefact's functionality, its part within economic exchange, and its role in the ritual life of a community. The approach connects two distinct activities of description and narration, or modelling and telling; two different methods exercised on fragmented data to produce narratives of historical continuity and sequential chronology. In this way, ceramic pots and jugs produce typologies, which, in turn, produce their status and authority as exemplary witnesses. Witnesses that become embroiled in supplying visualisation techniques and heritage narratives with positive evidence of historical and chronological

time. These archaeological representations mediate temporality by performing a calendar; dates and periodisation emerging from the medium of vitrified mud.

But, it is also important to acknowledge that typology can be employed for a different purpose: to indicate the evolution of typical forms across the totality of material culture; cars, bicycles, trains and planes, in a manner more similar to biological classification than strictly stylistic assignations. In this extended practice of typology, which is built around the core notion of autonomous, objective types, artefacts are posed as Darwinian, evolutionary species. Relying on the autonomy of types, this extended typology accelerates some of the assumptions inherent to ceramic dating, in an attempt to establish material culture's equivalency to biological taxonomy. In the restricted case of ceramic pots and jugs, the typological assumption of autonomy appears relatively unproblematic – reflecting broad technical continuity and localised historical change – through the presentation of a stereotypical protocol of production which has, in addition, been through a process of material self-selection, beyond utility or employment, due to the durability of ceramic. Extending the typological scheme to include artefacts that are assemblies of various technical processes (such as a train) can only have partial success, as artefacts do not adhere to the evolutionary logics of taxonomy beyond a very broad overview. Unlike biological species where functional autonomy leads to adaptation and survival, cultural artefacts hybridise, suffer neglect, re-emerge, are re-discovered, re-employed or parasitically attach themselves to other artefacts. Such contingent existence appears as the rule, not the exception. Whilst the infertility of mules, zonkeys and ligers validates hierarchy and the discrete type as the logic of taxonomy, artefacts endlessly multiply and, fecund with this multiplicity, present an infinity of potential use-values ahead, beside, and behind them.

In the temperature-controlled room in the basement of the Unité Archéologique de Saint-Denis is a collection of medieval leather shoes, classified in accordance to the prevailing reference guide on archaeological shoe typologies. These 15th-century dehydrated shells look more like dried fruit peel or seed pods than shoes but, in the damp, humid storage room, I can still smell the meaty, earthy vapours emanating from the open cardboard boxes. It turns out that one of the archaeologists at the Unité has remade a number of these shoes, which are then worn by her family members during historical re-enactments of medieval life, in the Paris environs. This is testified in person by the leather specialist's teenage son who has popped into his mum's laboratory after school, and who has worn a range of custom leather 'turn shoes', which are made inside-out from a pattern, after first carefully establishing the type of shoe from the reference guide. She told me how a problem emerged when one particular worn animal hide did not fit anywhere within the shoe-typology guide. The leather pattern lacked comparative examples, the very bedrock through which typologies are made and understood in the first place. She concluded that the anomalous shoe pattern could have only been the result of repair; the shoe was an adaptation, leather had been cut from one boot as the leather from another wore away. And, in this way, she decided that the anomalous shoe pattern was exactly that, meriting a disqualification from the evolution of shoe types.

Saint-Denis. July 8th, 2015.

Anomalies, along with the luxurious, the customised, the acculturated and the excessive, are the potential usurpers and disruptors of typology and taxonomy. They make the often obscured and abstract nature of these systems glaringly apparent, through the ongoing potential for additional variables, which threaten to disintegrate the whole. Distinctions of reuse and redeployment also pose a fly in the ointment, because the evolution present here can no longer be steadily progressive; a form that has been adapted, assimilated, repaired or spoliated, proposes a lateral or retrograde typology, running counter to typology's unspoken, yet present, teleological presupposition. Whilst we know that shoes are not hats and hats are not pots, a pot could become a helmet or a toilet or a footbath. Reuse is anathema to typology because it runs against a progressive logic of developing formal types. The demotion of reuse, into a subsidiary or secondary event, is the result of the belief that utility logically prefaces re-utility and, as a consequence, monopolises formal adaptation, which is successively seen as an autonomously genetic operation.

The notion of re-use drives a wedge between typology's marriage of technical genesis and anthropological utility. The focus on use-value cannot be sustained alongside a focus on the functionality and teleology of technical objects; technical development is not accounted for by human use and, therefore, technical objects do not follow human norms. The anthropological approach – which would maintain the customised and hybridised artefact within its scope – runs against the grain of technical developments. Formal adaptation insists that technical objects conceal an intrinsic and subterranean, non-human genesis, unlike those artefacts superficially exhibiting utility, re-utility, infinite potential for customisation and hybridisation, and the production of their own desirability.

The typological method, in placing utility above and not below re-utility, reduces ornament and customisation to surface irrelevancy. This demotion of ornament, customisation or a multiplicitous utility, is logically and ironically a rejection of the anthropological narrative of artefacts. Either typology is an infinitely divergent expression of cultural customisations and formal re-utilisations, whose

importance lies in a system of intrinsically human sign-values, or it is an evolution of technical forms, which develop in accordance to its own logical genesis. Typology presents a contradictory proposition in which coeval types autonomously evolve and gradually realise technical forms, but this, surprisingly, does not seem to belie a general anthropological proposition of cultural use-values.

Spoil Heap

When I look around the corner of archaeology's typological and stratigraphic orders, all I see is the spoil heap: waste produced and discarded from data production. All processes produce debitage – shrapnel from both ends. The transdisciplinary process is no different; a cow nose in aspic consumed at a Breton restaurant around the corner from the Basilique Cathédrale de Saint-Denis; an email requesting access to spoil; a carparking ticket as the potentially significant residue of visiting an underground carpark; encountering an intern rather than an expert; the words upon words that constitute funding proposals; authorisation labels on lanyards or receipts for pastries that I wonder which, or whether, to archive or bin. These engagements and leftovers are equal in expressing this encounter with archaeology; should I value the trajectory of a fruitless email exchange about a rumoured spoil heap?

Longformacus. December 31st, 2016.

Fri, Nov 6, 2015 at 4:13 PM Cc: Anita Synnestvedt
< [redacted] >

Dear Christina,
We met back in March last year when you gave us a fantastic (and cold!) tour of the site at Gamlestaden […] I hope you will forgive me for attaching this very long email thread, but it seemed to be the easiest way to explain the communication that we have been attempting to have so far with the council authorities in Gothenburg, regarding the movement and organisation of waste material from archaeological sites and its potential reuse in subsequent commercial construction projects. The topic of the depot and the spoil generated from preventive archaeology has become of real interest to us, in light of other projects we have been looking into: St. Denis' 10km walk preaching a sermon whilst holding his decapitated head; the fallen spire of the basilica of Saint-Denis; the ancient landfill site of Monte Testaccio in Rome; a high-speed rail link excavation in Nîmes by INRAP […]

However, our pursuit of information regarding the waste and spoil generated by archaeological excavations is proving difficult. Your name was given to us by the council as the person to contact regarding this matter. However, as Anita Synnestvedt has confirmed, we are fully aware that this is in fact a matter for the authorities! We have repeatedly explained that we have no interest in getting our hands on the spoil itself, but rather we are interested in the overview; the paperwork, the machine that drives this function. Yet it seems to be a contentious (or simply inconvenient) request? If you could give us your take on the situation it would be incredibly helpful for us […]

D Email exchange Gothenberg, - feedback loop.

no one wants you on their train.

M+J ⇒ A M+A ⇒ M+J ⇒ A ⇒ M+J ⇒ A ⇒ M+J ⇒ A

M+J ⇒ JA ⇒
⇒ JA ⇒ M+J ⇒ JA

M+J ⇒ LJ
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⇒ A
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M+J ⇒ PI

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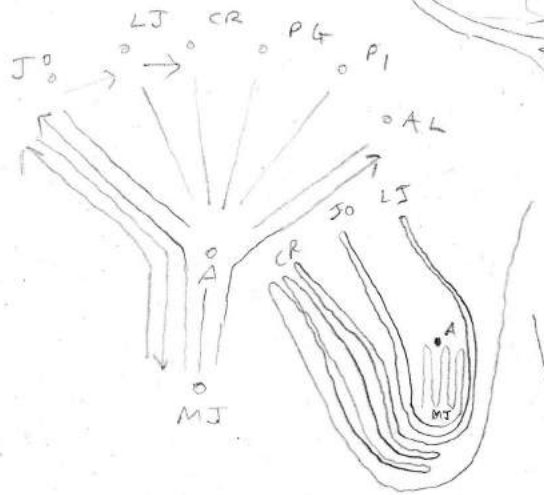

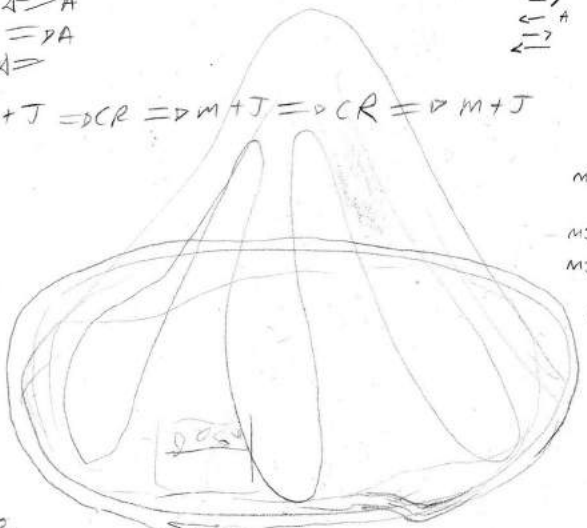

Heritage Law
National Heritage Board

The large-scale excavation in Gamlestaden, Gothenburg, of the medieval settlement Nya Lödöse, started in 2013 and is ongoing. The excavation proceeds at intervals (weather allowing) through the ex-industrial riverside suburb, contrapuntally rotating its jigsaw pieces in line with the timetable set by construction company Skanska, which is required by law to pay for the dig; the 'polluter pays principle'[13] is a hard-and-fast rule in Sweden, unlike other European countries. When I visited in March 2015, the second series of excavations were in progress. The first had already extracted the entire contents of a medieval graveyard, been filled in and was covered with grass and tarmac, in preparation for the new bus depot and a future crop of residential flats. At the time, there was a rumour circulating amongst the students and faculty members from Akademin Valand – who had been using the recent excavations as a pedagogic opportunity for participatory art projects – that one of the islands of a Gothenburg archipelago was apparently being used as a deposit for waste from the Gamlestaden dig. This was the production of archaeological spoil on an industrial scale and I wanted to trace the parallel movement of this spoil alongside the administrative and bureaucratic procedures that were guiding its passage via skips, heaps and holes.

Longformacus. December 31st, 2016.

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13 Following on from the Valletta Treaty, the 'polluter pays principle' (2001) is a legal form of financial compensation operating in most EU countries in which a developer or industrialist is responsible for potential damage to the environment, not the taxpayer or government. The principle enshrines the costs of waste into the costs of production. In Sweden, the location of Gamlestaden legally operates under the term Extended Producer Responsibility (originally introduced by Thomas Lindhqvist in 1990).

Wed, Sep 30, 2015 at 9:27 AM Cc: Anita Synnestvedt
< [redacted] >

Dear Jan Ottander,
[…] we visited Gothenburg in March and were very interested in the movement of material from the Gamlestaden site. We understood that the material was to be relocated both around the city and to an island of the archipelago […] Anita wrote recently that we would like to work with this material, but some clarification seems necessary.

What we are most interested in regarding this material is the processes of excavation, relocation and re-assignment for use in the city. Rather than a very direct, tangible interventionist approach, the way in which we wish to interact with this context would be to […] look at existing and relevant documents used by the authorities, for example. Though of course seeing the site would be interesting, even if only from the safety of a perimeter fence! It's not essential. Our purpose is not in wanting to use or even touch the material itself, more we wish to understand the process (both physical and bureaucratic) and the politics involved. It's the concreteness and transparency of the decision-making process that is of interest to us […] it would be great if you were able to respond to us and possibly send any documentary material you have on this site, both textual and visual. And perhaps you might have the time to be able to meet and discuss these processes when we next visit Gothenburg […]

After being put in contact with council representatives and county officials, who put me in touch with the archaeological contractors, who put me in touch with the property developers, who then put me in touch with the construction site contractors, I established – during long periods of silence prompting second and third email reminders, eventually leading me back to an unceremonious re-dumping at my initial point of contact on the site – that passing the buck on my question was likely due to ambiguities in Swedish law concerning the use of historical material, which, it turns out, is defined as any material pre-1850. Nobody wanted to enter the ambiguity or complexity, of which I was naively unaware, of the legal question at hand.[14]

It was also true that nobody had the time; these potential correspondents were employees attached to public bodies, or else self-employed specialists working for commercial businesses with only limited and largely self-electing responsibilities to communal questions. It was not surprising that nobody wanted my prosaic and inevitably amateur questions to arrest themselves in their company inbox. Of course, an information vacuum develops as a result of a switch in guardianship to industrial players and away from the curiosity and generosity of academic players, all of whom are completely aware of – and yet impotent in the face of – the dangers of private control over communal heritage.

Longformacus. January 2nd, 2016.

14 In contrast to French archaeological heritage laws, the Swedish system has been in place for an additional century or more.

