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On the Ruins of Babel

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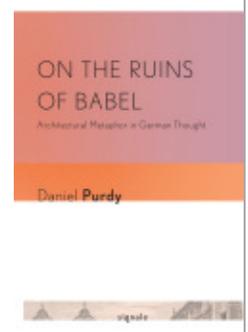
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Goethe and the Disappointing Site: Buildings That Do Not Live Up to Their Images

Inherent in Goethe's aesthetic assessment of architecture is his consideration of "the unbuilt." Although they are often taken as monumental units, complete and whole, buildings have different versions of themselves: the material structure left standing by history, and the architectural designs that preceded it. In the case of Palladio, an obvious tension arises between the drawings in his *Four Books of Architecture* and the existing structures. At his death many of Palladio's buildings were still under construction. The loggias of the Palazzo della Regione at Vicenza were completed a century later. Many palaces were left unfinished because of the declining fortunes of their patrons. The plague, inflation, and the expensive Turkish wars wore down prominent families' finances. Furthermore, the grand scale of the projects hampered their completion. As James Ackerman pointed out, not one of the private patrons managed to finish more than half a palace.¹ Some of the most famous Vicentine structures, such as the Olympic Theater and the Villa Rotunda, were built to conclusion later under the direction of Vincenzo Scamozzi (1552–1616).² Construction of the Palazzo Porto-Breganze was undertaken by Scamozzi according to Palladio's plans, yet only two of its seven bays were ever completed.

1. James Ackerman, *Palladio* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1966), 81.

2. Denis Cosgrove, *The Palladian Landscape* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1993), 20.

Palazzo Thiene, a project Palladio had inherited from Giulio Romano (1499–1546), lacked four sides to its courtyard. The Venetian monastery for the Conventio della Carita was presented in the *Four Books* as a reconstruction of ancient private houses; however, its idealized form was never realized, and, to make matters worse, the atrium was destroyed by fire in 1630.³ This rough history meant that visitors arriving in Vicenza, having studied the printed record of Palladio's work, were bound to be a little disappointed. Goethe was no different, but he overcame his dismay quickly by reading the discrepancies between the treatise and the actual site as a manifestation of the autonomous artist's struggle against an unsympathetic public. In his meditations on Palladio, Goethe circles around the question of the architect's relation to his client. Faults in building, or places where the existing building does not live up to the drawings, he interprets as moments when Palladio was forced to accept a customer's shortsighted instructions. Almost all the discrepancies between plan and building Goethe resolves to the architect's credit, whom he construes as a freethinking, autonomous agent who formulated a singular artistic plan prior to the building's materialization. The unbuilt designs acquire a truth content apart from the actual buildings, yet always dependent upon them. Palladio's drawings are never treated as pure immaterial, paper architecture that disregards construction. With every Palladian drawing, Goethe presumes that the structure could have been, indeed ought to have been, finished.

Goethe's disappointment arose from his assumption that architectural drawings both preconfigure and reproduce the building they represent. Only by visiting the various sites did he come to question these tenets. His initial comments focus on the urban clutter that surrounds the famous buildings. So familiar are the drawings that at first glance the buildings simply reveal what was not drawn, specifically the spaces around them. The surprise of seeing buildings squeezed into an actual city rather than surrounded by the clean space of the page he resolves allegorically. The urban context outside the frame of Palladio's architectural drawings, complete with its many layers of historical development, is transformed from unsightly disappointments into unintended material markers of Palladio's greatness. The discrepancies between plan and execution are negative features that are themselves negated by the aesthetically and historically informed spectator.

Even today, the sight of a Palladian house does not always provoke immediate wonder and delight. In the eighteenth century, Goethe was shocked by the dirty, narrow conditions of Vicenza's streets. Like most visitors, he notes that there is little room in front of the houses to view the palazzi. The prints present a distanced vantage point, whereas the actual streets make it impossible to see many of the Vicenza palazzi head-on in their entirety. The confined spaces reinforce the discrepancies between image and site, between design and construction, and between

3. Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 193–194.

artist and audience. In his *Italian Journey*, Goethe's thought follows a chain of associations that move from the narrowness of Vicenza to a reflection on how artists are never appreciated by their contemporaries. From the start, Goethe identifies with Palladio as an artist working within provincial politics. Palladio himself addresses the problem diplomatically in the second of his *Four Books of Architecture*. Remark- ing on townhouses, he displays a courtier's concern for decorum and for building in a manner appropriate to the site: "But as most commonly in cities, either the neighbours walls, the streets, or publick places, prescribe certain limits, which the architect cannot surpass, it is proper he shou'd conform himself to the circum- stance of the situation."⁴ Such polite avoidance leads Goethe to reflect upon his own position as a writer fleeing the restrictions of a provincial court.⁵ Writing within the eighteenth-century discourse on artistic genius, Goethe characterizes Palladio as struggling against local conventions.⁶ The city's varied buildings—some beauti- ful, some practical, others ostentatious—compare to different genres of writing. Autonomous poets are read side by side with those who write for entertainment. While twenty-first century urbanists celebrate small Italian towns for their stylistic unity, intending thereby to denigrate the disruptions high modernism created in the nineteenth-century cityscape, Goethe separated the artist/architect out from the local traditions. For him, the massive scale of Palazzo Valmarana's facade, with its oversized pilasters reminiscent of Michelangelo's Capitoline in Rome, reiterates that Palladio, like his buildings, literally towers over his contemporaries.⁷ The visual difference between image and site becomes further proof that Palladio did not fit in with his surroundings, neither the artist nor his buildings. Within Goethe's idealism, the architect's autonomy is preserved in his conception, rather than in its material actuality. The presumption that architects are obliged to bend their designs to the interests of clients splits the actual building from its ideal concep- tion. In his fantastical dialogue with Palladio, Goethe has the architect explain the discrepancy between the published designs and the realized buildings as a result of

4. Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books of Architecture* (London: Isaac Ware, 1738; repr., New York: Dover, 1965), 38.

5. Niederer also understands the identification with Palladio as a projection of Goethe's frustra- tions in Weimar. Heinrich Niederer, "Goethes unzeitgemässe Reise nach Italien, 1786–1788," *Jahrbuch des freien deutschen Hochstifts*, 1980, 83.

6. Over the course of writing the treatise, Palladio toned down and then eliminated his complaints against clients. Howard writes that in the earliest draft, Palladio "complains bitterly of being forced to concede to the demands of patrons. A correction to this insertion states simply that he has to take the wishes of his patrons as his starting point. In the published version this passage is omitted altogether, and he merely comments that architects have to comply with the will of those who are paying." How- ard, *Architectural History of Venice*, 226. Years of service in the Weimar court would have taught Goethe how to appreciate Palladio's understatement.