TUE, SEP 15, 2015 at 6:12 PM CS → 175 ✓ (931) - - - - -

SUN, SEP 20, 2015 at 12:50 PM CS → A 24 ✓ (955)

WED, SEP 30, 2015 at 9:27 AM CS → JO 375 ✓
cc. A

FRI, OCT 23, 2015 at 12:58 AM CS → JD 97 ✓ (+ 375)
cc. A

FRI, OCT 23, 2015 at 2:29 PM CS 28 ✓ - - - - - - - LH
cc. A

FRI, OCT 23, 2015 at 2:33 PM → JO 20 ✓
cc. A

SAT, OCT 24, 2015 at 3:43 PM CS → LH 412 ✓
cc. A

SAT, OCT 24, 2015 at 5:05 PM CS ← A 70 *

SAT, OCT 24, 2015 at 5:14 PM → A 20

TUE, NOV 3, 2015 at 12:30 PM CS → LH 174 ✓ (+ 412)
cc. A

TUE, NOV 3, 2015 at 2:49 PM 42 ✓ - - - - - - - CR

WED, NOV 4, 2015 at 10:51 PM CS → LH 162 ✓
cc. A

WED, NOV 4, 2015 at 12:34 PM ← A 169

WED, NOV 4, 2015 at 5:07 PM → A 80

THU, NOV 5, 2015 at 8:14 PM CS ← 325 *

FRI, NOV 6, 2015 at 11:17 AM → 166

FRI, NOV 6, 2015 at 4:13 PM CS → CR 333 ✓
cc. A cc. A

FRI, NOV 6, 2015 at 5:47 PM CS ← 88 ✓
cc. A

FRI, NOV 6, 2015 at 10:48 PM → CR 25 ✓
cc. A

WED, NOV 11, 2015 at 7:14 AM CS 253 ✓ - - - - - - - PG PIAL
cc. A

THU, NOV 12, 2015 at 11:01 AM ← CR 52 ✓

THU, NOV 12, 2015 at 11:52 AM CS → 28 ✓

TUE, NOV 17, 2015 at 2:24 PM CS → PG 321 ✓
cc. A cc. CR

TUE, NOV 17, 2015 at 2:38 PM CS → PI 356 ✓
cc. A cc. CR

TUE, NOV 17, 2015 at 2:54 PM CS → AL 413 ✓
cc. A cc. CR

MON, JAN 11, 2015 at 4:55 PM CS → AL 97 ✓
cc. A cc. CR

MON, JAN 11, 2016 at 4:57 PM CS → PG 101 ✓
cc. A cc. CR

MON, JAN 11, 2016 at 4:58 PM CS → PI 101 ✓

TUE, JAN 12, 2016 at 06:14 AM CS ← 87 ✓

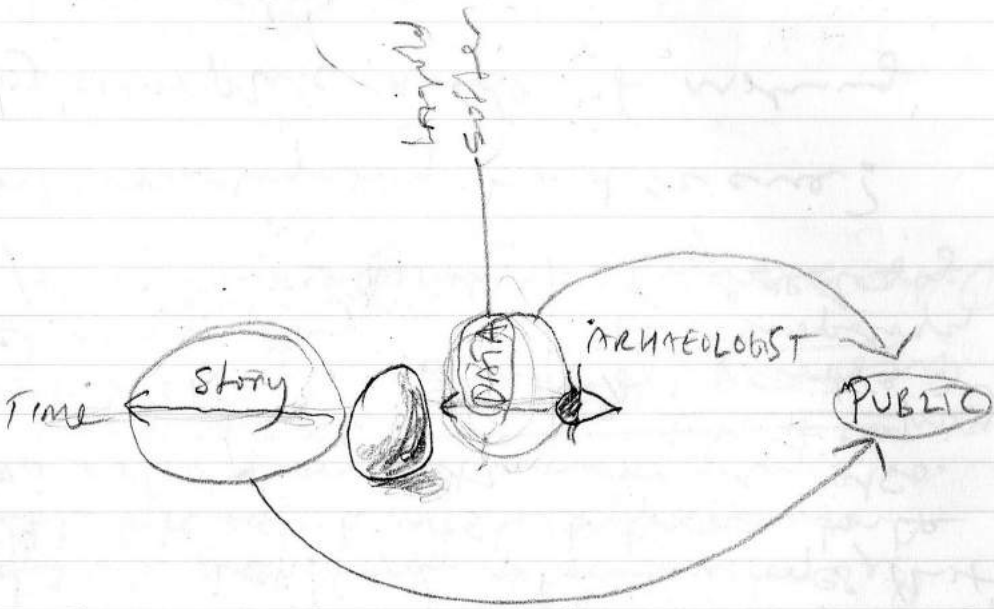
→ PG 333 ✓

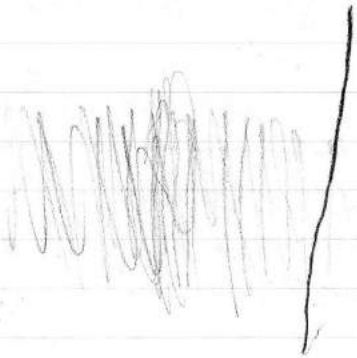
My experience in Gothenburg – the wild-spoil-heap chase and the circularity of email forwarding, which only returned me back to my initial point of departure – revealed the extent to which large-scale urban archaeological initiatives are fundamentally tied to property developers and, in turn, to contractors. Tracing a thread of the archaeological process led to potential participants having absolutely no interest in the collaborative attempt, yet, without their input, I realised, all I might be left with were familiar tropes and motifs of an art/archaeology paradigm. The network was full of players at the borders of archaeology – the privately employed conservator going from temporary contract to temporary contract; the builder chosen for his uniquely sensitive touch for a hydraulic excavator digger; the PhD student washing mud outside through a sieve all day in minus 2 degrees Celsius– yet, despite this, it became clear that it was this condition of peripherality that called many of the shots. Each player gave birth to another network of players, constellating, compromising and fracturing any possibility of a united whole. When this metastasised network came into contact with questions of legal uncertainty and responsibility, it revealed a catch-22 situation; in order to progress, the non-specialist must ask the specialist the specific question in order to receive the specific answer. It appeared that archaeology was only figurable by delimiting its sprawling network to interested parties who were, unsurprisingly, already invested in its narratives and frequently isolated within their specialisms, unless, that is, one took this frustrated issue as paradigmatic.

Longformacus. January 3rd, 2016.

My face is tired from all this smiling I have to do. I walk from lab to lab, herded by Anneli, who introduces me to an impressive roll call of science professionals. There is a constant underlying pressure to ask question after question, never knowing if it's the right one. And you do this with the knowledge that these people owe you nothing and that you only have one chance to get it right. Every time. Everyone I meet has that look that I must get when I'm cornered by a wine-soaked, slurring family friend in a panama hat at an anniversary party (not my own) and they want to talk about 'art'. I expect the stupid questions. So, it follows that these archaeologists must do so, too. And I do not disappoint. Because, I have started to realise, if you don't end up getting an answer to a stupid question, then you know you've hit on something.

Gothenburg. March 20th, 2015.





Datum / Date:

Preventive archaeology is itself a site that does not fit into the received tropes and motifs that mark the relation of art and archaeology. The fact that it is often also called 'rescue' archaeology, explicates the tension between a scientific discipline that 'saves' only by virtue of the 'liberation' afforded it by the development and construction industries. As in many complex relationships, the two must – as a matter of course – both resent yet need each other in order to exist and thrive. In my extended experience of the Gamlestaden encounter, formal and historical precedents of art and archaeology's own relationship (aesthetic and communicative) could not be found. Instead, a Gordian knot of politics, science, history, economics and bureaucracy framed the site of an emphatically unforthcoming encounter. This frame articulates the encounter as a seemingly shitty spoil heap of uncommunicative waste. However, I think I came to understand that this uncommunicative process is, in fact, a preclusion to a valuable spoil heap of archaeological practice; a mine of artefactual riches, if one concentrates hard enough on the peripheral.

London. January 11th, 2017.

Calendar

I'm back at the town hall to meet my nemesis. I look at my phone as it approaches 6 o'clock. At 3 minutes to the hour and in case my phone is inaccurate, I press 'record' on the mic. The phone counts 1, 2, 5, 8, 11, 15 minutes past the hour. No bell. I press 'stop' and now, total in my defeat, I walk over to Le Khedive for a litre of beer. On the flat screen TV above the bar, the news anchor is describing the situation at the nearby Porte de la Chapelle where French riot officers are in the process of removing 2,000 refugees and migrants from outside an overflowing aid centre, loading them into buses to deliver them to temporary shelters outside the capital. I take my glass outside and sit in front of the recently restored west façade of the basilica, which appears glaringly naked without its thick black crust of industrial-grade pollution. For months now, conservators have been working their way around the exterior surface of the basilica in an anti-clockwise motion to remove 2 centuries' worth of sulphur and carbon dioxide, which reacts with the limestone to produce cru noir, a deposit composed mainly of gypsum, which collects and hangs like mouldy lichen on the areas protected from rain run-off. These bulbous growths drip from the chins, noses and eyelids of drainpipe gargoyles, deforming the carved medieval ornamentations. This black crust is in the process of being removed, as evidenced by the clouds of fine dust emerging behind the cloaked scaffolding made by high-pressure sandblasters, which drift into every nook and cranny of the building, including the crawl space. I imagine that Ippolita, the lead conservator, will have this black dust re-emerging from her pores every night when she cleans her face; at her feet a bursting bin of blackened cotton wool pads.

20 minutes later, I look at the long arm of the clock on the façade as it points to 35 minutes past the hour, when suddenly the recorded bell rings out. I don't care anymore. I have my beer.

Saint-Denis. July 18th, 2016.

Typology is almost entirely based on a notion of periodisation through its application of annual, decennial, centennial or millennial date stamping. The extensive and complex evolution of date and time stamping has, today, in a world of predominantly digital transactions and distribution, come to be expressed purely in numbers rather than in combination with words and letters. The truncation of day, month, year into the data field dd/mm/yyyy is a familiar date format to anyone who fills out online forms. The necessity to attach a user identity usually presents this eight-character field alongside the express request for a date of birth, in order that subsequent visitor validation and their data security can be swiftly established. Although dd/mm/yyyy is composed mainly of letters, these are placeholders for the anticipated numbers that will complete the field. This placeholder also establishes the placement of its three subfields amidst localised conventions, thereby avoiding the confusion possible in reversing the order of days and months, as practised in American usage.

The Etruscan Brontoscopic Calendar was based on portents of thunder made by the child seer Tages.[15] The calendar was thought to assist priests or fulgurators in their interpretation of lightning and its effect on crops, health, war and peace. By contrast, the new metric of dd/mm/yyyy has become a symbolically denuded placeholder; the names of days, months and festivals – resulting from ancient and modern religious practices of nominating goddesses, gods and cosmologies – have been eliminated in the new, minimal data field. Such a system was proposed in a new, but short-lived, model of the Gregorian Calendar introduced after the French Revolution. The French Republican Calendar replaced all dates with a decimal system, erasing the prior association of the calendar with religion and royalty. Continuing this drive towards decimalisation, a completed dd/mm/yyyy data field, filled with commensurate numbers, removes all of the Gregorian calendar's linguistic analogisms in favour of a chronometric of

15 Jean MacIntosh Turfa, 'The Etruscan Brontoscopic Calendar and Modern Archaeological Discoveries,' *Etruscan Studies*, Vol. 10, Article 13 (2007): 163-73.

LAPIDARIUM. FOUNTAIN.

SOL SICVAD FAVAVS MAVRVS VAPVIR CERITAS SIMIA

ORFES

LVPVS

DIANA

II QVII

ICDIS

ACR

NEPTVN

CERCS

BACVS

PAN

VENVS

IVPITER

IVDO

HERCVLES

LEO

CERION

THETIS

PARIS

BELENA

DIVES

PAVPER

equal units. The day of the sun does not show itself as qualitatively any different from the day of thunder; the month of Janus and the month of purification are rendered inconspicuous. In place of nominative rituals and prophecies constructed from a mixture of terrestrial and celestial cycles combined with political authority, an enumerative capacity is substituted. Divided into three sub-fields: dd, mm, and yyyy – the first two are, in fact, limited to their Gregorian counterpart, retaining vestiges of pre-decimal lunar symbolism. By restricting the maximum input to 31 and 12 respectively, the day and month fields simulate rotational dials, cyclically returning to '1'. However, the third 'year' field has no maximum input and employs this decimal format in such a way that it indicates the infinite and uni-directional character of calendrical progression. After the year 9999, the sequence will need to expand its template by a factor of one: yyyyy, year 10000, and upwards.

Despite decimalisation, calendars are far from perfect systems, requiring ongoing modifications in order to match the astronomical year. For example, a leap year's intercalary day is included in the annual number of days. Even with this quadrennial addition to compensate for the earth's solar orbit, which exceeds 365 days, the Gregorian calendar still cannot account for fractions of days without these extra (or surplus) days needing to be skipped once every hundred years and resumed again once every four hundred years. The French Republican calendar named this four-year stretch the *franciade* 'in memory of the revolution which, after four years of toils led France to its Republican government.'[16]

16 'Décret de la Convention nationale portant sur la creation du calendier républicain', article 10, 1793, *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed April 16, 2018, https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Décret_de_la_Convention_nationale_portant_sur_la_création_du_calendrier_républicain.

After a lunch of minute steak plus frites around the corner from the INRAP headquarters in Paris, Kai, the self-labelled bureaucrat-an-archist, takes me up to his office on the 4th floor. The building is organised around a central cortile, where it would be possible to run around in circles endlessly, if I wanted. Despite the temptation, I am taken on a tour of INRAP offices and employees moving from office to office, clockwise around the negative space of the courtyard below in a staggered frame-by-frame version of my fantasy breakout. One of these offices is occupied by the Finance Director. Entering an almost bare room with the exception of a desk, a chair, a computer and 2 cupboards, not forgetting a poster of a Roman coin affixed to the wall, the Finance Director sits with his back to the window, facing a single, open A4 folder containing a sheet of white paper. It is the exact opposite of the busy, 'messy-order' of the Unité in Saint-Denis. We exchange smiles, pleasantries and ask each other a few undemanding questions. As I am about to turn to leave the office and re-join the circular track, I point at the A4 folder the Finance Director had gesticulated to as an example of just one of the administrative tasks the job entails – I ask him what is on the solitary sheet of paper. "Oh", he said reddening slightly and grinning, "I've just signed off my vacation leave."

Paris. February 29th, 2016.

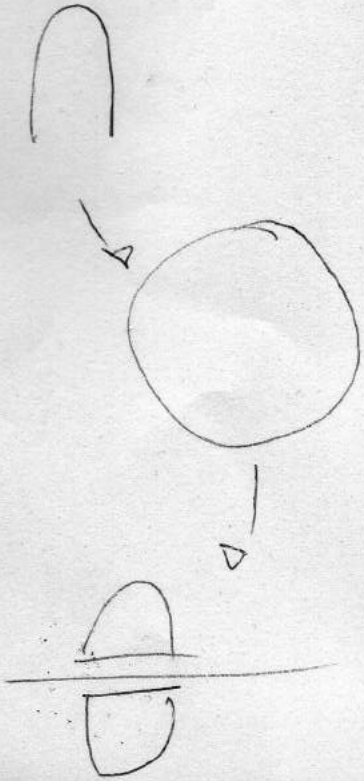
dd/\/mm/yyyy

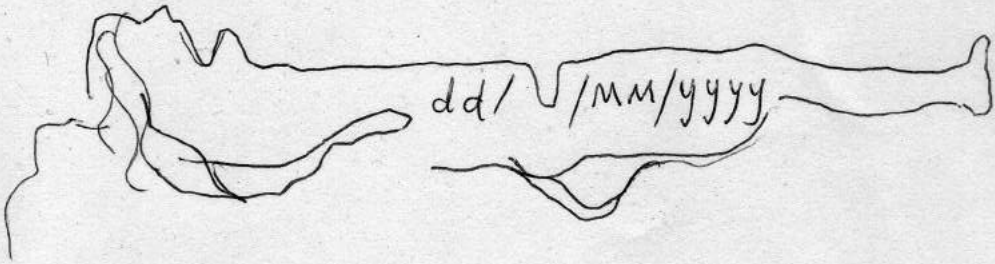
4,500

45°

4,000

3,000





The data field dd/mm/yyyy produces a metrics of time that neither indicates nor foretells narrative events. In this homogenisation of units of time, incident can be neither anticipated nor speculated, but is, in fact, complete, consistent and relative. Instead of the ongoing re-inscription of pagan and religious events, this homogenisation allows the statistical production of historical patterns to emerge. In contrast to a calendar of mythical inscriptions, which punctuates the indifference of minor time with human and nonhuman protagonists, the data template dd/mm/yyyy suppresses prescription in favour of emergent patterns, in accordance with a purely numerical structure. Patterns, here, begin with a series of equidistant and blank templates; a continuous, linear mean. The relative dating of typology (the minor time of potsherds) inserts time-frames into this homogenous sequence of blank templates; a time-frame followed by blanks, followed by another time-frame, followed by more or less blanks, and so on. These data fields stutter with infrequency across an input range of innumerable empty brackets – the system allowing for their expression – without aiming to produce a continuous sequence of filled-in fields, nor to completely materialise the system at hand. Instead, a material pattern overlays the infinity of the input-field, which presupposes the possibility of its completion.

If we put a 'U' into dd/mm/yyyy to make it an analogue of dummy, like so: dd/U/mm/yyyy, the 'U' slips in as if the date form was already primed to receive it, indicating its potential to become otherwise and to account for something besides days, months and years; an undated, sleeping, reclining body, cross-sectioned in elevation view, with a depressed umbilical entry. A dummy or somewhere close to a beginning – tombs are unsealed, and their contents are thrown into a mass grave; the monarchy.

Carpark

In the carapace-filled basement of the 'temporary' museum storage facility, 2 rows of Volvo cars – elaborate customisations from 1927 to sometime around the 1960s – perform, model by model, an engineering excerpt of their consumer development and customisation. The director Linnea says: "We have no space left, none at all… and now they want us to take 200 corpses!? But of course, we should, and we must – in the name of professional ethics, not to mention morally – people get very upset about this kind of thing you know… ah yes, technology is developing at such a pace everything we do now will be considered completely stupid in about 100 years…"

Gothenburg. March 23rd, 2015.

Buried metres below the ground in the southern corner of the Villa Borghese Gardens in Rome is Parking Saba, a double-level underground carpark accessible from Piazzale Brasile. Covered by scrub and grassland, the topsoil presents a barren contrast to the rest of the 18th-century Villa's picturesque and ornamental gardens and, consequently, this corner is rarely visited by the tourists that gather at the bus stop on the other side of the road. At night, however, this scrubland comes alive as a gay cruising scene and location for sex work. Parking Saba, along with its accompanying underground shopping precinct and walkway connectors to the Spanish Steps, was built between 1965 and 1972 by the Italian architect Luigi Moretti (1907 – 1973).

The first underground carparks were built in the early 1930s and became increasingly popular in Europe in the post-war era, where the partial destruction of some cities allowed for huge modernist development projects linking social housing, consumerism and leisure. Acknowledging the car as the growing primary mode of transport, underground carparks were submerged inside city centres to provide ready access to popular shopping precincts and to aid in promoting tourism. The underground character of these carparks scrambles stratigraphy's structural imagination, decreed in the law of superposition, of successive periodisation proceeding on top of previous periodisation, as a material and vertically additive act – the stratigrapher's job is to delaminate these material layers through a prescriptive chronological descent. Subterranean construction, such as Parking Saba, beneath the historic Villa Borghese, may initially counter the sense of timely succession because it creates a cavity – within rational succession and the stratigraphic imagination – where economic and engineering developments do not play by the rules of a material chronology that prioritises vertical addition and accretion.

It is interesting to recognise the similarity in structure and purpose of the carpark to the necropolis; often underground, both are municipal storage spaces, for stationery vehicles and the dead, respectively, maximising the efficient use of their space through the allotment of sequential units; both are generally concealed spaces

submerged at the periphery of everyday life, ritual and custom; and both store protective shields for the body's transportation, whether passing across town or symbolically across the Styx. A post-war hole is dug and used as a container for a set of objects that bear a remarkable resemblance to the ones they may well have replaced. Cars stored for long periods of time in underground carparks hold a striking similarity to the empty sarcophagi of a necropolis. Both the basement storage facility in Gothenburg that houses the city museum's collection of early 20th-century Volvo cars, and the line of stationary, cloaked vehicles, in the dim electric light of Parking Saba, recall the arrangement of empty coffins in the crypt of the Saint-Denis Basilica; in one, impressions of the owners' bodies are depressed into polyvinyl and leather seats; and, in the other, the body's liquefaction is stained into carved sandstone.

I am about to descend into the 6th underground carpark in 3 days. Detouring along the length of the Paris to Marseilles route, I remind myself that I had made a concerted decision to visit these underground sites excavated by INRAP. Poised to descend a sharp ramp and thinking absent-mindedly about how it reminds me of the downward entry into the catacombs in Saint-Denis, when suddenly a height-restriction barrier comes into view – 'HAUTEUR LIMITEE 180 CM' – I break. Even without the bicycle strapped to the back, the vehicle's height exceeds 180 cm. Shit. It had taken me 2 agonising hours of looping and re-looping the city centre to navigate Marseilles' road infrastructure to eventually get here and now I wouldn't even be able to park the car so that I could go to the toilet. I push into reverse gear. The car dramatically announces the steep backwards ascent with clutch oil burning, squealing and smoking, as I reverse up the concrete ramp.

Marseilles. July 29th, 2016.

Parking Saba's two levels are stacked directly on top of one another. Each level adheres to an orthogonal grid and their ceilings consist almost entirely of shallow eight-metre diameter domes. Consistent with the design preferences of the modernist period in which the carpark was built, pre-cast and pre-stressed concrete is the primary building material, bearing the imprint of the wooden planks that originally formed the moulds for the carpark's concrete volumes and negative spaces. The negative space of the domes in Moretti's carpark were probably partly a logical response to reducing the weight whilst maintaining the physical strength of the structure, satisfying both an engineering and design brief. But this logic of form also produces another unusual effect, which is entirely unexpected when solely experienced through visual documentation. The experience of physically encountering this architectural vault is a transformative, multisensory one. It is difficult to establish whether it was through Moretti's foresight, or as a welcome but unexpected outcome of the design, but each dome is able to produce a reverberating echo, which resonates richly with an amplification of any sound that occurs below the domes' encircled volume.

Having just deposited their vehicles, day trippers and commercial workers walking through the space cannot resist – upon hearing the sound of their own footfall or dropped car keys amplify into a recursive cacophony – yelping, whistling, finger-clicking, howling and humming, feeding back into the polyrhythmic soundscape above their heads. The noises are spontaneous; phatic and arbitrary self-greetings without pressure to communicate meaning. These performers are also frequently isolated in their performance – only those who step into the circumference of the dome can hear the acoustic trick. One step outside immediately cancels the resonance, and the solitary performer is contained inside an enormous concrete amplifier and earphone.

These delayed and amplified events are experienced as a media-architectural pleasure of hearing vocal sounds thrown outside the mouth, which ricochet against concrete and are delivered, transformed, to the ear. Momentarily, each of these performers become unintentionally engaged as an auto-audio archaeologist, where, as

auditors, they provide testament to the recovery of their expelled vocals, in a delayed and circuitous present composed of transmitted and received signals. The 'now' of the performer is a present whose ground of experience is a montage between vocal chords activated by lungs and tongues; cast concrete audio-reflections and vibrations of the dim fluorescent-lit air, meet with the tympanic membrane and the inner ears' spiral cochleae. The magnification through reverberation produces a minor bio-media event and a transmission channel, rebounding between biological and architectural organs.

I got on the bike again today and cycled up to where Viale del Galoppatoio meets Viale San Paolo del Brasile on the outskirts of the Borghese Gardens. Cycling down Via Po, I see the sign for the AGIP petrol station – a-legged wolf in profile; a Capitoline sprinter high on petrol. After locking my bike to the Borghese's railings, I descend by escalator into the underground carpark. I bring the basilica's mushroom-shaped plug with me in preparation. Its shape is, coincidentally, an almost exact double-mirror of the internal facets of Luigi Moretti's underground carpark; the 3-metre-high tapered columns supporting each level rise from the ground assuming a positive cast of the stem of the plug without its head, whilst the gridded, shallow, anamorphic domes inset into the ceiling at each level, look like they have been made by a gigantic hand pressing a gigantic mushroom-plug upwards into the concrete at regular intervals. In this space, next to golden-monogrammed golf buggies, I test the plug for its fit into a series of concrete reinforced holes made by historic scaffolding, the same size as those in the basilica's crawl space. It fits like a dummy hand into a display glove. Like a motor-learnt procedure, I begin to repeat the same physical movements and camera choreography as I did in the attic of the basilica a month earlier, re-performing those very same actions, now seamlessly, unthinkingly. An unscripted dance stored without reflection, within muscles, nerves and bones. An extension of the camera's mechanics and optics. I no longer see the tourists, conservators, security guards or worshippers as I did through the warm entry holes into the basilica's interior. Instead, this time, a series of black discs – the sodium-lit holes of the underground carpark. In tight sequence, repeating the same actions as before; blind and dictated by the camera – I walk; wait; grasp; position; pull; lean; reverse grasp; bend; wait; rotate clockwise; wait; forward shift; wait; hold; wait; reverse rotate clockwise; wait; forward shift; wait; rotate clockwise; grasp; reverse

bend; reverse pull; reverse lean; reverse grasp; walk; walk…

Rome. August 11th, 2016.

WALK
WAIT
PAUSE
READY
LEAN
BEND →
ROTATE CLOCKWISE (zoom)
FORWARD ~~SHIFT~~
ROTATE ANTI CLOCKWISE (focus)
BACKWARD ~~SHIFT~~
ROTATE ANTI CLOCKWISE (zoom)
FORWARD ~~SHIFT~~
ROTATE CLOCKWISE (focus)
FREEZE

Zoom
Focus
Zoom
Focus

Zoom
then
focus ↓

ROTATE ANTICLO
FOCUS ↑
→
ZOOM
FOCUS

~~TORSO~~	HAND	FEET	MISC.
WALK			
WAIT			
~~PAUSE~~			
~~READY~~			
LEAN			
BEND →	ROTATE CLOCKWISE FORWARD SHIFT ROTATE ANTI-CLOCKWISE		
HOLD	BACKWARD SHIFT ROTATE ANTI-CLOCKWISE FORWARD SHIFT ROTATE CLOCKWISE		
~~HOLD~~			
~~PAUSE~~ →	ABOVE		
STRAIGHTEN			
WALK			

Between Moretti's storage depot for the cloth-covered Ferraris and the basilica's attic space, an infrathin crawl space emerges. Duchamp's infrathin difference between two events; such as the difference between two mass-produced objects cast from the same mould or separating the smell of cigarette smoke from the smell of the mouth that exhales it[17] is also perhaps extendable to the difference between two choreographic repetitions; repetitions which take place across two geographically distant and empirically antithetical sites. Even with the acknowledgment that both the carpark and the attic share a morphological and formal detail of design through a mushroom-type volume, it is, in fact, the learnt choreography which translates and relocates their spatial, temporal difference; a choreography that osmotically absorbs and then exudes the encounter of body-to-site and site-to-body – two habituated performances where muscle memory and motor response provide the transit for a crawl space to emerge: walking, waiting, grasping, positioning, pulling, leaning, reverse grasping, bending. The same sequence performed in a basilica's attic, and then in a carpark underneath the remains of a Roman villa.