7. Some architectural historians note that Palladio makes many concessions to the narrow streets and the neighboring buildings; see, for example, Robert Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991), 93; Rudolf Wittkower is less generous about Palazzo Valmanara in his *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (New York: Norton, 1971), 84–86.

such compromise. The autonomy of the architect resides in his conceptualization of space, even if it cannot be materialized in stone.⁸

The disharmony between Vicenza's basilica and its neighbors shifts into an allegory of the architect's solitary greatness. In his letters, Goethe does not mention the specific design features of the basilica; he presumes they are known. Instead he expounds on the chaotic urban environment in which Palladio was obliged to raise his buildings. Even today, houses lean right up against the basilica, and market stalls sometimes crowd the piazza. In order to pull off his design, Goethe claims that Palladio had to simply think away the environment in which he worked, a gesture that completely unsettles Goethe because it reminds him that in Italy he must confront the same restrictions on artistry that he faced in Weimar:

Beside the Basilica stands an old building resembling a citadel and studded with windows of unequal sizes. It is impossible to describe how wrong this looks. Undoubtedly the architect's original plan called for it to be demolished together with its tower. But I must control my feelings because here, as elsewhere, I so often come upon what I seek and what I shun side by side.

Wie sich die Basilika des Palladio neben einem alten, mit ungleichen Fenstern übersäten, kastellähnlichen Gebäude ausnimmt, welches der Baumeister zusamt dem Turm gewiß wegedacht hat, ist nicht auszudrücken, und ich muß mich schon auf eine wunderliche Weise zusammenfassen; denn ich finde auch hier leider gleich das, was ich fliehe und suche, nebeneinander.⁹

Framing a building site to exclude neighboring structures compares to the writer ignoring contemporary taste. Overwhelmed by the layers of urban architecture, Goethe posits a second act of framing that repeats the book's format by blocking out the inchoate environment impinging on the singular building. As an architect, Goethe invents a second, nonimagistic boundary between the work of art and its environment that restores the blank spaces of the book, through which the building was first apprehended.¹⁰ The two buildings represent the two extremes

8. James Young uses this distinction to explain Richard Serra's withdrawal from the Berlin Holocaust Memorial and Peter Eisenman's willingness to adapt his proposal: "The artist's and the architect's modes of operation may always diverge: where the architect generally sees an accommodation to the clients' requests as part of his job, the artist is more apt to see suggested changes, however slight, as a threat to his work's internal logic and integrity. This conflict, too, is normal in the course of collaboration between artists and architects." Implicit in Young's emphasis on this distinction is a justification of his own adjustment from skeptical academic critic to jury member in the selection of a memorial design. He narrates his own relation to the Holocaust Memorial debate as a shift from an outside design critic to an informed participant ready to actualize construction. James E. Young, "Germany's Holocaust Problem and Mine," *The Public Historian* 24.4 (Autumn 2002): 77.

9. J. W. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, trans. W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer (London: Penguin, 1970), 64.

10. Goethe's attention to the discrepancies between print and building is part of a larger reassessment of Palladio's work. Howard (*Architectural History of Venice*, 230) states that even in the Veneto the

of Goethe's associations between architecture and the educated self: the incoherent architecture of Goethe's paternal house in Frankfurt versus the classical balance of the basilica. What starts as an aesthetic comparison in Vicenza becomes a division within the observing subject in Rome. The towering, old campanile, which Goethe imagines Palladio would have torn down, becomes, a few months later in the travelogue, a key figuration of his own education.

Not only does Goethe resolve the discrepancies between image and site by constructing a perceptual frame that recreates the format of a book, wherein the black page surrounds the cleanly drawn lines of an architectural plan, but he also extends the aesthetic presumption that the poetic genius stands outside social convention to include the architect's plans. He applies the logic of authorship to the architect by crediting a single name with the work's existence. Its complex history of construction, deterioration, and renovation is subsumed within the authorial principle: because the *Four Books of Architecture* has one author, so too must the buildings depicted therein have a single architect. In this sense, literature and architecture can share the term *classicism* through an aesthetics that secures the attribution of authorship by establishing clear boundaries between the poetic work and writing in general, as well as between the monumental building and its urban setting. For Goethe and the autonomy aesthetics that proceeds from his work, art separates itself from the cacophony of everyday life much as beautiful architecture seeks to clear away its neighbors. Classicism affirms the parallel between poetry and architecture at the expense of urban complexity. It seeks to clarify the multifarious meanings of city space, an enterprise that Henri Lefebvre has argued ought never succeed:

Social space can in no way be compared to a blank page upon which a specific message has been inscribed (by whom?). Both natural and urban spaces are, if anything, "over-inscribed": everything therein resembles a rough draft, jumbled and self-contradictory. Rather than signs, what one encounters here are directions—multifarious and overlapping instructions.¹¹

The attribution of a building's "author" goes beyond tracing a lineage of associations; for Goethe it entails a teleological interpretation of the building's design. Because a building is orderly, it is presumed to be the work of an architect.

first critical comparisons of Palladio came in 1740. All of these eighteenth-century critiques came in the wake of Perrault's critical introduction to Vitruvius. Goethe, in examining building sites so exactly, is engaged in the same sort of scientific observation of antiquity that Perrault used when he argued against the existence of harmonic proportions by demonstrating that the established treatises could not agree on the orders' dimensions. Indeed, Goethe examines building sites with some of the same tools that he uses for geological and botanical specimens. Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 27–39.

11. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 142.

Structures that are perceived as disorderly (such as the parental house in Frankfurt) are implicitly without an authoritative architect. Attribution requires the recognition of order first; the link to a particular name attaches itself then to the aesthetic analysis. In the Strasbourg essay, Goethe claimed to have discovered symmetry in the Gothic cathedral's ornaments, which not only recuperated the aesthetic value of the building but also ascribed a single architect as its cause. The moment in which Goethe recognizes the coherence of a facade is also the instance in which he detects the hand of a designing architect. In Vicenza, the terms are merely reversed: the medieval Gothic reveals the lack of systematic architectonic thought, whereas the classical basilica displays an intricate orderliness that functions as a sign of artistic intention. The disparagement of "disorderly" architecture has always been a popular move in architectural criticism, and in this sense Goethe adopts a trope common to the discourse. He deploys the opposition order-disorder in both his Gothic and his classical periods. A second, more distinctly biographical connotation emerges in his mature writing: disparaging references to buildings lacking architectonic form, a line of criticism aimed at his father's house. For the son reflecting back on his life, Caspar Goethe's piecemeal renovations represent the dull absence of artistry, the lack of genius, vision, or any coherent plan. If architectonic form marks the operation of genius, then shapelessness defines the antithesis of art and the absence of a creative agent.