17 Duchamp's reflexively elusive term infrathin is an actual but, in itself, imperceptible difference between two nearly identical things, surfaces, activities or processes. Marcel Duchamp, *Notes*, trans. Paul Matisse (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983): note 18 and note 11.

Dustbin

I sit in a public garden in front of the Roman amphitheatre in Nîmes, watching the sun dip behind stacked arches. Earlier in the day, Jean-Yves had said, "the tools shape the method". He said these words as I looked towards the incline of a huge excavation overlooked by a mountainous landfill site, where birds circled and dive-bombed behind articulated dump trucks shunting and levelling layers of rubbish. Beneath the landfill, archaeologists in full protective high-vis suits with respirators worked, using vehicles and machinery not dissimilar to those on the rotting escarpment above them.

Nîmes. April 3rd, 2016.

Archaeological warehouses burst at their seams with bulky physical data in storage facilities like a film set's prop store, at the same time as digital archival protocols develop whilst struggling to respond to the almost incongruous question of their own simultaneously degrading media artefactual status. Racing against technological time and its objects? Even oyster shells submitted to oxygen isotope analysis contribute to a gridded and inventoried space, which is held together by a practically conflicted notion of 'storage'. Producing historical time? If archaeology and its institutes are involved as collaborators who coalesce to produce historical time on an increasingly industrial and technological scale, then, what are the ramifications of desiring a complete picture of the past? The grid arranging the data enlarges; the mesh becomes finer and more systematic; the storage warehouse grows larger. Filling in the blanks? Perhaps these are not historical blanks of time but are, in fact, a resistance to minor technical oblivions that, like cryonics, may find alternative methods of resuscitation in a technologic future. And this, as techno-speculative ballast against the informational redundancy of archaeological depositories. Big data is stored in order to be accessible to future technological advances, which will, in turn, continue the relevancy of the non-living to life.

In this way, archaeology appears voraciously interdisciplinary – any complete picture of historical data is challenged by an appetite to incorporate external disciplinary methods: scientific methods, technical methods (geological, biological, chemical) and cultural methods (art), enlisting the latter to produce relevant narratives from a sprawling dataset, but ultimately struggling to connect their biases. Caught within this is a compendium of the slight: bureaucratic and communicative chambers of the exchange between art and archaeology; superfluities existing on the peripheries of that encounter, which find analogy with its hagiographic narratives; re-experiencing its backstage architecture through the peripatetic translation of muscle-memory; and in making waste a position from which to reflexively produce method. This encounter does not come from taking a stance in existing fields but arrives as their surplus. In this surplus, both encountered and extended – a heap of cow nose; a digital waste bin

of email messages; a bloodied sword – pre-existent imaginaries may loosen, and any player might have an opportunity to re-configure their indigenous understandings.

Jean-Yves arrives at the INRAP Méditerranée offices in Nîmes in a whirlwind of hair, tight jeans and éclairs. Holding an éclair sideways in front of Carolyn's computer monitor, he gesticulates enthusiastically whilst describing the arduous task of 2 years of excavating and clearing land for the infrastructural development of the high-speed rail link connecting Nîmes to Montpellier, following the route of the ancient Roman road, Via Domitia. As the only route connecting Southern Spain to Northern Europe and Scandinavia, a general increase in commuters and goods, both coming and going, had eventually strangulated the route with excess traffic congestion. Going deeper into the political intricacies – the path beaten by the rail link can displace people who have lived there for 50-plus years, but not environmentally-protected plants – some cream remains at the corner of his mouth from his delivery of the éclair.[18] *Nîmes. April 5th, 2016.*

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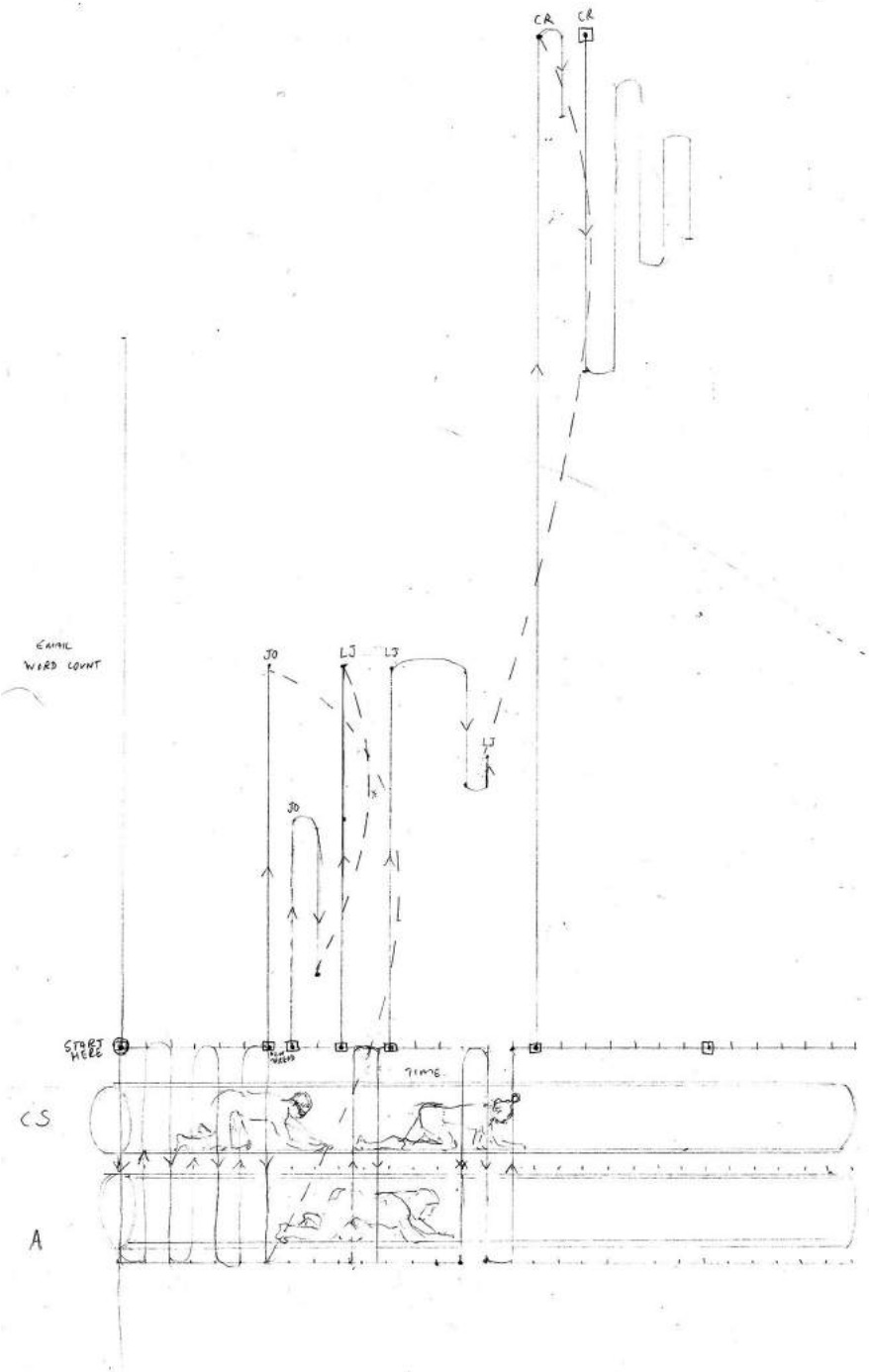
18 In a report released by the construction company Bouygues, the presence of a rare hybrid plant called Lythrum thesioides affected major changes to the construction works: 'Particular care is being given to the Lythrum thesioides during the bypass project. This flowering plant was first discovered during the ecological inventory procedures carried out by RFF in July 2010 [Réseau Ferré de France were the owners and maintainers of the French national railway network from 1997–2014]. It is only the second known occurrence of the plant in the world. Lythrum thesioides is therefore extremely rare and protected by both French law and the Bern Convention. Given the importance of this discovery, RFF has been conferring with government departments and environmental protection agencies over the best technical solutions to prevent the Nîmes and Montpellier bypass from impacting negatively on the plant's natural habitat.' See Bouygues Construction, (2012). Accessed January 19, 2017, https://www.bouygues-construction.com/sites/default/files/dp_signature_cnm_28.06.12_eng.pdf.

DELIVERY

On naked knees in Le Fabrique, I use a small trowel to cut into the baked earth. It is only 10 o'clock and the temperature has reached 30 degrees Celsius. I am already regretting the choice to wear shorts to the excavation – kneeling, squatting or sideways-leaning-knees-tucked-around-body are the limited range of positions one must assume to cut, sort and carefully sieve your assigned quadrangle of soil, separating bigger rocks from smaller rocks, and the odd animal vertebrae. Archaeology students volunteer every summer to come and work for short periods on the excavation for hands-on experience. My knees are red and raw in the space of about 40 minutes. Field archaeologists are rumoured to have knee joints with a lifespan measuring half of that of their non-field counterparts; the action of the body's ligaments and tendons moving bone and cartilage against each other in slow erosion, a lifetime partnership of dissolution. Buckets of discarded soil are dumped into a wheelbarrow to be transported along duckboards to a spoil heap at the back of Le Fabrique. The temperature is nudging 33 degrees when, in the distance, the familiar recorded tune of the town-hall bell plays out above our heads. This time I don't even have the sound recorder with me. 10 minutes later, we are all told to go home. The mercury has hit 34.

Saint-Denis. July 21st, 2016.



NEW EMAIL THREAD
END EMAIL THREAD
CS
A
ANITA

Modes of Communication

The art/archaeology axis has a history marked by certain modes of looking and reception; distributions of cognition and communication mark their relation to produce a cross-disciplinary history. The cross-disciplinary field we find ourselves in today is immediately predisposed to having contrary implications for the canonical and chronological: intervention, appropriation, amalgamation and subversion are all cross-disciplinary tactics that promote new perspectival shifts and historical re-assessments; together they pose the insistent and oppositional question of, indeed, how not to reproduce the familiar tropes and modes of looking, form and production, which characterise an historical, and frequently stagnantly romantic, relation between art and archaeology. The resuscitation of historical relationships, always latent and volatile to conservative re-activation, produces a type of cross-disciplinary nostalgia. The most identifiable expression of art-archaeological specific nostalgia is in the fetishistic cultural object: an amalgamation of art's formal identification with the commodity and archaeology's concern with material culture. In short, the primacy of things – relics – places artefacts above the processes that give rise to them; expressive tropes which archaeology, since its separation from the antiquarian, has rejected with the innovation of scientific approaches in processual archaeology. Nonetheless, the archaeological field often accepts the reminder of simpler times in the artistic expression of archaeological objects when the issue does not directly encroach onto its own turf.

Reductively developing the concept of historical phases in art and archaeology's collaboration into a list of familiar tropes, risks proposing genealogical lineages at exactly that point where resistance to any heritage narrative is most desirable. Although such a reduction may provide a helpful streamlining of previous involvements into an accessible data gateway, there is also the risk that, through reiterating what has come to be a series of conventional modes of relation, challenges to these established tropes and narrative contingencies encountered in the present are either displaced or ignored.

The following is an incomplete list drawing attention to a broad

range of some of these potential 'conventional modes', which present themselves, in some cases, as inevitable primary-response mechanisms. This is, perhaps, in part due to the self-validatory nature of any given discipline, where existing methodologies are offered up for adoption to the cross-disciplinarian as she departs from the safety of a discrete field – whether they be aesthetic, communicative, political or epistemic – as convenient guides or channels to occupy.

The first is the (1) political-aesthetics of temporal-romanticism; an admittedly catch-all (but not, perhaps, catchy) term, although one which, nevertheless, extends in many directions. At its extremity, this approach operates as a pseudo-cosmology, in which the archaeological past is coterminous with the future. This is particularly evident in popular entertainment's frequent science-fiction narratives of an archaeological time that exists as simultaneous past and future, a trope which often functions as a current metaphor for contemporary political dissent.[19] Rendering chronology redundant through the notion of cyclical return, this mode extends to the entropic as it appears in the work of artist Robert Smithson, whose idiomatic phrase 'ruins in reverse' has often been quoted in order to explicate entropy as a process of construction as well as deterioration.[20] For Smithson, the ruin only becomes termed as such depending on the viewpoint from which it is perceived (or more pointedly for aspects revealing use-values). Despite the epochal horizon that Smithson's views oc-

19 Most popularly, the final scene of 1968's *Planet of the Apes* depicts the crash-landed astronaut of the future, Taylor, discovering a beached Statue of Liberty, and cursing the political/economic perpetrators of its fate; in the same year, the opening scene to *2001: A Space Odyssey* depicts apes encountering a cuboid monolith. Franklin J. Schaffner, *Planet of the Apes* (Twentieth Century Fox, 1968); Stanley Kubrick, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1968).

20 Robert Smithson, 'A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic', *Robert Smithson: Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996): 72.

cupied at the time, the 'political-aesthetics of temporal-romanticism' is an approach that seeks political agency, yet, in being intrinsically non-empirical (in its determination to establish half of its proposal as a speculative future), results in an unavoidably hallucinatory and, therefore, ultimately romantic idiom.[21]

The second 'conventional mode' is equally, if not more, romanticist; (2) nostalgist mimicries of surface/layer processes, the most common tropes of which can be found in the consideration of the surface of painting as a support for excavatory processes or the valorisation of 'the fragment', alluding to an indexical passing of time. This also finds resonance and contemporary relevancy with some strands of media archaeology, where an exploration into technological vestiges often results in an escape into mediatic patination, an amplification of the cognitive gap between noise and communication, and the potential further enquiry into the efficacy of visualisation techniques.[22] This imitative slant – or the analogies between processes – can, furthermore, be extended to multiple (3) metaphors of the spade and the dig, which have been recently utilised by artists and curators alike as a broad umbrella under which to fund large-scale projects, public artworks and exhibitions.[23]

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21 'The future is an empirical field that does not exist' (Holtorf and Högberg, 2015) – we know that the future will unavoidably arrive, but not what that future will be. Cornelius Holtorf and Anders Högberg, 'Contemporary Heritage and the Future,' *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. by Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015): 509.

22 How the patina of the media might enter the message is approached interestingly by Håkan Karlsson. Håkan Karlsson, 'Why Is There Material Culture Rather than Nothing? Heideggerian Thoughts and Archaeology,' *Global Archaeological Theory*, (NY: Springer, 2005): 29–42. Also, more generally approached through the aestheticisations of glitch culture.

23 See Dieter Roelstraete's 2009 e-flux article 'The Way of the Shovel: On the Archaeological Imaginary in Art', which provided the basis for his 2013

The fourth 'mode' has art practices adopt taxonomical displays of material culture as a method of presentation in order to challenge dominant cultural heritage narratives, where a (4) reclassifying the cultural and/or social status of objects is employed to attain a cultural equivalency between the art work and the social artefact. This approach, however, in blurring the political and historical categories of art and social artefact, often neglects (in its conflation of the cultural with the social) to take into account the operational chains that may have been instrumental in producing this differentiation to begin with. In leaning upon the efficacy of the value distinction between artefact and artwork, even if in order to subvert it, the approach posits the reality of the distinction yet without the untangling of its divisions. In effect, a rhetorical power is borrowed and thereby maintained through the attitude it wants, in actuality, to dissolve. In this 'mode' we may applaud a challenge to dominant hierarchies but, in continuing to fix its gaze upon what it considers to be sites of cultural relevancy, it might inadvertently obscure and erase its own social production, thereby perpetuating the very possibility of value and status distinctions. If we reverse this 'mode' – for example, instances where archaeology uses art as a mirror to look at its own reflection – it is most clearly exhibited in (5) the re-imagination of archaeological fieldwork as land art or performance art.[24]

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book of the same name. Also, an exhibition at Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Nov 9, 2013 – March 9, 2014. Dieter Roelstraete, 'The Way of the Shovel: On the Archaeological Imaginary in Art,' *e-flux* (2009). Accessed April 2, 2017, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/04/68582/the-way-of-the-shovel-on-the-archeological-imaginary-in-art/.

24 Michael Shanks is one of many who have drawn parallels between Archaeology and Land Art, however, Shanks uniquely provocates to compare the archaeological process to a striptease. It could be speculated that Shanks might also retrospectively consider Mark Dion's *Tate Thames Dig* (Tate Modern, 1999) as a drag striptease performance of processual archaeology. Michael Shanks, *Experiencing the Past: On the Character of*

The penultimate 'mode' in this list is situated in the arena of identity politics; where archaeology and art become (6) co-contributors to a narrative of origins. That is, they become active producers in a performance of heritage and frequently in the construction of national identity narratives.[25] To approach this from a critical standpoint: the notion of the past as something that is engineered to speak to a stratum of territorially-affiliated people, is a big obstacle when it comes to communicating a heritage that has the potential to be shared, accessed and valued generally.

Finally, and more generally, a strategic mode that employs any of the tactics above (7), where the employment of art as a communicative tool, deployed under the guise of community outreach/knowledge transfer, seeking a wider public that does not find archaeology an engaging enough locutor without more developed rhetorical or sensual tactics.

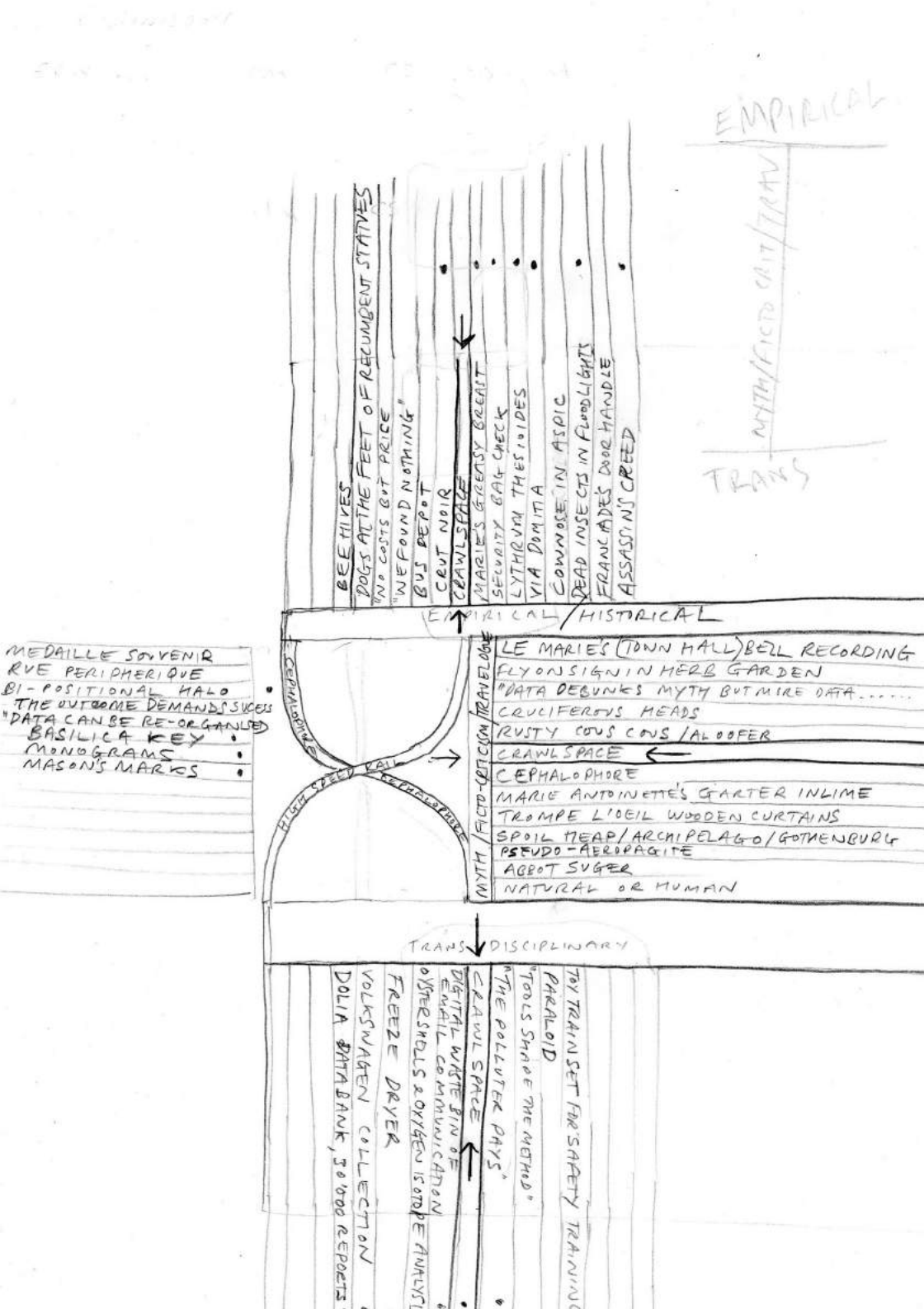
If we view the above as a set of potential 'modes of relation' or channels, which historically and bureaucratically – but also politically, epistemically and/or aesthetically – precede today's cross-disciplinary encounter between art and archaeology, this raises the question of developing the means to side-step these primary response mechanisms.

Archaeology (London: Routledge, 1991): 141-43 and 68-69.

25 See Christopher Smith's discussion of Kitty Hauser's study of O.G.S. Crawford. Here, Smith discusses both Hauser's study of the birth of aerial photography in the military-industrial complex, its subsequent adoption by archaeology and the integration of complex national-identity narratives in the work of John Piper, Paul Nash and Graham Sutherland, in the period preceding and after the Second World War. Generally, Smith's article outlines many of the historic relationships found between art and archaeology over the last 150 years (Smith 2016, Hauser 2007). Christopher Smith, 'Beyond Metaphor: Archaeology as a Social and Artistic Practice,' *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, Vol. 15 (2–3) (2016): 270–85. Kitty Hauser, *Shadow Sites Photography, Archaeology, and the British Landscape 1927-1955*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

An urgency arises: that, in situations where art is asked to plug a gap in a predetermination of its role, the real challenge becomes, in fact, how to articulate an encounter as it is found, warts and all. And an encounter that is vulnerable to, above-all, contingency. In this situation, the transdisciplinary encounter itself becomes something that can be addressable and reproducible as an outcome: a net that can be thrown out both spatially and temporally, collecting the remainders of a metastasised milieu. For example, the sprawling deferral of email communications experienced in Gothenburg during a search for the transit of spoil.

In this way, the repetition and continuation of the cross-disciplinary past becomes a foil in which neither art nor archaeology risk becoming marked by each other in contemporary encounters. Instead of continuity, stratigraphic topography would be characterisable in a cut, line or division; it differentiates rather than accumulates. The task, when proposed stratigraphically, is to produce something across this division; non-identifiable as a collaboration between art and archaeology, but that which is, nonetheless, a result of their encounter.


EMPIRICAL
MYTH/FICTO-CRITICISM/TRANS
TRANS
BEE HIVES
DOGS AT THE FEET OF RECUMBENT STATUES
"NO COSTS BUT PRICE"
"WE FOUND NOTHING"
BUS DEPOT
CRUT NOIR
CRAWLSPACE
MARIE'S GREASY BREAST
SECURITY BAG CHECK
LYTHRVM THESIOIDES
YIA DOMITA
CONNOISSEUR IN ASPIC
DEAD INSECTS IN FLOODLIGHTS
FRANCIADES DOOR HANDLE
ASSASSIN'S CREED
EMPIRICAL/HISTORICAL
LE MARIE'S (TOWN HALL) BELL RECORDING
FLY ON SIGN IN HERR GARDEN
"DATA DEBUNKS MYTH BUT MIRE DATA....."
CRUCIFEROUS HEADS
RUSTY COUS COUS/ALOOFER
CRAWLSPACE
CEPHALOPHORE
MARIE ANTOINETTE'S GARTER IN LIME
TROMPE L'OEIL WOODEN CURTAINS
SPOIL HEAP/ARCHIPELAGO/GOTHENBURG
PSEUDO-AEROPAGITE
ABBOT SUGER
NATURAL OR HUMAN
MYTH/FICTO-CRITICISM/TRAVELOGUE
CEPHALOPHORE
HIGH SPEED RAIL
CEPHALOPHORE
MEDAILLE SOUVENIR
RVE PERIPHERIQVE
BI-POSITIONAL HALO
THE OUTCOME DEMANDS SUCCESS
"DATA CAN BE RE-ORGANISED"
BASILICA KEY
MONOGRAMS
MASON'S MARKS
TRANS DISCIPLINARY
TOY TRAINSET FOR SAFETY TRAINING
PARALOID
"TOOLS SHAPE THE METHOD"
"THE POLLUTER PAYS"
CRAWL SPACE
DIGITAL WASTE BIN OF EMAIL COMMUNICATION
OYSTERSHELLS & OXYGEN ISOTOPE ANALYSIS
FREEZE DRYER
VOLKSWAGEN COLLECTION
DOLIA DATA BANK, 30'000 REPORTS

Postal Worker

> 'It was possible to complete the training of only 3 animals in the premotor group. Rat 12 became ill some months after completing the conditional motor task, and Rat 4 became ill during later training on the delayed-alternation task. It could be seen from the histological sections that one had developed a pituitary adenoma and the other a glioma in one hemisphere […] The rats with premotor lesions were very slow to relearn the visual conditional motor task, but they had no trouble with the spatial delayed-alternation task. One possibility must be that the premotor lesions caused a simple motor impairment. However, all these rats succeeded in pulling and pushing the door, and only 1 animal (Rat 12) changed its method of opening the door after surgery.'[26]

Working our way from the top of the cephalophore's severed neck and voice box, across to his arms carrying his decapitated head, and then down to the steady gait of his feet, St. Denis could be said to be the prototypical postal worker – a talisman for lost signals; letters without receivers but many unknown readers. With the mouth no longer connected to the foot, the spoken words he utters have been separated from their mode of delivery; and so, the decapitated head – a pathetic and unwilling trophy – occupies a threshold of integrated communication.

In public demonstration or act of protest, St. Denis is a town crier publicising his own death, insisting on his continuous semiotic agency and mobility on the condition of their dissonance. Words continue to flow fleshily from the mouth, whilst simultaneously being redirected and appropriated into written forms of narrative and myth, which coagulate and solidify over time, eventually returning as the basilica's exemplary audio guide available in nine worldwide languages (including Mandarin and Japanese) in the first quarter of

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26 R. E. Passingham, C. Myers, N. Rawlins, V. Lightfoot, and S. Fearn. 'Premotor cortex in the rat,' *Behavioral Neuroscience*, Vol. 102(1), (1988): 103.

the 21st century. It wouldn't be surprising to hear this postal worker's first words echoing the technical address of the literary letter writer to their anonymous 'Dear Reader'. When Franz Kafka wrote to Milena Jesenská in March 1922, 'the ghosts won't starve, but we will perish', he prophesises the perpetual cannibalism that will befall the pair's letter writing, a nourishment instigated between letters and their infinite interceptions long after their writers have expired.[27] Likewise, Denis is a nascent media event; an in-uteri writer who initiates a sequence of mediated speech acts.