Within Goethe's aesthetics, the tenuous position of the architect becomes obvious not only when he curtails his plans for the sake of money, but also when he exceeds them. Luxurious villas that went beyond the balanced decorum expected of Renaissance classicism expose the architect's need to please his client. Hence buildings that celebrate the inhabitant's political rank also underscore the architect's lack of autonomy. The excessive grandeur of a villa, with its repetitive overstatement of classical motifs, Goethe explains as the architect's obligation to appease a wealthy client. The Villa Rotonda demonstrates Palladio's overuse of Roman features. Commissioned in 1566 by Paolo Almerico, a papal prelate who had represented Venice for many years in Rome, the villa served the retirement of a single powerful man. Its round dome alludes to the Pantheon. Each of the four sides of the building has a facade so grand that it could serve as the entrance to a public building, thereby exceeding what decorum would deem appropriate for a suburban villa. Goethe begins to develop critical judgments of the villa and of Palladio's relationship to his clients: "It is a square block, enclosing a round hall lit from above. On each of the four sides a broad flight of steps leads up to a portico of six Corinthian columns. Architecture has never, perhaps, achieved a greater degree of luxury."¹²

12. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 66; "Es ist ein viereckiges Gebäude, das einen runden, von oben erleuchteten Saal in sich schließt. Von allen vier Seiten steigt man auf breiten Treppen hinan und gelangt jedesmal in eine Vorhalle, die von sechs korinthischen Säulen gebildet wird. Vielleicht hat die Baukunst ihren Luxus niemals höher getrieben" (21 September 1786; Goethe, HA 11: 55).

Goethe's reticence regarding the most famous of Palladio's villas is expressed in the word *Luxus*. Within Goethe's discourse, *Luxus* is a quality to be avoided. It constitutes the cessation of imaginative thought, for it entails the use of culture as a means of displaying wealth and power, instead of serving the further education of the individual. Goethe was critical of consumer culture particularly when it involved art objects, because it presented artifacts as mere signs of the owner's status.¹³ This discontent with the purely luxurious quality of villas comes to the fore in the passage describing his visit a year later to the Villa Aldobrandini. Having learned the contours of Roman high society, Goethe notes the "glorious, though not unexpected view," indicating that a stunning picture of nature was required of any grand villa. Instead of being taken in by the view, he sees that the villa was placed to command the countryside, so that the view out the window reflects the wealth of the owner inside: "One would think that the palace was built in such a way that the glory of the hills and the flat landscape beyond could be taken in with one glance."¹⁴ Goethe interrupts the flow of the *Italian Journey* in order to provide an editorial comment about the scene. The shift in tone, and the elevated language, suggest that the paragraph reflecting on the view from the villa was written later, as Goethe was preparing his letters for publication. Interestingly he begins with another deictic marker: "Here, however, I find myself compelled to add a thought."¹⁵ The "here" marks both the moment in the flow of the narration and the place, the Villa Aldobrandini. The "thought" concerns the aesthetic value of the view. Goethe then makes a familiar distinction between the satisfaction gained from art when it is used for pleasure alone and when it enhances the knowledge of the viewer: "Energetic, ambitious spirits cannot be satisfied by pleasure; they demand knowledge. This demand drives them to original activity, and whatever the results may be, such a person comes to feel that, in the end, he can judge nothing justly except what he has produced himself."¹⁶ Here we have a short summary of how art motivates the viewer to further *Bildung* by moving him to assume the position of the artist, at least in imaginary terms, so that one understands the consciousness required to produce the work of art. Critical judgment of art depends upon the viewer thinking from the position of the artist. The failure to find this imaginary configuration leads Goethe to become dissatisfied with what is presumably merely a gorgeous view. Having realized that his stay at the villa, complete with feast and learned company, was only serving the ends of pleasure and status, he is disturbed and filled with doubt that he should even be there.

13. Daniel Purdy, "Classicism's Fashionable Twin," in *The City of Weimar: Mapping German Cultural Studies for the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. Burkhard Henke, Susanne Kord, and Simon Richter (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000), 26–57

14. My translation; Goethe, HA 11: 409 (September 1787).

15. My translation; Goethe, HA 11: 409 (September 1787).

16. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 394; "Lebhaft vordringende Geister begnügen sich nicht mit dem Genusse, sie verlangen Kenntnis Diese treibt sie zur Selbsttätigkeit, und wie es ihr nun auch gelingen möge, so fühlt man zuletzt, daß man nichts richtig beurteilt, als was man selbst hervorbringen kann" (September 1787; HA 11: 409; FA 15.1: 439).

The villa, for all its subtle proportions, its thoroughgoing symmetry, and its advantageous view of the landscape, is not strictly a work of contemplation. Goethe, as well as many viewers after him, was disturbed by the all-too-lovely vista it provided. In order to respond to this undertone of rank and wealth, Goethe began to formulate a critical view of the architect. The visit to the Villa Aldobrandini almost a year later ends with more detachment and disquietude. Already at the first stages of his journey, while standing within the Villa Rotunda, Goethe began to distinguish between the architect's obligation to celebrate his patron and his own aesthetic intentions. Treatises, for example, rarely illustrate the view from within the villa. This perspective remains the privilege of the owner. Only by standing at the window does it become obvious that the villa functions as an apparatus that transforms the surrounding landscape into the luxurious property of the spectator.¹⁷

Like any other traveler, Goethe grapples with the inevitable dismay one feels upon arriving at some much anticipated locale; however, he recognizes rather quickly that his own disappointment was an effect of his earlier studies. The old accusation that "poets always lie" arises, he claims, from the disappointment travelers experience when they finally visit the sites they read about: "A thousand times I have heard people complain that some object they had known only from a description was disappointing when seen in reality, and the reason was always the same. Imagination is to reality what poetry is to prose: the former will always think of objects as massive and vertical, the latter will always try to extend them horizontally."¹⁸ Much of Goethe's writing about specific locations in Italy aims to overcome what is after all a fairly banal observation. He approaches a site intent on "seeing past" its immediate environment to the ideal historical moment when the work was first conceived. Goethe dramatizes this historicist approach by writing an imaginary dialogue with the architect, so that the building becomes the embodiment of a spirit, a fetish out of which the artist's voice speaks. This teleological approach reads the building not only as beautiful or as representative of its age, but as a communication between the spectator and the artist, whose intentions exist independently from the object:

The gratification on a trip, if one wants to have it pure, is an abstract gratification. I have to set aside the discomforts, the repulsions, everything disagreeable, so as to search out in the work of art just the artist's thought, the first execution, the first days of the work, in order to carry it into my soul pure again, cut off from everything which time, which conquers all, and the flux of things have worked upon it. Then I

17. James Ackerman, *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 10–13; Reinhard Bentmann and Michael Müller, *Die Villa als Herrschaftsarchitektur: Versuch einer kunst- und sozialgeschichtlichen Analyse*, 2nd ed. (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1992).

18. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 302; "Tausendmal habe ich klagen hören, daß ein durch Erzählung gekannter Gegenstand in der Gegenwart nicht mehr befriedige; die Ursache hievon ist immer dieselbe: Einbildung und Gegenwart verhalten sich wie Poesie und Prosa, jene wird die Gegenstände mächtig und steil denken, diese sich immer in die Fläche verbreiten" (13 May 1787; HA 11: 313).

have a lasting gratification and because of it I am excited for more than just the moment of pleasure or fun.¹⁹

Through this maneuver, the discrepancy between the engraving and the site is superseded by the fantastical image read out of the building's current appearance and written into the imaginative dialogue. Goethe's narratives suggest that the flow of time is reversed as the spectator is transported back into the moment of the artwork's first coming into being. Goethe supposes that his insight into the artistry of the object gives him real historical understanding of the past, either of the artist as isolated creator, in the case of Palladio, or of the community that built ancient architecture. Such engagement is possible, according to Goethe, only at the site, through repeated visits. Stories and engravings might prepare the viewer, but once the dialogue with the work has begun, they lose their signifying function and instead become memories measuring out the viewer's biography. The dynamic projects a new image of the artwork that incorporates the older engraving and the disappointing immediacy of the site into a critical dialogue about the condition of the autonomous artist in a restrictive society.

In his first reports from Italy, Goethe grapples with a problem that eighteenth-century architectural discourse left largely unattended: how to describe three-dimensional space in words. Many scholars have noted that in his earliest architectural writing, Goethe treats buildings as facades, without discussing them as three-dimensional spaces. The impression made by his father's prints might have been such that he would have viewed buildings foremostly as surfaces. This two-dimensional mode of perception was not unusual for eighteenth-century Germans accustomed to viewing Italian art on the page rather than in person. Gotthold Lessing had a similarly Euclidean understanding of space, for he writes about sculpture and painting without distinguishing between the distinct constructions of space that color and stone create.²⁰ Erich Kleinschmidt has argued that while eighteenth-century literature was capable of richly nuanced accounts of interior emotions, it lacked terms adequate to describe the bodily perception of space.²¹ Lessing's preference for poetry over painting hints at the differences between other

19. "Der Genuß auf einer Reize ist wenn man ihn rein haben will, ein abstrakter Genuß, ich muß die Unbequemlichkeiten, Widerwärtigkeiten, das was mit mir nicht stimmt, was ich nicht erwarte, alles muß ich bey Seite bringen, in dem Kunstwerck [*sic*] nur den Gedancken des Künstlers, die erste Ausführung, das Leben der ersten Zeit da das Werck entstand herausuchen und es wieder rein in meine Seele bringen, abgeschieden von allem was die Zeit, der alles unterworfen ist und der Wechsel der Dinge darauf gewürckt haben. Dann hab ich einen reinen bleibenden Genuß und um dessentwillen bin ich gereißt, nicht um des Augenblicklichen Wohlseyns oder Spases [*sic*] willen" (25 September 1786; Goethe, FA 2.3: 75).

20. David Wellbery, *Lessing's Laocoon: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 115–118.

21. Erich Kleinschmidt, " 'Begreif—Welt': Zur fiktionalen Raumerfahrung in der deutschen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatschrift* 41.2 (1991): 145.

aesthetic discourses as well. Whereas lyric poetry, aesthetics, and moral philosophy endeavored to differentiate emotions, architectural theory did not formulate a discourse focused solely on representing spatial experience; instead it aligned the bodily apprehension of built environments with the rich language of inner states. In the *Italian Journey* we see Goethe struggle to express architectural experience spatially. At first he writes about his inability to articulate his new awareness of architecture. Later, when he does try to describe a building's presence, he converts its spatiality into two-dimensional forms.²² The problem of representing space becomes entangled with his deeper motives for traveling to Italy: his childhood education and his frustrated love affair with Charlotte von Stein. Both are themselves enveloped in the dynamics of memory, for the contrast between pictures and places stretches out in Goethe's travel writing as a distinction between immediate perception and the recollection of pictures seen in his youth and in Weimar.

Up until his Italian writing, monumental structures had been compared to tableaux or canvases that spread out before the spectator. While it is true that Goethe celebrates "experience" over reading throughout his career, in the case of architecture his insistence on bodily perceptions marks the shift from seeing architecture as a facade, onto which ornaments are attached, to recognizing buildings as forms that constitute space. His first comments on visiting Vicenza reveal his struggle to articulate in words the surplus that standing within a building provides:

I arrived some hours ago and have already seen the Teatro Olimpico and other buildings by Palladio. An excellent little book with copperplates and a text has been published for the benefit of foreigners by someone with an expert knowledge of art. You have to see these buildings with your own eye to realize how good they are. No reproductions of Palladio's designs give an adequate idea of the harmony of their dimensions; they must be seen in their actual perspective. Palladio was a great man, both in his conceptions and in his power of execution.

Vor einigen Stunden bin ich hier angekommen, habe schon die Stadt durchlaufen, das Olympische Theater und die Gebäude des Palladio gesehen. Man hat ein sehr artiges Büchlein mit Kupfern zur Bequemlichkeit der Fremden herausgegeben mit einem kunstverständigen Texte. Wenn man nun diese Werke gegenwärtig sieht, so erkennt man erst den großen Wert derselben; denn sie sollen ja durch ihre wirkliche Größe und Körperlichkeit das Auge füllen und durch die schöne Harmonie ihrer Dimensionen nicht nur in abstrakten Aufrissen, sondern mit dem ganzen perspektivischen Vordringen und Zurückweichen den Geist befriedigen: und so sag' ich vom Palladio: er ist recht innerlich und von innen heraus großer Mensch gewesen.²³

22. Werner Oechslin credits Goethe with handily adapting architectural terminology in his descriptions of Vicenza's palaces. Werner Oechslin, *Palladianismus: Andrea Palladio—Kontinuität von Werk und Wirkung* (Zurich: gta Verlag, 2008), 46.

23. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 63; Goethe, HA 11: 52 (19 September 1786).