If St. Denis is the prototypical postal worker, then his sermon is the letter. An envelope is a container for a letter, sealing and concealing the contents of the message from spilling its guts to unsolicited eyes. The act of opening the envelope signals a moment of singular privacy becoming common currency, even if the contents are only shared between two people. Secrets are like this – a message arrested in the moments before delivery. However, St. Denis' message is more akin to a postcard sent in raw, peeled form. Lacking a front or back, yet proceeding onwards, the message shares its contents with every potential postal worker, courier and neighbour along its journey. St. Denis' postcard is, therefore, a public announcement of a public act of capital punishment – the revenge call of the town crier whose voice will be carried on, in public perpetuity.

Where a voice box, a larynx, has been cut through, the sermonising mouth becomes separated from its mode of transportation. And so, St. Denis' head, separated from his body – cleanly or otherwise – becomes a motif for mediation; a dislocation occurring between a message and its delivery media. Broadcast over the Seine's rustling water, only the sound of the river competes with Denis' words. There is no direct audience feedback, no immediate reverberations (as experienced in the concrete bunker of Parking Saba), only a silence that is mitigated by the speech's subsequent written reverberations. Just as,

27 Letter from the end of March 1922. Franz Kafka, *Letters to Milena*, ed, Willy Haas, trans. Tania Stern and James Stern. (London: Vintage, 1999): 229.

at one time, the saint's words were wrongly located in the body of another's text (misattributed to Dionysus the Aeropagite, an Athenian judge of the 1st century and, in actuality, predating St. Denis), only then for this text to become re-attributed (to a 5th- and 6th-century Christian theologian referred to as Pseudo-Dionysus the Aeropagite), this chain of mistaken scriptural authority and the false attribution of a verbal message produces a sequence of interceptions. Here, we have a cross-generational scriptural reworking of the recursive cacophony encountered in Parking Saba. This scriptural reverberation originates in an unrecorded voice that multiplies in the medieval manuscript culture of copying onto vellum, and then ricochets, as attribution, dis-attribution and adoption, to contribute to a theological and bibliographic dispute. The words of the sermoniser's tongue are catapulted from their local isolation into an epigraphic and authorial panorama; local, in the solitariness of the spoken word against an indifferent scenery – the Seine's tide, fields, stone walls and breeze as audience; panoramic, through the copyist's reproductive work; and, relatedly, the repeated dispute over the written word's authorship.

St. Denis' message of the continuity of the animate, despite lethal fatality, is expressed by the temporary rearrangement of his dismembered body. Carrying his head in front of him as he walks along the Seine, this postal worker holds a pre-recorded postcard; one that just so happens to look exactly like his own decapitated head. No longer in any necessary or conventional order: the brain, mouth, tongue, lungs, feet and hands – are components to be reordered or customised at will; Denis is no longer a biological entity integrated into the fabric of a specific environment or context but, instead, is a cipher of divisible and rearranging parts, which can mediate the message and its multiplication by progenerative means.[28]

The chain of Dionysian dummies proliferates, as evidenced

28 The separation of pulmonary air from the lungs as a supply source for speech can be overcome by the production of a small substitute lung in the mouth itself. An air bubble is created between either side of the upper jaw and the cheek; muscular action then drives this 'air through a small

through various representational conundrums. From the medieval dispute over whether the entire head (plus brain) was removed from the soon-to-be saint, or if it was, in fact, only the head's crown; to the following, and inevitable, representational dilemma of where to locate a saint's halo in relation to a decapitated body – should it follow the head or stubbornly frame a now-empty space? Representational edicts are contested as each sectarian promulgation aims to possess the dead saint's canon – to weaponise the dead body, body part or its representations for political means.

So, on the one hand we have the postal worker, who facilitates, mediates and potentially marks a message between the anchor points of sender and receiver. The courier, on the other, fulfils a different role. Delivery is guaranteed through safe passage – a form of insurance that connects the message parasitically to its host in temporary comfort for the duration of its guarantee, or at least until a coded series of actions has been performed in line with an established protocol. Cue the Amazon courier who has to pause for 30 seconds in front of the recipient of a parcel she is holding because the handheld scanner will not allow the parcel to be logged as delivered until the allotted time-frame is activated and, therefore, can be reciprocally validated by the device. The postal worker's letter, however, has the potential at any moment to be arrested in its detached state of transit, in an act of piracy, interception or human error. This is its primary condition as a message in transit; as a message it could be received, altered, or destroyed at any point on its trajectory.

And it follows that costs may be incurred. In Denis' case, his distended mouth must pay the courier or postal worker as each component now reveals its own separate account. The fee insures against the risk of loss, dispossession, expropriation, the forfeiture of authority, the threat of interception, tampering with meaning, and the

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gap between or behind the teeth into the mouth'. The high-pitched sound is used to articulate speech known as buccal speech, or Donald Duck talk. *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed April 21, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaryngeal_speech

possibility of direct response. The threat of lost authority in dispatch precedes the message's unimpeded delivery and successful landing. And although there is no strict metric to calculate the potential losses incurred and thereby fees to be extracted, there is, nonetheless, a real psychogenic price to pay, through the loss of a timely instruction and, therefore, timely response. And this as an approximation of the numerable components that constitute power and self-possession: status, regard, esteem; qualities which allow a subject to communicate effectively, but only on condition of this effectiveness deriving itself from these stockpiled qualities, from either their possession or from accepting the disposition that authorises remote speech.

The fact that Denis' detached mouth speaks ecclesiastic words is secondary to the composition and delivery of this narrative; a narrative which tells us of speed, delivery, and the conquest of space through motion: a quadrupedal wolf; a bipedal saint; a leather-shod peasant; horse-drawn carriage-deliveries of extracted hearts; a series of historical automobile modifications or customisations; the remote transportation of messages; deposits in bunkers and depots, as data – and in dustbins, as waste; bus departures from medieval graves and high-speed rail journeys; sleeping on budget airline flights and Eurostar connector services to partner destinations. Advancements in mechanical engineering have led to the incremental acceleration of transportation. The result? An increase in both the communication of goods and the exchange of messages; these, simply, as by-products of increased mobility.[29] Put succinctly – but without any of Futurism's celebration of techno-utopian dreaming – speed, in releasing communication and exchange, frees the brain. Put simply, the connectivity of the brain must be the accidental beneficiary of locomotive acceleration.

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29 'Communication is the exchange of messages, exchange the communication of goods.' Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Differend: phrases in dispute*. (University of Minnesota press: Minneapolis, 2014): 12.

I enter the Mont-Blanc tunnel just after midday, having patiently waited my turn to be ushered into the mountain's duodenum-like entrance. Speed is rhythmically controlled by the tailgating of one car behind another, similar to the peristaltic motion of a gut. The radio fizzles out almost immediately in the density of granite and gneiss, and the car travels like a sleepwalker in the throbbing of hypnotic sodium lights. I keep thinking about the Mont Blanc tunnel fire – how cars can metamorphose into steel sarcophagi furnaces at the flick of an electrical fault. Now the only noise I can hear is the layered whirring of staggered engines interspersed with infrequent gear-changes. These steady and static tonalities are perfect for zoning out, on, or in to; the ear finds emphases in certain frequencies and not others, tuning in on imagined voices. "Listen, Dear Reader," uttered the postal worker's speaking womb, "with my ears to my bowel I can write of rats' journeying through black then white plaque doors."

Paris. September 6th, 2016.

The Via Domitia was the first Roman road in Gaul and its remains still connect the cities of Nîmes and Montpellier in what is now Southern France. Large sections of this ancient road still exist physically and, even where parts are missing, archaeologists can predict with some degree of certainty that, along its periphery, they are almost guaranteed to find archaeological remains – the stone floorplans of dwellings, burials and rubbish dumps populate its path. Following closely alongside the Via Domitia is the A9 Autoroute, which runs the length of its course. A three-lane motorway, the A9 has become increasingly heavily congested at both the Nîmes and Montpellier points of its route; a fact that has created the pretext for a high-speed rail link. Planned for opening in July 2018, the Contournement Nîmes to Montpellier, travelling at up to 300 kilometres per hour, will bypass both these cities whilst carrying passenger and freight transport. Via Domitia, the A9 and the Contournement snake beside one another through the Languedoc-Roussillon region, in a kind of three-tier historical mockery of previous technological tracking and transit. Chariot-ruts in cemented stone and pebble run parallel to asphalt concrete roads with painted road markings – both follow after a standard-gauge rail line, which is suspended with in-cab signalling and overhead cables. This is an example of locomotive acceleration without technological continuity – successive modes of transport that have no functional connection, despite their shared utilities of transporting people and goods. The functional logic of an electric train does not proceed from the spark-ignition of a petrol engine, which, in turn, does not advance the mechanics of a horse-drawn chariot. Instead, increasing time efficiency and transmission capacity satisfies commuter and commercial hunger.

Infrastructural megaprojects, such as the Contournement Nîmes to Montpellier, confront a temporary counter-movement in their legal obligations to enrol archaeology in surveying and potentially excavating the land earmarked for development. Progressing towards the realisation of this high-speed capability produces the material, economic and legal conditions by which archaeological methods

come to be articulated. In this way, the archaeological task is to produce an account of the hitherto buried and historically unknown, as a result of an economically driven process. The planned rail link is a medium-term future that is contingent on the excavation of a longer-term past. The historical paradox here is that the excavation data will, in a longer-term future, take equal place with and, by any account, chronologically anticipate, the genesis of the present objectives and future outcomes of, for example, a rail link within a future heritage narrative. This presents an act of historical identification that will, eventually, though belatedly and retrospectively, identify the genesis of the accessible present as continuous with a past that it has reluctantly forced from the ground. Like a dragnet on the acceleration of off-the-press messages – fresh goods, newly customised commodities and the express delivery of the living – archaeology is simultaneously and parasitically dependent upon the economic pressures propelling development. As archaeology gathers and analyses the earmarked yet unknown soil, this propulsion forward is lengthened backwards. In such a scenario, economic voracity begets historical gluttony.

Denis' historical postcard has navigated with and against the ever-present danger in a process of circulation, where a black box would happily welcome the opportunity to define it. A black box composed of – but more composted as – a neutral, divested and indifferent region, consisting of earth, soil, matter; illegible signs and glossolalic fragments. Not letterforms, but stems and fragmentary letter ascenders, strokes, arches and diagonals. Not words, but incomplete phonemes and their echoes or repetitions. This is a black box in which connections are produced on the account of loss. This loss leads to a potential for neglected artefacts to pull the preternatural and the composted upwards with them. The black box – the account book of loss – is the concealed refrain within transmission. It is the penumbra that sketches archaeological delivery, a postal service for the exhausted and anomalous. Mineralisation percolates the fibres of wood in languidly flowing water, permeating the part-digested and part-rotted fish bones, assimilated into clay during their arrested delivery in underground depots. This, until the articulation of something previous-

ly unidentified (or unidentifiable), is brought into a 'now' that results in their accelerated presence and translation. The Saint's motif, as a speaking trophy and a mobile but brainless body, works overtime in mirroring the relation between historical narrative and the delivery of archaeological artefacts. When the discovery of artefacts in their underground delivery depots are uncovered, archaeology becomes the postal service, which produces new accounts of as yet unpaid debts generated by anonymous senders.

This car is a moving graveyard for flies. I know this because I'm looking at the windscreen against a clear-blue sky and all I can focus on are these see-through whitish splats. Those, and a dark green Magic Tree swinging from the rear-view mirror. I'm driving down the motorway and every 30 seconds or so another splat is added to the display, as the next unfortunate bug collides and pops on contact. Feeling a bit ghoulish, I try to squirt windscreen washer from the car's spray nozzles so I can stop looking at and counting them. But, instead of cleanly squeegeeing the debris away, the squashed bugs act like a fast-drying glue and stick to the windscreen wipers' rubber blades, which simply smear them across the entirety of the windscreen in a colourless skid-mark rainbow.

Nîmes. April 13th, 2016.

Interdisciplinary Divisions / DECAPITATIONS.