The passage jumps from the immediate survey of Palladio's buildings to a reflection on the relation between architecture and its medial reproduction. The first impression concerns not the buildings themselves but what the drawings could not show. Before he can describe Palladio's palazzi, Goethe points out that bookish knowledge of the buildings does not convey their real significance, neither the building's size nor the physical impression of how the individual components stand in relation to each other. The drawings do not reveal the buildings' spatial fullness. By pointing out how the drawings fail to convey mass, Goethe alludes to the haptic looking that Herder had long before described as combining the sense of touch with detached analytical vision.²⁴ Yet even as he explains the limitations of architectural drawing, Goethe does not construe an opposition between two-dimensional representation and the experience of space. Standing before the building, walking around and through it, the observer is ever conscious that Renaissance space was itself organized by the rules of perspective, thus preventing any real opposition between two- and three-dimensional descriptive language.

The importance of visiting the building does not vitiate the impression made by drawings seen beforehand. Even as he explains that drawings cannot convey presence, Goethe advises his reader to consult a guidebook for images of the place. In his original letter to Charlotte von Stein from Vicenza, Goethe tells her where she can find the print of Palladio's buildings in the Weimar library, and so he will not bother to describe them in writing. This quick reference to the library is one of several passing remarks in his correspondence that make clear that Goethe had already studied reproductions of Palladio's designs before leaving Germany.²⁵ Furthermore, it makes clear that he remembers the prints even as he stands in front of the site. On a semiotic level, by telling Charlotte to consult the library, Goethe accepts the convention that the buildings correspond to their textual reproduction. Thus he can stand in Vicenza confident that Charlotte in Weimar will see an accurate representation of the same buildings: "You can get the copper prints from the library, so I won't say anything specific, just general points."²⁶

The play of architectural presence and representation is caught up in the guilt and relief Goethe feels at having left Weimar and his difficult love affair with Charlotte behind. Whatever reassurance the print might provide, Goethe insists

24. Johann Gottfried Herder, *Plastik* (1770), in *Werke*, ed. Wolfgang Pross (Munich: Hanser, 1987), 2: 401–464.

25. Herbert von Einem gives further evidence from letters and diaries that implies a familiarity with Palladio before arriving in Italy. Herbert von Einem, "Goethe und Palladio," in *Beiträge zu Goethes Kunstauffassung* (Hamburg: Marion von Schröder Verlag, 1956), 181–183. Von Einem's article is still the most comprehensive study of Palladio's importance for Goethe. Günther Martin concludes that Goethe had read Bertotti Scamozzi's *Les bâtiments et les desseins d'André Palladio* in Duke Carl August's library. Günther Martin, "Goethe und Palladio—Fiktion klassischer Architektur," *Jahrbuch des freien deutschen Hochstifts*, 1977, 70.

26. "Von der Bibliothek kannst du sie in Kupfer haben also sag ich nichts nenn ich nichts, als nur im allgemeinen" (19 September 1786; Goethe, FA 2.3: 63).

on the superiority of firsthand perceptions over representations, both image and text. He promises to compensate for his absence and his inability to write by telling her personally about the experience when he returns sometime in the future. His newfound inadequacy as an architectural writer allows him to at least momentarily refrain from communicating with Charlotte, thereby reinforcing his absence. By urging her to look at the drawing in the library, he establishes the image as a mediator between writing and speech, between his departure and his return. If he cannot find the words to write and must defer his telling, then for now at least Charlotte can gaze upon the picture that they both share, he through memory, she through the treatise. The image of the building serves as a transitional object in the dissolution of their romance. From Vicenza, he tells Charlotte that she will surely remember the building he had always liked so much, the "Casa di Palladio," a building that does not appear in the *Four Books* and whose attribution remains uncertain. Like many early modern visitors, Goethe considered the house to have been Palladio's Vicentine residence.²⁷ Goethe fixates specifically on this building as the center of his architectural epiphany. The legend that it was Palladio's own helps make it a nodal point for Goethe's many uncertainties. Circling around the small townhouse, he expounds on the place, its distance from Weimar with its many obligations, and the possibility of reviving his younger poetic identity through his identification and exchange with the architect. Since Goethe believes that Charlotte might remember the building, this implies that they at least discussed, if not read, works on architecture together: "You might remember that among the buildings by Palladio there is one called the House of Palladio that I have always loved in particular."²⁸ The passage alludes to a shared moment of reading when Goethe declared his love for the Casa de Palladio. What other affections were shared in reading the Palladian treatise remain unarticulated; however, the reference to the print and to Goethe's love for what it signifies performs the double gesture of alluding to their moment of intimacy as readers and substituting the real house in Vicenza for that intimacy. Even if Charlotte does not remember the print, the letter presumes she remembers the reading. By writing about the house in Vicenza, Goethe reminds Charlotte of his love (whether for the print or her remains unclear).

Having sent Charlotte to the library in search of a book, Goethe stresses that in reality the house is far more interesting than any mental image of it can be: "Up close it is so much more than what you think it is from a distance."²⁹ Again, he promises to tell her about the building when he returns. In the first letters, Goethe often offers an oral telling when he cannot explain a place in writing. That this

27. On the same day, Goethe visited Bertotti Scamozzi, who credits the building to Palladio in his *Le fabbriche e i disegni di Andrea Palladio* (Vicenza, 1796), reprinted with an introduction by J. Quentin Hughes (New York: Architectural Book Publ., 1968), 126.

28. Goethe, FA 2.3: 67.

29. *Ibid.*

spoken supplement was never delivered is certain, given Charlotte's estrangement from Goethe upon his return. In yet another evasion of descriptive writing, he considers finding an artist to make an illuminated sketch of the building (the second story of the facade was covered in a fresco, now lost) but then decides that such an undertaking would attract too much attention, thereby ruining his incognito. Drawing, even when performed by another, is understood as a plausible means of representing the emotions engendered by a building. Goethe's reflections on the inadequacy of all media contradict his goal of giving Charlotte the impression that she is participating in his journey, and that, in the paradoxical logic of romantic disengagement, he has gone to Italy so that he may write to her about what he sees.³⁰ His comments on the paucity of pictures and words only underscore the futility of their romance.

Goethe's readiness to have his reader rely on engravings does not indicate a naïve acceptance of the image as mimetic reproduction. It reflects instead his aversion to writing scenic descriptions such as those found in a guidebook. Later, while traveling from Naples to Rome, he writes to his Weimar friends about the poverty of his own landscape descriptions. The narrator of a travelogue is required to include every detail so that the reader can construct his own image of a place. As Goethe acknowledges, he has neither the patience nor the inclination for such writing, and so he considers it a great boon that his friends have taken to reading travel books while studying engravings. What a relief, Goethe writes, that so many architects before him have more carefully represented to the external world that which he holds only in his inner eye.³¹ Goethe posits a layering of travel literature wherein one representation supplements the other: "If every human individual is to be considered only as a supplement to all the others, if he is never so useful or so lovable as when he is content to play this part, this must be particularly true for travelers and writers of travel books."³² Dirk Niefanger suggests that Goethe's position is not incompatible with a model of intertextuality that constructs Italy as a *Textraum*, a textual space, wherein different writers and artists cross-reference each other.³³ In the example of Goethe's writing on Palladio, we can see how the text presumes readers familiar with engraved images of Italian scenes. Goethe thus goes out of his way to avoid describing what the reader can see through engravings; instead he provides his own impression as a supplement to his predecessors: "So much has been said and written about Venice already that I do want to describe it too minutely. I shall

30. Heinrich Niederer claims this paradox structures the entire journey. Niederer, "Goethes zeitgemässe Reise," 62.

31. Goethe, HA 11: 348 (4, 5, 6 June 1787).

32. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 331; Goethe, HA 11: 348 (4, 5, 6 June 1787).