Discourse = Communication

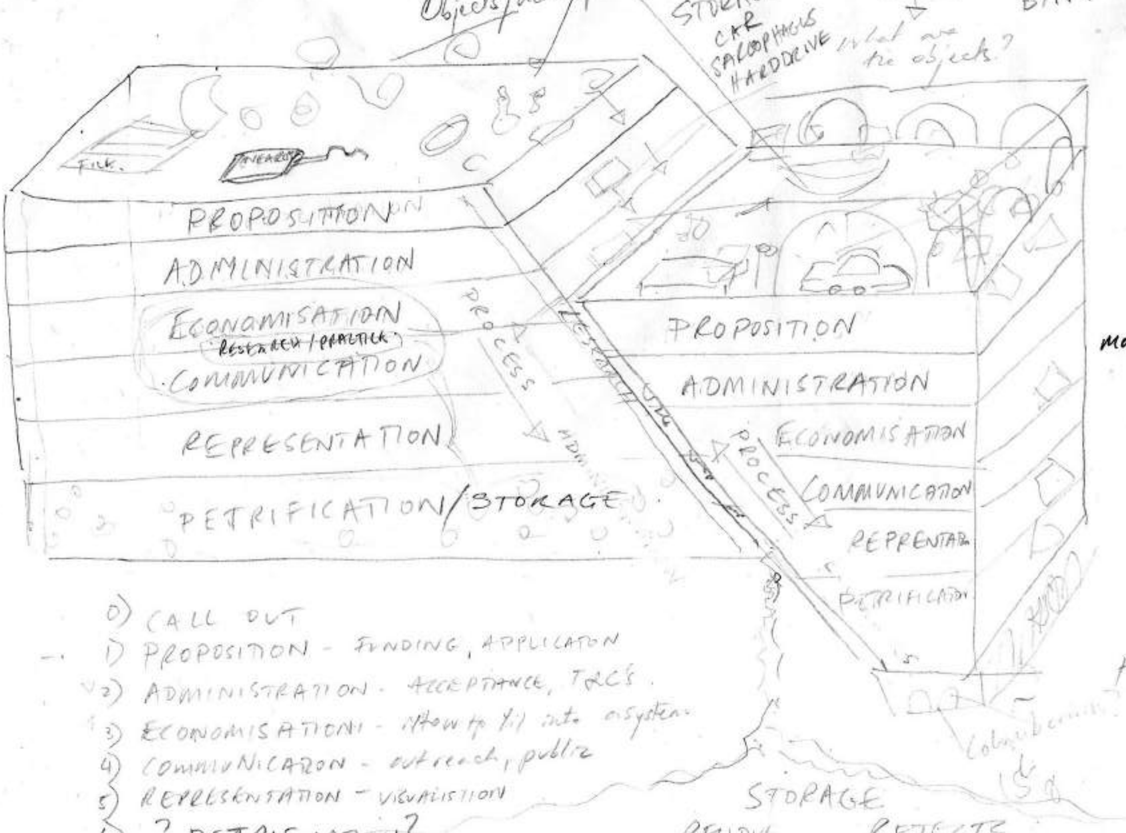
PROPOSITION UNIT
PROJECTS BOT

Each Actor is a black box. CAR PARK HEATER COLUMBARIUM.

Actant. Actor

Objects/actors/artifacts. STORAGE. CAR SARCOPHAGUS HARDDRIVE what are the objects?

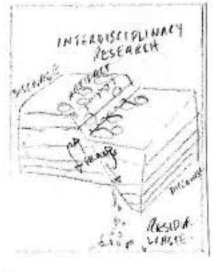
DUST BIN.



4 parts
rejecting irreducibility
Actors - all sizes
Not distinguish b/t Substance & aggregate
Cannot endure
not eternal
Information loss through translation

paradox is the death of lati-

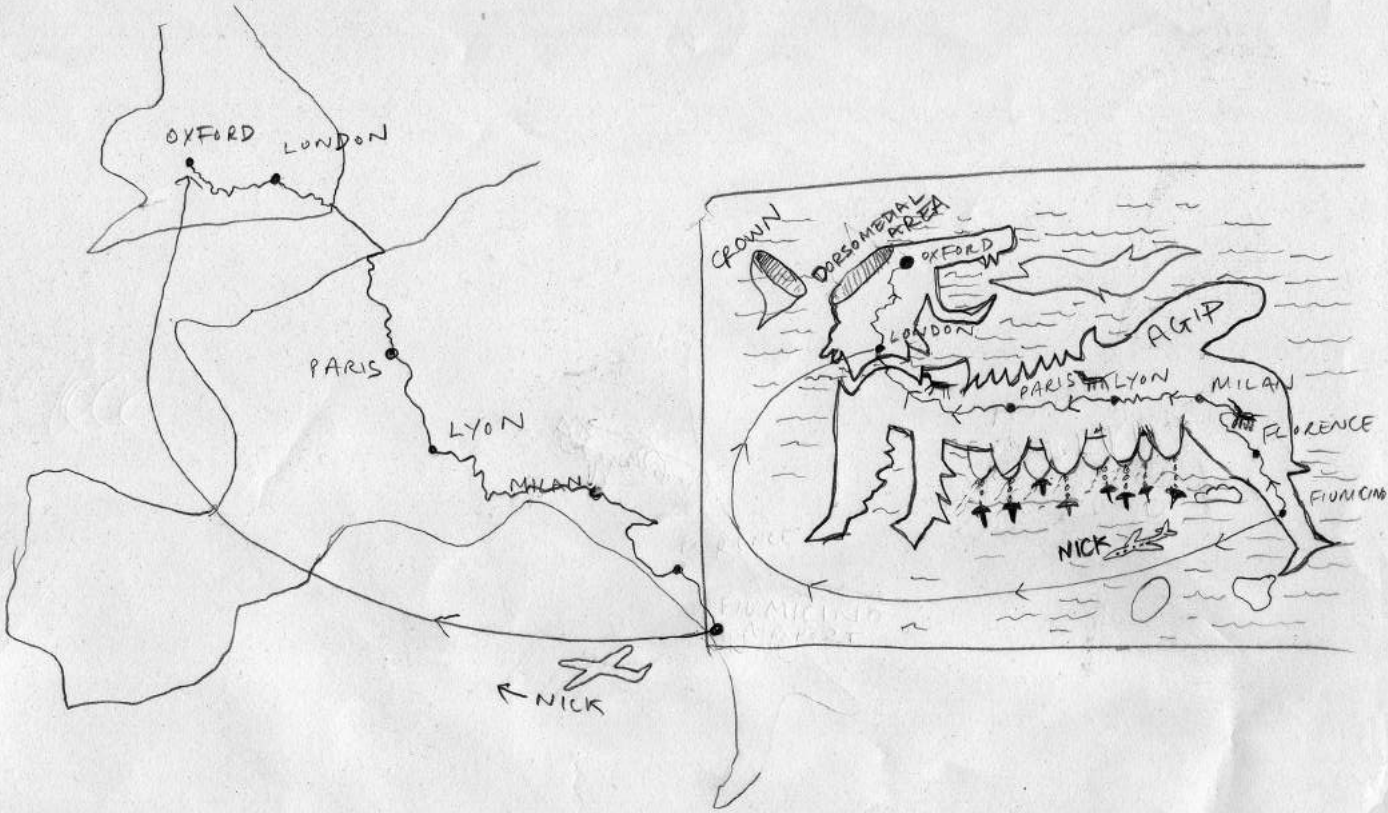
MONEY WATERFALL



FORK LIFT

0) CALL OUT
1) PROPOSITION - FUNDING, APPLICATION
2) ADMINISTRATION - ACCEPTANCE, T&C'S
3) ECONOMISATION - How to fit into a system
4) COMMUNICATION - outreach, public
5) REPRESENTATION - VISUALISATION
6) ? PETRIFICATION ?

Epilogue: Receiver


OXFORD
LONDON
PARIS
LYON
MILAN
NICK
CROWN
OXFORD
LONDON
PARIS
LYON
MILAN
FLORENCE
NICK

'Histology. At the end of the experiment the operated rats were perfused through the heart with 10% formol-saline. The brains were removed and embedded in low-viscosity nitrocellulose. Fifty-micrometer sections were taken in a 1 in 5 series, and they were stained with cresyl violet. Figure 2 illustrates the intended lesion and presents cross-sections through the actual lesions for 3 animals (Rats 1, 3, and 9).'[30]

Well, if we don't
get the money for rats…
Hope the stamp is new
to the collection.
Best wishes to all –
including me, as I'll be back,
Nick.

Twenty-eight years after the stamp on the back of Nick's postcard to 'S. FEARN et. al.' has been removed, I hold that very same postcard in my right hand.

Collectors of any kind arrest the circulation of their specimens. The stamp collector, in particular, assumes a curious double-role; by achieving the simultaneous arrest of the movement of things and that of the token, which had originally authorised and mediated the transport – or limited circulation – of the postal service's goods and messages. In this instance, just like other types of storage depots, a depository will have been designed with its arrested items in mind. A unique typological system is constructed with existing hierarchies of representation and symbolic value: iconology, postal history, rarity,

30 R. E. Passingham, C. Myers, N. Rawlins, V. Lightfoot, and S. Fearn. 'Premotor cortex in the rat,' *Behavioral Neuroscience*, Vol. 102(1), (1988): 103.

forgery, nationality, etc. The missing stamp from the postcard of the Capitoline Wolf has presumably found its way into 'the collection' of Sara Fearn, exiting one form of economic existence (the postal service), and entering that of another (the stamp collection). A cycle of expiry and reanimation is activated through the franking of the stamp and its subsequent removal. Despite being decollated from the top right-hand corner of the postcard, and even though I cannot see it, this stamp has still allowed me – at this very point in its future – to receive this postcard's message as its new recipient. Sometime before its reception in Maastricht but many years later than Nick's Roman holiday, Mr. Ervins Cippa appropriated the postcard for part of his own collection, to be individually auctioned off online. And my bid happened to be successful. A matter of days later, I become the recipient of a message that I have purchased.

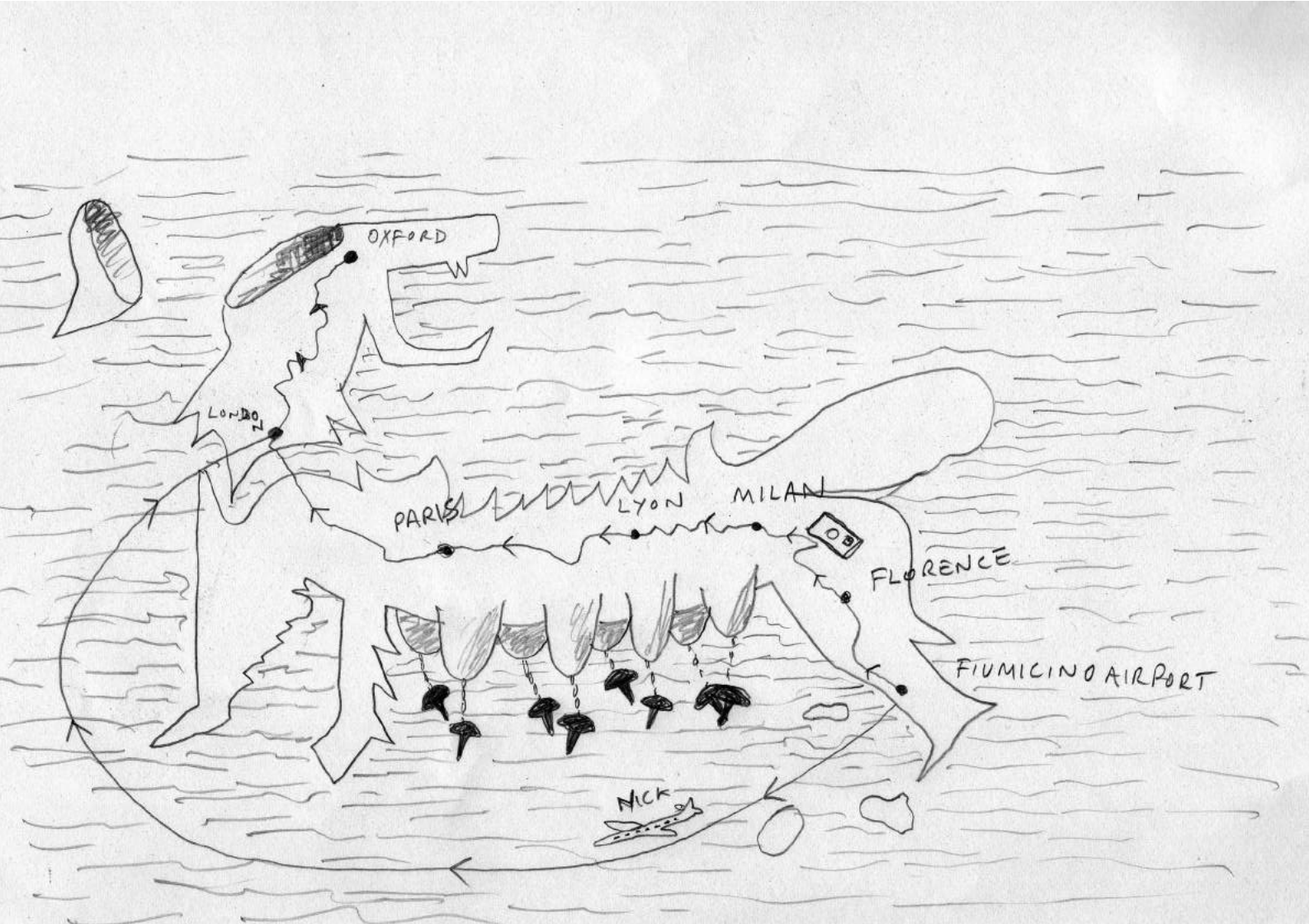
Writing and sending a postcard at an airport may imply several things; the sender is, perhaps, too busy or has procrastinated. Or, maybe nearing the end of a journey, suddenly remembers work colleagues and the relative importance of customary obligations. It is only at the point of departure that Nick found time, fortune or circumstance to locate a post box that allowed his message to be put into transit, evidenced by the postcard's frank: '0050 ROMA FIUMICINO AEROPORTO 20-04 1989 11H'. As testified in his final statement, 'Best Wishes to all – including me, as I'll be back', the Nick who eventually arrived back in Oxford was most probably the receiver of Roman Nick's message. Whilst sending a message implies propulsion inherent in an act of communication, Nick's body ends up overtaking his own missive, thereby becoming the receiver of his own tardy greetings. Nick's explicit narrative is that the postcard and its memo is subject to a greater delay than his own transiting body; human delivery and postal delivery operating at different speeds, and with different (although comparable) systems of administration. Passport stuffed down the back of his trouser pocket, Roman Nick tells me now that, in 1989, the length of time a postcard took to reach his colleagues was far lengthier and bureaucratic a process than that which transported authorised national citizens; Nick's passport

was a far more efficient postage stamp for the human body. If this is the case, then the reverse can also be true; a stamp is a passport for a letter. All four of which (body, passport, postcard, stamp) are open to all forms of interception during transit.