33. Dirk Niefanger, "'Keine Natur mehr, sondern nur Bilder': Goethes Abschied vom Vesuv," in *Von der Natur zur Kunst zurück: Neue Beiträge zur Goethe-Forschung*, ed. Moritz Bähler, Christoph Brecht, and Dirk Niefanger (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1997), 112.

only give my immediate impression."³⁴ He provides a cursory description of Saint Mark's Square with the conclusion that its sights have been pressed into engravings so often that his readers will surely have an image of it already.³⁵

The incomplete mimesis provided by architectural illustrations was by no means grounds for not writing about architecture; indeed, the inadequacy of prints only reinforces Goethe's belief in the artist as a creator who makes his presence felt through the work of art.³⁶ The contemplation of Palladio's palaces provides a moment of double reflection, on the buildings themselves and on the failure of engravings. Goethe stresses the three-dimensionality of the buildings. Even the facades, which are so readily presented on the printed page, take on a different perspective when seen corporally. Goethe's valuation of personal experience over textual mediation is of course a familiar one, already present in *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and many lyric poems. However, the new element in Goethe's Italian writing is his concern for harmony and the spatial relationships between parts of the building. The graceful order of Palladio's buildings does not overwhelm the viewer, as, for example, when Goethe described the sublime experience of standing before the massive Gothic facade of the Strasbourg cathedral. Here in Italy the spirit is *befriedigt*, satisfied, put at ease by the building's visual rhythm. Yet Goethe still invokes the Sturm-und-Drang rhetoric that he used when describing the Strasbourg cathedral. The architect-artist has a divine quality; he virtually competes with God by creating an alternative reality: "There is something divine about his talent, something comparable to the power of a great poet who, out of the worlds of truth and falsehood, creates a third whose borrowed existence enchants us." (Es ist wirklich etwas Göttliches in seinen Anlagen, völlig wie die Force des großen Dichters, der aus Wahrheit und Lüge ein Drittes bildet, dessen erborgtes Dasein bezaubert.)³⁷ The many tensions pulling at architecture, whether it was a science or an art, whether design intentions were expressed best through buildings or drawings, whether a building should be stripped down to its structural basics or whether ornamentation had a legitimate place on a wall, all these questions Goethe seeks to resolve with his (admittedly vague) notion of a third quality. From this spectatorial position, Palladio's lie would be the manner in which he misrepresented the actual sites, whereas the truth refers to the manner in which his drawings resurrect the ideals of ancient design.³⁸ Far from undermining Palladio's status, these unresolved

34. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 77; HA 11: 67 (29 September 1786).

35. "Die sämtlichen Aus- und Ansichten sind so oft in Kupfer gestochen, daß die Freunde davon sich gar leicht einen anschaulichen Begriff machen können" (29 September 1786; Goethe, HA 11: 68).

36. Goethe, HA 11: 52 (19 September 1786).

37. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 64; Goethe, HA 11: 52 (19 September 1786).

38. Goethe's idea of poetic architecture rejects the fantastical and is firmly opposed to baroque representation for its own sake. As the following letter to Schiller recounting his admiration for a Milanese opera company makes clear, Goethe maintains a strict distinction between architecture and stage sets; theatrical designs modify the practical rules of architecture for an aesthetic effect that belongs on the stage, not the palace facade: "Bei der Theaterarchitektur ist die große Schwierigkeit, daß man die

discrepancies invite an aesthetic resolution in the mind of the spectator. Goethe does not name the third element, though precisely its indeterminacy suggests the comparison between architecture and poetry. Beyond the truth and lie of architecture emerges *Dichtung*, a link suggested in the title of Goethe's autobiography.³⁹ Just as the "lie" is left unenunciated in the formula *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Palladio's architectural *Wahrheit* and *Lüge* are transferred across genre lines to become *Dichtung*. Goethe adds architecture to the long eighteenth-century debate over how different artistic genres express similar goals. While Goethe makes no systematic claims in the manner of Lessing's Laocoon essay, he does imply that poetry and architecture share the same humanist ideals.⁴⁰

By interpreting the misrepresentations of the book's engravings as attempts to create the illusion of an ancient order, Goethe recovers his initial belief in the poetic character of Palladio's work. In his "Architecture" essay of 1795, Goethe claims that the highest purpose of architecture is "the overgratification of the senses" (die Überbefriedigung des Sinnes), which "elevates the educated mind to the point of amazement and fascination" (einen gebildeten Geist bis zum Erstaunen und Entzücken).⁴¹ The spectator's engagement with the building compares to the reader's attempt to grasp the purposiveness of a fictional text. The spiritual content of a particular building is derived from the individual artist's intentions, and the poetry of a building exists foremostly as appearance, or an illusion, which the architect creates to engage the cultivated viewer. The "fictional" moment in architecture depends upon the phenomenological engagement of the subject with the genius of the architect as expressed in the building.⁴²

Grundsätze der echten Baukunst einsehe, und von ihnen doch wieder zweckmäßig abweichen soll. Die Baukunst im höheren Sinne soll ein ernstes hohes Festes Dasein ausdrücken, sie kann sich, ohne schwach zu werden, kaum aufs Anmutige einlassen, auf dem Theater aber soll alles eine anmutige Erscheinung sein. Die Theatralische Baukunst muß leicht, geputzt, mannigfaltig sein, und sie soll doch zugleich das prächtige, Hohe, Edle darstellen. Die Dekorationen sollen überhaupt, besonders die Hintergründe, Tableaus machen, der Dekorateur muß noch einen Schritt weiter tun als der Landschaftsmaler, der auch die Architektur nach seinem Bedürfnis zu modifizieren weiß." Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "Reise in die Schweiz," FA 1.16: 385 (Letter to Schiller, Frankfurt, 14 August 1797).

39. Günther Martin maintains that the fiction of Palladio's architecture is a dream image created by the manneristic ornamentation of his late work, which he nevertheless associates with the Villa Rotunda and the story of Mignon in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. Martin, "Goethe und Palladio," 79–83. Gerd Neumann connects the passage to the 1795 "Baukunst" essay and its opposition between function and decor, between supporting elements, such as walls and columns, and ornamentation. Gerd Neumann, "Aus Wahrheit und Lüge ein Drittes: Das erborgte Dasein der Architektur," *Daidalos* 1 (1981): 9.

40. "The differences between poetry and the plastic arts are differences in method, means, technique ('Wege'); their unity is their shared aim ('Ziel'). Lessing distinguishes the arts in order to insist on their proper unity." Wellbery, *Lessing's Laocoon*, 105.

41. J. W. Goethe, "Baukunst" (1795), in *Aesthetische Schriften, 1771–1805*, ed. Friedmar Apel (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998), FA 1.18: 368.

42. Goethe, "Baukunst" (1795), FA 1.18: 368: "Es kann dieses nur durch das Genie, das sich zum Herrn der übrigen Erfordernisse gemacht hätte, hervorgebracht werden; es ist dieses der poetische Teil der Baukunst, in welchem die Fiktion eigentlich wirkt."

The 1795 “Architecture” essay dispenses with the assumption that buildings and plans depict a reality beyond themselves. Goethe addresses eighteenth-century theorists such as Marc-Antoine Laugier and Francesco Milizia when he insists that architecture is not a mimetic art, but he avers that at its highest level one manner of building can be used to imitate another. Architectural materials imitate one another, marble columns simulate the trees that he presumes were used in the first Greek temples. He extends the point to include historical styles and how they are imitated by later artists, namely, Palladio’s effort to revive an antique Roman norm, which is Goethe’s real concern. The Vicentine builder performed a double fiction by, firstly, using one set of materials to simulate another (stucco for marble) and, secondly, using ancient styles reserved for temples and other public buildings in the construction of private villas. This second level of mimesis entails a transfer of styles from one setting to another for the purpose of recreating the ancient polis within a private, rural retreat.⁴³ Architectural mimesis turns in upon itself. It does not show the natural world; rather each work refers to the lineage of others.

* * *

Goethe’s writing on space expresses an anxiety about time, the sense that any enjoyment of a foreign building or city is fleeting, and that only through representation can the pleasure of a new place be prolonged. The urge to preserve spatial perceptions leads him back to the very same flawed modes of representation he had so recently dismissed. Happily, Goethe’s travelogue plays with the irony of this repetition. The moment of entry into a space known through images leads directly back into the circulation of images. At the point where he understands his own inscription within the cycle of signification (media-induced yearning, existential fulfillment, and nostalgic preservation), he also acknowledges his identity with the paternal Other. Landing at Saint Mark’s Square, he writes that he now can see the shapes of gondolas, which he had known since his childhood. His father had brought back a small model. This encounter becomes the coda for all of Venice; from the cheerful greeting of a long-lost impression from his childhood, he extends the mood to the entire city: “Everything greeted me like an old friend; I enjoyed the cheerful impressions of my youth, which I had long ago left behind.”⁴⁴ His arrival culminates with a gondola ride in which he recalls how his father told endless stories about his Italian journey, a habit he now expects to emulate: “I remembered my dear, esteemed father, who knew nothing better than to speak of these things. Will I end up like him as well?”⁴⁵ The vessel that carries Goethe also alludes to Palladio, who was born Andrea della Gondola, and whose treatise guides Goethe to Venice. Moving physically through the city recreates the childhood fantasy of enter-

43. Goethe, “Baukunst” (1795), FA 1.18: 370: “Hierinne hat niemand den Palladio übertroffen.”

44. My translation; Goethe, HA 11: 64 (28 September 1786).

45. My translation; Goethe, HA 11: 69 (28 September 1786).

ing into an image, or in this case a model of a boat. By placing himself in a gondola and toasting his father, Goethe not only recognizes his father in himself but also assumes his father's place as the enthusiastic storyteller of Italian adventures. This boat ride entails a triple movement: first, Goethe the spectator enters into the picture, and the model, of Venice as he has known them since his childhood; second, he assumes the position of his father by traveling to the place his father had visited before him so that he could experience what he had heard through stories; and, third, Goethe in Venice now knowingly assumes the position of the storyteller who will create similar images for others to contemplate and imitate.

The journey to Italy promises to undo Goethe's pained awareness of the contrast between signifier and experienced referent. Only after he settles into his trip does he acknowledge how much the inadequacy and longing he felt in Germany were organized by images of Italy. Upon arriving, he declares his relief that the word Venice no longer stands as an empty signifier: "So now, thank God, Venice is no longer a mere word to me, an empty name, a state of mind which has so often alarmed me who am the mortal enemy of mere words."⁴⁶ In both Venice and Rome Goethe describes how the act of traveling into a city already made familiar through engravings allows one not merely to revive childhood fantasies, but to enact them for the first time in physical form. Once in Italy Goethe stresses that his older imaginative representations have been replaced by a literal seeing, touching, and doing. To underscore the difference between representation and experience, Goethe invokes the myth of Pygmalion: "How different was the living from the sculpted stone!" The myth eroticizes Roman architecture. It sets up the contrast that Goethe uses in the opening strophe of the *Roman Elegies*, the difference between the cultured tourist who stares at stones by day and the naturalized visitor who learns about form from his mistress at night.

Joan Ramon Resina's concept of the afterimage helps explain the critical comments Goethe makes when he finally arrives at the places that he has known for years through printed images.⁴⁷ The term "afterimage" refers first of all to the visual sensation that lingers after the stimulus that provoked it has disappeared—a phenomenon Goethe describes in his *Farbenlehre*. But it is also understood by Ramon Resina as the critical process that destabilizes the image as the definitive representation of a site. The afterimage is what remains once the image is revealed as temporally conditioned by historical forces that shape its production. The usual art historical questions—such as Who commissioned the image? Which social perspective does it represent? What media were deployed in its construction?—create an effect that does not negate the image but eliminates its innocence. They dem-

46. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 74; Goethe, HA 11: 64.

47. Joan Ramon Resina, "The Concept of the After-Image and the Scopic Apprehension of the City," in *After-Images of the City*, ed. Joan Ramon Resina and Dieter Ingenschay (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 1–22.

onstrate that the image does not function as pure representation. In a sense the afterimage entails the framing of the image within a critical viewing that looks past the lines of sight that the engraving constructs. For travelers to Italy, criticism of an established image entails looking at what lies outside the frame. The comparison between the image as it appears on the page and the actual conditions of a place as a traveler sees them casts the image into doubt, not because it falsely represents so much as because of all that it does not show. The image is revealed as idealistic when compared to the actual place, even as the site is made idealistic through the memory of its imagistic representation.