Transit – a word for transportation, passage, access and citizenship – implies that authorisation has been granted, conferred through selection by various institutional bodies: through peer respect and institutional affiliation, in the case of being welcomed into another's field of research; selective nationality and international agreements in the case of citizens; meeting the imposition of customs duties to secure the legal transport of commodities; paying vehicle tariffs for personal road and rail transportation; or contingent socio-economic factors. Whilst there is a knowing irony in Nick's message – that delivering a human is not like delivering a letter – it is, in fact, arguable that, in acts of sending, delivering and receiving, this distinction has limited application. There exists, and has always existed, both legitimate and outlawed forms of sending and receiving – of bodies, messages and goods. Nick suggests his faith in the reliability of both delivery channels that he and his written surrogate are deployed within; that there was a high probability both journeys would run without a hitch, despite their differing velocities. Interception can be understood anew here: Nick's expression was permanently intercepted during his stay in Rome, or else intercepted by his own inscriptive silence, no doubt caused by the distractions of bronze wolves and gelato. His expression may well arrive later than him or not at all, just like the inscription of the expression itself was lodged in between an unbroken silence and the possibility that an expression may manifest itself as written. And, as for his body, given that it has housed an unreliable or belated duty to greet itself from afar, there are even fewer guarantees of its own uncomplicated, undistracted, or even safely received passage.

Twenty-eight years plus a couple of weeks after this postcard was placed into a post box at Fiumicino Airport, I have purchased and received it in Maastricht. Although an unremarkable object in itself, it is equally one that effortlessly draws attention to an interdependent network of self-referential factors: the photographic image

of the wolf's charity; Nick's ironic nod towards the vagaries of research funding; the postcard's evident means, methods and tokens of authorised passage; and, finally, Nick's self-greeting. And Nick was wrong – this time he is not here to receive his belated expression. The message that has been sent no longer holds its original meaning or context. Instead, a new relevancy emerges through its status as an object of interception and elopement. This time, Nick has not had the opportunity to cheat the recipient of his message by arriving in advance of its delivery. On this occasion, interception won.


OXFORD
LONDON
PARIS
LYON
MILAN
FLORENCE
FIUMICINO AIRPORT
NICK

Postscript: ‘On/Off-message’

Collaborations between arts and sciences are nothing new. In fact, there has been steadily increasing interest and support (financial and institutional), over the last two decades, for high-profile projects where particular methods of artistic practice are engaged to challenge organisational structures inherent within academic disciplines, and specifically those that set the terms for any participant's contribution to that field. And not only this; for it is also true that disciplines themselves recognise that, whilst boundaries may be positioned as strategic necessity, to build knowledge and its structures rather than to degrade them, their own objects of study keep to no such delineations. Things, people, objects, thoughts, material and immaterial culture all move and can transition as objects of one language or discipline to another across time and location.[31] It is possible, therefore, to suggest that a discipline is only something formed on the terms of its communication; how messages are formulated, sent, received and interpreted as the condition of a particular encounter.

Firstly, a preliminary distinction needs to be made between the coterminous definitions of trans- and inter- in the field of disciplinary collaboration. Whilst *inter-* aims to integrate and synthesise methods constituting discrete fields of knowledge, the *trans*disciplinary approach goes further than this, through an attempt to locate a unification of these methods outside of the disciplinary border.[32] In

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31 Martin Tröndle, 'The Entanglement of Arts and Sciences. On the Transaction Costs of Transdisciplinary Research Settings', *Journal for Artistic Research*, 1 (2011). Accessed April 4, 2018, http://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/?weave=9528&x=0&y=0.

32 Jensenius summarises Marilyn Stember's overview of levels of disciplinary definitions: 'intradisciplinary (working within a single discipline), cross-disciplinary (viewing one discipline from the perspective of another), multidisciplinary (people from different disciplines working together, each drawing on their disciplinary knowledge), interdisciplinary (integrating knowledge and methods from different disciplines, using

this way, the transdisciplinary endeavour – in its quest for unity – aspires to an as-yet-unknown form of knowledge and so can, in this propositional stance, end up being interpreted or received as fairly idealistic at times; utopian, even. However, this is a vast simplification of its potential to develop mutuality between disciplines. Perhaps the transdisciplinary, which is neither theory, method nor practice exactly, can instead be a 'proposition' for an organisational structure that leads to new forms of communication through (re)structured encounters.[33] This quite quickly poses the urgent question of by whom, how, and why an organisational structure has been put into place and for what reason(s). How is an encounter being structured and does everyone know the rules of this structure?

It is, of course, difficult to ascertain in totality art's contribution to other disciplines that have invited artists to be witnesses, interlocutors, interpreters and/or disruptors to their game – perhaps only with a large degree of hindsight is it possible to judge what was achieved, if anything at all, and, quite probably, given that the 'unknown' is the objective, it is hard to know the degree to which this 'unknown' becomes recognised and, therefore, contributive to either an existing discipline, or to the construction of the elusive 'transdisciplinary' (other than to the artist themselves, inadvertently re-embedding authorship as a publicly visible outcome of a supposedly collaborative project). Art's most visible traces and effects of collaboration tend to remain outside the fields it is responding to. One reason for this is the foci of dissemination for the project at hand. Either a gallery or museum

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a real synthesis of approaches), transdisciplinary (creating a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives)'. Alexander Refsum Jensenius, 'Disciplinarities: intra, cross, multi, inter, trans', *ARJ* (2016). Accessed April 15, 2018, http://www.arj.no/2012/03/12/disciplinarities-2/. Marilyn Stember, 'Advancing the social sciences through the interdisciplinary enterprise', *The Social Science Journal*, Vol. 28 (1) (1991): 1-14.

33 Ibid.

exhibition is the most common culmination, where emphasis is inevitably placed on a tangible outcome of a research collaboration to a wider public. Or, the academic field of artistic research absorbs this new knowledge and encounter into itself, where the most expected outcome will be a possibly internal and gradual transformation of the educational and pedagogic field of art practice. Not to mention the fact that art's approach to 'reality', as such, has, for the most part, been informed by the gap between this reality and its representation, and has, therefore, concentrated on obfuscation and the thematisation of this gap.[34] Neither of these outcomes of the research collaboration provides a situation for the principle of the transdisciplinary to emerge. The first (exhibition) becomes easily saturated with the duty of being a public communication model, whilst the second (practice-based artistic research) is an interdisciplinary endeavour embedded in the activity of the artist who returns enriched to within the borders of their field of departure.

In the former (exhibition), the term 'communication' appears to imply an effective outcome, where art is charged with the role of communicator – disseminating knowledge from another field to a wider demographic than would otherwise be available, thereby increasing that field's relevancy to the present and thus its cultural, political and economic cache. The immediate problem with this is twofold: the first is the reductive formulation of art as a simple intermediary that, when advocated, appears platitudinous and potentially instrumentalising (for the artist). This is not unfamiliar territory for artists who engage in particular interdisciplinary projects, where the exhibition as logical outcome can reduce art into a communication vehicle for information. The additional pressure to prioritise 'communication', may also threaten to overshadow some of the more unexpected or generative aspects of the collaboration itself, thereby reducing the possibility that others, outside of the discipline of art, may also be

34 Boris Groys, 'Art in the Age of Biopolitics: From Artwork to Art Documentation,' *Catalogue to Documenta 11* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002): 108-114.

in a position to reformulate questions that – on the surface – might appear solely the preserve of art. However, it could also be said in the same breath that art's ability to contribute meaningfully to interdisciplinary discourse and debate is never guaranteed; indeed, it could be argued that this is its raison d'être: to respond to the mode, method, and directionality of the communication at hand. If this communication is generally unidirectional (and although admittedly a generalisation, this could be said to be the shared factor of interdisciplinary collaborations across a broad range of fields), then art may have to risk little in its own aesthetic response and self-identity.

This is the condition of the latter (practice-based artistic research); the absorption of knowledge, methods, skills and techniques from one discipline into that of art practice depends on what is given and what is received during an encounter. But with this inevitably follows a set of expectations and assumptions coming from both ends of that encounter. Even during periods of 'field research', where artists are put into contact with their alter-disciplinary counterparts, an asymmetric evaluation of communication and aesthetics between artists and their collaborative partners is likely to emerge. This is, in part, due to the nature of the qualitative nature of scientific data, which is applied to an organisational structure with little communicative manoeuvrability (other than on its own terms) and is, thus, rigid and impermeable to any of the aesthetic concerns of artistic practice. But also, these artistic responses can be in danger of foregrounding a solely aesthetic response, which risks their research finding little in the way of mileage for their collaborative counterparts.[35] This, then, raises the question of what is risked, and by whom, within this encounter. Who is addressing whom and how is this communication being mediated?

In contrast to both of the above, the transdisciplinary as a proposition might seek to find a way in which reciprocity and the terms of communication within the encounter are redefined. This publication

35 Gerhard Eckel, Michael Schwab, David Pirrò, 'Transpositions [TP]', *Research Catalogue* (2018). Accessed April 10, 2018, https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/94538/94539

arose from collaborations with archaeological institutions and practitioners within the context of NEARCH.[36] NEARCH approximated a cross-disciplinary exercise, whereby one discipline was viewed from the perspective of another; archaeology viewed from the perspective of art practice. The terms on which we encountered these collaborations – along with our own expectations, failings, surprises and disappointments – have become the subject of this book. The collaborative relations that were set up for us through NEARCH became the cross-disciplinary ground upon which we began to stage our developing interest with the transdisciplinary (and potentially irrelevant concerns to our collaborative partners for what was admittedly a cross-disciplinary schema). And, in the context in which we were working, it became clear that the transdisciplinary was a matter by which the collaborative encounter was lived and sustained as a function of time, attention and responsibility within networks that were only pragmatically definable.

Conceivably, the transdisciplinary as method only existed within the terms and conditions of communication, expectation and responsibility that the network of partners presented; terms and conditions that none of the interested fields, institutions or practitioners were independently able to delineate. In short, the transdisciplinary revealed itself as the communication between distinct apparatus, each of which only contingently produced anything identifiable as a discipline. A bio-political question presented itself concerning the life-work contribution / management of people. The medium of collaboration or the particular tempo of communication into which we had been welcomed, necessarily lacked any formal or historical ontol-

36 NEARCH is a European Commission-funded project bringing together archaeologists and artists. From early 2015 to the present we have been engaged with four research institutes: Archaeology Department of Göteborgs Universitet; Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventives (INRAP), France; Unité Archéologique de la Ville de Saint-Denis; and Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht.

ogy. Instead, here was a politically contingent context of professional, academic and vocational work-life, which we, with the assistance of our collaborators, were tangentially inserted into as minor players. It appeared that the ground of the transdisciplinary might only arise from an apparatus of relatively communicative and isolated parts, generating lived affects: acknowledgement, welcome, invitation, ignorance, rejection, silence, noise, confusion, competition. In this way, the rather utopian aspirations of the transdisciplinary, which we were entertaining, met with agonistic and frustrated adversaries.

Despite this (dis)affective environment and the danger of our project dispersing into a generalised flux, as simply lived-life, each collaborative context provided analogies by which the condition of communication and access – and the opposite condition of isolation and exclusion – could be figured against one another. The lived context that we entered had, as its focus, non-lived relations: historical pasts, material remains, technical residues, inscriptions and projective futures. Each of these relatively static evidences of life – remains – being pursued in the non-living or the after-life, provided: occasion, incidence, anecdote, or motif – in order to mediate, re-gather and focus the project. These motifs – some of which were embedded at the centre of archaeologists' enquiries, whilst others were located at the periphery of heritage interests, and yet further others as unwitting by-products of organisation – mediated and self-reflexively provided tools to understand the emphasis we were placing on conditions of communication / isolation, access / exclusion. In this, we were neither hoping to communicate nor interpret the information that archaeologists had given us (incredibly generously at times), but to re-calibrate the layers of academia, institution, administration and hagiography we had encountered. A re-calibration directed by the questions of communication, transit and access.

Returning to the idealistic aim of the transdisciplinary as a proposition for a new organisational structure in which new terms for communication might be generated: this aim embraces a wider understanding of a failure in communication, in which barriers to the exchange or comprehension of messages between partners would be

as significant as the successful crossing of existing boundaries. In fact, the underside of the *trans* designation – a journey across, through or beyond – is a very material landscape of blockage, barriers and spillage. Refusal, delay and frustration are just as – if not more – consequent than access, information, and the effective exchange of messages in providing the contours of this space. This is the landscape we have attempted to trace in this publication.

The question of how to approach our own collaborative activity – the act of collecting, producing and re-working a co-authored voice – has been part of this problematic endeavour and is formally addressed within the travelogue entries. In these sections, the 'we' that accurately designates our co-authorship has been sacrificed for the singular 'I', as the presence of a dual sender would have proposed an entity which had already been resolved as a communal and unified voice – one without dispute. Rather, the employment of the first person indicates a subject with an unfixed and unstable relationship to a community, aiming to reflect the perpetually unresolved condition of collaboration. Perhaps the question of whether collaboration can produce a meaningfully unified voice is not the point at all. It is more, in fact, that this voice cannot exist as a proposition without its other half; its negative – where resistance, silence, frustration and failed communication allow a re-formulation of knowledge to arise; a re-formulation that places less priority on the specular outcome or the pursuit of the enlightened, and more on one that traces somatic and topographic aspects of both lived and non-lived experience.

Joey Bryniarska and Martin Westwood
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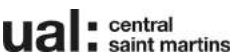

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