Even though Goethe stresses the importance of seeing a building directly, he does not let the immediate supersede the represented. He implies a sequence wherein writing, drawing, viewing, and recollecting follow upon one another, each attempting to compensate for the imprecisions of the other. The act of looking brings forth new attempts at drawing, which are responses to the prints that motivated a trip to the building in the first place. Engravings motivate the trip and remain afterward as commentaries upon the experience. Drawing elaborates upon the physical contemplation of the building.

The complex rotation from observation to recollection to renewed representation is vividly apparent in Goethe's account of his visit to the temple of Minerva in Assisi. Whatever fictional allowance Goethe granted Palladio's drawings of his own buildings he retracts in the name of archeology when faced with an actual building from antiquity.⁴⁸ He stops in Assisi (a liminal space between Venice and Rome) largely because of Palladio's drawings of the temple but is again surprised to find that the master's drawings do not conform to the appearance of the building's facade, specifically the pedestals upon which the Corinthian columns stand. Goethe writes that he can imagine a practical explanation for why the steps were cut through the soccus rather than placed in front of the columns. Had the original builders followed the established rule of placing the steps before the columns, the temple would have been too far removed from the street. For Goethe the foreshortening of the temple's facade, wherein steps and columns are interspersed, makes practical sense for a small temple in a provincial town. Palladio, whom he trusted, and here we suddenly find Goethe already writing in the past tense, must not have seen the building; otherwise he would have drawn it differently. Thus Goethe concludes with his axiom that the presence supersedes representation: "Thus the best copper print cannot teach us as well as presence." (So kann uns das beste Kupfer

48. When engaged with architecture, Goethe often positions himself as the precocious student questioning the paternal master. This pattern emerges in his confrontations with his own father over the family home, his invocation of Erwin in Strasbourg, his adoration of Palladio, even his reliance on Winckelmann while viewing the temples at Paestum. For a subtle Lacanian account of the Strasbourg essay, see Kenneth S. Calhoun, "The Gothic Imaginary: Goethe in Strasbourg," *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 2001, 5–14.

nicht lehren wie die Gegenwart.)⁴⁹ Palladio scholars note that the Italian surely did view the temple himself as we have sketches from 1541 that he drew as he was preparing the *Four Books* for publication. The discrepancy between the site and Palladio's illustration is explained by Palladio's concern to demonstrate the primacy of decorum over functionality; thus he represents the temple as it should properly have been built, rather than its compromised existence.⁵⁰ Goethe is less concerned with laying out architectural doctrine, yet hyperbole in architectural drawing has an epistemological resonance for him that it would not have had for Palladio. What in the sixteenth century amounts to an idealization of a compromised reality was understood in the eighteenth century as an inaccuracy. This mistrust of drawings is confirmed in Goethe's letter to Charlotte von Stein wherein he breaks off his description of the temple by telling her to consult Volkmann's travelogue for a complete description. In the later, published version of the *Italian Journey*, he leaves off this bibliographic advice but ends the episode with the prophetic claim that he cannot express how fruitful his viewing of the temple will be: "I cannot describe the sensations which this work aroused in me, but I know they are going to bear fruit for ever."⁵¹ This last line with its future orientation was written long after Goethe had left Assisi; thus, when understood within the editorial history of the work, it functions as a backdated prediction that has already come true.⁵² It also suggests a limit to the text's own ability to portray the experience of an architectural site, thereby inviting, or better still, urging, the reader to abandon the book in favor of travel to Italy, a response generations of Germans have chosen.

By concluding the published account of the Assisi episode with one of his well-honed expressions of the inexpressible, Goethe relies on poetic language to translate architecture into subjectivity. The temple is subsumed within the reflective movement of poetic language. The otherness of ancient architecture, the inability of moderns to know its origins, the inevitable need to speculate about what the ancients wanted, and the almost certain instability of such knowledge are preserved as an educational influence. The subject standing before the temple is filled with conjectures and desires that can best be summarized as both impossible to explain and yet of fundamental importance for the poet. The difference between print and perception, the first factual discrepancies Goethe recognizes, leads to larger reflections on what the viewer learns from the temple and how he transforms these lessons. Goethe does not draw out the trope of inarticulateness, because to do so would

49. Goethe, FA 2.3: 67.

50. Andreas Beyer, "Kunstfahrt und Kunstgebilde, Goethes 'Italienische Reise' als neoklassizistischen Programmschrift," in *Goethe und die Kunst*, ed. Sabine Schulze (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1994), 451.

51. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 121; Goethe, HA 11: 118.

52. Goethe uses the temple's deviation from the norm as an illustration in his "Architecture" essay of 1795; he provides several drawings of how even ancient architects altered the conventions for designing public buildings. Goethe concludes the discussion in the essay by pointing out that Palladio also freely invented variations on the classical rules. Goethe, "Baukunst" (1795), FA 1.18: 373.

undermine the educational point of journey, the construction, or *Bildung* of the self. The many epiphanies that make up the Italian trip should have more than a strictly private significance; hence Goethe feels compelled not only to write about architecture but to draw it. In order to make clear the discrepancy between building and engraving, Goethe decides to draw an architectural plan of the temple. Because he has to tear himself away from the building, because he cannot spend the rest of his days staring at its facade, he urges that some architect, and a few lines later he counts himself as one, draw an exact plan of the place: "I tore myself away reluctantly and firmly resolved to call the attention of all architects to this building so that an accurate plan may be made available to us." (Ungern riß ich mich von dem Anblick los und nahm mir vor, alle Architekten auf dieses Gebäude aufmerksam zu machen, damit uns ein genauer Riß davon zukäme.)⁵³ The word *riß* appears twice in this one sentence, once as the verb "to tear," as in to pull oneself away from something, and then as the noun "plan," in the sense of a two-dimensional schematic of the building, each word orthographically distinct, but aural the same. The second *Riß* compensates for the first; the drawing substitutes for no longer directly seeing the temple. Only a detailed plan can make clear what Goethe has seen, namely, that Palladio misrepresents the temple's facade, yet of course this urge to draw the temple faithfully replicates Palladio's own mission to share the glories of ancient architecture with the learned world via his drawings. Goethe wants to outdo Palladio, to take accuracy one step (or many) beyond the master. The point, however, is not pedantic accuracy. Goethe has not merely taken up precise archeological methods; rather, the discrepancy between representations reiterates the primacy of firsthand experience. Drawing and perception are intertwined, so that one instructs the other. Pictures teach the viewer how to look at a site; viewing the place guides further drawings of it. Goethe assumes different positions within this circle without dwelling on the paradox.

53. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, 121; Goethe, HA 11: 118.